

Community Spirit

What gameshooting means for Welsh people and the countryside



PERSONAL TESTIMONIES
FROM A SURVEY CONDUCTED
BY THE GAME & WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION TRUST



Game & Wildlife
CONSERVATION TRUST
Cymru • Wales

www.gwct.org.uk/wales

868

submissions

46,829

words reviewed
by GWCT staff





Left in charge, Ceredigion

Contents

- 5 FOREWORD
- 6 WELCOME
- 8 A PROSPEROUS WALES
- 10 A RESILIENT WALES
- 12 A HEALTHIER WALES
- 14 A MORE EQUAL WALES
- 16 A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES
- 18 A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE AND THRIVING WELSH LANGUAGE
- 20 A GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE WALES
- 22 APPENDICES
- 23 ABOUT THE GAME & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION TRUST



Out on the moors, Powys



Foreword

By Nick Williams

Cymru/Wales Chairman
Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust



I was extremely fortunate to grow up in New Quay, Ceredigion. My father was raised on a farm in Llangrannog, Cefn Cwrt, which was more rural, but I had the benefit of opening the curtains every morning and looking out on grass fields at the edge of the village.

I have lived and worked in Cardiff for over 50 years and went from teaching to a range of businesses, mostly in manufacturing. In that time, I have found that getting back into the countryside and my involvement with game shooting, has contributed greatly to my work/life balance. I believe my grounding as a teacher has allowed me to understand the great value of that balance in connection to numerous activities in life.

Much research has been done on the environmental benefits of gameshooting, but

the important social impact is little understood. In an attempt to fill that knowledge gap the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust Cymru/Wales conducted a comprehensive survey, the results of which are contained in this report. The number of responses and the strength of feeling they express is striking. I have always considered shooting to be part of my cultural heritage, but I hadn't quite realised the extent to which my passion was shared by so many across the country.

I look back fondly on seeing both my father and grandfather going out into the countryside with a gun under their arm when I was a child and feel the valuable balance that gave me should be accessible to future generations.

Honouring Nick Williams

GWCT wouldn't be as prominent in Wales doing as much as we are now doing without the passion of Nick Williams. Nick relaunched the GWCT in Wales in 2017 and served as our Chairman until his death in late 2021. The foreword above shows just how much our work, and particularly this report, meant to him and he was delighted that it highlighted the true passion of those in Wales for shooting and associated game management. Nick was proud that we showcased its importance not only to individuals, be they beaters, gundog owners or the shooters themselves, but also to the wider community. This document is to be launched at the first GWCT Welsh Game Fair in September 2022, which Nick always longed for us to hold. We are all sad that he isn't here to see his hard work come to fruition, but the legacy that he leaves us with in Wales is there to see for anyone who attends the event or reads this report. His passion for game was inspirational – thank you, Nick.

Welcome

By Sue Evans

Cymru/Wales Director

Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust

The submissions in the following pages provide insight into how important game shooting is to people from many different backgrounds. They demonstrate that, in Wales, it is not the preserve of a wealthy minority, but is activity enjoyed by ordinary people, which brings generations and communities together.

It is often hard for Ministers to get beyond the fog of misinformation about game shooting, but this document provides a clear bridge between people and policy makers, an opportunity to discover what it means to communities in their own words.

Many of the responses fall neatly under the seven principles of Wales' Well-being of Future Generations Act and a selection is grouped under each of those headings in this document. However, the comments often cover several themes and 868 submissions can be read in full in the Appendix.



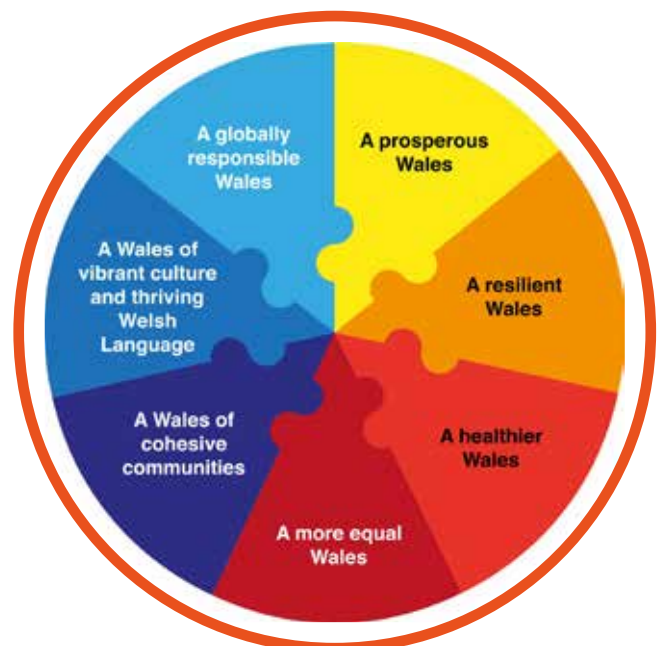
This report is structured around the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act - improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.



