

SHOOTING: THE FACTS FOR JOURNALISTS

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ABOUT BASC

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) is the UK's largest shooting organisation, with a membership of over 155,000.

BASC is recognised by government and voluntary sectors as a representative body for sporting shooting in the United Kingdom.

In representing the best interests of all forms of sporting shooting, BASC works to set and promote high standards of sportsmanship, safety and courtesy within the shooting community as well as to promote game and wildlife conservation.

As a voluntary body with an elected Council, these objectives are pursued through international, national and regional programmes encompassing conservation and land management, research, standards development and training, press and public relations, and firearms.

These are run by a staff of 123 based at BASC's head office as well as offices in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and five English regional centres. An extensive network of honorary representatives and volunteers further strengthens these resources.

For information about becoming a BASC member, exclusive BASC member benefits and joining the largest shooting organisation in the UK, visit www.basc.org.uk/join-basc

Click below to watch a short film about BASC:



WHAT IS BASC

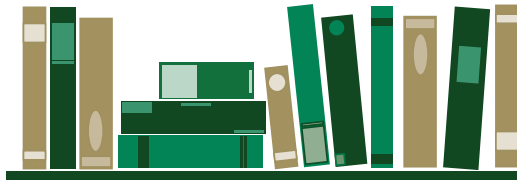


BASC began in 1908 as WAGBI, The Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland

Today BASC has a membership of

155,000

BASC is a non-party political organisation, works with all parties and has never been politically partisan



BASC CODES OF PRACTICE

cover all areas of shooting. Members bringing shooting into disrepute and breaching the standards in the codes can be subject to disciplinary action

Wildfowling

was a traditional source of protein for coastal communities



BASC's turnover is more than **£12 million**



BASC covers all shooting disciplines including game and rough shooting, wildfowling, pest control, pigeon shooting and deer stalking

BASC is the largest shooting organisation in the UK and one of the largest in Europe



WAGBI was founded in Hull by Stanley Duncan, a railway engineer and later a shop keeper



BASC members live in the city, in the countryside and on the coast

BASC EMPLOYS

123 STAFF

across the UK many of them experts in their field



BASC takes an active role in conservation. Its Green Shoots conservation programme is endorsed by Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Environment Agency.



THE AIM OF THIS GUIDE

The BASC press office represents shooting and BASC in the media. From Newsnight to local newspapers, we work to achieve balanced and accurate reporting on the lawful ownership and use of firearms. We also promote the positive economic, environmental and social aspects of shooting.

The aim of this guide is to provide you with the facts at your fingertips. It contains easy to reference infographics, hyperlinks and a range of films.

On the BASC website you can find the latest BASC press releases, along with press office contacts.

We are professional and well-resourced, with ISDN radio facilities and video capability at our head office in North Wales and we can offer a range of spokespeople for live or pre-recorded radio and TV interviews across the UK.

We suggest that regular checking of the BASC website – www.basc.org.uk – where statements and policies on developing subject areas are published, will ensure you are best informed.

All the information contained in this guide was correct at the time of publication 2017 (revised 2019).

For further information, journalists can call the press office on 01244 573 052 or email press@basc.org.uk

You can also follow us on Twitter @BASCSnews, like our Facebook page or subscribe to our YouTube channel BASCfilms.



THE VALUE OF SHOOTING

Shooting is good for the environment and the economy. Sixteen shooting and countryside organisations commissioned an independent study to ascertain exactly what shooting is worth.

The result was The Value of Shooting report – the most comprehensive research into the economic, environmental and social contributions of shooting ever undertaken in the UK. It was conducted by Cambridge-based Public and Corporate Economic Consultants (PACEC).

The report revealed that shooting is worth £2 billion a year (Gross Value Added**) to the UK economy and supports 74,000 full-time jobs. People who shoot spend £2.5 billion each year on goods and services, bringing income into rural areas, particularly in the low-season for tourism. The research shows that an established shoot generates local economic benefits for businesses in a radius of up to fifteen miles.

The figures show that the amount spent on shooting (£2.5 billion) equals almost 10 per cent of the total amount spent on outdoor recreation in a year, which has been measured at £27 billion by the Sport and Recreation Alliance***.

Shooting is involved in the management of two-thirds of the UK's rural land area. Almost two million hectares are actively managed for conservation as a result of shooting. Nearly £250 million a year is spent on conservation and habitat management which benefits a wide range of wildlife. People who shoot put in 3.9 million work days on conservation every year – the equivalent of 16,000 full-time conservation jobs.

At least 600,000 people in the UK shoot live quarry, clay pigeons or targets.



