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Some Principles

Identifying your quarry is only one aspect of good shooting practice. There are many contributory factors, and understanding and applying them in the shooting field is very important, for several reasons. They will increase your success and enjoyment, keep you a responsible and considerate sportsman or sportswoman, and ensure any losses or wastage of shot birds and animals are kept to a minimum.

On the basis that you have the authority to shoot and are fulfilling all relevant legal requirements, then positively identifying your quarry is the first step. You should then take a shot only if you are sure:

- it is safe to do so
- the target is within your range
- your gun/cartridge combination is appropriate for the type and size of quarry you are shooting
- you are confident of hitting and killing the bird or animal
- you will be able to recover the shot bird or animal and, as far as possible, put it to good use.

BASC has codes of practice for all types of shooting. You are encouraged to obtain those which relate to your type(s) of shooting and be guided by the information and advice given. Do also encourage your shooting friends and associates to do the same. For the good of the sport, do not tolerate bad practice, either of your own or of others. Enjoy your shooting!

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THE QUARRY SPECIES

This guide includes descriptions of the most popular birds and animals which may be shot under current legislation within the United Kingdom.

Waterfowl These comprise ducks, geese and waders, large numbers of which are migratory and visit the British Isles during autumn and winter, returning in spring to their northern breeding grounds.

Ducks Sexes are normally dissimilar – the male is usually highly coloured, while the female has drab plumage throughout the year. The quarry species of ducks can usefully be divided into two groups according to the way the birds feed:

Dabbling ducks (Mallard, Teal, Wigeon, Pintail, Shoveler and Gadwall) feed mainly in shallow water, paddling or up-ending to collect food from just below the surface. Most dabblers are typically night-feeders. Their normal pattern is to use a safe roost site during the day – frequently open water – and flight to feeding areas at dusk, returning to their roost at dawn. This generalised pattern may be complicated by local weather and feeding conditions, and will vary from species to species.

Diving ducks (Tufted Duck, Pochard, Goldeneye and Scaup) typically use deeper, open waters for both feeding and roosting – one site often fulfils both functions. These ducks are highly adapted to swimming and diving, as a result they move less easily on land than do dabblers. They are also slower in taking to the wing, and have to patter along the surface to gain lift.

Geese This group includes Britain's largest quarry bird species. Geese are often referred to as being either 'grey' (Pink-footed, Greylag and White-fronted Goose) or 'black' geese (Canada Goose). Sexes are generally similar and indistinguishable in the field. Geese typically feed during the day and roost at night, although, as with ducks, tidal cycles and moonlight will alter patterns of movement, especially of those using tidal areas for feeding. Their call notes are highly characteristic.

Waders This diverse group includes five quarry species. Golden Plover, Common and Jack Snipe, and Curlew occur on coastal marshes, inland waterways and moors. The Woodcock is regarded as a forest wader in view of its affinity to woodland habitats. Sexes

of waders generally are indistinguishable in the field.

Coot and Moorhen These members of the Rail family are readily recognised and found in a wide range of marsh and open water habitats.

Gamebirds Gamebirds comprise two main groups according to habitat preference. They are largely ground-dwelling birds and tend to fly only when forced to do so. When flushed from cover they take off noisily and once airborne their flight is strong and direct, characterised by short bursts of whirring wing beats alternating with gliding on down-curved wings.

Lowland gamebirds (Pheasant, Grey Partridge* and Red-legged Partridge) are closely associated with lowland agricultural and woodland habitats, where they are commonly managed for shooting.

Upland gamebirds (Red and Black Grouse* and Ptarmigan) have quite distinct and different habitat requirements. Red Grouse are characteristic of open heather moor and Black Grouse are found typically in moorland and adjacent forest-edge habitats. Ptarmigan occur on higher rocky mountain tops.

Pest bird species Certain bird species, commonly regarded as pests, can be shot at any time of the year, by authorised persons, under the terms of general licences issued by approved statutory authorities. These include Woodpigeon and Collared Dove**, members of the crow family (Carrion Crow, Hooded Crow, Rook, Jackdaw, Magpie and Jay**), and Canada Goose in England.

Mammals This group comprises small mammals such as rabbits and hares, and six deer species, all of which are shot for sporting purposes and crop and tree protection.

Small mammals The four quarry species described comprise the closely-related herbivores: Rabbit, Brown Hare, Mountain (Blue) Hare and Grey Squirrel.

Large mammals These comprise Roe Deer, Fallow Deer, Muntjac Deer, Red Deer, Sika Deer and Chinese Water Deer. These animals can be shot but under differing legal and other circumstances that apply to the preceding bird and mammal species, not least the need for firearms certificates.

*Should only be shot in accordance with Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) guidance (www.gct.org.uk). **Protected in Northern Ireland.

INFORMATION PROVIDED

In the following species descriptions the common name of each species is followed by its scientific (Latin) name. Size refers to the average length of the adult from the tip of its bill or nose to the end of its tail, with ranges given for species with marked size variation.

Male birds are distinguished from females by the symbols ♂ and ♀, respectively.

