



Swansea University  
Prifysgol Abertawe

Reconfiguring the place of estate-based game  
management: challenge, change and opportunity within  
rural England and Wales today.

Natasha Carolyn Coleman

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy at the Department of Geography,  
Swansea University, UK

Year of Presentation

2023

Copyright: The Author, Natasha C. Coleman, 2023.

Distributed under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial 4.0  
License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

## Abstract

Rural land use in the UK is currently undergoing a significant transition, prompting a re-evaluation of its purpose and beneficiaries. As a key component of this transition, game management claims to occupy over two-thirds of the UK's rural land mass and annually contributes several billion (GBP) to the economy. Despite this, the subject has remained a taboo within rural and cultural studies, with little attention paid to organised game management within private landed estates. Existing literature is often outdated, spatially biased towards Scotland's larger case examples, or overly focused on environmental or economic accounts.

This empirically-driven and culturally-engaged thesis explores driven game management within English and Welsh private estates. The study aims to enhance understanding of those who manage land for this purpose and address key questions about the existence of such spatial configurations, as well as the challenges and opportunities they face. The research employs assemblage thinking as a methodological framework, using a two-fold approach referring to (1) rural stakeholder and estate-based questionnaire surveys and (2) an in-depth thematic exploration of estate case studies.

The results show that despite some fluctuations, private estates and key game management actors continue to redefine value and meaning in a contemporary context. Key adaptations include strategic moves to provide and further develop estate-based activities and diversification, while retaining significant levels of game management. The research also highlights multifaceted threats and questions the succession of some forms of game management.

Overall, the thesis reveals valuable insight into the private worlds of estate-based game management. The study shows how game management continues to shape rural land use, and why the subject remains contentious. By drawing attention to this aspect of our evolving countryside, the research offers a better understanding of the multifarious challenges confronting rural areas today.

## DECLARATION

I confirm that this work has not previously been submitted for any degree in any university previously.

Signed:  (Natasha C. Coleman)

Date: 23rd June 2023

## STATEMENT

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information which have been used in the thesis. A bibliography is appended.

Signed:  (Natasha C. Coleman)

Date: 23rd June 2023

I hereby give my consent for my work, if relevant and accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loans after expiry of a bar on access approved by the University.

Signed:  (Natasha C. Coleman)

Date: 23rd June 2023

The University's ethical procedures have been followed and, where appropriate, that ethical approval has been granted.

Signed:  (Natasha C. Coleman)

Date: 23rd June 2023

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>List of Boxes</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>List of Illustrations</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>Glossary</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Introduction: The Challenge of Game Spaces Today</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>1.1. Rationale for Researching Game Spaces</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>1.2. Further Defining the Scope of the Research</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>1.3. Aim and Objectives</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>1.4. Structure of the Thesis</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>1.5. The Evolution of the Private Shooting Estate</b> .....	<b>37</b>
1.5.1. The Rise of Modern Game Shooting (19 <sup>th</sup> - early 20 <sup>th</sup> century) .....	37
1.5.2. The (Relative) Fall (late 19 <sup>th</sup> - early 20 <sup>th</sup> century).....	39
1.5.3. A New Order: Commercialised Shooting & Multifunctional Rural Land Use.....	40
1.5.4. Chapter Summary .....	41
<b>Chapter 2. Green and Pleasant Land: Contextualising Game Management and Shooting Practices within Rural Research</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>2.1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>2.2. Part One - Conceptualising the Rural: Relational Geographical Research Moves</b> .....	<b>43</b>
2.2.1. Introduction .....	43
2.2.2. Relational Rural Studies .....	44
2.2.3. Assembling the Rural: Assemblage Thinking for Rural Spatial Relations .....	45
2.2.4. Part One: Summary.....	49
<b>2.3. Part Two - Rural Policy and Politics</b> .....	<b>49</b>
2.3.1. Introduction .....	49
2.3.2. Land Use Policy .....	50
2.3.3. Land Use Politics: The Multi-Functional and Conflicted Rural Space.....	54
2.3.4. Part Two: Summary .....	60
<b>2.4. Part Three - Exploring Current Research and the Gaps: Field Sport, Game Management and Shooting Practice</b> .....	<b>61</b>
2.4.1. Introduction .....	61
2.4.2. Barriers to Research on Field Sport, Game Management & Game Shooting Practice .....	61
2.4.3. Examining the Controversies: Key Areas of Game Management Conflict .....	62
2.4.4. Actants and Spaces: Social and Spatial Focus of Current Field Sport Studies.....	71
2.4.5. Part Three: Summary .....	77
<b>Chapter 3. Methodology</b> .....	<b>79</b>
<b>3.1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>79</b>
<b>3.2. Framework &amp; Research Approach</b> .....	<b>80</b>

3.2.1 Methodological Framework: Assemblage Thinking.....	80
3.2.2 Research Approach.....	82
<b>3.3. Phase One: Questionnaire.....</b>	<b>83</b>
3.3.1. Purpose and Justification.....	83
3.3.2. Phase One Methods: Two Questionnaire Surveys .....	84
3.3.3. Sampling Selection Criteria.....	85
3.3.4. Design and Operational Details .....	87
3.3.5. Phase One: Application and Results .....	89
<b>3.4. Phase Two: Ethnographic Case Studies.....</b>	<b>90</b>
3.4.1. Purpose and Justification.....	90
3.4.2. Phase Two: Mixed-Methods.....	92
3.4.3. Study Selection Criteria .....	94
3.4.4. Design and Operational Details.....	99
3.4.5. Phase Two: Application and Results .....	104
<b>3.5. Research in Practice .....</b>	<b>107</b>
3.5.1. Ethics.....	107
3.5.2. Harm and Safety .....	109
3.5.3. Positionality and Reflexivity.....	110
<b>3.6. Analysis.....</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>3.7. Chapter Summary .....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b><i>Chapter 4. The Estate-Game Management Nexus: Rural Stakeholders, Private Estates, and Game Shoot Perspectives .....</i></b>	<b><i>116</i></b>
<b>4.1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>4.2. Questionnaire Survey One: Rural Stakeholders (RSs).....</b>	<b>117</b>
4.2.1. Introduction.....	117
4.2.2. Rural Stakeholders (RSs) Identification.....	117
4.2.3. Rural Stakeholders (RSs) Identifying Factors Driving Rural Transition. ....	119
4.2.4. Rural Stakeholder Perspectives on Game Management .....	133
4.2.5. Summary.....	137
<b>4.3. Questionnaire Survey Two: Estate and Shoots Transition (ESs).....</b>	<b>138</b>
4.3.1. Private Estates and Shoots: Introduction .....	138
4.3.2. Key Characteristics.....	138
4.3.3. Shoot Specific Characteristics .....	146
4.3.4. Adapting to Change: Perspectives and Possibilities for Private Estates and Shoots (ESs)....	150
4.3.5. Summary.....	160
<b>4.4. Chapter Summary: Bringing the Questionnaire Results Together.....</b>	<b>161</b>
<b><i>Chapter 5. Case Study Profiles .....</i></b>	<b><i>163</i></b>
<b>5.1. Case Study Overview.....</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>5.2. The Case Studies .....</b>	<b>169</b>
5.2.1. Dolwyn.....	169
5.2.2. Frithdale.....	173
5.2.3. Marlott.....	177
5.2.4. Tinsworth.....	180
<b>5.3. Supporting Cases.....</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>5.4. Chapter Summary .....</b>	<b>187</b>
.....	<b>189</b>

<b>Chapter 6. Threat .....</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>6.1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>6.2 Poor Public Perception .....</b>	<b>190</b>
6.2.1. Introduction.....	190
6.2.2. Detachment from Rural Realities and Criticisms of Chris Packham.....	190
6.2.3. Staying Concealed and Being Seen .....	191
6.2.4. Perceived Stricter Governance: ‘A Lobby Against Us’ .....	195
6.2.5. Pest and Predatory Control .....	197
6.2.6. Summary.....	200
<b>6.3. Recognising Internal Issues Within Game Management Spaces .....</b>	<b>201</b>
6.3.1. Introduction.....	201
6.3.2. Profit Driven Shooting Practice.....	201
6.3.3. Intensive Practice.....	203
6.3.4. Poor Game Meat Supply Chains – the Consequence.....	206
6.3.5. Summary.....	208
<b>6.4. Land Use and Access Competition .....</b>	<b>208</b>
6.4.1 Introduction.....	208
6.4.2. Recreational Land OR Land to be Worked: Maintaining Boundaries .....	209
6.4.3. Physical Land Use Shifts: More Blurred Boundaries .....	214
<b>6.5. Chapter Summary .....</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Chapter 7. Opportunity and Adaptation .....</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>7.1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>7.2. Addressing Negative Perceptions .....</b>	<b>222</b>
7.2.1. Introduction.....	222
7.2.2. Communicating over the Boundary Fence: Online Estate Presence .....	223
7.2.3. Enhancing the Public Perception of Game Management (and Shooting Practise).....	225
<b>7.3. Resolving Internal Issues: Re-Profiling Game Management .....</b>	<b>229</b>
7.3.1. Introduction.....	229
7.3.2. The Public Facing Gamekeeper.....	230
7.3.3. The Countryside Steward.....	233
7.3.4. Summary.....	238
<b>7.4. Estate Land Use and Access Transition: Beyond Established Traditions.....</b>	<b>238</b>
7.4.1. Introduction.....	239
7.4.2 Embracing Tourism and Leisure Ventures .....	239
7.4.3. Environmental Land Use Moves .....	244
<b>7.5. Chapter Summary .....</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>Chapter 8. Discussion – Exploring the Challenges and Adaptations of the Estate-Game Management Nexus .....</b>	<b>253</b>
<b>8.1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>253</b>
<b>8.2. Towards an Assemblage of the Game-Estate .....</b>	<b>255</b>
<b>8.3 Facing Key Perceived Threats .....</b>	<b>258</b>
8.3.1. Poor Public Perception .....	259
8.3.2. Internal issues.....	264
8.3.3. Land Use and Access Competition.....	266
<b>8.4. Seizing Opportunity and Navigating Adaptation .....</b>	<b>272</b>
8.4.1. Addressing Negative Public Opinion and Overcoming Internal Issues .....	273
8.4.2. Land Use and Access Adaptation.....	282

8.5. Chapter Summary .....	287
<b>Chapter 9. Conclusion - Our Green and Pleasant Land Revisited: Exploring the Changing Dynamics of the Estate-Based Game Management Nexus in England and Wales .....</b>	<b>289</b>
9.1. Contribution .....	289
9.1.1. General Summary .....	289
9.1.2. RO1: Diversity of Actors and Land Use Practices.....	290
9.1.3. RO2: Pressures.....	292
9.1.4. RO3: Opportunities.....	294
9.1.5. Overall Summary: Answering the Aim.....	295
9.2. Constraints of the Research Project.....	297
9.2.1. Pandemic Research.....	297
9.2.2. Data Bias .....	298
9.2.3. Partial Picture .....	299
9.3. Future Research .....	300
9.3.1. Comparative Data Sets .....	300
9.3.2. Moves Beyond Game Management (for the Private Estate).....	301
9.3.3. Research on the Consumptive Game Meat Supply Chain .....	302
9.3.4. More-than-Human Research within Game Spaces.....	302
9.3.5. Future Research Summary.....	303
<b>References.....</b>	<b>304</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>336</b>
Appendix A: Tables of initial questionnaire inquiry key details.....	336
Appendix B: Example cover letter .....	337
Appendix C: Final Version of Rural Stakeholder' (RS) questionnaire survey .....	338
Appendix D: Final Version of Estates and Shoots (ES) questionnaire survey .....	346
Appendix E: Examples of case study application to rural research .....	357
Appendix F: Photography guidelines followed during fieldwork.....	358
Appendix G: Field research ethics approval 2020 .....	359
Appendix H: Example participant information sheet .....	360
Appendix I: Rural Stakeholders geographically located within Scotland.....	362
Appendix J: Breakdown of additional surveyed private estate and shoot information .....	363



## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my academic mentors. Dr Keith Halfacree, who believed in my writing and showed enthusiasm and humility towards both the project and me. Dr Ruth Little who has been a steady presence and source of inspiration since the project's inception, and Dr Pysr Grufford and Dr Angharad Closs-Stephens who took on supervisory roles with grace.

I am also grateful to my academic and non-academic companions who have been with me through all the ups and downs of being a distance-based researcher. To my friends and family, who provided so much comfort, humour, and countless meals, I cannot thank you enough. I am especially indebted to my dear parents, who have both been unwavering anchors in the many storms over the last 4 years and for ultimately being the threads that have held me and this thesis together. As well, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Ben, whose patience and willingness to endure my rambles and grumbles during the write-up certainly shows a deep strength of character. Together with Callum, Selina, and Greg, who have all played integral roles at various stages and continued encouragement.

Furthermore, I would like to thank all the participants who responded to my calls for their time and for sharing their knowledge and personal tales with me. It has been an honour to learn from you and be briefly a part of your world(s). I am grateful too, to those of you who reminded me of the complexity of the subject and the stakes involved – including those back in the heather fringed community I was born into, a place brimming with the original anecdotes and experiences that began all of this.

And lastly, I honour my dear friend Cerys, whose sudden death as I began this PhD served as a poignant reminder every time I considered quitting of just how fortunate I am to be here and to be able to finish this.





## List of Figures

Figure 1.1:	Structure of the thesis, full chapter headings are shown in the table of contents.	p.37
Figure 1.2:	Anonymous upland estate during a grouse shoot, including King George V, August 1927, image courtesy of the Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool.	p.39
Figure 2.1:	A visual interpretation of assemblage parameters, adapted from Wood et al's (2021, p.288).	p.46
Figure 3.1:	Timeline of the data collection stages based on grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006).	p.83
Figure 3.2:	Researcher and participant out during fieldwork on a grouse moor of a case study estate, authors photo, November 2021	p.92
Figure 3.3:	Merging of Phase One of the research project into Phase Two. Differences are shown between key and supporting case studies, highlighted in orange (supporting) and blue (place-based enquiry).	p.94
Figure 3.4:	Map of identified case study sites anonymised up to regional accuracy. Key cases are capitalised and supporting cases shown in lower case, map by author.	p.95
Figure 3.5:	Gamekeeper's boots, taken during fieldwork, authors photo, 2021.	p.98
Figure 3.6:	Images taken during field work, September-November 2021, authors photos.  A. Top-left, feeding in maize cover crops during participation.  B. Top-right, beating on a grouse moor.  C. Bottom-left, participant pointing across a grouse moor during a go-along interview.  D. bottom-right, pheasants flying during a pheasant shoot.	p.99
Figure 3.7:	Driving through maize cover crop, during a drive-along interview with a research participant, authors photo, November 2021.	p.101

Figure 3.8:	Out beating on a pheasant shoot day, authors photo, November 2021.	p.102
Figure 4.1:	Flow diagram of Chapter Four's structure.	p.116
Figure 4.2:	Rural Stakeholder (RS) Likert concern rating: Climate Change & Biodiversity Loss.	p.120
Figure 4.3:	Rural Stakeholder (RS) Likert concern rating: Covid-19.	p.123
Figure 4.4:	Rural Stakeholder (RS) Likert concern rating: Brexit.	p.125
Figure 4.5:	Map of geographical distribution of Estates and Shoots (ESs) in England and Wales by region, map by author.	p.140
Figure 4.6:	Cluster bar graph of Estate and Shoot (ES) ownership structures.	p.142
Figure 4.7:	Land use practices of the surveyed Estates and Shoots (ESs) alongside game management.	p.144
Figure 5.1:	Map of Case Study locations across England and Wales, regionally accurate, made by author.	p.164
Figure 5.2:	Illustrative example of an estate-based game management assemblage of components and actors.	p.168
Figure 5.3:	A cluster diagram of Dolwyn.	p.169
Figure 5.4:	Images of Dolwyn, authors photos, July 2021. A. Top-left, Dolwyn's organic wildflower meadows B. Top-right, free-range broiler chickens C. Bottom-left, deer by woodland game bird cover D. Bottom-right, fallow scrubland used as game bird cover	p.170
Figure 5.5:	A cluster diagram of Frithdale.	p.173
Figure 5.6:	Images of Frithdale, authors photos, November 2021. A. Top-left, farm tracks towards pheasant woodland B. Top-right, view from estate owners house C. Bottom-left, grouse butt D. Bottom-right, marginal grazing pasture on moorland	p.174
Figure 5.7:	A cluster diagram of Marlott	p.177

Figure 5.8:	Images of Marlott, authors photos, August 2021.	p.178
	A. Top-left, arable fields	
	B. top-right, residential cottages	
	C. Bottom-left, steep hills and wooded edges	
	D. Bottom-right, whitewashed holiday cottages	
Figure 5.9:	A cluster diagram of Tinsworth.	p.181
Figure 5.10:	Images of Tinsworth, author photos, June and November 2021.	p.182
	A. Top-left, woodland with pheasant feeders	
	B. Top-right maize cover crops	
	C. Bottom-left, sheep pasture and woodlands	
	D. Bottom-right, arable oilseed rape	
Figure 5.11:	Images of Highbeck, author photos, September and August 2021.	p.185
	A. Top-left, Highbeck estate, grouse beating	
	B. Top-right, rough pasture and heather moors on the moorland fringe	
Figure 6.1:	A broken squirrel trap, photo taken by Archie with permission, June 2021	p.199
Figure 6.2:	A game bird release pen ready for pheasant poults, on an intensive shoot, undisclosed location, authors photo, 2021	p.203
Figure 6.3:	Pheasants in a game larder for cold storage after a shoot day, authors photo, November 2021	p.206
Figure 6.4:	A sign displayed on a public footpath, indicating the presence of pheasant poults, authors photo, 2021	p.210
Figure 6.5:	Boulders on roadside to prevent parking, Highbeck, authors photo, September 2021	p.213
Figure 6.6:	Overlooking new housing development on the Tinsworth estate, authors photo, November 2021	p.217
Figure 6.7:	Old tenant cottages being turned into holiday lets, Frithdale, authors photo, November 2021	p.219

Figure 7.1:	Oven ready pheasants ready for giving out on a shoot day, authors photo, 2021.	p.227
Figure 7.2:	Wild grasses in a field managed as a cover crop for pheasants, Dolwyn, authors photo, July 2021.	p.234
Figure 7.3:	Pheasant release pen, Dolwyn, author photo, July 2021.	p.235
Figure 7.4:	Mixed cover crop seedlings, Tinsworth, authors photo, June 2021.	p.236
Figure 7.5:	Gated access to Marlott's adventure centre, author photo, June 2021.	p.240
Figure 7.6:	Holiday cottages nestled at the heart of the Marlott estate, author photo, June 2021.	p.241
Figure 7.7:	Peter's future hotel ambitions, Frithdale, authors photo, November 2021.	p.242
Figure 7.8:	Uncut upland wildflower meadow, Highbeck, authors photo, September 2021.	p.246
Figure 7.9:	Sign stating no chemical use or cutting of roadside to protect wildflowers, Highbeck, authors photo, September 2021.	p.246
Figure 7.10:	Talking about re-wetting the peat moors with Peter, Frithdale, authors photo, November 2021.	p.247
Figure 7.11:	Marginal Land set aside for tree planting, author photo, Frithdale, November 2021.	p.248
Figure 7.12:	Solar Park on Dolwyn, evident from the window of Robert's truck, author's photo, July 2021.	p.249
Figure 7.13:	Solar Park evident in the distance, Marlott, authors photo, July 2021.	p.250
Figure 8.1:	Diagram of Adaptation and Conflict within Estates with their GMSP operations (demonstrating areas of compromise and adaptations which cannot or do not always align with current GMSP), adapted from Gobin et al (2020).	p.255
Figure 8.2:	Analytical Interpretation of game management within the private estate using assemblage thinking as a conceptual framework.	p.257

Figure 8.3:	A gamekeeper’s gibbet, displaying his pest control abilities, magpies on a line. Private collection, undisclosed locality, with permission, 1920s.	p.263
Figure 8.4:	Land use transition model, using Dolwyn as an illustrative example, based on Slee et al's (2014) concept of a 'squeezed middle' in land use transition.	p.268



## List of Tables

Table 2.1:	New Environmental Land Management Schemes (DEFRA, 2021b, pp. 10–12)	p.53
Table 2.2:	Dominant narratives surrounding Game Management and Shooting Practices	p.64
Table 3.1:	Survey Sampling Strategy	p.86
Table 3.2:	Search terms to identify Estates and Shoots across England and Wales	p.87
Table 3.3:	Questionnaire step-by-step process	p.88
Table 3.4:	Summary table of methods used for Phase Two	p.93
Table 3.5:	Inclusion and exclusion criteria for case study selection	p.96
Table 3.6:	Case study site Identification	p.97
Table 3.7:	Characteristics of case study sites	p.106
Table 3.8:	Other ethical considerations involved in the research project	p.109
Table 3.9:	Simplified example of the stages of thematic data analysis, adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006, pp. 16–23)	p.114
Table 4.1:	Breakdown of Rural Stakeholder (RS) respondents and represented sectors	p.117-18
Table 4.2:	Rural Stakeholder (RS) sub-sector identification and descriptions	p.119

Table 4.3:	Examples of Rural Stakeholder (RS) comments concerning awareness of the global scale of climate and biodiversity crises	p.121
Table 4.4:	Examples of Rural Stakeholder (RS) comments concerning action on climate change and biodiversity losses	p.122
Table 4.5:	Examples Rural Stakeholder (RS) comments on Covid-19	p.124
Table 4.6:	Examples of Rural Stakeholders (RS) comments on Brexit	p.126
Table 4.7:	Summary of key concerns Rural Stakeholders (RSs) identified	p.127
Table 4.8:	Rural stakeholders (RS) concerns over increased recreational rural land use and access	p.129
Table 4.9:	Rural stakeholders (RSs) who recognised funding and finance as major concerns	p.130
Table 4.10:	Summary of key opportunities rural stakeholders (RSs) identified	p.131
Table 4.11:	Table of rural stakeholders (RSs) stances on game management and shooting practices	p.133
Table 4.12:	Perceived direction of change to game management witnessed by rural stakeholders (RSs)	p.136
Table 4.13:	Initial identification features of Estates and Shoots (ESs)	p.138-139
Table 4.14:	Roles of Estate and Shoot (ES) respondents	p.139
Table 4.15:	Geographical distribution of Estates and Shoots (ESs) in England and Wales by region	p.141
Table 4.16:	Topography of Estates and Shoots (ESs)	p.141
Table 4.17:	Table of ownership structures of Estates and Shoots (ES)	p.142
Table 4.18:	Length of Estate or Shoot (ES) ownership	p.143
Table 4.19:	Descriptive statistics of the scale of land area reported by Estates and Shoots (ESs)	p.143
Table 4.20:	Table of land management practices in conjunction with Game management	p.144

Table 4.21:	Number of employees across Estates and Shoots (ESs) showing seasonal fluctuation within the game shooting season	p.145-6
Table 4.22:	Shoot management structure	p.146
Table 4.23:	Species of game managed across the Estates and Shoots (ESs)	p.147
Table 4.24:	Frequency of different game managed by the Estates and Shoots (ESs)	p.148
Table 4.25:	Methods of surveyed Estates and Shoots (ESs) game shooting practices	p.148
Table 4.26:	Average (shoot day) game bag size across Estates and Shoots (ESs)	p.149
Table 4.27:	Typicality score of Estate and Shoots (ESs) in their Game Management strategy across England and Wales	p.149
Table 4.28:	Key Challenges Estates and Shoots (ESs) identified within the next 10+ years	p.151
Table 4.29:	Key Opportunities Estates and Shoots (ESs) identified within the next 10+ years	p.154
Table 4.30:	Survey of predicted changes to game management practices across Estates and Shoots (ESs) in the next 25 years	p.156
Table 4.31:	Anticipated changes in Land Use and Management across Estates and Shoots (ESs)	p.157
Table 4.32:	External factors impacting Estates and Shoots (ESs) operations, land, and local community.	p.159
Table 5.1:	Case study key features	p.165
Table 5.2:	Operational approach of the case study estates	p.166
Table 5.3:	Table of case study participants and key associated details	p.167
Table 5.4:	Dolwyn shoot details	p.172
Table 5.5:	Estate Practices alongside Game Management	p.173

Table 5.6:	Frithdale shoot details	p.176
Table 5.7:	Estate practices alongside game management	p.177
Table 5.8:	Marlott shoot details	p.180
Table 5.9:	Estate practices alongside game management.	p.180
Table 5.10:	Tinsworth shoot details	p.184
Table 5.11:	Estate practices alongside game management	p.184
Table 8.1:	Key Threats to estate-based GMSP	p.258
Table 8.2:	Key Opportunity and Adaptation for estate-based GMSP	p.273
Table 8.3:	A comparison of historical and contemporary 'good' game management and shooting practice, with emphasis on the estate context	p.277



## List of Boxes

Box 1.1:	First-hand insight from an upland (grouse & pheasant) estate	p.33
Box 1.2:	First-hand insight from a lowland (pheasant) estate	p.34
Box 2.1:	Public goods under post-Brexit land use policy (drawn from Bateman & Balmford, 2018, p.295)	p.53
Box 2.2:	The Manchester Rambler (lines 13-28) Ewan MacColl (1932)	p.74
Box 3.1:	Phase Two – Participant Sampling Strategy	p.98
Box 3.2:	Examples of potential gender impact on participant engagement	p.113
Box 3.3:	Example of time helping in building rapport between me and my participants	p.113
Box 4.1:	Claims made by those within the Field Sports (F) sector that game management strategy should <u>not</u> be assumed inherently problematic	p.135



Box 4.2:	Examples of ESs explaining how they view their game management operations as either 'Typical' or 'Atypical' within the context of English and Welsh shoots	p.150
Box 6.1:	The retired gamekeeper's tales, field diary notes, November 2021	p.189
Box 6.2:	A conflicted researcher, research diary notes, October 2020	p.195
Box 6.3:	The gamekeeper who lost his pheasants, research diary notes, October 2020	p.200
Box 6.4:	An alternative view of a commercial shoot day on an intensively managed game estate, field diary notes, November 2021	p.205
Box 6.5:	To celebrate or to mourn a shoot day harvest, research diary notes, November 2020.	p.208
Box 7.1:	Pheasant Shoot Day, Field Diary Notes, November 2021	p.222
Box 7.2:	Grouse Shoot Day, Part One, Field Diary Notes, September 2021	p.222
Box 7.3:	Grouse Shoot Day, Part Two, Field Diary Notes, September 2021	p.238
Box 7.4:	Grouse Shoot Day, Part Three, Field Diary Notes, September 2021	p.252
Box 8.1:	Gamekeepers' perspectives on public detachment from their rural realities (from 6.2.2-3)	p.261
Box 8.2:	Gamekeepers' concerns over obstructed conservation efforts and perceived public deformation of pest and predator control measures (from 6.2.5)	p.262
Box 8.3:	Concerns of case estate manager regarding intensive driven game management (from 6.3.2-3)	p.265
Box 8.4:	Concerns raised by case estate manager and gamekeepers regarding increased recreational land use and access requirements (from 6.4.2)	p.269

Box 8.5:	Concerns raised by case estate managers and gamekeepers regarding increases in environmental objective and biodiversity concerns (from 6.4.2-3)	p.271
Box 8.6:	Examples of Field Sport Representatives and Estate managers efforts to shape positive images and outlooks of the Estates' and GMSP	p.275
Box 8.7:	Examples of Gamekeepers Conscious Consideration of their public behaviour	p.279
Box 8.8:	Examples of Estate and Shoot managers emphasising scaled back approaches to GMSP, taken from 7.2.3	p.280
Box 8.9:	Examples of increased efforts to marketize game meat and establish viable markets for shot game, taken from 7.2.3	p.281
Box 8.10:	Showcases examples of case study estates that have embracing holiday accommodation as a component of their land use diversification. Examples are drawn from 7.4.2	p.284
Box 8.11:	Examples of positive environmental land management practice on estates and within their GMSP strategies	p.285
Box 9.1:	Research Aim and Objectives (Revisited)	p.290



## List of Illustrations

Illustration 1:	Regional locations of identified game-estates, by author, 2021	p.79
Illustration 2:	From research diary, attempt to assemble the various actors and components within a case study estate, by author, 2021	p.104
Illustration 3:	Gamekeeper and dog, by author, 2021	p.163



## Glossary

It is crucial to note that throughout this research project, I have observed that many of the terms associated with this subject specialism are idiomatic and not widely known. Considering this, I include a comprehensive glossary to enhance readers' understanding of the language intricately intertwined with the cultures and traditions associated with this subject. This approach is reinforced by the valuable insight shared by Professor Richard W. Hoyle, a renowned Rural Historian (Hoyle, 2007a, p. xiv). He astutely observed that Field Sport terminology, once part of the "common language" across Britain, has gradually become marginalised due to changes in our relationship with the land (ibid).

Term	Definition
Acre	A traditional measurement of land area, deriving from the old English term for open field. An acre equates to approximately 4047 square metres or 0.4047 hectares.
Bag	The total number of game birds shot on a given shoot day or session. I.e., a shoot may expect a bag of 200 birds. Bag can also refer to the exact number of birds killed on a shoot day or the seasonal average of a shoot.
Beat	The name given to each separate area which is managed for game shooting across a given land area or estate. Several 'beats' will be managed year-round and crossed throughout a shoot day. Each gamekeeper is generally responsible for a 'beat'.
Beat Line or Line	The formation in which a beat team are expected to move or to 'flush' game towards the waiting guns.
Beater	A form of casual employment throughout the shoot season. Beaters are employed to flush the game into the open so that they can be shot. Beaters work in a team which is generally led by gamekeepers. Often this role is performed by local people, of all ages. An average day's wage may be £40-55; grouse days generally pay more than

	other forms due to being more physically laborious.
Beat Keeper	A gamekeeper. Usually, the rank below a head keeper, commonly this role includes independent management of a beat.
Brace	The measure used to count shot game. One brace equates to two birds.
Butt(s)	A small shelter, often fashioned out of either wood, stone, or natural material, where a 'gun' will traditionally stand on a driven grouse shoot day. Typically, eight will be spaced across one shooting drive.
Closed Season	The season in which it is illegal to take or shoot a species of game. This ensures they can breed and/or move between wintering grounds. Most game has a season in which it is legal to take or shoot game, see also 'Open Season' (BASC, 2022d).
Commercial Shoot	No singular agreed definition. This generally refers to modern (1970s+) shooting practices focused on economic profit and paying clients. Often on a large or intensive scale of management with driven shooting to ensure economies of scale. Smaller shoots with paying guests also place themselves in this category.
Cover Crop	Also known as game cover, providing valuable protection from predators and food source for game as well as other farm and woodland birds. Specially developed kale, corn, chicory, and cereal mixes are common; woodland and hedgerows are also used.
Dogging In	Rounding up straying game birds and driving them back towards a certain area, usually where they are fed daily and in position for the shoot. Commonly performed with working dogs.
Drive	A certain area of land where the birds are driven towards the guns. Usually there are between four and six drives on a day across different areas (or beats) of the estate.
Driven Shoot	Form of shooting sport in which game birds are flushed over the standing guns.
Elevenes	A break (usually around 11am) between drives, where refreshments are served, generally the beaters are separate from the shooters.
Established Land Management Practices	Refers to a collection of land-based practices that have been common across rural Britain over the last 50+ years, including agricultural production (meat, dairy, and arable), forestry and field sports.

Estate	The private land in which shooting and other activities take place, traditionally this includes farming and forestry.
Family Day	A shoot day in which the 'guns' or shooters are the estate or shoot owner's friends or family and are not paying a commercial rate to shoot.
Farm Shoot	No official definition but generally a shoot which is informally organised and run on the side of a main farm business.
Field Sport	Outdoor countryside-based sports, generally this includes hunting, shooting, and fishing.
Flag or Beaters Flag	An important piece of equipment used commonly by beaters to rouse game, create noise, and change the direction of game birds. Commonly red or white are used with colours alternating to indicate the ends of a beat line.
Flanker	A role required on a shoot day, usually working on the left- and right-hand side of the beat team to ensure game stay within the range of the guns.
Flush	To rouse the game.
Flushing Point	The point at which the game should be driven upwards off the ground, into the sky and in line with the waiting guns.
Full Tweeds	The uniform a gamekeeper is expected to wear on a shoot day or other formal occasion. This is a three-piece tweed suit, consisting of jacket, waistcoat, breeks (trousers) plus shirt with matching socks and tie. Usually, each shoot or estate will have a different tweed pattern (Anderson, 2017).
Game	Species which are legally designated to be hunted or shot, UK legislation classes the following species as some game species (BASC, 2022d): pheasant, red-legged, grey partridge, red grouse, woodcock, common snipe, rabbit, and hare. Wildfowl species are often counted too, including ducks and geese.
Game Bird Release or Release Game	Refers to the artificial breeding and release, most commonly red-legged partridge and pheasants into managed areas or release pens. Release generally happens in mid-summer ahead of the shooting season. Once game is released it is classed as wild (gov.uk, 2022).
Game Cart	A vehicle or trailer used to place dead game in which will then be collected by the game dealer.
Game Dealer	External organisation or individual tasked with the job of collecting game after a shoot. They then

	stock and supply prepared game to butchers, restaurants, and the wider supply chain. Prior to Brexit a large quantity of this game was exported to Europe ( <a href="http://britishgameassurance.co.uk">britishgameassurance.co.uk</a> , 2018).
Gamekeeper or Keeper	A primarily land-based occupation, the central aim being to care for an adequate stock of game ready for the shoot season. The job is physically laborious and involves long hours and often isolated outdoor working. Common tasks include control of pests and predators and seasonal management of specific landscape and habitat i.e., woodlands, farmland, and moorlands.
Game Larder	A cold store for dead game, often a small outbuilding. Most private estates with a game shoot traditionally had one.
Game Licence	A license authorised to legally kill certain types of animals during a specific period.
Game Management	In the broadest sense of the term, caretaking of associated game stocks and land required for the primary purpose of game shooting.
Game Spaces	A term coined for use within this thesis, in references to the spaces in which game management and shooting practices take place.
Game Sport	A form of legally permitted sport involving the licenced hunting, shooting, or fishing of non-domestic live game quarry in a particular season.
General Licence	Government issued licences for the legal basis of carrying out various activities involving wildlife. Most prominently here this includes the legal control of certain pest and predatory species. Law changes have recently been implemented.
Gibbet or Gamekeepers Gibbet	A now outdated practice of hanging dead pest or predatory species to demonstrate the ability to protect game (Jones, 2009).
Glorious 12 <sup>th</sup> or 12 <sup>th</sup> of August	The first and most popular day of the red grouse shoot season. Tradition derived from the 1831 Game Act.
Gun(s)	A group of individuals that make up a shoot party or team, for driven shooting. There are usually eight to nine guns that make up a shoot team. On a shoot day, any person shooting is referred to as a 'gun'.
Gun Dog	A specially trained and bred dog used for locating, flushing, and retrieving game. Spaniels, Labradors, and Retrievers are common breeds used for this work. Pointers and Setters are also common on

	upland grouse shoots. Each breed has a specific function for which it has been bred.
Grouse Surplus or Surplus	Excess bird population above the base breeding level which can therefore be harvested in the shoot season.
Hatchery	A locality where game birds are artificially hatched and either sold as eggs, chicks or reared until they are 'poults' and then distributed to shoots. Pheasants and Partridge are generally reared in this way.
Harvest	A harvest is defined as the reaping of a crop. In this case it is defined as the gathering of dead game birds i.e. "The harvest was good this year".
Head(s)	The overall number of game killed; one head is one animal.
Head Keeper	The top and most responsible position of a gamekeeper. Usually, a head keeper will oversee a gamekeeping team made up of beat keepers and underkeeper's. Commonly this individual liaises closely with the shoot manager, estate manager and/or owner.
High Bird Shoot	A popular type of shooting involving using the contours of a hilly landscape to encourage high flying quarry to be driven towards awaiting guns, valley tops are usually used to create this set-up.
Intensive Shoot	No known official definition, but colloquially refers to the concentrated rearing and often largescale management and driven shooting practice. Association to an intensive shoot often seen as negative during fieldwork.
Lamping	Shooting vermin and pests at night using powerful spot lamps.
Lead Shot	Lead pellets used for guns, controversial due to evidence of negative environmental consequence as well as concerns its use limits current markets for game products. There is a voluntary phased transition away from the use of lead shot for all live quarry (BASC, 2022a).
Licence	"General licences are issued by government agencies to provide legal basis for people to carry out a range of activities relating to wildlife". This includes permission to kill certain species to protect game and licence to release game within certain zones (BASC, 2022b). Firearms licence is a certificate to validate the carrying and use of firearms.

Loader	A person tasked with accompanying a gun on a shoot and loading their gun. They generally are well dressed as they are working closely with the guns/shooters.
Lobbying Group	Refers to an organisation which seeks to influence the decisions and actions of government officials and other public policymakers on behalf of a cause or interest.
Lowland	Low-lying country can also be used to refer to any land which is not 'upland'. While the land itself may not be low-lying, pheasant and partridge game management can often be referred to as 'lowland' shooting while grouse is an 'upland' sport. There are however discrepancies.
Medicated grit	Medically inoculated quarts grit used to control parasitic worms, predominately in grouse.
Moorland	Refers generally to an open upland landscape dominated by heather and managed traditionally for hill sheep and grouse. It is generally found beyond the upper periphery of enclosed agricultural land. Peat and blanket bogs are features of moorland habitat, as are migratory birds such as the Curlew and Lapwing.
Muirburn (heather burning)	The controlled practise of burning off old moorland heath and stubble growth to encourage the new shoots and mitigate the risk of wildfire.
Multifunctionality	A land area fulfilling several different functions. In this context this is used to refer to established enterprises, game management, forestry, and agriculture with the addition of more non-commodity outputs and 'public goods' (Urquhart et al., 2012, p.95).
Natural Capital	Natural resources or environmental features in each land area regarded as holding economic value or providing a service.
New Money	Wealth which has been earned rather than inherited. Shrubsole (2019, pp.113–114) marks the industrial revolution as a good gage of old vs new money acquisition. Often used to refer to the type of shoot clientele or estate owner i.e. They are from 'new money'.
Old Money	Wealth which has been inherited rather than earned. Often used to refer to the type of shoot clientele or estate owner i.e. They are from 'old money'.
Open Season	The season in which game can be legally shot or taken. Generally, no game can be taken on



	Sundays or Christmas day (BASC, 2022d), see also 'Closed Season'.
Paying guns	A shoot day in which the 'guns' or shooters are paying commercial clients.
Pickers up	Those tasked with the job of picking up the freshly shot game and loading it onto the game cart. They usually work alongside dogs who retrieve the game.
Peg or Gun Peg	A stake placed in the ground or marked position used to locate where the shooter or gun should stand. A full time of guns is commonly eight.
Peg Draw	The position each gun will stand, usually decided on the morning of the shoot.
Pest or Pest Control	Animals that damage crops or wildlife. Control is the legal dispatch of wildlife classified as pests. This practice is done to maximise game bird survival rates and minimise cover crop damage. Colloquially also known as vermin.
Poult	A young game bird which has not yet reached maturity.
Pricked Game	A bird that has been wounded or clipped during a shoot. These birds are usually found and despatched as soon as possible after a shoot. It is a big taboo to have any 'pricked game' seen after the shoot day.
Predator	Animals that prey on other animals, in this context usually those that prey on game.
Private Estate	Land owned by individuals, families or connected individuals as opposed to charities, institutions, or communities (Hindle et al., 2014).
Private Let	A shoot that is privately owned but let and managed externally.
Public or General Public	In this thesis this term is often used with regards to those not directly associated with 1. The shooting sector 2. Private estates.
Quarry	The animal that is being targeted during a hunt or shoot.
Rural Stakeholder (RS)	A person or body who is invested in rural space, generally through a specific concern or interest. In this context a RS should be set apart from a shoot manager or employee through their indirect association with organised shooting.
Seasons	An abbreviation of game or shoot season. The seasons in which it is legal to kill game or quarry. When game can be legally killed it is an 'open season'. In England & Wales the seasons are as follows:

	Red Grouse: 12 <sup>th</sup> Aug-10 <sup>th</sup> Dec Partridge: 1 <sup>st</sup> Sept-1 <sup>st</sup> Feb Pheasant: 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct-1 <sup>st</sup> Feb (BASC, 2022c).
Shot	The lead or steel pellets contained in a shotgun cartridge. A shooter or gun may also be referred to as a shot.
Shoot Captain	The individual in charge of the 'guns' on a shoot day, this can be the estate owner, manager, or other experienced individual.
Shooter or Huntsperson	An individual partaking in game shooting or hunting who uses a gun.
Sporting	Generally relating to game shooting activity.
Sporting Club	A group formed for the purpose of shooting which members only can join.
Sporting Estate	No universally agreed definition. Within this thesis an adapted version of Hindle et al's (2014, p.14) definition is used: landholdings over 450 acres where game sport sits alongside other land uses including, but not limited to, agricultural practices, forestry, tourism, and leisure, let residential or business property and renewable energy.
Syndicate	A group of people who shoot together and usually share either the costs of a shot day or an entire season's sport. They may also manage or rent a shoot long term.
Traditional Land Use	Referring to a collection of established land use practices common across rural Britain over recent centuries, this includes agriculture (meat, dairy and arable), forestry and field sport.
Underkeeper	An assistant to other gamekeepers, usually new to the profession and/ or in training. Role requires less responsibility than a beat keeper and such employed individuals may not have their own beat.
Upland	GWCT (2022b) refer to this as "land above 300m". A term also used to refer to the game which resides in upland areas, this mostly commonly includes grouse as well as pheasant on moorland fringes.
Walked up or Rough Shoot	Shooters walk rather than standing still at butts or pegs, the whole shoot party and scale of the shoot is usually smaller, and it is generally the guns themselves who are flushing the birds.
Wildlife Management	Used to refer to the management of the landscape and habitats, within game management. This is often used to refer to the

	control of pests and predators to protect game, livestock, and other wildlife.
Wild Game	Game which cannot or has not been artificially reared and released. Most commonly red grouse, in such cases, it is generally the land that is managed to maintain optimum conditions to create a harvestable surplus population.