**Gross Value Added (GVA): The standard monetary measure of the value of economic activity. Equal to the sum of employment costs plus profits. Equivalent to the value of goods and services produced minus the inputs (raw materials, services, etc.) required to produce them.

***Source: "Reconomics" report <http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/policy/research/reconomics>

THE VALUE OF SHOOTING

350,000
direct paid jobs



3.9
million

Work days spent on conservation every year



which is the equivalent of **16,000** full-time conservation jobs

£2.5 billion spend on goods and services



Shooting influences **14m** hectares of rural land management of which

2m hectares are actively managed for conservation

£2 billion annual benefit to UK economy (GVA)



74,000 equivalent number of full time jobs



SHOOTING IS...

Nearly **£250m** annual spend on conservation

At least **1.6 million** people in the UK shoot



97% of participants say shooting improves their well-being

70,000 Shooting businesses in the UK



Shooting accounts for almost **10%** of the total amount spent on outdoor recreation in the UK

1/3 Around a third of businesses provide formal or on the job training



£3.5 million annual charitable donations recorded by shooting businesses



87% of participants say that shooting contributes to the well-being of the local community



97% of all edible quarry shot is consumed and **35%** sold in shops and restaurants

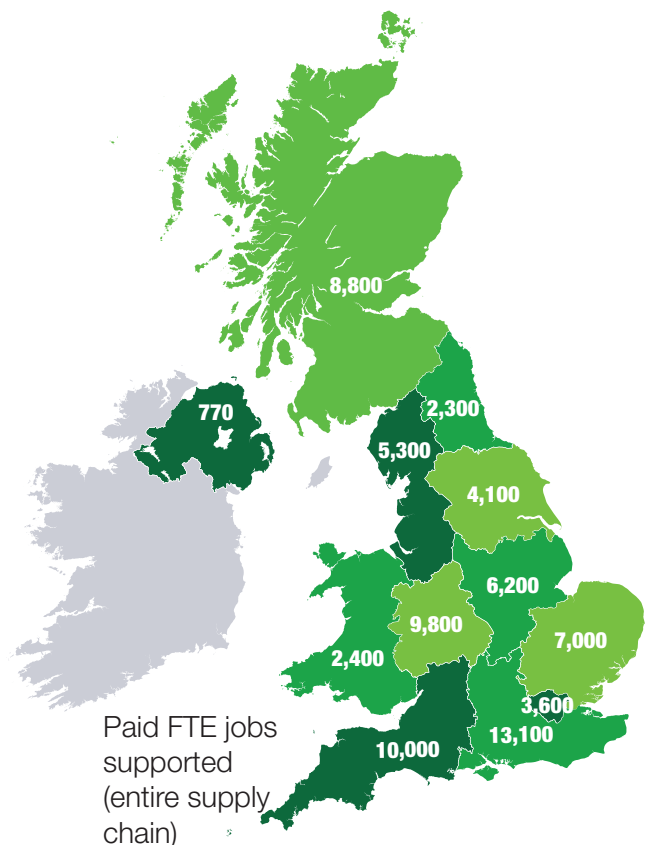


The picture across the UK

	Participants†	Area influenced (ha)	Conservation labour (FTE)	Paid FTE jobs supported (entire supply chain)	Total GVA supported (£m)
South East	200,000	1,800,000	2,400	13,100	370
East	100,000	820,000	1,100	7,000	180
Greater London	22,000	240,000*	280*	3,600	140
South West	170,000	1,800,000	2,200	10,000	250
West Midlands	95,000	1,300,000	1,600	9,800	240
East Midlands	79,000	830,000	1,100	6,200	150
Yorkshire and the Humber	87,000	810,000	1,000	4,100	120
North West	64,000	890,000	990	5,300	160
North East	44,000	400,000	480	2,300	57
England	550,000	8,800,000	11,000	61,000	1,700
Wales	76,000	380,000	490	2,400	75
Scotland	120,000	4,500,000	3,900	8,800	200
Northern Ireland	9,800	69,000	67	770	28
UK	600,000	14,000,000	16,000	74,000	2,000

To view the full Value of Shooting report, [click here](#)

To watch a short film on the Value of Shooting, [click below](#)



GUNS

What is a shotgun?

A shotgun can be single or double-barrelled. It fires a charge of small pellets and is mainly used for shooting game birds and pest birds, small mammals and clay targets. Owners must have a police-authorized shotgun certificate in Great Britain or a firearm certificate in Northern Ireland.



