



Advice on Moorland (Red Grouse) and Orienteering
Red Grouse shooting season: 12th August – 30th November

The red grouse is a bird of heather moorland with a range restricted to areas of blanket bog and upland shrub heath. It is a subspecies of the willow ptarmigan whose range extends across the northern latitudes. The red grouse differs by not developing white plumage during the winter and in having a diet almost exclusively of heather. It is indigenous only to the British Isles. *Management for red grouse increases the chances of breeding waders and black grouse being present.*

Red grouse are a vital and unpredictable component of the Scottish rural economy, with the period from April to August critical to young and ground nesting birds (including merlin, hen harriers, lapwing, golden plover and other waders). Many estates will start shooting on or around 12th August and care should be taken when seeking access to areas where shooting takes place. The following advice gives the general picture across Scotland.

The bulk of breeding/nesting in Scotland takes place between the beginning of April and the end of July; the higher the altitude/ the poorer the weather, the later the start of hatching.

In order to protect ground nesting birds on moorland, please keep dogs on leads and stay on footpaths during the breeding season.

A recent survey has shown that each grouse shooter contributes £3,000 per day to the local economy and much of that income is ploughed back into managing heather moorland for the benefit of all.

It is advisable to contact estates for access to their land well in advance to protect wildlife and again when grouse counts have been carried out and shooting programmes determined; be aware that they might not be able to provide access for orienteering during this period. Try and plan your events round this time.

Also be aware that estates will be extremely busy at this time of year and not always available to answer enquiries or accommodate access requests for orienteering events.

Please also be aware that Scotland is infested with Tick (which is not just a danger to wildlife but to human health too. Check your body thoroughly for Ticks after accessing the Scottish Countryside and seek medical advice if you have been bitten.)

For further advice contact:

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