## Abbreviations

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BASC	British Association for Shooting and Conservation
BGA	British Game Assurance
BPS	Basic Payment Scheme
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCBL	Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss
CGSP	Code of Good Shooting Practice
CLA	Country Landowners Association
C4PMC	Campaign for the Protection of Moorland Communities
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
ELMS	Environmental Land Management Scheme
ES	Private Estate and/or Shoot
EU	European Union
FGMSP	Field Sport, Game Management and Shooting Practices
GMSP	Game Management and Shooting Practices
GM	Game Management
GWCT	Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
GWT	Gamekeepers Welfare Trust
NGO	National Gamekeepers Organisation
NRW	Natural Resource Wales
RO	Research Objective
RS	Rural Stakeholder
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAABS	Hunt Saboteurs
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations

In Pursuit of the Ring-neck (Phasianus Colchicus): A Field Diary Poem, November 2021

*4 drives (till dusk)*  
*4 beats*  
*3 gamekeepers*  
*1 estate owner*  
*8 guns*  
*8 loaders*  
*16 beaters*  
*16 beaters flags*  
*5-10 pickers up*  
*15 dogs*  
*2 caterers (for the guns)*  
*1 gun dog trainer (the owners)*  
*1 mechanic*  
*1 gun bus*  
*1 beaters wagon*  
*1 provided packed lunch (sausage rolls, soup, fizzy drinks, sloe gin, instant coffee, and tea)*  
*1 game larder*  
*1 yard*  
*1 lavish house*  
*622 pheasants.*

In Pursuit of the Moor Cock (Lagopus Lagopus Scotica): A Field Diary Poem, September 2021

*4 drives (2 called off by rain)*  
*4 beats*  
*9 gamekeepers*  
*1 estate manager*  
*8 guns*  
*8 loaders*  
*20 beaters*  
*20 beaters flags*  
*5-10 pickers up*  
*25 dogs*  
*2 beaters wagons*  
*4 land rovers (transport for the guns)*  
*1 provided packed lunch (sandwiches, crisps, fizzy drinks, water, chocolate bars)*  
*2 game dealers*  
*1 yard*  
*1 lavish house*  
*100 red grouse.*



## Chapter 1. Introduction: The Challenge of Game Spaces Today

*See! from the brake the whirring pheasant springs,  
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings:  
Short is his joy; he feels the fiery wound,  
Flutters in blood, and panting beats the ground.  
Ah! what avail his glossy, varying dyes,  
His purple crest, and scarlet-circled eyes,  
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,  
His painted wings, and breast that flames with gold?*

(Windsor Forest, Alexander Pope, 1713, lines 111-119).

### 1.1. Rationale for Researching Game Spaces

Questions over what rural land and the finite resources which lie within it are used for and by whom are ever more central to governmental agenda and current public discourses across the UK (Bateman & Balmford, 2018; Burchardt et al., 2020). Present attention, for instance, addresses the consequences of the Agricultural Act (2020) and subsequent still-emerging new agri-environmental schemes (Defra, 2018a, 2021b). This includes debates over the ambitiousness of the government's 25-year Environment Plan (gov.uk, 2018) and similar implementation of the Environment (Wales) Act (2016). It has been sharpened by the focus of current policy transition and wider public discourse centring around a sentiment that public funding should be restricted to "public goods" (Bateman & Balmford, 2018, p. 293). The accumulative effect is of more pressure placed on land and landowners to fulfil a plethora of demands, whilst also experiencing closer scrutiny of the current uses of such spaces (Burchardt et al., 2020). Further pressure has been added to such land use debates by the global pandemic (Covid-19) and subsequent trends towards increased and unevenly spatially distributed patterns of in-migration and recreational land use within some rural areas (Colomb & Gallent, 2022).

At a time of such significant land use transition, however, some aspects of the countryside seemingly retain in what Burchardt et al (2020, p. 13) call "remarkable stability", including the private landed estate. One indication is how ownership of many often-vast estates are traceable to the Norman Conquest (Beckett & Turner, 2007). But how will this apparent stability last when buffeted by currents from the widespread debates over land

use and potentially major changes in policy? It is clearly a very apposite time to explore one relative continuum within these estates, the management of game for sport, especially since these estates more widely have received remarkably little scholarly engagement within the English and Welsh context. Despite much upheaval to the rural landscape, the continuum and culturally embedded tradition of game sport has remained an established part of the rural landscape for over two centuries. Questions over such privileged use of land, now more than ever, clearly merit raising (Dooley & Ridgeway, 2019; Hoyle, 2007).

Turning attention to the game birds themselves, it is perhaps their commonness which has rather positioned them as 'wild' residents, naturally fitting the pastoral, country scene and thus meriting little specific attention. This (in) visibility distracts from the part such birds play in a multi-billion-pound economic sector (PACEC, 2014) which many people, especially those far from the spaces game inhabit, know little about. Foregrounding such knowledge, including noting that between 39-57 million pheasants are released into the countryside each year (Aebischer, 2019) and how much of the uplands has been shaped to be a reserve of the red grouse (St John et al., 2019), further setting the scene for the thesis.

Consolidating, two-thirds of the UK's rural land area remains today under some form of management for game (PACEC, 2014). The shooting sector estimates its worth to the UK economy to be £2 billion, delivering nearly 2 million hectares of land management for conservation, supporting the equivalent of 74,000 full-time jobs, and comprising of at least 600,000 shooters (ibid). The sector, too, has grown exponentially, with figures for instance for pheasant release up nearly seven-fold over the last 50 years (Aebischer, 2019, p. 64). Such up-scaling has taken place as the sport has evolved from a predominately elite cultural practice to one increasingly defined and supported by a wider clientele and commercially focused business model (Martin, 2011a, 2012). Also growing have been potential ecological consequences, a recent RSPB review (Mason et al., 2020; McKie, 2020) recommending greater regulation of the sector, sparking a defensive response from nine bodies representing UK game shooting, who called the review "punitive and restrictive" (British Game Assurance, 2023).

Returning to the broader picture, shifting norms of land use and its effects on established land management has seen scholars recently begin to pay relatively closer attention to many rural actors, particularly within agriculture (Riley, 2011; Riley et al., 2018; Sutherland & Calo, 2020). Yet, there remains gaps in knowing how these changes impact on other rural groups, including those within game management. Thus, Thomson et al (2018, p.40) posit gamekeepers as one “important group of land managers [who] are understudied”, emphasising the need for “greater understanding of their drivers, concerns and motivations” (also see, The National Gamekeepers’ Organisation, 2022a).

In sum, this thesis begins to develop a profile of some of those within the sector, the specific reproduction of game management across English and Welsh estates (to some extent balancing broader contextual studies north of the border), and the threat, opportunity and adaptations which currently surround this whole topic at different spatial levels. The study covers a broader spectrum of those associated with 21<sup>st</sup> century game spaces, from indirect engagement with wider rural stakeholders to specific examination of the private estates-game management nexus. Overall, the study facilitates a fuller picture of the relations within, and understanding of the shifting place of game management within the broader context of a rurality dynamic and how such spaces need remain “always open to change” (Woods, 2015a, p. 6).

## 1.2. Further Defining the Scope of the Research

*“An estate is not an island but a jigsaw”* (Glass et al., 2013a, p. 222).

From the start, the ‘sporting estate’ is recognised as a “very subjective matter”, especially today (A. Lawson, Head of Estates, Savills, personal communication, June 9th, 2019). However, to create a boundary for this thesis, private rural landholdings over a threshold of 450 acres, where driven game management occurs, was regarded as an ample definition (Hindle et al., 2014). Within these landholdings, agriculture, forestry, tourism, residential lets, business property and renewable energy are also common (ibid). The 450-acre threshold comprised the smallest landholding recorded during the study; no high defining point deemed necessary. As Glass et al (2013a, p.222) made clear, within

this landscape setting it is possible to analyse the “complex interactions between people, place and the environment”, a clear space to explore relations between game management and broader rural and societal concerns (Dooley & Ridgeway, 2019).

Game management and shooting practices (GMSP) take many different forms and occur at differing scales. Most within the UK today take place on a relatively small-scale (Madden, 2021) but this thesis focuses on where they are more substantive and organised, situated within the more exclusive realm of the private estate. Historically, such spaces were widely regarded as sporting estates and in Scotland, where game management remains a known dominant landscape feature it continues to be regarded as such (Higgins et al., 2002; Jarvie & Jackson, 1998; Wightman et al., 2010). In England and Wales, the picture is more complex. Focusing too much on defining an estate today with an emphasis on game sport is unwise. Instead, the terms ‘private estate’, ‘game-estate’ and ‘game spaces’ are used in their broadest sense, being sites where game management takes place on a scale regarded by those involved as impactful to the wider estate character, rather than simply being an “exclusive” reserve of game sport (Huggins, 2008, p.365). Indeed, the significance of game management across the estates will be shown to vary considerably from site to site.

An overarching focus is therefore drawn to estates which practice some form of organised driven shooting and game bird release. Especially considered within this framework are pheasant (*Phasianus Colchicus*) and red grouse (*Lagopus Lagopus*), with less focus on red-legged partridge (*Alectoris Rufa*) and mallard duck (*Anas Platyrhynchos*). Primarily, the value of a game bird comes from its flight ability and quality as a shooting target. For instance, pheasants are colloquially within the shooting sector compared to fighter jets, gliding fast through the sky towards waiting guns. Red grouse, on the other hand, are unique to the British uplands and renowned for their ability to fly at speeds of up to 70 mph and change direction at the last-minute, placing them in a superior sporting category, at added expense to the shoot party (Jones, n.d.; Vesey-Thompson, 2023).

Focusing first on these red grouse (Box 1.1), as they cannot be captively reared, strongholds are found in the wilder Scottish Highlands and moorlands of Northern



England. Moorlands on which they reside are managed to ensure favourable conditions for the birds to thrive. This includes predatory control, muirburning and the use of medicated grit to reduce pest and disease risk (GWCT, 2023; Werrity, 2019). The grouse shooting season runs between 12<sup>th</sup> August-10<sup>th</sup> December but requires year-round land management (BASC, 2022e). Moorland managed for grouse traditionally also comprises other established upland land management activities, including deer stalking, sheep farming, forestry and more so today, renewable energy production (Slee et al., 2014). Land areas covered by grouse management encompass approximately 459 grouse moors, the majority existing in Scotland (296), with a UK area total of 16,763 square km (Hudson, 1992; Richards, 2004, p.10).

Box. 1.1. First-hand insight from an upland (grouse & pheasant) estate:

Peter is an estate owner and hill sheep farmer in North Yorkshire. We spoke several times on the phone before finally meeting in the winter of 2021. Peter always talked to me fast and in a serious tone, almost shouting, not at me, but I feel him getting more and more animated, angered, as he opens-up about the injustices, he believes his “culture” to face. Peter talked about estates as being in a period of transition and this being a very difficult time for driven shooting and upland farming. He says, he is under pressure from many different avenues. There are issues with grouse numbers related to year-on-year less predictable weather patterns, meaning grouse stocks are increasingly unreliable. There is the huge shake-up of long-standing agri-environmental policy and the real concern of what this means for the future of the uplands. His community’s population is also dwindling, while the number of second homes being bought in the village only grows. Peter tells me with frustration about how he wants to “shoot above the parapet” and does not care about “getting shot at”, which is why he has chosen to talk to me. He talks about how farming and shooting are all connected and the ‘umbrella’ for him is community. Despondent statements like, “if the community dies that is it” were left ringing in my head long after our interaction ended.

Turning attention now to pheasants (Box 1.2), which dominate driven game management, with around 23,000 driven shooting providers in the UK (PACEC, 2014). The focus of this thesis mainly covers such pheasant shoots. Widely distributed across England and Wales, pheasants favour woodland edges, agricultural land, and shrubby area, with both upland and lowland estates making suitable habitat (GWCT, 2021; Sage et al., 2020). They have a long history within Britain, originating in Asia but popularised by the Romans as a table bird (Yardley, 2015). Their association with hunting has an

equally extensive history. While the bird faced major decline in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, spurred on by woodland clearances and marshland drainage, the rise in popularity of game shooting during the Victorian era spurred their modern success as an established British game bird (ibid).

Box. 1.2. First-hand insight from a lowland (pheasant) estate:

Earlier that year, in the summer of 2021, I met an enthusiastic gamekeeper, Robert, he too saw some big hurdles up against the pheasant shoot he manages in North Wales. The main issues here are what he sees as a government agenda against driven shooting, supported by significant, and loud lobbying groups which are further diminishing public opinion. Then there is the success of the hugely diversified estate which is thriving through high regional tourism and an established global production chain of estate sourced goods, including several multi-million-pound global production faculties. It is Robert's colleague's that tell me it is these new revenue streams that are de-stabilising the place of game management in this landscape. I see it too, the shoot pushed increasingly to the edges of the estate's priorities and physical realm. Somehow, game management continues to exist amongst all this, but like on other estates I visited, the bigger picture of their position is similar and increasing destabilised. Today, there really seems a need for contemporary justification of their place and to establish justification of the vast physical spaces and temporal landscapes used for such an established tradition.

Hereby, then the notion of estate-game management being a cultural asset alone, seems in the current climate and under new legislation to be understood to have limited standing. These are different stories of a web of interactions I had with estate managers, owners, and gamekeepers. The stories differ but the bigger picture is often linked. There are considered issues and opportunities which are shown to stretch the length and breadth of Britain and intertwine closely with patterns seen elsewhere, including across agriculture.

### 1.3. Aim and Objectives

Having introduced something of the scope and challenges presented by what I term 'game spaces' in the UK today, we are now able to state the overall aim of this thesis:

*To explore the contemporary and changing place of estate-based game management within the present-day English and Welsh countryside.*

Specific research objectives (RO) under this aim are:

RO1. To identify and explore the **diversity** of actors and land use practices that currently encompass the estate-game management nexus via application of assemblage as a methodological framework to better understand and interpret these sites.

RO2. To examine what key **pressures** are present today within game management, across the estates and through the wider countryside and explore game management's adaptations to them.

RO3. To examine what key **opportunities** are present today within game management, across the estates and through the wider countryside and explore game management's adaptations to them.

The thesis draws out what and who encompass such spaces and the challenges and opportunities they face. It explores adaptations being made to game spaces and evaluates where associated land practice and those dependent on them fit within 21<sup>st</sup> century rurality. It therefore aims to situate and emplace the everyday livelihoods and specific examples of game management within wider conceptualisations of the evolving nature of the rural today.

In terms of the broad approach of this thesis, not least due to Social Scientific neglect of this research area, it avoids application of established theoretical constructs a priori. Instead, following Mckee's (2013b) examination of the Scottish private estate, it deploys a critical interpretivist approach to identify key themes and their implications for theory, policy, and practice. It adopts an empirically driven two-phase methodological approach, using both widescale questionnaire survey and situated case study to explore and develop critical understanding of the contemporary place of estate-game management within England and Wales. Assemblage thinking is used as a methodological framework

to aid interpretation of spatial manifestations within rural space and to illustrate the dynamic relations between components (DeLanda, 2016; Jones et al., 2019; Woods et al., 2021).

Giving further overview, the questionnaires acted as a scoping mechanism, providing a widescale thematic picture of rural transition. The questionnaires involved 39 key rural stakeholders representing different sectors and bodies with stakes in the countryside, as well as 36 estates and shoots across the UK. An ethnographic case study approach evolved from this, with eight identified estates forming this second phase (four key and four substantive case studies). This follows in-depth exploration of the threats and opportunities facing key actors and identified estates in England and Wales, also bringing attention to who and what endures within such rural spaces and the means and effect of adaptation to identified challenge and opportunity. Overall, the place of game spaces and estate-game management within the contemporary rural framework is evaluated.

#### 1.4. Structure of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis is shown in Figure 1.1. Following the present introductory chapter, Chapter 2 sets the research's context with the literature review. This highlights approaches to rural studies, gives a contextual overview of rural transition, including key policy transitions and explores current engagement with game management as a research topic. Chapter 3 then describes the two-phase methodological process and the thematic analysis approach adopted. Chapter 4 turns to the research results, presenting findings from questionnaire surveys with key rural stakeholders (RSs) and with estates and shoots (ESs) across the UK. This provides a contextual and thematic direction for Chapters 5-7. Chapter 5 provides a short introduction to the case studies identified through the ES questionnaire. Chapters 6-7 then present case study findings, under the titles of 'Threat' and 'Opportunity'. Chapter 8 provides a consolidating discussion, reviewing key themes, debates, and findings in relation to prior research, as well as evaluating their contribution to the research objectives. Finally, Chapter 9 summarises the research overall, dwelling on the implications of the results, successes, and limits of the thesis, and suggests substantive further research within this subject area.

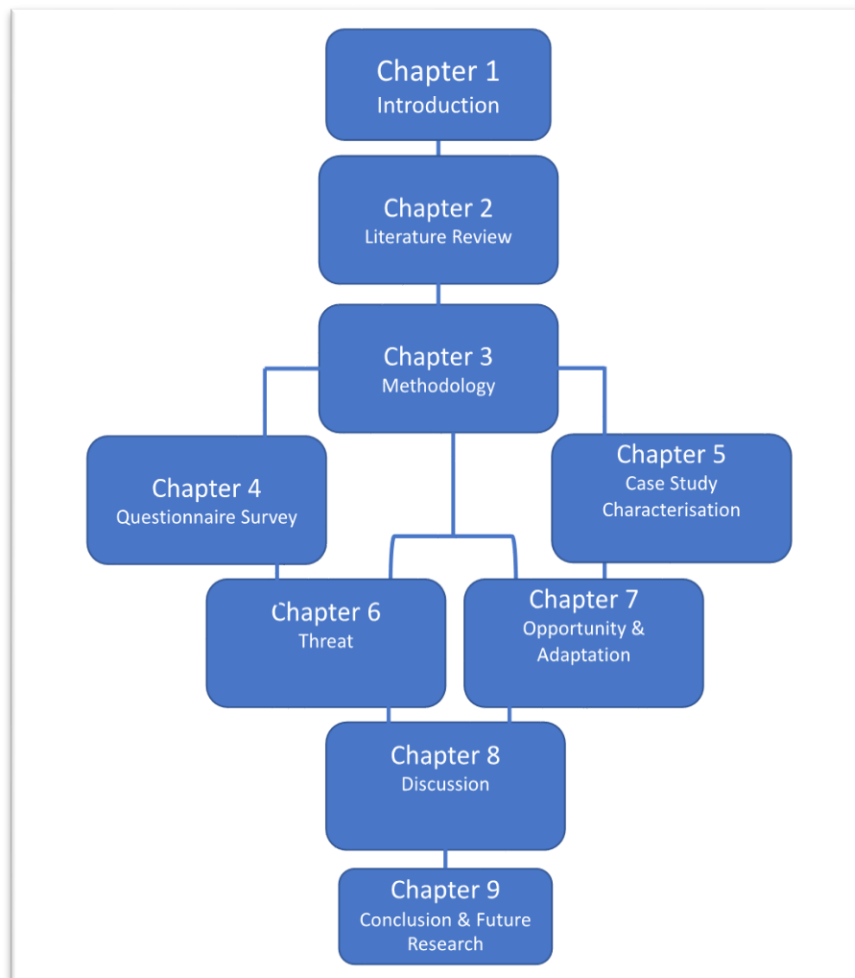


Figure 1.1. Structure of the thesis, full chapter headings are shown in the table of contents.

To consolidate this introduction for the reader, the rest of this chapter provides an overview of the historical evolution of private shooting estates in the UK. After booming around a century ago, these estates experienced a period of decline before resurging once more into the present day, setting up the timeliness and relevance of the research project.

## 1.5. The Evolution of the Private Shooting Estate

### 1.5.1. The Rise of Modern Game Shooting (19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century)

*“The possession of a good pheasant shoot, partridge manor or grouse moor confirmed high social standing or offered a way into the elite” (Durie, 2008, p. 431).*

Modern origins of organised game sport originated with Prince Albert's acquisition of the Balmoral estate as a hunting lodge for his wife, Queen Victoria, in 1852 (MacMillan & Phillip, 2010). This coincided with a period of stark decline in sheep prices, triggering the decline of agricultural prioritisation and leading to vast swathes of the Highlands being purchased by the Victorian gentry for sport (Orr, 1982). Writing in the 1980s, Orr (ibid, p.226) found over 60% of land in Scotland to be sporting estates, provoked by the aforementioned social and economic shifts. Furthermore, while these trends began in the Highlands, the popularity of game sport quickly grew across the rest of the UK (Martin, 2011). Access and ownership of estates and to field sports generally, however, largely remained the exclusive reserve of the landed gentry and their associates, shaping a marked societal division (Bujak, 2007; Durie, 2008).

Alongside game shooting, a vast array of other leisure pursuits also took place on the country estates, including hare coursing, racket sports, hunts, and fishing (Dooley & Ridgeway, 2019; Huggins, 2008). Considering this, Dooley and Ridgeway (2019) argue the countryside was organised very much for the overall leisure and pastime of the landed gentry. This demonstrates the importance of rural sport and leisure beyond just rural space, with its wider links to social, political, and economic relations (ibid).

In terms of shooting specifically, participation in this era was on a par with an "Oxbridge Education" in terms of the social status it embodied (Hoyle, 2007, p.13). If a man (sic.) could shoot, he could use this as a "currency" to gain high socio-political standing (Durie, 2008, p.432). Illustrating this, archival documents of prominent estates from this period feature an impressive array of guests on such shoots, Figure 1.2 shows King George V amongst the royalty and ministers who routinely participated (ibid). As Thompson (1990, p. 4) pointed out, in 1910 40% of parliamentary members were also of the landed gentry, many owning or participating in game shoots. Participants comprised of the 'leisure class', referring to the way they annually rotated their time and activities around the game seasons: winter months participating in pheasant and partridge shoots, summers

spent on grouse moors, and in between travelling across the continent for big game hunts (Huggins, 2008, p. 365; Martin, 2011b; Stearns, 2008).



Figure 1.2. Anonymous upland estate during a grouse shoot, including King George V, August 1927, image courtesy of the Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool.

While fewer academic records evidence the working operations of estates and game management, their practices rapidly developed in line with the popularity of the sport (Durie, 2008; Jefferies, 1896; Martin, 2011a, 2011b). Thus, by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a record number of 23,000 gamekeepers were recorded across the UK (Huggins, 2008, p.358).

Technological improvements also saw major advancements in released game, leading to the large-scale replacement of broody chickens to incubate game birds' eggs. Industrial incubation units thus allowed huge expansion in game production (Jones, 2009; Yardley, 2015). Similarly the later development and use of medicated grit and industrial sheep dip allowed wider control of disease vectors, allowing greater grouse survival rate and thus greater harvestable surplus for the sport to grow and thrive (Done & Muir, 2008; GWCT, 2023).

#### 1.5.2. The (Relative) Fall (late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century)

*“A simple proposition was that [the relative decline] was due to overshooting, but it would be naïve” (Durie, 2008, p. 445).*

The 20<sup>th</sup> century was a time of great upheaval and rapid socio-political changes that rocked the foundations and structure of British society. The “growth of democracy, accelerated industrialisation, development of middle classes, commercial elites and urbanisation” (McCarthy, 2019, p. 196) powered a new era and, with it, new wants, needs and desires for rural space. With these shifts came perhaps an inevitable end to shooting’s once ‘golden era’. Domination of rural landscapes by field sports and private estates came under significant financial and political threat as well as public scrutiny (Martin, 2012, p.1146; Thompson, 1990). Marked by a downturn of rental income, land value, increased debts and huge upscaling of agricultural production, the post-War years saw the decline of game shooting and fall in the social status and physical breakup of many large estates (Bujak, 2007; Jones, 2009; Martin, 2011a; Tindley, 2018). Taxation on asset wealth and property had reached over 65% by 1945 (Thompson, 1990, p.2). This “watershed” moment for shooting and the private estates of Britain (Durie, 2008, p. 441) was further demonstrated in the decline of gamekeepers, with estimates plummeting to less than 4,000 by 1951 - a reduction of around 83% (Huggins, 2008, p. 358).

### 1.5.3. A New Order: Commercialised Shooting and Multifunctional Rural Land Use

Out of the collapse of old order came, nonetheless, a revival of game shooting, this time driven by a monetary rather than social prestige (Durie, 2008; Higgins et al., 2002; Hoyle, 2007). The clientele willing and able to embrace game shooting practice shifted, the country gentleman replaced by the “self-made and hard-working man” (Hoyle, 2007, p.3). As Durie (2008, p.431) notes, “film stars and financiers” from across the globe are now amongst the shoot clientele of today. As well as the formation of estate-based game shoots, syndicate and farm shoots grew during this period, owners finding new means to financially diversify their land (Durie, 2008; Martin, 2012). Accordingly, this period emphasises the “highly adaptive” nature of shooting practices (Rothery, 2007, p.251). Focus shifted from the “personal and social” benefits of game and field sport management to its “financial” outputs, which were traditionally poor (MacMillan & Phillip, 2010, p.490). However, increased social, political, and economic pressures have resulted in greater incentives for seeking economic resilience, raising this as a topic



clearly meriting investigation. As Martin (2011a, p.213) states, the biggest change to game shooting since the 1950s is the shift to more “commercialised orientated shooting estates”. Such a substantial change to their very *raison d'être* is of research interest, as this thesis will show.

The estates themselves and their owners also found new means of forging significance. Jarvie and Jackson (1998, p.45) discuss survival strategies, including creation of ‘trusts’, ‘letting’ of sporting rights, ‘selling’ fractions of estates, to beginning new ‘niche’ business ventures, and ‘promoting’ the familial and heritage value of their estates. Warren (2019, p.258) charts the demise of the position of some landowners within a more democratic society via shifts to more social roles, including endorsing “Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, military service charities, Anglican church, the fields of conservation and preservation”. Transition for estates, game management and ownership has come through a manifold of inter-linked forms. Many estates also changed hands, for the first time since their formation (Shrubsole, 2019), ‘new money’ and both foreign and absentee ownership shaking up traditional peerage and paternalistic structures (McCarthy, 2008; Shrubsole, 2019). A growing movement also challenged upper class claims over land ownership and the public began to express more and more disapproval towards field sports (Huggins, 2008).

Furthermore, while private landownership still dominates, public and institutional land ownership also expanded, with groups such as the Ministry of Defence, Forestry Commission and Natural England emerging as some of the largest landowners in the country (Christophers, 2018; Shrubsole, 2019). Increasingly recognised as multifunctional, alongside established practices, rural land’s use value has grown through shifts linked to mass consumption, including tourism and recreation (Woods, 2011), and recent ‘green’ investments spurred by policy changes and environmental awareness (Gov.uk, 2018; Robbins & Fraser, 2003).

#### 1.5.4. Chapter Summary

This section has presented a contextual knowledge basis to situate the ongoing and future moves of private estates and their game management practices discussed within

this thesis. The latter part of this chapter has highlighted historic patterns of transition which closely follow wider societal developments, with many adaptations and changes linked to wider societal changes, including the rise of a new order for these game spaces. Within this, those involved in game management, notably gamekeepers, have had to acclimatise to new material and expressive roles and to a changed landscape in which to live and work. Yet, there remain significant gaps in current knowledge and future projections of the place of game management and the wider estate within today's rural framework. How to engage with these game spaces in order to explore some of these gaps will feature in the next chapter, the literature review.



## Chapter 2. Green and Pleasant Land: Contextualising Game Management and Shooting Practices within Rural Research

*“Before the argument starts, country life has many meanings”* (Williams, 1973, p. 3).

### 2.1. Introduction

This literature review provides a contextual overview of relevant academic and contemporary public discourses, situating this specific study of game management within the private estate setting. Part one (2.2) draws attention to relevant conceptual shifts in studying rural spaces, specifically the growth in research practice and theory which addresses the contested and diversifying nature of today’s rural. Part two (2.3) focuses on the significance of recent post-Brexit agri-environmental policy changes and the interlink of this with shifting socio-economic prioritisation of land use practices and management strategies. Part three (2.4) focuses on game management and shooting practice, exploring research and policy documents concerning these fields. This literature review also draws attention to this research area as a relatively underdeveloped area of Social Scientific study, highlighting key omissions and relevant spaces for additional inquiry.

### 2.2. Part One - Conceptualising the Rural: Relational Geographical Research Moves

#### 2.2.1. Introduction

This section discusses the development of rural research and how this has shifted from a focus on mapping rural landscapes to more critically reflective approaches, which recognise the subjective and socio-culturally constructed nature of rurality. Introduced here is the ‘relational turn’, which emphasises the multi-authored and dynamic nature of rural spaces and the importance of place-based studies. The section then introduces assemblage thinking, as well as the concept of the “good farmer” (Burton 2004, p.196), as useful means of understanding rural spatial relations. Additionally, this section

highlights the potential value of a place-assemblage approach and the good farmer concept in exploring shifting land use practice and management within the framework of game management and the private estate.

### 2.2.2. Relational Rural Studies

Rural research has come a long way from a central rubric which mainly focused on mapping rural settlement patterns, populations, and agricultural practice (Larsen, 2013; Newby, 1986). It was not until the 1970s that scholars such as Clout (1972) and Hart (1975) attempted to move studies of the rural beyond such a narrow focus and to recognise moves within and beyond these subject areas, therefore divulging the discipline from a focus centred on evidence gathering as concerning mainly knowable truths and objective facts (Murton, 2008).

As Rural Geography has developed, discourses have been reframed through a more critical lens, assessing the influence of flows through and beyond the boundary of rural spaces and society (Woods, 2007, 2011, 2017). Such change today prompts scholars to argue for rurality (plural) to be understood as webs of imagined, subjective and social-cultural constructions. Importantly, such scholarship has allowed a recognition that meaning(s) of the rural can change and has led to rurality being recognised as dynamic spaces engaged in just as many challenges, compromises, and conflicts as urban localities.

The awakening of less reductionist engagement of human geographers and rural researchers has come to be known as the 'relational turn' (Greenhough, 2014; Heley & Jones, 2012). Accordingly, a relational approach comprehends the rural to be "multi-authored" and grounded through the establishment of "local and global interconnection" that can comprehend how place relations can be contested (Heley & Jones, 2012, p. 208). This approach critiques inquiry which leans towards a generic perspective of space and instead insists on "place-based studies" of phenomena as they are experienced in specific localities (Woods, 2007, p. 485) therefore moving away from an 'armchair' approach to Rural Geography (Bunce, 1994; Halfacree, 2014). Instead, this approach considers rural lived experiences more directly, questioning identity, power, diversity, and inequality

dynamics as well as exploring the alternative experiences of the subordinated and neglected aspects within and beyond these spaces (Previte et al., 2007).

### 2.2.3. Assembling the Rural: Assemblage Thinking for Rural Spatial Relations

Part of the relational turn in Geography includes the growing use of assemblage thinking to help frame rural phenomena under study (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011; Anderson, 2012). The section is split into an overview of what assemblage thinking is (2.2.3.a); criticism and justification of this approach (2.2.3.b); focus on assemblages' use in place-based research (2.2.3.c.) and a discussion of the interlink and potentially use of a relevant concept, 'the good farmer' in understanding changing rural land management practices (2.2.3.d).

#### *2.2.3.a. Overview: What is an Assemblage Thinking*

An assemblage can be broadly defined as a heterogenous collection of components or elements configured together (DeLanda, 2006). While there are various strands to assemblage thinking (see, Jones et al, 2019) here DeLanda's (2006; 2011; 2016) interpretation is predominately focused upon. Within this context, a given assemblage is understood to be mobile and constantly evolving through cycles of relations (Woods et al., 2021). Woods et al (2021, p.285) builds on DeLanda's (2006; 2011) conceptualisation, using it to explain globalisation, as the "effect of diverse interactions between assemblages". Key concepts of the approach include processes of 'territorialisation', 'deterritorialisation' and 'reterritorialisation'. As Woods et al (2021) describes, an assemblage can be strongly defined, meaning 'territorialised', or in a process of decline, known as 'deterritorialisation'. The process between the two is known as 'reterritorialisation'. Figure 2.1 illustrates the parameters of a highly territorialised versus a weak or deterritorialised assemblage.

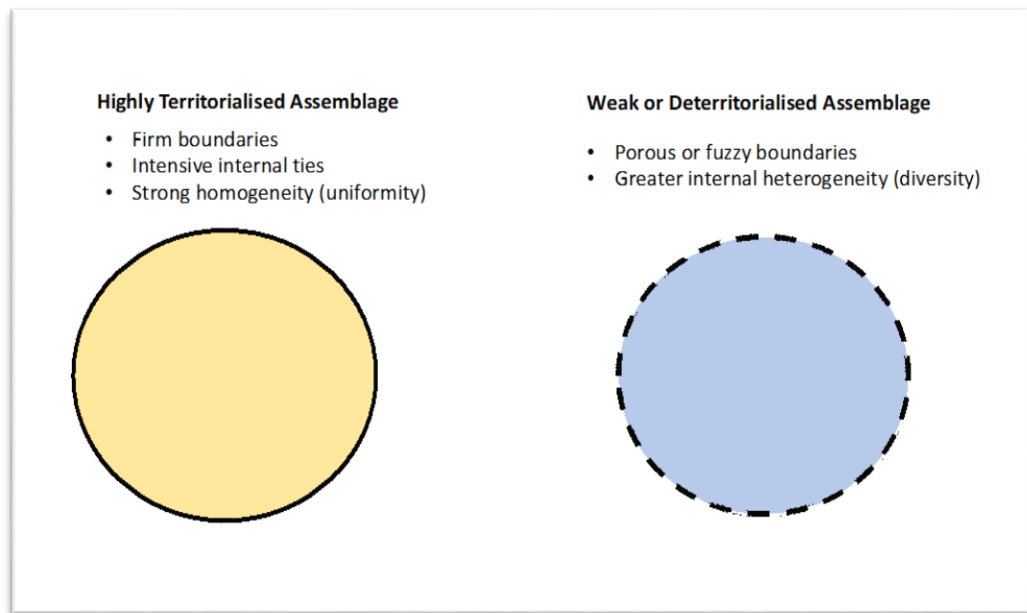


Figure 2.1. A visual interpretation of assemblage parameters, adapted from Wood et al's (2021, p.288).

The processes outlined in Figure 2.1 happen cyclically and are dependent on 'relations of exteriority' which Woods' (2005, p.4) early work states to be determined by their "positioning [in relation to other] places within complex webs of social relations". Thus, an assemblage is always temporary, and any attempt to capture it is merely a "snapshot" (Woods et al., 2021, p. 298). Both 'material' or 'expressive' components are also crucial to a particular assemblage. Expressive elements play a symbolic or performative role that may have cultural or historical significance in defining the assemblage's identity, heritage, or meaning (DeLanda, 2006). While material components are physical or tangible element that play a functional role (ibid). Woods (2015a) provides examples of material components, such as a car or person, and expressive components, such as rituals and customs, dialect, particular clothing, or even routine practices that give meaning to a particular assemblage (ibid, p.3). Importantly, Woods (ibid) clarifies that a component can play both material and expressive functions dependent on the circumstances, this is known as 'coding'.

### *2.2.3.b. Criticism & Justification of Assemblage Approach*

As with any analytical tool it is important to recognise their shortcomings. Several scholars have expressed concern that assemblage thinking is too ambiguous (Anderson

& McFarlane, 2011; Brenner et al., 2011; Kinkaid, 2020) and hence not to be viewed as a coherent theory (Woods et al., 2021). Additionally, Anderson and McFarlane (2011, p. 125) are concerned by assemblage's lack of clarity, arguing "anything comes to be described as an assemblage". Nevertheless, Kinkaid (2020) argues such concerns can be denounced, as assemblage is a useful analytic tool to interrogate a wide range of phenomena, including social categories of race, gender, and sexuality (Anderson, 2012; Saldanha, 2006). Wood's et al's (2021) application of assemblage thinking as a methodological framework to understand the processes constituting and reconstituting place shows how it can be adapted to specific roles and relations within and across spaces. While recognising its limitations, assemblage thinking can enrich our understanding of certain manifestations of place change. Moreover, there is a growing body of rural research which reap benefits from utilising assemblage thinking to explore complex inter-species and spatial phenomena (Jones et al., 2019; Sutherland & Calo, 2020).

#### *2.2.3.c. Use of Assemblage Thinking for Rural Place Relations*

The assemblage approach has been applied to analyse changes to place, such as the shifts in relations of "power, resource[s], and knowledge" (McFarlane, 2011, p. 655) between components. Additionally, assemblage thinking has been used to understand places themselves as assemblages, with various components interacting to form a particular place (Woods, 2017). It has also been widely applied in urban studies (DeLanda, 2016; McFarlane, 2011; Parker, 2009; Rosin et al., 2013), and now there is also a growing body of research focused on its application in a rural context (Hollander, 2010; Jones et al., 2019; Law & Mol, 2008; Murray Li, 2007; Sutherland & Calo, 2020; Woods, 2015b, 2015a).

Woods (2015a) as one example, explores how external forces such as globalisation and environmentalism has changed the cultural, social, and economic value of regional Cod outports within both Newfoundland and Queenstown. The shifting relations across these localities also illustrate the material shift in the role of the fish and the reterritorialisation of the communities. Despite this the expressive role of the fish is shown to linger within the local culture (ibid, p.16). Similarly, Jones et al (2019) explore how sheep farming in

Newtown, Mid-Wales, became part of a global industrialised wool industry. Murray Li (2007) maps the assemblage of a forest community and its stakeholders, revealing the struggles between agri-businesses and agrarian dwellers. Sutherland and Cato (2020) use assemblage to analyse the emergence of new crofters and crofting practices in Scotland, highlighting the power dynamics between component parts and how the emergence of innovative practices can shift the rigid or established conventions. In all, such examples demonstrate the application of assemblage to a range of rural place relations and established practices, and the worth in generating a methodological framework for analysis is demonstrated (Woods et al, 2021). This has clear use potential for the study of private estates and game management and to highlight the shifting relations across specific sites.

#### *2.2.3.d. The Role of the 'Good Farmer' in Understanding Rural Landscapes and Practice Changes*

A further useful conceptual consideration directly applicable to rural land management and place relations is Burton's (2004) 'good farmer' concept. This perception emphasises the influence of socio-cultural values and policy in shaping acceptable agricultural practices. It helps to explain how traditional beliefs can hinder farmers' adaptation to changing policy changes and societal expectations (ibid, also; Wilson, 2001). This concept also elucidates several societal shifts in expectations placed on farmers and the agriculture landscape, including in the provision various public goods (Cusworth & Dodsworth, 2021), thus highlighting how, within the UK context, agricultural land management has expanded to encompass numerous provision. As Burton (2004, p.195) states, farmers are now expected to do much more than farm; they are expected to be "shopkeepers, leisure providers, foresters, nature conservers and public custodians of the countryside".

Sutherland and Cato (2020) build on this concept by integrating DeLanda's (2006, 2016) understanding of assemblage thinking. They view agricultural holdings as inclusive of both human and more-than elements, emphasising their varying roles influenced by social perceptions or codes. These codes can be established internally through social



networks or externally through legislation. Larger farm holdings have been shown to potentially possess greater adaptive capacity (ibid, p.533).

Overall, this conceptualisation offers a novel perspective of the complex relationships between human and more-than-human elements in shaping agricultural practices over time. The authors further illustrate how farmers are learning to adapt to what they call “changing rules of the game” (p.537), referencing regulatory changes. They provide the example of crofting communities (ibid). Despite this, it is worth noting that others have highlighted a potential lag time between policy shifts and farmers' favourable attitude towards new expected measures (Howley et al., 2012; Lobley & Potter, 2004).

#### 2.2.4. Part One: Summary

Section 2.2 discussed the development of rural research into critically engaged and reflexive approaches to studying geographical phenomena. This section further outlined the potential value of assemblage thinking and the good farmer concept in exploring shifting land management within a rural framework, importantly highlighting how they can enrich such rural research.

### 2.3. Part Two - Rural Policy and Politics

#### 2.3.1. Introduction

*"The rural is on the move, now as always"* (Bell & Osti, 2010, p. 199).

This section explores the shifting perspectives on rural space and the major transitions that are impacting land practices and management operations. Today, the rural is no longer viewed as inferior to the metropolis, but instead understood and analysed alongside it, with a critical lens applied to the complex socio-political shifts currently affecting this sphere (Reed, 2008; Woods, 2005). The section is structured into two broad parts. Section, 2.3.2 ‘Land Use Policy’ provides context within the history and current politics that shape rural spatial relations, focusing on relevant policy transitions. Section 2.3.3 ‘Land Use Politics’ delves into current broad areas of political discourse, including

considerations of who and what the rural is for today. All in all, this section paints a picture of an ever-changing and evolving rural landscape, leaving space for further scholarly enquiry that reflect this. Thereby, part two accounts for some of the recent topics dominating scholarship in a renewed effort to address what Woods (2005, p.1) once described as the “strange awakening of the rural”.

### 2.3.2. Land Use Policy

*“The unique set of circumstances that are aligning make this a major moment for agriculture, environment and land use policy”* (Burchardt et al., 2020, p.6).

#### 2.3.2.a. Historical Policy Focus

At a macro level, the land use and management policies in the UK have been greatly influenced by international organisations, including the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) (Burchardt et al., 2020). The principles of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for instance has underpinned new plans and legislation in devolved nations, including the recent addition of the government’s 25-year Environmental Plan in England (HM Government, 2018) and the Well-being of Future Generations Act in Wales (Gov.wales, 2015).

One key policy which has dominated UK and EU agricultural policies and rural land practices until recently is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (Bateman & Balmford, 2018). This policy supported agricultural productivity, and controlled market competition through subsidies to stabilise post-war food security (Ward et al., 2008; Winter, 2004). However, the policy faced extensive criticism for its environmental and humanitarian costs (Bateman & Balmford, 2018) and came to be known as a “skewed” subsidy model which favoured the largest landowners (Defra, 2018b, p.5). Broadly, the policies and practices surrounding CAP emphasised intensive and industrial-based agricultural production in the wake of World War Two to ensure domestic food security (Lowe et al, 1993, p.221). Such policies led to several issues, including mass overproduction and largescale degradation of ecological systems, including farmland habitats (Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019). Despite multiple reforms, issues with the policies continued (Woods,

2011). One of the biggest problems connected to this being the basic payment scheme (BPS), which agricultural landowners or holders had to apply to annually for assistance. Issues with BPS included a strategy based on paying rural landholders for the quantity of land they owned rather than for the outcome of land use (Cusworth & Dodsworth, 2021), with Defra (2018b, p. 5) reporting that 61% of farms between 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 relied on this direct agricultural subsidisation. Many organisations now share the belief that such schemes concentrated landed wealth and offered little environmental benefit, therefore increasing divisions between rural groups (ibid; Woods, 2005, 2011).

