

## A New Duck Load

For two seasons I had been using my precious Alliant Steel powder to propel my duck loads, to me it seemed awful dear and a waste to use up my goose load powder in this way. My favoured A356 had long been used up and I worried if I'd find another powder with similar qualities. I'd spent a bit of time looking for cheaper power with decent loading data. Via correspondence with another loader on Pigeon Watch forum I was recommended to try 24 grams of steel shot with AO which has traditionally been associated with lead shot loads. I loaded up a few of the clay pigeon cartridges I had kept with the exact recipe, I was quick to notice that it required a good bit of powder and as such was tight in a 70mm case, however I was still getting a good enough crimp and the powder was cheap. All that remained was a pattern test and fingers would remain crossed that it suited my needs.

Towards the end of September I still hadn't found the time to pattern the shells, and as I skirted the worst patches of mud towards one of my favourite flighting spots on the estuary with a pocket full of the new shells I slightly regretted not doing so.

The morning was blustery, overcast and ever so slightly cooler than usual, thankfully the tide was on the ebb as I made my way out. Conditions were looking perfect as the morning would take a long time to come in, meaning the birds would be easier to spot against the thick heavy clouds.

Having a breather I was astonished to see two Teal flip over my head, then battle on against the wind in to the gloom. The gun was hastily loaded up after seeing that and the eyes narrowed as I made myself concentrate on the eastern sky. Out over the channel I was aware of a pack of duck flying low out of range, so grabbing gun and a pocket full of shells, Myself and Mal got right down to the waters edge.

We didn't have long to wait as another pack of Wigeon swept past and an aggressive swing of the gun had one floating belly up in the tide. Next was a rush of wings and a Teal tore past to be felled by a snap shot. The new shells were working well in this type of close quarter shooting which was akin to automatic ball trap shooting on the clay range.

By the time the flight was over I'd fired 11 shots and 7 duck lay beside me, 2 Mallard, 2 Wigeon, 2 Teal and a Hen Pintail had fallen to the new shells. The highlight bird being a drake Mallard which I had plucked out of a pack of 5 birds at 35 yards. It fell cleanly killed on to the mud.

Granted the weather had been in my favour this morning, but it was a morning to remember. My fears of too little shot had been eased, my confidence had soared and I think I'm on to a winner with these loads. Now my thoughts are turning to developing a 3" 1 1/4oz steel load - will keep you posted.

Please note the author now uses factory loaded duck cartridges given the massively welcomed improvements in factory loaded steel shot shells. One feels confident using such loads now and confidence is everything in shooting! SW



Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June is our Interclub shoot at Dunkeld Park cartridges can be purchased via myself on the day, 5 guns have shown an interest and will shoot, with 1 spare being the club Secretary , 12.00 for 12.30 start till around 4pm see you there.

Also on the day a 50 bird sporting open member's competition is also on offer if you feel up for it entry £20. All cartridges to be 28g Fibre Wad.



Cygnets in formation

JM Secretary