Key to Shooting Seasons

The closed season is shaded and dates of opening and closing of each season are specified. All information refers to the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) unless otherwise specified.

Example: Season opens 1 September; closes 31 January inland and 20 February on foreshore.

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Licences

Game licences are no longer required in England and Wales, as from August 2007, but are still required in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

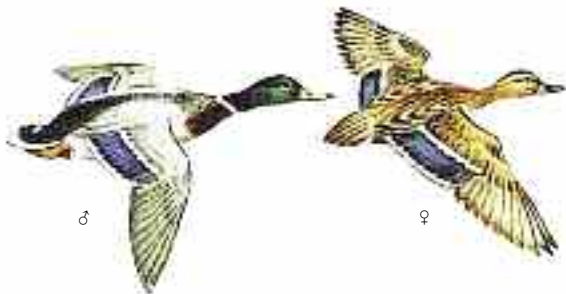
You do not need a game licence to shoot ducks or geese.

To shoot any of the pest bird species (see page 35) you do not need to be in possession of a general licence (there are several licences covering different species and circumstances), but must adhere to the terms and conditions of it. It might be prudent though, to carry a copy when you are shooting these species. For further details please contact BASC.

MALLARD

Anas platyrhynchos

Size: 50–65 cm (20–26 in)



Large heavily-built dabbling duck with rather long head and bill. Adult male characterised by glossy, dark-green head, white collar and purple-brown chest; rest of plumage mainly light grey, tail white with black central feathers. Female dull, mottled brown. Both sexes have purple speculum (metallic, coloured feathers on upper wing) bordered by white wing bars, particularly conspicuous in flight. Juvenile plumage similar to female.

Colouring of male resembles male Red-breasted Merganser (protected). Female similar to female Wigeon, Pintail, Shoveler and Gadwall, but both male and female Mallard are bigger and more heavily built.

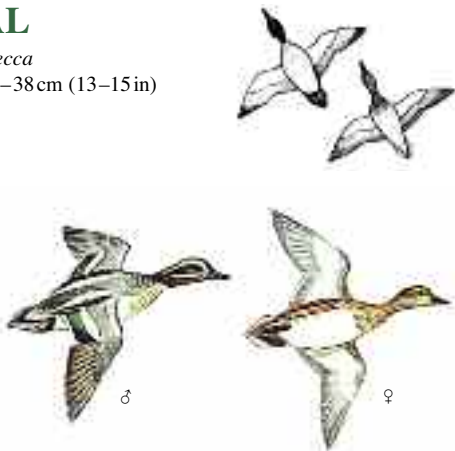
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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

TEAL

Anas crecca

Size: 34–38cm (13–15in)



Small compact dabbling duck with narrow pointed wings. Male characterised by conspicuous grey plumage contrasting with dark chestnut head, creamy-buff patch on each side of black under-tail feathers and prominent white stripe along shoulders; breast cream coloured, spotted with black; underside white. Female mottled brown with paler cheeks and whitish underside. Juvenile similar to female with spotted under parts.

Only species of similar size is Garganey (protected) – a summer visitor.

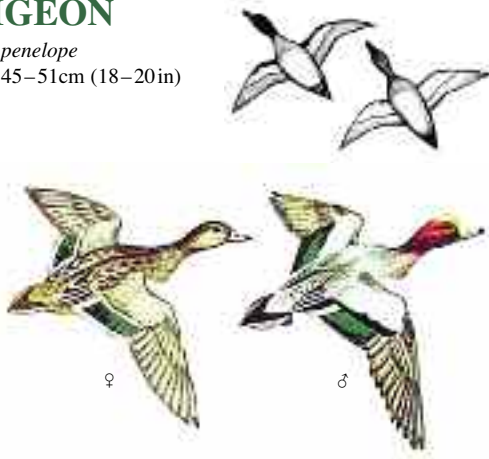
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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

WIGEON

Anas penelope

Size: 45–51cm (18–20in)



Medium-sized, short-necked, compact dabbling duck with small bill, pointed tail and narrow wings. Male is mainly grey with buff forehead and crown, chestnut head, chest pinkish-brown, white under parts; white shoulder patch readily seen in flight. Female duller; brown plumage tinged rufous, white underside, green speculum fringed with white wing bars. Short bill and dark, pointed tail useful identifying characters.

Female resembles other female dabbling ducks, especially Mallard, Pintail, Shoveler and Gadwall.

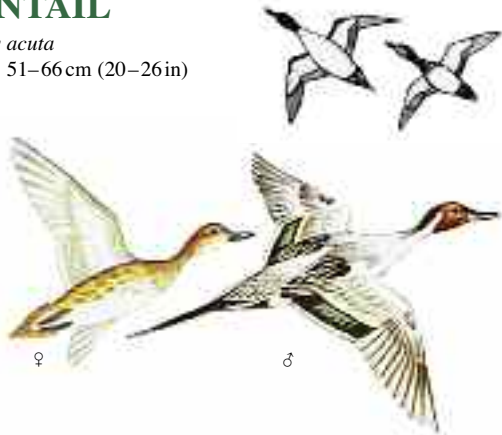
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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

PINTAIL

Anas acuta

Size: 51–66 cm (20–26 in)



Large slim dabbling duck with long neck and long narrow tail. Male has dark brown head, and back of neck, pure white breast, sides and front of neck, extending as white streak up side of head; under parts white; back and flanks light grey; rump black; wings grey and brown with green speculum conspicuous in flight. Female duller, grey-brown plumage and no discernible wing pattern in flight, except a light trailing edge to inner wing. Juvenile resembles female, but generally darker and more uniform.

