

WILDFOWLING GUIDELINES

WILDFOWLERS ACCESS

You must use one of the three access points shown on the Permit.

WHERE TO SHOOT AND WHEN

The wildfowling area over which you may shoot is clearly shown on the permit. A line of marker buoys denotes the boundary between the shooting and sanctuary areas. Should you intend fowling for the first time you are advised to inspect the boundaries and access routes in daylight.

WILDFOWLING DAILY SHOOTING PERIODS

You may shoot on the dates stated in the permit as follows:-

1½ hours before and 1½ hours after sunrise
1 hour before and 2 hours after sunset

Reasonable time will be allowed outside the hours quoted to take up and leave wildfowling positions;

Morning - 1 hour walk on and ½ hour walk off
Evening - ½ hour walk on and ½ hour walk off

THIS TIME MUST NOT BE REGARDED AS EXTRA SHOOTING TIME.

WILDFOWLING PERMIT

You should complete an entry for each flight which you attend. The information supplied is our main indication of the extent to which the wildfowling area is being used, and of the success of wildfowlers.

One of the main aims of the management of wildfowling at Montrose Basin Local Nature Reserve is to ensure that the sport is enjoyable for those who obtain permits. People found to be falsifying returns will not be issued permits in the future.

Because of the importance attached to the information obtained from permit returns, persons who do not return their permits may be banned from receiving a permit in future seasons.

WILDFOWLERS - WHAT YOU CAN SHOOT

The permit allows you to shoot certain geese, ducks and wader species subject to the provision of Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The table below gives a full list of the species which may be shot at Montrose Basin.

Species which may be shot under permit at Montrose Basin Local Nature Reserve		
Geese 01 September - 20 February	Ducks 01 September- 20 February	Waders 01 September- 31 January
Pink footed Greylag Canada	Wigeon Gadwall Teal Mallard Pintail Shoveler Pochard Tufted Duck Goldeneye	Golden Plover Snipe Woodcock
You are not allowed to shoot "Pest Species", game (except above species), rabbit or hare. February below the mean high water mark of ordinary spring tides only.		

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Park carefully and quietly, using access routes where shown. Do not obstruct roads and avoid slamming doors. At Maryton Ditch ensure that your car is parked in the car park area, please do not park on the verge. There is now a height restriction barrier of 2.2m at the Old Mill Car Park.

Dress sensibly - Wear inconspicuous clothing, otherwise the birds will avoid you as well as any nearby fowlers.

Keep Quiet - Sound can travel far on the Basin - plan your move when entering the marsh to avoid undue disturbance to birds.

Use torches sparingly - since flashing lights not only spoil your vision but also alert the birds.

Keep your distance from other wildfowlers - for your own safety and enjoyment as well as your neighbours.

Once you have selected your stance do not wander, as this could spoil the sport for others.

Ensure that your dog is kept under control. Permit holders are encouraged to use a well-trained dog for retrieving birds. Recovery of injured birds is often only practicable with a dog - remember this point if you do not have one.

Familiarise yourself with details of tide time and height the fore-shore can be dangerous.

Field glasses, while not essential, add enormously to your enjoyment and aids species identification

WILDFOWLING CODE OF PRACTICE

Montrose Basin Local Nature Reserve is an important east-coast site for winter wildfowl populations. The intertidal area of the Reserve measures approximately 750 hectares and is largely square in shape. The Reserve is important nationally and internationally for six species of wildfowl or wader, all of which rely on the intertidal area for feeding and/or roosting. Apart from one, the Eider, all are winter visitors.

In terms of numbers the Pink-footed goose is the most important bird using the Reserve. Pink-footed Geese arrive in mid-September and remain until late April. Their numbers usually peak in late September or early October and high counts are around 80,000. Greylag geese are also found at Montrose Basin but in considerably smaller numbers. Highest counts usually coincide with spells of cold weather and are around 1000.

Wigeon are the most numerous duck found on the Basin but their numbers fluctuate widely over the season. The highest count recorded recently was 5,400, but their numbers are very changeable throughout the season. Other species found on the Basin are Mallard, Teal and Goldeneye. Later in the season Pintail, Shoveler and Tufted duck arrive on the reserve from northeast Europe.

RANGER SERVICE

Montrose Basin Local Nature Reserve is staffed by full-time Rangers. The Rangers provide a service for all the people who use this Reserve. They are there to give advice and information about the area, and it is hoped that they will also receive reports and information on anything of interest you see while you are there.

The Rangers may ask to see your permit as they are instructed to check that only permit holders shoot on the Basin.