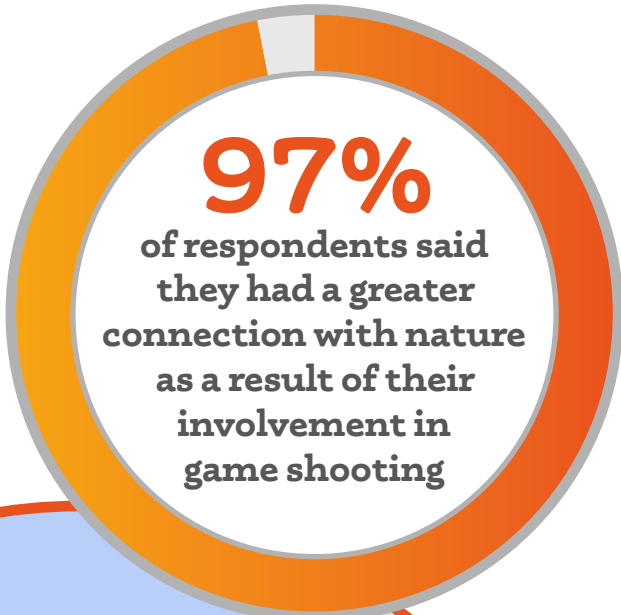
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Game shooting in Wales is activity enjoyed by ordinary people, which brings generations and communities together.

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Respondents came from across Wales, reflecting the passion for fieldsports not only in the Welsh countryside but also in our cities and towns.



Map data 2020 © Google

A PROSPEROUS WALES

An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.



What you told us >>

Shooting provides a vital role in rural communities, not just for the individuals involved, but the network of businesses that support them. It provides direct employment, including casual work for the young and old, and is an important source of revenue for small local businesses.



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This is an income generating activity that pays for wildlife and habitat management.
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It would adversely affect jobs in the countryside. Also, **now especially is a time to be trying to create jobs and activities where people can meet and work outside with minimum risk of picking up the virus.**

If shooting were banned, personally I would be unemployed and living in a rural area with not much other employment. The area would be much poorer for it with not as many visitors in the winter.

The impact would be huge. I personally would be devastated. The end of a way of rural life. **Here in Mid Wales and the Welsh Border it is so important. Our local pub has had up to 6 different shoots in there in an evening.**

I would lose my job, home and income. The estate would suffer drastically in terms of the flora and fauna that benefit from the proactive management of the estate for game shooting that manages.

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As a farmer I am delighted to see wildlife flourish as a result of shoot management. The ecosystem improves and rural economies benefit.

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I am a farm owner and shoot only out of occasional necessity. However, I recognise the value of shooting to the economy and environment. **Moorland near my home has for three years been the subject of a conservation project to bring back ground-nesting birds such as curlew and lapwing. Grouse shooting on this moor generates significant income without which the project may not survive.**

Shooting in the Welsh borders is a lifeline for many, many people. The taking of game for eating is a small, but of course important element in the whole process. Shooting and the directly related conservation work has huge positive benefits to the natural ecosystem with shoot management the primary factor in farm biodiversity and predator control. **There are also many benefits to the local area increasing tourism, providing direct and indirect employment to include shops, hotels, pubs and many more examples.**

I think it would be damaging for the rural economy. I also think **it would create unemployment and social unrest and illegal behaviour** as people would poach etc.



Our local economy would take a big hit, from the local petrol station to the post office and local restaurants. The shooters who come through the shoot I beat on spend a fortune on accommodation and food, using local businesses this allows them to stay open and we can then benefit all year round instead of only during the tourist season.

The benefits shooting brings is not only the social interaction between different generations and mutual respect but also the massive increases in biodiversity and whilst you cannot put a price on the positives of this it does not burden the taxpayer in any way as shooting self-funds this.

I think the Welsh Minister should be very careful. **The economic and commercial advantages to Wales let alone the conservation ones are significant. Shooting brings money into Wales during the quieter winter months and following Covid-19 Wales should not put itself at a economic disadvantage just on a political whim!**

A ban would have huge impact on my state of mind, the local working population, our crop and household vegetable crop, the songbird population. It would destroy much of our community and their jobs.

”

A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.

