

End the shooting season with a bag record

Friday 7 February, 2020

- All shoots urged to take part in National Gamebag Census
- Long-running GWCT initiative is an important conservation tool
- Help build a historical perspective on shooting
- Contribute to fighting misinformation about species abundance

As you pack away your guns after another season in the field, the Game & Wildlife Trust (GWCT) urges you not to consign your gamebook to another six months on the shelf. Instead, you should submit records to its National Gamebag Census (NGC) – a strictly confidential registry of species shot or culled in the UK.

By doing so, you will be joining thousands of people whose gamebooks have provided a record of shooting efforts since the NGC was launched by GWCT in 1961. Considered a wildlife conservation resource of global significance, it measures long-term trends in national and regional bags for a wide range of species. In many other countries, these records are gathered by government bodies, but the UK is reliant on voluntary submissions to the GWCT from those who want to use their experience to help inform wildlife decisions. The information is often used to improve the understanding of population trends, particularly of species that are otherwise difficult to count, and to counter misinformation about species abundance.

Nicholas Aebischer, Deputy Director of Research at the GWCT, is responsible for the Census and notes: “The scientific value of national or regional trends summarised from bag records is immense. Despite the growing popularity of shooting, the number of submissions to NGC has declined in recent years. We invite all shoots, large and small, to send us their records in confidence. Whether you have been filling in gamebooks for years or you run a newly-established shoot, we would love to hear from you. Every record gives us a more accurate picture of how bags change over time and how the underlying species abundance changes.”

You can join the Census by completing a sign-up form at www.gwct.org.uk/ngc or by calling 01425 651019 to request a paper form.

Six things to know about the NGC

1. It is a voluntary scheme that relies on the goodwill of keepers and shoot managers.
2. It is free to take part.
3. It is easy to do - simply fill in the form online or by post
4. Shoots of any shape or size are welcome.
5. It is not necessarily a long-term commitment, even if you provide data for only a few years it is still useful.
6. **We keep your records completely confidential** - we do not share them with third parties and the Freedom of Information Act does not apply to GWCT.

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