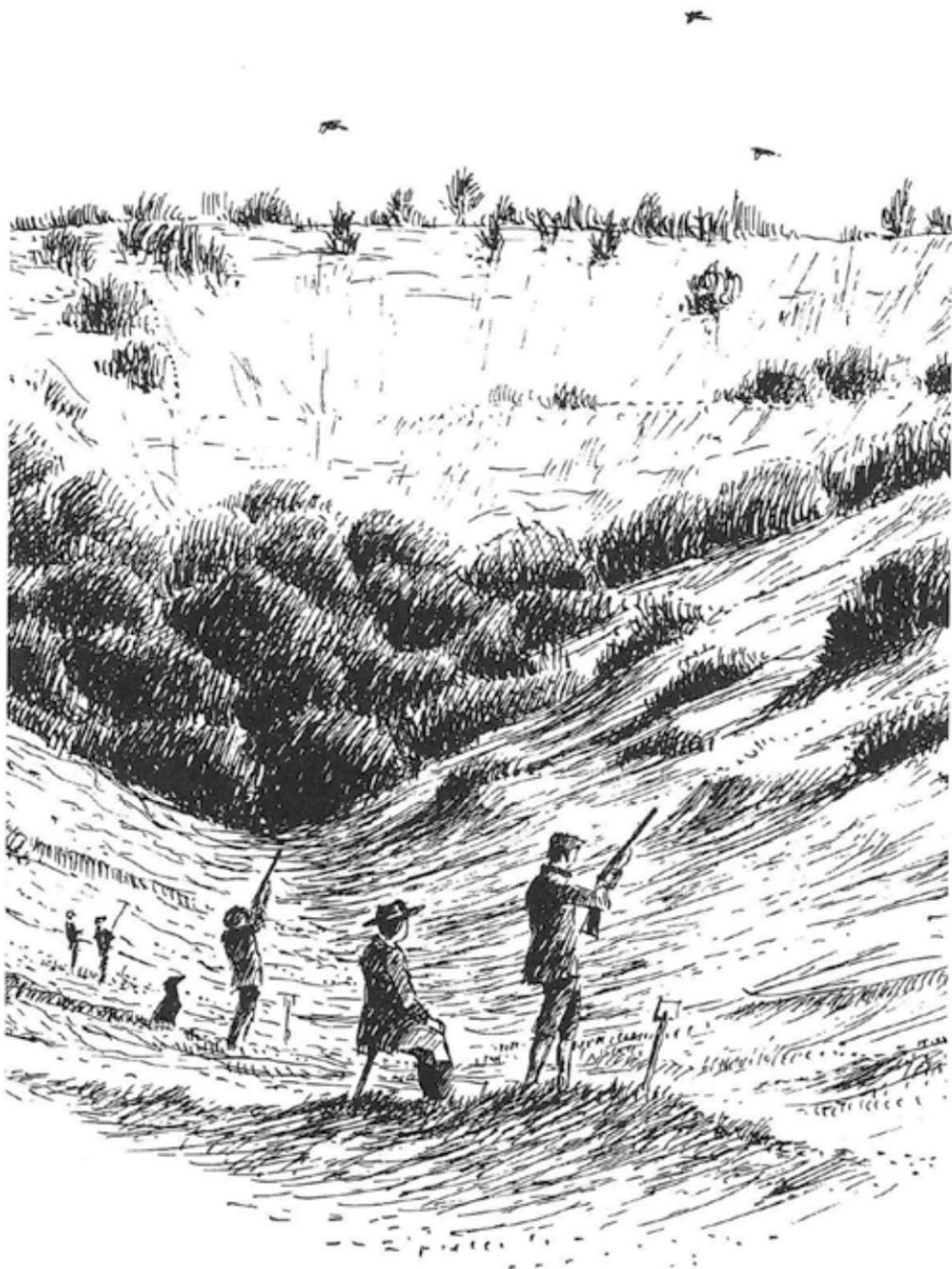


# CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	ix
1 A Day's Shooting – Etiquette	1
2 The Beginner	37
3 The Host	49
4 Safety	55
5 Care of the Gun	61
6 Dress and Equipment	69
7 Gundogs	91
8 Treatment of Game	99
9 The Law	109
10 Shooting Agents	118
11 Gameshooting Seasons	120
12 The Rest of the Team	129
13 How to Shoot	139
14 Rough-shooting	146
<i>Appendix 1</i> Glossary of Shooting Terms	151
<i>Appendix 2</i> Useful Addresses	165
<i>Index</i>	169
<i>About BASC</i>	175



## SAFETY

This book's main aim is to preach safety. No-one denies the influence of fate, but usually it intervenes only after some form of carelessness. Genuine accidents do happen but usually due to negligence by someone and not on the part of the victim.

There are four areas of safety; the points under each heading are not necessarily in a set order of priority. In order to press the point, this chapter is necessarily clipped and curt, hence the simplest classification of Do's and Don'ts.

### 1. GUNS AND AMMUNITION

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**Do** maintain and service your gun carefully.