What you told us >>>

The natural environment needs to be managed to ensure that it is balanced and to ensure the long-term future of many species. Those involved in the countryside are not only more sympathetic to these needs, but also undertake and often pay for the important work that is done.



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All life (including nature) is a balance. Listen to those whose lives revolve around it.

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Unfortunately, us humans have created a countryside that needs to be managed. We do indeed get things wrong as well as right. Recent protection of certain species has led to the demise of others. Without management of any kind, nature will indeed thrive. However, the distribution of certain species, whether animal or vegetable will change. The extinction of certain species will occur. This may be ‘natural’, but will we look upon this world and find it pleasing? I fear not.

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Sustainable wild produce, grown locally, natural and healthy with a story linked in. We now understand that managed land can deliver so much more wildlife and keep people fed.

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I run a shoot which pays for my conservation work. My priorities are Welsh lapwing. I also have other red-listed species here breeding.

Irrespective of your personal views on the morality of shooting and eating healthy meat, **there can be no doubt whatsoever of the benefits shooting brings to nature and the environment.** The disappearance of the private funding and expertise invested by shooting in the Welsh countryside would have a devastating effect and would and should not be replaced from the public purse, especially during times of economic crisis.

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In a world where people spend less and less time outside **it's important that the natural wildlife is preserved for future generations to enjoy as much as past ones have.**

As a countryside manager I am satisfied that the shooting I take part in (and its associated habitat management) supports a great deal of biodiversity. **Many of the game and wildfowl habitats I am involved with, would otherwise be extremely vulnerable to degradation and land use change, if they weren't safe guarded by their main 'economic driver' - shooting.**

I work on a shooting estate so out in all weathers all year, I love my shooting but I'm as passionate about shooting with a camera as much as anything else. **If we didn't have shooting we probably wouldn't see half the wildlife that I see through the lens.**

It's a nature-connected lifestyle that **takes me closer to our natural environment which in turn enables me to protect, conserve,** maintain it, as well as personally benefitting my own health and providing food for the table.

As shooters we are one first groups to get to know what is happening in the countryside because we are deeply involved and spend a great deal of time there. **Without shooting sports there would be a lot less knowledge about the countryside and a lot fewer doing work to look after it,** mostly at no cost to the nation.

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Out of season we undertake a great deal of wildlife conservation work for the most part helping farms control pests such as foxes and corvids, repairing hedges, fencing and trimming woodland trails.

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Intimacy with nature. An awareness and deep investment in the whole ecosystem. I only shoot what I will eat and only sustainably.

We live on farmland on the edge of the Clwydian AONB. We observe daily the animals, birds and plants around us. **There are constant and numerous examples of these benefitting from the game-keeping activities on our small rough shoot.**

The (unpaid) conservation work that we carry out along with sympathetic management and pest-control that we exercise on farmland that we shoot would suffer greatly. The corvids take 2-3 chicks each day during the breeding season. rats, stoats, weasels, mink, foxes, corvids, and squirrels would devastate nesting birds, dormice shrews and voles would be almost non-existent all mammals would suffer. On the farmland, we shoot we have snipe, woodcock, duck, geese, wood pigeon, wild pheasants, plover, hares rabbits, kestrels, sparrowhawks, and goshawks also visit.

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A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

What you told us >>>

Game shooting and the activities associated with it has a highly positive effect on the mental and physical health of participants. Benefits to mental health come from the chance to socialise in often remote locations and during the difficult winter months. Community bonding and getting out into the countryside both also contribute to mental wellbeing. Shooting inspires regular exercise including walking in the countryside, dog handling and conservation work. Many expressed the devastating impact on their mental and physical health were shooting to be prohibited.



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Shooting is crucial to our mental wellbeing during the long winter months.

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I would say country sports are vital for my mental health. They have given me a purpose, in training my dog to the highest standard so he can compete in trials, and I have made so many friends through country sports. **I am more active, and more engaged with nature and conservation due to my involvement in country sports.**

Shooting and its associated activities have helped me both physically and mentally over the last 20 years or so.

As a shooter autumn and winter hold so much to do with the husbandry of birds, the conservation work we do on our shooting grounds and the interaction with my fellow members.

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I am more active, and more engaged with nature and conservation due to my involvement in country sports.

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I don't think many people understand perhaps the solitary lifestyle of many rural occupations especially through the winter. **The effect of banning yet another rural pastime will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect on mental health to some parts of the rural community.** The Welsh Government needs to understand that it represents everyone and not just those that make the most noise.