Although male readily distinguished, female resembles other female dabbling ducks, particularly Mallard, Wigeon, Shoveler, and Gadwall.

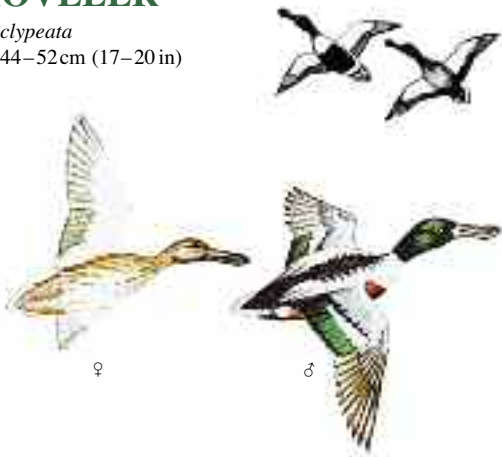
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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

SHOVELER

Anas clypeata

Size: 44–52 cm (17–20 in)



Medium-sized dabbling duck; both sexes characterised by very large, spoon-like bill, large flattened head and short neck. Male has striking dark-green head, chestnut flanks and belly contrasting with pure white chest, pale blue forewing, green speculum edged with white. Female mottled brown, with similar but duller blue forewing and green speculum. Juvenile a dull version of female.

Plumage of female similar to that of female Mallard, Wigeon, Pintail, and Gadwall.

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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

GADWALL

Anas strepera

Size: 46–56cm (18–22in)



Medium-sized dabbling duck of uniform appearance. Male uniform grey-brown with conspicuous black rump; white speculum forms bold white patch on trailing edge of wing, seen readily in flight; upper wing feathers chestnut and black. Female dull, mottled brown, with white belly and white wing patch as male. Juvenile much like female but well marked with streaks and spots on underside and darker upper parts.

Size close to that of Mallard; female plumage resembles female Mallard, Wigeon, Pintail and Shoveler.

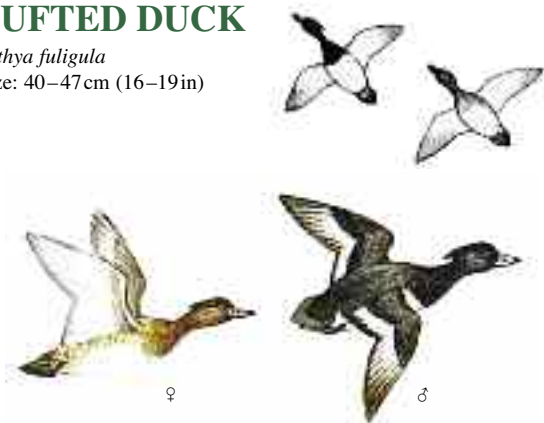
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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

TUFTED DUCK

Aythya fuligula

Size: 40–47 cm (16–19 in)



Small, compact diving duck. Adult male black with white flanks and belly; rounded head and drooping crest. Female rich dark brown head and back; flanks and underside paler; crest shorter than male. In flight both sexes appear black with white belly and a distinctive broad white wing bar. Juvenile resembles female.

Male resembles male Scaup (protected except in N. Ireland); female similar to female Pochard and Scaup.

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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

POCHARD

Aythya ferina

Size: 42–49cm (17–19in)



Medium-sized diving duck with short-necked ‘dumpy’ appearance on water, and long broad bill. Male has dark chestnut head and neck contrasting with pale grey back and flanks, black breast and tail. Female uniform dull brown, slightly paler around face. Both sexes characterised in flight by absence of white on wings; forewing dark grey. Juvenile resembles female.

Male readily distinguished; female resembles female Tufted Duck and Scaup (protected except in Northern Ireland).

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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

GOLDENEYE

Bucephala clangula

Size: 42–50 cm (17–20 in)



Medium-sized, stocky sea duck. Male has high-crowned, ‘triangular’ dark head and short bill, with greenish-purple gloss and circular white patch on cheek; neck and under parts white contrasting with black back and rump and grey tail; white inner wing readily seen in flight. Female smaller than male; has chocolate-brown head, pale blue-grey upper parts with white under parts, grey flanks and tail; wings dark with conspicuous white patch similar to male. Juvenile resembles female.

Both sexes readily distinguished from other diving ducks.

