

Shooting of wild geese in cold weather

During the hard winter of 1962-63 geese and other birds suffered severely in many parts of Europe. A joint appeal to sportsmen by the Wildfowl Trust and the Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland, asking them not to shoot birds in places where they were obviously weakened by shortage of food, met with a good response from organised wildfowlers. But there continued to be a great deal of shooting by irresponsible people. The following letter received by the Trust provides a splendid example of effective action against this kind of behaviour. We publish it to draw attention to a means of helping the Trust's funds while encouraging respect for the law and for high standards of sportsmanship.

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Helensburgh.

26th March, 1963

Dear Sir,

During the recent very hard winter I had a large number of wild geese sheltering and feeding in the fields in front of my house and with a bit of effort by our family we had managed to protect them from various so called "sportsmen".

However, unfortunately on one occasion a lorry driver was successful in shooting one of the geese from his vehicle. My wife with the aid of field glasses was able to pick up the name of his employers on the lorry and I, in turn, when the matter was reported to me, was able to report the matter to the Company. Therefore, when the driver reported to his Depot he was informed that he could either be immediately dismissed or pay the sum of £5 to your Society. He preferred to do the latter and I have pleasure in enclosing a cheque for £5.

It is very difficult to understand the mentality of people who shoot wild fowl under conditions such as existed at that time; the creatures were starving on many occasions and barely able to fly. I was very glad indeed that I was able to trace the man.

So far as I am concerned, I have been shooting all my life but one only does a thing if it is reasonably difficult and I think to shoot one of these geese was like shooting 'a grazing cow'!

I have always been interested in your Society and should you care to send me an application form I would seriously consider asking you to accept my membership.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN L. ROXBURGH.