### *2.3.2.b. Ongoing Policy Reform*

During the 1990s, as the negative impacts of such productivist policies became more apparent, a new term, 'post-productivism', was introduced to describe the changes that were taking place in agricultural practices (Almstedt, 2013). These changes were reflected in a shift of incentives away from agriculture and towards "amenities, ecosystem services and preservation of landscape" (ibid, p.8). These policy adaptations aimed to support economic diversification and broader rural development (Midgley & Adams, 2006).

Post-productivism was, however, criticised for falsely implying an end to productivism when it involved changes, including renewed environmental focus within agricultural incentives (McCarthy, 2005). Alternative terms such as multifunctionality (Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019; Wilson, 2001) and ecological modernisation (Evans et al., 2002) have been suggested to better express wider changes to agriculture and land use (Riley, 2011). For instance, the Agri-Environment Schemes (AESs) incentivise sustainable countryside management and could be achieved through a variety of practices and land uses, including renewable energy, afforestation projects (Emery & Franks, 2012). Another scheme, the Basic Payment Scheme, introduced in 2015, is also being phased out, and payments are being delinked from agriculture, instead rewarding landholders for the delivery of public goods, including those that "improve the environment" (Defra, 2021c, p. 3). Schemes such as these are part of the Government's wider seven-year phase out from EU based rules (ibid). Further, despite agriculture remaining at the forefront of Britain's rural land use and making up over 70% of the UK's land area, a wider plethora

of concerns surround the future directive of such spaces (Bateman & Balmford, 2018, p.297).

The introduction of a new agricultural and environmental bill in rural Britain is considered a momentous shift (Cusworth & Dodsworth, 2021). One crucial aspect of this bill is its emphasis on ‘public goods’. These are defined as goods or services that are available to all and do not affect the use of others (Defra, 2021a, p.2). Public goods are closely links to natural capital; elements of the natural environment, including clean air and water, enhanced habitats and biodiversity, recreational access, mental and physical wellbeing (ibid). The new schemes aim to implement place-specific solutions such as “greater recreation and mental health benefits” in areas near large settlements and greater value for “carbon storage” in upland regions (Bateman & Balmford, 2018, p. 295).

#### *2.3.2.c. Devolved Policy Moves*

As post-Brexit policy transition takes effect, the devolved nations are replacing measures with their own strategies, under the UK’s Agricultural Transition Plan. In England, one example is new ‘Environmental Land Management Schemes’ (ELMS) which aim to incentivise sustainable farming and multifunctional land management practices, centred on the place specific implementation of public money for public goods philosophy (Defra, 2021b; Cusworth & Dodsworth, 2021). ELMS consists of three main components supporting the government’s 25-year plan and commitment to net Zero emissions by 2050 (ibid). Box 2.1 highlights some of the key targeted outcomes of the government’s public goods initiative and Table 2.1 highlights key branches of the new ELMs schemes as an example of their implementation.

Box. 2.1. Public goods under post-Brexit land use policy (drawn from Bateman & Balmford, 2018, p.295).

Public Goods:

- o Improved soil health
- o Water quality improvement
- o Water quantity regulation
- o Climate change mitigation through the reduction and storage of greenhouse gas emissions
- o Flood risk reduction
- o Other air quality improvements such as reducing ammonia emissions
- o The provision of amenity views
- o Conservation and enhancement of biodiversity
- o Recreational access
- o Improvements to physical and mental health
- o Supporting provision of the above environmental public goods through diversification into other production with high public good characteristics (e.g., woodland) and/or compensation for environmental damage elsewhere in the economy (e.g., delivering net environmental gains from housing developments).

Table 2.1. New Environmental Land Management Schemes (DEFRA, 2021b, pp. 10–12)

ELMS Schemes
Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) – rewarding environmentally sustainable land management actions (Pilot 2021, phased in 2022).
Local Nature Recovery schemes- payments made or actions that support nature recovery and local environmental priorities (Pilot 22, phase in 2022-24).
Landscape Recovery scheme. – bespoke agreements to support long-term, land use change and rewilding where appropriate (pilot 22, phase in 2022-24).

In Wales, similar environmentally focused schemes have evolved under the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) program, which, at the time of writing, was still in development (Gov.wales, 2019). Central to this new scheme, as in England, are multiple prescribed benefits for society and the environment (Marshall & Mills-Sheehy, 2021). The scheme again focuses on action and is based on the ‘Brexit and our Land’ governmental report (2019). The scheme responds to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Gov.wales, 2015) and the Environment Act (2016) ensuring support for farmers and land managers in delivering sustainable land management outcomes (Gov.wales, 2019).

Overall, this emphasises growing requirements placed on rural land areas and further demonstrates the importance of debates concerning the future of rural land and livelihoods. In short, land use policy (2.3.2) has shown that there are significant and ongoing shifts happening in land management across the UK, with a greater emphasis on the environment and the provision of public goods in rural areas. These policies mark a transition away from agricultural productivity towards environmental protection, while still providing food and access to green spaces, reducing emissions and much more (Cusworth & Dodsworth, 2021). Overall, this emphasises growing requirements placed on rural land areas and further demonstrates the importance of debates concerning the future of rural land and livelihoods.

### 2.3.3. Land Use Politics: The Multi-Functional and Conflicted Rural Space

*“Immovable and unyielding, the land bears witness to the social processes played out upon and through it, carrying the past with it through time. For all that this past becomes ever more distant, its echoes increasingly quietened, it can never be fully escaped”* (Christophers, 2018, p.73).

This section provides a brief overview of current literary discussions on the politics of rural land use and management. It begins by emphasising the significance of land ownership in current and future land use trajectory. The discussion then focuses on the current debates dominating discourse on land use. Finally, it critically evaluates who is currently included in studies of land use, in doing so illuminating those who are excluded, concluding by summarising associated challenges and changes.

#### 2.3.3.a. Why Land (Ownership) Matters

*“Land quite literally underlies and underpins everything”* (Winchester, 2021, p.1).

Land is currently one area of critical debate, sustaining public attention in understanding how it connects and divides society, who owns it, and how it is managed and used (Winchester, 2021). Recent research has shed light on the pattern of land ownership in the UK, identifying that 0.01% of the population (25,000 individuals) own 18 million acres of land. This represents half of England and Wales (Shrubsole, 2019, p.84) meaning that

a minority has significant influence over it, with potential impacts on the majority. As Warren and McKee (2011, p.11) state, “landholders remain key actors with considerable influence for good or ill”. Yet, there is still no complete registry of land in England, nor Wales, with 17% of ownership remaining unaccounted for in England alone (Shrubsole, 2019, p.41). While debates over land ownership have been most prominent in Scotland, there is a growing body of research on landownership involving England and Wales, including texts such as Shrubsole’s (2019) ‘Who Owns England’, the webpage ‘Who Owns Wales’ (Spike-Lewis & Haf, 2020), Cahills’ (2002) ‘Who Owns Britain’ and Winchester’s (2021) ‘Land’ exploring land ownership on a global scale. Such a flurry of literary publications and public entourage recognise land is the subject of lively debate. Land is increasingly recognised as an objective concern to societal needs and desires, including environmental protection and recreational access alongside more longstanding productivism needs (Burchardt et al., 2020; Home, 2009).

#### *2.3.3.b. Multifunctional Rural Land Use Studies*

Rural spaces today are actively considered complex and multifunctional. Through rural discourse it has become clear that the Rural is tasked with providing a diverse yet often conflicting political, economic, socio-cultural, and environmental returns and investments (Brown & Shucksmith, 2016; Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019; Slee, 2005; Woods, 2011). The emphasis of scholarship addresses how these factors are changing the social dynamics and physicality of spatial occupancy (ibid). One useful conceptual overview of the redirection of certain forms of capital into rural areas comes from Livingstone et al (2021). Livingstone et al (ibid, p.1) explains diversification of rural land use to be a reaction to, and mitigation of the vulnerabilities within established land practices, hereby, building on Harvey’s (2001) prominent notion of the ‘spatial fix’, to explain how new or altered land use practices can be understood as measures to create greater resilience of a rural locality or organisation. A key example relates to new moves within and beyond what has been one of the most prominent mainstays of the UK’s rural economy in recent decades; agriculture (see also, Woods, 2011, p.90). Two interconnected areas of academic focus and physical landscape transition are discussed below, ‘Consumption Based Land Use’ and ‘Environmental Considerations in Land Use’.

## Consumption Based Land Use

It is well recognised consumption of the rural landscape, be it to “hunt, play, stroll or bathe”, has endured alongside primary resource extraction (Woods, 2011, p.92). Yet recent literature, shifts attention to, as Slee (2005, p.255) calls a “constellation” of consumptive demands create the present model of a complex base of economic activity and multiple use demands (also, Everett, 2012; Halfacree, 2011). This diversification sees substantial moves away from established activities including a dominance of agriculture, towards culturally centred activities and tourist ventures (ibid, Cawley & Gillmor, 2008; Storey, 2004). Within established spaces of agricultural practice, this is also being witnessed as Sutherland (2012, p.547) reports farms investing in shifts towards more “non-farming activities” leading to “alteration of cultural capital from production to consumption” and thus contributing to physical alterations to the farming landscape.

For new and established groups such consumptive moves can offer investment potential. Slee (2005) discusses land holders offering multiple social-cultural services and hospitality alongside revenue generated from established investment (also, Everett, 2012). Other possibilities of investment including second home development, renewable energy, and natural capital (Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019). Further literature demonstrates how the agricultural sector have embraced a broader movement towards seeking cultural capital within the landscapes they work and own; providing a wider choice of amenities desired by new and emerging rural dwellers and stakeholders (Burton et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2021; Stockdale, 2010).

Even private estates renowned for established land-use practices are shown to be embracing diversification. Wightman (2004, p.21) discusses how estates are “slowly coming to terms with the forces of modernity”. Hindle et al’s (2014) survey of Scottish estates economic profiles demonstrates greater investments into areas including renewable energy, leisure and tourism, and commercial property, alongside established avenues of farming, forestry, and sporting interests (ibid). This furthers Glass et al’s (2012, p.10) report which concluded the role of current private land management must “deliver multiple and integrated benefits” to society including recreation, wellbeing, and cultural heritage alongside established provision of local housing and employment. As does



Urquhart et al's (2012) work which highlights the increased breadth of expectations placed on private woodland owners, from biodiversity enhancement to recreation, carbon sequestration, on top of growth in timber production. Also, Slee (2005) talks of active, rather than passive engagement in shifting land management expectations on one estate, Rothiemurchus, which has developed an impressive array of public goods:

“Even the fish farm has been turned into a tourist attraction and not only sells feed to tourists to feed the trout, but also sells value-added products in the shop at the exit” (ibid, p.259).

### Environmental Considerations in Land Use

Another key investment area has been prioritising positive environmental outcomes in rural land use (Adams & Hodge, 2014; Burton et al, 2021; Manfredo et al., 2003). This has meant widespread changes to such land use, with both state and non-state taking a lead on conservation and greener energy initiatives (Adams, 2012; Adams & Hodge, 2014; Glass et al., 2013; Urquhart et al., 2012). Adams and Hodge (2014) argue this shift is part of a larger trend in managing nature through a neoliberal approach, that values environmental goods and services as natural capital (Defra, 2021a).

The private sector, including land managers, are shown to be diversifying their environmental investments, such as through renewable energy generation, carbon trading and further afforestation projects (Bowditch et al., 2019; Hindle et al., 2014). Even more controversially, landowners are shown to be taking radical turns towards the 'rewilding' of the rural landscape (Burrell, 2020; Dolton-Thornton, 2021; Wynne-Jones et al., 2018). Rewilding, however, has created much polarisation between rural stakeholders, with differing opinions surrounding the concept and impact of such potentially largescale land use transition (Sandom & Wynne-Jones, 2019). Greater clarification of the social impact of such largescale land use change is deemed necessary with regards to this (Pettorelli et al 2018; Dolton-Thornton, 2021).

Returning to the broader picture, tensions arise between established land uses and new areas of rural investment, making this an interesting space for cultural study (Slee, 2005).

Scholars have examined the appropriation of natural resources or ‘green grabbing’ of land (Fairhead et al., 2012), the increasing tensions between spaces of work and the growing needs and desires of the ever-increasing multitude of other rural stakeholders (Everett, 2012). Rural scholars have brought some attention to the impact of transitions upon working rural communities, including agricultural (Riley, 2011) and wider rural communities (Bowditch et al., 2019; Bunce et al., 2014), but there is a gap in understanding the implications of such land uses and user transition which includes, game management (2.4).

### *2.2.3.c. Rethinking Rurality through Social Relations & Recognition of Rural Others*

Another key area of rural scholarship addresses the social relations and composition of rural areas, and recognition of Rural Others within this.

#### *Social Relations*

In terms of social relations and population movements, the loss of services and resultant “hollowing out of communities” have been regarded as a key areas of interest (Heley, 2010; Neal & Walters, 2008, p.282). Previous studies have documented the counter-movements in and out of rural spaces, including greater recognition of ethnic minorities (Butler, 2021; Neal & Agyeman, 2006), commuters (Hillyard, 2015), travellers (Halfacree, 2016) and second homeowners (Halfacree, 2012). In-migration is shown to have an uneven geographical impact, often affecting areas considered as “picturesque and mythical” creating regional disparities in demographics and service provision (Hughes, 1992, p.39). Other research has focused on where areas have faced stark de-population, example studies include; research on out-migration, particularly of youth (Butler, 2021; Stockdale, 2004), poverty and socio-economic deprivation (Cloke, Marsden & Mooney, 2006; Cox & Winter, 1997; Pacione, 1995; Woods, 2007; Woodward, 1996). Considering these population and service changes, many studies focus on the impact of shifts on rural communities and the often-resulting displacement and conflict over the use of and belonging within such spaces (Halfacree, 1997; Slee, 2005). In this regard, Slee (2005, p.258) remarks on the importance of recognising the wider economic and social currents. Whilst the long-term implications of Covid-19 are yet unknown, trends indicate the

pandemic and resultant social effect may have significantly altered long-standing migration patterns. Labelled the “reverse brain drain” (Bakalova et al., 2021) many rural areas have witnessed unprecedented population growth and for some communities, a complete reversal to decades of chronic out-migration (Argent & Plummer, 2022; McManus, 2022). Some of the drivers include enhanced ability remote work, perceived better value for money (ibid; Davies, 2021) and shifting socio-cultural ideals (Åberg & Tondelli, 2021; Kay & Wood, 2022). This urban-to-rural migration, particularly of working age people, contrasts long-standing patterns with such groups previously seeking more prosperous lifestyles in urban areas (Butler, 2021; Halfacree & Barcus, 2018).

### Rural Others

A further area of amplified engagement in Rural Geography, surrounds rural Others; the seemingly forgotten actants in rural space(s) (Philo, 1997). Research on these Others has varied significantly. Consequently, emphasis varies from generalised discussions of inclusion and exclusion (Sibley, 2006), to specific case study investigation of groups who have been systematically ‘Othered’. Cloke and Little’s (1997) comprehensive ‘Contested Countryside Culture’s’ allows scholars a detailed way in which to examine the diverse branches of what ‘Other’ and ‘Othered’ rural(s) can entail. Key examples within this sub-field include studies of rural childhoods (Matthews et al., 2000; Valentine, 1997); women in rural space, specifically their gendered roles and relations (Little & Austin, 1996); and minority groups, including travellers and ethnic minorities (Halfacree, 1996; Holloway, 2005; Neal, 2002).

Enquiry regarding rural Others has expanded to include more-than-human actants, Woods (1998, p.1233) labelled as the “ultimate neglected rural Other”. There has been a recent growth of research in this area, with non-human actants including animals, plants, soil, and other organic beings all understood to be a part of such spaces (Halfacree & Williams, 2021; Lorimer, 2005; Philo & Wilbert, 2000). Often the focus here has maintained a narrow focus on predominately agricultural spaces (Halfacree & Williams, 2021; Jones, 2003; Yarwood & Evans, 2000). Although there has been some study of the inter-relationship of animals within spaces of hunting, including the persecution of foxes,

deer, and birds of prey (Garlick, 2019; Gordon, 2008; Patchett et al., 2013; Woods, 1998, 2000).

In summary, research on the rural Other has been used to challenge the notion of rurality as bounded and homogenous and to surpass any imagined idyllic conceptualisation of who the rural can encompass (Sibley, 2003). Gaps clearly remain in the study of certain groups, places and individuals within rural research and giving such subjects the attention deserved.

#### 2.3.4. Part Two: Summary

As the Rural shifts and changes, the multitude of concerns and demands on land use are increasingly being academically addressed. These discussions have included the conflict over who has the right and responsibility to the countryside (Marsden et al., 2012) and who owns, can access, and use this land (Hunt, 2019; Shrubsole, 2019). Additionally, rural research has expanded its plethora of concerns to focus on various changing relationships within the rural landscape; on policy, politics of land use, material growth consumption, the intensity the intensity of natural resource exploitation (Burchardt et al., 2020; Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019; Woods, 2011). Moreover, this section has demonstrated how longstanding rural populations are subject to new waves of influx and outflow with populations rapidly shifting and becoming increasingly divided, diverse, and dispersed (Halfacree, 2011; Shucksmith, 2012). At the same time, rural localities across Europe are facing greater challenges as already dispersed populations encounter reduced services, global trade competition and narrowed business and social opportunities (Jauhiainen & Moilanen, 2012, p.119). This is all occurring whilst rural tourism and recreational industries are increasing in volume and intensifying a fictional idyllic narrative, far removed from the realities of these growing problems, discontent and conflict emerging for those who live, work, and play in the countryside (Halfacree, 1993; Woods, 2011).

As a means of deliberating such conflicts, Slee et al's (2014) developed the notion of a 'squeezed middle' referring to a physical or expressive point in which it becomes challenging to balance an increasing array of wants and desires from a finite amount of rural space. The effect of this can lead to evident compromise in what planners and policy

makers can achieve and whose needs and desires can be met within such a space. While their theorization is grounded in a Scottish upland context, they agree on the wider salience of this term as a useful conceptualisation for diverse purposes, differing user demands and pressures evidenced across such spaces and within relevant literary discussions (ibid, p.207-8). This leads into part three (2.4), which draws attention to one particular articulation of such conflict, how field sports are being researched and their association to wider challenges and changes to rural research and life.

## 2.4. Part Three - Exploring Current Research and the Gaps: Field Sport, Game Management and Shooting Practice

*“We have a paradox: for some field sports are one of the great glories...and recreations beyond compare: for others they are distasteful, if not intolerable, recreations of the monied”* (Hoyle, 2007, p. xiii).

### 2.4.1. Introduction

This section of the literature review identifies key areas of research on field sport, game management and shooting practice (FGMSP). In doing so, the research gaps this thesis aims to address are revealed. The section is organised into three parts. Firstly, 2.4.2 discusses the barriers that hinder research on FGMSP. Furthermore, 2.4.3 delves into current areas of conflict, with an emphasis on debates over conservation. 2.4.4 focuses on the limited remit of current research on involved actors and, linked to this spatial disparities within present studies, 2.4.5 provides a conclusive summary.

### 2.4.2. Barriers to Research on Field Sport, Game Management & Game Shooting Practice

*“[This] is a relatively closed world which creates many challenges for the social researcher in terms of access”* (Hillyard, 2007a, p.126).

Although the context of FGMSP is lively, it is widely acknowledged in Social Science and Rural Research that the subject area remains a relative research gap (Heley, 2010; Hillyard, 2007a-b; MacKenzie, 2017; Martin, 2011; Wightman, 2004). Various discussions exist as to why this is the case, some of which are briefly examined here.

Firstly, several academics attribute such absences to the controversial and taboo nature of the subject. Hillyard and Burrige (2012, p.396) state that it is the “elitism” surrounding the subject matter “mixed with the emotively charged issue of gun use [that] serves to distance the academy”. Similarly, Lovelock (2008, p.3) agrees that the distasteful nature of the subject has led to a lack of research stating that such practices are no longer unquestionably accepted by the “educated middle class”. Further Lovelock (ibid) categorises such research into two unfavourable categories: (a) the uncomfortable (relating to guns and firearms) and (b) the unforgivable (leisure induced killing of innocent creatures), further declaring that “no one wants to research people performing such unpleasant acts”. Additionally, the closed nature of the activity and spaces in which these practices take place make it difficult to report on (Hillyard, 2007a; Lovelock, 2008). Lovelock (2008, p.3) notes how traditionally the sector has been regarded by researchers, and those outside of it, as opaque, both in physicality and in terms of economic administration, which leads to a lack of transparency. Moreover, the subject requires a vast amount of expertise to understand the complex frameworks in which relevant activity is situated. Illustrating this point, Mackenzie (1997, p.1) states a need to understand a rich body of interconnected “human and animal relationships”. Lastly, the lack of categorisation of field sports is further argued as a limiting factor in academic engagement. For instance, Martin (2011b) argues game shooting is viewed neither as a mainstream sport nor as an agricultural activity, despite the close connection of FGMS with agricultural advancements. Lovelock (2008) concurs that there is no space exists for field sport within tourism studies, thus these subjects remain excluded from these fields of study. This means without an established field in which to study the subject, contemporary research has been limited.

#### 2.4.3. Examining the Controversies: Key Areas of Game Management Conflict

*“Field Sports have been one of the most divisive and contested areas of recent political debate” (Hoyle, 2007, p. xiii).*

#### *2.4.3.a. Generalised Conflicts*

As part one made clear, within rural research the countryside is no longer regarded a homogeneous space of pastoral idealism, but rather as a diverse and contested space (Hamilton, 2016; Neal & Agyeman, 2006). This diversity and contestation has fuelled academic and political enquiry into the diverse narratives of multiple stakeholders (Brouwer & van der Heide, 2012; Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019). The traditional rural pursuits of hunting, shooting, and fishing, collectively known as field sports, were once seen as symbolic of British imperial and patriarchal nationhood (Huggins, 2008), but today they face pressure to redefine their societal position (Colls, 2020). The focus of this section is on game management and shooting practices, with references to the broader field sport sector.

There are longstanding and persistent debates surrounding both game management and the broader arena of field sport, and recent growing engagement with GMSP specifically (Feber et al., 2020; Jones, 2006; Milbourne, 2003; Woods, 2003). While there is no room to trace every relevant discussion, a widescale review of significant literature reveals several lines of discourse. Table 2.2 highlights a sample of key debates, centred on the environmental, social, and economic contribution of GMSP. Within the table, supportive discourse (+) refers to narratives which highlight the favourable role of game management, unsupportive discourses (-) refers to those which provide counter narratives.

Table.2.2. Dominant narratives surrounding Game Management and Shooting Practices

Justification	Explanation	Citation Examples
Environmental	<p>(+) Interventions used within game management improve habitat and biodiversity of non-target wildlife. This includes ground nesting bird species and the maintenance and restoration of moorland, hedgerows, and woodlands. Necessary interventions include pest and predator control, feeding and habitat maintenance, such as muirburn. Some of these habitat management techniques can also aid carbon capture and storage.</p> <p>(-) Interventions used within game management are damaging to habitat and biodiversity, including fragile ecosystems. Critics claim these interventions create monocultural landscapes, add to greenhouse gas emissions and put wildlife at greater risk of disease vectors. The use of pest and predator control, artificial feed, chemical input, and habitat alteration such as muirburn are examples.</p>	<p>(Aebischer, 2009; GWCT, n.d.)</p> <p>(Grant et al., 2012; Hodgson et al., 2018; Mason et al., 2020; Redpath &amp; Thirgood, 2009)</p>
Social-Cultural	<p>(+) Game shooting is an established cultural tradition offering work and social connection for rural often remote communities and individuals, which improves mental wellbeing of participants.</p> <p>(-) Game shooting is an elite, exclusive and outdated activity which prevents land access and use by a diversity of rural groups.</p>	<p>(Latham-Green, 2020)</p> <p>(Shrubsole, 2019; Wightman, 2004)</p>
Economic	<p>(+) Shooting contributes large sum to the UK economy, provides local employment and maintenance of services. Especially for release game shoots, the income provided maintains isolated local economies during low tourist seasons. Further, game should be regarded as a potentially profitable meat product (currently work is being done within the sector to improve this).</p> <p>(-) Shooting is an activity which continues to benefit a small minority and offers minimal contribution to the rest of society. Economies of scale have prompted a need for larger and larger quantities of bird management and release which is controversial. Further, game is currently often a redundant byproduct which markets, commonly beyond the UK have been hampered by new-trade agreements.</p>	<p>(PACEC, 2014)</p> <p>(Martin, 2011b; Savills, 2018)</p>

Evident conflict over conservation and ecological contribution as well as land ownership, use, access, economics of management and wider considerations of rural land use are addressed. Centrally to the debates around GMSP, is a focus on driven shooting across



the UK, with calls for largescale reformation of both release and wild game sectors (Mason et al., 2020; Revive, 2020).

In terms of claims in support of the sector, one notable publication which has been widely used to promote positive attributes of the sector is the PACEC (2014) report. This report was produced with co-operation and subsequent substantive use by partner organisations including the CLA, BASC, NGO and the Countryside Alliance (among 17 organisations involved in shooting and rural affairs). Statements here showcase game managements involved in two million hectares of rural land conservation, the annual contribution of two billion GBP to the UK economy and significant cultural and economic contribution to threatened rural communities (ibid, p.3). Further, recent, defence of GMSP has seen the drawing together of cross-sector organisational support. This includes the production of the ‘Code of Good Shooting Practice’ (2020). The document is supported by ten organisations including BASC, GWCT, CLA, The Moorland Association, NGO, and Countryside Alliance, drawing on points of contestation and giving practical advice and codes to follow for those within the sector. This includes advice on releasing game (p.12-13), pest and predator control (p.14) and ensuring dead game reaches consumptive markets (p.10):

*“Shooting has its opponents; the good name of shooting –and the ability of our organisations to defend it – depends on everyone involved following this Code”*

(The Code of Good Shooting Practice, 2020, p.2).

Moreover, the importance of shooting as a cultural attribute is further drawn out by several researchers who emphasise, despite notable contention, the rich cultural heritage of field sports (Bye, 2003; Cox & Winter, 1997; Marvin, 2003). For instance, Marvin’s (2003) paper, published in the heated lead up to the fox hunting ban, argues that hunting is embedded in rituals that form and maintain the cultural identity of many rural places.

Several narratives which denote FGMSF more generally have been tied to perceptions of a growth of urban dwellers and influx of middle-class in-migrants to rural spaces (McLeod,

2007; Milbourne, 2003; Mischi, 2013; Watts et al., 2017; Woods, 2000). As Reed (2008, p.217) reports the conflict has been heated as “threatened [rural] identities” try to reassert their place and identity against new waves of in-migrants who have less cultural and historic connection to such traditional practices. Shucksmith (2018) further highlights how problems stem from collective imaginaries of rural space, which significantly differ from the reality of a working countryside. Further critical discussion continues in the following sub-section, surrounding a specific and currently dominant area of debate; conservation.

#### *2.4.3.b. Conservation Conflict*

Conservation, particularly the differences in interpretation of the term and practical application of it across various rural stakeholders is a cause of widespread contention (Redpath et al., 2013; Riley et al., 2018; Swan et al., 2020). Thirgood et al (2000, p.961) warn that “finding ways to resolve such conflicts is a challenge to all involved”. Hodgson et al (2018, p.332) stating that conflicts over wildlife and game management is “one of the greatest challenges to wildlife conservation” adding that such conflicts are “embedded in wider issues surrounding land ownership and natural resource use” and thus deeply engrained in the spaces and cultures in which they emerge (also, Marshall et al., 2007; St John, et al., 2019). Issues arise when the value systems of different groups account for widely different stances (Marshall et al., 2007). One way of summarising key current areas of review and contention is through the branches of different forms of game management.

Generally, issues which span various forms of game management practice and ecological debates included the environmental and physiological impact of lead shot on both humans and wildlife, with the Food Standards Agency making clear in 2017 that frequent exposure to lead-shot through game meat can lead to “potentially harmful levels of lead” within humans and wildlife (Food Standards Agency, 2017, pp.1-2; GWCT, 2022a). As a result of such widespread concern over its usage within the shooting sector, the GWCT alongside eight other organisations released a statement on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2020 calling for a “voluntary 5-year phase out” of all lead ammunition by 2025 (GWCT, 2022a).

Key topics of concern during the research period surrounded changes to the general licence, for the control of certain species, including those regarded as pests. A general licence is a licence issued by government agencies across the UK that allows certain practices. In this instance, it relates to the shooting of certain species, without the need for individual licences. A prominent topic is Wild Justice's (a prominent lobbying group for reform surrounding GMSP) legal challenge to revoke three general licences which allowed gamekeepers, as well as farmers and landowners to control species including crows and pigeons under the licences in England. DEFRA has announced plans for a review (Case, 2019; Defra, 2021d). Significant general licence changes are also being seen across Wales, with Natural Resource Wales (NRW) recently revoking the general licence for the control of certain bird species, including crows and magpies, with more restrictions placed on such wildlife controls (BASC, 2022c). While such licence changes are seen by government bodies as important for protecting and enhancing biodiversity, many within the shooting and agricultural sector regard such controls as vital measures for the conservation of livestock and rare bird species, thus regarding such restrictions as damaging (Hadfield, 2022).

### Grouse Shooting and Moorland Management

A particularly prominent example of conservation conflict surrounds moorland management for grouse and the methods of grouse shooting practised within the UK (St John, et al., 2019). Recent discussion, in this context, has turned towards issues involving the intensification of moorland management for grouse shooting, especially the environmental consequences (Thomson et al., 2018; Redpath & Thirgood, 2009; Thirgood et al., 2000; Tingay & Wightman, 2018). Headline coverage of this issue has dominated environmental news reports in recent years, including accusations of key practices being linked to soil and blanket peat erosion (Evans, 2019), downstream flooding (Monbiot, 2020) and generally creating a monoculture unfit for a variety of wildlife to thrive (Francis, 2019). A large proportion of the conflict within these dialogues is also shaped by reports correlating grouse moorland management with raptor persecution (Hodgson et al., 2018; Redpath et al., 2013). Out of such accusations has come lively campaigning for further restrictions and bans upon such practices, including the League Against Cruel Sports' campaign for government action to ban these practices with publications such as 'The

Case Against Bird Shooting’ (2016). Similarly, the Revive Coalition has campaigned for reform to grouse moorlands in Scotland (Revive, 2020), while Avery’s (2015) publication of the book ‘Inglorious’ and the related article ‘Half a million reasons why it’s time to give up the ‘sport’ have further triggered public debate over such topics (Avery, 2017).

Such widespread public controversy has led to major reports into key issues involving grouse moorland management. Although many of these key reports have been based in Scotland, a knock-on effect of the findings of such reports have been noted across the UK. An example of this is the Werrity report (2019) submitted to the Scottish government, an independent review of driven grouse shooting across Scotland conducted by six experts who reflect a “broad and relevant set of interests – grouse shooting, estate management and academic research” (p.5). The report concluded that significant economic and social contributions are provided by grouse management to both ecosystems and communities. However, it highlighted problematic areas including correlation of driven grouse moorland management to raptor persecution (ibid). While the report concluded no immediate realistic alternative land practices exists, the Scottish Government has since agreed all grouse management will need to be licenced to tackle issues including raptor persecution and comply with best practice guidance associated with management techniques including muirburn and the use of medicated grit. Groups such as the RSPB have backed notions for this licencing, stating that they “support the licencing of driven grouse shooting” both in Scotland and across England, but warn that if licences are not enforced by 2025 then they as an organisation will “call for a ban on driven grouse shooting” (RSPB, 2022, p.4). Such a damning statement from one of the country’s largest wildlife conservation organisations (RSPB, 2023, p.1) emphasises the severity of the current discussions taking place concerning driven grouse GMSP.

Further significant reports include Thomson et al’s (2018) report, again commissioned by the Scottish Government, which assessed the socio-economic and biodiversity impacts of driven grouse moors. This report has highlighted the variable ecological impact, including raptor persecution, linked to singular estates. This report also highlighted the importance of understanding that moorland management and shoot activities do not occur in isolation but sit alongside other land management activities including

agriculture, energy generation, tourism, and conservation, further demonstrating a need for independent research to engage with gamekeepers. This led to another Thomson et al (2020) report, which concluded with the decisive need for independent and direct engagement with such groups.

In England the contentious nature of grouse GMSP has also recently been under scrutiny. In April 2020, three large moorland landowners, including Yorkshire Water, United Utilities, and the National Trust made the decision to stop allowing routine muirburn on their land (an aspect of grouse moorland management) which until recently was widely regarded within the sector to be ecologically beneficial (Cieem, 2020). This comes alongside increased regulation and licencing (May 2021) which prohibits burning on deep peat and across certain protected sites (Gov.uk, 2021).

Overall, these examples demonstrate the highly contested nature of particularly driven grouse moorland management. Thereby revealing a significant weight of pressure and concern placed on the sector which is leading to the re-evaluation of the place of such management practices and ultimately driven grouse shooting as a country sport.

### Release Game Management

Recently the release of game bird species, particularly red-legged partridge, and various pheasant breeds, has been at the centre of national conservation debates. Calls for reform have grown as the scale of the sector has exacerbated (Madden, 2021), with evidence demonstrating around 57 million pheasants and 8.1-13 million red-legged partridges released annually across the UK, 85% of this occurring in England (Aebischer, 2019). Growing knowledge of the increasing scale of the sector has provoked calls for sanctions, multiple reviews, and reforms of various related practices. Prominent campaign groups include Wild Justice which is directed by well-known public figures Chris Packham and Mark Avery (2020). Campaigns led by such groups resulted in a DEFRA review into gamebird release around designated protected UK sites (Gov.uk, 2020a, 2020b). The review concluded negative impacts tend to be localised, with an interim licence<sup>1</sup> introduced to mitigate resultant impacts and to further gather evidence (Gov.uk, 2020b, p.2). A recent RSPB review into the wider impact of “non-native gamebird

release”, concluded, “more evidence of negative ecological impact of gamebird release than positive” (Mason et al., 2020, pp.10-11). The drawbacks of this review listed localised risks of spreading disease vectors, damage to vegetation and invertebrate destruction. It also listed positive ecological impacts associated with feeding and predator control (ibid). As well as listing ecological impacts, the review does grant limited attention to the socio-economic consequences of game bird release, including positive outcomes for wellbeing and employment within shoot communities, with drawbacks including, again, risk of spreading disease vectors and lead entering human food chain (ibid, p.14). In the same year, a comprehensive ecological review of game bird release, using prior collated data, was commissioned by Natural England and the BASC (Sage et al., 2020). The Review concluded that negative impacts do occur but can be mitigated, for instance, by spacing release pens away from sensitive ecological sites (ibid, p.1). The review also identified some positive outcomes of this release game management activity, such as the potential benefits to non-target local bird populations through predator control and feeding. However, the review concludes that more extensive evidence is needed to fully understand the impact of non-native game bird release on the wider ecosystem.

In all, section 2.4.3 has highlighted the current profile of some of the numerous threads of debate surrounding GMSP, especially driven forms of management, with key arguments about the impact on rural communities and to a broader extent, the surrounding environmental and ecological impact. The effects of such practices are shown to be subjective and dependent on various factors, including the scale and style of management, as well as organisational values. The review further points to notable disparity between Scotland and the rest of the UK, as well as a lack of place-specific studies. Again, what is highlighted is that the current focus very much remains on the ecological outcomes of such practices reflecting growing emphasis on the need to recognise and balance socio-economic benefits of land management with the need to protect and enhance the natural environment.

1. The interim licence was introduced in 2021 to regulate the release of common pheasants and red-legged partridges in protected sites and within a 500-metre buffer zone of those sites. The licence stipulates that no more than 700 birds can be released per hectare within protected sites and up to 1,000 per hectare within the buffer zone. Shoots are required to keep detailed logs of the number and species of birds released, which must be reported to DEFRA and Natural England (GWCT, 2021a).

#### 2.4.4. Actants and Spaces: Social and Spatial Focus of Current Field Sport Studies

The section focuses on illuminating cultural studies on who and where scholarly engagement across FGMSF has focused, demonstrating how a focus on these matters has remained remarkable narrow. In doing so, the section also underlines absences and relevant spaces to address these. From the literature, one marked disparity is upon the workforce to which the sport relies upon, further pointing towards a need for more engagement with the whole assemblage of actants involved in such spaces and practices, particularly within the spatial context of England and Wales.

##### *2.4.4.a. Social Focus: Who Has Field Sport Studies Centred Upon?*

To date, and despite the field sports sector being made up of multiple actants, attention predominantly has focused on selective groups, including that of the shooters, also widely referred to as hunters and the landholders where these practices take place. Studies of hunters/shooters are geographically wide-ranging, based across Europe and North America, highlighting comparative differences in practices, scales, and management (Bye, 2003; Emel, 1995; Ingold, 2000; McLeod, 2007; Misch, 2013; Watts et al., 2017). For instance, several non-UK based papers examine deep connections between hunting/shooting practices and a culture of respect for the animals and landscape. Bye (2003, p.145) for example argues that, unlike the English shoot tradition based upon elite leisure pastime, Norwegian practices derive from principles of 'harvesting'. Similarly, Watt et al (2017, p.258) compares hunting/shooting etiquettes of Finnish and Scottish shoot practitioners, demonstrating how in Finland the sport is most often small-scale for leisure or necessity, while the large-scale driven shoots of the UK are generally frowned upon. A common theme across these studies is, nonetheless, a shared mutuality within the sport which binds the hunter/shooters together.

Within the UK context, current and historic studies have focused on the exclusionary nature associated with the sport, such as the strong association of the practice to patriarchal and masculine identities (Bye, 2003; Emel, 1995; McKenzie, 2000; Sramek, 2006). From all of this, there is widespread literature associated with the landed elites and their exclusive relationship to field sports, particularly game shooting (Bujak, 2007; Done & Muir, 2008; Dooley & Ridgeway, 2019; Durie, 2007, 2008; Huggins, 2008;

Rothery, 2007). Contributions reinforce an overall argument for the importance of studying landed society and elites, who not only dominated much of the country's political relations during the late 19<sup>th</sup>- early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also created the private estates which powered the sport (Bujak, 2007 ; Rothery, 2007).

Today, some research has indeed begun to engage with the newer huntspersons and the spaces they occupy. While still exclusive, examples demonstrate the demographic of both shoot landholders and clientele has opened to participants of a "wider constituency", including the self-made businessman, farmer, and lawyer (Jones, 2015, p.263; also, Shrubsole, 2019). For instance, Heley's (2010) research draws attention to a new class influx drawn to rural areas, in part by the prospect of participating in field sports; he calls this group the "new squirearchy". Within such work Heley (ibid) discusses how this group are "filling the space" of the gentry's relationship to field sport and how they (re)assert their belonging within certain spaces, including the pub, hunt, and shoot (ibid, p.321, also; Martin, 2012). Edensor (2006, p.487) takes the act of asserting belonging to another level of analysis, dramatizing the "city dweller" whose rural identity is asserted through association to the pheasant shoot. In another example, Marvin (2003, p.49) demonstrates the deep connection of "hunts persons" to the rural landscape through what he describes as the "ritualistic act of hunting". The study also makes clear that nature too has a role to play, linked more widely to literature on the rural as a place of escapism from the modern metropolis (Woods, 2011). For instance, Jarvie and Jackson (1998, p.28) argue Scotland "sells itself" to hunting tourists as a "last wilderness" within the British Isles, whilst Lorimer (2000, p.408) illustrates how hunting has "glorified" aspects of the natural world. As such, several scholars have suggested field sports and specifically hunting may act to reinforce idyllic constructions of the British countryside, with the "rich businessmen" now acting as country gentlemen (Huggins, 2008, p.354). And yet, despite the shift in actants, field sports still remain economically inaccessible to the majority, which at least implicitly reconnects contemporary field sports research to the historical emphasis on the UK rural landscape as a "plaything of the rich" (Bujak, 2007, p.3; Huggins, 2008, p.354).



Despite the coverage of some actants involved in FGMSP, namely the prestigious roles of landowners and shoot clients, there remains a wide pool of underrepresented voices and perspectives from the spaces of game management across the UK (Thomson et al., 2018; Latham-Green, 2020; Swan et al., 2020; Thomson et al., 2020; Hillyard, 2007). In response, this review highlights how there is much to be done to account for more of the actants in the spaces and landscapes the sport occupies.

Good gamekeeping was once perceived as the ability to rear and protect game and the land of a master (Martin, 2011; Munsche, 1981). Often a focus of discussion here draws on wider symbolism of the gamekeeper to land and class struggles. For instance, the gamekeeper is pitted against the poacher through narrow depictions of a “hired thug” (Ridgwell, 2021 p.1) or is symbolic of the wider struggle for land access, as Hey (2011) describes in relation to the famed Kinder Tresspass and the bitter scenes of conflict between the “hostile” gamekeeper's defence of his master's land (p.199). Situated within this, it is the gamekeeper who has failed to engage current investigative focus, despite the significant symbolic history of the role. A figure Jeffries (1896, p.14) refers to as “holding a position more nearly resembling the retainer of the olden time than perhaps any other institution of modern life”. More studies as such have focused on the historical role and representation of such individuals' lives and work (Munsche, 1981; Ridgwell, 2021). A famous example of such narratives being the folk song ‘The Manchester Rambler’, written after MacColl participated in the Kinder Tresspass, a national land rights and access protest and act of civil disobedience by urban dwellers from cities bordering The Peak District (Box 2.2).