Living in a rural area I don't see lots of people all the time. The day out is a real boost to mental health and physical health as you have to be fairly fit to walk all day. Winter is long in the country and a day's shooting is something to look forward to. I love watching the dogs work and noticing wildlife I don't normally see!

It would change a huge part of my structures for mental health. Without shooting we wouldn't have the dogs. Social and exercise would both reduce.

In terms of my rough shooting, I would be completely lost without it. I also think my dogs would be lost as they love the day as much as I do.



Swapping notes between drives, Ceredigion

Being outside whether it be shooting or beating brings a great feeling of wellbeing and relaxation away from the hustle and bustle of everyday stresses. When you get to see wildlife you wouldn't normally see is amazing and **brings great happiness.**

Some of our team are retired and the local doctor told me how the shooting season keeps them going, both mentally and physically, **particularly those who are widowed or caring for partners with serious illnesses.**

The level of exercise that is taken during shooting activities **is very unlikely to be replaced** with other means throughout the year and specifically in winter.

Game shooting happens in the winter months when levels of sunlight are low and Season Affecting Disorder (SAD) impacts many people. Reasons for venturing outdoors are limited, so the routine of our weekly syndicate shoot gives me an incentive to get out whatever the weather. A ban on shooting would leave me searching for a way in which I could combine regular social interaction with over 30 people that offers **healthy exercise within five miles of my home and from which I can bring home healthy food for the table.**

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A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic circumstances).

What you told us >>>

Fieldsports bring together people of all backgrounds, all ages and all circumstances. As such, they are an important role, not just in binding together a community, but in providing an education about the Welsh countryside. The social skills and opportunity that fieldsports offers to young people, was seen as a great way of giving them a strong footing for future life.



Very few activities have the same degree of discipline, respect and responsibility for young people. That will inadvertently teach them about the countryside.

As a small game syndicate, up to 16 of us come together from different walks of life for 10+ days a season, from teenagers to the retired. We love the social aspect, the exercise and especially flushing the first woodcock of the season.

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Well managed shooting has created much of the Welsh countryside and still protects many of its most iconic wildlife species as well as being a sociable activity that brings all classes together.

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Beaters tend to be the older and younger members of society. A wonderful mix of personalities.
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Siblings take a break, Ceredigion

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Shooting encourages wildlife and helps sustain a strong sense of community. People from all walks of life together doing something they are passionate about. I know people who don't even shoot but only work their dogs, and youngsters who beat. And to be honest **in this day getting young people to do anything other than sit on their phones on social media must be a benefit for their mental wellbeing.**

My kids who are now 12 and 13 are passionate about shooting, hunting and beating. They rarely get the chance to shoot driven game only on beaters day when the syndicate take a gun for the youngsters and coach them, stood by their sides through the day. This is the highlight of the kids' year which they look forward to as much as they do Christmas. **I love the fact that all age groups mix together with the kids from the age of seven talking animatedly on the same subject with youngsters in their twenties up to retired folk in their seventies.** What else would get all these people out of the house walking miles on a winter's day in horizontal rain?

Our small shoot involves at least 30 people of all ages and backgrounds. **It gives everyone involved a sense of common purpose and being a part of the countryside. Most of them come from a socially deprived urban background** (as described by the Welsh assembly).

Shooting creates a unique way of bringing together people who probably wouldn't get to know or meet each other, in natural surroundings in our long and dark winters.

Born and reared on a rough council estate, ever since the age of 16 I've had an interest in shooting, fishing and conservation. On driven shooting days you are mixing with people from all walks of life and enjoying exercise at the same time.

I find shooting and other fieldsports are a great leveller i.e we are all the same on the field. Please don't regulate me out of what I love.

A whole community would also suffer, all ages and from all backgrounds would not interact and **it would be another nail in the coffin for the rural community.**

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It is not a class thing, participants come from all walks of life. It is an enjoyable day out and not about the bag at the end of the day.

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My son and daughter joined me on shoot days from the moment they could walk. They learnt their social skills by interacting with adults from varying backgrounds as a result and learnt discipline by being part of a shoot. **This has helped them enormously in their careers and been a significant factor in who they are.**

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A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES

Communities should be attractive, safe, viable and well-connected. People have skills, lived experience, energy and commitment and finding ways of unlocking these strengths is critical. Too often, communities face barriers when it comes to doing simple things for themselves, such as local community events. Remove barriers to enable them. Look to bring communities together through arts, cultural and sporting projects which deliver multiple benefits.

What you told us >>>

Shooting brings remote rural communities together and drives positive change in attitudes to the natural world, inspiring people to get involved in wildlife conservation and voluntary work.



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The life-long friendships and relationships that can grow and the opportunities to meet people from all walks of life.