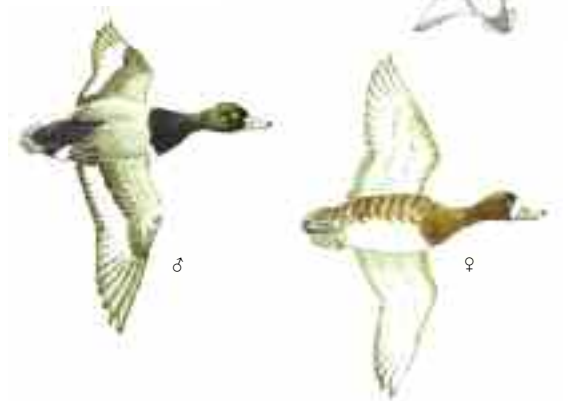
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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

SCAUP

Aythya marila

Size: 42–51 cm (16–20 in)



Medium-sized, compact, broad-bodied diving duck with large, wide bill and large, round head, lacking any crest; male has black head, breast, and stern, pale grey back, and white flanks and belly. Sexes dissimilar and seasonal differences in both. Juvenile closely resembles adult female.

Can be confused with Tufted Duck and male Pochard.

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Protected in England, Wales and Scotland.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

Anser brachyrhynchus

Size: 60–76 cm (24–30 in)



Medium-sized, pinkish-grey goose characterised by dark head and neck, contrasting with pale brownish body. Bill is small and short, dark-coloured with a pink band; feet and legs are pink. Back and wings grey; paler forewing noticeable in flight. Young birds darker and more uniform above, mottled appearance below compared with more uniform colouring of adults.

Can be confused with Greylag, White-fronted Goose (protected in Scotland), especially immature birds, and Bean Goose (protected).

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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

GREYLAG GOOSE

Anser anser

Size: 75–90 cm (30–35 in)



Large, big-headed, thick-necked, heavy grey goose. Head, neck and most of body uniform pale brownish-grey. Characterised by large size, heavy head and neck with stout bill, and very pale bluish-grey forewing – the latter especially distinctive in flight. Bill bright orange; legs flesh pink. Breast often spotted with black. Young birds similar to adults but generally unspotted, with greyer legs.

Can be confused with Pink-footed and White-fronted Goose (protected in Scotland) especially immature birds, and Bean Goose (protected), but all these are smaller and more slightly built by comparison.

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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

Anser albifrons

Size:

66–76 cm
(26–30 in)



Two races of the White-fronted Goose regularly occur in the British Isles: the European White-front (*Anser a. albifrons*) and the Greenland White-front (*A. a. flavirostris*). The two races are distinguishable in the field and have markedly different winter ranges, but they are both protected in Scotland. The following description relates to the European White-fronted Goose as there is no open season for White-fronted Goose in Scotland where the majority of the Greenland race occurs.

Medium-sized grey-brown goose characterised by white band at base of upper bill and black bars on belly. Amount of black on underside very variable. Young birds lack these characteristics, but are normally found amongst adults. Generally dark greyish-brown plumage, fairly long pink bill, orange legs.

Can be confused with Pink-footed Goose (especially immature birds), Greylag and Bean Goose (protected), but generally distinguished by small size, uniformly dark plumage.

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Protected in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

CANADA GOOSE

Branta canadensis

Size: 91–102 cm (36–40 in)



Very large grey-brown goose with long neck; black head and neck with distinctive white patch extending from chin across cheeks to behind eye. Body dark above; paler brown flanks and under parts; tail black with white inner band. Bill and legs black. Males and females similar. Young birds similar to adults, and generally indistinguishable in field.

Not easily confused with other species of goose. The largest European goose: much larger than Brent and Barnacle Goose (both protected), with characteristic black and white pattern on head and neck.

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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

Canada Geese are also included on certain general licences in England. See page 35.

GOLDEN PLOVER

Pluvialis apricaria

Size: 28 cm (11 in)



Medium-sized wader with short, straight bill and rounded head. Distinguished in all seasons by rich gold and black spotted plumage on back and wings, white underwing, and dark tail; no wing bar. In winter underside and face whitish, mottled gold-brown. Sexes similar. Juvenile plumage more uniform than adult, paler above and darker below.

Confusion most likely with Grey Plover (protected).



COMMON SNIPE

Gallinago gallinago

Size: 27 cm (10½ in)



Small brown wader with characteristic long, straight bill. Upper parts rufous brown and black with golden buff stripes on head and back; under parts white with dark brown markings and pale barred flank. White trailing edge to wing in flight. Juvenile resembles adult.

Characteristic zig-zag flight pattern when disturbed. Most easily confused with Jack Snipe (protected except in Northern Ireland).

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Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

JACK SNIPE

Lymnocyptes minimus

Size: 17–19cm (7in)



Small, relatively short-billed and large-headed snipe, with dark plumage, and rather slow, reluctant flight. Longitudinal back stripes obvious at close range; flanks mottled or softly streaked, not barred. Tail wedge-shaped. Almost silent except when displaying.

Sexes similar. Juvenile not separable in field.

Distinguished from Common Snipe by smaller size, and when flushed (often at close range) rises silently, flying a short distance and falling back to ground.