Shotguns come in a variety of sizes; classified by the 'bore' or 'gauge'. This is an historical measurement of the diameter of the barrel. Confusingly, smaller bore-sizes have bigger numbers. So the 12 bore, which is the most common size, is actually larger than the 20 bore, which is the second most popular size.

Shotguns fire shot (small pellets) contained in a cartridge. The shot leaves the gun in a cloud formation and spreads out, making it effective against moving targets.

A shotgun certificate (or a firearm certificate in Northern Ireland) is required to buy ammunition and strict age restrictions are in place.

What is a rifle?

Rifles fire bullets, the size of which varies according to the type of rifle and quarry species. Essentially used for target shooting competitions and for shooting mammals up to the size of deer in the UK, they require a police-authorized firearm certificate. There are tight controls on the ownership of rifles and ammunition.



The word rifle refers to the 'rifling' in the barrel, a spiral groove cut into the metal which spins the bullet before it leaves the muzzle, stabilising its flight. The rifle bullet is a solid projectile, as opposed to the cloud or string of shot which comes from a shotgun. Where the relative sizes of shotguns are measured by bore or gauge, the size of a rifle is indicated by its calibre - the diameter of the bullet it fires.

The calibre of a rifle refers to the size of the bullet that it shoots. For example, a .22 rifle fires a bullet that is .22 of an inch in diameter. So unlike shotguns, the bigger the number, the bigger the bullet. But the calibre doesn't necessarily mean that a rifle is 'more powerful'. It is not only the diameter of the bullet but also its weight and speed that are important. So, for instance, the law requires a certain combination of calibre, weight and velocity to ensure a humane kill for deer population management.

What is an air rifle?

A low-powered version does not require a licence in England or Wales. It shoots a small pellet, propelled by compressed air or gas. Airguns are used for target shooting and for shooting small pest species. Air rifles are limited to a kinetic energy level of 12 foot-pounds (ft/lbs) which is about 100 times less powerful than training rifles used by cadets.



More powerful air rifles require a firearm certificate and are subject to the same stringent controls as other rifles. It is not necessary to hold a certificate for an air rifle which can produce a kinetic energy of less than 12ft/lbs - except in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

The law makes no distinction between firearms offences committed with an airgun or with more powerful cartridge firing guns.



Airguns in Scotland

In Scotland, as of 31 December 2016, anyone who wants to own or possess an airgun must possess an Air Weapon Certificate. The Certificate is administered by Police Scotland and the information supplied by applicants and checks carried out are almost identical to those supplied when completing an application for a firearm certificate. Applicants also need to provide 'good reason' for possession of airguns and this would include target shooting or pest control. The certificate costs £72 for five years. People visiting Scotland with their airgun are required to apply for a visitor permit through Police Scotland. This is not required for shotguns or firearms.

Antiques

The definition of an antique firearm is enshrined in law. If antique guns are still in use, they are treated as modern guns in terms of licensing, storage, etc. If they are not used, but kept as ornaments or as part of a collection, the owner does not require a firearm certificate. Certificates would be required if guns are fired as part of an historical re-enactment, albeit with blank ammunition.

Gun crime

Many types of firearm, including handguns, automatic and most semi-automatic rifles are prohibited under UK law.

Machine guns were banned in 1937. Semi-automatic rifles were banned in 1988 and handguns were banned in 1997.

Pistols

Although most pistols, other than muzzle-loading pistols for target shooting, were banned after the Dunblane shootings, a small number are owned by firearm certificate holders to humanely dispatch severely injured animals. These people tend to be deer managers or pest controllers and their pistols are reduced in capacity to make them unattractive to criminals.

Imitation pistols which only fire blank cartridges are also used to train gundogs. The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 limits their manufacture to those which cannot be readily altered to fire live ammunition and which are brightly coloured to discourage their use in crime.

It is now an offence to be in possession of tools suitable for converting blank firers into firearms with intent to make such conversions.

There is a thriving, sporting interest in revolver and pistol target shooting in Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. It is facilitated through clubs that are authorised by the chief constable, with shooting confined to approved ranges.

Pistol shooting can be undertaken by club members and in certain circumstances by guests. Muzzle-loading under supervision and a strict administrative regime means guests are not required to possess a firearm certificate to participate.

Licensing

The UK has some of the toughest gun laws in the world. People who shoot are some of the most law-abiding in the country – they have to be in order to obtain and keep their certificates.

Guns are an essential tool of the countryside and are used for pest control, game and target shooting purposes as well as Olympic sports.

People who apply for a shotgun or firearm certificate go through a series of stringent checks which may include home visits by the police, background and medical checks.

