



## Use of lead-free ammunition on the land we manage (Scotland's national forests and land)

### Key Points

- Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) does not set government policy on the use of ammunition. However, FLS aspires to implement best practice on Scotland's national forests and land to be an exemplar of sustainable forest management.
- There is evidence that the use of lead bullets can result in lead contamination of animal carcasses. In the 2017/18 financial year, Forest Enterprise Scotland (now FLS) put approximately 850,000 kilograms of venison into the human food chain. Concern over food contamination is therefore a main driver for changing to lead-free ammunition.
- Spent lead ammunition also poses a significant health risk to wildlife, such as wildfowl and raptors. Concern over harm to wildlife is therefore an additional driver for changing to lead-free ammunition.
- Where FLS has control of the activity, the type of ammunition used on the land we manage is an operational decision for FLS. The choice of ammunition is based on its effectiveness and on environmental considerations, with due consideration for all applicable legislation and government policy.
- FLS continues to trial lead-free bullets for deer and feral pig and effective lead-free ammunition has now been identified for the majority of calibres used by our wildlife ranger team.
- FLS Wildlife Rangers account for around 31% of the deer shot on the land we manage. By 1 April 2019 all deer and feral pigs culled by FLS Wildlife Rangers will be by lead-free ammunition, except in the small minority of cases (<5%) where suitable lead-free ammunition is not available. Our aim is to reach 100% of our deer and feral pigs culled by non-lead ammunition as soon as possible. This will be dictated by the speed with which the ammunition market develops to provide suitable non-lead ammunition for all relevant calibres.
- FLS contractors account for around 60% of the deer shot on the land we manage of which just under half are currently using non-lead ammunition. By 1 December 2022, all FLS contractors will be using lead-free ammunition for shooting deer and feral pigs. This

will be achieved in a phased way, whereby all contract renewals will stipulate the use of lead-free ammunition.

- This progressive change will mean that by April 2019 around two thirds of all ammunition used will be lead free, and by the end of 2022, all deer and feral pigs entering FLS larders for processing will have been shot by non-lead ammunition.
- A small proportion (approx. 9%) of the deer shot on the land we manage is covered by lease or permission arrangements. On an ongoing basis, opportunities will be actively sought and taken to change lease conditions to stipulate that only lead-free ammunition can be used to shoot deer and feral pigs.
- By 2023, all permissions will use non-lead ammunition. This will be achieved in a phased way similar to contracts.

**Forestry and Land Scotland**  
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