

Quarry Species & Shooting Seasons

There are a number of game birds, waterfowl (ducks, geese and waders) and other bird species, as well as mammals, which can be shot legally. For many there is a close season when it is illegal to shoot them, and this helps to ensure that they are able to breed successfully and move between breeding and wintering grounds. The bird quarry species and their open seasons in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands are shown below.

Game bird and Waterfowl Open Seasons (dates inclusive)

Species	England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Isle of Man
Pheasant	Oct 1 – Feb 1	Oct 1 – Feb 1	Oct 1 – Jan 31	Oct 1 – Jan 31
Grey Partridge	Sep 1 – Feb 1	Sep 1 – Feb 1	Sep 1- Jan 31	Protected (ban in force)
Red-legged Partridge	Sep 1 – Feb 1	Sep 1 – Feb 1	Sep 1- Jan 31	Sep 13 – Jan 31
Red Grouse	Aug 12 – Dec 10	Aug 12 – Dec 10	Aug 12 – Nov 30	Aug 25 – Oct 31 *
Black Grouse	Aug 20 – Dec 10 (Somerset, Devon and New Forest: Sep 1 – Dec 10)	Aug 20 – Dec 10	—	—
Ptarmigan	—	Aug 12 – Dec 10	—	—
Duck & Goose inland	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Sep 1 – Jan 31 – Ducks July 1 – Mar 31 – Geese**
Duck & Goose below HWM (see below)	Sep 1 – Feb 20	Sep 1 – Feb 20	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Sep 1 – Jan 31- Ducks Jul 1 – Mar 31 – Geese **

Common Snipe	Aug 12 – Jan 31	Aug 12 – Jan 31	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Sep 1 – Jan 31
Jack Snipe	Protected	Protected	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Protected
Woodcock	Oct 1 – Jan 31	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Oct 1 – Jan 31	Oct 1 – Jan 31
Golden Plover	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Protected
Coot/Moorhen	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Protected	Protected

MHW-Mean high water

England, Wales and Scotland

Any area below high-water mark of ordinary spring tides.

Northern Ireland: The limit of where the living seaweed is attached to the stones of the foreshore.

Isle of Man: * Currently a voluntary ban on shooting red grouse is in place. ** Geese can only be shot under general licence under the Wildlife Act 1990. See the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) website for terms and conditions of general licences <http://www.gov.im/categories/the-environment-and-greener-living/wildlife/>

Shooting in the Channel Islands

Guernsey

1. The close season for game (rabbit only) runs from Mar 1 until the Sep 30 inclusive. Owners/occupiers of land can kill game on their land at any time of year. Additionally, any person who has, in their possession, written permission from the owner/occupier of land may hunt or kill rabbits on that land at any time of year (Island of Guernsey, Ordinance of the States XXXII 1994 – The Protection of Game Ordinance 1994).
2. The open season for birds (pheasant, partridge, snipe, woodcock and collared dove) runs from Oct 1 to Jan 31.
3. Woodpigeon may be taken at any time under The Protection of Wild Birds Ordinance 1949.

Jersey

1. In Jersey there are no game seasons and game birds can only be shot under licence for the protection of agriculture. All wild birds are protected with the exception of carrion crow, magpie, feral pigeon and woodpigeon which may be shot under licence. However the Minister for Planning and Environment may license any person to do anything which would otherwise constitute an offence against wildlife (Conservation of Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2000 Article 16(1) as amended).

2. In Jersey it is illegal to release or allow to escape into the wild any pheasant, red-legged partridge or grey partridge except under licence (Conservation of Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2000 Article 15(1) (b) and (3).

Waterfowl Species which can be shot

(For information on the use of non-lead shot for waterfowl please see specific technical information from BASC [Research Team](#) or [Country Offices](#))

England, Wales & Scotland

The species that can be shot during their open season are (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981):

Duck	Gadwall	Goldeneye	Mallard	Pintail
	Pochard	Shoveler	Teal	Tufted duck
	Wigeon			
Goose	Canada*	Greylag	Pink-footed	White-fronted**(England and Wales only)
Wader	Golden plover	Common snipe	Woodcock	
Other	Coot	Moorhen		

*Canada geese

This species can be shot throughout the year (i.e. during the close season) in **England, Wales and Scotland only** under the terms and conditions of specific general licences. [Click here to find out more.](#)

**White-fronted geese

There are two races: European white-fronted goose, which can be shot throughout England and Wales, and the Greenland white-fronted goose, wintering mainly on the west coast of Wales. The latter is part of a declining population which is expected shortly to receive full statutory protection but, in the meantime, continues to be subject to a voluntary no-shooting moratorium by BASC-affiliated clubs.

Northern Ireland

The species that can be shot during their open season (Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985) are:

Duck	Gadwall	Goldeneye	Mallard	Pintail
	Pochard	Ruddy Duck	Scaup	Shoveler
	Teal	Tufted Duck	Wigeon	
Goose	Canada	Greylag	Pink-footed	
Wader	Common snipe	Jack snipe	Golden plover	Woodcock

Isle of Man

The following species can be shot during the open season (Wildlife Act 1990)

Duck	Mallard	Teal	Wigeon
Goose *	Canada	Greylag	
Wader	Common snipe	Woodcock	

* The geese listed can only be shot during the open season as specified on the general licence. See the DAFF website for the terms and conditions of general licences <http://www.gov.im/categories/the-environment-and-greener-living/wildlife/>

Guernsey

The shooting of ducks and geese is not permitted.