Overall responsibility for granting the application rests with the Chief Constable of the police force area where the applicant lives. The police have wide discretion in considering applications for firearm and shotgun certificates. The Chief Constable must refuse a certificate or withdraw one from anyone he or she thinks is unfit to possess a firearm or who he thinks may be a danger to public safety or the peace.

Shotgun and firearm certificates must be renewed every five years. It is a condition of the certificates that all guns covered by them are stored securely. This normally means a heavy-gauge steel cabinet, bolted to the wall and secured by appropriate locks. Extra levels of home security can also be required.

A firearm is defined as “a lethal barrelled weapon of any description from which any shot, bullet or other missile can be discharged”. This includes airguns.

The Firearms Acts break guns down into four categories: Section 1 Firearms, Section 2 Shotguns, Section 5 Prohibited Weapons and Uncertificated Firearms such as antiques and low-powered air weapons.

No-one under the age of 18 may purchase a firearm or ammunition of any kind. No-one under the age 18 may purchase airguns or airgun pellets.

With only a few specific exceptions, airguns above a set power limit, shotguns and rifles can only be owned and used by someone who has successfully applied to the police for a shotgun or firearm certificate.

The possession of an airgun, shotgun or firearm or any ammunition for them is absolutely prohibited for life for anyone who has been in prison (including youth custody and corrective training) for more than three years.

A five-year ban on possession applies to anyone who has served a prison sentence (including youth custody or corrective training) or been sentenced to a suspended prison sentence for more than three months but less than three years.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) does not apply to applications for certificates. All convictions in the UK and abroad, including motoring offences, must be declared. Certificate holders who are sentenced to imprisonment will have their certificates revoked.

TYPES OF SHOOTING

The main types of lawful shooting in the UK are:

- Clay shooting
- Game shooting
- Wildfowling
- Deer stalking
- Target shooting
- Pest and predator control

Clay shooting

Clay shooting is an Olympic sport in its own right and an essential tuition and practice aid for game shooters.

It takes place at club grounds, shooting schools, on private land, at game fairs and a variety of other locations up and down the country all year round.

Clays, or clay pigeons, are small discs, typically made of pitch and limestone, which are launched into the air using a clay 'trap' to provide a range of targets.

For the live quarry shooter, the flight characteristics of many quarry species can be simulated, allowing valuable practice and tuition to take place.

Clay shooting clubs and shooting schools provide one of the best ways for newcomers to shooting to try their hand. People are able to shoot with expert supervision and coaching without the need for a shotgun certificate or to have their own gun.

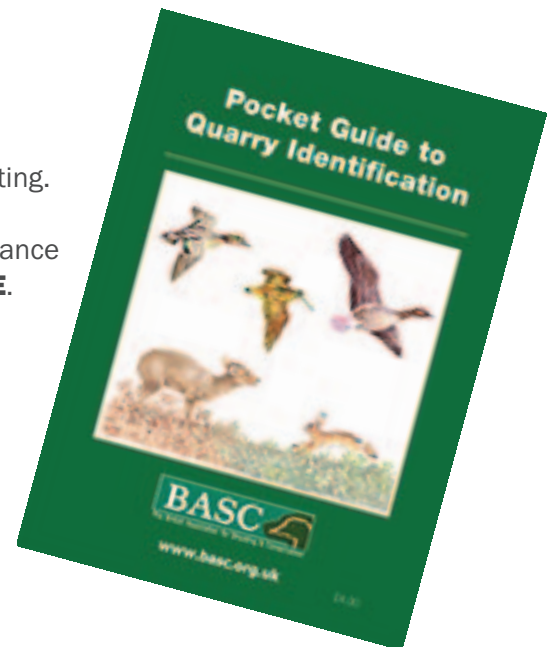
Game shooting

Game shooting is probably the most popular form of live quarry shooting.

All shooting is expected to be carried out in accordance with the guidance and standards set out in the **CODE OF GOOD SHOOTING PRACTICE**. The code was drawn up by all the main representative shooting organisations and last revised in 2019.

For information on what can be shot and when, click here:

<https://basc.org.uk/game-and-gamekeeping/quarry-species-shooting-seasons/quarry-identification>



Forms of game shooting:

- **Driven** – where a line of people, known as beaters, usually with one or two dogs, will walk through an area, for example an area of woodland or a covert, known as a ‘drive’. The birds will run or fly on ahead as the beating line approaches. Drives will be planned so that the birds will take flight at a given point – for example at the edge of a wood. A line of people known as ‘Guns’ will be positioned so the birds pass overhead at sufficient height and speed to present a safe and challenging shot.
- **Walked-up/rough shooting** – More informal than driven shooting. Usually carried out in smaller groups. ‘Guns’ and their dogs will walk through an area thought to hold game and shoot as the birds are flushed from cover by their approach.

