

Fowling Season 2018-19 Reconnaissance



Taking time to check out your wildfowling areas a month or two before the season starts keeps you up to date with any changes that have occurred during the summer months and can be carried out whilst fishing for sea trout and salmon on the estuaries and rivers.

Nothing seems to stand still these days. Simple things like parking your vehicle in tried and tested places may no longer be available - not a good start. Fields that had crops in them may now have luxury lodges, towns are forever expanding, farmer's bordering fences may have been eroded from recent high tides making a hike in the dark strange and difficult. Lastly, the estuaries will themselves have changed shape and depth. All these things will have to be taken into account when heading out for your first day of the season.

Awareness that increasing numbers of the general public could well be out there running, biking, dog walking, counting birds, or just bird watching before heading for work calls for a re-evaluation on the direction in where you are shooting and where your spent pellets might end up. Can you imagine turning up and having to deal with some of the above mentioned, in the dark!

Decoys should be intact unless you've sprayed them with an occasional pellet. They do however make a nice sound when shaken. Attached lines and weights will require attention, and last but not least what about man's best friend - what kind of shape is he or she in for the season ahead?

My daughter and son in law's cocker pup is now 8 months old and what a great job they are doing with him. Barra's obedience and familiarisation couldn't have gone any better. Water holds no fears either for this loveable little dog. Next on his list is the introduction to gun shots, we will be carrying this out with the use of a blank firing pistol and a walking stick to simulate a raised gun - all done very carefully out of sight and from a distance then gradually coming closer towards him. He dotes on his two owners and is happily coming back to them with retrieves - let's hope that continues! The icing on the cake would be to work him with a beating team on a local shoot, not this season but next, taking things slowly with him is definitely paying off. After all he is far too young for this season however we will be busy with cold then warm game retrieves, and the introduction to walked up shooting later on next year.



Fishing on the Estuaries has been tough with all rivers feeling the added pressure of mega low waters. One local river has stretches of thick river bank that even a fully trained commando would find it almost impossible to negotiate, making fishing the old favourite pools frustrating. The main culprit seems to be the Himalayan Balsam - an invasive plant that reaches 3 metres tall. Each plant can disperse up to 800 seeds from ripened pods - firing them up to 7 metres, and are activated by anyone who brushes past them.



Whilst fishing for sea trout way out close to the sea I hooked this fine mackerel great fun on light gear using a rainbow type of lure. Clearly loads of skill from me - after all there's not many fishermen who can blank on sea trout and catch only one mackerel after 4 hours of trying!

Best of luck if you are out on the first. I will be beating on a local shoot but hope to grace the mud flats later on in the week.

Take care over the flats and mind your wading stick - it's a great bit of kit for keeping your powder dry.

Ps - Due to a combined air and maritime exercise at Leuchars from Sunday until September 21st you might find you are not on your own out there!!

JM