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Walking up wild game has been a very long-standing traditional activity on our hill land and if it were to be prohibited it would be a great loss to the social fabric of this rural area.

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It is about being part of a community that cares, rolls up its sleeves and contributes in a unique way to Welsh life.

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Catching up with old friends, Ceredigion



Young beating team, Ceredigion

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It's all about companionship, fresh air, community, a diversity of backgrounds and encouraging youngsters – all three syndicates involve the children of members as beaters.

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The social element is key to this, I don't often see many other people on a week-to-week basis and I have grown up in the community of people who don't get to meet up a lot in the rest of the year.

The time we can go beating allows us to catch up, get exercise, share in our country stories and then at the end of the day, go for a meal together.

Beaters are people of all ages, with vastly different backgrounds, income levels, and outlooks on life that come together, for maybe just one a day a week in the winter, around a common purpose. They strengthen the social fabric of many rural areas.

It doesn't get any better than working together to produce a great flush of birds. The work through the summer to look after the land, flora and fauna and then the teamwork and joint effort to achieve the outcome. And all the time surrounded by and looking after our beautiful countryside, the perfect antidote to modern life. Couldn't live without it.

Shooting in Wales binds together some very remote communities. It provides income that otherwise simply would not exist, which, in turn, helps so many families to survive.

It is a way of life. If these types of interest are stopped then there will be a loss of interest in the countryside. It will lose its management and would soon be abused by other people who would not have the same empathy for nature.

A true sense of comradeship and companionship. My wife and I try and beat twice a week to keep active in our retirement years.

”

70%

of respondents mentioned the importance of fieldsports in the community and the role it played in their social life.

A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE AND THRIVING WELSH LANGUAGE

A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh Language and which encourages people to participate in the arts, sport and recreation. Using culture and the Welsh language as a driver for economic and environmental change. Enabling our citizens to access and engage with their own and other cultures.



Stopping for lunch, Powys

What you told us >>

Game shooting is a very important part of Welsh culture and heritage. It is considered a way of life by people from a range of social backgrounds. Harvesting game from the countryside and the traditions that go with it are part of Welsh history that future generations should not be denied. Game shooting is a traditional pastime that still has much to offer, encouraging young people to get out into the countryside and learn about and care for the landscape and the natural world. There is a growing disconnect between country life and modern urban culture. Those who seek to ban shooting will destroy highly valued elements of the rural culture out of prejudice and intolerance.



Mae saethu yn rhan o gefn gwlad Cymru, ei wreiddiau, ei ddiwylliant a'i hiaith. Hebddo, byddai fy iechyd yn cael ei effeithio'n aruthrol. Mae'n fy nghysylltu â'r tir a diwylliant Cymru. Trwy ymdrechion cadwraethol gennyf i a fy ffrindiau, mae hefyd yn cyfrannu at fioamrywiaeth ein hardal, dyma beth nad yw pobl mewn dinasoedd yn ei ddeall.



Shooting is not for everyone, but the social and environmental benefits are huge in rural areas. **Today we live in a world where most people do not know where their food comes from.**

Country life and traditions are not a thing of the past, they are here now, thriving, just, and have **much to contribute to the future of our community**, countryside and the wellbeing of thousands of people.



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Wild game has always been a regular part of my family's diet, and coming from a relatively poor mining community, rabbit was a regular addition to our weekly meals. As teenagers we used ferrets on rabbit hunts on local hill farmers' land. These farmers were part of our community and knew every child and miner using their land and our teachers and local bobbies were enthusiastic and interested in our trips out. I would add that I have no political affiliation. **I come from a community where the majority of people were miners or steel workers, who voted Labour and shot and hunted.**

Please listen to honest hard-working people who enjoy countryside activities.

Please act on science and not prejudice and treat the people interested in country pursuits fairly and with the respect they deserve.

Mae saethu wedi bod yn rhan enfawr o fy mywyd ers pan oeddwn i'n blentyn, byddai bywyd heb saethu yn annychmygol gan ei fod yn rhan o bwy ydw i. Mewn gwirionedd mae'n rhan o ble rydw i'n byw, fy nhreftadaeth, fy nhraddodiadau a fy iaith!

Mae hefyd bellach yn rhan o fy nheulu gan fod gen i blant ifanc sy'n awyddus i gymryd rhan. Ni allaf or-bwysleisio pwysigrwydd saethu yn fy nghymuned a'r ffaith bod pawb rwy'n saethu, curo a chiperio gyda nhw yn siarad Cymraeg iaith gyntaf ac yn teimlo'n mor angerddol â'r ydw i. Gobeithio y bydd gwleidyddion yn ceisio deall bod saethu yn rhan anatod o gefn gwlad Cymru, ei chymunedau a'i thraddodiadau ac felly wedi ymglymu ac yn hanfodol i'n lles, ein hiechyd a'n hiaith!

