The Kent Wildfowling & Conservation Association

Information for prospective members

www.kentwildfowlers.co.uk
www.wildspacesfund.org.uk

IT IS ILLEGAL TO USE LEAD SHOT FOR SHOOTING DUCKS, GEESE, COOT AND MOORHEN, OR TO USE LEAD SHOT OVER SPECIFIED SSSI WETLAND FOR ANY SPECIES.

We are pleased to hear of your interest in the KWCA. This sheet contains basic information about the Association and applying for membership. Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact us.
For general enquiries:
Email: enquiries@kentwildfowlers.co.uk or telephone our Secretary on 07836 771715

For new membership enquiries:
Email: join@kentwildfowlers.co.uk

For membership renewals:
Email membership@kentwildfowlers.co.uk or telephone our Membership Secretary on 07818 061783

Founded in 1953, the Kent Wildfowling and Conservation Association has grown to become the largest wildfowling association in the country. Since 1983 it has increased its freehold land base from less than 100 acres to over 2,500 acres. It is the largest single owner of saltmarsh in the Medway Estuary and shoots over 13,000 acres across five counties. With access to such considerable amount of marsh and foreshore throughout the South and East, the KWCA offers superb variety and value to those drawn towards this demanding but extremely enjoyable pastime.

As well as wildfowling, the Association's vast land holdings and sporting rights have enabled it to also offer inland syndicated duck shooting, air rifle hunting & target shooting and several coarse fishing areas.

The principal aims of the KWCA are the preservation of our sport from those who seek to curtail it and the conservation of wildfowl and their environment.

The following facilities can be offered to all fully subscribed members (when available).
1. Wildfowling in Kent, East Sussex, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.
2. Rough shooting, ferreting and vermin control in Kent and Essex.
3. Inland duck shooting syndicates. (Extra fee, subject to availability.)*
4. Sportscover Insurance for Legal Liability, Personal Accident and Legal Expenses*
5. Annual gundog tests.*
6. Regular newsletters.*
7. Maps of our shooting grounds.*
8. Social events.*
9. A personal mentor from whom you can seek advice.
10. Accompanied trips by arrangement.
11. Summer visits to our shooting grounds to show you around.*
12. Basic dog training lessons during the summer months.*
13. Wildfowl identification days.*
14. Air rifle hunting and target shooting.
15. Coarse fishing (additional fee).*
16. Regular updates via email.*
17. Website access.*

*Also available to Associate Members.
Air Rifle Hunter, Air Target and Coarse Fishing are also offered as separate membership categories at reduced cost.

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All joining members desirous of Full membership will be known as FULL NEW MEMBERS for the first five years and during this period their fees will include a £30 per annum joining fee. After five years they will become FULL MEMBERS and only pay the annual membership fee. (For full details of current membership subscriptions, please visit our website.)

Applicants desirous of Full New or Senior New membership will be required to pay a £15 administration fee. If returning an application form by post, please enclose all required documents.

Classes of Membership for NEW members

Full New	-	A fully subscribed member.
Senior New	-	60 years old and over. A fully subscribed member.
Junior	-	Under 18 years old. (No voting rights.)
Associate	-	Supporter (No shooting or voting rights.)
Country	-	Six shooting permits per year only. Restricted membership (See note 6.)
Air Rifle Target	-	Access to our air rifle target range only. (No voting rights.)
Air Rifle Hunter	-	Access to our air rifle Hunter areas and target range only. (No voting rights.)
Coarse Fishing	-	Access to our coarse fishing areas. (No voting rights.)

Shooting Permits

All KWCA shooting areas are controlled by a permit system with returnable Site Record Cards. This allows us to control the number of guns and offer all members equal opportunities as well as providing important wildfowl refuges. It enables us to fulfil legislative requirements and use accurate data to counter any accusations levelled at us by those opposed to our sport.

At first glance, the permit system may appear to be complicated, but with over 80 shooting areas to regulate, each with its own special conditions, simpler methods are ineffectual.

The Association's shooting rights cover over 60 miles of coastline and over 13,000 acres of marsh and mud. This is divided into numerous permit areas; each one named, and clearly defined on members' maps. Depending on the nature of these areas, permits may be valid for part of a day, a whole day, several weeks, a calendar month or even the entire year. Some areas are open all year round; others have a limited number of shooting days. The number of permits may also be restricted on some areas depending upon their size or sensitivity to disturbance.

