

BRITISH GAME ALLIANCE SHOOT STANDARDS EXPLANATORY NOTE

The purpose of the BGA is to promote the consumption of game. The BGA Standards cover the marketing of game and ethical issues which relate to consumer confidence. All the BGA standards are **absolute requirements** for BGA members and **must be adhered to at all times**.

[The Code of Good Shooting Practice](#) sets out the framework that enables shoot managers, guns, gamekeepers and their employees to deliver sustainable shooting, paying attention to management of habitat and avoiding nuisance to others. All BGA members should abide by it and make it available to guns and all involved in their shoots.

*All Member Shoots of the British Game Alliance (BGA) agree to abide by the following Standards and to be subject to the BGA's Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure that governs them. Adherence to these Standards will be audited on a regular basis, any substantive complaints raised will engender investigation and possible inspection.

Where necessary the following notes clarify what is required in order to comply with each point, and in some cases highlights how the Standards go beyond the legal requirements.

Where appropriate these notes also make recommendations as to how a Member Shoot can demonstrate compliance with the Standards. Please note that these recommendations are not exhaustive, and failure to follow these recommendations does not necessarily represent a breach of the Standards*

1. It is essential that shoots keep records of the following; administered medication, game sales, game supplier, environmental stewardship, feed receipts etc. (Recordkeeping books will be provided for all members to help them going forward on completion of signing their shoot up to the GBA standard).

2. Shoot operators must ensure the land is appropriately managed to continually benefit wildlife and its environment.

The BGA expects all Member Shoots to secure the environmental benefits associated with good shoot management. A Member Shoot must be able to demonstrate that any minor negative impact on the environment or on wildlife is being mitigated by habitat improvements elsewhere on the Shoot. Major negative effects on the environment or wildlife will be considered a breach of this Standard.

3. Birds released on to your shoot must have been reared to Government game rearing standards, or equivalent if sourced from abroad.

If a Member Shoot rears its own game, it must do so in compliance with the [Code of Practice for the Welfare of Gamebirds Reared for Sporting Purposes](#) relevant to the Member Shoot's country.

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If the Member Shoot buys eggs, chicks or poults, it must satisfy itself that the welfare of the laying stock and the birds to be released was in line with the [Code of Practice for the Welfare of Gamebirds Reared for Sporting Purposes](#) relevant to the Member Shoot's country.

If a Member Shoot is buying eggs, chicks or poults, correspondence between the game farmer and the Member Shoot concerning the need for all birds or eggs to have been produced in line with the appropriate Code would constitute evidence of compliance with this Standard.

4. Stocking densities must not compromise animal welfare or have a negative impact on the surrounding biodiversity. Shoots should refer to the [GWCT's releasing guidelines](#).

Birds must not display symptoms of over-crowding in release pens, such as excess feather-pecking or frequent outbreaks of density-dependent disease. Measures must be taken to mitigate any environmental impact of releasing game such as silt runoff, pollution and damage to ground flora. Mitigation measures could include: siting of pens away from sensitive ground flora; the use of buffer zones between pens, watercourses and slopes prone to erosion; and ensuring the pen is light and sunny, possibly through selective felling.

Adherence to this Standard can be assured by following the GWCT's releasing guidelines, which state that in most situations shoots should avoid releasing more than 1,000 pheasants per hectare of pen, and more than 700 per hectare of pen in ancient semi-natural woodland.

5. Release pens must be checked daily ensuring adequate water, food, and habitat is available.

This Standard applies while any individual release pen is being used by a significant number of released birds.

6. Ducks must be released onto open water in numbers appropriate to the carrying capacity of the wetland habitat and encouraged to become wild.

Released ducks must not be causing damage to the wetland habitat onto which they are released. Ducks must not be fed in an enclosure of any sort.

7. Antibiotics must not be used prophylactically.

Antibiotics must not be used routinely when game birds are released. Antibiotics must only be administered when prescribed by a veterinarian for the treatment of a specifically diagnosed condition in the relevant flock of gamebirds, and then only in strict accordance with the veterinarian's prescription. Appropriate wormers are not classified as an antibiotic.

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8. Un-prescribed medications must not be used.

If a medication requires a prescription, then it must not be used without one nor is it to be used for anything other than the exact purpose and the exact birds for which it was prescribed.

9. Stated withdrawal periods must be adhered to for all medication before game meat enters the food chain.

10. Birds must not be released to replenish shot stock. Birds must not be shot within four weeks of being released and must be mature and fully adapted to the wild.