My father was a shooter, his father before that. I have three boys, 16, 14, and 10. All attend shoots, come out feeding, beating, and all three are polite well-mannered boys. **It teaches them how to behave and respect their elders.**

Please remember that we are not all wealthy aristocrats. The majority of us are ordinary people with a love for our countryside and a passion for the outdoors. Please don't indulge those people who think meat comes from a supermarket and everything in Disney is true. Their interest in the country and wildlife will soon wain when there is something else to demonstrate about. We will always be here.

It is important to carry on traditions that have been part of our countryside for centuries. **Who are [people] to suddenly turn around and intervene and stop things that are part of the countryside heritage?** They will be responsible for the declining wildlife, wellbeing and families being made unemployed.

Rwyf wedi bod yn ymwneud â saethu ar hyd fy oes ac mae'n rhan o fy DNA, mae'n darparu cymuned ac iechyd da (meddyliol a chorfforol) i mi ac yn fy nghysylltu â natur, hebdo byddwn yn colli'r cysylltiad hwnnw â chefn gwlad Cymru. Mae pawb yr ydw i saethu â nhw yn siarad Cymraeg iaith gyntaf, mae hyn yn arwyddocaol iawn gan ein bod ni i gyd yn gwerthfawrogi iaith ac yn teimlo ei bod yn rhan o bwy ydyn ni a beth yw pwrpas cefn gwlad Cymru. Pe bai saethu yn cael ei gymryd oddi wrthym fe fyddai'n dinistrio treftadaeth ac elfen hanfodol yn niwylliant Cymru.

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A GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE WALES

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act looks out to Wales's wider global responsibilities aligning with the United Nations 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development. UN Goal Number 15 "Life on Earth" states that all countries must "reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss." The Welsh Act's goal of a Resilient Wales states that "Here in Wales, we are now among the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with 1 in 14 wildlife species facing extinction". It seeks to reverse this trend.

What you told us >>>

Game management provides an important driver for biodiversity net gain. A ban on shooting or further restrictions on legal predation management could lead to the widespread loss of highly valuable conservation efforts and further declines in Welsh wildlife and habitats. Where active shoot management has been carried out there is an abundance of wildlife and restored landscapes.



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The environment is greatly enhanced by the time and effort myself and my family put into maintaining the habitat for many species of birds and mammals.

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Farmland bird feeder.
© Christopher Wills

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I am a syndicate member in two small self-kept shoots. I feel that the work I have done creating cover, planting trees, digging ponds and feeding game strips has had a **significant positive impact on wildlife**.

Beating with my Labrador takes us into the countryside. I can see that **land managed for shooting results in a greater biodiversity** than if it was unmanaged or used for agriculture.

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The shoot actively plants winter feed crop for wild birds. The hedges which are maintained for cover provide huge quantities of sloes, hips and haws which support fieldfares and redwings.

I shoot pest species including corvids that destroy the wild song birds on our own farm and those of family members and friends. **Since I have addressed this the increase in songbirds has been astonishing.** Wrens, green woodpeckers, great spotted woodpeckers, gold finches, bull finches, curlews, snipe, swift, blue tits, robins, reed warbler and numerous others I have not seen in years.

The change in the Welsh general licenses is already having a heavy impact on song bird populations. Shooting helps maintain a social group of enthusiasts, who actually understand ecology. **This is a whole group of knowledge that would be lost.** Land management should not be driven by emotion and ideology.

Bird surveys which I've conducted during the last three years show that **keepered moorland has particularly good bird populations** including several Red data book species including whinchat, curlew, cuckoo and linnnet.

Without sensible, and legal, pest and predator control a wide range of game and non-game species will become increasingly rare. Generalist predators such as corvids, foxes, mink and grey squirrels benefit from year round food sources associated with human activity. They do not suffer themselves from a reduction in prey species as they might in a completely wild environment.

European song thrush.
© Cliff Day

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We do make a real and positive difference to the wildlife and especially rare upland birds.

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Without running the syndicate, we wouldn't put down supplementary feed. It encourages wild game and supports our resident song birds of which there are lots, especially compared to neighbouring land. We feed right through to late spring and you can tell the difference it makes.

Trying to manage the countryside by solely relying on grants to farmers is bound to fail. You need committed gamekeepers and helpers who understand the countryside and its wildlife.