There is no restriction on the number of permits you can apply for, provided that you have returned your previous Site Record Card for that area. For instance, you can hold monthly permits for several areas and, at the same time, numerous day permits for different areas. However, to allow an equal opportunity to all, you may only hold one permit at a time for any particular area, and you must submit your Site Record Card for that area before applying for another permit.

Once you have joined as a full member, for the most part, permits are free; you can collect in person, have them sent by post (you provide a Stamped Addressed Envelope) or get them online. Full details of shooting areas and permits, along with a list of Permit Issuing Officers (PIOs), are given on our website as well as in the August Newsletter. Remember that PIOs are volunteers with a family life of their own. Please respect this, be courteous and telephone at a reasonable time.

Please note! All members must be in possession of the following when shooting on KWCA grounds: a valid membership card, the appropriate permit for the area and a valid shotgun certificate (or photocopy). These must be produced, without fuss, when requested to do so by a fellow member, Warden, or land owner / occupier. Any member found on the marsh without membership card, permit or shotgun certificate (or copy) will be disciplined. KWCA Wardens carry out regular checks.

Safety

The Kent Wildfowling & Conservation Association has a good safety record but it must be stressed that wildfowling is not without its elements of danger. The tides, terrain and weather conditions make this pastime

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far more demanding than any other branch of shooting, and the wildfowler must be on guard at all times. The hazards met when taking to icy waters in small craft or facing a strenuous trudge through glutinous ooze, risking exposure and fatigue should not be taken lightly.

For those of us who frequent the intertidal zone for recreation, even the smallest of tidal storm surges can be life threatening. As deep depressions pass to the North, Atlantic surges are squeezed into the North Sea, driven by low pressure and northerly gales, they surge down the east coast and into the Thames and Medway rivers, bringing with them, potentially catastrophic flooding.

Watch out for low pressure in the North Sea! If you do not see it coming, one day it will catch you out!

The safe and responsible handling of your shotgun is paramount to your personal safety and the safety of others when Wildfowling. Unlike other forms of shooting, wildfowling presents a whole range of new difficulties to be overcome. Hands and fingers wet and muddy, numb with cold, make control of your gun clumsy. Feet stuck fast in the mud, shooting from crouched or kneeling positions frequently make swing and balance awkward.

Those new to the sport must be cautious and rely heavily on the experience of the older and wiser members of the Association. Our Permit Issuing Officers, Wardens and your Mentor are always available, and ready to give advice on matters of safety. If you are unsure and need guidance, accompanied trips out can be arranged.

We cannot repeat often enough the importance of ensuring your own personal safety when out on the marsh, wildfowling can be a hazardous pastime and great care should be taken at all times.
If in doubt stay at home!

Quarry Identification

It is the sole responsibility of the individual to be absolutely certain in the identification of the quarry.

Our comprehensive website quarry guide will help you, but it is only a guide, and the only real way of attaining positive identification is by regular observation of species on the quarry list. This can be done out of season, and we can arrange bird identification outings for new members at local nature reserves. At dawn and dusk, the poor light makes identification even more difficult. Learn to identify their silhouette, the sound of their wing-beat and their call.

Of equal importance is the ability to judge the range of your quarry. Our website range and forward allowance charts are a good starting point, but there is no substitute for natural observation of the markings and size of quarry. Visits to local nature reserves will also help in judging effective shooting ranges.

Wildfowling Quarry and Seasons

The main quarry species are wild ducks and geese which are mostly migrants, travelling from the Arctic Circle, Scandinavia and the Low Countries in the autumn and returning to their breeding grounds in the spring. Their habits are governed by tide, wind, weather and moon.

Duck, many of which are seed and grass eaters, usually come in at dusk to feed and spend the night on the pools, returning to the mudflats at dawn. Geese generally fly in at day break to their feeding grounds of grass or winter cereals, and return to roost far out on the mudflats at dusk.

