

Spotlight Shoot Benchmarking 2015/16 Season

August 2016



SUMMARY

Costs stabilise and shoots are optimistic about the 2016/17 season

141 shoots took part in our industry leading 2015/16 season Shoot Benchmarking survey.

The results show the key to profitable performance is the aggregation of marginal gains. The biggest difference in performance between profitable and loss-making shoots is in fixed costs, especially those relating to staff. But the difference in staff costs is not a race to the bottom, as the salaries of full-time Head Keepers on profitable shoots are higher – the difference is that on profit-making shoots they look after more birds.

There is also a difference in shoot performance. Profitable shoots put down more birds, have more let days, larger bag sizes, have higher returns, and generally charge more per bird. All of the above translates into substantial differences in the income each let day generates, of £916 profit per let day compared with a -£1,396 loss for the loss-making shoots.

Overall total costs per bird put down were within 1% of the 2014/15 average.

Shoots have also increased their charges by 4.6%, leading to a small reduction in the proportion of shoots making a loss.

General optimism and bookings are both up relative to last season; like last season, half the shoots are planning to increase their charges for the 2016/17 season. 28% are also intending to release more birds this summer, which is a larger proportion than 22% last year.

.....
“The key to profitable performance is the aggregation of marginal gains”

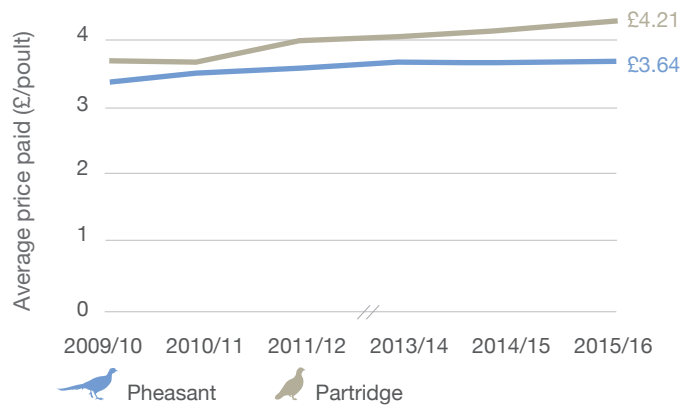
Andrew Teanby, Savills Research
.....

SHOOT PERFORMANCE

Poult prices and charges per bird increase

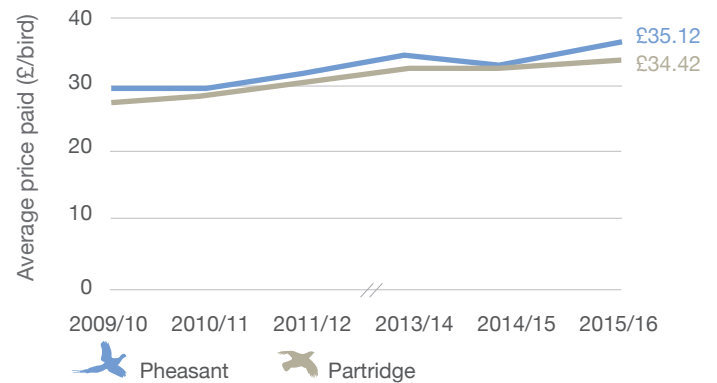
Price paid per poult (£)

The cost of a pheasant or partridge poult has risen by 7% and 11% respectively since 2009/10, but there was little change this season.



Price charged per bird (excluding VAT)

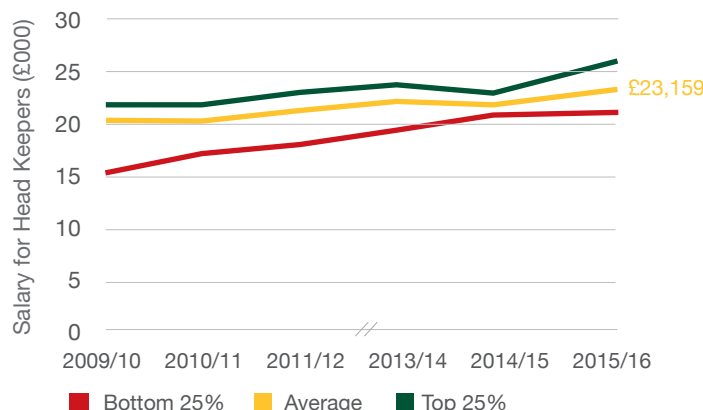
Shoots have increased their charges per bird since 2009/10 (by 17% for pheasants and 23% for partridges).