**Don't** use a gun you know to be unsafe.

**Don't** buy a gun unless you have a reputable gunsmith's certificate to say that it is in proof and safe.

**Don't** open a gun after a misfire unless it is pointed well away from people and dogs.

**Don't** mix different calibres of ammunition in pockets or any other container since dangerous barrel bursts can occur.

**Don't** place ammunition too close to dampness or excessive heat.

**Do** use the correct size shot for your intended quarry.

**Don't** use damaged ammunition – remember that a life is worth more than the few pence of a cartridge. Similarly, be very wary of buying or accepting second-hand ammunition. While it may be perfectly safe, it could prove to be unreliable.

**Don't** use ammunition which the gun has not been proved for, e.g. Magnum cartridges in standard chambers.

**Don't ever be complacent.**

## THE GAMESHOOTER'S POCKET GUIDE

Hang game unplucked with stomach intact, in a cool, well-ventilated, shaded place protected from predators such as pets and especially cats. A garage is often the nearest solution available but should be made cat-proof, i.e. keep the doors closed. Everybody has their own ideas on length of hanging; in essence, it depends very much on the weather, on the species, and on personal taste. If the body comes away from the head, it may be safe to say that the game is overhung!

The following minimum times are fairly conservative since the author prefers his game to be not too gamey:

### SUGGESTED HANGING TIMES BY SPECIES

Species	Minimum (more applicable early season)	Maximum (more applicable late season)
Grouse	1 day	7 days
Ptarmigan	1 day	7 days
Partridge	2/3 days	7 days
Pheasant	4 days	10/12 days
Duck	1 day	3 days
Woodcock	1 day	3 days
Snipe	1 day	3 days
Pigeon	1 day	3 days
Hare	4 days	10 days
Rabbit	1 day	3 days
Goose	3 days	10 days

**NB.** In very mild weather, these times could be halved, particularly with duck and geese.

# SHOTGUNS – A GUIDE TO THE LAW

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## **Applying for a Shotgun Certificate**

You should apply for a shotgun certificate to the firearms licensing department of the police force in whose area you are living. Instructions for completing the application form are necessarily thorough but straightforward to understand. Shotgun certificates contain a 45mm x 35mm passport-sized photograph of the holder, a detailed description of all guns held on the certificate, including any identification numbers if known. You will therefore need to provide this information on the shotgun certificate application form. Safekeeping conditions appear on all shotgun certificates. This creates two distinct levels of security to ensure safe custody of the guns.

## **Criteria for the Issue of a Shotgun Certificate**

A chief officer of police may refuse to grant a shotgun certificate if:

1. He is not satisfied that the applicant can possess a shotgun without danger to public safety or to the peace.
2. The applicant does not have to make out a case for wishing to possess shotguns; neither does he have to give good reason for possessing one.

## **Common Expiry Dates for Shotgun and Firearms Certificates**

A firearm certificate holder applying for the granting or renewal of a shotgun certificate can ask for it to be issued with the same expiry date as his firearm certificate. Alternatively, where a shotgun certificate holder applies for the grant or renewal of a firearm

# GAMEBIRD AND WATERFOWL OPEN SEASONS (dates inclusive)

Species	England & Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Isle of Man
<b>Pheasant</b>	Oct 1–Feb 1	Oct 1–Feb 1	Oct 1–Jan 31	Oct 1–Jan 31
<b>Grey Partridge</b>	Sep 1–Feb 1	Sep 1–Feb 1	Sep 1–Jan 31	Protected (ban in force)
<b>Red-legged Partridge</b>	Sep 1–Feb 1	Sep 1–Feb 1	Sep 1–Jan 31	Sep 13–Jan 31
<b>Red Grouse</b>	Aug 12–Dec 10	Aug 12–Dec 10	Aug 12–Nov 30	Aug 25–Oct 31 *
<b>Black Grouse</b>	Aug 20–Dec 10 (Somerset, Devon and New Forest: Sep 1–Dec 10)	Aug 20–Dec 10	–	–
<b>Ptarmigan</b>	–	Aug 12–Dec 10	–	–
<b>Duck &amp; Goose</b> (inland)	Sep 1–Jan 31	Sep 1–Jan 31	Sep 1–Jan 31	Ducks Sep 1–Jan 31 Geese** July 1–Mar 31
<b>Duck &amp; Goose</b> (below High Water Mark) – see page 120	Sep 1–Feb 20	Sep 1–Feb 20	Sep 1–Jan 31	Ducks Sep 1–Jan 31 Geese ** Jul 1–Mar 31
<b>Common Snipe</b>	Aug 12–Jan 31	Aug 12–Jan 31	Sep 1–Jan 31	Sep 1–Jan 31
<b>Jack Snipe</b>	Protected	Protected	Sep 1–Jan 31	Protected
<b>Woodcock</b>	Oct 1–Jan 31	Sep 1–Jan 31	Oct 1–Jan 31	Oct 1–Jan 31
<b>Golden Plover</b>	Sep 1–Jan 31	Sep 1–Jan 31	Sep 1–Jan 31	Protected
<b>Coot/Moorhen</b>	Sep 1–Jan 31	Sep 1–Jan 31	Protected	Protected