Birds must be released at least four weeks before the area into which they are being released is to be shot or driven, and birds must not be released into areas in which birds had already been shot that season. Where suitable all reared game should be released before the beginning of the season.

11. Adequate food and water must be provided throughout the season and thereafter until appropriate levels of natural food are available.

Feed provided to released game also increases the number of wild non-game species on an estate, which will go hungry if food is withdrawn at the end of the shooting season. As such, Member Shoots must continue to supply feed to released game throughout the shooting season, and after the shooting season until such time as sufficient wild food is available to sustain the resident wild bird population. Local weather conditions will dictate when it is appropriate to stop supplementary feeding wild birds.

12. All game must have an agreed market before release and before shoot days are planned, taking into account the number of birds you intend to shoot and the subsequent table weight of the fully-grown birds you released.

Game birds must not be released unless a market has been confirmed for every bird that may be shot. To demonstrate compliance with this Standard, a Member Shoot should be able to document a planning process that considers the number of shoot days planned, the number of birds to be shot on each day, the confirmation of where this shot game will be sold or taken away to be eaten and the anticipated returns percentage for the estate. These considerations should be used to calculate the number of birds to be released. If additional shoot days are planned after these calculations, then a market for the birds to be shot on these additional days must be confirmed before the day is marketed, sold or otherwise undertaken.

13. Adequate picking-up must be available to ensure all birds are quickly accounted for and wounded birds are dispatched accordingly.

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14. Shoot owners must take responsibility for ensuring guns use non-lead ammunition where legally required.

Member Shoots can demonstrate compliance with this Standard by providing their guests with non-lead ammunition where required. All Member Shoots must inform all guns prior and during the day about the need to use of non-lead ammunition where legally required.

15. All shot game must be regarded as food and treated in accordance with the [‘Guide To Good Game Handling’](#).

16. Game must be placed into an ambient temperature of 4C or below within a reasonable timeframe and where possible within 2 hours of being shot.

Member Shoots must demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable measures to cool game to 4C as rapidly as possible. The definition of "reasonable" will differ depending on the location, circumstances and resources of each Member, but failing to invest in appropriate resources is not an acceptable reason to extend the time from shooting to cooling.

17. Shoots must offer and where possible facilitate guns to take home game or game products.

All Member Shoots must make game available to guns, either in feather, oven-ready or in processed form. All Member Shoots are encouraged to offer game as part of any meals partaken during the shoot day, and to offer as wide a variety of game products as possible to guests at the end of the day.

18. Game that is unfit for consumption along with processed game carcasses must be disposed of appropriately.

Game that has been "breasted out" or otherwise processed must be disposed of in accordance with the [Animal By-Product Regulations](#), which in most circumstances will require incineration or rendering at an approved site.

19. Where a shoot or its employees are successfully prosecuted for wildlife crimes, the shoot will be expelled from the BGA and their membership revoked.

As per the BGA Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures, any Member Shoot that is either itself successfully prosecuted for a wildlife crime, or one of its employees is successfully prosecuted for a wildlife crime, shall be deemed to have committed a breach of the Standards and will be subject to expulsion from the BGA and its activities. Depending on the circumstances of the conviction, the BGA may rule that the Member Shoot may be able to apply for membership after a pre-determined amount of time if the Member Shoot is able to demonstrate that is now complying with this Standard.

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20. Individuals with an unspent conviction for wildlife crimes must not be employed in any capacity directly relating to the management of the shoot.

Unspent convictions are those records that have not yet reached a set period as defined by the [Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#) and will appear on a [Basic Criminal Record Check](#). The length of time it takes a conviction to become "spent" depends on the sentence. This information can be provided by Disclosure Scotland or the Disclosure and Barring Service as appropriate.

21. Shoots must adhere to the law on trapping and snaring and adhere to the relevant industry Codes or statutory regulations in their country.

Member shoots must adhere to the [Code of best practice on the use of snares for fox control in England](#) or the [Welsh Code of best practice on the use of snares in fox control](#) as appropriate. In Scotland Member Shoots must ensure that anyone operating snares is accredited and has an operator ID number, and is adhering to the Scottish statutory regulations.

22. Shoots must abide by [The Blanket Bog Land Management Guidance](#) and [The Heather & Grass Burning Code for England](#), similarly the Code for Wales those in Scotland must abide by the [Muirburn Code](#) and all of their associated regulations.