Ducks	**Geese**	**Waders**	**Others**
Gadwall	Canada Goose	Golden Plover	Coot
Goldeneye	Greylag Goose	Common Snipe	Moorhen
Mallard	Pink-footed Goose	Woodcock	
Pintail	White-fronted Goose		
Common Pochard			
Shoveler			
Teal			
Tufted Duck			
Wigeon			

Shooting Seasons

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Duck & Goose – inland, Golden Plover, Coot and Moorhen
Sept 1 - Jan 31

Duck & Goose - below high water mark of ordinary spring tides
Sept 1 - Feb 20

Common Snipe	Woodcock
Aug 12 – Jan 31	1 Oct – 31 Jan

On some KWCA shooting areas it is permissible to shoot game; their seasons are:

Partridge	Pheasant
1 Sept – 1 Feb	1 Oct – I Feb

In England, game may not be shot on Christmas Day and Sundays. The shooting of wildfowl on Christmas Day and Sundays is allowed, but not on Sundays in some counties - including Norfolk and some parts of Cambridgeshire (Isle of Ely).

Law protects all wild birds in England; authorised persons may take some species at any time of year, under a General Licence issued by Natural England. On some of our shooting areas you may shoot birds other than wildfowl and game, such as Woodpigeons, Crows, Magpies etc, you must comply with the terms of the General Licences.

Please note that the Kent Wildfowling & Conservation Association does not allow the killing of Canada Geese - Branta canadensis on any of its land during the closed season.

Insurance

Your KWCA membership includes a package of insurance policies to provide protection for all Members.

COVER FOR LEGAL LIABILITY
The policy provides cover for each member while undertaking Insured Recreational Activities which are defined as wildfowling, stalking, the shooting of game, deer, vermin, and any other lawful quarry, target shooting including clay shooting, airgunning, conservation, hawking, archery, angling and ferreting, gundog working and training.

The Geographical Limits are the U.K. plus temporary visits abroad other than to USA or Canada

The Limits of Indemnity are:
Public Liability £10 000,000 any one event.
Employers Liability £10,000.000 any one event.
Products Liability £10,000,000 during any one period of insurance.

COVER FOR PERSONAL ACCIDENT
The policy provides Capital Benefits in the event of Accidental Bodily Injury sustained while undertaking an Insured Recreational Activity (as defined above).

COVER FOR LEGAL EXPENSES – **Not included with membership for those joining after 16th July 2020**
Up to £50,000 any one claim in respect of Legal expenses incurred, in an appeal against a revocation or refusal to renew a certificate holders shotgun or firearm certificate.

The insurance cover provided by your KWCA membership will cease if you are expelled, resign or your membership lapses or is cancelled. Renewals always fall due on 1 April. The membership of a member who does not renew and pay his subscription by 31st July shall automatically lapse and all benefits that membership provides, including insurance, will cease.

Conservation

The members of the Kent Wildfowling & Conservation Association are committed and dedicated to the cause of conservation.

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To further this aim, in 2008 the KWCA launched a new conservation and land preservation arm - Wild Spaces Fund.

Wild Spaces Fund is a company limited by guarantee and a UK registered charity whose aims are to preserve wild spaces, so that wildlife, and people, will benefit.

Wild Spaces Fund currently manages six of our flagship reserves at Cooling, Isle of Grain, Iwade, Halling, Motney Hill and Westbere.

There is plenty of opportunity for you to become involved in all aspects of wildlife conservation.

Your best Friend

Shooting wildfowl is possible without a dog, but it requires very careful planning. Obviously, if there is water about it is difficult to retrieve ducks; unless you're a strong swimmer. You will have to avoid shooting at anything that is likely to fall in the water, and that will severely curtail your wildfowling and the places you can shoot.

So a dog is very desirable; there are few situations when you can get by without one. Which breed you choose is a matter of personal preference and depends on the type of work you will be asking the dog to undertake.

If your dog's only task is to retrieve wildfowl on the foreshore then few would disagree that a Labrador or similar retriever is the answer. Having a double coat - fine fur next to the skin and longer hair over that, they can better stand the long, cold and often wet waits between retrieves.

Many shooters prefer a Springer Spaniel - particularly if they enjoy rough shooting as well as wildfowling, spaniel owners maintain that the breed is better for flushing game from really rough cover. A day on the marsh sitting in the cold and damp is just as tiring for the wildfowlers dog as a days walked up or rough shooting; both are strength sapping.