STAFF SALARIES

Average salaries continue to rise

Head Keepers salaries have increased since 2009/10, to an average of just over £23,000. The average this year is 5.7% higher than last. Across all staff roles shoots reported that they were increasing staff salaries by an average of 2.5%. There has been a small increase in the proportion of Head Keepers receiving a pension to 59% from 55% in 2014/15. We expect the proportion will increase further as more shoots prepare for auto enrolment.



Beaters and pickers up pay

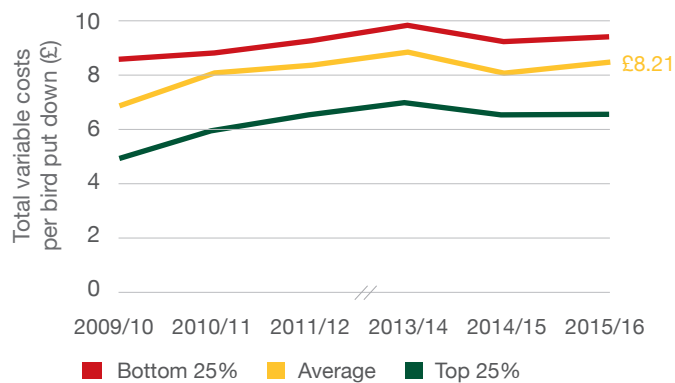
Beaters and pickers up pay is the fourth biggest cost for shoots. The majority of shoots pay beaters £25 - 30 per day and pickers up £30 - 40. Day rates tend to increase in £5 increments, and average rates have increased by 15% for beaters and 19% for pickers up since 2009/10. However the cost per bird put down has not increased as much, suggesting less staff are used on the day, or days are larger and/or fewer.

COSTS

Variable costs rising and fixed costs falling since 2009/10

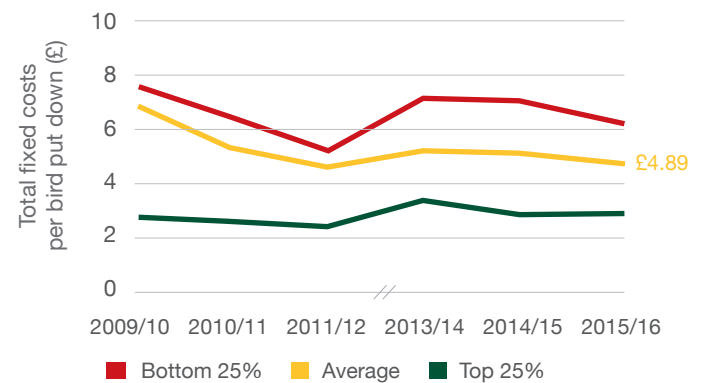
Total variable costs per bird put down

Average variable costs are rising, but the range remains large. £2.20 - 2.80 (or 25-30%) difference between the upper and lower quartiles of variable costs. Variable costs have risen by 12% since 2009/10. This is mainly due to feed costs rising by 18%; beaters / pickers up costs and bird costs are within 2% of their 2009/10 level.