Ecosystems in Wales are complex so **radical policy changes such as banning shooting, although highly populist, carry significant risk of bring about serious unintended consequences.**

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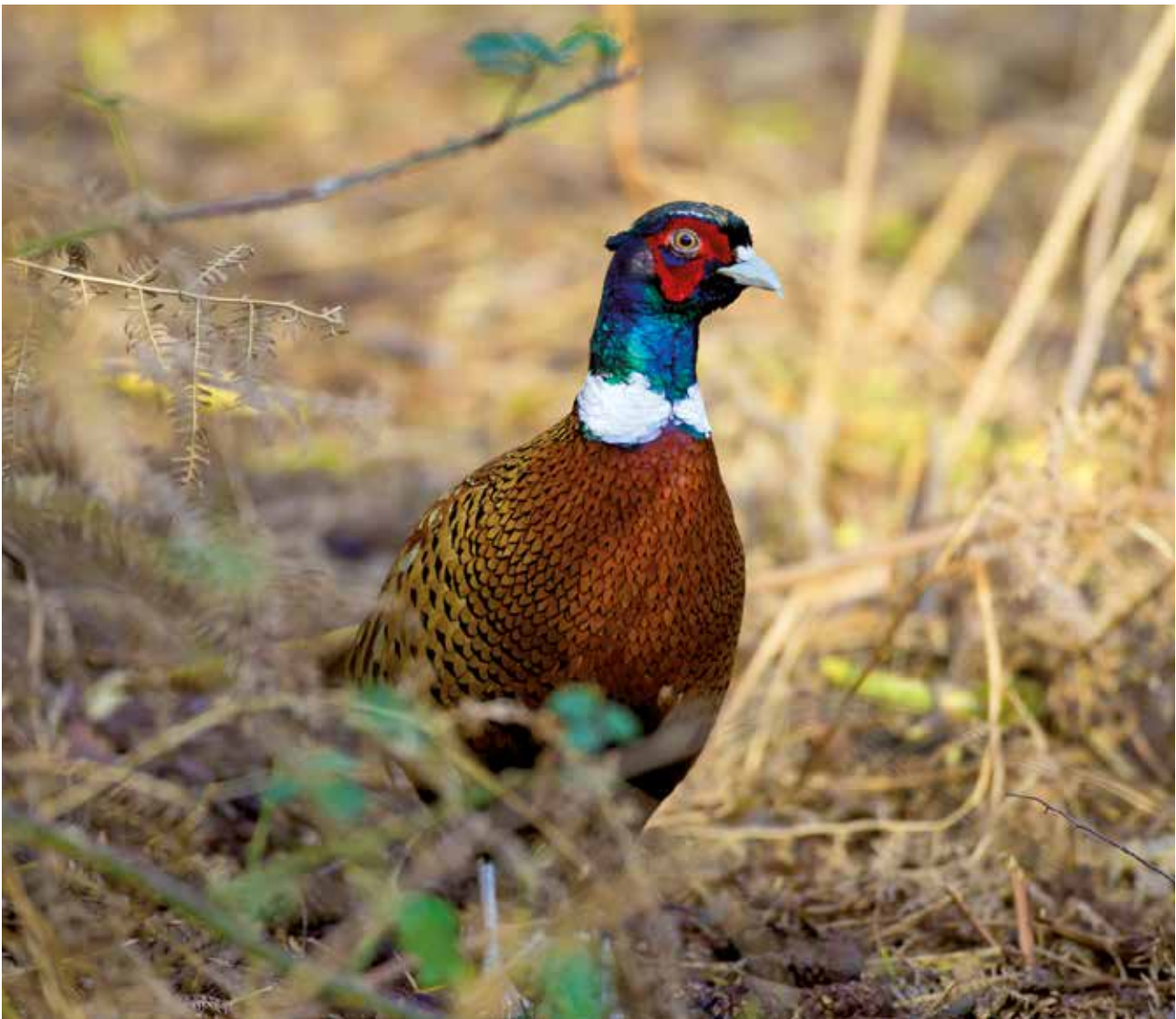


What we did

To get an understanding of what gameshooting meant to people in Wales, the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust promoted a survey to its members in Wales and the wider community via social media and in the press.

