

# News story: Chairman of Natural England speaks at the Game Fair

Andrew Sells today (Friday 26 July) welcomed efforts by the shooting community to safeguard and conserve hundreds of hectares of land for wildlife, when he spoke at the Game Fair. The Chair of Natural England said despite this work “more needs to be done to ensure there is a balance between shooting and conservation.”

He said:

Sustainably-managed shoots are safeguarding wildlife like curlews and lapwings, reducing flood risk and storing carbon.

Natural England will sign a second agreement with the British Association for Shooting and Conservation this weekend placing sustainable land management at the heart of BASC’s mission and recognising that 70 per cent of land managed by those affiliated to the shooting organisation are Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI).

However, he sounded a note of caution arguing that not all shoots are doing enough to protect the environment from damage.

He said:

Too many shoots seem to have lost sight of the balance between shooting and conservation and the natural environment. Has the size of the day’s bag become the dominant consideration? Are some shoots damaging, rather than enhancing, our natural environment? If so, I hope we can work together to eliminate any such practices.

And the recent terrible wildfires near Manchester have shown moorland managers and keepers bravely joining forces with firefighters to limit environmental damage. I applaud their tireless efforts.

We are also seeing more estates coming into partnership agreements with NE, voluntarily finding ways to enhance environment. These deepening relationships will be vital in joining up prime wildlife sites and achieving goals of 25 Year Environment Plan.