Box. 2.2 The Manchester Rambler (lines 13-28) Ewan MacColl (1932)

The day was just ending and I was descending  
Down Grinesbrook just by Upper Tor  
When a voice cried "Hey you" in the way keepers do  
He'd the worst face that ever I saw  
The things that he said were unpleasant  
In the teeth of his fury I said  
"Sooner than part from the mountains  
I think I would rather be dead"

He called me a louse and said, "Think of the grouse"  
Well I thought, but I still couldn't see  
Why all Kinder Scout and the moors roundabout  
Couldn't take both the poor grouse and me  
He said "All this land is my master's"  
At that I stood shaking my head  
No man has the right to own mountains  
Any more than the deep ocean bed

Munsche's (1981) historical paper on 'The Gamekeeper and English Rural Society' is one of the few academic papers to interpret the life of the keeper, Jones' (2017) publication for the Gamekeepers Welfare Trust (GWT), titled 'Gamekeepers Welfare (A History)' fills some knowledge gaps. A caveat to such academic disengagement is Hillyard's (2007b) photographic exploration of a singular English gamekeepers' daily life, highlighting wider implications of the "hidden aspects" of their work upon the countryside and the mundane and physical labour of a keepers work beyond the climax of the shooting year, the shoot day (p.146). Swan et al's (2020, p.4) partially socio-scientific evaluation of the gamekeeper motivations and association to predator control, is one of very few papers to refer to gamekeepers as "key [rural] stakeholders". Beyond this, recent reports such as Thomson et al's (2018), and especially Thomson et al's (2020), both based in Scotland warrant further figurative engagement. These are key documentations independently attempt to investigate the gamekeeping profession and build a profile of those within the sector, including their opinions over land management and issues which impact their working lives. It is for this reason that Thomson et al's (2018, p.40) report marked the

evaluation of gamekeepers and the wider community's perspectives as top priorities for future research, albeit within the Scottish moorland context, stating:

*“Independent research to engage with gamekeepers’ motivations, behaviours, and support needs. This important group of land managers are understudied and developing a greater understanding of their drivers, concerns and motivations would likely be beneficial”* (Thomson et al., 2018, p. 40).

More broadly studies such as Latham-Green (2020) have centred on the social implications of partaking in shoot day labour from the perspective of local rural community groups, thus demonstrating the cultural contribution of the sport, beyond its more common association with shoot clientele. A further key insight into who comprises such rural communities, within the private estate context, comes from the ‘Working Together for Sustainable Estates Communities Report’ (2012) a project which ran from 2007-2012. This project was carried out by a research team at the Centre for Mountain Studies exploring collaborative initiatives between estates, communities, and other partners across Scotland (ibid). The report offered key insight into who comprises an “estate community”, including the owners, tenants, and employees, as well as those in adjacent villages, visitors and others who simply felt they “belong[ed]” (p.6). Key findings of the study point towards the shifting role of the estate within rural localities, where a structure of paternalistic provision of housing, employment and services for local community groups now crucially needs to provide multiple and integrated public and private benefits (p.10). This also highlights shifting management decisions and adds “new dimensions” to the estate’s role (ibid, p.10), as well as crucially noting barriers to implementing necessary adaptive measures, including funding, landowner and management objectives, economic viability of estate businesses, legislative requirements and barriers and divisions across partnerships (ibid, p.10). More broadly the relevance of the report also demonstrates similar issues to other rural spaces beyond the bounds of an estate, including issues with affordable housing, service, job decline and ageing population.

Adjoining the 'Sustainable Estate Communities Report' came McKee's (2013a-b, 2015) academic enquiries which have reiterated the need to engage with the wider estate community, as noting how these communities are often dependent on the estates, for instance, for employment and housing opportunities, thus changes to estate configurations effect these groups too. Several other publications from the Scottish context reiterate the need for this wider community engagement in decision making and daily living (Thomson et al., 2018; Glass et al., 2013).

Returning to FGMSPP more generally, a highly relevant groups which have received even less attention are the more-than-human actants within such landscapes. While there is no space to go into depth here, nor is there space within this research project, animals within field sport practice should not be disregarded yet remain another deficit within research engagement. There has been some scholarly enquiry which has focused on representations of foxes (Woods, 2000), deer (Woods, 1998), birds of prey (Patchett et al., 2011) and fish (Bear & Eden, 2011). Yet, inclusion of animals and the more-than-human aspect, especially where game management is concerned, remains narrow. However, Feber et al's (2020) paper, a rare article centred on the common pheasant, gives hope that future research will engage with key actors, including game birds. However, as broader studies of more-than-human worlds convey, major methodological advances may be necessary (Dowling et al., 2017).

#### *2.4.4.b. Spatial Focus: Where has Field sport Research Centred?*

As well as a disparity in considerations of the actants involved in FGMSPP, the literature to date also has a spatial bias. In terms of current rather than historic research, there is an over-focus upon deer and particularly driven red grouse shooting in the Scottish context, rather than across other areas of the UK (Durie, 2013; Glass et al., 2019; Higgins et al., 2002; Lorimer, 2000; MacMillan & Leitch, 2008; McKee, 2013a; Wightman et al., 2010; Wightman & Tingay, 2015). These studies have re-appeared throughout this literature review and focus on cultural politics around land management, private ownership, the private estate, and changes to recreational land use.

The dominant Scottish focus of research can be explained by several interlinking themes present in the associated literature. One important factor regards landed history. Scotland has a highly public politicised landed history which intertwines with sporting estates, brought about by the highland clearances and a legacy of concentrated private land acquisition, which is still pronounced today<sup>2</sup>. The long history of social and economic injustice and brutal history of peasants cleared from the land is carried in folk memory and has prompted research (Morgan-Davies et al., 2015; Wightman, 1996, 2004). The publication of texts such as Wightman's (1996) *Who Owns Scotland* which provides a clearer empirical basis for the analysis of a changing pattern of landownership in these areas. In recent years this research has been added to by the growth in community buy outs of estates and public policy reforms. For instance, in 1999 the re-established Scottish parliament generated new public policy agendas on land reform and rural development (Higgins et al., 2002) and the controversial 2003 Land Reform Act in Scotland which allowed rural communities to buy out private land (Warren & Mckee, 2011). The latter described as a "watershed moment" which changed the "balance of power away from private landowners and towards communities" (ibid, p.34). In addition, the Scottish sporting estates and shooting sector tends to cover greater consistent geographical land areas with private estates averaging 12,000-20,000 acres, in comparison to the rest of the UK where it is much harder to estimate the scale of such landed reserves (Shrubsole, 2019; Wightman, 2004). In contrast, land ownership in England and Wales is more "secretive in nature", lacking a central up-to-date land registry, with as much as two million titles, covering half of England and Wales, unregistered estates (Beckett & Turner, 2007, p. 271).

<sup>2</sup> In Scotland concentration of private land means around 30% of all private rural land is owned by only 115 people and 17 owned are responsible for 10% of Scotland (Wightman et al., 2010; Burchardt et al., 2020, p.45).

#### 2.4.5. Part Three: Summary

In sum, this section has outlined some of the actants involved in FGMSP, highlighting the bias and shifts in the focus of contemporary research in this area. The section has further pointed to key areas where more research is necessary, including engaging with the working population involved in game management and key sites such as the private estate where practices take place. This includes highlighting how internal and wider

societal changes are affecting these groups and spatial localities (McKee et al., 2013a-b; Thomson et al., 2018, 2020). As far as the literature review shows, no comprehensive study exists which draws together the range of actors involved in the field sport, shooting or private estate sectors within England and Wales. Here too, the spatial disparity of field sports has been assessed, highlighting the need for greater coverage of this subject matter within England and Wales.

Such limited academic enquiry accordingly offered a unique opportunity for a breadth of further research across this subject matter. Moreover, as this literature review makes clear throughout, field sports continue to hold a place within a landscape undergoing substantial alterations. This is evidently leading to the reshaping of priorities for land use and management structures across sites where game sport has established a longstanding spatial and cultural bias. Research which grounds itself within this landscape of transition seems a good place to develop a new research agenda, with a critical cultural lens of inquiry into these matters.



## Chapter 3. Methodology



Illustration 1. Regional locations of identified game-estates, by author, 2021

### 3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this research was to understand where game management and private estates fit into the 21<sup>st</sup> century English and Welsh countryside and to provide context-specific interpretation of their existence. The study took an empirical approach, seeking to comprehend who and what encompass the spaces game management occupies, as well as the challenges, opportunities and adaptive strategies encountered within the broader context of large-scale rural landscape transition.

This chapter provides a theoretical background to the thesis and outlines the practicalities of the methodological choices. Through the various methods taken, the agency and influences of those within and beyond the bounds of the private game-

estates are illustrated, developing further contextual understandings of organised game sport as a historically significant and enduring phenomena.

The methodology begins by outlining the methodological approach grounded in assemblage thinking (3.2). The chapter is then divided into two key phases of data collection: Phase One, which involves the administration of two questionnaires (3.3), and Phase Two, which encompasses ethnographic case study inquiry employing a variety of methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subjects under study (3.4). The chapter also delves into the practical aspects of the research, exploring the ethical considerations, as well as the form of analysis used (3.5-6). The chapter ends with a summary of how these methods form a comprehensive and cohesive methodology (3.7).

## 3.2. Framework and Research Approach

### 3.2.1 Methodological Framework: Assemblage Thinking

*“An assemblage approach demands an empirical focus on how the spatial forms and processes are themselves assembled, are held in place, and work in different ways to open up or close down possibilities” (Anderson et al., 2012, p.7).*

Assemblage thinking provided a methodological framework or analytical tool for the following research objectives (Baker & McGuirk, 2017; Dovey, 2020). Assemblage thinking is used here as a means of conceptualising the entanglements of the people, places, animals, machinery, views, and emotions that incorporate game management within the private estate and to explore how these relations are shifting in response to wider societal change. Assemblages are composed of heterogeneous elements working together, with the elements linked relationally by different effects (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011). Each element can be part of multiple assemblages through different social, cultural, political, and economic relations (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Woods, 2017). It is these relations, commonly referred to as 'relations of exteriority' which are relied upon to provide meaning (ibid). Assemblage thinking is increasingly used across Geography and within Rural Studies to create a framework for understanding changes within and beyond place (Hollander, 2010; Jones et al., 2019; Murray Li, 2014; Woods et



al., 2021). Figure 3.1 (p.83) demonstrates the multiple stages of the data collection process used to account for the place of game management within the private estate framework and in relation to wider assemblages.

Using assemblage thinking as an analytical tool for the private estate- game management nexus is justified by the lack of recognition of these game spaces and their current occupants in geographical work. Additionally, there are gaps in engaging with those who experience game management in their daily lives. There is no known direct example of assemblage thinking applied to the private estate, but Woods et al (2021, p.285) suggest that this approach can help to emphasis place transformation. Cloke (1997, p.371) calls for recognition of “ordinary subjects [in] non-idyllic landscapes” and Thomson et al (2020) calls for engagement with the game management community supporting the need for such a framework. Without understanding what makes up these game spaces and how they function, it is difficult to comprehend how they adapt to social, economic, and political changes, and thus the potential role of assemblage thinking in interrogating these spaces, their spatial position, and components.

More broadly, the thesis is shaped by a critical scientific perspective and aligns itself with the broad paradigm of interpretivism under a social constructivist approach (Creswell, 2013). A central goal is to understand the complex nature of participants’ subjective experiences and to offer interpretations of game management and private estate worlds grounded in their actuality. The foundations of the project are based on the theory that social reality has no objective truth and following this tradition, multiple interpretations of the truth are used to build a critical picture (Burr & Dick, 2017; Previte et al., 2007). In pursuing this theory, each process and method undoubtedly will generate different research outcomes (Holloway, 1997; Taylor & Ussher, 2001). The research project also builds on the assumptions of grounded theory, meaning that patterns of meaning are generated from interaction with those who are the object of the study and deductively from prior literature (Charmaz, 2006). For this reason, a multidimensional approach was applied to situate and assess the varied and conflicting narratives of the research phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 1998). Here, as Creswell (2013 p.8) emphasises, context is important to understand how history and culture shapes participants’ outlook,

experiences, and views. The thesis for the reasons outlined, is orientated towards rich empirical description, addressing personal and organisational perspectives key to the functioning assemblages and the wider rural framework. As little prior research exists, the project is structured to account for varying levels which interplay within specific rural assemblages. The following sub-section further outlines the multi-staged approach.

### 3.2.2 Research Approach

A predominantly qualitative led, multi-staged approach is adopted for this research project, to explore the numerous actors, components and perceptions that comprise the assemblages under investigation (Creswell, 2013). Firstly, questionnaire surveys were used to scope large scale patterns and perspectives on rural change from (1) rural stakeholders and (2) a regional analysis of private estates and game shoots. The second phase used immersive ethnographic case study to collect detailed and diverse perspectives of this life and work. Ultimately, the objective of the approach was to engage with and understand how differing perspectives are entangled within the landscape of the game sport assemblage and the wider rural framework. A multi-stage approach was also utilised by other studies which worked with comparable key stakeholders, closed private estate and community groups (Mckee, 2013b; Thomson et al., 2020).

Figure 3.1 shows a timeline of the data collection process, including the two distinct phases of investigative study.

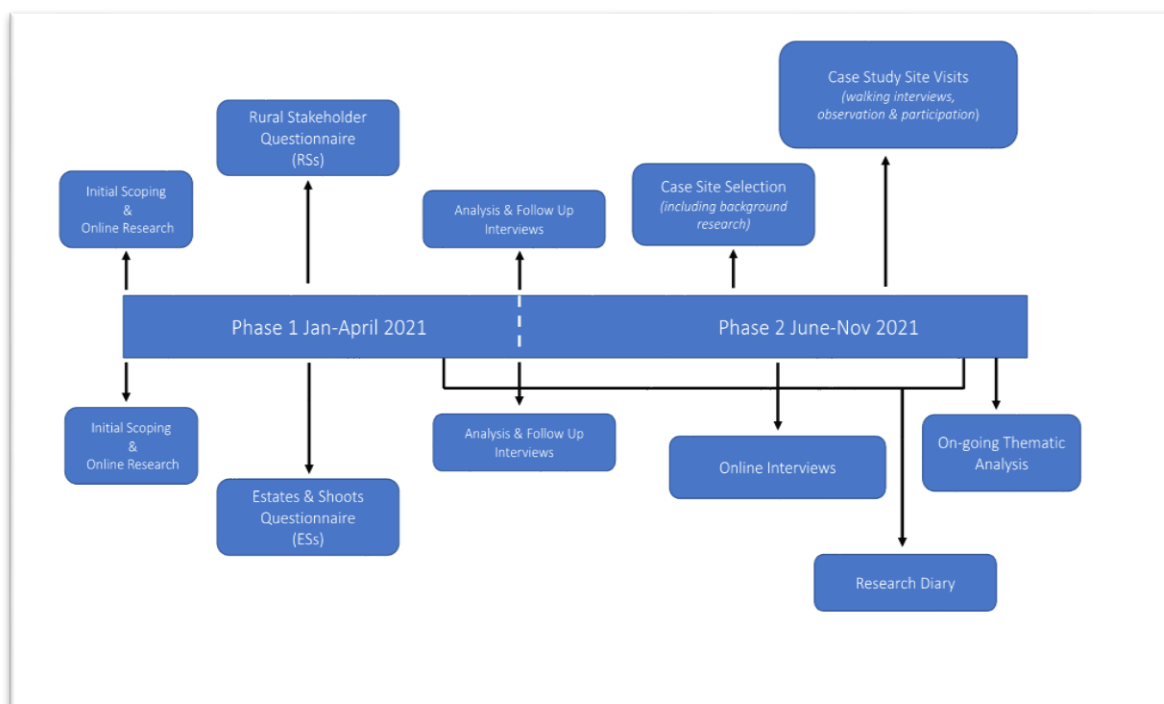


Figure 3.1. Timeline of the data collection stages based on grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006).

### 3.3. Phase One: Questionnaire

#### 3.3.1. Purpose and Justification

The initial phase of data collection consisted of two self-administered questionnaire surveys, rolled out digitally from January to April 2021. These questionnaires aimed to gather information and insight regarding the composition of the game-estate. They also sought to identify the diversity of actors and components involved, recognise some of the challenges and opportunities encountered at varying levels within and beyond these sites, and understand how factors of change are currently shaping them and their future trajectories. Additionally, the questionnaires served the purpose of refining research themes and identifying potential case study sites.

Using questionnaire offered an efficient means of engaging with large and geographically dispersed populations (De Vaus, 2002; Fink, 2003). Both questionnaires were carefully designed to include detailed explanation of why each question was asked, aiming to address any potential distrust generated by an outsider's enquiries (Celestina, 2018). Distrust of outsiders is a common challenge encountered in closed and conflicted communities, which were prevalent in this project (Carpiano, 2009; Cohen, 2001; Neal &

Walters, 2006). Furthermore, the remote nature of the questionnaire method provided participants with necessary space and time to consider their responses, while minimising the disruption to their daily routines (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2016). Importantly, the digital format of the questionnaires was particularly effective in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic when immersive fieldwork was restricted (Jowett, 2020).

By taking into account these considerations, the questionnaire inquiry proved to be a valuable and practical method for engaging with a diverse population and gathering a wide range of individuals' perspectives, particularly where information was not publicly available (McLafferty, 2010). Moreover, this method effectively addressed potential challenges and limitations posed by the research context, further enhancing its value and applicability.

### 3.3.2. Phase One Methods: Two Questionnaire Surveys

#### *3.3.2.a. Questionnaire 1. Rural Stakeholders (RSs)*

The questionnaire administered to rural stakeholders' (RSs) aimed to investigate their experiences and perspectives regarding significant policy and practice changes, specifically focusing on their attitudes towards game management. In section one, the questionnaire identified a range of RSs across England and Wales, exploring major challenges and opportunities they faced. Section two assessed the RSs' relationship to game management, including their stances on associated practices and their awareness of changes in game management approaches.

#### *3.3.2.b. Questionnaire 2. Private Estates and Shoots (ESs)*

The survey specifically targeted the managers, owners, and employees of private estates with active game shoots and organise shoots across England and Wales, examining factors of challenge, opportunity, and change in this context.

The questionnaire was split into three sections. Section one built a portfolio, capturing the diverse forms and scales of game management and shooting practices across England

and Wales. This section included information on the geographical distribution, types of shoots, organisational and management structures, as well broader uses of the land areas. Section two generated insights into the patterns of change within the various organisational structures and the drivers behind these changes. Therefore, seeking to understand the dynamics influencing the evolution of game management and shooting practices. Section three, focused on assessing the impact of the identified challenges and opportunities at different levels, including the local environment and community. By organising the questionnaire into these three sections, the study gathered a broad range of data and insights on the estates and game shoots, shedding light on the various dimensions of their operations and the influences shaping them.

To ensure the protection of the identity of the ESs, an additional stage of anonymisation was implemented for this questionnaire. The data collected from these organisations holds significant potential to address important research gaps, including the distribution and ownership of game shoots across the UK (Shrubsole, 2019). However, to maintain a high response rate and uphold the trust of participating ESs, maintaining anonymity was considered paramount. As a result, this thesis does not disclose specific details regarding the identity of the ESs (Swan, 2017; Thomson et al., 2020). Despite the rich possibilities that such information holds, prioritising anonymity was essential in ensuring the success of the research process.

### 3.3.3. Sampling Selection Criteria

The selection criteria for sampling both surveys is outlined by Table 3.1. Non-probability sampling was chosen for this research (Bryman, 2012). Initially, a purposeful sampling strategy was used, as the focus was not on obtaining a large sample size, but rather on the adding depth of knowledge to a limited area of cultural study (Freeman, 2020; Jensen & Shumway, 2010). Additionally, a chain referral process known as snowball sampling was used to maximise response rate (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). While the sampling strategy is not generalisable it acted as a scoping mechanism to identify different types of organisations, recurrent themes, and potential case studies (Jensen & Shumway, 2010). During the exploratory stage of the research project, a non-probability sample was considered an efficient in identifying themes and issues that existed (Secor, 2010).

It is important to note that Scotland and Northern Ireland were purposely limited from the sampling criteria. This was done because numerous studies have already been conducted surrounding Scottish estates, field sport, game management and associated topics (see Chapter 2). The addition of these localities adds further disparities. Also, the Covid-19 pandemic limited travel and physical access. Moreover, particularly relevant for the ESs questionnaire, English and Welsh cases were more physically accessible to the researcher.

Table 3.1. Survey sampling strategy

Survey One: Rural Stakeholders (RSs)	Survey Two: Estates or Shoots (ESs)
Predominantly based in England, Wales or across the UK	Based in England and Wales ONLY
Holds stakes in land use and / or management	Actively operating some form of game shoot
Currently operating or campaigning	NO size criteria (allowing multiple forms of game shooting to be represented)
Accessible via email	Publicly accessible email address, postal address, or phone number
NOT-DIRECTLY involved in game management and shooting practice	DIRECTLY involved in game management and shooting practice

Identification of respondents for both questionnaires required manual online searches, while this process was tedious it allowed foundational knowledge of some of the key actors and components to be fostered.

Scoping participants for Survey Two (ESs) had an added layer of complexity, with many ESs operating their shoots separately from other business operations. An amalgam of different methods was therefore used to identify these shoots and estates. One of the

most important websites was Guns on Pegs (2020), an organisation with a large following used to connect guns with shoots. Contacts were also sourced through information provided in Shrubsole’s ‘Who Owns England’, book and related blog on land ownership (2019; 2020). Further web inquiry included social media searches, including organisations who platform those working on shoots. As well as searching related job listings on web pages including The National Gamekeepers’ Organisation (2022), as well as news articles analysis, for example ‘20 best shoots in England/Wales’, The Field (Young, 2015). Finally, direct searches were made within specific regions of interests. After identifying shoots, secondary searches were conducted to locate details of owners or managers, equally difficult to trace. Table 3.2 shows search terms used to identify ESs.

Table 3.2. Search terms to identify Estates and Shoots across England and Wales

Example Search Terms
Shoot syndicates in ....
*Pheasant* shooting in...
Game Sporting Estates in...
Game shooting in...
*English* game shoots

\* *Interchangeable with other key search terms*

### 3.3.4. Design and Operational Details

#### 3.3.4.a. Design

As recommended by McGuirk & O’Neill (2016) a variety of question formats were used including open, closed, tick-box and Likert scale (Appendices C & D). Closed questions determined factual details and gave direct opinions and open questions were used to clarify details and support opinions given. All questions were written in simple English, avoiding jargon to maximise completion rate (Fowler, 2014).

The questionnaires were also intentionally designed to allow respondents to choose to answer in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation, on condition they clearly indicated this in their response. This design feature enhanced the response rates, as indicated by the pilot questionnaire feedback. By providing this clarification, participants

felt they could be open in expressing their views, even if they deviated from the prevailing views of their retrospective organisation.

### 3.3.4.b. Operational Detail

Respondents were enrolled through direct email correspondence or snowball sampling. Digital distribution of the questionnaire was seen as both an environmentally considered measure and time efficient choice (Glass et al., 2019). A step-by-step process was taken to conduct the questionnaire surveys (Table 3.3).

Table. 3.3. Questionnaire step-by-step process

Step 1. Survey Preparation: desk-based scoping, configuration of contact database, literature review to identity initial themes and questions
Step 2. Ethical Approval (granted Dec 2020)
Step 3. Pilot study & final edits (Dec-Jan 2020)
Step 4. Initial contact with organisations and individuals and survey roll out (Jan-April 2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roll out Survey 1 (initial email, follow up, final reminder)</li> <li>- Roll out Survey 2 (initial email, follow up, final reminder)</li> </ul>
Step 5. Thematic Analysis (April 2021+)
Step 6. Selective follow up correspondence (April-July 2021)

Prior to sending out the questionnaires, desk based online research allowed relevant information to be compiled. This included gathering phone numbers, email addresses, regional locations, web-domains, as well as identifying exploratory questions and themes. Further details on what was logged can be found in Appendix A. Subsequently, after obtaining ethical approval, a pilot questionnaire was sent out to a small sample of ESs and RS representatives. This pilot was crucial in refining the final questionnaire and ensuring inquiries were as relevant as possible (McGuirk & O’Neill, 2016). Once the questionnaire was finalised, a gradual roll-out took place alongside continued thematic analysis. The final step involved selected follow up correspondence with some RSs and ESs to gain additional details and identify case studies.



### 3.3.5. Phase One: Application and Results

The two questionnaires were rolled out simultaneously between January-April 2021. All contacts received an initial email, with two later attempts to follow them up over several months, further extending the survey roll-out phase an additional month to coincide with Covid-19 restrictions easing. All contacts also received an explanatory cover letter, outlining the purpose of the inquiry (Appendix B). Appendices C and D show a final version of both questionnaires.

Initially, 92 organisations and individuals were contacted for the RS survey and 118 for the ES questionnaire. The response rate was 42% (39 respondents) for RSs and 30.5 % (36 respondents) for the ES questionnaire. Within the limits of a global pandemic and working within a highly contentious research remit, the response rate was anticipated to be relatively small. Further to this, Covid-19 meant that many potential respondents were furloughed or under increased work or home-life pressures and consequently felt unable to complete questionnaires (Baska, 2020). Additionally, several relevant organisations had non-disclosure agreements in place and other targeted groups only responded to the initial email correspondence, so they did not find the questionnaire directly relevant (Fowler, 2014). Moreover, by conducting the questionnaires digitally this automatically excluded those without an online presence (Archibald, et al 2019; Salmons, 2020). However, for the premise of researching during a pandemic such measures were necessary and thus the negative effects had to be weighed against other associated risks and practicalities (Jowett, 2020).

The response rate was further limited by the time of year when the research was conducted. For example the winter season is the busiest for shoots who release game birds, while for managed grouse moors, this period is generally the off-season. Similar issues may have been linked to broader temporal cycles of rural land management affecting other potential ES and RS questionnaire respondents.

While acknowledging the inherent limitations of the data collection, it is important to highlight once more that there has been a lack of extensive social scientific engagement

with the subjects of this inquiry. Therefore, the data generated through this study serves as valuable explorative material, laying the foundations for further inquiry (Thomson et al., 2020). In summary, despite the various limitations within questionnaire design (Glass et al., 2019), within the perimeters of this research context, the questionnaire provided a valuable scoping tool, facilitating further in-depth analysis and understanding.

### 3.4. Phase Two: Ethnographic Case Studies

#### 3.4.1. Purpose and Justification

##### *3.4.1.a. General Overview*

Phase Two of the research revolved around engaging with the intricate dynamics of actors, relationships, and contextual setting of the selected case study game-estates. This involved comprehending the ways in which internal and external factors shape the actors and the interplay between people and places within these case study sites. As with Phase One, the overarching aim was to contribute to the understanding of the role and significance of the private estates and land actively managed for game sport in today's countryside.

To achieve this, a predominantly qualitative, ethnographic case study was adopted, allowing for the exploration of cultural context (Yin, 2008) and meaningful engagement with individuals deeply involved in these working environments. Case study facilitated engagement with a range of individuals and shared meanings, aligning with the key objective of this research (Stake, 1995; Taylor, 2016). Additionally, this fieldwork allowed the capturing of the relatively "unseen labour of the contemporary countryside" (Hillyard, 2007b, p. 146), offering a wealth of information on the specific nuances of this life and work (Fetterman, 2009). The selection of an ethnographic case study follows multiple rural scholars, including those involved in studies of estate communities. Appendix E shows some of the topics covered across some prior research projects, including rural land use, ownership, and management changes and relevant sites including rural villages, farms, pubs, hunts, shoots, and private estates. Despite the limitations imposed by Covid-19, ethnographic case study proved valuable in capturing the embodied experiences and

impact of game management at the place specific level. While prolonged on-site access was restricted, the case study provided insights into the nuanced dynamics and complexities of the research subject.

It is important to note that while this chapter focuses on the methodological application of the case studies, Chapter 5 delves into the finer details of each individual case.

Prior to engagement with the individual methods used, a brief section is dedicated to justifying the use of place-based research, highlighting its significance in understanding the interactions between the research subject and its surrounding context.

#### *3.4.1.b. The Importance of Place-Based Study*

*“Emplacing the encounter means that often marginalised voices can be brought into a more co-constructed and democratic narrative, while the [locality] and its associated micropolitics can provide a medium through which new, and often unforeseen, trajectories and narratives can develop” (Riley, 2010, p.651).*

Importantly, here, the emplacement of the research allows the researcher, alongside participants, to move through different contextually relevant landscape(s) revealing intersubjective experiences and encounters (Barker, 2008; Riley, 2010). In the rural setting, the interconnection of place with identity is often recognised to be pronounced (Riley, 2010), therefore using a methodology that recognises this can be advantageous to the quality and validity of research (Casey, 2001; Cohen, 2001). Figure 3.2 demonstrates interaction with place during a participant-led walking interview, where a participant on one case studies site, took me on a tour of the sites he worked in every day.

Generally, in terms of facilitating participation, especially with hard-to-reach groups, remaining immersed in participants’ natural environment can improve rapport (Brown & Durrheim, 2009; Carpiano, 2009; Kusenbach, 2003). Hillyard (2007, p. 126) observes the shooting community, including gamekeepers and other rural workers, to reside in a “relatively closed world...creating many challenges for the social researcher in terms of access”. Therefore, practically, remaining in a locality of familiarity means participants are more likely to engage with the researcher without the discomfort of an unfamiliar

location (Carpiano, 2009; Iphofen & Tolich, 2018; Riley, 2010). For the participant too, encounters with spaces of familiarity can be revelatory, with mundane and everyday encounters within a space transformed by the shared encounter (Halfacree, 2006, p. 44). Hence, wherever possible, site visits were prioritised.

Overall, ethnographic case study inquiry was advantageous in delving further into perceptions of place and landscape connection across trajectories of time and space as well as aiding in the negotiation of complex power dynamics (Fetterman, 2009; Riley, 2010; Stake, 1995). The chapter now moves to discuss specific methods used to facilitate this methodological design.



Figure 3.2. Researcher and participant out during fieldwork on a grouse moor of a case study estate, authors photo, November 2021.

#### 3.4.2. Phase Two: Mixed-Methods

A mixed method approach provided the foundation for the ethnographic case study phase of this research project (Taylor, 2016). Data was collected using a range of qualitative techniques (Freeman, 2020) with site visits, participant guided walking interviews and observation allowing me to “get close” to the activities and everyday experiences within the game-estate assemblage (Emerson et al., 2011, p.74). Other methods added richness to the data including internet-based enquiry, participation, photography, and a research diary (Freeman, 2020; Given, 2012). The use of such a

collage of approaches is advocated as a way of increasing internal validity (Stake, 1995), and further aiding the identification of patterns across data (Fetterman, 2009; Gillham, 2000). A total of 20 formal interviews (including online, in-situ and walking), five sites visited, three days spent participating in shoot days, a book filled with observational field diary notes, over 200 photographs and 16+ hours of walking interview material was recorded. Table 3.4 provides a summary of the methods used and Figure 3.3 illustrates the transition from Phase One to Phase Two. The diagram further demonstrates the difference between key and supportive cases, highlighting the distinction between key and supportive cases.

Table 3.4. Summary table of methods used for Phase Two

Type (Method)	Count	Detail
Gatekeeper engagement	8	Initial contact with primarily estate owners and shoot managers to establish willingness to participate in the project and physical site access.
Initial scoping	N/A	Primarily internet-based research and some archival research on selected sites. This scoping often continued at various stages of the data collection.
Site Visits	5	Long day trips, with expectation of 1 case where 2+ weeks were spent on site.
Participation	3 (days)	1 x grouse shoot day 2 x pheasant shoot day
Walking Interviews	4	mostly gamekeepers, estate managers, estate owners (1 hour to 5+ hours)
In-situ Interview	10+	Mostly estate workers including butchers and office staff as well as casually employed beaters and shoot day participants (15-30minutes). Often more informal.
Virtual interview	8	Online Zoom or audio calls mostly with estate owners, managers, and gamekeepers (30 minutes to 1.5 hours).
Observation	1 notepad	Photographs & field note recordings (200+ photographs & full notepad).
Field diary	(As above)	Reflections throughout fieldwork process.

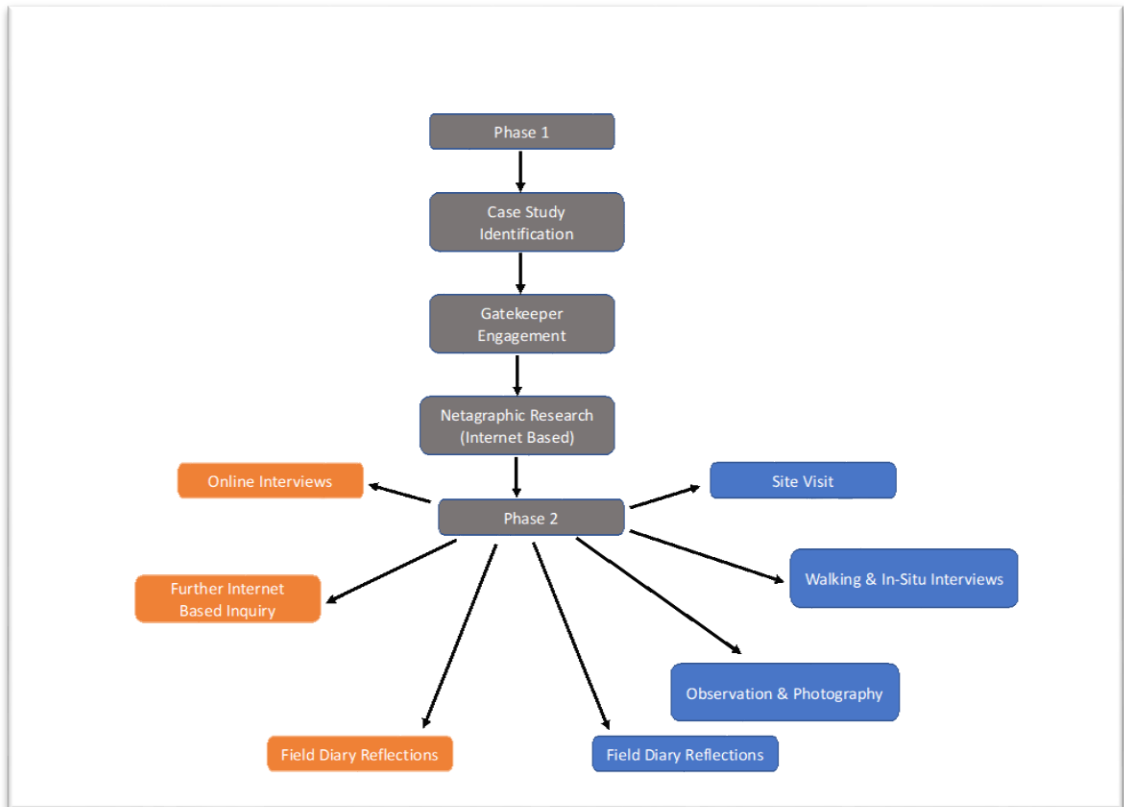


Figure 3.3. Merging of Phase One of the project into Phase Two. Differences are shown between key and supporting case studies, highlighted in orange (supporting) and blue (place-based enquiry).

### 3.4.3. Study Selection Criteria

This section identified the case study sites and outlines the criteria for selecting both the sites (3.4.3.a) and participants (3.4.3.b).

#### 3.4.3.a. Case Study Sites

Figure 3.4 illustrates the case studies, both key and supporting cases, on a regionally accurate basis. The supporting cases, despite aiding in further focusing themes developed in Chapter 6 and 7 lacked crucial details, hence they did not meet the criteria for the status of key case. For instance, Chigley, Darrowby and Caldlow, and while Highbeck was visited and participation in a grouse shoot day took place, a walking interview was unobtained due to last minute participant illness.

## Map of Case Study Sites

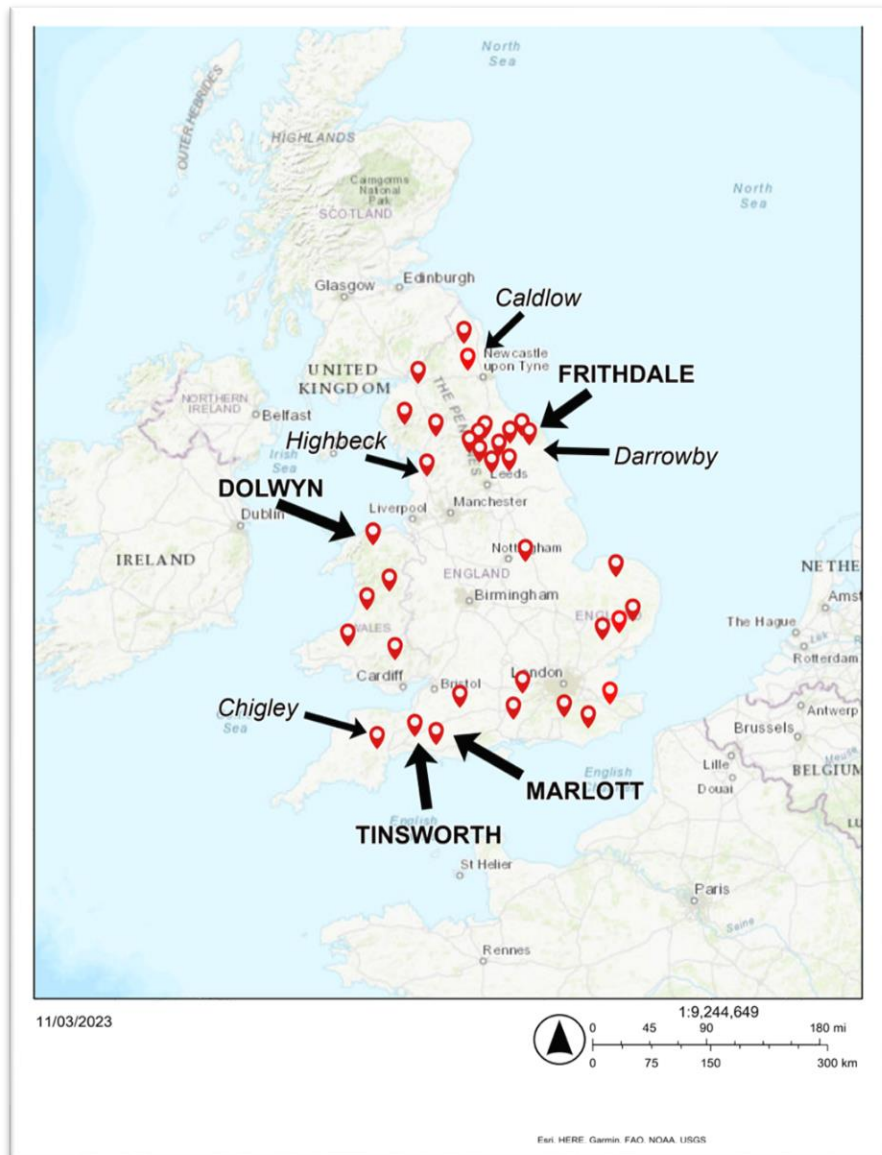


Figure 3.4. Map of identified case study sites anonymised up to regional accuracy. Key cases are capitalised and supporting cases shown in lower case, map by author.

The criteria for study selection were based around access and prior knowledge acquired through the initial research scoping phase and questionnaire development (Phase One). For each key case site, the criterion included in-person visitation, while supporting cases comprised online interviews and further web-based research. The number of selected sites was based on the work of related rural research (Bowditch, et al, 2019; McKee, 2013a-b) and corresponded with the circumstances outlined above.

Each of the study sites was purposefully selected on the basis that they would fulfil some or all the criteria outlined (Table 3.5), Table 3.6 illustrates the stages of study site identification.

Table 3.5. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Case Study selection

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Based in England	Based in Scotland
Based in Wales	Based in Northern Ireland
Syndicate run or owned	No public contact details accessible
Estate run or owned	No longer practising any form of live game management
Large-scale (> 2,000 acres)	Physically inaccessible location
Small-scale (< 500 acres)	No local population present (within 5-mile spatial range)
Lowland	
Upland	
Physically accessible (within means)	
Evidence of diversification*	
Evidence of conservation* initiatives/schemes	

*\*Diversification is defined here as the re-allocation of some of the organisations or group's productive resources, such as land, capital, equipment, and labour in place of conventional farming or shoot related activities.*

*\* Conservation is defined here as conscious efforts being made to protect and improve ecological diversity (Tidball, 2014). This definition derives from a wildlife conservation perspective rather than game management.*



Table 3.6. Case Study site identification

Case study identification and preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using questionnaire responses to identify potential case sites</li> <li>- Further contact made</li> <li>- Online &amp; desk-based background research</li> </ul>
Pre- case study Informal telephone interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To gain access to communities &amp; more background knowledge of case sites</li> </ul>
Case study site visitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-depth walking interviews</li> <li>- Participant observation</li> <li>- photography</li> <li>- Research diary</li> <li>- Participation</li> </ul>
Case study thematic data analysis (ongoing)

As part of the study selection procedure, gatekeepers for each estate were contacted. In most instances this was the shoot manager or landowner who had initially completed the ESS' questionnaire (Bryman, 2012). The initial communication with such key community members created an open and informed dialogue. Further, such personal contact allowed me to get to know the study site and to assure participants of confidentiality and anonymity, potentially contributing to greater engagement rates. Due caution was also attributed to the power imbalance of a gatekeeper's role in the rural community network with the research diary reflecting on this (Campbell et al., 2006).

### 3.4.3.b. Participants



Figure 3.5. Gamekeeper's boots, taken during fieldwork, authors photo, 2021.

As with Phase One, a purposeful sampling strategy was initially used, followed by a snowball approach; the criteria for Phase Two participant selection are outlined below (Box 3.1). Participants were often a strident contrast of muddy gamekeepers (see image above, Figure 3.5) and smartly dressed estate owners, shoot or estate managers and other staff.

Box 3.1. Phase Two – Participant Sampling Strategy:

- Individuals that worked in any capacity of the estate
- Individuals who lived within a five-mile radius of the estate

Particular attention was ascribed to those who worked within game and land management and specifically engaged with these everyday actualities. As Thompson et al (2020, p.3) stresses, gamekeepers, specifically, are important rural land managers, often “integral to how estates are managed” yet little research delves into their day-to-day existence (ibid). They are a challenging group to research (Thomson et al., 2018, 2020), with only around 5000 currently employed across the entirety of the UK in an occupation which is increasingly politically precarious (BASC, 2022b; 2.4.3).

Consequently, engagement with such individuals is supported by discussions with those who are directly associated with them including estate managers, owners and supporting organisations such as the Gamekeepers Welfare Trust (GWT) and National Gamekeepers Organisation (NGO).

Participants were contacted via email and or telephone, with a participant information sheet (and cover letter) adjoining any correspondents, these set out the research intentions and potential benefits and drawbacks of participation (Appendix G).

#### 3.4.4. Design and Operational Details

The data collection methods used very much depended on the individual case and on what participants felt safe doing during a pandemic. In-situ refers to the interviews that took place within a case site, but that were not a walking interview. Figure 3.6 shows images taken during field work, several of the data collection methods used are explored further in the following sub-sections.