Jersey

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Ground Game Open Seasons (dates inclusive)

Species	England & Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Isle of Man
Brown Hare	Jan 1 – Dec 31 moorland & unenclosed land is subject to a close	Open season Oct 1 – Jan 31	Aug 12 – Jan 31*	Brown or common hare Oct 1 – Jan 31

	season (see below)			
Mountain Hare		Open season Aug 1 – Feb 28/29		
Rabbit	Jan 1 – Dec 31 moorland & unenclosed land is subject to a close season (see below)	Jan 1 – Dec 31 moorland & unenclosed land is subject to a close season (see below)	Rabbit is classed as a pest and therefore not subject to a close season	No close season

* The Special Protection Order previously issued to give **Irish hare** additional protection is no longer in place and therefore the Irish Hare is now subject to an open season as above.

Moorland and unenclosed land does not include arable land or detached portions of land less than 25 acres which adjoins arable land.

In **England** and **Wales** occupiers or authorised persons may only take and kill ground game on moorland or unenclosed land between 1 September and 31 March inclusive. Firearms may only be used for such purposes between 11 December and 31 March (Ground Game Act 1880 Section 1 (3) and Ground Game (Amendment) Act 1906 Section 2)

In **Scotland**, the occupier of the land or persons authorised by him may kill rabbit throughout the year on moorland and unenclosed land (not being arable) by all legal means other than by shooting, and by means of firearms over the period from 1 July to 31 March inclusive (Section 1 (3) of the Ground Game Act 1880 as modified by the Agriculture (Scotland) Act 1948). Hares are subject to a close season (Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011) (see above).

Game Licences

Game licences to kill or take game are not required in **England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland**. However, in **Scotland**, a venison dealer's licence is still required for those wishing to deal in venison although deer stalkers can sell their venison direct to a venison dealer without the need for a licence.

On the **Isle of Man** a game licence is required in order to shoot game and is available from the Treasury Office. Game is defined as pheasant, partridge, grouse or moor game and hare (brown or common). A game dealer's licence is also required for those wishing to deal in game.

There is no requirement for a game licence on **Guernsey** but you must hold an appropriate firearm or shotgun certificate.

In **Jersey** there are no game seasons and therefore a game licence is not required.

Sunday and Christmas Day Shooting

England and Wales

No game may be killed or taken in any county on Sunday or Christmas Day. Game for the purposes of this section means pheasant, partridge, red grouse, black grouse and hare.

Orders prohibiting the shooting of wildfowl on Sundays made under sections 2 and 13 of the Protection of Birds Act 1954 still in existence are in the following counties (or parts of counties in existence before the 1974 local authority re-organisation): Anglesey, Brecknock, Caernarvon, Carmarthen, Cardigan, Cornwall, Denbigh, Devon, Doncaster, Glamorgan, Great Yarmouth County Borough, Isle of Ely, Leeds County Borough, Merioneth, Norfolk, Pembroke, Somerset, North and West Ridings of Yorkshire.

Scotland

There are no statutory restrictions on the killing of game on Sunday or Christmas Day but it is not customary to do so. The wildfowl species listed may not be shot on Sunday or Christmas Day.

Northern Ireland

It is an offence to kill any wild bird, game bird or hare on a Sunday. Although there is no restriction on killing any wild bird, game bird or hare on Christmas Day, provided it does not fall on a Sunday, it is not customary to do so. There is no prohibition on shooting deer on any day during the open season.

Isle of Man

The killing or taking of game is not permitted on Sunday. There are no restrictions on shooting on Christmas Day unless it falls on a Sunday.

Guernsey

Shooting is not permitted on Sunday or Christmas Day.

Jersey

The use of a firearm to kill any wild bird or animal is not permitted on Sunday, Good Friday and Christmas Day unless acting under and in accordance with the terms or conditions of a licence.

Night Shooting

Night is defined as between one hour after sunset until one hour before sunrise (except Jersey – see below).

England, Wales and Scotland

The shooting of game at night is not permitted. Ground game (rabbit and hare – which is subject to a close season in Scotland) may be shot at night by an occupier of land or one other person authorised by the occupier, with the permission of the holder of the shooting rights under Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 7, unless the occupier has the exclusive rights.

Northern Ireland

Night shooting of any wild bird, game bird, hare or deer is prohibited. Foxes and rabbits may be shot (lamped) at night.

Isle of Man

Night shooting of rabbits is permitted by the use of suppressed firearms or sound moderated shot guns, lamps and dogs. Night shooting of any game, bird or vermin is not permitted under the Game Act 1927.

Guernsey

Night shooting is not permitted.

Jersey

The use of a firearm to kill any wild bird or animal is not permitted between sunset and sunrise on any day unless acting under and in accordance with the terms or conditions of a licence.