The 868 responses, totalling over 46,000 words, were reviewed and assessed by GWCT staff and related to the relevant sections of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

All submissions are listed verbatim, with no filtering of the contributors' comments, and can be found online by visiting:
www.gwct.org.uk/communityspirit



About the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust

The Home of Working Conservation

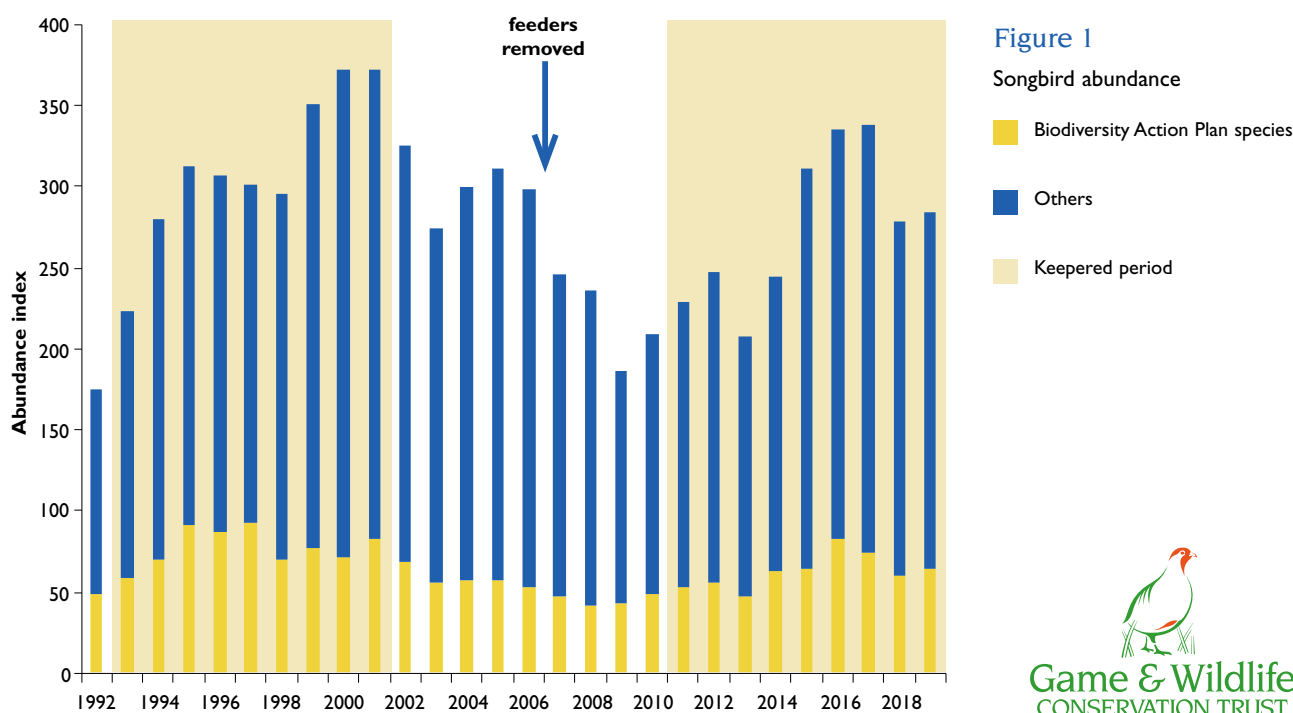
The GWCT believes that wildlife can thrive if we focus on integrating its conservation with other land uses. Demands on the Welsh countryside are increasing. Today as well as producing food and land for building it must help reduce CO₂ emissions, increase biodiversity, provide clean air and water and allow room for recreation. To balance these needs we must focus on finding solutions that deliver multiple outcomes.

Gamekeepers became the unexpected pioneers of a multiple outcomes approach as farming modernised to meet the post-war demand for food. The GWCT studied how they began to use their range of tools, from trapping to growing small strips of cover crops to maintain their gamebirds without hindering farm production. These game management techniques are vital to conservation because they support wildlife in a working countryside.

Today the Trust employs more than 60 scientists who conduct research into a wide range of species and

ecosystems from the life cycle of salmon and trout to the impact of pesticides on insect pollinators and the effect of different forms of cultivation on soil and water health. It runs some of the world's oldest long term wildlife monitoring studies and its many farm-based demonstration sites include The Allerton Project, which has studied the positive effect of game management on farmland birds and hares over decades (see Figure 1 graph below).

Evidence-based conservation is at the heart of the GWCT's approach. When it comes to the impact of game bird releasing on the environment it has analysed the negative as well as positive outcomes from potential damage to woodland flora due to overstocking pheasant release pens to beneficial increases in invertebrates in conservation headlands. This science helps develop best practice and ensure game management achieves its huge potential to deliver biodiversity net gain and help restore Wales' lost wildlife.



To find out more and support the Trust's research visit
gwct.org.uk

To support its campaign for farmer-led conservation sign the pledge at
www.workingforwildlife.co.uk

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