

[News story: New general licences for controlling Canada geese and wood pigeon comes into force](#)

The licences, which allows people to kill or take [Canada geese to preserve public health and safety](#) and [wood pigeon for preventing serious damage to crops](#) are part of a programme to replace the previous general licences for controlling 16 species of birds.

Natural England is working at full speed to ensure that those affected by the decision to revoke three general licences can continue to control certain wild birds where necessary.

Further general licences will be issued as quickly as possible. This will mean people can continue to take necessary action as they do now, whilst also taking into account the needs of wildlife.

Those who need to control Canada geese and wood pigeon in the circumstances described in this licence can now do so without further steps – there is no need to apply for an individual licence. For people in other circumstances who need to take action in other situations before new general licences are issued, Natural England has also published a simple online application system for individual control licences. During the application process users will be advised how to take urgent action if they cannot wait for their application to be determined.

The decision to revoke these licences was not taken lightly. Natural England explored all other options available, but was left with no choice but to revoke the licences. This was done to protect people with legitimate reasons to control wildlife from potentially committing offences by acting outside the law.

Natural England's interim chief executive Marian Spain said:

The new licences should give peace of mind to people who need to shoot to control certain wildlife that they can do so within the law.

I recognise, as does my team at Natural England, that the interim measures will cause disruption for licence users. This is not a ban on control, it is a change to the licences that allow control to take place.

Next steps

Natural England is committed to working with farmers, pest controllers, gamekeepers and other professionals who rely on these licences to ensure

everyone who needs to control the 16 species of wild birds covered by the revoked general licences can.

If people need to take action for species which are still not covered by a general licence, they will need to apply for an individual licence, using our [simple application form on GOV.UK](#).

Background

- To apply for an individual species licence, please make use of the online application system. Apply now: Direct link to the online application forms.
- Get the latest comment on this story on the Natural England blog.
- Currently the three licences subject to the legal challenge cover 16 bird species, including several members of the crow family (crows, magpies, rooks, jackdaws and jays), feral and wood pigeon and number of invasive non-native species (such as Canada goose).

The specific licences:

- General licence GL04: To kill or take certain species of wild birds to prevent serious damage or disease
- General licence GL05: To kill or take certain species of wild birds to preserve public health or public safety
- General licence GL06: To kill or take certain species of wild birds to conserve wild birds or flora or fauna