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Protected in England, Wales and Scotland.

CURLEW

Numenius arquata

Size: 50–60 cm (20–24 in)



Large, bulky wader, with remarkably long and curved bill, long legs, and rather uniform plumage. Plumage grey-brown, often looking dun at distance but intricately marked at close range. No striking flight pattern except for prominent white rump and lower back.

Sexes similar, though bill of male generally shorter. Juveniles separable only at close range.



Protected in England, Wales and Scotland.

WOODCOCK

Scolopax rusticola

Size: 34 cm (13½ in)



Medium-sized, dark, round-winged wader with long straight bill. Plumage richly marked with browns, buff and black on upper parts; under parts light brown with fine dark brown barring. In flight looks stout with short tail and long bill angled downwards. Sexes similar; young resemble adults.

Typically found in woodland by day but often flies out to open country at dusk.

Distinguished from Common Snipe by much larger size, heavy appearance and thick bill.

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Northern Ireland season as for England and Wales.

COOT

Fulica atra

Size: 38 cm (15 in)



Medium-sized bulky waterbird, characterised by overall very dark slate-grey body colour and black head in sharp contrast to white bill and frontal shield. On water distinguished by round back and apparently small head. Sexes similar; juvenile dark brown above, pale brown and whitish under parts.

Only likely to be confused with Moorhen.



Protected in Northern Ireland.

MOORHEN

Gallinula chloropus

Size: 33 cm (13 in)



Small-sized, dark waterbird. Striking white flank stripes and undertail feathers with dark brownish-black upper parts and slate-grey under parts. Bill and frontal shield bright red; yellow bill tip. Sexes similar; juveniles brownish with creamy flank stripes, white undertail feathers and greenish-brown bill.

Only likely to be confused with Coot.



Protected in Northern Ireland.

PHEASANT

Phasianus colchicus

Size: Male 76–89 cm (30–35 in)

Female 53–64 cm (21–25 in)



Large gamebird; both sexes characterised by long, pointed tail. Male colouring very variable, but typically iridescent copper body plumage with glossy dark green head, scarlet wattle and white neck ring. Female about two-thirds size of male, duller, mottled plumage tones varying from light buff to dark brown. Juvenile similar to adult female.

Large size and long tail are unmistakable characteristics; a wide range of colour variants occurs.



Northern Ireland open season is 1 October to 31 January.

GREY PARTRIDGE

Perdix perdix

Size: 30cm (12 in)



Small, rotund gamebird with short wings and short, rufous tail. Sexes essentially similar, although male slightly larger; both have characteristic orange-chestnut face, grey neck and under parts, and chestnut flanks; male has conspicuous dark chestnut horseshoe patch on lower breast, but this feature usually only poorly developed in females. Juvenile has orange or chestnut markings replaced by brown streaking.

Easily confused with slightly larger Red-legged Partridge; in particular, juveniles of the two species are very similar.

NB: As wild Grey Partridges are declining in number it is recommended that they are shot only where actively managed and their numbers remain above 20 birds per 100 ha. (Source: Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust.)*

**Should only be shot in accordance with Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) guidance (www.gct.org.uk).*



Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE

Alectoris rufa

Size: 33 cm (13 in)



Small, rotund gamebird with short wings and tail. Sexes have similar plumage. Adult has distinctive long white eye stripe, white throat and cheeks bordered black; chestnut, white and black-barred flanks; red bill and legs; rest of plumage olive brown, grey and buff. Juvenile lacks distinctive head pattern and barred flanks.

Easily confused with Grey Partridge, especially in flight. Quail (protected) is very much smaller, with duller plumage.



Northern Ireland open season is 1 September to 31 January.

RED GROUSE

Lagopus lagopus scoticus

Size: Male 36–39 cm (14–15½ in)

Female 33–36 cm (13–14 in)



Medium-sized grouse characterised by rotund appearance, short wings; body plumage uniform dark rufous-brown with darker wings and black rounded tail. Sexes similar, but female more barred and a duller rufous colour. Adults appear greyer in winter, with white underwing feathers and occasionally show white on flanks and belly. Juvenile generally like female.

May be confused with female Black Grouse (Greyhen); Ptarmigan distinguished by smaller size and white wings and other parts.



Northern Ireland open season is 12 August to 30 November.

BLACK GROUSE

Lyrurus tetrix (*Tetrao tetrix*)

Size: Male 53 cm (21 in)

Female 41–43 cm (16–17 in)



Medium-sized grouse. Male (Blackcock) plumage glossy blue-black with white wing bar and curled, lyre-shaped outer tail feathers. Female (Greyhen) warm brown above, greyer and paler under parts, mottled and barred with black throughout; slightly forked tail. Male in autumn plumage looks dingy, without characteristic lyre-shaped tail. Juveniles like small dull female.

Male unmistakable, but female may be confused with female Red Grouse or female Capercaillie (protected and much larger).

NB: As Black Grouse are declining in number it is recommended that they are shot only where actively managed and their numbers are above two or more males per 100 ha. (Source: Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust.)*

*Should only be shot in accordance with Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) guidance (www.gct.org.uk).

