

Montrose Basin Local Nature Reserve

Wildfowling Guidelines & Code of Practice



The following must be adhered to by all wildfowlers at Montrose Basin Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

SHOOTING BY PERMIT ONLY

All wildfowlers must obtain a permit from Angus Council. Visitor and Seasonal Permits are available via Angus Council website.

WILDFOWLERS ACCESS

All wildfowlers must use one of the three access points shown on the Wildfowling Permit.

WHERE TO SHOOT AND WHEN

The wildfowling area over which you may shoot is clearly shown on the permit. Two marker posts on the shore denote the boundary between the shooting and sanctuary areas. Should you intend fowling at the basin for the first time, you are advised to inspect the boundaries and access routes in daylight.

WILDFOWLING DAILY SHOOTING PERIODS

Shooting times for each season are provided when purchasing permits. The shooting times are determined as follows:

Shooting period:

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

Reasonable time is also allowed outside the shooting period 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 RECORD

You should complete an entry for each flight which you attend, including blank flights where no birds are shot. Permit returns should be completed within 21 days of the last day of shooting for Visiting wildfowlers and within 21 days of the end of the wildfowling season for Seasonal and Club permit holders.

The information supplied in your bag return is our main indication of the extent to which the wildfowling area is being used, and of the success of wildfowlers. This data illustrates the sustainability of wildfowling at the basin.

People found to be falsifying returns will not be issued permits in the future.

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

QUARRY - 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 LNR		
Geese	Ducks	Waders
01 Sept - 20 Feb	01 Sept- 20 Feb	01 Sept- 31 Jan
Pink-footed Greylag Canada	Wigeon Gadwall Teal Mallard Pintail Shoveler Pochard Tufted Duck Goldeneye	Golden Plover Snipe Woodcock
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– A maximum of 5 Pink-footed geese and 2 Greylag geese are permitted to be shot per flight.– Wildfowlers are not permitted to shoot "Pest Species", game (except above species), rabbit, or hare.– During February, permit holders are only permitted to shoot below the mean high-water mark of ordinary spring tides.		

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 nationally and internationally important for six species of wildfowl or wader; all of which rely on the intertidal area for feeding and/or roosting.

The Pink-footed goose is the most numerous bird using the reserve. Pink-footed Geese arrive in early/mid-September and remain until late April. Their numbers now usually peak in late-September to mid-October depending on migration patterns. The highest recorded count on the reserve was 90,000 pink-feet in October 2016. Greylag geese are also found at Montrose Basin but in considerably smaller numbers, and high counts usually coincide with spells of cold weather.

Wigeon are the most numerous duck found on the Basin. Their numbers fluctuate widely over the season, though typically peak in November. 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.

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 a height restriction barrier of 2.2m at the Old Mill Car Park.

PLANNING YOUR VISIT

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).

WARDENING SERVICE

The Wildfowling Warden(s) 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 wardens must also deal with offences related to wildfowling. A report on any incident will be sent to Angus Council who will invite a written statement from the wildfowler concerned before all reports and correspondence are presented to the Wildfowling Sub Committee at their next meeting for deliberation and action. There is a right of appeal to the Chief Executive of Angus Council.

Proved offences result in a permit ban for varying numbers of years. 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.

THE WILDFOWLER'S 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 gun slip 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 (which should only be a 3-shot semi-auto); 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 serrator*) 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!

Disturbance: 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.

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 your dog 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.**

Dress sensibly: Wear comfortable, inconspicuous, warm clothing; chest waders are recommended.

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

For any more information relating to wildfowling please contact:
wildfowling@angus.gov.uk

MONTROSE BASIN LNR

Montrose Basin Local Nature Reserve is supported by a Ranger from the Scottish Wildlife Trust who provides a service for all the people who use this Reserve. They are able to give advice and information about the reserve, and it is hoped that they will also receive reports and information on anything of interest you see while you are there.

For non-wildfowling related issues or observations, the Scottish Wildlife Trust Angus Ranger can be contacted at:

Montrose Basin Visitor Centre | Rossie Braes | Montrose | Angus | DD10 9TA.
T: 01674 676336