Unfortunately, from time to time they also have to deal with offences under the Byelaws and the Wildlife and Countryside Act. A report on any such incident will be sent to Angusalive who will invite a written statement from the wildfowler concerned and then all reports and correspondence will be presented to the Wildfowling Sub Committee at their next meeting for their deliberation and action. There is a right of appeal to the Chief Executive of Angusalive.

Proved offences result in a permit ban for varying numbers of years and details of serious offences may be forwarded to BASC and also the local Wildfowling Organisations. For minor offences a system of endorsement is in operation. BASC, who are at liberty to take further action, may decide to do so on all of these proven offences

PLANNING

If this is your first wildfowling trip to Montrose Basin then visit the Reserve in daylight with someone who knows the area well (i.e. someone who can point out the boundaries, access routes and any inherent dangers).

If this is not possible then contact the Countryside Ranger at Montrose Basin, Tel 01674 676336 or **07771 956433** or Montrose and District Wildfowlers Association

THE WILDFOWLERS OBLIGATIONS

Always remember that your main quarry, geese and ducks, are largely migrants and that we have a responsibility to safeguard them and their environment.

Currently the Greylag population using the reserve is very low and their numbers increase marginally when the weather is exceptionally cold. **The present code of practice recommends a maximum bag of 5 pinkfeet and only 2 greylag per flight.** Wildfowlers are requested to exercise restraint and not to go out and hunt specifically for greylag.

Guns

- Follow the BASC Shotgun Safety Code
- Never leave your gun in an unlocked vehicle or anywhere it could be stolen.
- Shotguns must be carried in a gunslip outside the shooting area.
- Load and unload only when in position and always unload before you leave.
- Keep the safety catch on until you are ready to shoot.
- Never shoot where you cannot see clearly especially towards hedges or along the sea wall.
- Keep your gun properly maintained. Pay special attention to cleaning your gun - sand and salt water will quickly erode it.
- Always look through your gun barrels to make sure that they are clear. Carry a pull through; it's all too easy to get mud or snow in the muzzle of your gun.
- **Empty cartridges - if you find any cases please pick them up and take them away with you (even if they are not your own).** More cases are being left with the increased use of semi-autos, please take the time to look for your used cases at the end of a flight – even at night, as the public judges your sport by your behaviour.
- **In line with current legislation – lead shot is not to be used or carried by permit holders on Montrose Basin LNR.**

Non-Quarry Species to Look Out For

The two main species, which appear to cause problems for inexperienced wildfowlers on the Reserve, are **Red-Breasted Merganser** (*Mergus serator*) and **Barnacle geese** (*Branta leucopsis*). Mergansers are usually found flying low in the vicinity of the river, especially early in the season. Skeins of Barnacle geese are usually found in September, October and occasionally in November. Their call (best described as yapping) usually gives their presence away. They can be difficult to identify when there are individual Barnacles in with skeins of pink-footed geese.

Take care to recognise legal quarry and if in doubt **do not shoot!**

Do not disturb the locality or other sportsmen/women by making a noise, banging car doors when arriving early in the morning or leaving late at night. At Maryton Ditch ensure that your car is parked in the car park area, please do not park on the verge.

Never arrive late or depart early and so disturb the shooting of those who have taken the trouble to get into position in good time.

Dress sensibly - wear comfortable, inconspicuous, warm clothing and chest waders are recommended.

Keep quiet - sound can travel far on the Basin. Plan your movements on to the mud carefully and **avoid disturbing the birds unnecessarily**. This may improve your chances of bagging a goose.

Please be considerate of other wildfowlers. Keep your distance and do not sit in close proximity or in front of someone and spoil their flight. Once you have selected your spot do not wander as this could spoil it for others.

Retrieving: A dog is essential for shooting near water or picking up once it becomes dark, remember to keep it under control at all times. The recovery of dead and injured birds can only be accomplished with a well-trained dog. Send it to retrieve birds as they are shot, dogging the tide line will often recover lost birds. When shot or wounded birds land within the Sanctuary Area, you may retrieve them but only take your shotgun into the area if the bird needs to be dispatched by shooting.

Range: Distance can be very deceiving and the inexperienced wildfowler tends to fire at birds well beyond reasonable range. When you next have a pile of empty cases and nothing to show for them consider if you are a “bad shot or a “poor sportsman” or both. **Remember that choke or larger loads only marginally increases your range and is no excuse for attempting out of range shots.**

At the end of the season the ranger will produce a report, which will be available to those who have an interest in wildfowling on Montrose Basin LNR.

No private wildfowling guiding for commercial gain is to take place on Montrose Basin LNR.

The Countryside Ranger can be contacted at

Montrose Basin Visitor Centre

Rossie Braes

Montrose

Angus

DD10 9TA.

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