

Glossary

Agri-environment schemes

A government-funded mechanism aimed to support farmers and land managers in adopting techniques or management measures that are beneficial to the environment.

Ancient semi-natural woodlands:

Areas of woodland that have been continuously wooded since 1600 in England and Wales, and since 1750 in Scotland.

BASC

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation:
www.basc.org.uk

Beetle bank

A raised earth bank constructed across the middle of large arable fields, sown with a mix of tussocky, perennial grasses, and disconnected from the existing field edges. This habitat provides ideal nesting cover for grey partridges, as well as overwintering sites for predatory, beneficial insects.

Beneficial insects

Beneficial insects are: pollinators, decomposers, chick-food insects and butterflies, as well as predatory insects that are the natural enemies of pest species, eating pests such as greenfly within crops and can therefore be beneficial to the farmer in controlling these.

Biodiversity Action Plan

A government program to identify and protect threatened species and habitats. The UK biodiversity action plan was published in 1994, as the UK's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and which the UK signed up to. Species and habitat lists were published in 1995 and 1999, and reports are published every three to five years looking at how the BAP is contributing to the UK's progress towards reducing biodiversity loss.

Biodiversity assessment

The GWCT advisory service offers the shoot biodiversity assessment. They will thoroughly survey the shoot and the management methods in place, examine the game and wildlife and how it is managed, and give a confidential report with an action plan for future improvement for the shoot, and the biodiversity.

Brooding

A parent bird uses their wings or body to protect the chicks and keep them warm early in life when their own temperature regulation is not yet developed and they are most vulnerable to the cold and wet.

BTO

British Trust for Ornithology: www.bto.org

Conservation Headland

A strip around the perimeter of an arable field that is treated with no or few herbicides and insecticides, and are often drilled more widely than the main cropped area to increase the space between rows and allow chicks to move through it more easily. Conservation headlands are designed to provide insect-rich brood cover for the early weeks of life, when gamebird chicks need insect foods. They contain more arable weeds and wildflowers than the rest of the crop, provide chick food insects for game birds, and many benefits for other species.

Corvids

The crow family of birds, that includes the carrion crow, hooded crow, raven, magpie, jackdaw, rook and jay.

Covey

A group of partridge (or grouse) – usually a family group, but sometimes with additional lone adults, which stay together through the summer and winter, breaking up in January or February into pairs, whereupon there is some dispersal.

Exclosure

An area which is fenced off to protect from certain species, for example predators, by keeping them out.

Exclosure cages

A cage to keep out certain animals, usually predators, thus protecting the inhabitant.

Fauna

The animal life in a particular region or area at a certain time.

Flora

The plant life in a particular region or area at a certain time.

Flush

To drive the birds out of their cover.

Fodder crops

Crops that are planted to provide food for livestock.

Game cover crops

Crops that are planted to provide gamebirds with food and shelter. These are not harvested as a crop, but provide habitat for the gamebirds and other wildlife.

Hoppers

Feed containers usually steel or plastic barrels, usually filled with wheat, designed to allow easy access for gamebirds.

Hungry Gap

The period in late winter and early spring when food is very scarce for birds. During this time, supplementary food can be particularly important.

Improved grassland

Areas of grassland that have been improved for livestock, by grazing, mowing, sowing with desirable grass species, drainage or treatment with fertilizers or herbicides. Agricultural improvement usually results in decreased diversity of the grassland plants and dominance by a few quick-growing grasses.

Indicator species

A particular species that reflects the overall health of a wider group or species or an environment as a whole.

Invasive (non-native) species

A species that is not native to a particular ecosystem, and causes harm. They tend to reproduce quickly, and spread rapidly.

Invertebrate community

The range and mix of invertebrates found in a particular area.

Invertebrates

Invertebrates are animals that do not have a backbone. This includes a very wide variety of creatures, for example: insects, spiders, molluscs (snails, slugs, many sea creatures), crustaceans (crabs, lobsters etc), worms, jellyfish and many more.

IUCN

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

Jinking

An unpredictable flight from side-to-side when flushed exhibited by certain birds such as woodcock.

Lead-in strips

Sections of cover crop planted to provide a channel of cover, and so avoid gamebirds using hedges as corridors to get to and from their release pens.

Marking birds

Watching where a shot bird lands to ensure it is found and retrieved as quickly as possible.

NE

Natural England. The government's adviser for the natural environment in England, helping to protect England's nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide.

NGC

National Gamebag Census, see chapter 10.

NGO

National Gamekeepers' Organisation:
www.nationalgamekeepers.org.uk

PCS

Partridge Count Scheme, see chapter 10.

Pesticides

Treatments to remove plant or animal pests – the term pesticides includes both herbicides, which kill groups of weeds, and insecticides, which kill groups of insects.

Picker-up

A person with a trained gundog retriever which locates and picks up game when it has been shot.

Poult

Young gamebirds. Pheasant poults are generally bought at 6-8 weeks old, and red-legged partridges at 11-13 weeks.

Raptors

Birds of prey. Raptors hunt and feed on rodents and other animals and include eagles, vultures, buzzards, kites, harriers, owls and others.

Release pen

Pheasants: A large, open-topped pen sited in woodland where pheasant poults are placed while they adapt to their environment.
Partridge: Smaller, closed-topped pens, usually sited on open farmland, to hold partridges.

Residual grass

Grass that is left from the year before or dead grass that can provide good nesting cover for grey partridges.

Roding

The breeding display flight of woodcock, which is performed by the males between April and June. They fly over woodland at tree-top height with rapid wingbeats, whilst making a unique low, croaking call.

Roosting

A place where birds settle to sleep. Though it is widely perceived that birds roost in trees, as with pheasants, some birds roost on the ground, as with partridges, or on water, as with mallard.

Scrape

Scrapes are shallow depressions filled with water that are dug in fields to benefit wading birds and wildfowl.

Shelter belt

A line of trees or shrubs planted to protect an area, especially woodland, from wind and weather.

SSSI

Site of Special Scientific Interest, an area designated to protect a particular species or habitat.

Supplementary feed

Additional feed, usually grain, provided by the gamekeeper to supplement the food that gamebirds can forage for in the countryside.

Topping up

The practice of releasing additional birds throughout the season to replace those already shot.

Understorey

Plant life growing beneath the woodland canopy.

Unimproved habitat

Areas that have not been ploughed, sown, treated with pesticides, or had fertilizer spread.

Voluntary restraint

Shoots or Guns not shooting something that is a legal quarry species through their own choice, rather than being prevented from doing so by legislation.

Waders

A group of birds most of whom spend parts of their life wading in

the shallow waters of the sea, estuaries and lakes. They are referred to as “shorebirds” in America.

Wild bird mix

Seed mixes that include a range of species known to be attractive to, or provide good food resources for, wild birds. When sown as cover crops these can provide many benefits to farmland birds as well as gamebirds.