It is a good idea to provide something for your dog to sit on; frozen mud is the most unpleasant seat for your dog. Just one quarter of a bail of straw will provide ample material to make a warm dry comfortable bed. When coming off the marsh make sure that you have an old towel ready to rub your dog dry. It goes without saying that your dog should have access to a clean supply of fresh water during the day. Consider buying a neoprene dog coat (many are available in camouflage patterns) for your gundog, particularly if your dog is getting on a bit. As well as helping to insulate against the cold, they also provide additional buoyancy when swimming.

The cost of owning a working dog is high, not just buying the pup, but in terms of time and patience in training as well as veterinary treatment. Purely in financial terms it makes sense to look after your dog well, and your dog in turn, will serve you well. A strong bond develops between a wildfowler and his dog. A wildfowler's dog will never tell on you, and if you have a good day or a bad day, your dog will always think you are the best.

The club hold a working dog test in the summer, open to all KWCA members.
If you require help or advice in choosing a breed of gundog, you can ask a more experienced members of the club, since there are many different breeds of gundog that are owned by club members.

IMPORTANT

Note 1. Junior Members (under 18 years old)
All junior members when shooting on any KWCA shooting area, MUST be accompanied by an adult member (21 years old or over). If they wish to shoot, they MUST obtain a valid permit for the area concerned and MUST also hold a valid shotgun certificate, unless shooting with an air rifle on our Air Rifle Hunter areas or Air Rifle Target Range. Junior applicants holding a shot gun certificate must include a copy of it with their membership application. This can be uploaded on the online application form.

Applicants desirous of Junior membership must provide a letter from their parent or legal guardian giving their permission for the applicant to join the Association. This can be uploaded via the online application form.

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Note 2. Shot Gun Certificate
Only holders of shot gun certificates will be accepted for the following categories of membership: Full New, Senior New, Country and Junior intending to shoot with a shot gun. Your shot gun certificate can be uploaded via the online application form. If you apply for these categories by post you must send a photocopy of your shotgun certificate with your application. (Only provide the front sheet of your Shot Gun Certificate, not the list of guns!)

We use the copy of your shot gun certificate to confirm your identification and postal address, and as proof that you are permitted to own a shot gun. We do not retain the photocopy or uploaded file. Once you become a member, you must carry with you your shot gun certificate or a photocopy or electronic facsimile when shooting on KWCA shooting areas.

For membership classes requiring a shot gun certificate, on the expiry or cancellation of your shot gun certificate, your KWCA membership and any benefits for any of the above categories will be cancelled with immediate effect. This cancellation shall remain until such time as you are in possession of a valid shot gun certificate or you change your membership class to one not requiring a certificate.

Note 3. Character Reference / DBS Certificate
If you do not have a shot gun certificate, we may require you to provide a character reference or alternatively, sight of a DBS Certificate. Non SGC holders applying for Air Rifle Target and Air Rifle Hunter categories must provide a character reference or a copy of their DBS Certificate. A character reference should be written by a responsible person who is not a family member, and should include the name, address and telephone number of the referee, how they know you, how long they have known you, whether you are responsible and reliable, and whether you would be a valuable addition to the Association.

We do not require a character reference or DBS cert for Associate or Fishing applicants.

Note 4. Country Members
Entitled to a maximum of six daily shooting permits per season. No voting rights.
Country membership is only available to those residing **outside** of the counties of:
Kent, Essex, East Sussex, West Sussex, Hampshire, Surrey, Berkshire, Hertfordshire, Middlesex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, all Yorkshire counties, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Derbyshire and all London Boroughs.

Note 5. Your photograph
All applicants are required to provide a passport sized colour photograph of them self showing their face and shoulders. This can easily be uploaded and cropped on your online application form. Postal applicants must include this photograph with their application.

Note 6. The KWCA membership year
The KWCA membership year runs from 1st April until the following 31st March. All renewals are due on 1st April each year, regardless of when you joined during the preceding twelve months.
There is no reduction of fees for joining or renewing part way through the year.

Applicants applying in March will be deferred until 1 April, otherwise membership will be offered immediately.

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