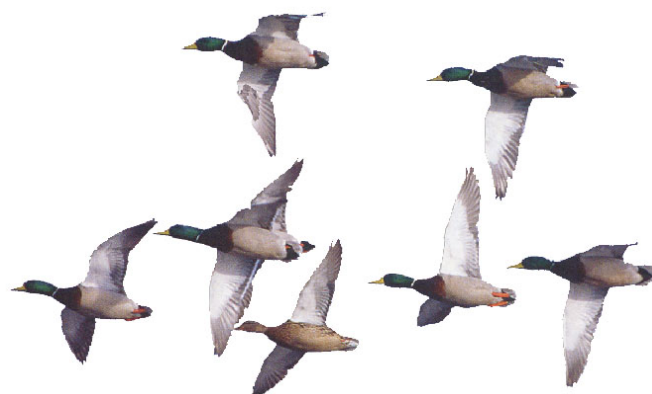


# Scottish Association for Country Sports



## Wildfowling Code of Practice

**Northern Ireland Edition**

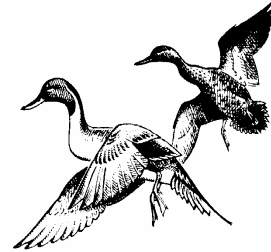
July 2006

## The Quarry

The main quarry of any wildfowler will be wild geese, ducks and waders. Many of these will be migratory species, visiting our shores to over-winter. As wildfowlers, we have a responsibility to safeguard our quarry as we harvest a surplus from their numbers.

These simple pointers will help wildfowlers;

- Identify the bird as a quarry species in season before shooting. If in doubt do not shoot
- Ensure that all birds are within effective range of the weapon you are using
- Match shot size and load to maximise your chance of a clean kill
- Retrieve shot birds as soon as practicable and dispatch any wounded birds humanely
- Never shoot without a properly trained gundog that is steady and will retrieve to command
- Cause as little disturbance as possible when arriving or departing a shooting position



## Shooting Season for Wildfowl

The wildfowling season in Northern Ireland is:

- September 1st - January 31st inclusive

The following may be shot from 1 Sept. until 31 Jan. in Northern Ireland			
Curlew	Pink-footed Goose	Pintail	Teal
Golden Plover	Gadwall	Pochard	Tufted Duck
Canada Goose	Goldeneye	Scaup	Wigeon
Greylag Goose	Mallard	Shoveller	

## Guns & Cartridges

The choice of guns and cartridges is very much a personal one but the important factor is to match the choking of the gun barrels with the shot size to ensure the optimum hitting power of the shot.

A double barrelled 12 bore is a suitable, all round shotgun for fowling. Modern, interchangeable chokes can provide fowlers with the optimum combination. More traditionally wildfowlers may prefer to use a 3 inch chambered gun allowing them to shoot heavier loads more effectively. Larger calibre shotguns such as 10, 8 and 4 bores, although capable of handling

larger loads, can be cumbersome. It is important to remember that while it is a good idea to match choke and cartridges, the gun's choke only marginally increases the range and is no excuse for attempting out of range shots.

The Wildlife and Countryside (NI) Order makes the use of self loading or repeating shotguns illegal for shooting wildfowl unless fitted with a device to prevent the firing of more than three cartridges in succession without reloading.

#### Typical Cartridges for Wildfowling

Shot Size	Quarry	Max. effective range
No. 4/5	Duck	40 yards
No. 6	Teal/waders	40 yards
No. 3	Geese	40 yards

#### Preparing for a Wildfowling Trip

The following pointers will help wildfowlers when planning a trip. Please remember that trips to tidal areas can be extremely dangerous and those visiting for the first time should seek local advice before venturing into unknown territory. If guides are available it is worth consulting them. They are not expensive and could mean the difference in a successful trip and a tragedy.



If you plan a trip to a location that is controlled by a local club it is important that you make contact with the club in advance to familiarise yourself with local conditions and any restrictions that apply.

- Consult tide tables when foreshore fowling
- Always tell someone where you plan to shoot, how long you will be away and remember to tell them when you safely return from your trip
- Carry a mobile telephone with you
- If you are out all day, carry some food and a flask of hot liquid with you
- Wear comfortable, appropriate, waterproof clothing
- If using a boat for access, ensure boat safety equipment and spare fuel is available
- A personal buoyancy aids for boat travel is recommended
- A wildfowler's "back pack" is a useful piece of kit. Typically it can contain; over-trousers, torch & loud whistle (emergency signalling only), a knife, short length of rope, towel, flask and some food,

groundsheet, spare hat, compass, spare dog whistle, gun pull-through, binoculars and a small bag of dried dog food

- Bring your Firearms Certificate and Permit and have a game license for snipe and woodcock
- Wear a waterproof wristwatch, essential for judging tides.
- Make tide alterations for BST/GMT
- Consider a wading pole for foreshore/marsh shooting

### **On the Foreshore, Shore or Marsh**

- Do not disturb residents or other fowlers by making a noise, banging car doors when arriving early in the morning or leaving late at night.
- Arrive sufficiently early so as not to disturb the shooting of those who are shooting in the same area
- Do not shoot in the vicinity of dwellings adjoining the shore.
- Make sure your field craft is good and that your camouflage suits the surroundings
- Make your dog comfortable and provide a dry surface for it to sit on – groundsheet or game bag for example.
- Carry your gun in a gunslip and make sure there are no obstructions in the barrels before loading
- Where possible, identify range limit markers in the terrain to assist you in range judging when flight begins
- Do not shoot at out of range birds
- Where practicable, send your dog to retrieve as soon as birds are shot.
- Identify quarry before attempting a shot
- Remove everything you bring from the shoreline, including spent cartridges
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### **On your Return Home**

- Inform your contact that you have arrived home safely
- Tend to your dog/s checking for cuts or lesions and treating as required
- Dry off dogs
- Dry, clean and store guns
- Hang up shot fowl in a cool, dry and secure place to cool-off
- Set aside to dry-off any wet clothing or equipment
- Secure ammunition in appropriate secure cabinet
- Complete bag return while it is fresh in your memory