Dogs are used to locate and flush game and to retrieve shot game. On formal driven days, there will be a team of ‘pickers-up’ with trained dogs whose only purpose is to collect shot game.



GAME SHOOTING PROVIDES...
habitat and conservation management, delivers high-quality landscapes and provides tasty food

97% of game meat goes into the food chain

41% of shoot providers create or maintain hedgerows



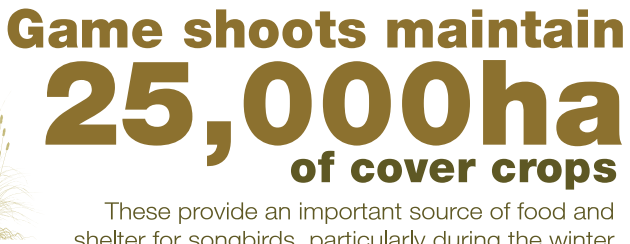
Predators cause over 40% of the nests of ground-nesting birds to be lost



The effort put into game management and pest control is equivalent to **7,800 full-time jobs**



Game shoots maintain 25,000ha of cover crops



These provide an important source of food and shelter for songbirds, particularly during the winter

Around **430,000** people shoot game



OVER 280,000 people work on shoots each year

Shoots manage **500,000ha** of woodland and **100,000ha** of copses for game



Conservation organisations acknowledge the benefit of game shooting to the environment



The 'glorious twelve' benefits of grouse shooting

Conservation of globally threatened habitat

Heather moorland is rarer than rainforest
75% is found in Britain because of grouse moor management

Time and money invested into conservation

Almost **£100m** estimated annual value of grouse shooting in England, Wales and Scotland



Landscape scale management

79%

of the Pennines and N.Yorks moors' Special Protection Areas are managed for grouse

Conservation of globally and nationally important species

UP TO 5 TIMES

more threatened wading birds supported on moors managed by gamekeepers

Breathtaking scenery and wildlife for everyone

90%

of English grouse moors fall within a National Park or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Preservation of the UK's biggest carbon store

Managing heather helps preserve and protect

UK's BIGGEST CARBON STORE in peat

Strengthening local communities and businesses in the uplands

Grouse shooting in England, Wales, and Scotland supports the equivalent of

over 2500 full time jobs

Fresh water sources and reduced flood risk

of the UK's drinking water comes from the uplands

70%

Wellbeing and social benefits

AT LEAST 40,000 people take part in grouse shooting annually and the average shooting day brings 40 people together

Reduced risk of wildfires by controlled burning

An important source of healthy food

Gamebird Open Seasons (dates inclusive)

Species	England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Isle of Man
Pheasant	Oct 1 – Feb 1	Oct 1 – Feb 1	Oct 1 – Jan 31	Oct 1 – Jan 31
Grey Partridge	Sep 1 – Feb 1	Sep 1 – Feb 1	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Protected (ban in force)
Red-legged Partridge	Sep 1 – Feb 1	Sep 1 – Feb 1	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Sep 13 – Jan 31
Red Grouse	Aug 12 – Dec 10	Aug 12 – Dec 10	Aug 12 – Nov 30	Aug 25 – Oct 31 *
Black Grouse	Aug 20 – Dec 10 (Somerset, Devon and New Forest: Sep 1 – Dec 10)	Aug 20 – Dec 10	–	–
Ptarmigan	–	Aug 12 – Dec 10	–	–

In England and Wales gamebirds may not be taken on a Sunday or Christmas Day. In Northern Ireland you cannot take game on a Sunday. In Scotland there are no statutory restrictions on killing game on Sunday or Christmas Day, but it is not customary to do so.

Wildfowling

Wildfowling involves habitat management for the purpose of conservation and the sustainable shooting of ducks, geese and waders from the foreshore on marshes and estuaries around the coast and on some major inland wetland sites. The foreshore is the area below the height of an ordinary spring tide as dictated by the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Wildfowling can be dangerous. Tides, weather and terrain can all be deadly if not treated with respect and caution.

Typically, the more extreme the weather, the more favourable conditions are for shooting as the quarry is kept low and on the move.

The peak wildfowling times are the morning and evening flight – when ducks and geese are moving between feeding and roosting grounds. It is vital to be in position before the flight starts. Shooting a morning flight involves crossing the marsh in the pre-dawn dark and evening flight involves leaving after the light has faded. Given the conditions of weather and light under which wildfowling normally takes place, the ability to correctly identify quarry species is crucial.