Figure 3.6. Images taken during field work. A. Top-left, feeding in maize cover crops during participation. B. Top-right, beating on a grouse moor. C. Bottom-left, participant pointing across a grouse moor during a go-along interview. D. bottom-right, pheasants flying during a pheasant shoot. September-November 2021, authors photos.

#### *3.4.4.a. Virtual Methods*

Virtual interviews and internet-mediated research methods were used, both in place of and alongside in-person fieldwork. Advice on conducting remote ethnography was taken from Postill (2017) and guidance on online research during a pandemic drawn from several sources (Dodds & Hess, 2020; Jowett, 2020; Kaye, 2020; Wood et al., 2020). Virtual methods allowed collection of data in quick succession from a range of localities, generated a wealth of data sources and prioritised the wellbeing of participants (ibid). The attention of this chapter now shifts to the emphasis on the key case study sites where in-person research was possible.

#### *3.4.4.b. Walking interviews*

A key research method from which a large proportion of data derived was from participant led walking interviews (Chang, 2017), also referred to as 'go-alongs' (Carpiano 2009), the latter is used particularly where less walking and more driving was involved (Figure 3.7). Walking interviews can be defined broadly as an interviewing technique which involves the participant and researcher walking as well as talking together (Evans & Jones, 2011; Kusenbach, 2003). This approach allowed participants(s) to assume agency over some of the theoretical and physical routes of the research encounter (Cornwall & Jewkes, 2001). Moreover, power dynamics can be somewhat shifted with the participant becoming the educator through defining the issues they see as most relevant (Baker & Wang, 2006; Grenier, 2009; Wang & Burris, 1997).

Walking interviews can be especially useful when the environment itself is an important factor and plays an active role, as was the case for this study (King & Woodroffe, 2017; Kusenbach, 2003; Riley, 2010). For one, it can act as a "trigger" to knowledge and memory (Anderson, 2004, p.254). Moreover, where possible walking interviews were preferred as they built a space for dialogue and rapport which contrasts the artificial awkwardness of a stationary interview (Evans & Jones, 2011; Macpherson, 2016). The walking interview here alongside other methods informed the context of those who inhabit the game-estate assemblage(s) (Carpiano, 2009). In-situ interviews were also conducted, often these took place spontaneously where a key participant introduced me to others living and working on the estate.



Figure 3.7. Driving through maize cover crop during a drive-along interview with a research participant, authors photo, November 2021.

#### *3.4.4.c. Participation*

*“The best way to try to understand someone else’s lifeworld is to observe and take part in it” (Bennett, 2014, p.6).*

Another element of my research strategy was participation or ‘deep hangouts’. Coined by Geertz (1998), hang outs are a method used by social researchers to engage directly with personal experiences and immersion in others’ day-to-day worlds (Nair, 2021). While the maximum time spent on a case site was two weeks and the minimum a day, informal “hanging out” created some of the best spaces for reflection and “ludic social interactions” both inside and outside the working worlds of various actors in each locality (Nair, 2021, p.1302). Though Covid-19 prevented consistent periods of participation, this method still slowed down the research process and ultimately allowed the building of deeper rapport and understanding of the research communities and their connection to the working estate (Pottinger, 2020). Key participation or space for deep hangouts involved assisting with gamekeepers’ daily tasks such as pen construction and feeding as well as beating on both pheasant and grouse shoot days (Figure 3.8).



Figure 3.8. Out beating on a pheasant shoot day, authors photo, November 2021.

#### 3.4.4.d. Photography

*“Photography provides an opportunity to see a world unseen by all, but a handful of people involved with running or working on shoots” (Hillyard, 2007a, p.148).*

Photography and visual observation were used as a further method of capturing and exploring the everyday case sites. The use of photography generated a means of capturing participants’ accounts of this life and how they perceive it to be changing or resisting transformation. Rose (2016, p.308) notes photography’s ability to capture “the feel of a place”, as well as the social relations and identities which exist within them (ibid). The approach used here follows Hillyard’s (2007b) documentation of the daily tasks of a singular gamekeeper. Her study is notable due to the relative absence of engagement with gamekeeper’s daily lives within Social Sciences.

Photographs were taken during site visits. They added to comparative analysis alongside the other data sources (Salmons, 2016). Despite me, as the researcher, having to take the photographs due to social distancing measures in force, guidelines were still issued to all participants on what might be good to be shown and what should be avoided to ensure confidentiality and anonymity (Appendix H).

Despite the use of photographs within this research project, the inclusion of such images comes with the need for the reader to engage critically with the documented images. Rose (2008, p.151) reminds the photographic observer that what is presented through imagery is often consciously or subconsciously captured to create a certain production of a landscape, place, event, or practice. Therefore, like all communicative mechanisms, photographs should be viewed, within this work, as socially and culturally constructed and be critically considered (ibid; also, Cloke et al., 2004).

#### *3.4.4.e. Research Diary & Observation*

*“Through observing and writing as you go, you can produce a more detailed, closer-to-the-moment record of that life”* (Emerson et al., 2011, p.137).

A research diary was used throughout the research process, to negotiate reflexivity and for documenting activities, observations, thoughts, and feelings. This is a recognised technique used across several disciplines (Burgess, 1981; Engin, 2011; Nadin & Cassell, 2006) including Geography (McGuinness, 2009). The research diary created a space to record developing knowledge, evolving perceptions, introspections, and the research journey. Despite the preliminary plan for the research diary to be only a tool for negotiating reflexivity, as the research developed so too did the diary’s role (Latham, 2003). The diary itself was a simple A5 notebook filled with drawings, documentation, and reflections (Nadin & Cassell, 2006). Initially, it was used to record conflicting thoughts and feelings upon the entire research process. During Phase One notes were added to contemplate and modify the process, and by Phase Two the diary had evolved into part of the ethnographic research method (Latham, 2003). Consequently, the research diary provided what Engin (2011, p.299) calls an “internal dialog” of the data collection process, aiding validity and adding to the rigour of self-assessment and personal reflection as well as producing logs and ultimately data that could add to the richness of the overall study (Hyers, 2018; Latham, 2010). The illustration below (Illustration 2) shows an example of how I used the diary to unpack what I encountered when I visited case study estates.

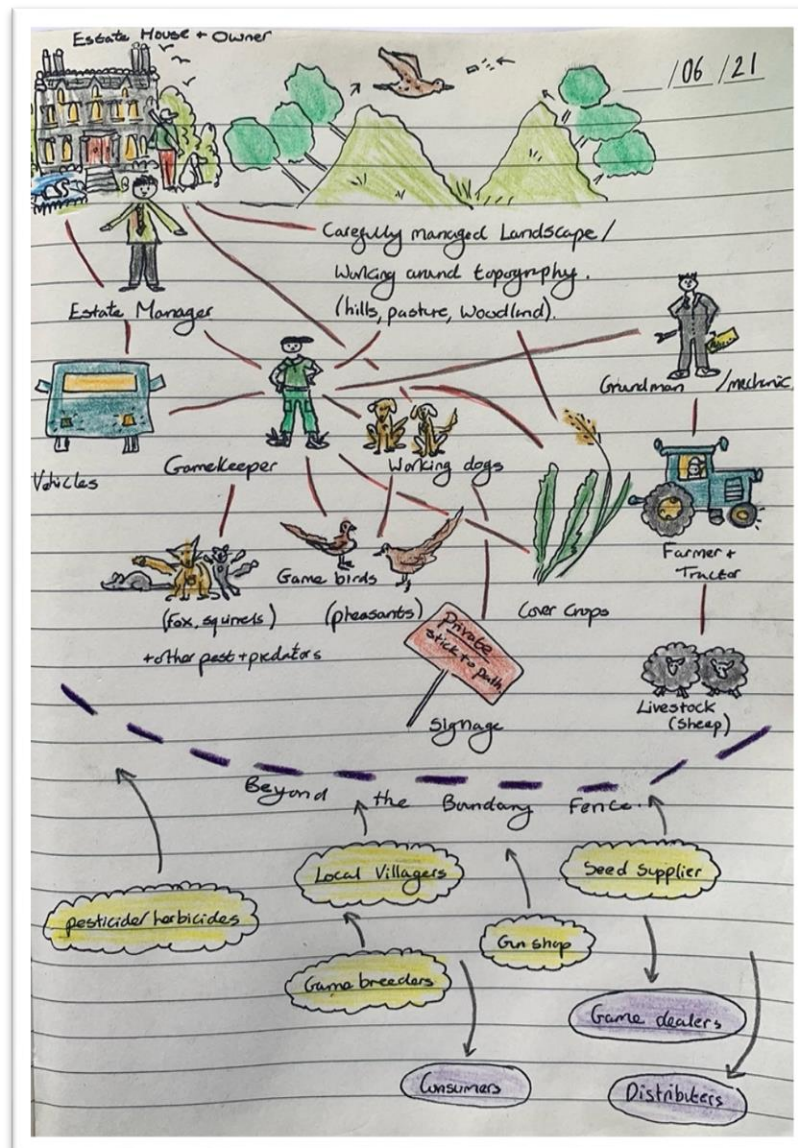


Illustration 2. From research diary, attempt to assemble the various actors and components within a case study estate, by author, 2021.

### 3.4.5. Phase Two: Application and Results

This section provides a brief overview of the collated data gathered during Phase Two, the application of selected data collection techniques and brief evaluation of how the process developed.



#### *3.4.5.a. Application*

Fieldwork took place between June and November 2021. Initial correspondence, while planned to be in-person, as recommended by Gillham (2000), took place via telephone conversations and internet-mediated research due to Covid-19 restrictions. This physical distance nonetheless allowed me to build background information of the present and historic nuances of each locality, meaning I arrived with prior knowledge of each of the case site (Kaye, 2020).

Following initial correspondence, each of the four key sites were visited and a mix of data collection techniques utilised dependent on each site, the minimum being an in-person interview, tour of the estate and field diary recordings of my observations.

Alongside interviewing and observation, with permission granted by gatekeepers and due caution exercised, I attended and participated in three separate shoot days and helped with manual tasks with gamekeepers where possible on sites, including pen construction and feeding. For the shoot days I took on a voluntary role as a beater (see Glossary), beginning work around 7-8am and finishing around 3pm on the pheasant shoots and 6pm on the grouse day. Despite growing up on an active game-estate this was my first, first-hand experience of a shoot day, which was openly discussed with participants as I believed this mutual familiarity helped establish entrance into the often-closed worlds of the private game-estates' (Swan et al., 2020). Participation also made visible the work and performance of the shoot phenomena and "open[ed] up taken for granted behaviour" (Bennett, 2014, p.4-5). Consequently, actions and detail beyond that seen by the public audience became visible (Aspers, 2009). While a shoot day was not the general focus of the thesis, I felt that it was important to witness, what for many involved in game management is considered the pinnacle of the shooting season.

#### *3.4.5.b Results*

A total of eight sites underwent Phase Two investigation, including four key sites and four supporting cases (see details in Chapter 5). Table 3.7 provides a brief overview of the identified cases, including their pseudonym, general locality, and the types of game managed.

Table 3.7. Characteristics of case study sites

Code	Key Study Site	Rough Location	Type
ES 3	Tinsworth	South West England	Pheasant
ES 12	Marlott	South West England	Pheasant
ES 24	Frithdale	North Yorkshire	Pheasant & Grouse
ES 36	Dolwyn	North Wales	Pheasant
	Supporting Study Site		
ES 1	Highbeck	North West England	Pheasant & Grouse
ES 4	Darrowby	North Yorkshire	Pheasant & Grouse
ES 20	Chigley	South West England	Pheasant
ES 22	Caldlow	North East England	Pheasant & Grouse

#### 3.4.5.c. Evaluation

Evaluating the data collection approach, one necessary consideration was the need for continued multi-tasking in unfamiliar locations (Carpiano, 2009; Jones et al., 2008). For example, I was often audio recording, taking photographs, observing, asking questions, and walking almost instantaneously. Prior planning and practice however helped me to navigate this, for instance, learning to carefully set up my dictaphone and having a crib sheet on hand. I also wrote up everything in my research diary as soon as possible after leaving the field, as advised by Engin (2011).

A further foreseen issue was participants playing up “performative norms”, as well as using jargon commonly associated with game management (Darby, 2000; Edensor, 2010; Macpherson, 2016, p.428). However, arriving conscious of this meant that where appropriate I could shift conversations or probe deeper into certain topics. A further related consideration was the potential for selection bias, with it often being the case that those who accepted research requests shared traits (Swan, 2017; Swan et al., 2020). Accordingly, it is important to stress and accept that the data derived in this thesis is not representative of the entirety of the population of game-estates’ and remains subjective research material (Darke et al., 1998; Yin, 2008). It is for these reasons several methods

were utilised to gain different perspectives of the research phenomena with a focus on generating rich empirical data in an area where little similar qualitative research exists.

More broadly it is important to reinforce that such a research project is ultimately limited in its ability to fully explore such a hugely underdeveloped research area and was further restricted by Covid-19 restrictions which severely reducing my place-based immersion (Huggins, 2008; Thomson et al., 2020). The ethnographic case study did however importantly capture some of the lived experiences of the private game-estate worlds, as well as shedding light on the interconnected relations between the actors and components who live and dwell within and beyond these spatial sites.

### 3.5. Research in Practice

This section reflects on the practical considerations of the field research including ethics, safety, and my positionality as the researcher.

#### 3.5.1. Ethics

Ethical approval was granted from Swansea University's School of Science Ethics committee before conducting the research (Appendix G). I drew frequently on Hay's (2010, pp. 39–40) steps taken to resolve ethical dilemmas in geographical research to aid such considerations. Some ethical issues were revised and re-negotiated as the research developed. Informal consent and confidentiality are directly addressed below, for a breakdown of other ethical issues, see Table 3.8.

In terms of confidentiality - for Phase One ES questionnaires, all localities were anonymised and coded upon completion into fictionalised pseudonyms. For the RS questionnaire, an option was given to remain anonymous. Where an individual gave their name, this was only anonymised where they had either highlighted a preference for this or they were not considered to already have a public profile. All data remained stored on an encrypted hard drive and raw data was not shared with any third-party.

For Phase Two, confidentiality was difficult to negotiate and almost impossible to maintain in participants' places of work and residency. The main issue was participants

being recognised whilst I conducted interviews. This was acknowledged early on, and strategies implemented to safeguard and manage confidentiality (Kinney, 2017, p.182). As the nature and topic of the research was not judged as high risk, and the research went through ethical review before commencing, this was not seen as an issue. Where a participant was recognised, each participant had a plan in place which we had discussed together, including what they wished to do if someone asked what we were doing (Kinney, *ibid*). Most often this involved further discussion of the research intentions with third parties. During transcription, all data was coded, and pseudonyms assigned. For online interviews, confidentiality was relatively straightforward with participants choosing a time where they felt uninterrupted in a private space (Archibald et al., 2019). All interview transcripts and photographic material were anonymised. This included the blurring or “de-identification” of easily identifiable features and any individual to protect participants’ identities and localities (Rose, 2016, p.302).

In terms of ensuring information provision and the obtaining of informed consent, participants during all stages data collection were reminded that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point without prejudice or consequence. The nature and purpose of the research was also openly disclosed throughout.

During Phase One, respondents were invited to complete the questionnaire via email. A comprehensive participant information sheet was attached to the initial email, clearly stating that respondent submission acted as consent (Appendix H).

For Phase Two, when deemed appropriate, consent to contact participants was obtained from the gatekeeper. However, it was explicitly agreed with the gatekeeper that further consent must be obtained directly from the participants, and no information would be relayed to the gatekeeper (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018, p.11). Both written and verbal informed consent was gained prior to interviews, with a full and detailed information sheet given to each participant. This included consent for:

- The material gathered to be used for the purpose of this project alone.
- Permission to discreetly record the interview (Kinney, 2017, p. 183).

- Permission to take photographs during site visits.

Table 3.8. Other ethical considerations involved in the research project

Ethical Consideration	Description
Access	For Phase One, all respondents' contact details were accessed through publicly available sources or granted access through snowballing. For Phase Two, participants were contacted initially through a gatekeeper. Disruption to daily lives was minimised by careful scheduling of interviews and remaining in participants' spaces of habitual work or residence (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018; Riley, 2010).
Conflict of Interest	My positionality has the potential to be a conflict of interest, this was disclosed to potential participants. A full discussion of this can be found in Section 3.5.3.
Dissemination	Any participant who asked to see the results of the study was guaranteed to be notified after the thesis was completed.
Group Meetings	During site visitation individuals were often introduced together, especially landowners or managers introducing estate employees. Though this could be seen as problematic due to the monitoring of statements, this method had the unintended advantage of allowed me to meet more participants whilst negotiating often complex hierarchical estate relations (Bennett, 2014). Again, consideration of this was recorded in the research diary.
Overt Observation & Informal Conversation	Overt observation and informal conversation took place during the case study phase. Here, informed consent could not be easily granted before informal discussion (Bryman, 2012, p. 136). However, all efforts were made to make community members aware of my presence and purpose where informal conversations took place consent was obtained post-hoc as recommended by Bryman (2012).

### 3.5.2. Harm and Safety

Although topics covered in Phase One are politically charged (2.4.3), the content was deemed not to contain material that would cause adverse effects or contain personally sensitive material. For Phase Two, the nature of the research meant participants were discussing topics and practices that formed part of their day-to-day life. While this content could be judged to cause an emotional response, participants were fully informed of the nature of the research prior to giving informed consent. The potential benefits of participating in the research, which include gaining a deeper understanding of the participants' lives and livelihoods were considered more significant than any temporary discomfort (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018, p.3).

In terms of Covid-19- Phase One had a very limited risk factor due to the remote nature of data collection. Phase Two involved case by case consideration, asking participants what they felt most comfortable doing. Hence, both online and in-person research elements. Where research was in-person, restrictions were adhered to.

Physical harm was a factor within Phase Two, especially regarding the remote nature of this rural research and engagement with physical labour (Bullard, 2010). Where possible, site visits were conducted when weather conditions were at their best and the dates chosen accordingly. All interviews were conducted during daylight hours. The terrain covered was part of the participants' everyday routes. By being participant-led, the participants knew the terrain they were covering and were asked prior to engaging if they felt able to walk, with no concerns over my physical fitness as the researcher. In terms of the working nature of the research area, all estates were informed in advance of the dates of the field research and asked to tell all employees who may be in possession of potentially dangerous working machinery or equipment to be extra vigilant. In advance, walking interviews were roughly mapped and judged by a third party to be sensible, sticking (with permission granted) to beats or public footpaths. I was never left alone in the field.

### 3.5.3. Positionality and Reflexivity

This section delves into the rationale behind the selection of my methodological design by briefly examining my embodied "intellectual autobiography" (Stanley & Wise, 1990). While acknowledging that sustained attention to the reproduction of the researcher's power, does not provide a definitive "solution" to the power imbalances inherent in research, it is crucial to recognise its implications (Naples & Sachs, 2000, p.196). Therefore, considering this, a brief discussion of my motivation and personal associations to the research, and the consequences for methodological choices are considered here.

The hope is that by maintaining a conscious process of reflexivity (Corlett and Marvin 2018), which questions the bases upon the project, its formation can be better understood and justified (Holloway, 1997). Additionally in the context of a topic

increasingly found to be politically charged, critical self-reflection on the research formation and philosophy is even more necessary (Brooks, 2019; Pini, 2004; Woods, 2005).

Delving into my positionality, the shaping of this project is deeply immersed in my personal narrative and early immersion within the boundary of an upland game-estate I grew up within. The predominant land management in this area was red grouse and pheasant shooting, hill sheep farming and commercial forestry. During childhood I observed the complex interplay and juxtapositions of an overt and closed rural working community, its deeply hierarchical structure and historical sporting traditions, and later shifts to this way of life that many rural spaces encounter (Woods, 2005). At the time I lived within this estate I saw it as a tightly bound assemblage. Though I have now left this locality, my intrigue for the practice of game management and rural politics continues to be stirred and to inspire my academic work.

Today, my urban location means I am now immersed in ideologies and assemblages of a different kind, and I now find myself in a between space, occupying the position arguably of both an “insider and outsider” (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p.54). As the rural and in-particular game management and shooting practices are brought increasingly into the public lens, I have appreciated a partial representation of life bounded within these spaces. It is this - how the worlds of estate-game management and those who live and work within these spaces morph and move within the 21<sup>st</sup> century that I wish to explore and assemble some explanation of within this thesis. This section aims to acknowledge the effect of this on my professional judgement (Thummapol et al., 2019).

Negotiating a researcher’s place within rural research and ethnography is well practised (Bell, 1994; Crow, 2008; Fielding, 2000; Heley, 2011; Pini, 2004). An excellent example of this within the rural research setting is Heley (2010, p.322), who explores construction and reproduction of social identities through sites of familiarity in his home village, including the pub, hunt, and shoot. Similarly, Bell’s (1994) and Pini’s (2004) work lays out characteristic traits that bind them to their research groups as well as set them apart, including accent and residential status. Within this project my whiteness and rural roots

tied me to these rural worlds, yet my increasing loss of a broad (Northern) accent, passing rural encounters (urban situ), age and gender set me apart.

Despite the shared traits, my positionality outside of the rural and the growing tension within the wider political sphere is what I see as crucial to address (Watts et al., 2017). Hence, why I use my privileged position within academia to unpack some of the lived experiences of this life and work. Importantly, at all points throughout this research project I have tried to remain impartial and maintain as far as possible a sense of balance over involved topics. The approach taken is done so to allow others' experiences and opinions to be at the forefront of this thesis. Yet, inevitably, my positionality will play a part in the knowledge construction process, hence the need for reflexivity and the inclusion within boxes of my own, often internal dialogue and conflicts.

In rural spaces, Pini (2004) emphasises that a more nuanced understanding of the reflexivity of the researcher is necessary as identity can carry more weight. Moreover, returning to Heley (2011, p.220), he found that when researching a rural locality of familiarity his "identity categories" could "facilitate engagement" while it also shut down other further conversation. Importantly for me, as a young woman, gender I believe played a role in the data I was able to collect. Gender in rural spaces is a known influential factor for other researchers too, I looked to them for guidance on negotiating this. For instance, Pini (2004) and Fielding (2000) suggest playing up to gendered stereotypes can at times be advantageous in male dominated working rural spaces. Pini (2004) admitted that the identity she carried as a country girl and had worked hard to abandon became a useful character trait to carry in her own research and Fielding (2000) confessed sharing some identity traits with participants, besides gender transpired to more open participant engagement. Pini (2004, p.169) additionally dwells on how, considerations of gender, further complicated her ability to remain an academic feminist where she felt she had to



accept the notion of being what her participants saw her as a “nice country girl”, such negotiations were ones I became familiar with too in my own fieldwork (Box 3.2).

Box. 3.2. Examples of potential gender impact on participant engagement

Walking interview, Summer 2021, research diary extract:

‘He said I should lead the conversation but then I hardly said a word and he just talked a lot about what they do, the history and landscape...I couldn’t be annoyed, I just had to get on with it’.

Online interview, Summer 2021, research diary extract:

‘I was nervous. Again... I found it hard to interrupt him to ask specific questions, but what he said was relevant... I was frustrated at myself after’.

Here my frustrated internal dialogue is evident as the male interviewees dominate the interchanges from the outset of our engagement. I believe that, as others have discussed, gender and physicality were factors in how participants interacted with me and even in the answers they gave. I did however find that the more time spent in a locality, the more accepted I became, as I gained more of an established rapport (O’Reilly, 2014), see Box 3.3.

Box. 3.3. Example of time helping in building rapport between me and my participants

Winter 2021, Pheasant Shoot, fieldwork diary notes:

‘Now I’ve done one day people seem welcoming and warm, they know who I am. Spirits are high, and they even started to talk to me with less filter’.

November 2021, Frithdale, Talking to the estate owner, field diary notes:

‘We spoke about dyslexia too and how that had influenced or impacted us. We then got back in the truck, and I was given a tour of the estate, the moors, the woodlands, and cottages...’

This section has dealt with positionality and reflexivity in the context of rural research. In doing so, it has drawn on how my own experiences have informed insight into a specific cultural context and framing of the estate-game worlds. In sum, throughout data collection my positionality was explicitly highlighted through both verbal communication and accompanying documentation which outlined research objectives (Appendix G).

### 3.6. Analysis

Data analysis was split according to quantitative and qualitative material across both phases of the data collection process. Phase One contained some quantitative material in the form of closed questions. For these data, basic descriptive statistics were generated using excel to map key details and visually present them (Creswell, 2013). These results are presented in Chapter 4.

For the qualitative data from Phases, a broad thematic analysis approach was used, drawing on grounded theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Table 3.9 shows the process of qualitative data analysis used.

Table 3.9. Simplified example of the stages of thematic data analysis, adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006, pp.16–23)

Process of Thematic Coding
Data familiarisation
Transcription
Initial coding
Sorting codes into initial themes
Review of themes
Further refinement of themes and comparisons drawn between them into overarching story
The story is told using the themes, extracts, and examples of the data

Firstly, a process of data familiarisation ensued (1), simultaneous with transcription (2) and further data collection. Initially transcripts were coded by hand to identify patterns within terminology, description, and subject content. Hand-coding whilst time consuming, allowed me to “get to know the data” intimately (Cope and Kurtz, 2016, p.651). This formed the basis of initial coding (3) which drew upon deductive data from Phase One and prior literature analysis as well as the inductive data emerging. Data were then reorganised (4) from chronological to thematic categories using NVivo software where tentative themes developed around the research questions. Codes were then categorised into broader key themes (5) with quotes and relevant images assigned to them. This followed an iterative process created, moved, re-visited and erased codes across the case studies (Atkinson, 2002, p.2; Gibbs, 2007). Importantly, this coding process allowed the generation of repeat themes as well as “capturing relevant detail”

(Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.10). Saturation was considered researched when data points started to overlap (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

### 3.7. Chapter Summary

In summary, this thesis uses methods that shed light on critical aspects of a subject that is relatively unknown in popular culture, helping to bridge existing gaps in engagement and knowledge by drawing upon subjective experiences (Wilkin & Liamputtong, 2010). These methods also provide a tangible way to engage with the diverse landscapes and individuals involved in estate-based game management and the broader rural environment they inhabit. By adopting this methodological approach, new insights are gained, highlighting valuable knowledge and experiences, and collating additional information (Bryman, 2012, p.638).

Phase One of the study provided a contemporary overview of the national and regional challenges, opportunities, changes influencing both ESs and RSs, forming the exploratory foundations for understanding the complex interplay within the estate-based game management. In Phase Two, I delved deeper into specific locations, engaging with the various perspectives and emotional responses associated with private game sport, management, and estates (Harper, 2002). This place-specific engagement allowed me to gather insights from those closely connected to estate-based game management practices, contributing to the limited existing research in the field of Social Science.

Overall, this research offers a valuable contribution to understanding estate-based game management. It not only fills the gaps in current knowledge but also provides a platform for sharing subjective experiences and enriching our understanding of this domain.



## Chapter 4. The Estate-Game Management Nexus: Rural Stakeholders, Private Estates, and Game Shoot Perspectives

### 4.1. Introduction

Chapter 4 of this research project forms Part One of my investigation into the estate-game management nexus (Figure 4.1). The chapter is divided into two main sections: 4.2 introduces 39 rural stakeholders (RSs) from various UK sectors and presents the results of a questionnaire survey that aims to understand their perspectives on key topics influencing the rural landscape, including game management, and shooting practices (GMSP). 4.3 introduces 36 private estates and shoots (ESs) in England and Wales and presents the findings of a questionnaire survey that identifies important details related to private estate-based GMSP. Overall, the chapter offers valuable insight into the multifaceted nature of rural space today and provides initial understanding of the complex interrelationships between estate, game management, and some of the key stakeholders.

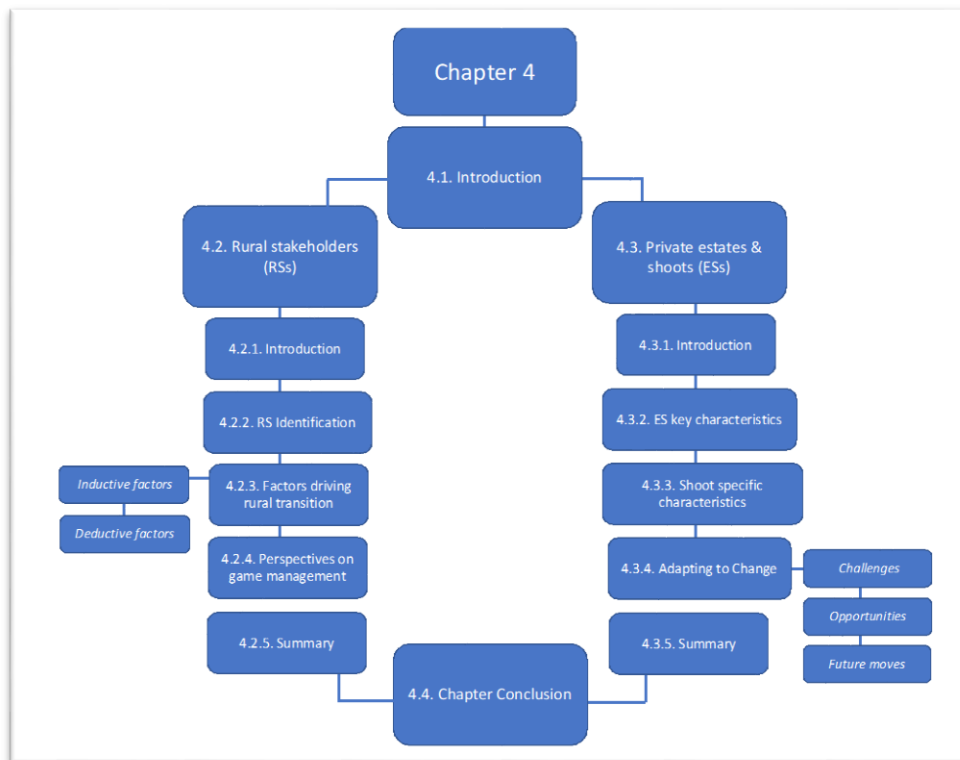


Figure 4.1. Flow diagram of Chapter Four's structure.

## 4.2. Questionnaire Survey One: Rural Stakeholders (RSs)

### 4.2.1. Introduction

‘Rural Stakeholder’ (RS) refers to individuals or organisations who have a particular interest or concern related to rural areas. ‘ES respondents’ are defined as those who have a direct association with organised GMSP. Despite this distinction, there may be some overlaps. The section (4.2) is divided into three main parts, section 4.2.2 identifies RSs, 4.2.3 discusses the factors driving rural transition and the impact of this in the lens of RSs and 4.2.4 explores the relationship between these identified stakeholders and GMSP.

### 4.2.2. Rural Stakeholders (RSs) Identification

39 respondents answered the questionnaire, (Table 4.1). 85% (33) were directly affiliated with an organisation, while the rest (15% 6) were non-organisationally affiliated (ind) or preferred to remain anonymous (anon). Flexibility in where within Britain RSs were located was permitted at this stage, with three respondents from Scotland (Appendix I). Though the response rate was low, the power and influence over land represented is significant. The data provides an initial examination of some of the current stakeholders, opinions, and beliefs in the rural landscape.

Table 4.1 Breakdown of Rural Stakeholder (RS) respondents and represented sectors

Rural Stakeholder Respondents	Sector
(RS 2) GWCT Director, Wales, Sue Evans	F, Ed, C, Env
(RS 3) Woodland organisation site manager (anon)	L, C, Env
(RS 4) Forest of Bowland Moorland Group	F, Ed, C
(RS 5) Former Conservation Ranger, Eastern Moors Partnership (anon)	L, Env
(RS 6) Rock climber, British Mountaineering Club Member – BMC (ind, anon)	A
(RS 7) North Highland College, programme leader, gamekeeping	F, Ed
(RS 8) Vegan animal rights activist (ind, anon)	C
(RS 9) BASC & GWCT member (anon)	F, C
(RS 10) The Gamekeeper’s Welfare Trust, Helen Benson	F, C
(RS 11) Outdoor Swimming Society Inland Access Group, Owen Hayman	Ed, A, C, Env
(RS 12) Director of Game Dealing Company (anon)	F
(RS 13) Conservation Group Southern England (anon)	F, Env
(RS 14) Open Spaces Society	A, C, Env
(RS 15) Wildlife & Countryside Link	C, Env

(RS 16) Managing agent for numerous rural estates (anon)	F, L
(RS 17) Shooting Membership Organisation (anon)	F
(RS 18) Angling Trust	F, A, C, Env
(RS 19) John Burns, writer, land access & rewilding advocate	R, Env, C, A
(RS 20) Nature Conservation Charity (anon)	L, R, C, Env
(RS 21) HEAL, Rewilding	R, C, Env
(RS 22) Shooting Times writer & editor, Patrick Galbraith	F, Ed, C
(RS 23) Former gamekeeper (ind, anon)	F
(RS 24) Hunt Saboteurs Association	C, Env, Ed
(RS 25) Moorland Association	F, L, C, Env
(RS 26) Oakbank seed suppliers for game cover, Ian Gould	F, L, Env
(RS 27) Scottish Land & Estates, Moorland Director, Tim Baynes	F, L
(RS 28) Seed Supplier for game cover (anon)	F, L, Env
(RS 29) Gamekeeping support organisation employee (anon)	F, C
(RS 30) British Game Alliance	F, C
(RS 31) Land manager, agricultural valuer & board member of the Moorland Association, Simon Gurney	F, L, C
(RS 32) landowner, Nicholas Cottrell (ind)	F, L
(RS 33) Wild Welsh Meat Limited, Izzy Hosking	F
(RS 34) Land in Our Names	C
(RS 35) Country Land & Business Association (CLA) lead on field sports, Robert Frewen	F, L
(RS 36) Welsh shooter & landowner (ind, anon)	F, L
(RS 37) C4PMC, Campaign for the Protection of Moorland Communities	F, C
(RS 38) Conservation director private estate (anon)	F, L, Env
(RS 39) Trees for Life, Alan McDonnell	L, R, Env
(RS 40) Farmer, landowner & field sport participant, Graham Downing, (ind)	F, L

RSs were split into seven sub-sectors (Table 4.2) based on their role description; accordingly, some respondents are categorising into multiple sub-sectors. Here are the sub-sectors and proportion of respondents in each:

- Field Sport (F): 67% (26), incorporating nationally and regionally operating organisations, alongside individual stakeholders, and initiatives. Representatives came from diverse occupations, including seed suppliers, gamekeepers, associated education specialists, journalists, and support groups.
- Campaigns & Charity (C): 54% (21), representing different campaigns and associations related to rural spaces, including land and water access, racial and social justice, animal rights, gamekeeper welfare and field sport advocacy.
- Environment & Conservation (Env): 46% (18), contained groups with completely different values and showed major conflict across sub-sectors related to biodiversity, environmental welfare, rewilding, and game management advocacy.

- Land Management (L); 39% (15), including the Country Land Association (CLA) and Scottish Land and Estates (SLE).
- Recreational Activity (A): 13% (5), representing a small proportion of the leisure activities in rural spaces, such as climbing, angling, and swimming.
- Education and Research (Ed): 13% (5), covering a diverse sub-category, from college educators, those advocating for gamekeepers and other F roles, recreational water access, and those stressing adverse effects of F practices.
- Rewilding (R): 8% (3), forming a small but significant sector of a growing groups of rural stakeholders.

Table 4.2. Rural Stakeholder (RS) sub-sector identification and descriptions

Term	Abbreviation	Description
Field Sport	F	Those who work within, with or represent hunting, shooting and fishing.
Charity & Campaigns	C	Those who organise and campaign for social and political change or promote, fundraise, or work towards charitable purposes.
Environment & Conservation	Env	Those who campaign, promote or work towards care of ecosystem and landscape services.
Land Management	L	Those who own or manage land, either private or public. This includes collective bodies and individuals working across regions / nations and operating at scales from sole enterprises to multiple business ventures.
Recreational Activity	A	Those who partake in or promote recreational use and access to the countryside, excluding field sport.
Education & Research	Ed	Those who provide educational material, research or writing on specific topics.
Rewilding	R	Those who work towards or promote the large-scale restoration of ecosystems.

#### 4.2.3. Rural Stakeholders (RSs) Identifying Factors Driving Rural Transition.

This section examines factors identified by RSs to be significantly impacting rural land management, practice, and decision making. 4.2.3.a focuses on geo-political events explicitly raised with RSs, while 4.2.3.b focuses on key challenges, opportunities, and future moves that RSs identified. It should be noted, the Field sports (F) sector dominated the data, accounting for 67% (26) of the ES respondents. Although this is an obvious bias,

the data remains useful in giving an initial indication of transitions taking place within the rural landscape and the effect of this upon involved actors.

#### 4.2.3. a. Inductive Themes

Climate change, biodiversity loss, Brexit and Covid-19 were factors explicitly raised with RSs. These factors were selected because of their contextual relevance on rural transition under investigation.

Of the three inductive topics, most discussion emanated from climate change and biodiversity loss (CCBL). While both are distinctive issues the results here are presented together as the topics overlap. 38 RSs responded to this question with an average concern rating of 7/10 and 55%, (21), in the very high concern category (8-10). Only 12% (5) rated a very low concern level (1-3) (Figure 4.2).

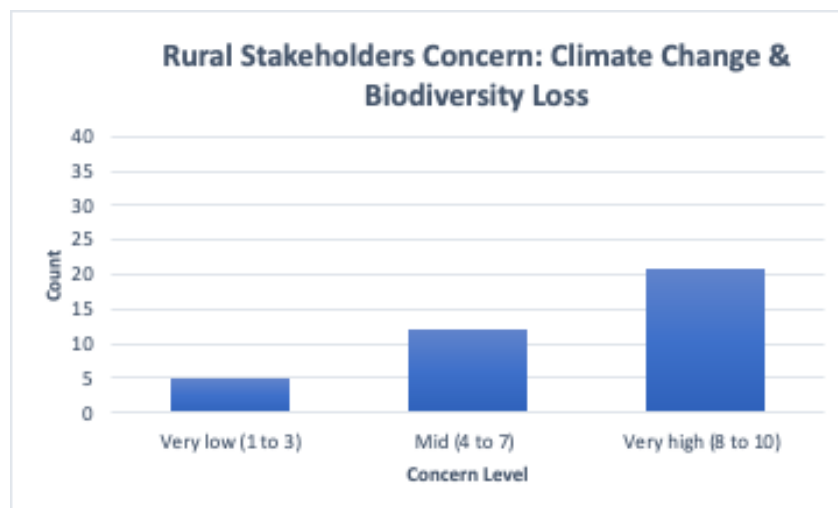


Figure 4.2. Rural Stakeholder (RS) Likert concern rating: Climate Change & Biodiversity Loss.

CCBL was regarded as deeply emotive, with most RSs recognising it as significant to them and the wider countryside. Although most respondents saw these topics as a concern, some regarded them with potential optimism where their organisational ability to leverage action offered benefits, especially monetary reward. Two key themes were 'Awareness' and 'Action'.



In terms of Awareness, there was recognition of the global scale of CCBL and considerable links between the issues. The quotes below demonstrate the bleak picture and threat some RSs saw CCBL to pose (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. Examples of Rural Stakeholder (RS) comments concerning awareness of the global scale of climate and biodiversity crises

Quote	Rural Stakeholder (RS)	Sector
"This is a global problem"	(RS 9) BASC & GWCT member	F, C
"...These are two of the biggest threats in human history"	(RS 3) Woodland Organisation site manager (anon)	L, C, Env
"These issues will impact our base systems"	(RS 5) Former Conservation Ranger, Eastern Moors Partnership (anon)	L, Env
"The impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises will be wide ranging and profound"	(RS 20) Nature Conservation Charity (anon)	L, Env
"The UK is 189th out 218 countries for biodiversity depletion and climate change are an existential threat"	(RS 21) HEAL, Rewilding	R, C, Env
"Planetary degradation weighs heavily on my heart. The feeling it induces borders on nostalgia, for the lost wildlife [and] habitat...I feel helplessness ahead of the existential threat"	(RS 6) Rock climber, British Mountaineering Club Member – BMC (ind, anon)	A

The Env sector demonstrated the most awareness of the threat, and shared concern over the global significance of CCBL. Post-Brexit land management policies were shown to be creating opportunities for financial reward for RSs in the F, Env, R, L, and A sectors through new and improved ecosystem and environmental relations, including carbon sequestration. However, some sectors, especially L and Env, perceived negative impacts related to physical factors such as uncertainty over crop yield, water level and quality, and less reliable weather and habitat patterns. Increased conflict over land management and use were also noted, including by established land users including the L and F sectors, but some RSs saw potential for collaboration, such as RS 39 Trees for Life, Alan McDonnell.

Turning now to Action, a large proportion of RSs showed willingness to mobilise and leverage a response to issues posed by CCBL (Table 4.4). While some saw these matters as a collective issue, others felt it was their individual responsibility to mitigate negative impacts.

Table 4.4. Examples of Rural Stakeholder (RS) comments concerning action on climate change and biodiversity losses

Quote	Rural Stakeholder (RS)	Sector
“How we manage land now, and in the future, are some of the most valuable ways we can slow the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss”	(RS 3) Woodland Organisation Site Manager (anon)	L, C, Env
“Climate change, especially, will require a great degree of adaptation to new conditions, which there isn't much scope for within the current models used by the conservation sector”	(RS 5) Former Conservation Ranger, Eastern Moors Partnership (anon)	L, Env
“Climate change and biodiversity loss will both influence our delivery of courses, as well as change the path of land management. We have reduced our carbon outputs by increasing the amount of online delivery”	(RS 7) North Highland College, programme leader, gamekeeping	F, Ed
“Action on both climate change and biodiversity loss is absolutely vital”	(RS 21) HEAL, Rewilding	R, C, Env
“The shooting sector needs to show that it is part of positive change rather than the cause of negative change. Done right shooting can be part of the solution to our woes and done badly it can be a cause of woes”	(RS 22) Shooting Times writer & editor, Patrick Galbraith	F, Ed, C
“We feel that our organisation is directly contributing to slowing down climate change and is improving biodiversity”	(RS 30) British Game Alliance	F, C

Responses shown in Table 4.4 represent a range of sectors and RSs. A desire for action was highlighted by numerous respondents yet approaches or calls to action varied. For instance, F respondents appeared eager to demonstrate positive mitigation or adaptation strategies for numerous environmental and ecological concerns (for example, RS 22 and 30). Responses also showed varying levels of pessimism over the ability to enact the scale of change necessary, for instance, RS 5 felt that their ability to do this within the sector they work within, conservation, was limited.

