These notes have been compiled by the Caerlaverock Panel and are designed as an introduction to wildfowling at Caerlaverock. Please read them and ensure that the highest standards of behaviour and safety are observed for the benefit and enjoyment of yourself and all visitors to the NNR.

A. When and Where to Shoot:
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 wildfowling area, it is clearly marked with yellow and black striped posts along the east and west edge of the zone. The north boundary is marked by the stock fence at the back of the saltmarsh (merse). The south boundary is the edge of the green merse within the confines of the east and west boundaries. 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.

You may shoot from one hour and 15 minutes before sunrise until 10 am and then from 3 pm until one hour and 30 minutes after sunset on any day for which the permit is valid during the season from 1 October until 20 February except Sundays and Christmas Day. When carrying a shotgun you may only access this wildfowling area during these times. 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.

For the purposes of access you are permitted to carry your gun in a slip from the reserve access points to the wildfowling area. The access points are the reserve car parks at Castle Corner and Hollands and Hollands loaning. The wildfowling area is marked by the stock fence at the north edge of the merse, please use the styles provided. Published tide tables can be found on the reserve notice boards.

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 quarry species are:

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

**YOU MAY NOT SHOOT AT ANY OTHER SPECIES:**

You should be particularly aware of the presence of large numbers of protected species on the NNR and wider Solway Firth. Barnacles are 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. For information Barnacle Geese often flight from the mudflats over the wildfowling area in mixed flocks with the Pink footed geese.

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

**THERE IS A BAG LIMIT OF 5 BIRDS PER FLIGHT.**

C. General Information:

**Shotguns**
- You may only use non-toxic shot and you may not carry or use lead shot on the reserve.
- 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 e.g. 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.

**Range** - Distances on the merse can be deceptive, and you may be tempted to shoot at birds well beyond reasonable range. The shooting range, regardless of bore, is to be no higher than 50 yards. 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 wildfowling into disrepute.

**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 wildfowling area. In event of un-retrieved bird please advise stewards or reserve staff of location to ensure safe dispatch.
Dogs - Ensure that your dog is kept under close control and clean up after your dog, in accordance with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Park carefully and quietly - Do not obstruct gateways or roads and avoid slamming doors. Parking is in designated areas as shown on the permit.

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

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

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

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

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

Litter – Ensure all used shotgun cases are collected after flight.

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.

Poor weather conditions - Carry a compass in case of mist or fog.

Binoculars - while not essential, help identify species and add to your enjoyment.

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.

Public access - Please be aware that public have access to the site at all times.

D. Permit Returns:
You must 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. The main aim of the control of wildfowling at the Reserve is to ensure that the sport is sustainable and enjoyable.

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. Completed permits, whether used or not, should be returned within 15 days from your last booked date.

E. Monitoring:
Wildfowling is monitored by SNH Officers and authorised stewards to ensure the permits scheme rules are adhered to. 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 and authorised stewards will ask to see check your permit and may ask you to provide proof of ID, e.g. your shotgun certificate or a drivers licence. Window stickers must be displayed in vehicles.

Anyone who breaches the permit scheme rules, byelaws or wider legislation which applies on the NNR will have their permit removed by SNH staff. 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.

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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