Wildfowling is organised into clubs and associations around the country. Many undertake clean-up and conservation work on the land on which they shoot, which can be leased or owned. The open seasons for ducks and geese (wildfowl) are:

- 1 September – 20 February
(England, Wales, Scotland) on the foreshore.
- 1 September – 31 January
NI, England, Wales and Scotland above the high water mark

*Currently a voluntary ban on shooting red grouse is in place.

The species of wildfowl which can be shot in season are:

DUCK	GEESE	WADERS
Gadwall	Canada	Common snipe
Goldeneye	Greylag	Golden plover
Mallard	Pink-footed	Woodcock
Pintail	White-fronted (England and Wales only)	Jack snipe (N. Ireland only)
Pochard		
Scaup (N. Ireland only)		OTHER
Shoveler		Coot (Except N. Ireland)
Teal		Moorhen (Except N. Ireland)
Tufted duck		
Wigeon		

In addition, it is illegal to shoot wildfowl on Christmas Day in England, Scotland and Wales. It is also illegal to shoot wildfowl on Sundays in Scotland and in some counties in England and Wales.



WILDFOWLING

shooting wild duck and geese on tidal areas, including the foreshore and inland marshes

Wildfowlers actively sustain **50,000**

acres of valuable wetland habitat



Wildfowlers were instrumental in the establishment of the **UK's first** wildfowl refuges and continue their conservation work today

Wildfowling clubs are responsible for more than

250,000

acres of land across

England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales



Wildfowling is a traditional subsistence activity – **first recorded in 1614**



Wildfowlers have invested in excess of

£3m

in securing declining coastal wetlands



more than **140** local clubs

provide shooting for a broad range of people

Wildfowlers work in partnership with statutory agencies to **protect threatened habitats and species**



90%

of land managed for wildfowling is in Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Wildfowlers provide over **600,000** conservation work days per year



Deer Stalking

Deer have no natural predators. If deer populations remain unmanaged, they can overpopulate, inbreed and cause considerable damage to farm and timber crops as well as strip woodland and other habitats of flora which can cause serious issues for the deer and other species.

To reduce damage and to ensure that the population remains balanced and healthy, deer stalkers use rifles to cull individual animals as part of a deer population management plan.

Rifles are used and there are specific laws which regulate the calibre and type of ammunition that can be used for each species.

Deer stalkers focus on females to reduce the number of offspring produced. Any old or weak deer will be taken as a priority.

A deer stalker must know their ground and the habits of the deer intimately. A prime consideration is to ensure that there is nothing that will deflect a bullet between the rifle and the target and that there is a safe backstop to any shot taken.

There are six species of deer found in the wild in the British Isles. Red and Roe deer are the only two native species. The others – fallow, sika, muntjac and Chinese water deer - have established themselves after being introduced or escaping from private collections and deer parks.

Five deer species are protected by close seasons related to the breeding cycle. Shooting is permitted between the following dates:

Species and sex	England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
RED			
Stags	Aug 1 – April 30	July 1 – Oct 20	Aug 1 – April 30
Hinds	Nov 1 – Mar 31	Oct 21 – Feb 15	Nov 1 – Mar 31
SIKA			
Stags	Aug 1 – April 30	July 1 – Oct 20	Aug 1 – April 30
Hinds	Nov 1 – Mar 31	Oct 21 – Feb 15	Nov 1 – Mar 31
FALLOW			
Bucks	Aug 1 – April 30	Aug 1 – April 30	Aug 1 – April 30
Does	Nov 1 – Mar 31	Oct 21 – Feb 15	Nov 1 – Mar 31
ROE			
Bucks	April 1 – Oct 31	April 1 – Oct 20	–
Does	Nov 1 – Mar 31	Oct 21 – March 31	–
CHINESE WATER DEER			
Bucks	Nov 1 – Mar 31	–	–
Does	Nov 1 – Mar 31	–	–
MUNTJAC			
There is no statutory closed season for this species. It is recommended that when culling female muntjac, immature or heavily pregnant does are selected to avoid leaving dependent young.			