Covid-19 was a factor RSs were specifically asked about. All respondents answered this question. The average concern rating was 6 (out of 10), 36% (14) had a very high concern rating (8-10) and 21% (8) very low (1-3) (Figure 4.3).

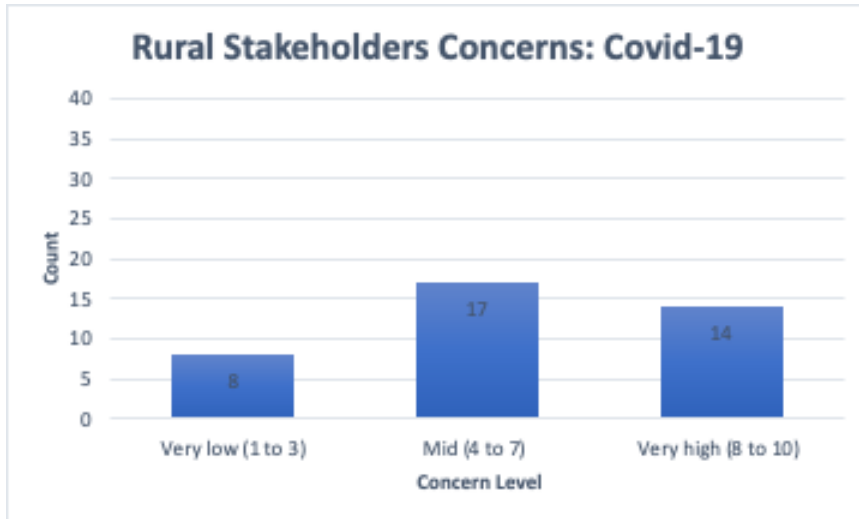


Figure 4.3. Rural Stakeholder (RS) Likert concern rating: Covid-19.

Consequences of Covid-19 were shown to be reverberating with influence over land policy, management, and practice. Some examples of the ways Covid-19 impacted RSs are identified by Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Examples Rural Stakeholder (RS) comments on Covid-19

Quote	Rural Stakeholder (RS)	Sector
"Covid has exaggerated patterns of land use change we were already starting to see"	(RS 19) John Burns, writer, land access & rewilding advocate	R, Env, C, A
"There's been more visitors to the moors, which increases the risk of wildfires and likelihood of damage to the work rural workers do – whether that is dogs attacking sheep or members of the public interfering with snares. Equally an increase in visitor numbers would benefit many of the local businesses, which would be a positive"	(RS 37) C4PMC, Campaign for the Protection of Moorland Communities	F, C
"There's been a reduction in the volume of work we can undertake, and volunteers are on and off. However, there's been an increase in people engaging with the outdoors, which can only be a good thing"	(RS 3) Woodland organisation site manager (anon)	L, C, Env
"Covid-19 has caused many keepers to lose jobs and therefore their homes, which has an impact on the whole household [by] reducing household income. Then there's been mental health, money issues, balancing work/home schooling...all of these are real worries"	(RS 10) The Gamekeeper's Welfare Trust	F, C
"The forced closure of large parts of the hospitality sector has caused loss of potential income from the catering side of my business. I could not be supplied with game meat for long periods due to forced lockdowns in Wales. Again, this had a detrimental effect to my turnover"	(RS 33) Wild Welsh Meat Limited, Izzy Hosking	F
"Covid-19 has meant more and more people are using the countryside. However, this has not been mirrored by an increased state response to provide more resources to deal with visitor behaviour"	(RS 5) Former Conservation Ranger, Eastern Moors Partnership (anon)	L, Env

Effects of Covid-19 were categories into physical effects, impact on land use and socio-cultural considerations. The physical changes included direct material implications on health, wellbeing, everyday life, work patterns, organisational capacity, and global supply networks. Covid-19 also impacted land use, resulting in increased recreational use of rural space, which was viewed by several sectors as problematic to their operations and established conduct, including some F and L representatives. Socio-cultural effects

included a refocusing of their priorities towards environmental concerns and growing leisure and tourism markets for several RSs.

RSs also answered questions on Brexit, with an average concern rated of 6. 30% (12) of respondents had a very high level of concern, more had a mid-level of concern (51% 20), while 17% (7) scored their concern as very low (1-3) (Figure 4.4).

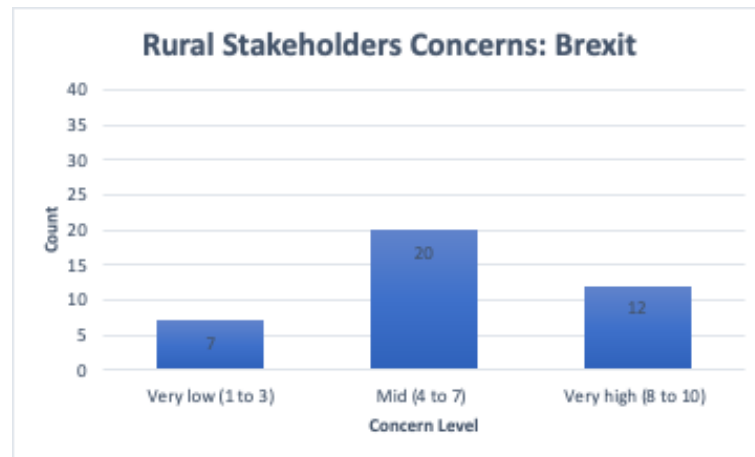


Figure 4.4. Rural Stakeholder (RS) Likert concern rating: Brexit.

Qualitative responses again highlighted widespread changes posed by Brexit. Especially within the F and L sectors, Brexit was shown to have the potential for gaining greater control over policy and legislation as well leading to possible beneficial environmental shifts in relations to the rural landscape through new agri-environmental schemes. However, it also marked several significant losses and disruptions for RSs in shifts to trade and knowledge exchange as well as marked uncertainty and financial losses or major disruption to work pattern and practice for some sectors. Further concern over legislative changes were highlighted by the Env sector, including over EU environmental protection schemes. Examples of concerns, as well as opportunities, are shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Examples of Rural Stakeholder (RSs) comments on Brexit

Quote	Rural Stakeholder (RS)	Sector
“Having worked in rural policy for a long time, there is a lot of frustration in operating within EU policy, with Agri-schemes. There is a mismatch of Welsh targets vs the EU policy which can hamper objectives. Now, with the freedom of not having to work within those parameters there is potential for us to have much better programs”	(RS 2) GWCT Director, Wales, Sue Evans	F, Ed, C, Env
“I'm worried about how Brexit will affect funding for conservation projects. I've worked on projects like 'Moor Life' which was EU funded and clearly won't happen anymore. But I also think Brexit provides opportunity now that we're out of the EU and can redesign ELMS”	(RS 5) Former Conservation Ranger, Eastern Moors Partnership (anon)	L, Env
“It remains to be seen what the full impact of Brexit will be but, for small farmers and landowners especially, their prospects and opportunities will more than likely be adversely affected by Brexit in the long term”	(RS 36) Welsh shooter & landowner (ind, anon)	F, L
“We have concerns over what legislation the UK government might bring in regarding land management, when they are not controlled by EU legislation”	(RS 37) C4PMC, Campaign for the Protection of Moorland Communities	F, C
“Environmental Land Management (ELMs) post-Brexit look to be much better environmental than pre-Brexit farming subsidy”	(RS 15) Wildlife & Countryside Link	C, Env
“I don't see it as a concern as more of an opportunity. There will be fewer subsidies for cover crops, but it may become more financially attractive to run a sustainable shoot which has great conservation benefit”	(RS 22) Shooting Times writer & editor, Patrick Galbraith	F, Ed, C

#### 4.2.3.b. Deductive Themes

This section focuses on themes that emerged from RS responses, organised into Challenges and Opportunities. Many inductive themes (4.2.3.a) are reiterated here, demonstrating how influential these factors were to the RSs.

RS respondents were asked to summarise the key Challenges affecting them, their work, and the spaces they operate within, 37 responded. This question was used to facilitate understanding of how rural landscapes are changing and to identify common patterns, as well as differences, across RSs. Collective concerns shared by stakeholders included the impact of post-Brexit policies, financial stability and increased recreational land use. Stark differences also came to light with concerns over land inequality, access, and justice. Consequences for the state of the environment were again raised. As the F sector dominated responses there was bias towards issues that impacted them. Table 4.7 summarises the most significant concerns.

Table 4.7. Summary of key concerns Rural Stakeholders (RSs) identified

Concerns	Count	Percentage (%)
Public perception and disconnect	13	36
Legislative changes and regulation	11	30
Environmental depletion*	10	27
Rural land use and access ( <i>increase</i> )	9	25
Finance & funding	7	19
Threatened livelihoods	5	14
Rural land use and access ( <i>injustice</i> )	3	8

*\*Environmental depletion is listed as it was a theme which developed from deductive analysis. It is not however discussed in-depth as it is already discussed.*

The most consistently noted concern raised across RSs was ‘Public Perception and Disconnect’. This factor predominantly stemmed from the F sector and other sectors involved in established land use and management (L). For the F sector specifically, there was a shared rhetoric of targeted opposition to their professions and often more directly their land management strategies. RSs regarded this opposition to stem both from government bodies and the public. Generally, this was marked by a feeling of threat over what one stakeholder called a “changing attitude to traditional rural values” (RS 36) as

well as feelings of “growing disconnect between rural and urban populations” (RS 2). Patrick Galbraith (RS 22), Shooting Times editor, notes how public pressure has led to a change in organisational behaviour. The publication now, according to Galbraith, focuses on news features perceived to be more favourable to a broader public audience:

*“Public perception limits some of the features we might now run. For instance, a greater emphasis is being placed on deer stalking and shooting greylag geese while [we are] running less on shooting rooks or features about big commercial days”.*

The theme of negative ‘public perception and disconnect’ crossed with concerns over ‘increases in rural land access and use’ and ‘threatened livelihoods’. Again, especially recognised by those representing established RS groups and related land use strategies. Upsurges in rural land use and access, especially for recreation, were noted alongside Covid-19 related restriction eases, leading to an influx of what RS 9 refers to as “newcomers”, within rural spaces. One of the major concerns raised surrounding the increased recreational use of the countryside is tension over its established use as a production space. RSs shared detail of such tensions:

*“There’s pressure from urban populations who are using the countryside increasingly. This comes without education or appreciation of the wider use of [it] and with little understanding of the damage that can be done unwittingly. More public use of the countryside is not a bad thing, but unpoliced and without knowledge, damage and confrontations are likely” (RS 9, BASC & GWCT Member).*

*“One of the biggest threats we face is changing land use, away from traditional use into commercial tourism [activities] such as mountain bike parks and large glamping venues” (RS 33, Izzy Hosking, Wild Welsh Meat).*

*“During lockdowns the countryside has been used and abused by people who would normally visit. They see it as a playground where they can let their dogs chase wildlife and farm stock. They leave litter and have no regard for the environment or the people that work in it” (RS 13, Conservation Group Southern England).*

Overwhelmingly such responses evidence a recurrent rhetoric of threatened livelihood and established working practice because of growth in recreational or leisure-based sectors. A former gamekeeper (RS 23) detailed the basis of his concern as a “lack of knowledge of rural ways of life”, he saw decreased understanding of “rural ways” to be a



direct threat to his former profession. The C4PMC (RS 37) divulged their concern over new or changed land use policy as failing to account for actors and practices already dwelling within the rural landscape:

*“Although we represent all upland communities, so much of the rural economy is focused on grouse shooting estates and rural pastimes, and with rural policies all leaning towards rewilding, tree planting, and putting an end to field sports, we need to make sure that the health and biodiversity of the uplands is protected, and that the rural economies and jobs this facilitated are not lost” (RS 37, C4PMC).*

Specific concerns over the growth of the leisure and recreational sectors are listed in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8. Rural Stakeholders (RS) concerns over increased recreational rural land use and access

Concern (s) Over Recreational Land Use and Access
Visitor pressure & overcrowding ( <i>of space</i> )
Wildlife disturbances
Habitat damage ( <i>litter, wildfires, dog fouling, path erosion &amp; harm to livestock</i> )
Trespassing
Ignorance/lack of education ( <i>especially surrounding ‘countryside code’</i> )
Conflict ( <i>particularly between recreational and working rural</i> )

Other challenges raised by RSs included ‘Legislative Change and Regulation’, ‘Environmental Depletion’ and ‘Funding and Finance’. In terms of legislation and regulation, a large issue established groups perceived was keeping up to date with legislative changes. Again, this concern predominately came from the F and L sectors. Concerns included tighter regulations over GMSP, pressure to shift to lead free ammunition (RS 17 and RS 30), related to issues with predator control (RS 10) and restrictions on scale (RS 32). ‘Funding and Finance’ issues were also linked to largescale land management transition, connected to Brexit, and exacerbated by Covid-19. Concerns range from running profitable businesses to apprehension over losses of BPS (post-Brexit) and ability to find suitable diversification opportunities. This issue was shared by rural businesses, land managers and advisors, though agricultural businesses appeared as particularly vulnerable (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9. Rural Stakeholders (RSs) who recognised funding and finance as major concerns

Rural Stakeholder (RS)	Sector
(RS 3) Woodland organisation site manager (anon)	L, C, Env
(RS 16) Managing agent for numerous rural estates (anon)	F, L
(RS 26) Oakbank seed suppliers for game cover, Ian Gould	F, L, Env
(RS 31) Land manager, agricultural valuer & board member of the Moorland Association, Simon Gurney	F, L, C
(RS 32) Landowner (ind), Nicholas Cottrell	F, L
(RS 33) Wild Welsh Meat Limited, Izzy Hosking	F
(RS 35) Country Land & Business Association (CLA) lead on field sports, Robert Frewen	F, L

An important competing discourse came from a small proportion of RSs who reported issues over land inequality and justice, including land hoarding and continued racial injustice. These concerns were explicitly recognised by a subset of the Charity & Campaign groups, including Land in Our Name (RS 34) who focus on land justice, food growing, racial justice and rural racism, writer, and rewilding activist John Burns (RS 19) and Animal Rights Campaigners, including RS 8 and RS 24. Responses here differed, but all conflicted with some of the prior arguments within this section, particularly centring on shared beliefs of the need to open-up land access, improve shared land use and increase regulation on private land ownership and GMSP.

RSs were asked over the next 10+ years what Opportunities they saw for themselves, their organisation, and the wider countryside. 34 responded (Table 4.10). Responses were closely intertwined, as anticipated, with largescale land management transition and significantly influenced by established factors, Brexit, climate change & biodiversity loss, and Covid-19 (4.2.3.a). The latter was shown as a defining feature of the time, highlighting and accentuating debates and changes across policy, public opinion, land use and management transition.

Table 4.10. Summary of key opportunities Rural Stakeholder (RSs) identified

Opportunities	Count	Percentage (%)
Communication & connection a. Public engagement b. Industry collaboration & partnership	21	58
Environmental action	19	56
Land policy reform	16	47
Financial return	11	32

Opportunities for greater ‘Communication & Connection’ reflected how many RSs were hopeful to either forge and/or increase these within the next 10+ years. This was split into two sub-categories, ‘Public Engagement’ and ‘Industry Collaboration & Partnership’. An overarching message seemed to be that communication and connection could be used to help redefine a RSs’ position within the rapidly changing rural landscape. C4PMC (RS 37) refers to this as “shifting the narrative”.

Public Engagement was noted by a large proportion of respondents, with the rise in importance of virtual connectedness seen as significant and further influenced by Covid-19 social distancing measures. Greater public communication was also viewed as an opportunity to further promote information access and allow a greater spread of RS communications to a wider audience. There was optimism that enacting such changes would facilitate greater support for the issues that matter for RSs:

*“We are seeing greater recognition from the public of the importance of paths and open spaces” (RS 14, Open Spaces Society).*

*“There is an increased awareness of the health benefits of angling, and we have seen an increase in members over this period of time [since Covid-19] with over 100,000 new people taken up angling [since May 2020]” (RS 18, Angling Trust).*

The opportunities for Public Engagement RS mentioned tended to relate to environmental matters, such as habitat management and ecosystem services. Public Engagement also relates to an increased influx of rural recreational visitors, providing opportunities for RSs to create new business venues and engage visitors in their projects and work. This opportunity was seen as a potential means of motivating change:

*“We are seeing huge increases in people who care about land and water, who want to improve and protect it. For example, at Ilkley, swimmers have achieved bathing water status for a part of the river, meaning the river is now held to higher environmental standards”* (RS 11, The Outdoor Swimming Inland Access Group, Owen Hayman).

Hayman demonstrates how increased engagement with wild swimming is leading to change and increased ability to physically access and build knowledge of water ways. This is shared elsewhere in RS responses, where awareness and knowledge dispersal are shown to generate more involvement with RSs causes. Greater communication was also presented as an opportunity to change entrenched perceptions of some established land uses, including game management, where current news articles featuring good news stories appealing to a broader public audience, for example:

*“There is a real opportunity for a positive message to be sent to people outside the rural community that game rearing is producing a crop and it can [be] very positive on many different fronts, from improving habitat, to increasing wild bird numbers on managed areas”* (RS 12, Director of Game Dealing Company).

This rhetoric was shared by F sector representatives such as RS 9 who suggests the need to be “more inclusive and tech savvy” (RS 9, BASC & GWCT Member) about what they post and how it is expressed, while RS 4 discusses how media communication could be used to “counter false information” of involved practices (RS 4, Forest of Bowland Moorland Group).

‘Industry Collaboration and Partnership’ was seen as a means of decreasing historical and culturally entrenched divisions between rural sectors. One RS Alan McDonnell, of Trees for Life (RS 39), highlighted that collaboration can aid “new approach[es] to land use and relationships between rural stakeholders” and improve “long-established cultural divides” (ibid). Collaborations offer a mode of reducing divisions, the Moorland Association (RS 25) exemplifying how together L and F sectors can “deliver ecosystem services [including] slowing water flows, creating carbon sinks, improving biodiversity, land access and wellbeing services at a landscape scale”.

Another key prospect shared by RSs was optimism over positive financial returns, with some RSs openly in difficult financial situations. Broadly, monetary opportunities related to shifts in policy direction. This included in relation to environmental action and growing markets (and policy incentives) for natural capital, especially carbon credits and emission offsetting. This was seen as an exciting prospective, with new markets offering solutions to financial, environmental, and social concerns:

*“On balance climate change is a possible opportunity for rural businesses, being uniquely placed to mitigate its effects as part of their business model” (RS 35, CLA, Robert Frewen).*

*“Carbon sequestration is an opportunity to improve the environment and mitigate climate change, this may prove a useful income stream” (RS 31, Land manager, agricultural valuer & board member of the Moorland Association, Simon Gurney).*

*“Climate change is one of the areas used to influence the general public regarding shooting” (RS 10, Gamekeepers Welfare Trust, Helen Benson).*

Demonstrated here is a marked opportunity for largescale landscape transformation and recovery seen to have potential for positive financial returns.

#### 4.2.4. Rural Stakeholder Perspectives on Game Management

RSs were asked about their views on GMSP. Responses provide insight into how these practices are perceived and may evolve. All participants responded (Table 4.11). Stances were gathered as an important measure of the overall bias of RSs and to ensure at least some representation of the divergent views surrounding the topic.

Table 4.11. Table of Rural Stakeholders (RSs) stances on game management and shooting practices

Stance	Count	Percentage (%)
Pro ( <i>Supportive of Practice</i> )	22	56%
Anti (Against the Practice)	9	23%
Neutral	6	15%
Unable to Clarify Stance	2	5%

The data shows 56% (22) of RSs in favour of GMSP. The 23% (9) against included those involved in Env and C including rewilding, animal rights and land and water access and justice. A further minority, 15% (6) gave neutral opinions aligning with those unable to clarify their stance (5%, 2). The latter included those that felt their professional or personal position limited disclosure of opinion on such matters.

Respondents were then asked specifically about their opinion on different scales and types of game management style. On scale, 70% (30) responded directly to this question. Of those 57% (17) believed scale made no difference. RSs were also asked whether their opinion differed for different types of game management, such as for reared and wild game management practice given, 24 RSs responded. Despite the low response rate, again, more answered the next question where further explanation could be given. Overwhelmingly, for those that responded, 'type' of game managed made no difference to respondents' overall opinion on game management.

Drawing together open-ended responses surrounding scale and type, resulted in the following dominant observations on RSs opinions on game management:

Outright Condemnation:

A view generally based on opposed values, views, and practices, notably surrounding animal rights perspective and localised ecological impact of both released game and grouse moorland management. Prominent sectors represented included C & C, A and Env.

Outright Support:

A view which frequently correlated with RSs with stakes or interests within the sector or providing support to those within it, including F and some L sector representatives. Dominant reasoning included the view that:

- 1) All forms of shooting have a place in the countryside.
- 2) Larger shoots have greater capacity to implement positive impacts within a local area.
- 3) There are already agreed codes of good practice in place for game management.

Condemnation of large-scale or intensive management:

- A view reflected by respondents who considered small-scale management to cause less negative impact. Several suggest syndicates or scaled back models to be the best future moves. This stance was represented by a variety of sectors, including F sector who see scaled back practice as an appropriate means of continuity and Env who see a beneficial role in small-scale or subsistence extraction.

Strategy (scale nor type) as not inherently problematic:

- A view held by many F sector representatives who maintain scale is not inherently problematic. Instead, they argued that favourable environmental outcomes can be demonstrated through good management practices and these discussions should be paramount (Box 4.1).

Box. 4.1. Claims made by those within the Field Sports (F) sector that game management strategy should not be assumed inherently problematic:

“It’s complicated. Bigger shoots seem "worse" but have more scope to conduct beneficial landscape scale conservation work, including hedgerow and woodland management, cover crops, predator control. Smaller shoots tend to be less intensive, but also have less time, money, and resources to do the beneficial things” (anon).

“There is a perception that low key or walked up shooting is "better" for the environment, but it rarely generates enough income to pay for habitat and wildlife management and is often extractive rather than regenerative” (anon).

In sum, responses demonstrate the complexity and nuances of discussions surrounding game management, including the scale at which it operates and what forms these operations take. Moreover, the results demonstrate that respondents do not simply see these matters as a binary argument, further justifying a need for localised examination of the effects of such management practices and relations within these spaces.

Lastly, RSs were asked whether they perceived any changes in game management, and if so, what direction these changes were heading, 38 responded (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12. Perceived direction of change to game management witnessed by rural stakeholders' (RSs)

Direction of Change	Count	Percentage (%)
Positive Some Positive (15) Very Positive (5)	20	52
Negative Some Negative (5) Very Negative (1)	6	16
Both ( <i>positive &amp; negative</i> )	6	16
No change	3	8
Unsure	3	8

Results were skewed towards overall positive shifts for game management, (52% 20), with several respondents (16% 6) believing there to be both positive and negative changes taking place within game management. Based on the comments provided key explanations for these stances were drawn out.

#### Perceived Positive Changes:

- 1) Improved animal welfare: this includes condemnation of raptor persecution and greater focus on game-bird wellbeing.
- 2) Improved public engagement and service provision, with increased use of social media to reduce conflict.
- 3) Notable practice shifts within the sector, such as the phase-out of lead ammunition and increased tolerance of raptors, as well as greater internal regulation and focus on environment and habitat restoration.
- 4) Increased UK market for game meat, with an emphasis on strengthening game meat supply chain to further justify the sports continuity.

#### Perceived Negative Changes:

- 1) Increase in perceived biased information surrounding GMSP, including through social media.
- 2) Intensification of practices correlated with growth in number and scale of GMSP, potentially causing environmental harm and negative association with large-scale and commercialised shoots.
- 3) Increased government and local policy regulation viewed as further constraining practice and related land management, causing frustration within the F sector, and limiting their ability to operate.



#### 4.2.5. Summary

The RS survey results demonstrated a breadth of knowledge, experience and practices situated across a multi-functional rural landscape. Results emphasise that the period in which the data was collected was marked by instability and substantial shifts in land management and expectations placed on the countryside. The subject areas identified have highlighted strong views and values of established and emerging stakeholders. The data additionally revealed both significant opportunities and obstacles for RSs, with noteworthy challenges posed to some RSs acting as a catalyst of optimism for others. This highlights the need for RSs to redefine themselves and their practices in line with the current landscape of rural space, which is characterised by uncertainties stemming from Brexit, climate and biodiversity losses, and the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The data also demonstrate a growing number of needs, desires, and actors, presenting both concerns and opportunities across sectors, with environmental action, public communication, physical landscape access, and financial viability being highlighted as pressing issues. For the field sports sector, redefining their place and practices within this shifting landscape was shown to be crucial for their continuity. This was indicated particularly in stances on game management and shooting practices, noting credible positive moves to the field sport sector but also highlighting the persistence of negative practices and poor attitudes of some F groups, which continue to cause problems for the entire sector. Additionally, the data revealed game management and private estates' futures entangled with discussions over land, land value, access, power, and ultimate future land management changes. Amongst established groups there was a narrative of being under attack and needing to counter perceived false information, with new land management transitions seen as a potential pillar upon which to create additional support.

The qualitative responses provided especially rich data, making for useful exploratory analysis. The thesis now moves towards more focused engagement with key rural actors involved in game management within the private estate setting.

### 4.3. Questionnaire Survey Two: Estate and Shoots Transition (ESs)

#### 4.3.1. Private Estates and Shoots: Introduction

The private estates and shoots (ES) questionnaire was used to identify some of the key trends across such landholdings in England and Wales and to facilitate access to key case studies. Data for this section was split into three main parts. In section 4.3.2, an overview is provided of the characteristics of identified ESs. In 4.3.3, the focus is on the characteristics of ESs game management operations. Finally, section 4.3.4 explores key challenges, opportunities, and future moves that ES respondents perceived to be affecting them and their operations.

#### 4.3.2. Key Characteristics

This section builds a picture of specific models of the surveyed estates and land managed for game shooting across England and Wales. Table 4.13 introduces the ESs by code, pseudonym, and region; fuller details can be found in Appendix J.

Table 4.13. Initial identification features of Estates and Shoots (ESs)

Code	Pseudonym	Region
ES 1	Highbeck	North West England
ES 2	Fitton	East Midlands
ES 3	Tinsworth	South West England
ES 4	Darrowby	Yorkshire & Humber
ES 5	Abergarth	South Wales
ES 6	Cragwich	East England
ES 7	Disham	East England
ES 8	Houlton	Yorkshire & Humber
ES 9	Dulldale	North West England
ES 10	Connelton	Yorkshire & Humber
ES 11	Saltmarch	South East England
ES 12	Marlott	South West England
ES 13	Barnstonworth	Yorkshire & Humber
ES 14	Mertonford	Unspecified
ES 15	Kembleford	South East England
ES 16	Malbry	Yorkshire & Humber
ES 17	Eastvale	Yorkshire & Humber

ES 18	Woodston	South East England
ES 19	Gwilyn Dale	Mid & West Wales
ES 20	Chigley	South West England
ES 21	Denley	Yorkshire & Humber
ES 22	Caldlow	South West England
ES 23	East Proctor	Yorkshire & Humber
ES 24	Frithdale	Yorkshire & Humber
ES 25	Tilling	South East England
ES 26	Danbury	East England
ES 27	Everington	North East England
ES 28	Little Hangleton	North West England
ES 29	Limmeridge	North West England
ES 30	Polearn	South West England
ES 31	Gillitie	North East England
ES 32	Trevean Head	South Wales
ES 33	Llareggub	Mid & South Wales
ES 34	Seaburgh	East England
ES 35	Fenchurch	South East England
ES 36	Dolwyn	North Wales

The questionnaire received 36 responses, with ES managers or land agents accounting for 47% (17) of these. A further 33% (12) of respondents were either sole or shared owners. Gamekeepers totalled just 11% (4). The remaining 8% (3) classified as 'other,' included additional ES employees and an individual who held the role of both manager and gamekeeper (Table 4.14).

Table 4.14. Roles of Estate and Shoot (ES) respondents

Roles	Count	Percentage of ESs (%)
Manager or land agent	17	47
Owner (6 sole) (6 shared)	12	33
Gamekeeper	4	11
Other	3	8

To maintain ES anonymity, only regional locations were revealed (Figure 4.5 and Table 4.15). The data points cover almost every region in England and Wales, except the West Midlands. 14% (5) came from Wales and 86% (31) from England. The highest regional

response rate was in Yorkshire (27%), with 8 out of 10 located in North Yorkshire, 14% were located in South East England, 11% in South West and Eastern England, and 11% in North West England.

### A Map of ESs by Region in England and Wales



Natasha C Coleman

Figure 4.5. Map of geographical distribution of Estates and Shoots (ESs) in England and Wales by region, map by author.

Table 4.15. Geographical distribution of Estates and Shoots (ESs) in England and Wales by region

Region	Count	Percentage of ESs (%)
Yorkshire and The Humber <i>(North Yorkshire, 8, 22%)</i>	10	27
South East England	5	14
South West England	4	11
East of England	4	11
North West England	4	11
North East England	2	6
South Wales	2	6
Mid Wales	2	6
North Wales	1	3
East Midlands	1	3
Unspecified	1	3
West Midlands	0	0

In terms of the topography, 58% (21) of the ESs considered themselves to be in upland regions, 31% (11) in lowland areas and 11% (4) within both (Table 4.16). This information gives an idea of the landscape in which ESs operate; topography also can influence land management practices, including what game can be successfully managed.

Table 4.16. Topography of Estates and Shoots (ESs)

Topography	Count	Percentage of ESs (%)
Upland	21	58
Lowland	11	31
Both	4	11

Information on ownership helps to provide an idea of the different characteristics of the ESs. Although estates were the focus of the study, non-estate-based shoot respondents were also included in the dataset to account for the variety of structures within game management in the UK (Table 4.17 and Figure 4.6). Some of the respondents selected multiple categories, indicating multi-levelled structures, such as established resident owners who also leased their shooting rights. The largest proportion of respondents were

established resident owners 59% (24), followed by absentee 12 % (5), leased tenancy 10% (4), owned farm 10% (4), rented farm shoot 7% (3) and one community-owned shoot 2% (1). The data provides insight into the diversity of ownership structures across the selected ESs.

Table 4.17. Table of ownership structures of Estates and Shoots (ES)

Nature of Ownership	Count	Percentage of ESs (%)
Established Resident Owner	24	59%
Absentee ( <i>not main residence of owner</i> )	5	12%
Leased Tenancy	4	10%
Owned Farm Shoot	4	10%
Rented Farm Shoot	3	7%
Community Owned	1	2%

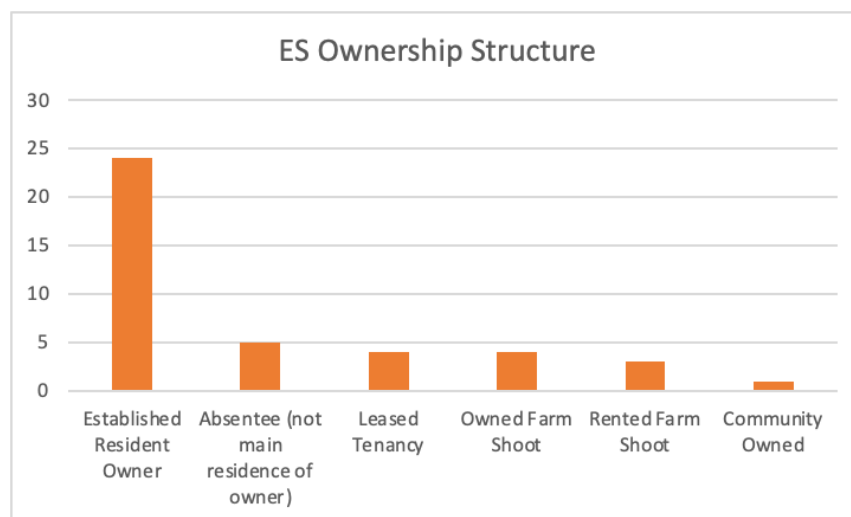


Figure 4.6. Cluster bar graph of Estate and Shoot (ES) ownership structures

The data surrounding ownership also provided insight into the longevity and stability of estate and shoot tenure, 34 ES responded to this question. Most had held their estates or land for over 50 years (38% 13) and 18% (6) had held it for 100 years or more. Only 15% (5) had held it for between 6-10 years, and 6% (2) for less than 5 years (Table 4.18). This indicates that ESs represented within the dataset most commonly were those with a longstanding relationship to the land that they own, lease and or manage.

Table 4.18. Length of Estate or Shoot (ES) ownership

Time (leased or owned) in years	Count	Percentage of ESs (%)
100+	6	18%
51+	13	38%
41-50	2	6%
31-40	2	6%
21-30	2	6%
16-20	0	0%
11-15	2	6%
6-10	5	15%
5 <	2	6%

The ESs surveyed covered a wide scale of land areas, from the smallest, Chigley (ES 20), a pheasant shoot in South West England, covering only 480 acres to the largest, Dulldale (ES 9), a 200, 000 acre cluster of grouse moors in North West England. In total, the ESs covered approximately 55, 4330 acres. The mean size including outliers was 15, 398 acres, much higher than the median of 6325, indicating a skew towards higher values (Table 4.19). Overall, the results highlight significant variation in the sizes of the surveyed ESs. Further breakdown of each ESs acreage can be found in Appendix J.

Table 4.19. Descriptive statistics of the scale of land area reported by Estates and Shoots (ESs)

Descriptive Statistic	Result
Mean	15398
Median	6325
Mode	2000, 5000
Range	199520
Maximum	200000
Minimum	480
Quartiles	Q1 >3000 Q2 >6325 Q3 > 15000
Interquartile Range	12000
Outliers	35, 000, 200,000
Total	554330

Land managed for game is often shared by other land use practices and the survey responses support this notion (McMorran et al., 2015). All ESs responded to this question, with an average of 5.5 different land management practices. The most common practice

that occurred alongside game management was ‘Agriculture (Meat & Dairy)’ which accounted for 81% (29) of ESs. Second came ‘Forestry’ at 78% (28). Other land use practices taking place on over half of ESs included forms of ‘Conservation’ (58% 21), ‘Residential Property’ management (53% 19), ‘Arable Agriculture’ (50% 18) and ‘Tourism and Leisure’ (50% 18). Less common but still widely part of surveyed ESs’ land management practices was ‘Renewable Energy Schemes’ (36% 13), ‘Commercial Property & Business’, (30% 11) and ‘Holiday Rentals’ (19% 7). These findings, importantly, emphasise how game management is typically part of a larger system of shared land use, with multiple coexisting practices (Table 4.20 and Figure 4.7).

Table. 4.20. Table of land management practices in conjunction with Game Management

Practice	Number of ESs participating	Percentage of ESs (%)
Game Management	36	100%
Agriculture ( <i>Meat &amp; Dairy</i> )	29	81%
Forestry	28	78%
Conservation	21	58%
Residential Property	19	53%
Agriculture ( <i>Arable</i> )	18	50%
Tourism & Leisure	18	50%
Renewable Energy Schemes	13	36%
Commercial Property & Business	11	30%
Holiday Rentals	7	19%

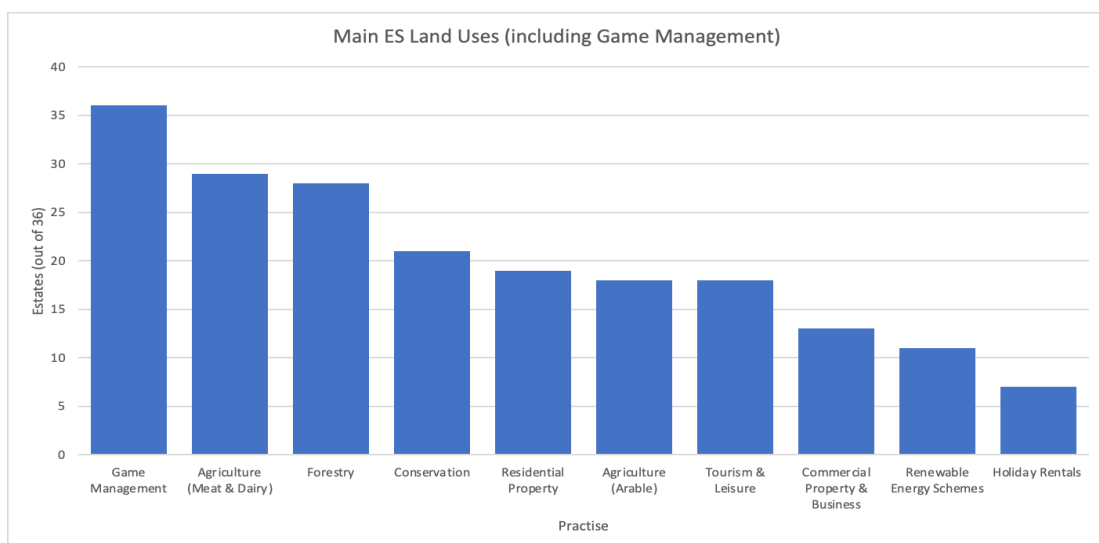


Figure 4.7. Land use practices of the surveyed Estates and Shoots (ESs) alongside game management.



There were different staffing arrangements across the ESs (Table 4.21). Most provided their daily staff numbers, plus the additional staff required during the shoot season(s). The average daily employee number across the ESs was 33. One of the largest ESs, Gillitie (ES 31) in North East England had 300 employees. The smallest number of employees recorded was 0.5, equating to a part-time gamekeeper on Chigley (ES 20). These figures demonstrate the diverse range of employment models accounted for by the ESs. While specific roles were not always detailed, some did provide information on the number of gamekeepers employed, varying from 0.5 to nine, as well as detail of other staff, including bookkeepers, administrators and several specific roles required during shoot seasons, including beaters, pickers-up, loaders, flankers, as well as hospitality staff. The data further revealed the fluctuation in employment during shooting seasons, with some ESs having over ten times the daily average during these periods. There were, however, inconsistencies in the information, with some ESs reporting only their game management staff, while others included all ES employees. Nevertheless, this data provided valuable insight into the staffing requirements of different estates and shooting operations.

Table 4.21. Number of employees across Estates and Shoots (ESs) showing seasonal fluctuation within the game shooting season

ES Code	Pseudonym	Daily Count	Seasonal Count
ES 1	Highbeck	30	
ES 2	Fitton	56	
ES 3	Tinsworth	9	55
ES 4	Darrowby	9	
ES 5	Abergarth	2	25
ES 6	Cragwich	200	
ES 7	Disham	3	20
ES 8	Houlton	16	30
ES 9	Dulldale		
ES 10	Connelton	3	35
ES 11	Saltmarch	1	22
ES 12	Marlott	20	30
ES 13	Barnstonworth	6	30
ES 14	Mertonford	20	
ES 15	Kembleford	7	20
ES 16	Malbry	4	25
ES 17	Eastvale	30	100

ES 18	Woodston	5	30
ES 19	Gwilyn Dale	2	
ES 20	Chigley	0.5	20
ES 21	Denley	3	30
ES 22	Caldlow	13	
ES 23	East Proctor	10	25
ES 24	Frithdale	2	30
ES 25	Tilling	30	50
ES 26	Danbury	200	45
ES 27	Everington	21	30
ES 28	Little Hangleton	5	
ES 29	Limmeridge	6	15
ES 30	Polearn	18	30
ES 31	Gillitie	300	
ES 32	Trevean Head	3	35
ES 33	Llareggub	7	24
ES 34	Seaburgh	2	25
ES 35	Fenchurch	15	
ES 36	Dolwyn	100	30

#### 4.3.3. Shoot Specific Characteristics

Several forms of shoot management structures were demonstrated across the data set. Most common was ‘Combined’ at 39% (14), a mix of the different individual shoot management structures, mostly a combination of syndicate and private estate. Individually, private estate was the most popular structure (28% 10), followed by private let (19% 7), and syndicate (8% 3) (Table 4.22).

Table 4.22. Shoot management structure

Structure (of Shoot Management)	Score	Percentage (%)
Combined <i>private estate &amp; syndicate (4), private let &amp; syndicate (4), private estate &amp; let (2), private estate, private let &amp; syndicate (1)</i>	14	39%
Private Estate	10	28%
Private Let	7	19%
Syndicate	3	8%
Farm	1	3%
Commercial	1	3%

In terms of species of game primarily managed on the shoot, most commonly this included red grouse (*Lagopus Lagopus Scotica*), pheasant (*Phasianus Colchicus*), red-legged partridge (*'French'*) (*Alectoris Rufa*), grey partridge (*'English'*) (*Perdix Perdix*) and Mallard duck (*Anas Platyrhynchos*). Less frequent were common Snipe (*Gallinago Gallinago*) and Woodcock (*Scolopax*).

Out of the 34 ESs who responded to this question, pheasant was the most widespread game managed, with 94% (32) listing this as a part of their management practice. The spread of land managed for pheasants included upland and lowland regions of England and Wales. Red-Legged Partridge was second most common (59% 20), then Red Grouse (41% 14) all of which were in Northern regions of the English uplands. 17% (6) listed duck (Mallard), most commonly in lowland regions (Table 4.23).

Table 4.23. Species of game managed across the Estates and Shoots (ESs)

Species of Game	Count	Percentage (%)
Pheasant	32	94%
Red Leg Partridge ( <i>French</i> )	20	59%
Red Grouse	14	41%
Duck (Mallard)	6	17%
Grey Partridge ( <i>English</i> )	3	9%
Other ( <i>Woodcock &amp; Snipe</i> )	1	3%

In terms of the frequency of game species managed 34 ESs responded. Most managed a combination of two types of game, most frequently Pheasants and Red-Legged Partridge, (29% 10), followed by Pheasants and Red Grouse (15% 5). A combination of Pheasant, Red-Legged Partridge and Red Grouse was less frequent (12% 4). The majority of those which managed only one type of game, managed only pheasants (5), apart from two which managed just red grouse (ES 10, ES 17) (Table 4.24).