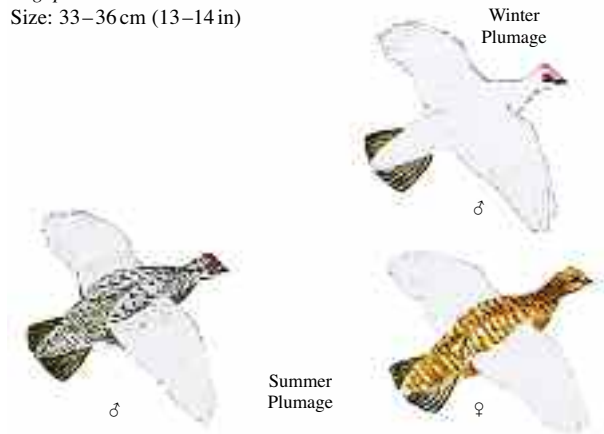


Does not occur in Northern Ireland.

PTARMIGAN

Lagopus mutus

Size: 33–36 cm (13–14 in)



Small grouse, both male and female characterised by pure white wings and under parts at all seasons. In winter both sexes pure white except for black tail. Male in autumn has greyish-brown mottled head, neck, flanks, upper breast and body, and black tail; female darker. Juvenile like autumn female, but with pale brown wings and tail same colour as back.

White wings and under body, and preferred habitat typically above 1000m, easily distinguish Ptarmigan from other British grouse species.



Does not occur in Northern Ireland.

Pest Bird Species

The following species – Woodpigeon, Collared Dove, Magpie, Crow, Rook, Jackdaw and Jay – are covered in this section.

Certain bird species, including those above, may be controlled under general licences issued by the statutory authorities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. See page 21 for Canada Geese.

The licences permit control throughout the year, by authorised persons, for defined purposes. The defined purposes include crop protection, conserving wild birds, and preservation of public health or air safety.

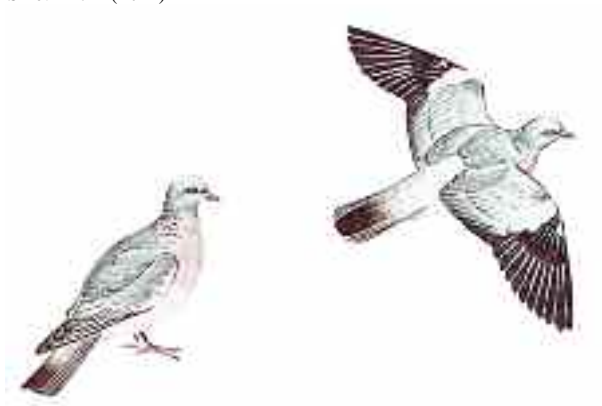
No individual has to apply for a licence but each should ensure that any control complies with the specific terms and conditions attached to each licence and that they are authorised persons for the land on which control takes place under each licence.

See www.basc.org.uk for more detail.

WOODPIGEON

Columba palumbus

Size: 41 cm (16 in)



Characterised by broad white band across wing seen readily in flight, and white patches on side of neck. Sexes similar. Body plumage basically blue-grey, head and neck bluer than rest, flanks and underside paler; purple-green gloss to side of neck. Young duller and lack white on wings and neck.

Confusion most likely with Stock Dove, Rock Dove and some domestic pigeons (all protected), but all are smaller and lack white wing and neck patches of Woodpigeon.

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Can be controlled for specific purposes, under the terms of the general licences, by authorised persons throughout the year.

COLLARED DOVE

Streptopelia decaocto

Size: 31–33cm (12–13in)



Noticeably pale dove with long, rather square-ended tail. Undertail boldly marked with almost black base and broad cream-white terminal band. At close range black half-collar on hindneck of adult obvious. Sexes similar; no seasonal variation. Juvenile separable.

Similar to Turtle Dove (protected), which has fan-shaped tail and is darker and spotted above.

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Can be controlled for specific purposes, under the terms of the general licences, by authorised persons throughout the year. Protected in Northern Ireland.

MAGPIE

Pica pica

Size: 46 cm (18 in)



Medium-sized corvid, characterised by distinctive black and white plumage and long wedge-shaped tail which comprises half total length. Belly, flanks and scapulars white; rest of plumage black with bluish or greenish gloss. Sexes alike; juvenile a duller version of adult.

Distinctive plumage makes confusion with other species unlikely.

