

4 April 2022

## Open letter to the signatories of the 2020 call for a voluntary end to the use of lead in shotgun ammunition for live quarry shooting:

- BASC
- British Game Alliance
- Country Land and Business Association
- Countryside Alliance
- Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust
- Moorland Association
- National Gamekeepers' Organisation
- Scottish Association for Country Sports
- Scottish Land & Estates

## Invitation to join a call for a statutory end to the use and sale of lead shotgun ammunition

The RSPB and WWT advocate new legislation to end the use and sale of lead shotgun ammunition for shooting game animals in the UK because of its proven harms to wildlife, the environment and risks to public health. The availability of effective and comparably priced non-toxic shotgun ammunition means there are now no real practical obstacles to transition.

We were impressed by your [joint declaration of 24 February 2020](#) in which you called for complete voluntary phasing out of UK use of lead shotgun ammunition for game shooting over five years. Stopping the release of 1000s of tonnes of lead shot annually would bring us the mutual benefits of reduced mortality and morbidity of many bird species, including quarry species, as well as reducing soil contamination.

As one of the signatories to your declaration rightly [noted](#) *'The phased transition away from lead [...] in shotgun ammunition in live quarry shooting will make the environment a better place and will help develop the market for game'*. This was echoed by Rebecca Pow, the UK Government's Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, who [wrote](#) in March 2021 that, *"Addressing the impacts of lead ammunition will mark a significant step forward in helping to protect wildlife, people, and the environment."*

We note and appreciate the considerable efforts you have made since your call for a voluntary phasing-out of lead shot to raise awareness, debunk mistaken objections to switching to non-toxic shotgun ammunition and to demonstrate to shooters the practicality of switching.

We trust, therefore, that you are as disappointed as we were to see that the only published rigorous monitoring evidence available shows no indication that gamebird shooters are actually making the switch that you and we hoped for, despite indications from surveys of their intentions that many of them were persuaded to try it ([Green et al. 2022](#)). Similarly, compliance with the existing legislation banning the use of lead shotgun ammunition for shooting wildfowl in England has remained low ([Stroud et al. 2021](#)).

We conclude that only a statutory end, i.e., a ban on the sale and use for hunting of lead shotgun ammunition, accompanied by good communication and surveillance, is likely to achieve the outcome to which all of our organisations are publicly committed. Recognising the work you have done in preparing the shooting community for change, and given that we agree with you that the use of lead shotgun ammunition should cease by the time of the 2024/2025 shooting season, we urge that you join us now in recommending to government that legislation to ban the use of lead shotgun ammunition for hunting should proceed as soon as possible and come into effect by then. We appreciate that your views on other ammunition types may be different from ours, but we are clearly in agreement about the use of lead shotgun ammunition for hunting.

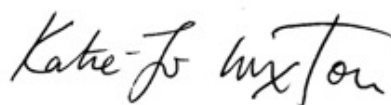
Joining us in this now is timely because a UK REACH process to consider such a ban has been requested by the UK Government and will soon reach a critical stage.

Yours faithfully,



**James Robinson**

Director of Conservation  
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust  
(WWT)



**Katie-Jo Luxton**

Executive Director, Global Conservation  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds  
(RSPB)