

BASC Information Sheet

THE FARM SHOOT

All farmland has the potential to provide sporting opportunities which can be developed to provide enjoyment or financial return. Your farm should be looked at as a whole, existing habitats may be used unchanged or modified or new habitats created to the benefit of game and wildlife. Managing sympathetically for game will encourage biodiversity over peripheral farm habitats. Many declining farmland birds benefit from well managed hedges, field margins and woodlands, as they provide food, shelter and protection from predation.

Below is a check list of important farm habitats for game and wildlife for top consider on your shoot.

Hedges

- provide shelter and food for game birds
- link other habitats and provide a corridor for dispersal
- provide a site for feeders

Field Margins - the grassy strip around a field edge

- provide nesting and brood-rearing habitat
- can extend wildlife/game value of hedges and woods
- provide a buffer against agricultural pesticides

Release Wood

- central wood
- holds release pen
- radiating hedges link to other woods

Game Cover Crops

- additional holding cover
- positioned at flushing points
- brassicas/maize/cereal mixes etc

Flight Pond

- open water to attract flighting duck
- pond plants provide food and shelter
- island for roosting and nesting

Satellite Wood

- small wood linked to release wood by hedges and field margins

Wet Grassland

- important for waders e.g. snipe
- also wildfowl grazing

Type of shooting

Additionally, farmland can offer a range of different sporting opportunities:

Rough shooting

- Involves walking-up cover, either alone or with companions.
- Additional habitat management is not essential but will enhance sporting opportunities.

Game Shooting

- Organised sport, beaters drive pheasants and partridges over standing guns.
- Can involve rearing and releasing game birds and employing a full or part-time gamekeeper.
- Positioning and management of habitats and control of pests and predators is important.

Waterfowl shooting over flight Ponds

- Provide shooting of wildfowl as they "flight" onto a pond in the early morning or evening.
- An ideal "conservation" pond is best for wildfowl.

Deer Stalking

- Can be considered but opportunities may be limited.

Pest Control

- Pigeons and rabbits can provide sporting opportunities.

Economics

- Shooting rights over farmland can be let on a long term or season by season basis.
- Alternatively organised shooting can be sold on a day or per head basis.
- Labour involved in woodland management can be under negotiation with lessees of sporting rights under a joint working arrangement.

Letting Shooting

- Shooting rights can be let through annual licence or a longer lease.
- Liability for payment on rates on sporting rights is no longer applicable. (Local government and Rating Bill April 1997).
- Farmers should ensure that anyone shooting over their land is adequately insured. BASC membership includes third party liability insurance up to £10 million.

Running A Shoot

- If sporting rights are let to a syndicate or individual they will organise their own sport.
- With driven game, beaters will be required as well as pickers-up to collect shot game. Vehicles will be required for transport between drives.
- Farm buildings can be used for keeper accommodation, game larders or shoot hospitality.

Agricultural Practice

- Sympathetic cropping patterns benefit game.
- Winter stubble provides feed and cover.

- Management of field margins for game and wildlife can provide high conservation benefits with minimal impact on agriculture.
- Initiatives such as Conservation Headlands and Bug Banks provide nesting and feeding habitat for game within cereal crops.
- Game Cover Crops can integrate with existing natural habitats to provide extra cover and food for birds.

Set-Aside and Grants

- A large number of incentive schemes and grants for environmental protection are currently available. These can benefit game.
- When entering into agri-environment schemes look to incorporate and enhance game management.

Further Advice

The BASC Conservation and Land Management Team will be pleased to discuss any of the above information with you. *We are here to help*, contact us at:

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