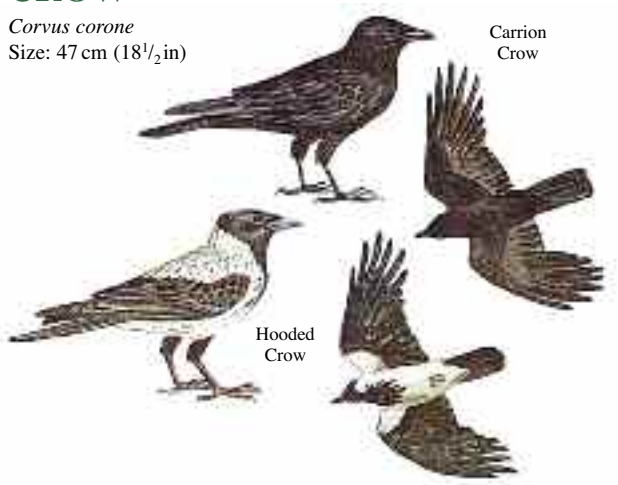


Can be controlled for specific purposes, under the terms of the general licences, by authorised persons throughout the year.

CROW

Corvus corone

Size: 47 cm (18½ in)



Two races of this large corvid occur in the British Isles. The Carrion Crow (*Corvus c. corone*) has uniform sleek black plumage with a greenish or blue-purple gloss. The Hooded Crow (*C. c. cornix*) is black except for grey back and under parts. Both have a heavy, dark-brown bill, and square tail.

Hooded Crow unmistakable, although flight silhouette like Carrion Crow. Carrion Crow may be confused with Rook; other black corvids are the much larger Raven (protected), and smaller Chough (protected).

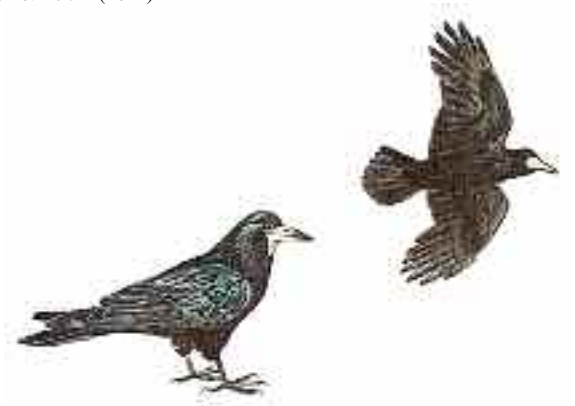
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Can be controlled for specific purposes, under the terms of the general licences, by authorised persons throughout the year.

ROOK

Corvus frugilegus

Size: 46 cm (18 in)



Large, black corvid with characteristic bare, white face patch. Loose plumage around flanks gives ‘shaggy trousers’ appearance. Feathers have iridescent blue-purple or greenish gloss; heavy bill is grey-black. Juvenile birds lack bare face patch, but characterised by loose flank feathers.

May be confused with Carrion Crow. Some resemblance to Raven (protected) and Chough (protected).

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Can be controlled for specific purposes, under the terms of the general licences, by authorised persons throughout the year.

JACKDAW

Corvus monedula

Size: 33 cm (13 in)



Small, dark corvid, characterised by grey nape and ear coverts; under parts dark grey, remaining plumage black. Distinctive pale grey eye, and short bill.

Most likely confusion is with Chough (protected), but this species has distinctive flight and red bill and legs. Carrion and Hooded Crow, Raven (protected) and Rook all much larger and heavier than Jackdaw. Often found mixed in with other crows.

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Can be controlled for specific purposes, under the terms of the general licences, by authorised persons throughout the year.

JAY

Garrulus glandarius

Size: 34 cm (13½ in)



Medium-sized corvid, characterised by white rump, black tail and white wing patch conspicuous in flight. Body pinkish-brown; bright blue and black-barred wing coverts; black and white erectile crown feathers; fairly long tail and short rounded wings.

Easily identified by plumage, and affinity to woodland habitats.

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Can be controlled for specific purposes, under the terms of the general licences, by authorised persons throughout the year. Protected in Northern Ireland.

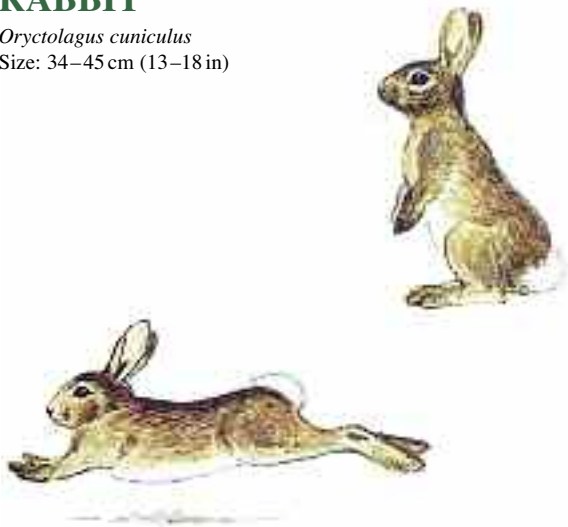
Mammals

The following section describes four mammals widely available for shooting, for sport or control purposes – Rabbit, Brown Hare, Mountain (Blue) Hare and Grey Squirrel. Then follow six species of deer which can also be pursued for the same purposes, with due authority and appropriate sporting firearms.

RABBIT

Oryctolagus cuniculus

Size: 34–45 cm (13–18 in)



Characteristic long ears and long hind legs; short, woolly tail which is white on underside contrasting with black or brown-grey above. Body colour normally light brown, but wide range of colour varieties occur, notably black, fawn, white and silver-grey.

