



SACS
UK-WIDE SHOOTING
& COUNTRY SPORTS
ADVOCACY



Statement on lockdown, shooting and shoot management in Scotland

Shooting, rural organisations and charities are reminding the shooting community of the importance of following the law and government guidance following the announcement by The First Minister that mainland Scotland and islands including Arran, Bute, Gigha and Skye and are in lockdown as of 5th January 2021.

The full list of Islands remaining in Level 3 can be found on the Scottish Government website [https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/Scottish Government Stay at Home order](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/Scottish%20Government%20Stay%20at%20Home%20order):

The purpose of the lockdown restrictions is to ensure that people stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/>

Everyone considering shooting during the Covid-19 pandemic should also consider the impact of their actions. We all have a responsibility to comply with Government regulations and guidance, and failure to do so may place you at risk of a fine and jeopardise your shotgun, firearm and air weapon certificates.

There are a limited number of permitted reasons to leave your home including caring, outdoor exercise and to go to work, but only if that work cannot be done from home.

Sport and exercise are permitted reasons to travel in a limited local area, which must be no more than 5 miles from the boundary of your local authority area. Any such travel must start and finish at the same place. Shooting and other country sports are permitted, so long as:

- **No more than two people from two separate households or members of an individual household or extended household participate;**
- **The activity takes place within the local authority area in which you reside, or within five miles of your local authority area boundary.**

Shooting-related essential work is permitted in Scotland you may travel outside your local area to carry out that essential work. This includes essential bird and mammal control to protect crops or livestock: such as the shooting and trapping of bird species under general licence; the management of rodents and rabbits; and control of foxes.

All those undertaking shooting related essential work should discuss their particular circumstances with their employer, or other person under whose direction they are working, and are advised to carry an appropriate supporting letter. Advice regarding deer or other essential wildlife management is available from bodies representing those interests.

Gamekeeping activities such as management of game birds, conducting predator control and undertaking habitat management are also permitted.

These are unprecedented times with harsh economic implications for sporting enterprises. With national lockdown in Scotland likely to continue beyond the end of the game shooting season, a different approach to the final weeks of this season will be required:

- Shoots may decide to continue to harvest game to meet the requirements of game dealers and other outlets that need birds to supply into the food chain, but must only do so by shooting involving no more than a maximum of two people from two different households or members of an individual household or extended household, or catching up. Driven or any form of organised or rough shooting involving more than two people should not go ahead. Shoots should regularly liaise with their game dealer or other outlet to ensure supply chains are met and that their actions comply with legal requirements including relevant Covid regulations.
- Shoots which normally catch up in the latter part of the season may opt to catch up birds earlier. Catching up in Scotland is as much 'taking' in the legal sense as shooting but it is legal in Scotland (only) to catch up pheasant and partridge for breeding purposes (only) for 28 days after the start of the close season for these birds i.e. up to and including February 28th. Shoots should discuss this option with their game-farmer before doing so and must comply with the requirements within the Avian Influenza Protection Zone currently in force across Scotland. See [Avian Influenza Prevention Zone](#)
- Depending upon size and location, some shoots may decide to keep a higher density of pheasants unharvested into the spring, with a view to helping enhance or establish the population for the following season. This approach would require consideration of the need for increased spring feeding sites (there should always be sufficient feeding of any birds at the end of the shooting season until there is sufficient natural feed), management of birds around spring sown crops and away from private gardens and an increased emphasis on predator control and habitat management such as cover crops for brood rearing.
- Shoots should continue to follow the requirements of the [Code of Good Shooting Practice](#) and, if members, comply with the relevant standards of the British Game Alliance.