Deer stalking

Six species of wild deer live in the UK



There are up to **2 Million**

wild deer in the UK – the highest number for 1,000 years

The annual deer cull of **350,000**

reduces the impact that deer can have on native flora and fauna



Venison is worth **£170 million** to the UK economy



Over **100,000** people go deer stalking each year

Deer management provides

2,500 JOBS



in Scotland alone

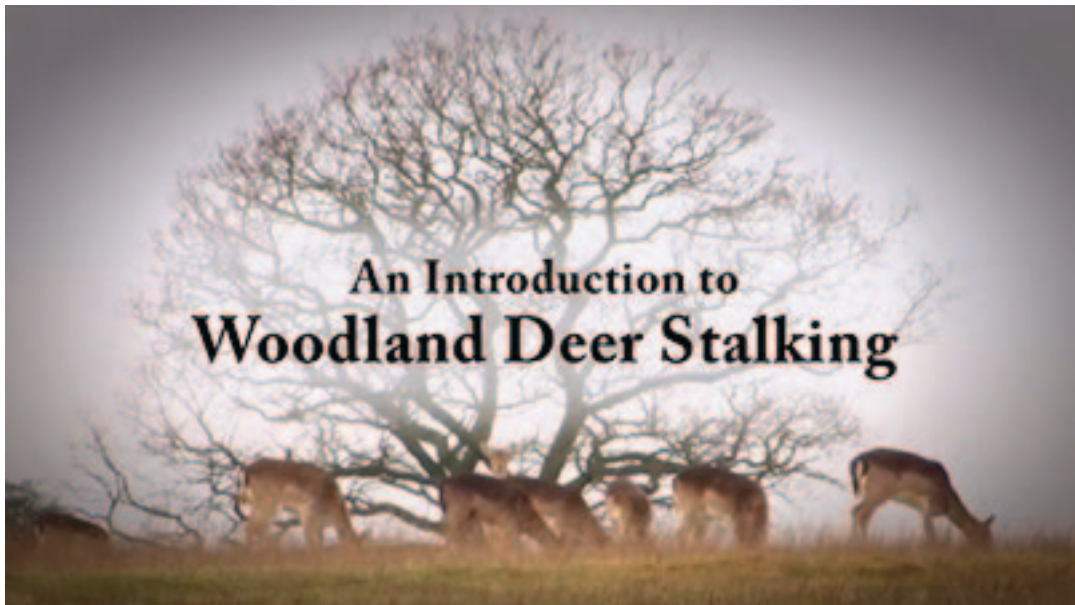


A **100g / 3oz** serving of roast venison contains **140 calories** and **1 gramme** of fat

Each year deer management helps to reduce the



74,000 deer-vehicle collisions



Pest and predator control

Pest and predator control is a vital part of game, land and wildlife management in the UK. It is also essential for agriculture, and may be undertaken for other specific reasons such as the protection of public health and air safety.

Methods of control are tightly regulated by law.

Mammals

Rabbits will damage growing crops, trees and saplings and their burrows can be a hazard. The whole of the UK, except the City of London, the Scilly Isles, Skokholm Island, Jura and the Outer Isles is a rabbit clearance area under the Pests Act of 1954. The occupier of any land has an obligation to kill or take rabbits on their land. Where this is not practical they have to take measures, such as installing fencing, to prevent damage being caused. Failure to comply can result in prosecution or the work being done and charged to the occupier.

Shotguns, air rifles and certain rifles, when used correctly, are all effective against rabbits.

One particular technique, which proves successful, is shooting at night using a powerful lamp or night sight to spot rabbits which are feeding out in the open. Ferrets are often used to flush rabbits from their burrows, either to waiting guns or to be caught in nets and dispatched by hand. Traps and snares may also be used.

Foxes

Fox control is essential. The fox is the UK's major predator. It is extremely adaptable and opportunistic and can be found in almost every habitat. It has no significant natural predator. The fox's diet is not specialised and will include almost anything it encounters, from fruit and insects to worms, carrion, eggs, birds and mammals. Any small creature is vulnerable to the fox as farmers, shepherds, gamekeepers, poultry keepers and wildlife reserve managers can testify.

An effective method of controlling foxes is by shooting at night (lamping) with a suitable rifle either by using a powerful lamp or night vision equipment to spot and identify a fox. It is a skilled job, requiring intimate knowledge of the landscape and the quarry to be able to judge where a fox is likely to be, to positively identify it, to judge whether a shot is safe and to ensure a clean kill.

The use of a shotgun is also an effective method of control. Dogs may be used to flush foxes but there are very specific laws which govern this. Snares can also be an important method of control and are only designed to catch and hold a fox until it can be humanely dispatched.

All methods can be effective in the right circumstances and good control is about selecting the most appropriate one for the specific circumstances.

Bird control and the general licences

All wild birds are protected by law. However there are certain species such as game birds and wildfowl which can be taken in the open season and there are others which can be controlled under certain circumstances. There are some restrictions on shooting at night and on Sundays.

In England, the government, through Natural England/Defra, issues general licences every year detailing which species may be controlled, for what purposes, how that may be done and by whom. Similar licences are issued by the relevant authorities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The licences are kept under regular review.