Both Brown and Mountain Hare are larger, with longer ears and larger hind legs.



BROWN HARE

Lepus capensis

Size: 50–68 cm (20–27 in)



Medium-sized, characterised by very long ears and very long hind legs. Ears have black tips; body colour yellowish to reddish-brown in summer, becoming greyer in winter; upper tail is black.

Typically found on arable land.

Resembles Mountain Hare, also similar to, but much larger than, Rabbit.

NB: Hares are declining in some areas. Restraint in hare shooting is recommended where this is the case.

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Northern Ireland season is 12 August to 31 January.

MOUNTAIN (BLUE) HARE

Lepus timidus

Size: 45–55 cm (17½–21½ in)



Medium-sized, characterised by long black-tipped ears and very long hind legs; tail lacks any black colouring. Body colour grey-brown to reddish-brown in summer; in winter largely white with black ear tips, although not all individuals change colour; during moult mixtures of white and grey-brown (or bluish-brown) occur.

Mountain Hare (except in winter coat) closely resembles Brown Hare, is similar to the much smaller Rabbit, and typically found in upland areas.

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Does not occur in Northern Ireland.

GREY SQUIRREL

Sciurus carolinensis

Size: 45–55 cm (17½–21½ in)



Medium-sized rodent. Characterised by long bushy tail (nearly half total length); grey fur with some reddish and yellow tinges on back and flanks. Under parts white; gains silver-grey winter coat in autumn and brownish summer coat in spring.

Resembles Red Squirrel (protected), although the latter is smaller, more lightly built, has noticeable ear tufts and is found mainly in coniferous woodland.

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ROE DEER

Capreolus capreolus



Small graceful deer, widely distributed within Great Britain. Summer coat deep foxy-red, turning to grey-brown in late autumn/winter. Rump patch very prominent in winter coat. Females have downward pointing tuft of hair. Neither sex has visible tail.

Distinguished from other deer by two white spots under nose. Mature males typically carry antlers with three tines each side (which are grown during winter).

| <i>Open Season:</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Eng/Wales | 01 Apr – 31 Oct | 01 Nov – 31 Mar |
| Scotland | 01 Apr – 20 Oct | 21 Oct – 31 Mar |

FALLOW DEER

Dama dama



Widest variation in coat colour of any deer, from white to black. Four distinct colours:

Common: deep chestnut with white spots, long tail with broad black band and white rump fringed in black.

Menil: Lighter than Common, creamier brown, bordered by brown on rump, more spots than Common.

Black (Melanistic): Black with no white anywhere. Contrasting paler shading.

White: Ranges from cream in younger animals to white as they mature.

The only species of deer with palmated antlers. Males have conspicuous 'Adam's Apple' and penile sheath. Fallow have the longest tail of all deer species.

| <i>Open Season:</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Eng/Wales | 01 Aug – 30 Apr | 01 Nov – 31 Mar |
| Scotland | 01 Aug – 30 Apr | 21 Oct – 15 Feb |
| N. Ireland | 01 Aug – 30 Apr | 01 Nov – 28/29 Feb |

MUNTJAC DEER

Muntiacus reevesi



Small stocky deer with unusual gait and head-down posture on the move. Coat chestnut-brown in summer with paler chin and under parts. Winter coat grey-brown with paler under parts. Males grow their antlers from long pedicles on skull, producing pronounced 'v' shape. Mature males have upper canine teeth up to 3cms long, which can be visible. Flat beaver-like tail constantly flicked upwards whilst on the move exposing white underside. Both sexes have large facial glands below eyes for scent marking.

Open season: No statutory close season anywhere in Great Britain.

RED DEER

Cervus elaphus



Largest land mammal in UK but considerable variations in size: lowland/woodland deer very much larger and heavier than those on open hills. Summer coat reddish-brown, turning darker brown-grey in winter. Lighter rump patch extends on to back above short tail. Mature stag antlers typically long and multi-tined with prominent mane by late autumn.

| <i>Open Season:</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Eng/Wales | 01 Aug – 30 Apr | 01 Nov – 31 Mar |
| Scotland | 01 Jul – 20 Oct | 21 Oct – 15 Feb |
| N. Ireland | 01 Aug – 30 Apr | 01 Nov – 28/29 Feb |

SIKA DEER

Cervus nippon



Intermediate-sized deer. Summer coat chestnut with white spots. Rump area white, banded in black and may have black line down tail. Winter coat turns lighter grey with paler under parts. Stags usually look darker than hinds and typically grow eight-tined head when mature. In autumn stags have mane. Prominent white gland on rear lower leg and a 'u' shaped area on forehead distinguishes Sika from other deer.

| <i>Open Season:</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Eng/Wales | 01 Aug – 30 Apr | 01 Nov – 31 Mar |
| Scotland | 01 Jul – 20 Oct | 21 Oct – 15 Feb |
| N. Ireland | 01 Aug – 30 Apr | 01 Nov – 28/29 Feb |