

SACS statement on proposed five-year transition from lead shot and single-use plastics

Forever, shooters have been at the mercy of events, ideology and politics, but for the future of shooting we can no longer sidestep the reality that the lead shot agenda is rapidly slipping from our control to others less well-disposed to shooting and rural life. Whilst it is exasperating that the metal we have so long used as a suitably dense and relatively cheap projectile material happens to be toxic, that is a strategic threat we now cannot shy away from.

Thus, after much reflection and foresight, the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, British Game Alliance, British Association for Shooting and Conservation, Countryside Alliance, Country Land & Business Association, Moorland Association, National Gamekeepers Association, Scottish Land & Estates and Scottish Association for Country Sports have come together to issue a joint statement proposing a five-year transition. **This is not a ban**; simply, given the indelible writing on the wall, it is joint support for a five-year withdrawal from lead shot and single-use plastics for quarry shooting.

Rifle ammunition is not included in this transition period, given our position that viable and commercially accessible alternatives are not available for many common UK rifle chamberings. Based on contained ranges, clay target shooting is also not included in this transition.

The eventual loss of lead shot is a big, but inevitable change. Some members will already have, even partly, moved away from lead; for others this is entirely new ground. The SACS management committee has fully considered this matter and given unanimous support. To be brutally candid, whilst it may have been easy to hide behind an excuse while other organisations weathered the inevitable storm, and easy to make-believe that we will be able to use lead forever; to behave like that would have demonstrated the sort of ineffectual leadership that has so often crippled shooting and country sports advocacy.

As a committee, we cannot leave our members, both recreational and professional, to face the likelihood of loss of control of our destiny through a broad lead ban over a shorter timeframe. As a committee we are obligated to do what is right, not what may gain us a few members in the short term, yet then leave those very members high and dry when control of the lead agenda is ultimately lost.

Remember, this is a proposed transition period over five years, not a ban; the intention is to give the cartridge manufacturers the time they need to develop innovative non-lead products. For you and me (I am a vintage gun enthusiast) the aim is to give us the opportunity to make this transition on our own terms in our own time.

For so many of us loss of lead shot is a major hassle, but we must look at this as an opportunity and not a threat. The opportunity is nothing less than the very future of shooting; the threat is, for the sake of the status quo, in naysaying that future is at risk at all.

Please read the Gun Trade Association non-lead factsheet and the FAQs published with the joint statement. Have a think about your own circumstances. Speak with your pals and local gunshop. Get in touch with your representative body. If you are a SACS member and need guidance then contact us.

Shooting representative bodies are taking this joint stance to be in a position of strength in the years ahead when, inevitably, lead faces further decisive restrictions. By working together and promoting research and development into new cartridges and components, we are looking to secure the future of shooting now while we still have time and opportunity.

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