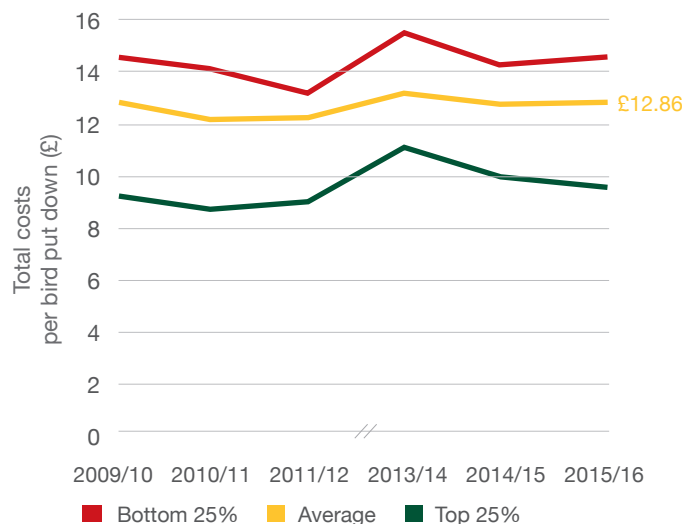
Total fixed costs per bird put down

Total fixed costs have fallen since 2009/10 (-23%). Fixed costs for the bottom 25% remain £3.00 - 4.00 (or 50-60%) higher than for the top 25% of shoots.



Total costs per bird put down*

Total costs fell by 1% compared with 2014/15 while charges per bird have risen by 4-6%. This has led to fewer shoots making a loss (35%), compared with 37% in 2014/15 and 59% in 2013/14.



* This only includes shoots which provided variable and fixed cost data and so is not the sum of total variable costs plus total fixed costs as those calculations included shoots that only provided one set of costs.

HABITAT CREATION AND MANAGEMENT

Shooting encourages environmental management which benefits habitats and wildlife

70% of shoots shot over land that is in a paid agri-environment habitat improvement scheme.

16% shot over land that is in a voluntary habitat improvement scheme, like the Campaign for the Farmed Environment.

50% pay for habitat improvement themselves, to benefit the shoot.

83% have established buffer strips and / or field corners.

69% have planted woodland in the last 10 years (41 acres per shoot on average).

97% feed game birds after the shooting season.

55% feed songbirds voluntarily.

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

Benchmarking acts as a financial management tool and identifies areas of strength and weakness in a shoot's performance so corrective action can be taken. For each participating shoot, we produce (for free!) a detailed 17 page report analysing their data against an overall benchmark, and a group of similar sized shoots. All data is held entirely confidentially. We thank those who have taken part, and encourage others to follow their lead, please contact Andrew Teanby to register your interest in the next survey.

SHOOT BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENTS

Shoots face increasing pressure to demonstrate sustainability and measureable biodiversity gain arising from their activities. To meet this, the GWCT's experienced team of advisors offers bespoke Shoot Biodiversity Assessments, which provide an independent expert report on best practice and biodiversity gain on individual shoots, covering release sites, feeding, game and habitat management and predation control. Contact advisory@gwct.org.uk for further details.



Please contact us for more information

We are also pleased to arrange free seminars on shoot management and benchmarking for groups of 10 or more shoots.

David Steel
Director, Head of Sporting
Savills
01200 411 051
dsteel@savills.com

Roger Draycott
Head of Advisory Services
Game & Wildlife
Conservation Trust
01440 821 325
rdraycott@gwct.org.uk

Matthew Watson
Director, Rural
Savills
01904 617 824
mwatson@savills.com

Andrew Teanby
Senior Researcher
Savills
01522 507 312
ateanby@savills.com

Savills plc: Savills is a global real estate services provider listed on the London Stock Exchange. Savills operates from over 700 owned and associate offices, employing more than 30,000 people in over 60 countries throughout the Americas, the UK, Europe, Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East, offering a broad range of specialist advisory, management and transactional services to clients all over the world.

This report is for general informative purposes only, it was published in July 2016 and is based on the latest data available at the time of going to press. It may not be published, reproduced or quoted in part or in whole, nor may it be used as a basis for any contract, prospectus, agreement or other document without prior consent. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy, Savills accepts no liability whatsoever for any direct or consequential loss arising from its use. The content is strictly copyright and reproduction of the whole or part of it in any form is prohibited without written permission from Savills Research.