Table 4.24. Frequency of different game managed by the Estates and Shoots (ESs)

Number of Types of Game Management	Count	Percentage (%)
1 <i>(Pheasant x 5, red grouse x 2)</i>	7	20
2 <i>(Pheasant &amp; red-legged partridge x 10, pheasant &amp; red grouse x 5)</i>	15	43
3 <i>(Pheasant, red legged partridge &amp; grey partridge x 2, pheasant, red-legged partridge &amp; duck x 3, pheasant, red-legged partridge &amp; red-grouse x 4)</i>	9	26
4 <i>(Pheasant, duck, snipe &amp; woodcock x 1, pheasant, red-legged partridge, red grouse &amp; duck x 1)</i>	2	6
5 <i>(Pheasant, red-legged partridge, red grouse, grey partridge &amp; duck x 1)</i>	1	3

Referring to the methods of shooting practices followed (Table 4.25) driven shooting was most frequent (72% 26). With methods followed dependent on factors including type of game, land area and both owner and game managers preference. Only one shoot practiced just walked up shooting, this was the smallest recorded estate by game managed, ES 28 Little Hangleton in North West England.

Table 4.25. Methods of surveyed Estates and Shoots (ESs) game shooting practices

Method	Count	Percentage (%)
Driven	26	72%
Both <i>(Walked Up &amp; Driven)</i>	9	25%
Walked-Up	1	3%

30 ESs completed the question on average size of game bags. Sizes ranged from 20 birds (ES 14, Little Hangleton) to 350 (ES 14, Mertonford) (Table 4.26). The average game bag reported across these ESs respondents was 213. The most frequent game bag size, fitted in the range of 151-200 (10 ESs), with 200 most common within this. With an average of eight guns per typical driven shoot day this equates to 25 birds per gun. The land area of game management significantly varied between ESs and as such the scale of game management should be considered with regards to this (Appendix J). In terms of wider

data comparison, figures are hard to find. However, a recent report by GunsOnPegs (2023) regards anything over 200 as large.

Table 4.26. Average (shoot day) game bag size across Estates and Shoots (ESs)

Game Bag Size	Number of ESs	Percentage (%)
0-50 (20, 35)	2	7
51-100 (100 x 3)	3	10
101-150 (120, 150 x 2)	3	10
151-200 (160, 160, 175, 200 x 7)	10	32
201-250 (220, 230, 250 x 3)	5	16
251-300 (270, 300 x 5)	6	19
301-350+ (350 x 2)	2	7

Finally, ESs were asked about the typicality of their game management operations, all 36 ESs responded. 75% (27) considered themselves as typical, while 25% (9) considered themselves atypical (Table 4.27). When asked why they gave this response, ESs that saw themselves as typical generally believed this due to communication with other ESs which operated in a similar way. Those who considered their operations atypical had various reasons, including seeing their operations are more progressive or non-commercial, one ES suggested their operations atypical because they have an average game bag of 300, which they saw as “larger than most” (ES 22, Caldlow). The quotes in Box 4.2 describe some ESs reasons for viewing their operations as they did.

Table 4.27. Typicality score of Estate and Shoots (ESs) in their Game Management strategy across England and Wales

Typicality (of Operations)	Count	Percentage (%)
Typical	27	75
Atypical	9	25

Box. 4.2. Examples of ESs explaining how they view their game management operations as either 'Typical' or 'Atypical' of other English and Welsh shoots

Typical

"We talk to a lot of other shoots and attend other shoot days which are similar to what we do" (ES 30, Polearn).

"Plenty of operations are like ours, albeit each has subtle differences" (ES 16, Malbry).

"We carry out similar practices to other driven grouse moors" (ES 17, Eastvale).

"We are just a normal shoot, nothing special" (ES 35, Fenchurch).

Atypical

"The shoot is completely private, with no sold days for commercial purposes" (ES 26, Danbury).

"We are moving away from largescale shooting, as part of our conservation program. If shooting was to continue it would be an even more wild version of a walked-up day" (ES 28, Little Hangleton).

"The shoot is family run, rather than commercial or a syndicate, that makes us different" (ES 15, Mertonford).

"We run all our operations as organic, that's not so common at the moment" (ES 36, Dolwyn).

#### 4.3.4. Adapting to Change: Perspectives and Possibilities for Private Estates and Shoots (ESs)

This section highlights factors influencing change across the sample of ESs, both in terms of game management and more broadly within the land area they operate within. The results provide valuable insights into the perspectives of those working within the estate-shoot nexus. Analysis disclosed increased points of contention, particularly regarding land access and resource provision, as well as notable opportunities for those ESs and individuals willing or able to adapt, including diversification and investment in environmental restoration and other incentivised public goods. The section is structured into three parts: perceived Challenges for the next ten or more years, perceived Opportunities over the same period and respondents' perspectives on the Future of their estate or shoot, looking 25 years ahead.

ES respondents were asked what they viewed as the main Challenges they faced over the next ten or more years (Q 15) 36 responded. Five themes were drawn from open-ended responses, with some overlaps between categories (Table 4.28). The responses to such enquiry generally focused on the challenges posed to GMSP, indicating multi-faceted pressures felt by the sector and those operating within it.

Table 4.28. Key Challenges Estates and Shoots (ESs) identified within the next 10+ years

Challenges	Count	Percentage (%)
Public Perception <i>(negative perception of shooting, perceived lack of understanding)</i>	19	53
Legislative Changes <i>(increased legislation and restrictions around shooting, including licencing &amp; game bird release, lead phase out, reduced government support, need to reduce chemical inputs)</i>	18	50
Supply Chain <i>(poor game meat market)</i>	9	25
Land Use & Stakeholder Changes <i>(increases in recreational land users, new developments, conflict with other stakes &amp; stakeholders)</i>	8	22
Financial Returns <i>(shoot financial viability, market for game meat, rising costs)</i>	5	14

The most significant challenge identified by 53% of ESs (19) was ‘public perception’, including negative attitudes towards shooting and a perceived lack of public understanding over what such a sector involves and why certain land management strategies are adopted. This concern was recognised across a broad range of identified regions and shoot models:

*“Rural communities are becoming more disconnected with sporting estates and related practices, they increasingly don’t understand what we do and challenge such practices” (ES 4, Darrowby).*

*“...Animal rights activists are winning the race for public support, shooting, farming and other rural sectors, all need to make a collective effort to promote the good that they are doing” (ES 14, Mertonford).*

*“There’s a real lack of public understanding around country sports” (ES 30, Polearn).*

The second most frequently mentioned challenge, identified by 50% (18) of respondents, was 'legislative changes'. This transcended multiple different policy and legislative concerns and ongoing changes encompassing GMSP, such as licensing and game bird release, changes to the general licence and tighter restrictions on pest and predator control, pressure to phase out use of lead shot and the need to reduce chemical inputs, including antibiotic usage in game birds. In Wales especially, and for driven shoots more generally, concerns were also voiced over a blanket ban. For instance, one respondent, based in Mid-Wales, raises the point that they are:

*"Dealing with increasing opposition to even [their] type of shooting [small-scale syndicate] from public bodies and some the environment campaigners" (ES 19, Gwilyn Dale).*

More broadly, ESs indicated related concerns:

*"Currently, we are unable to plan for the long-term future. There's real concern over job security if policy changes are so significant that they impact the viability of shooting. Currently we can only plan year-to-year" (ES 26, Danbury).*

*"There is more pressure from anti-shooting organisations and new/tighter legislation, which is all mounting up" (ES 10, Connelton).*

The third challenge, identified by 25% of respondents (9) as 'supply chain difficulties', especially a poor current game meat market. Issues included finding and maintaining a suitable supply chain for shot game as well as sourcing chicks, eggs, and poults. This issue was shown to be exacerbated by Brexit and trade restrictions across Europe, mostly impacting those who ran driven shoots with released game. Concerns were also raised here about the impact of big game bags on the rest of the game sector, which was indicated to be further fuelling this problem:

*"There are multiple issues, some of it in our hands to control, some not. One of which is bag sizes which have become too large - with an apparent desire on the part of some shooting folk to shoot bigger and bigger numbers - and the market for game meat cannot always meet that supply" (ES 24, Frithdale).*

'Land use and stakeholder changes' were also shown to be a relatively significant challenge, 22% (8) mentioning associated issues. Concerns included increases in



recreational land users and new housing developments, which both seen to place pressure on and increase conflict with established land practices and land users:

*“There’s just too many people around”* (ES 11, Saltmarch).

*“Greater recreational land use is putting a heavy burden on paths and the surrounding environment”* (ES 7, Disham).

*“Local people are now from widely varied backgrounds, often with little understanding of their new surroundings and little or no sympathy for the countryside as a workspace”* (ES 15, Kembleford).

Finally, ‘financial returns’ was identified by 14% of respondents (5). Specifically identified concerns included the financial viability of shooting, the market for game meat, and rising costs of such land management. Although, as presented below, ESs were shown to be exploring new or alternative revenue streams and implementing stricter cost-saving measures to address financial challenges.

Respondents were next asked what Opportunities they foresaw for their shoot and wider land management operations over the next ten or more years. Out of the 32 ESs who responded, opportunities were categorised into five key themes, with overlaps between categories (Table 4.29). However, a few respondents 9% (3) highlighted no opportunities for their organisation, or more broadly the estate-shoot nexus. This was demonstrated in the responses of two large game management operations:

*“I don’t think the opportunities are huge to be honest”* (ES 27, Everington).

*“I can’t see many opportunities in the present climate”* (ES 34, Seaburgh).

Table 4.29. Key Opportunities Estates and Shoots (ESs) identified within the next 10+ years

Opportunities	Count	Percentage (%)
Conservation & Environmental Restoration <i>(carbon capture, afforestation &amp; hedgerow creation peatland restoration, reduced overgrazing, reduced chemical usage, biodiversity net gain &amp; nature-based land management)</i>	19	59
Education & Engagement <i>(greater opportunities for public communication, to change or challenge commonly held beliefs around shooting &amp; to promote game shooting practice)</i>	8	25
Financial Return & Diversification <i>(new markets, environmental rural payments, building redevelopment, increase game sales, provision of local produce)</i>	6	19
Public benefits <i>(increase rural tourism &amp; leisure markets, land access &amp; more local employment opportunities)</i>	6	19
Improve sustainability of shooting <i>(scaled back game bags, improved game meat supply chain, reduced game bird release)</i>	5	16

Returning to opportunities, the most prominent identified by 59% (19) of ESs was associated with ‘conservation and environmental restoration’, with ESs feeling they can embrace such land management changes, especially with alterations to agri-environmental policy schemes and even see themselves as “at the forefront of environmental stewardship” (ES 1, Highbeck). This suggests a significant interest from ESs in promoting sustainable and environmentally friendly practices particularly within game management, including carbon capture, afforestation, peatland restoration, reduced chemical inputs, and net biodiversity gain. Respondents highlighted the interlink of opportunities relevant to this:

*“There are multiple opportunities for us to play our part in a climate crisis... through sensible planting trees and preserving the peatlands as a carbon sink which will mitigate upland fires and prevent further irreparable damage to peatlands and biodiversity. There too is a real opportunity to better inform the wider debate and reset some of the myths written and spoken about shooting” (ES 24, Frithdale).*

*“We are going to be doing more conservation, planting more woodland, we’ve been planting a lot of trees, using more wildflower mixes and less pesticides on*

*cover crops, we're bringing back hedgerows too, this all helps the pheasants and the environment" (ES 3, Tinsworth).*

*"We will further embrace wildlife and habitat management which are now being recognised through schemes and government environmental objectives, as well as maintaining a wild game stock" (ES 8, Houlton).*

The second most frequently mentioned opportunity, representing 25% of respondents (8), was 'education and engagement'. This category suggested ESs perceived a need to improve public perception and understanding of shooting practice through greater communication and engagement efforts, as well as by challenging commonly held beliefs around the activity. Again, this response came from across different models and regions represented by the ESs. For instance:

*"We are more aware than ever that public perception needs to be good and communicating with the public is important" (ES 10, Connelton).*

*"We have a real opportunity to liaise and educate the public on what we do" (ES 11, Saltmarch).*

'Financial returns & diversification' was mentioned by 19% (6) respondents. This category suggested ESs were interested in exploring new markets and revenue streams, either directly associated with game management or within the wider remit of the land area held by the associated ESs', including leveraging environmental and rural payments, mentioned earlier, or specific examples such as building redevelopment (ES 25, Tilling). 'Public benefit' was also mentioned by 19% (6) respondents, suggesting ESs embracing or further promoting tourism, greater employment opportunities and in some cases more land access. 'Improving the sustainability of shooting' was another theme mentioned by 16% (5). Here, specific references were made to reducing game bags, improving the game meat supply chain, and reducing the scale of game bird release.

Finally, ES respondents were asked a series of questions about the more long-term Future of their shoot operations and wider land use and management plans. Firstly, ESs were asked where they viewed their organisation to be in 25 years' time and what practices they thought they would be operating, 31 responded (Table 4.30). Further to this, ESs were more directly asked a series of questions around the main drivers affecting their

current and future management strategies and practices. Responses to these questions are combined as there was significant overlap.

Table 4.30. Survey of predicted changes to game management practices across Estates and Shoots (ESs) in the next 25 years

Practices in 25 years (by 2045)	Count	Percentage (%)
Scaled Back <i>(more restricted practices, greater legislations, less game bird release &amp; less commercial driven shooting)</i>	11	35
Conservation & Environmental Restoration <i>(at the forefront of environmental stewardship, more environmentally friendly farming, more renewable energy production, peatland restoration, emphasis on diverse habitats &amp; greater biodiversity &amp; even providing wildlife safaris)</i>	10	32
The Same <i>(but less funding &amp; greater uncertainty)</i>	6	19
Diversified with shoot <i>(greater emphasis on property, holiday lets, tourism &amp; selling local products)</i>	5	16
No Shoot <i>(too many pressures including growth in recreational land use)</i>	3	10

Based on the data provided it seems that there is a high likelihood that game shooting practices will change over the next 25 years (by 2045). The survey indicates that 35% of respondents (11) believe their game management will be scaled back, with particular emphasis on the viability of large or commercial-driven shooting. For instance, ES 13, Barnstonworth, had the largest game bag of all respondents (350) and believed this would be “much smaller”. Reasons given for a reduction in the scale of practices, included more legislation preventing or significantly restricting game management practice, “red tape” (ES 13) and a shift in priorities in line with policy objectives, as well as changes in societal attitude towards shooting.

32% of respondents, (10) believed that there would be a greater emphasis on conservation and environmental restoration, with ESs taking an active role in

environmental stewardship, promoting biodiversity. One estate even saw wildlife safaris as a plausible role gamekeepers may have (ES 18, Woodston). This was often linked to changes to agri-environmental policy schemes, with unproductive land increasingly taken out of production and more focus on broadscale ecological priorities.

The survey also suggested some ESs (19%, 5) may diversify their model of existence due to financial concerns and funding changes, including into a greater focus on property development (ES 25, Tilling), tourism and more holiday lets (ES 27, Everington) and local produce sales (ES 30, Polearn & ES 12, Marlott) as well as aforementioned environmental schemes.

Finally, 10% of respondents (3) believe there will be too many pressures for shooting to continue, including too many restrictions and a growing desire from the public for greater recreational land access. These concerns came from a large driven grouse shoot and two commercial shoots (ES 10, Connelton; ES 20, Chigley; ES 34, Seaburgh).

ESs were then asked to identify from a given list what land use practices and structural changes they see as happening more in the game sector and wider rural landscape over the next decade(s) – (Table 4.31).

Table 4.31. Anticipated changes in Land Use and Management across Estates and Shoots (ESs)

Practice	Estates (out of 36)	Percentage
Conservation	29	81%
Green Energy Production	28	78%
Tourism ( <i>including Property</i> )	23	64%
Rewilding	21	53%
Rural Population Change	16	44%
Residential Property Rentals	16	44%
Shift Away from Shooting	14	39%
New or Changed Business	13	36%
Property for Business	11	31%
Local Policy Changes	11	31%
Intensification/Commercialisation	5	14%

The most identified move, again, was towards more 'Conservation' centred practices, 81% (29) choosing this option, suggesting this is seen as a priority and/ or high likelihood amongst ESs. 'Green Energy Production' was also shown to be important, 78% (28) ESs selecting this option. ESs are interested in or view the embracing of such strategies as a strong likelihood for their land management and revenue streams. For instances ESs indicated the transitions they see ahead:

*"The estate will not have sufficient income through shooting. So other business opportunities will be explored"* (ES 6, Cragwich).

*"Renewable energy is going to become more important; this will be generated in the countryside and coastal areas. ELMs will bring a shift in farming and land use to more environmental schemes which will increase habitat"* (ES 12, Marlott).

'Tourism, including property' investment was selected by 64% (23), indicating an interest in using land for tourist-based activity. 'Rewilding' was also an important potential move (53% 21), again signifying an interest in restoring natural habitats and promoting biodiversity gain. ESs saw rewilding and more broadly the increased removal of unproductive land areas from agricultural land use as increasing across the landscape. There were, however, big differences in what such a term encompassed, and further inquiry would be necessary to deduce what respondents meant by this.

A minority of respondents selected 'intensification/commercialisation', with the corresponding ESs indicating an increasing need for financial viability as a key reason for choosing to move in this direction. Several respondents also confirmed they would not be moving in such a direction but saw this as a possible further move for some within the sector (for instance, ES 12, Marlott).

Overall, results suggested a wide range of practices that extend across the rural landscape, from established game management and shooting practice, with a particular emphasis on conservation, environmental restoration, and more sustainable shooting practices.

Finally, ESs were given a list of pre-determined factors shown from prior research to be influencing game management. Respondents were asked to select those they felt impacted their operations, land, and local community. Several ESs selected multiple answers, with 43% (15) of the 35 respondents to this question viewing at least three factors influencing their operations. The most common combination of factors cited were Covid-19, policy changes, and lobbying groups (17%, 6) (Table 4.32).

Table 4.32. External factors impacting Estates and Shoots (ESs) operations, land, and local community.

Factor	Count	Percentage (%)
Lobbying Groups	27	77
Covid-19	27	77
Policy Changes	24	66
Weather & Climate	16	46
Brexit	5	15

In all, the results demonstrate that respondents were most concerned about the current directly tangible impacts of ‘lobbying groups’ and ‘Covid-19’. 77% of respondents (27) expressed concern over lobbying groups, citing issues around rural-urban divisions, urban-centred governance, the increased influence of lobbyists and threat upon rural livelihoods, even the mental health of such “attacks” (ES 31 Gillitie) on rural workers. One ESs cited how they believed lobbying groups were getting “increasingly vocal” (ES 11 Saltmarch) and another suggested they “don’t care, or really know the damage they cause” (ES 34 Seaburgh). Covid-19 was also a major concern. 77% of respondents expressed concerns which ranged from income and financial losses due to disruptions to work, including shoots, as well as shutdown of holiday rentals. Respondents also mentioned the impacts of Covid-19 on the wellbeing for their local communities, including isolation and lack of events.

Concerns were also expressed about the impact of ‘policy changes’ by 66% of respondents (24) including trepidations over further restrictions on licensing, and pest and predator control, with Caldwell (ES 22) citing their frustration over “changes without consultation”. More broadly, shifts to environmental land management schemes were mentioned (such as ELMS), with some anticipated benefits. In terms of ‘weather and

climate', 46% (16) saw major concerns, citing direct impacts such as increases in pest species like heather beetle (ES 16 Malbry & ES 8 Houlton), and raising cereal crops due to unpredictable climate leading to higher feed costs for game shoot and agricultural operations (ES 15 Kembleford). 'Brexit' was identified as a concern for 15% (5), with concerns relating to trade disruptions and agricultural payments, though significant opportunities were also identified through agri-environmental schemes noted earlier.

#### 4.3.5. Summary

This section provided insight into how a selection of ESs within England and Wales currently exist, and identified key challenges, opportunities, and adaptation indicated by these models. Such data provide a useful tool to establish factors recognised to be affecting the landscapes in which ESs are situated (Shrubsole, 2019).

In terms of the characteristics of the surveyed ESs, the results highlight a diverse arrangement of models, demonstrated through varying spatial localities, scales, employment, and ownership structures. Clearly demonstrated here is the notion that game management does not happen in isolation, but rather, forms part of a complex web of integrated land management practices (Glass et al., 2013b). While longstanding associations were shown between game management and other established land management operations (including agriculture and forestry), moves towards new and emerging land-based initiatives were also presented as strong indicators of changing relationships across the majority of the surveyed ESs. Here, the growth and emergence of additional opportunities for land management, and investment potential, were acknowledged to be taking place within the larger context of changing socio-political relations. Key areas of transition included greater capacity for renewable energy generation, natural capital, and public goods. For shooting specifically, potential was indicated to come through the ability of ESs to redefine the position of such practices, with key transitions noted to include scaling back practices and demonstrating the ecological benefits of such land-based management. Concerns were indicated to surround most predominantly driven forms of GMSP across a range of models, with particular concern for the future of large and commercial forms.



Returning to the broader picture, shared traits were indicated in management strategies despite differences also being noted in the capacity of ESs to adapt to key factors, topography, scale, and form of management practice influencing this. Predominantly, opportunities noted tended to focus on promoting environmental restoration and sustainable practices, improving public perceptions and appreciation of GMSP, exploring new market and revenue streams and, in some cases, embracing further public access and tourism. Key challenges noted were shown to have a more direct focus on game management and shooting practice, relating to negative public perception, legislative changes, poor game meat markets, as well as land use and stakeholder changes and concerns over financial stability and need to foster public support for ESs. The survey emphasised the need to balance an increasing plethora of land management practices and demands including profit making activities, established traditions, and environmental efforts. Addressing such challenges will require concerted efforts by ESs to adapt. Overall, the survey provided valuable insights into a small cross-section of ESs and their perceived prospects, this material creates a useful picture of the types of estates and land management practices happening alongside game management in England and Wales, providing a useful thematic framework for Phase Two of the research project.

#### 4.4. Chapter Summary: Bringing the Questionnaire Results Together

Chapter 4 has identified key themes from across the ES and RS questionnaire surveys. These themes relate to the direction of agri-environmental policy and practices, including the greater use of rural landscapes for environmental restoration and public goods delivery, considering widely accepted climate and biodiversity crises, and post-Brexit reforms to land policy. Within the chapter changes in the socio-cultural perception of game shooting and management are noted, with a growing awareness of both disconnect from and a perceived negative public and inter-sector perception of such practices and land management strategies. Despite this, what is also potentially indicated is that the field sport sector is conscientiously working hard to improve the public image of game management and shooting practice (Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019).

Of course, a greater response bias of those supportive or involved in the sector may account for the optimistic outlook of positive change, as well as of high perceived threat. Such perceived threats were shown to relate to government objectives surrounding game management and shooting which are, as Chapter 2.4.3 indicates, increasingly restrictive of some game management practices, creating considerable concern for ESs and relevant RS representatives. Covid-19 was also found to be a cause for concern, particularly for ESs and established land management practices including agricultural. This was, in part, related to the loss of income and increased public access pressures upon established rural workforces and primarily land-based occupational use of the rural landscape.

The chapter also highlights that ESs and a large proportion of RSs representing the game shooting sector are aware of a rapidly changing natural climate and, as such, acknowledge that they will need to adapt strategies for this. Both willingness and recognition of responsibility were widely shown, particularly by those with physical capacity. The chapter addresses nuanced issues and opportunities related to rural land use, practice, and management today. This includes tensions over established rural groups and land management strategies, including game management and shooting practice and new and emerging configurations. Overall, the chapter shows that there are complex and diverse expectations and desires placed on rural land, with evident room for conflict. The chapter thus concludes by re-emphasising the multifunctional nature of rural land use, practice, and management today (Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019).



## Chapter 5. Case Study Profiles



Illustration 3. Gamekeeper and dog, by author, 2021

*“An estate is not an island but a jigsaw”* (Glass, et al., 2013, p. 222)

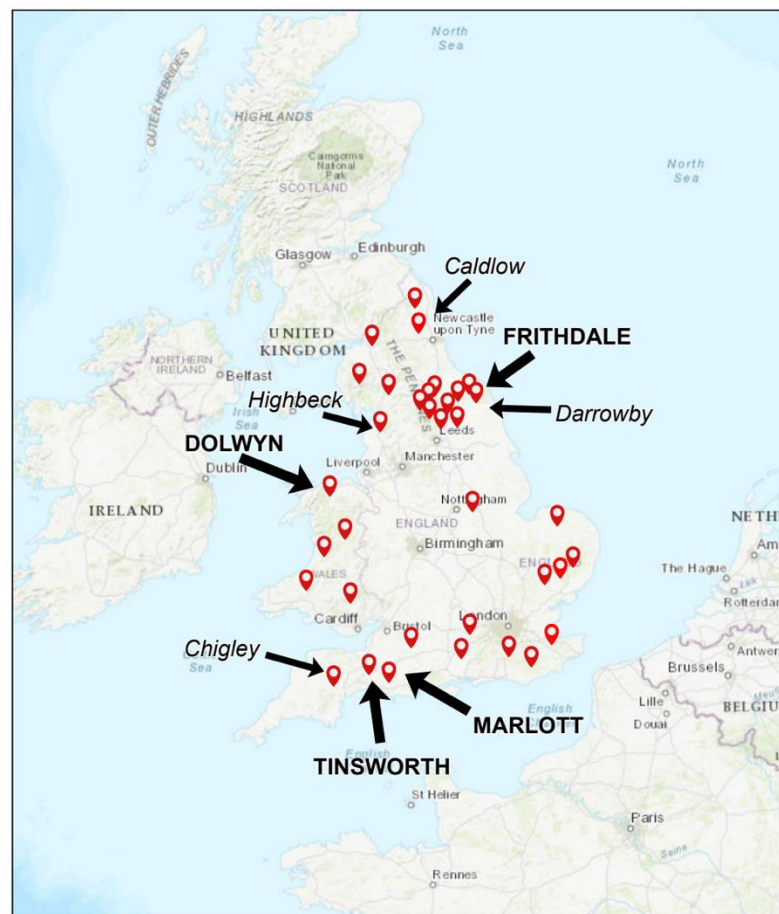
This chapter introduces case study examples of private estates practising game management in England and Wales. The cases merge fiction and fact, protecting field site anonymity (Warner, 2018), while providing tangible examples of how private estate game management can be structured, re-structured and resist processes of transformation within the wider sphere of the estate and rural (DeLanda, 2006, 2016; Woods, 2017). Four key case study sites and four supporting cases were established (Figure 5.1), totalling over 104, 880 acres, the equivalent land area of Barbados (World Land Trust, 2022). The cases provide glimpses into relatively unknown rural worlds, following assemblage thinking, whereby a description of a place is “only ever a snapshot” (Woods et al, 2021, p.289) as their exterior relations continually change. An explanation of the case study selection criteria can be found in Chapter 3.

The chapter begins with an overview of the estates, followed by more detailed case-by-case breakdowns.

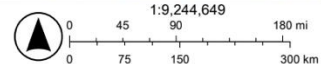
### 5.1. Case Study Overview

Figure 5.1 shows the broad location of case studies across England and Wales. Key cases were located in North Wales (Dolwyn), North Yorkshire (Fritthdale), and the Southwest (Tinsworth and Marlott). Supporting cases were in Northwest England (Highbeck), the Southwest (Chigley), North Yorkshire (Darrowby) and Northeast England (Caldow).

Map of Case Study locations across England and Wales



11/03/2023



Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS

Natasha C Coleman

Figure 5.1. Map of Case Study locations\* across England and Wales, regionally accurate, made by author.

\* Key cases are capitalised and supporting cases are in italics.

All the estates at the time of data collection, operated a driven released game shoot (pheasant and red-legged partridge), with Frithdale, Caldlow, Darrowby and Highbeck also actively managing grouse moors. The scale of the shoots ranged from a game bag of 100 (Frithdale) to 300 (Tinsworth and Caldlow). Average game bag figures are used in place of game bird release figures, which were heavily guarded and known to be controversial (Wild Justice, 2020). For almost all the estates, game shooting has remained a landscape feature throughout multiple waves of land management change since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The exception was Chigley, which offers an alternative conception: game shooting only began here during the late 1980s-90s, forming a major part of the estate’s agricultural diversification.

Table 5.1 demonstrates other key features of the case sites, expressing both upland and lowland topography and vastly different scales of land management. Commonality is established by all the estates operating under a model of shared land use function. A dominant pattern of established land use presides with residential property lets, arable, meat and dairy agriculture, as is the case with the majority of Scottish landed estates (Glass et al., 2013b).

Table 5.1. Case Study Key Features

Pseudonym	Rough Location	Estate Size (acres)	Type of Game Species	Average Game Bag	Other Land Uses	Topography
Key Cases						
Dolwyn	North Wales	12,500	Pheasant	200	Agricultural (Meat & Dairy), Agricultural (Arable), Forestry, Renewable Energy, Tourism & Leisure, Residential Property, Conservation Initiatives, Commercial Property & Business	Lowland
Frithdale	North Yorkshire	5,500	Pheasant & Red Grouse	100	Agricultural (Meat & Dairy), Residential Property, Conservation Initiatives	Upland
Marlott	South West England	2,000	Pheasant & Red Legged Partridge	200	Agricultural (Meat & Dairy), Agricultural (Arable), Forestry, Holiday Rentals, Renewable Energy, Tourism & Leisure, Residential Property, Conservation Initiatives	Lowland
Tinsworth	South West England	3,500	Pheasant & Red Legged Partridge	300	Agricultural (Meat & Dairy), Agricultural (Arable), Forestry, Renewable Energy, Tourism & Leisure, Residential Property, Commercial Property & Business, Conservation Initiatives	Lowland
Supporting Cases						
Caldlow	North East England	32,000	Pheasant & Red Grouse	300	Agricultural (Meat & Dairy), Residential Property	Upland
Chigley	South West England	480	Pheasant & Red Legged Partridge	120	Agricultural (Meat & Dairy), Agricultural (Arable), Renewable Energy Scheme(s), Holiday Rentals	Lowland
Darrowby	North Yorkshire	20,000	Pheasant, Red Legged Partridge & Red Grouse	250	Agricultural (Meat & Dairy), Agricultural (Arable), Forestry, Tourism & Leisure, Residential Property, Commercial Property & Business, Conservation Initiatives	Upland
Highbeck	North West England	28,000	Pheasant & Red Grouse	200	Agricultural (Meat & Dairy), Forestry, Renewable Energy Scheme(s), Tourism & Leisure, Residential Property	Upland

Table 5.2 illustrates differentiations in the values which underlie their land management strategies. ‘Custodians’ are understood as estates where land is inherited, the owner seeing this as a priority to care for and protect the estate for future generations. A ‘traditional’ operational outlook resulted in game management presiding around traditional productivity-based land uses, specific to the topography and local area. A ‘commercial’ structure generally seemed to prioritise profit. ‘Diversified’ estates showed significant modifications beyond traditional productivity-based land management structures. In this context ‘diversified’ differed from ‘commercial’ as the latter centres on the intensification of pre-existing practice rather than the innovation and entrepreneurship of the estate’s natural assets.

Table 5.2. Operational approach of the case study estates

	Case Study (Key)	Operational Outlook
1	Dolwyn	Custodian/ Diversified
2	Frithdale	Traditional / Custodian
3	Marlott	Custodian / Diversified
4	Tinsworth	Commercial
5	Caldlow	Traditional
6	Chigley	Commercial
7	Darrowby	Diversified
8	Highbeck	Traditional / Custodian

Table 5.3 indicates key case participants. On each estate at least one individual closely associated with game management operations was interviewed. On all key cases except Frithdale multiple individuals engaged in the working practices on the estates were interviewed. In Frithdale, despite only meeting Peter, the estate owner, his estate was considered a key case site due to the breadth of data gathered, including historic records and extensive observational field notes.

Table 5.3. Table of case study participants and key associated details

Case Study	Who	Role	Interview Location
Dolwyn	Robert	Head gamekeeper	Walking Interview
	Billy	Butcher	In-Situ (non-walking)
	Maddy	Office employee	In-Situ (non-walking)
	Kevin	Office employee	In-Situ (non-walking)
Frithdale	Peter	Estate owner/manager/farmer	Walking Interview
Marlott	Edwin	Estate owner/manager	Walking Interview
	Joe	Sole gamekeeper	Walking Interview
	Marvin	Estate worker	In-Situ (non-walking)
Tinsworth	Archie	Beat keeper	Walking Interview
	Tim	Head keeper	Walking Interview
	Jim	Beat keeper	Walking Interview
	Alan	Retired keeper	Participation
Caldlow	Christopher	Manager	Online
Chigley	Alex	Owner/manager	Online
Darrowby	Max	Estate manager	Online
Highbeck	Harold	Estate manager	Online

The cases revealed a variety of landscape settings, scales of game management practice and diverse entrepreneurship, giving scope for exploring the diversity of game management within England and Wales’s private estates today. Despite the establishment of broad comparative features, the specifics and nuances of each case contained too many variables to facilitate direct comparison. The data should instead be considered as explorative of the diverse means by which the estates and their relationship to game management currently exist. Themes deriving from the cases are drawn on in Chapters 6 and 7, highlighting challenges, opportunities, and adaptations.

At the start of each case study introduction (below) is a network diagram forming a snapshot of the assemblage of components and actors observed during fieldwork inquiry. Of course, not every component nor relation between them is captured within these diagrams. Instead, an overview and insight can begin to be formed around the place and the interaction of components within them.

Figure 5.2 shows a diagram used to illustrate the actors, components and practices involved across estate and game management operations, based upon observation and interviews. While there is no space to go into depth, this diagram demonstrates the complexity and nuances which make up the estate case study sites. The boxes can be filled or substituted for different estates. Generally, more diversified estates tend to have softer boundaries between direct/internal and indirect/external components, with each estate utilising the particular assets of its locality.

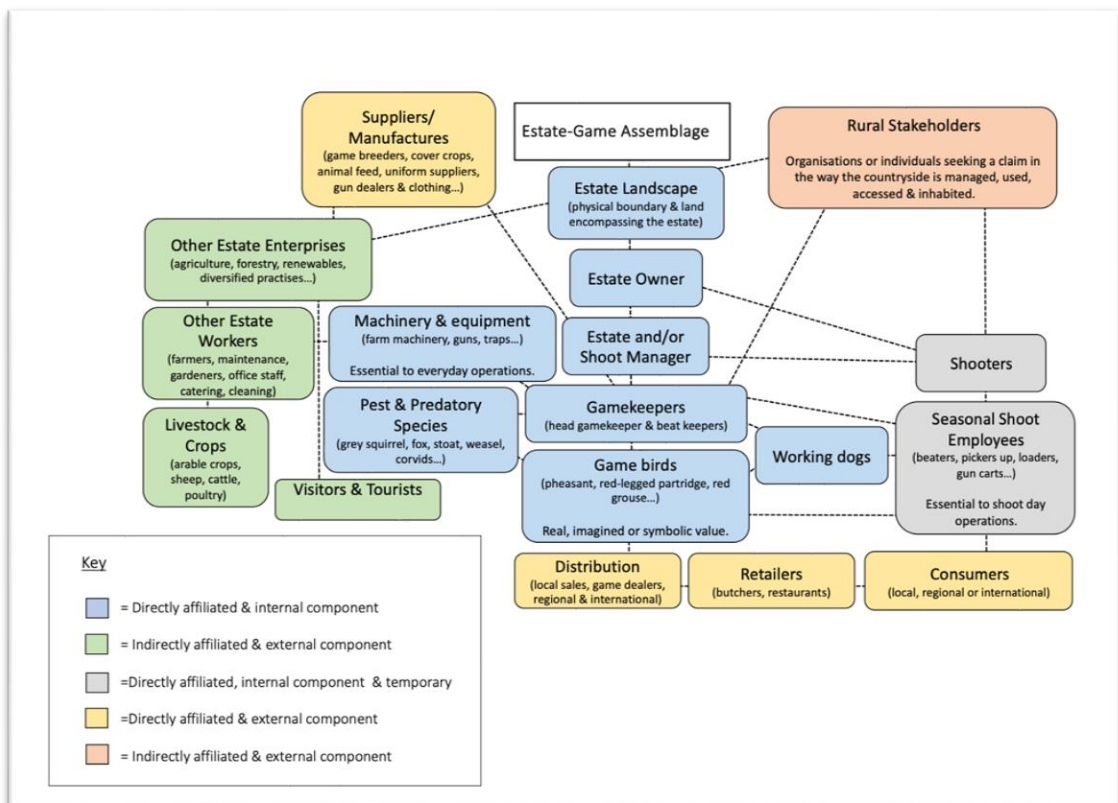


Figure. 5.2. Illustrative example of an estate-based game management assemblage of components and actors.



## 5.2. The Case Studies

### 5.2.1. Dolwyn

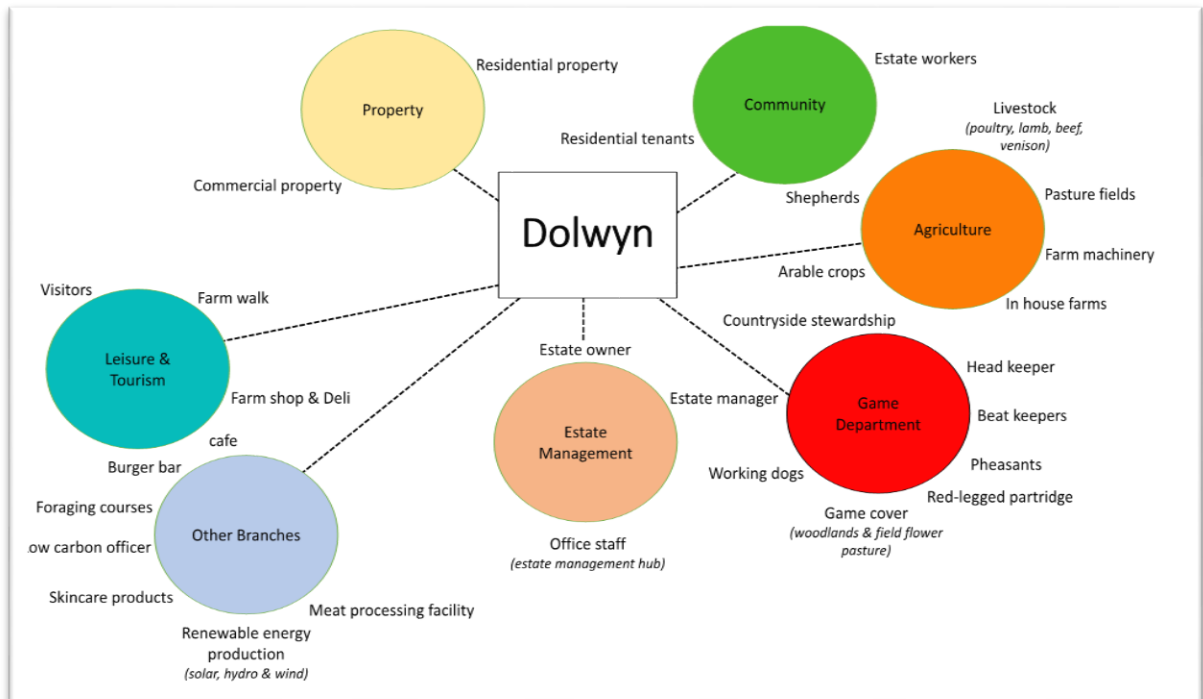


Figure. 5.3. A cluster diagram of Dolwyn.

#### 5.2.1. a. Overview

Dolwyn Estate is an organic and multifunctional estate situated within the rolling hillsides of central North Wales (Figure 5.4). The landscape is luscious, readily filled with evidence of extensive use of the landscape's natural assets. There is an impressive array of livestock, from Welsh lamb, chicken, beef, to more unusual Welsh countryside residents. The estate's centre is a busy hive of activity for summer tourists with an expansive farm shop, café, play area and takeaway, readily consumed by thousands of annual visitors. I am reassured by head keeper Robert that in the quieter winter months it is the game shoot which ensures visitors continue to consume this landscape.



Figure 5.4.A. Top-left, Dolwyn's organic wildflower meadows. B. Top-right, free-range broiler chickens, C. Bottom-left, deer by woodland game bird cover, D. Bottom-right, fallow scrubland used as game bird cover, authors photos, July 2021.

Dolwyn has been passed through a small pool of families since its origin in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, all of whom have resided in the stately home, hidden within an expansive coniferous treescape, set back from the estates' central business area. Despite Dolwyn's long history, the practices that dominate its landscape have shifted considerably in recent years, with the latest Earl of Dolwyn converting the entire estate to an organic status upon inheritance in the 1990s. The estate has over 100 staff members, all managed by a central office and admin team. Employment ranges from the farm manager, two shepherds, the three gamekeepers to eleven staff for an on-site meat processing facility, hospitality for the two food service branches and more niche employment including a forager, estate sourced natural skincare project manager and the most recent recruit, a low carbon officer. Only a few staff live on the estate, the owner and those whose work keeps them tied to its landscape, including the shepherds, butcher, and gamekeepers.

There is a strong sense of being within a bounded estate upon visitation. These boundaries are both physical, visible through boundary posts and expressive, captured through the established reputation of ‘Dolwyn’, with welcoming signage across the public areas surrounding the estate and Dolwyn logo worn on employee’s uniform. The estate’s website pictorially promotes the natural assets of the landscape and products on offer, and it is both interactive and up to date.

#### *5.2.1. b. Participants*

During my visit, I mostly spend time with Robert, the English head gamekeeper who had worked on the estate for over 30 years. Robert had two young and shy underkeepers, he told me he lived alone on the estate despite having raised a family there. Despite often working in solitude Robert spoke of regular visitations from young grandchildren who he eagerly entertains by allowing them to feed the various animals under his care. Robert fondly recounted all this as we drove around Dolwyn in his truck, the notes come from my field diary in July 2021, when I first met Robert in-person:

*‘He wears well-worn brown leather Chelsea boots, light workman’s khaki trousers and sports a National Gamekeepers Organisation green polo. He drives a beaten-up pickup truck which is not the dirtiest estate vehicle I have been in! When he arrives to collect me for an estate tour the cargo bed of the truck is laden with a comically leaking water tank, ready for filling pheasant drinkers, a sign that new poults are about to arrive to fill his carefully constructed pens.’*

I also spoke to a friendly butcher, Billy, and estate office employees Kevin and Maddy.

#### *5.2.1.c. Game Management*

The shoot (Table 5.4) occupies 5000 acres of the estate grounds with predominately reared and released pheasants and red-legged partridge. This area is set back from the estate’s central hive of public activity. The birds are managed by a head keeper and the two beat keepers.

