

Wildfowling in Findhorn Bay Local Nature Reserve
Kinloss Resident Comments on Shooting Activities During 2015-2016 Shooting Season

1. The shooting season for wildfowling is from 1 September to 20 February inclusive (8 days short of 6 months). Shooting is banned on Sundays and on Christmas day. From 1 February to 20 February shooting is restricted to below the High Water Mark only. During the rest of the season shooting is allowed anywhere, however permission is required from the landowner if one wants to shoot from private land. The shooting of wildfowl can be carried out anytime of the day or night. The use of Lead cartridges over wetlands is banned throughout the UK because of the effect Lead has on the environment and also the harm it can do to animals and mammals etc.
2. Kinloss Village including the Stables Community is located right next to the South and East area of Findhorn Bay. There are also houses located along the Southern edge of the Bay. The wind direction is always nearly coming in from a westerly direction, therefore any noise coming from the bay is magnified.
3. Shooting in the Bay, especially in the South and East is a free for all and because of this, is totally abused by the vast majority of wildfowlers. In fact this area is more commonly known as “Cowboy Corner” by the whole of the shooting fraternity. Many responsible wildfowlers avoid shooting in Findhorn Bay as they do not want to be associated with these Cowboys. Every year more wildfowlers are coming to Findhorn Bay to shoot as word travels about this “free for all” location.
4. This is what they get up to:
 - A. They tactically position themselves in such a way, to kill and maim as many geese as possible, as each wave passes overhead. The waves are numerous early to mid season and can last for up to 4 hours. The shooting is constant for up to 4 hours in the morning and up to 4 hours in the evening during the months of September, October and November.
 - B. They retrieve only what they want. The rest are left to rot at the waters edge.
 - C. It is commonly known that they have competitions to see which area can shoot the most. As a result a lot of geese are injured due to the high shooting that takes place.
 - D. We have evidence that they use Lead cartridges which is banned over wetlands.
 - E. They do not collect their empty cartridges or wads afterwards. I and other villagers venture into the bay (mainly Sundays) to clean up their mess, however most cartridges and wads drift out into the bay due to the high tides that sweep in on a twice daily basis.
 - F. They also leave behind the plastic bags which are used for the dogs to sit on, empty plastic energy bottles, cigarette packets, sweet wrappers etc. For some reason they also leave their tarpaulin camouflage nettings behind as well. The dogs messes are not picked up either.
 - G. The natural Hides they build are never dismantled after a shoot.
 - H. They dress up in full camouflage gear, mainly Eastern European, probably because it’s the cheapest to buy. All you can see is the gaps for the eyes and the mouth. For anyone venturing into the Bay, it is very intimidating. So intimidating that hardly anyone ventures into this part of the bay during the 6 month shooting season. Especially children.
 - I. I have noticed there can be as many as 16 shooters at any one time, this season. They come up for a week or two, leave on a Sunday and are replaced by more shooters. They come from as far as Bristol and Newcastle. It seems very much organised given the constant numbers.
 - J. There is a bus stop right outside the bay. The school children waiting to go to school have a full view of the massacre that is going on. They can hear all the shot gun noise and they can clearly see the resulting dead geese fall from the sky.
 - K. In the Army Married Quarters there are many young mothers escorting their children to and fro Kinloss Primary School whilst this shooting is going on. They may have nursery children with them and they can also be pushing prams. They too are also in full view of the carnage and noise that is

happening in Findhorn bay. The nominal roll at Kinloss Primary School as at September 2015 was 235 children.

- L. Because Lead shot is banned, steel shot should only be used. However it is commonly known that Steel shot is not as effective as Lead shot and as a result there are injured geese flying over the village of Kinloss, Kinloss Married Quarters and Kinloss Primary school. Some of these geese succumb to their injuries and fall to the ground in this Kinloss area. If there is however an injury to a person caused from a falling goose, no one can be prosecuted as it can never be proven as to who fired the actual shot, therefore the shooters shoot knowing they are always free from any prosecution. Recently a dead goose fell from the sky and landed next to a walk way the Army mothers use to take their children to school. I had my camera with me so I took photographs of it. This goose also narrowly missed a house. Also recently an injured goose landed into an enclosed children's play area, was rescued by two young ladies and was taken to the SSPCA whom they met up with at Fochabers. Personally I have also seen two dead Geese in Kinloss Cemetery and one in the children's playing field located next to the main road.
- M. Nature walkers, walkers, dog walkers, bird spotters, flower and fauna enthusiasts, eco tourists, children and visiting relatives avoid the South and the Eastern area of the bay for 6 months of the year. Here are some examples why: One woman (a locals visiting relative) was told to "F Off". Another woman stopped walking her dog there when she found out she was pregnant as she feared miscarriage. Another local has actually banned his 3 children from entering this area of the bay whilst the shooting season is on. During the few times I have ventured into the bay during the shooting season, I have been met with intimidating looks and glares from shooters if they happen to be in there at the same time.
- N. I have photographic proof showing that the shooters sometimes remove the "crop" and the wings from the geese they have shot and just take the breasts away with them. The crop and wings are left to rot in the bay.
- O. Some shooters are currently breaking the law by shooting geese from above the High Water Mark in Findhorn Bay. As I mentioned earlier shooting from the High Water Mark is banned from 1 February to 20 February every season.

From what I believe, the BASC members of the Local Wildfowlers Group tried to get a Bye Law introduced twice in the past, but MC has always said that it's so much trouble and cost, to actually put a Bye Law in place.

John Finnie MSP visited Friends of Findhorn Bay on 5 February 2016. He is in full favour of a total shooting ban being placed on Findhorn Bay.