

SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE

WILDFOWLING ON CAERLAVEROCK NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

These notes have been compiled by the Caerlaverock Panel. They are designed as an introduction to wildfowling at Caerlaverock.

Please read them and ensure that the highest standards of behaviour and safety are observed to the benefit of the enjoyment of yourself and all visitors to the National Nature Reserve.

A) Where to Shoot and When

The area on which you may shoot is shown on the map in the permit, on the map supplied with your permit and on the Reserve signs. Study the map carefully; there is no excuse for straying outside the shooting zone as it is adequately marked with yellow and black banded posts and on boundary signs. If you intend wildfowling for the first time at a morning flight you are advised to inspect the boundaries and access routes the previous day.

As stated in the permit you may shoot from one hour before sunrise until 10 am and then from 3 pm until one hour after sunset on any day, except Sunday, for which the permit is valid during the season from 1 September until 20 February. From 1 February to 20 February you may **ONLY** use your permit from below high water mark, ordinary spring tides - this means from any of the creeks within the shooting zone.

You are not permitted to carry a gun on any part of the reserve (including the shooting zone) between one hour after sunset until one hour before sunrise or between 10 am and 3 pm or on Sundays. Sunrise and

sunset times are widely published by local press and on the internet, via mobile weather apps and in published tide tables.

B) What can be shot

The permit only allows you to shoot wildfowl subject to the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and any requirements set out with the advice of the Caerlaverock NNR Wildfowling Panel. For Caerlaverock NNR this means that the main quarry species are:

GEESE - Pink-footed, Greylag, Canada
DUCK – Pintail, Mallard, Teal, Wigeon, Tufted Duck, Goldeneye, Gadwall, Pochard and Shoveler

You may shoot other duck and geese included in Schedule 2 Part 1 of the above Act but you are not permitted to shoot game species such as Pheasant, Partridge, Snipe or Woodcock or ground game such as rabbit, fox and hare.

You may not shoot at any other bird species:

You should be particularly aware of the presence of large numbers of protected species on the NNR and wider Solway Firth. Barnacle Geese often flight from the mudflats over the shooting zone. This species is protected and any person shooting at this or any other protected species will, in addition to being reported to the Panel, be reported to the Police.

YOU ARE ADVISED TO KNOW YOUR QUARRY AND DO NOT SHOOT IF IN ANY DOUBT.

C) General Information

1 Park carefully and quietly - Do not obstruct gateways or roads and avoid slamming doors.

Parking is in designated areas as shown on the permit.

2 Be on time - It is infuriating to have shooting ruined by latecomers. However, any wildfowler found to be on the shooting zone out with the specified times and in possession of a firearm will have their permit withdrawn immediately and be reported to the Caerlaverock Panel

3 Dress sensibly - Wear inconspicuous clothing otherwise the birds will avoid you as well as other nearby fowlers.

4 Keep quiet - Sound travels far over the merse at flight times.

5 Torches - Use torches sparingly. Flashing lights not only spoil your vision but alert the birds to your presence.

6 Keep your distance - For your own safety and enjoyment as well as your neighbour's.

7 Dogs - Ensure that your dog is kept under close control and clean up after your dog, in accordance with the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#).

8 Tide - Familiarise yourself with details of tide time and height, The merse and creeks can be flooded especially at times of spring tides and strong south-westerly winds.

9 Fog - Carry a compass in case of mist or fog.

10 Binoculars - while not essential, add to your enjoyment.

11 Shotguns

- Load only when in position. Never leave a cartridge in the gun - too many accidents result from neglect of this simple rule.
- Always unload before you leave.

- Always check that your gun barrel is clear of obstructions i.e. – mud.
- Always keep the safety catch on until ready to shoot.
- Never shoot where you cannot see clearly,
- Keep your gun properly maintained.
- Always take away your cartridge cases for safe disposal. They can prove fatal if eaten by grazing stock.

12 Range - Distances on the merse can be deceptive, and you may be tempted to shoot at birds well beyond reasonable range. High, or out of range shooting will result in the immediate withdrawal of the wildfowling permit.

As large, conspicuous birds, geese often appear to be flying lower and more slowly than they really are. Consider whether you are judging height and speed accurately within the capabilities of your gun, charge and shot and the conditions.

Indiscriminate shooting not only spoils your own sport but that of others, risks wounding birds and brings shooting and the NNR and wildfowling into disrepute.

13 Retrieving – Only take shots which will result in birds falling where you can ensure you can reach them. You may retrieve the quarry when shot or wounded birds land beyond the shooting area

14 Duck and Goose Rings - Please remove any rings from your quarry and send them to the appropriate address or give them to a member of SNH staff or monitoring officer.

15 Public access - The public car park at Castle Corner to the western edge of the shooting zone is well beyond the range of any sensibly positioned wildfowler but extra care should be taken to ensure that persons using it

are not put in any danger. No shooting from or above footpaths is authorised.

D) Permit Returns

You should complete an entry on the permit for each flight which you attend as soon as it is practically feasible. The information supplied is our main indication of the extent to which the wildfowling area is being used and of the relative success of wildfowlers. False or incorrect information may lead to reduction in permit issue which is unnecessary or to an increase in permit issue which could lead to overcrowding. Recording more birds shot than actually were could lead to unnecessary concern about the species involved and perhaps a reduction in permit issue.

The main aim of the control of wildfowling at the Reserve is to ensure that the sport is sustainable and enjoyable for those who obtain permits and others who visit the reserve. To falsify returns not only risks a permit holder being banned from holding a permit on the NNR, but is likely to lead to a reduction in the enjoyment of the sport for future wildfowlers.

Because of the importance attached to the information obtained from permit returns, anyone who does not return their permit is automatically banned from receiving a permit for a year.

E) Monitoring

The reserve is staffed by SNH Officers, or authorised representatives to monitor the permit scheme on behalf of SNH. The SNH staff are also concerned with scientific and management work and wider visitor safety, access, understanding and enjoyment. They are there to give advice and information about the reserve and it is hoped that you will pass on information to them on anything of interest you see while at Caerlaverock.

The SNH staff may well ask to see your permit to check that only "**bona fide**" permit holders wildfowl on the Reserve. Window stickers should be displayed in vehicles.

Unfortunately from time to time they also have to deal with offences under the Byelaws, wildlife protection legislation. and for bad sporting abusive or aggressive behaviour including shooting at birds out of range or behaviour which is in contravention of best practise and codes of conduct.

Anyone who breaches the permit scheme rules, byelaws or wider legislation which applies on the NNR will have their permit removed by SNH staff or authorised representatives. A report will be sent to the Secretary of the Caerlaverock Panel who will invite a written statement from the wildfowler concerned and an account of the incident will be presented to the Panel for their consideration. If a crime may have been committed this will be reported to the Police. Proven offences result in a ban on holding a permit for a varying number of years depending upon the severity of the incident. Further breaches may result in a permanent ban.

Consideration and respect for other wildfowlers and visitors must be observed at all times. We expect the highest standards of behaviour and shooting on the NNR and that you, along with all our visitors will have an enjoyable visit to Caerlaverock National Nature Reserve.

If you require any more information about wildfowling on the Reserve or indeed you wish to know more about any aspect of the Reserve, our Reserve staff will be pleased to help and can be contacted at:

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