Birds may only be controlled using methods specified in, and for the reasons set out by, the general licences. Control can only be carried out by "authorised persons".

An authorised person is defined as the owner or occupier of land, or persons authorised by them to carry out pest control.

As well as allowing shooting they can permit the use of cage traps for the capture of certain species. It is not necessary to prove that a particular bird or flock was causing a problem, nor is it necessary for individuals to hold copies of the general licences, or apply for one. But anyone relying upon the authority of a general licence must comply fully with the relevant terms of it. They are published by the government and copies are available from the issuing authority or can be viewed on their website. BASC publishes a code of practice on trapping pest birds which can be viewed on the website www.basc.org.uk

The main reasons why the majority of pest bird species are controlled can be broadly divided into two:

- To conserve wild birds.
Pest species such as rooks, crows and magpies will eat eggs and young of other birds.
- To prevent damage to agriculture.
Woodpigeon are the UK's number one agricultural pest, feeding on crops all year round.

SHOOTING AND CONSERVATION

Shooting and conservation go hand in hand. In order to have good shooting then you first need to provide good habitat and protection from pests and predators through legal control.

- Shooting is involved in management of two-thirds of the rural land area.
- Shoot providers spend nearly £250 million a year on conservation.
- Nearly 2 million hectares are actively managed for conservation as a result of shooting.
- Shooters spend 3.9 million work days on conservation – The equivalent of 16,000 full-time jobs.

Source: **The Value of Shooting**



Green Shoots

BASC works with people who shoot and partner organisations to target conservation effort on land which is shot over in order to achieve public conservation targets.

We call this programme of work Green Shoots and it is extremely successful in linking shooters and non-shooting conservation organisations for the benefit of all wildlife.

Green Shoots gave BASC the framework to record what species and habitats of national importance could be found on members' land. Members were then given the opportunity to work with partners on projects that achieved public conservation targets. Initially information was collected in certain areas through paper surveys, and this inspired some highly successful and respected projects. Now all BASC members can provide useful information on their shooting land and the wildlife it supports by using

BASC's Green Shoots Mapping website



YOUNG PEOPLE AND GUNS

Sporting shooting teaches young people safety, discipline and responsibility.

The law allows controlled gradual supervised access to firearms.

Young people who wish to apply for a shotgun certificate can do so at any age but they will go through the same police checks as an adult.

Even with a certificate they cannot buy a gun or ammunition until they are 18 so the law allows a gradual introduction to shooting under supervision.

A shotgun certificate is just a piece of paper which allows a young person to shoot under supervision.

BASC works hard to encourage young people into our sport, for example through our **Young Shots programme**. Teaching young people about guns removes the myths. In 2016 we coached almost 6,000 scouts and guides to shoot shotguns at the Essex International Jamboree.

***“Teaching the responsible and safe use of firearms to younger people removes the myths that surround firearms, and teaches both self-control and responsibility towards others.*”**

“Shooting has many aspects, from pest control through to Olympic and Commonwealth Games clay shooting. It is vital that anyone wanting to compete at these top international levels gets an early start in life.”

BASC vice-president Peter Glenser highlights the importance of educating young people to use guns safely from an early age.

For many children growing up in families where shooting is a part of life, acquiring a shotgun certificate is part of training in shooting safely which emphasises responsibility and self-discipline.

Some of these young people are learning to shoot so they can represent their country in the Olympics and other competitions.

On the subject of young people and shotgun certificates, BASC supports the current expert opinion. The Home Office, in guidance on firearms law, has said: “It is in the interests of safety that a young person who is to handle firearms should be properly taught at a relatively early age.”

In his evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee in 2010, the ACPO lead on firearms licensing, Assistant Chief Constable Adrian Whiting, said: “The evidence in relation to young people shooting does not give any cause for concern.”

GAME AS FOOD

Game meat is becoming more popular and is increasingly featuring on restaurant menus, in recipe books and on television, and is far more readily available in mainstream retailers.

BASC runs a game meat promotion campaign – Taste of Game.

Ninety seven percent of game that is shot makes it to the table. The Value of Shooting report states that 62% is consumed by those who shoot or provide shooting and 35% is used elsewhere, for example sold through game dealers, restaurants or retailers. Game meat is healthy, sustainable and highly nutritious. It can be locally sourced, is affordable and is very tasty. It is extremely versatile, low in fat and full of vitamins.

For more information, a range of delicious recipes and information on where to buy game meat, visit www.tasteofgame.org.uk



CONTACTS

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