Table 5.4 Dolwyn shoot details

The Shoot	Dolwyn
Type	Driven
Shoot Clientele	Let Days
Game	Pheasant & Red-Legged Partridge
Game Bag	200
Acres	5000
Gamekeepers	3

Game management on Dolwyn today plays a reduced role in major revenue generation. Instead, it is predominately recognised more for its cultural value. More widely in Wales the continuation of shooting is under significant threat from increased government sanctions on game management and related practices, including restrictions on gamebird release and review of licences for pest and predator control (BASC, 2022d; Natural Resource Wales, 2022). Threat also arises from inside the estate boundaries with increasing alternative entrepreneurial land-based activity, conflicting with game management. A transition which, however, has somewhat improved the unfavourable outlook for game management on the estate is the environmental achievements and schemes Robert links to game management. The poor market for game meat has however been a major issue recognised by Robert though he has gone out of his way to improve this.

#### *5.2.1. d. Other Practices*

Operations on the estate are expansive and diverse (Table 5.5), with several million-pound operations including a high-end global meat production facility and a recent beauty product range which uses the estate's natural assets. Though the estate permanently closed its restaurant during the Covid-19 pandemic, there are plans to expand operations through additional investments in tourism, including luxury holiday accommodation. A predicted future investment that Kevin, a key office employee also sees becoming a dominant asset is investment in natural capital. He introduced me to the latest employee, Maddy, Dolwyn's low carbon officer tasked with recording the estate's carbon assets for use in the carbon offsetting market.

Table 5.5. Estate Practices alongside Game Management

Type of Practice	Description
Agriculture	Mixed organic livestock - Aberdeen Angus beef, Welsh lamb, chicken, turkey, venison, goose & arable
Renewable Energy	Solar (7000 panels), geo-thermal and hydro power plants
Farm Shop & Deli	focused on local and artisan produce, 3000 items
Café	Range of on-site produce, seasonal and local focused
Takeaway	Using meat from on-site and other local produce
Butcher & Meat Processing Plant	All meat produced on site and dispatched globally as premium products
Skin Care	Organic skincare range using estate sourced ingredients
Other	Foraging courses, hay meadow restoration, carbon offsetting schemes & afforestation

### 5.2.2. Frithdale

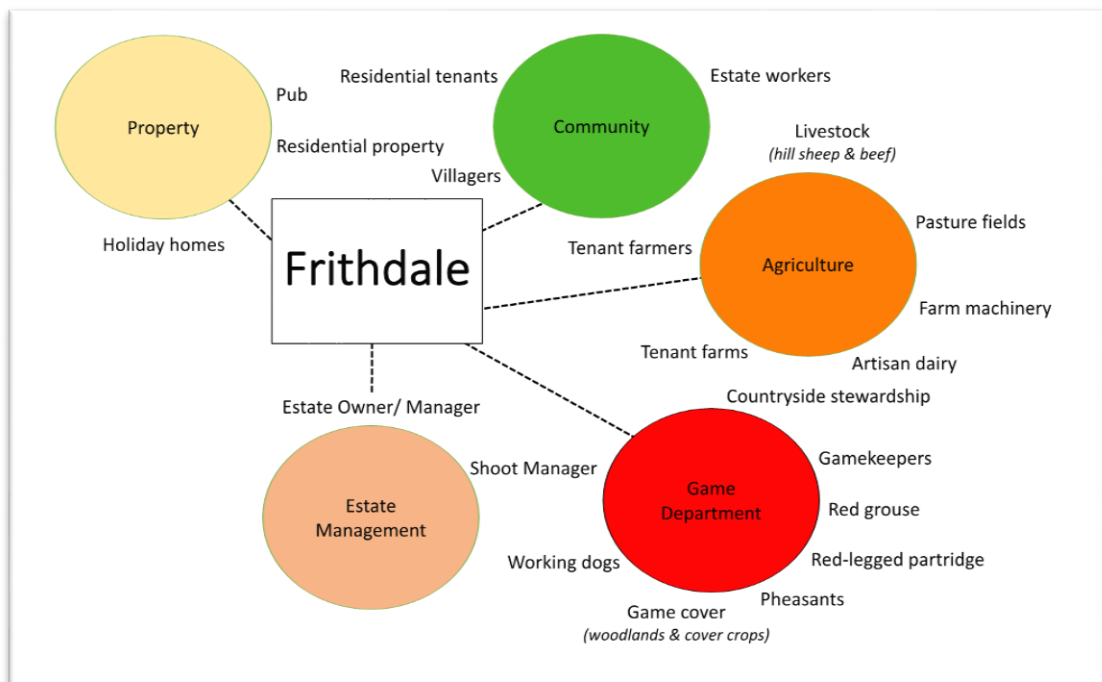


Figure 5.5. A cluster diagram of Frithdale.

### 5.2.2. a. Overview

Frithdale is situated in a remote upland region of North Yorkshire (Figure 5.6). Here, land use is shaped by the expansive moorland topography, marginal grazing and longstanding practices and upland traditions. The estate is owned by resident manager and hill sheep farmer Peter, with the shoot run from the nearby town by a close family member. There is a small but dwindling village community, centred around the estate, residing in predominantly tenanted accommodation. The village's population has dropped significantly from 120 > 40 between the 1920s and early 2000s, now made up of just 35 residents. There are ten farms on the estate, half that of a century ago. The estate is quiet, despite the clear blue winter's day. Peter tells me it is only avid hikers or those visiting the singular cosy village pub that come to the estate "at the roads end". Holiday accommodation has nonetheless surged in recent years, with 1/3 of houses within the Frithdale boundary second homes. Peter speaks of this with a tone of concern, his priorities residing in community retainment and housing affordability. When I visited the two gamekeepers and all ten farmers proved rather elusive.



Figure 5.6.A. Top-left, farm tracks towards pheasant woodland, B. Top-right, view from estate owners house, C. Bottom-left, grouse butt, D. Bottom-right, marginal grazing pasture on moorland, authors photos, November 2021.

The boundaries of the estate are hard to physically define, following the ley lines of the land as the open moors expand beyond the eyeline, but can be made out by the clusters of cottages embedded in the moorland and are expressed in the traditions of estate life, including hill sheep farming and the game shoot. The estate has no webpage.

#### *5.2.2. b. Participants*

During my visit to Frithdale I spend time with the charismatic Peter, with his multifaceted role as resident estate co-owner, hill-sheep farmer, and estate manager. He inherited the estate from his father over 40 years ago, sharing ownership with another family member who manages the shoot. Peter was incredibly receptive to being interviewed and had a clear desire for what he perceives as the struggles of upland estates, and for the plight of such remote rural working communities to be acknowledged further afield. This extract is from my field diary, November 2021:

*'I was given precise instructions to wait on the bench by the phone box overlooking the valleys in the heart of Frithdale's small village centre. Peter had no time for small talk. He wore a green boilersuit decked under a cashmere jumper, green wellies, and tweed flat cap. His hands showed significant signs of use, black and blue with blood blistered nails. His hair was wild, salt and pepper grey. We drove straight to his house, a large but unassuming stone building, not a stately home, and were greeted by 5 equally charismatic dogs and a cat. He made me instant coffee with water from the hot tap, no questions asked, and we sat on kitchen stools, eating hobnobs from the tin, and chatting about the rich history of the landscape around us. He showed me maps, archival game records and ancestral images before embarking on a whirlwind tour. Peter called me up after I'd left to tell me more thoughts he'd had on the issues his estate faced and some of his wider issues he had with humanity, including the prioritisation of profit over the environment'.*

#### *5.2.2. c. Game Management*

The shoot totals 5,500 acres with 3,500 of this being driven grouse moor and the rest predominately managed for pheasant (Table 5.6). The game birds are managed by two gamekeepers and coordinated by the shoot manager from an office in the nearby town. Despite several email exchanges the shoot manager was unable to meet me in person, though they provided an extensively email exchange.

The shoot is still a central part of the land use and a huge cultural asset to the estate, though economically the turbulence of grouse numbers and Covid’s impact on the shooting seasons over the last few years place it in a precarious position. Peter blames both climate change and the over-intensive use of medicated grit and other agricultural intensive land uses for poor grouse chick survival rate and harvest to date. Peter also recognises driven grouse shooting to be under wider significant political threat and to have a significantly unfavourable public image due to wider media propaganda.

Table 5.6. Frithdale shoot details

The Shoot	Frithdale
Type	Driven & Walked Up
Shoot Clientele	Let Days & Family
Game	Pheasant & Red Grouse
Game Bag	100
Acres	5,500
Gamekeepers	2

#### *5.2.2. d. Other Practices*

Hill sheep farming still dominates the landscape, but diversification has occurred too with special breed sheep and cattle bred by tenant farmers (Table 5.7). Out of all the key case studies, Frithdale was the most openly in a difficult predicament in terms of land use transition, the owner (Peter) admitting that intensive management of heather moorland for grouse and livestock grazing is under significant pressure from government subsidy reduction, public outcry over moorland management for grouse and the growing pressure of a declining local working population and upward second home market. For the estate, agri-environmental schemes are providing hope, especially flood defences and afforestation of marginal land which have provided vital income sources. Diversification is limited by the topography and with the growth of holiday homes comes the counter effect of reduced properties for residents.



Table 5.7 Estate practices alongside game management

Type of Practice (alongside shooting)	Description
Agriculture	Mixed livestock: Hill sheep, specialised rare breed tups & artisan cheese production
Residential Property	Tenanted properties offered to local people
Holiday Property	Short term holiday lets

### 5.2.3. Marlott

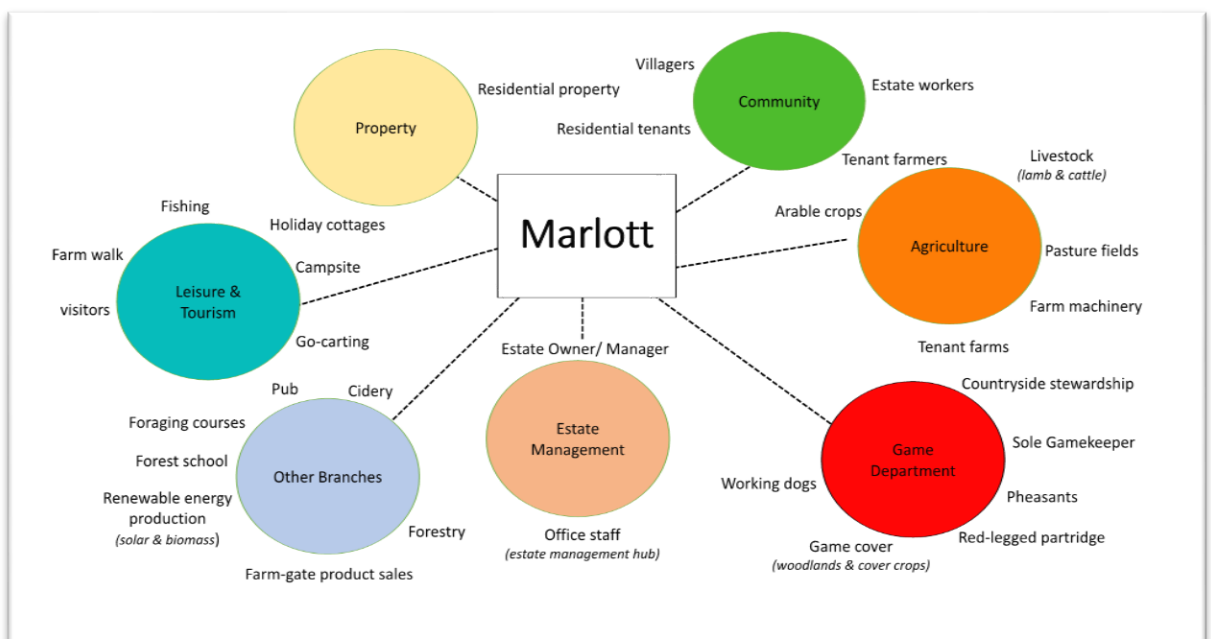


Figure 5.7. A cluster diagram of Marlott.

#### 5.2.3. a. Overview

Marlott is nestled in the rolling hills close to England’s Southwestern coastline. The landscape is visibly fertile and rich with swathes of arable pasture, high hedges and wood bordered steep green fields (Figure 5.8). The buildings on the estate follow the road ley line, from a village hall and pub to holiday and residential cottages and the small estate office at the roads end. The big house where owner Edwin lives is hidden beyond the hillsides. Records of this ancient estate landscape are found in the Domesday Book of 1086. Current owner and manager Edwin inherited Marlott just ten years ago, from his father who bought the estate in the 1930s when many estates came up for sale

(Thompson, 1990). Proximity to a large and popular holiday town means diversification has played an important role in estate finances in recent years. Evidence of the estates existence is everywhere, with emblematic visitor welcome signage dotted around the roadsides, the cidery and gates to the fishing lake, clay shoot and holiday cottages. There is a small cohort of estate staff, with one gamekeeper, the cidery employee, contract staff renovating the holiday cottages, a cleaner for the seven luxury holiday cottages, a forager and a small admin team. Most of the workers live on the estate in tied cottages.

The boundaries of Marlott are differentiated by emblematic estate signposts and expressed across merchandise for tourists, including cider bottles. Marlott's webpage is brand new, promoting the many attributes offered to all manner of visitors and boasting a "modern country estate" status.



Figure 5.8. A. Top-left, arable fields, B. Top-right, residential cottages, C. Bottom-left, steep hills and wooded edges, D. Bottom-right, whitewashed holiday cottages, authors photos, August 2021.

### 5.2. 3. b. Participants

During my visit to Marlott I met resident owner and estate manager Edwin and his gamekeeper Joe. Edwin inherited the estate ten years ago from his father, he lives with his wife and young family on the estate. Joe joined us in the estate office for the afternoon's tour of the estate. He arrived straight from preparing equipment for the imminent arrival of his pheasant poults, a big task for a single-handed keeper. The field diary extracts captured in July 2021 gives a feel of this duo:

*'Edwin wears a navy polo, dark jeans, shades, a little slicked back hair and drives a Range Rover. He's chatty and leads conversations from the outset. He is a man with an air of authority, cheeky but also caring, a paternalistic figure in the village. He is welcoming and keen to charm, speaking in place of Joe, who often follows this up with a humble addition, correction, or simply an agreement'.*

*'Joe is quite the contrast from his boss, both physically and in gesticulations. He's reserved and has a petite but strong frame, his bootlaces, like other young keepers I've met before remained undone. He's wearing shorts, wrap around shades and a khaki t-shirt. He sits slouched in the office, half listening but comes alive when we head out on a tour of the estate, pointing things out and interjecting Edwin's description of the landscape and practices which occur across the estate landscape'.*

### 5.2. 3. c. Game Management

Marlott operates a driven pheasant and partridge shoot (Table 5.8). The shoot has undergone significant change in recent year, sparked by poor inter-personal relations between the previous gamekeeper and the local community, resulting in the estate nearly losing the entire local syndicate. Hence the removal of the former gamekeeper, colloquially nicknamed 'sloth' (due to apparent laziness), and the promotion of Joe who was formally the underkeeper. Since Joe took over, the size of the shoot has been scaled back, owner Edwin sees this as a positive move, a "more environmentally acceptable" ethos dominating the management structure and expects more estates will soon follow suit. Edwin has high hopes for Joe and the shoot, despite recognising significant challenges exist for the driven shooting sector. These include public opinion, loss of almost an entire shoot season to the pandemic, the sale of dead game and lack of market within the UK, with reduced European trade being some issues drawn attention to. The growing openness to visitors, (below) has, however, led to some added negotiation for shoot days around holiday guests.

Table 5.8. Marlott shoot details

The Shoot	Marlott
Type	Driven
Shoot Clientele	Syndicate Shoot & Let Days
Game	Pheasant & Red-Legged Partridge
Game Bag	200
Acres	2,000
Gamekeepers	1

#### 5.2.3. d. Other Practices

Operations on the estate reflect its diversified status, whereby several of Marlott’s natural resources are utilised for investment purposes. The estate (Table 5.9) continues to expand and grow new businesses, including plans to marketize more local food and drink products, with work already taking place to expand largescale holiday cottages (25+ people) to meet demands for rural retreats. Marlott did however suffer a loss of revenue during the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in the closure of its on-site restaurant.

Table 5.9. Estate practices alongside game management

Type of Practice (alongside shooting)	Description
Agriculture	Arable, Cereal crops Finishing lamb & cattle
Forestry	Commercial
Residential Property	Tenanted properties offered to local people. Especially those deemed to contribute to the estate in some capacity i.e., pub manager or estate workers.
Holiday Property	Short term luxury accommodation
Renewable Energy Schemes	Solar and biomass boiler
Recreational Activities	Activity centre, fishing, go-carting, golf, foraging courses, forest school
Cidery	Small-scale cider production
Other	River restoration, pub, foraging courses

#### 5.2.4. Tinsworth

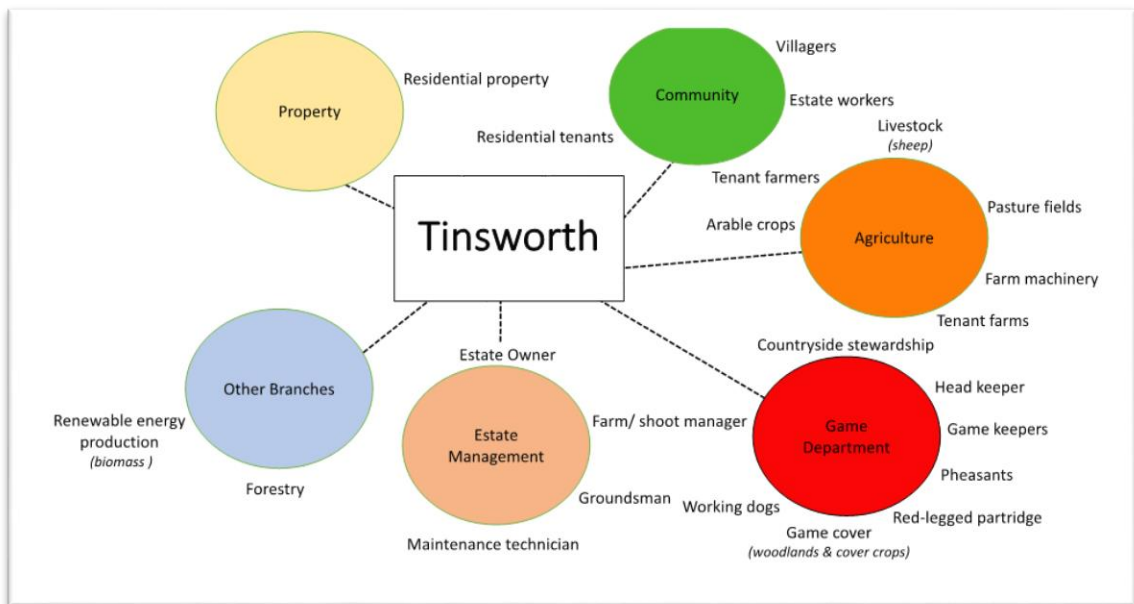


Figure 5.9. A cluster diagram of Tinsworth.

#### 5.2.4.a. Overview

Tinsworth (Figure 5.10) is situated within steep hillsides of Southwest England, yet with a major city less than ten miles away, the result of continuing urban sprawl. The effect of this generates an outward mismatch of private largescale agriculture practice and a game shoot, set against a growing suburban population desiring access to green spaces primarily for recreation. The estate has a grade one listed manor house which forms the central feature of the grounds. Here the owner Lady Silvia resides, having bought the estate 25 years ago after acquiring significant wealth elsewhere. The grounds are lavishly decked with huge ancient trees, large lakes, and lawns. There is a small pool of estate residents scattered at equidistance from the grand house along roadside tracks. The community on Tinsworth is relatively small with a few residential tenants and several tied cottages for the estate workers, including the three gamekeepers, a groundsman, mechanic, and farm manager whose days exist around the central work yard, hidden down an even longer dusty red clay track. The estate in its current form dates to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with wider speculation its origins are registered in the Domesday Book of 1086. Public access is limited, with management focused predominately on the private working farm and commercial shooting. Importantly, the latter have continued to be undertaken for the leisure and aesthetic desires of Lady Silvia's family. Desire for traditionalism has resulted in some evident tensions between staff, a growing suburban population, and the

wider hierarchical estate structure. This came to light during my visits, this being the only estate I was able to visit several times between Covid-19 lockdown waves, first observing and then partaking in a series of pheasant shoot days as a beater.

In terms of boundaries, although no signage indicates you have arrived on Tinsworth, evident physical signage announces this is private land. Each right of way footpath is marked with equal signage, grand statues, and fences either side reminding visitors this remains a private and working estate and paths must be abided to. Such indicators clearly express the prestigious and off-limit status of Tinsworth. It has no webpage.



Figure 5.10.A. Top-left, woodland with pheasant feeders, B. Top-right, maize cover crops, C. Bottom-left sheep pasture and woodlands, D. Bottom-right, arable oilseed rape, author photos, June and November 2021.

#### *5.2.4.b. Participants*

During my visits to Tinsworth I spent time mostly with beatkeeper Archie, his boss Tim, and the other keeper Jim. Archie and Jim have been on the estate for a couple of seasons and Tim four. All live with their retrospective partners and an impressive number of dogs

(seven or more of each). This extract from my first visit in June 2021 helps to characterise them:

*'Archie is a serious faced young lad with recently cropped dark hair, he wears cargo pants, big leather work boots and despite the summer heat a khaki hoodie. He's anxious to get on with work, a significant workload as the pheasant poults are due to arrive any week.'*

*'Tim is a broad chap, cheeky from the outset of our interaction, with laddish jokes dropped into every other line of conversation. He wears a cream tattersall shirt, jeans, and beaten-up Chelsea boots.'*

*'Jim wears a flat cap, shorts, laced work boots and green polo shirt. He is more reserved than the other two, a self-proclaimed introvert who "doesn't really do conversation". Comically (or ingeniously) he's wearing snow chains on his shoes to help prevent slippage while they build a pheasant pen on a steep slope. He complains a lot about the heat as we eat packed lunches on the hood of the truck, but he does interject to agree with Tim or Archie every now and again.'*

#### 5.2.4.c. Game Management

The shoot on Tinsworth is one of the largest I visit, with an average of 300 birds (Table 5.10) per shoot, twice most weeks throughout the pheasant season, which accounts to around 10,000 birds a year. While unable to acquire exact figures, thousands of pheasants are released from several different release pens across the estate. Despite the given average game bag of 300 birds, both the two shoot days I joined ended with over 500 birds. The land managed for shooting is shared with both in-hand and tenanted farms. The farm manager organises the shoot but tends to ensure farm management is prioritised, to the frustration of the gamekeepers. Good relations are however maintained by the gamekeepers with the local farmers. For instance, Archie bargains pest control for access to farmland for game birds and associated vehicles.

Table 5.10. Tinsworth shoot details

The Shoot	Marlott
Type	Driven
Shoot Clientele	Let Days
Game	Pheasant & Red-Legged Partridge
Game Bag	300
Acres	3, 500
Gamekeepers	3

#### 5.2.4.d. Other Practices

The land management pattern is relatively traditional (Table 5.11) and bounded owing to a history of an intensive agricultural production and the lowland game shoot. To this effect the fields are uniform, with distinct green pastures for fattening lambs, arable crops, including rapeseed, and marginal land space for game cover crops such as maize. Game management encompasses these expansive fields and the woodlands, creating bordered valleys in hard to cultivate areas, making home for the pheasants and partridge (Figure 5.10).

Table 5.11. Estate practices alongside game management

Type of Practice (alongside shooting)	Description
Agriculture	Arable, cereal crops, sheep
Forestry	Commercial
Residential Property	Tenanted properties offered to local people
Renewable energy schemes	Biomass boiler

### 5.3. Supporting Cases

These cases added detail to key cases and helped further develop emergent themes. Data here is generally derived from the ES survey and online interviews.

Highbeck is an established upland private estate dating back to the Norman Conquest (Figure 5.11). The owner is absentee and inherited the estate in the last five years. The estate has been in this family for the last 40 years. There is a huge gamekeeping team of



eleven, necessary for the huge estate moorland land area and average 200 bird pheasant shoot, with grouse numbers fluctuating too much to be specified. A small community of around 200 populates Highbeck, many of whom are residential tenants. The estate remains private with active attempts to minimise substantial public access. Environmentally, the estate is progressive and has been working hard to re-model its land management to this effect, including moorland regeneration schemes, reduced chemical usage, woodland planting and taking unproductive farmland out of production. I spoke to estate manager Harold who lives on the estate, though estate worker Mike completed the ES survey, but I did not get to meet in-person due to him having Covid-19. I also participated in a grouse shoot in September 2021. The estate has a recently updated website, with a significant focus on highlighting the natural assets and ecological successes.



Figure. 5.11.A. Top-left, Highbeck estate, grouse beating, B. Top-right, rough pasture and heather moors on the moorland fringe, author photos, September and August 2021.

Chigley is a small lowland estate, made up of 480 acres on a South Westerly tidal peninsula. Historically it formed part of a much larger estate until its demise due to rising taxation, as with many estates in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century (Thompson, 1990). The shoot is run solely by owner, Alex, with a part-time keeper and contracted workers. The shoot does not support a regular community and has recently sold off land to developers due to major financial concerns. Despite this, the estate's small shoot appeals to shooters looking for a more sustainable bag number (average game bags of 120 birds). During a phone interview, the owner had a lot to input on the de-valuation of farmers and land

workers because of issues with CAP. Alex felt optimistic that her prospects may be enriched by agri-environmental policy directive changes, specifically ELMS. Chigley had no website.

Caldlow is a vast 32,000-acre upland estate in north-eastern England. Weather patterns have had a large negative impact on the grouse population here. The land is predominately used for game management and hill sheep farming with little alternative comprehended by estate manager Christopher. Practices are intense and commercial with a 300-bag average shoot day (pheasant). The estate has thirteen gamekeepers and annually provides income for the local community through casual labour on shoots and indirectly through accommodation and hospitality. The biggest threats are the risk of driven grouse shooting being banned through policy changes and linked to this lobbying groups. Opportunities are seen in showcasing the environmental benefits that game management can provide on moorlands and future exploration of asset opportunities of natural capital. The estate has no website.

Darrowby is in the heart of North Yorkshire. It is relatively diversified for an upland estate. It is large with several income streams. I spoke to estate manager Max about the shoot, which employs seven full time gamekeepers and is commercially run with an established global clientele. In terms of threats, the shoot is under pressure to remain profitable within unstable markets. The anti-shooting lobby is a significant concern. While game bags are relatively high (250 birds) the estate sees this as sustainable, but they are phasing out lead shot. Concerns also presided over imports due Brexit, with additional tariffs making it difficult to get game chicks and eggs from Europe. Max doubts the future of driven shooting but sees switching away from it a real possibility, with simulated shooting already a significant financial asset for the estate. Changes in policy and additional pressures to mitigate carbon emissions are cause for concern over its future, as is in-migration, where a local populous is increasingly no longer active in shoot days nor sees this as a cultural benefit (according to Christopher). Covid-19 has also had major financial impact on the shoot, with losses resulting from consecutive non-shooting years. Opportunities are however noted by Max, especially in relation to the significant efforts his gamekeepers are putting into conservation and in improving numbers of red listed

farm and moorland bird species. The picture here for shooting is seen to be relatively bleak, especially with an owner who is not personally invested in it. The estate had an interactive website and page dedicated to its game shoot, listed as 'Darrowby shooting'.

#### 5.4. Chapter Summary

Chapter 5 has provided an overview of eight case studies of private estates managing game shoots across England and Wales. Four key case studies (Dolwyn, Marlott, Tinsworth and Frithdale) and four supporting cases (Chigley, Caldlow, Darrowby and Highbeck). While all differ, they are drawn together by the shared attribute that each operates at least some form of driven game management (pheasant and red-legged partridge). Each demonstrates a diversity of operations, actors, components, and practices which make up a game-estate assemblage as well as demonstrating how game management can share varying degrees of interconnection with a variety of other land-based operations and enterprises. The chapter further sought to pay attention particularly to details of the key actors involved in game management, outlying some of the nuanced detail of individuals involved in game spaces.

The chapter also highlights differences across the models in terms of their socio-historical context, the value which drives their model, their topography, land ownership and management structure and scale of both estate and game management operations. As it briefly introduces some key pressures and opportunities, as understood by involved actors. For instance, in term of topography, upland estates with active grouse shoots, including Frithdale, outlined particular vulnerability to climatic changes and specifically weather pattern shifts leading to unstable grouse populations. Broader issues are shown to be shared across different topographical levels, including concerns raised over legislative changes, post-Brexit agricultural protocol and associated perceived public disagreement. Scale and operational style were also shown to be a potential factor in resilience, with larger estates and those with diversified operations highlighting generally more optimism and resilience (for instance, Dolwyn and Marlott). What is also established is the importance of the wider spatial context, such as Frithdale's owners pessimistic outlook towards the future amplified by de-population and rural second

home ownership and visitors leading to threats to established and bounded estate structures. In the lowlands, proximity to large populations is argued to be diminishing the cultural significance of game shooting and therefore potentially further contributing to a broader increase in negative public attitude towards these established land practices. The case estates are however shown to be, at least in some cases adaptable, with some demonstrating broader diversification and trends towards the direction of funding streams, including the provision of public goods and environmental land management schemes as well as where possible or desired embracing public engagement. Yet, other cases show little willingness or ability to transform and are shown to be at risk of their established place, with game management being diminished in the face of estate-based or wider rural land use and management transition. Chapters 6 and 7 move towards further expansion of the shared findings and details of all this dynamism and change across the estates.



## Chapter 6. Threat

### 6.1. Introduction

*“What we are seeing with the game estates is an iceberg melting at its end”* (RS 19, John Burns, writer, and rewilding campaigner).

*“Our culture is under threat”* (Peter, Frithdale owner and manager).

Chapter 6 explores the internal and external threats facing game management (GM) and highlights the resilience of case sites and actors in the face of unstable socio-political and economic conditions. The chapter is structured into three parts, examining the poor public perception of GM (6.2), internal issues within game management spaces (6.3), and land use conflicts and tensions within and beyond the estate boundaries (6.4). The chapter also draws on field diary notes to provide alternative viewpoints.

Box. 6.1. The retired gamekeeper’s tales, field diary notes, November 2021.

‘At the start of the shoot day, as we sat waiting in the barn, I struck up a conversation with a retired gamekeeper. He was slightly deaf in one ear and sat quietly taking in the day. With little prompt, he told me that he had been a gamekeeper his whole working life, having left school at 15. Now he spends his retirement travelling between different shoots as a flanker. After a life on the land, not many could put up their feet.’

‘He disclosed that if he had his time again and knew what the job entails now, he wouldn’t do it. He said things have changed unrecognisably – how the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has destroyed hedgerows and abundant wildlife. He said he’d always tried to protect it, but now there’s hardly any left and keepers get blamed. He also expressed he’d seen things nobody would believe – “better than Attenborough on TV”. I laughed, but I listened. I’m still unsure of what was truth and what was tale, but he sure believed every word he told me and seemed genuinely fearful that the profession he had dedicated his life to was today almost unrecognisable...and so the tales went - how he’d seen ‘six badgers, nose to tail in a circle protecting their young, tales of clouds of bugs, fields of hares, and skies full of birds of prey. Things are so rare now, things that many of us who walk in the countryside yearn for.’

## 6.2 Poor Public Perception

*“There is a threat to those who engage in shooting activity from a lot of people out there who are strongly opposed to it. That means people are guarded and cautious about what they say. They don’t want information to get into the wrong hands” (Alex, Chigley Owner).*

### 6.2.1. Introduction

A major threat observed at the case study level was burgeoning public disdain towards game management. This effect was shown to influence the behaviour and actions of GM actors, resulting in generalised concerns at the level of the individual case study and field sport sector (Chapter 4).

### 6.2.2. Detachment from Rural Realities and Criticisms of Chris Packham

During the fieldwork, participants frequently attributed the negative perception of game management and its actors to a detachment from the lived experience of working rural practices. Chris Packham's recent high-profile involvement in a lobby to increase sanctions on specific aspects of GM, known as the Wild Justice campaign (Wild Justice, 2020), was an often-cited example of this detachment. Many participants portrayed Packham as lacking understanding towards GM and believed that campaigns such as Wild Justice, coupled with Packham's prominent media standing, were leading to a situation where "all game shoots [were] being tarnished with the same brush" (Archie, Tinsworth, beat keeper, 2021).

To gain insight into where the negative rhetoric around GM and gamekeeping comes from, I spoke to Helen, founder of the GWT. Helen's response was that:

*"Social media is a huge part of it, and extremist groups are very adept at putting their point of view across. Chris Packham is a huge part of that, and they [mainstream media representatives] are totally blinkered in their approach, they don't want to listen, they don't want to learn."*

Evidence of the damage caused to the entire field sport sector by such campaigns was also supported by Caldlow estate's owner, Christopher. He talked about the ongoing confrontation over the Wild Justice campaign with grouse management (2.4.3). Christopher stated:

*"I think there is a very real risk of it [the campaign] changing the government agenda. A change of emphasis could happen, and I think that is the biggest threat to moorland management today. It's quite possible that 20 years down the line [shooting] will be banned in the same way as fox hunting."*

Participants in the lowlands also expressed their views on this topic. Robert, a head keeper on the Dolwyn Estate in Wales, talked about the issues of detachment and how it is affecting gamekeepers, again referencing Chris Packham:

*"What annoys me about people like Packham is that they are so one-sided, I don't disagree with Packham there are some very bad practices done in gamekeeping, but that is done by a very small number of people. If I invited him here [to the estate] he wouldn't come to see how we do things here."*

These statements demonstrate that actors involved in game management are frustrated by the all-encompassing depiction of game management particularly as ecologically destructive. Gamekeepers like Robert stress that GM can diverge from this reputation, and that there are potentially positive examples of practices taking place today. Moreover, the popular nature of Chris Packham and his sizable digital platforms is cited as a reason why notions of wildlife crime involving game management often dominate public perception.

### 6.2.3. Staying Concealed and Being Seen

*"There's this stigma around saying you're a gamekeeper or you darn't put anything on your vehicle that says you're a gamekeeper...or your children don't feel they can talk about your job at school. It's getting worse all the time"* (Helen, GWT).

*"I'll take part [in the study] as long as you don't incriminate me"* (Robert, 2021).

These were the first words uttered when I asked Robert, a gamekeeper, to sign a consent form so that field research could commence. Robert said this in jest, but behind the joke was real caution in conversing with a stranger, especially one working in a position to disperse information about him. This caution was shared by other gamekeepers during fieldwork, who felt the need to conceal their profession or remain anonymous. Such caution and stigma carried heavy consequences for everyday working practice, including a lack of trust and communication between gamekeepers and wider society. These

findings correspond with experiences shared by other researchers regarding the “hard to reach nature” of gamekeepers (Thomson et al., 2020, p. 8).

The level of adverse attention which surrounds gamekeeping as Helen (GWT, 2021) recounted has recently reached such levels that even use of the term ‘gamekeeper’ carries negative weight:

*“I had a gamekeeping lecturer on the phone the other week ... he said they were dropping gamekeeping from the course title [even] though lots of people are taking jobs that are essentially gamekeeping, but they won’t be called gamekeepers... There’s a huge stigma around it [gamekeeping] and it’s getting worse, a lot worse.”*

The fact that educational colleges may remove ‘gamekeeper’ from their curriculum highlights the stigma associated with the profession in public discourse. I asked Helen what she would replace "gamekeeper" with, to which she answered that more publicly palatable terms like “ranger” could soon be used. This corresponds with evidence based in Scotland where 56% (of 152 respondents) of gamekeepers said they had experienced forms of verbal or physical abuse because of their occupation in the last year (Thomson et al., 2020, p. 37).

A reluctance to communicate with me was further explained by estate owner and manager Alex:

*“There is always a threat to those engaged in shooting activity from a lot of people out there who are very strongly opposed to it and from that point of view people are guarded and cautious about what they say, they don’t want that information to get into the wrong hands”.*

For Alex and the others which I encountered, they perceived sharing information with someone they see as an outsider (and a researcher) may result in negative repercussions which has led to guarded interaction and self-censorship. For instance, Edwin, Marlott’s owner and manager says he “doesn’t shout about shooting” that takes place on the estate.

Peter, owner and land manager of Frithdale, had a different perspective from the others I encountered. He felt obligated to speak to me, likening it to “standing above the



parapet” in a warzone. This analogy illustrates perhaps how many participants felt about interacting with me. However, the consideration of risks was still evident, with both speaking out and remaining silent requiring calculated deliberation. This shows that there are discrepancies in the best approach for dealing with external interaction. Nonetheless, the fact some individuals chose to engage with me suggests potential for change, which is further explored in Chapter 7.

More direct examples of participants concealing their profession and working practice, but also feeling victimised came from Tinsworth. Here, according to head keeper Tim, the conservative estate owner, Lady Silvia, limits the public appearance of the estates’ game management team. He compares this to other areas in the UK where he believes GM to be more publicly supported:

*“In \*\*\*\*\*[estate areas] it would be okay to walk into a pub wearing your full tweeds. Here you’re not allowed, you’d get in trouble for wearing estate clothing [out of work] and if you did you’d get dirty looks.”*

Tweed is the traditional formal uniform of a gamekeeper, each estate having its own pattern which historically, and symbolically, ties a keeper to an estate (Anderson, 2017). The fact Lady Silvia denies this connection points towards concerns of the estate’s reputation based upon shooting practice, and therefore the erosion of the gamekeepers’ place in rural landscapes. Tim goes on:

*“You [used to] go around with a quad bike and a gun on the side of it, now you just wouldn’t do that, you wouldn’t just drive through the village with your gun showing”.*

Tim notes gamekeepers on this conservative estate must keep a low profile and adapt their behaviour and there is an overwhelming sentiment that GM should keep a low profile. This practice of physically concealing key indicators of the occupation was something I encountered when out with Archie (one of Tinsworth’s beat keepers). As we pulled up to get breakfast at a local shop, he covered up the whole back shelf of his truck, including his traps and dog crates. When I asked Archie about this, he said it was simply “easier to hide [this] than to have to explain to people” what he was doing or what his occupation involves.

*'We would stop at a café to get breakfast, and everything would be covered over'*  
(Field Diary Notes, out with Archie, June 2021).

Robert also demonstrated a more subtle awareness of feeling public and political disdain towards GM, this leading to his own adapted behaviour. Out with Robert, we came across one of his pheasants, dead on the roadside:

*"you bastard" [Robert picks up a squashed dead pheasant poult from the road].  
[He talks to the bird]  
"You shouldn't be down here should you"  
[Turning to me]  
"That's paid the ultimate price"  
[he gets out of the truck to pick it up and puts it gently in the hedge].  
[Turning to me again]  
"I always get the lads to pick them up off the roads, we don't lose a lot, but I don't like seeing them and I know that people who don't like shooting don't like seeing them."*

Robert's dead pheasant is a physical and symbolic manifestation of one of the biggest taboos surrounding the sector, the killing of game birds for sport (2.4.2). Dolwyn has a high public profile and there is a clear desire to maintain a sanitised view of GM and keep certain practices away from public attention.

This section emphasises how negative public opinion towards field sports and game management practices has led gamekeepers and managers to adapt their behaviour to avoid negative attention. However, this has also led to a lack of trust and communication between gamekeepers and wider society, which can exaggerate tensions and conflicts. The negative impact of this stigma is therefore shown to extend beyond the sector level and the everyday working practices of those involved in game management.

Box. 6.2. A conflicted researcher, research diary notes, October 2020.

‘When I turn up at the pub for a talk on land reform, I hear suggestions of breaking game keepers’ traps and disrupting shoot days by dressing as a grouse, I struggle to sit still. I don’t simply want to take the side of landowner or shooter whose day will be spoiled and money potentially lost, but I empathise with those that people working on the land and who are often at the forefront of landed debates. I think of those who chose a vocation so they could stay connected to the land they grew up within, the ones I grew up with, without the academic credentials or ability nor desire to join the city rat race. How they’re the ones who toil from the break of dawn till after dark and yet, they might lose their job or at the very least that days’ work will be made a lot harder by instances like those described above, instances I’ve heard repeated again and again. I believe change must cautiously consider these voices too, otherwise there will be more battles, more sides chosen, more destruction and ultimately very little gained.’

#### 6.2.4. Perceived Stricter Governance: ‘A Lobby Against Us’

*“From an owner perspective, I am frequently frustrated by what some commentators, organisations, the government, and even charities put out as ‘truths’, when they are often not, they’re to advance their [own] agenda. From a keepers’ perspective, I imagine constantly feeling undermined and concerned about what is being attributed to me and my profession” (Peter).*

*“For God’s sake, talk to the people on the ground. You’ve got a gamekeeper that’s been working there for 40 years and understands how the habitat works and where everything is and a bloke rolls up in a bloody Mondeo, with a clipboard and tells them to stop what they’re doing, and he will tell them what to do” (Ian Coghill National Gamekeepers Organisation (NGO) Educational Trust).*

Participants in this study who support and work in GMSP expressed a strong awareness of the perceived threat of stricter regulations, seen by some as an attack on their livelihoods and culture. The findings show how this has materialised into pressures to adapt to new requirements, misunderstandings about game management practices, and poor treatment by government officials which they attributed to being a rural minority. These findings also show feelings of threat and uncertainty about the future of GM roles and as argued here, the implications for rural wildlife and habitat. Similarities can be drawn between these experiences, attributed to the GM sector, and those leading up to the fox hunting ban in England and Wales (Woods, 2000).

Archie, a young keeper on Tinsworth, described this as a “tightening noose” around his livelihood. In North Yorkshire, Darrowby’s manager Max shares similar sentiments:

*“There is so much pressure against shooting. We've got to be doing everything by the book, we are, but it's hard work to stay within the bounds of everything...from release pressure to raptors and everything else. [We] have to be a little bit smaller and a little bit tighter...”*

These sentiments reveal growing consideration for the estate manager of the perimeters of legislative acceptability. Max is not alone in these feelings. Peter believes practices are progressively becoming more difficult on his upland estate too:

*“The enemy or the opposition are trying to kill off shooting by stealth, they’re not going to ban it, just make it harder”.*

I pressed Peter on where he saw these pressures to be emerging from:

*“I write letters to my MP, we're not listened to because, from a voting perspective, we are less than 1% of the country's population so it does not matter. The bird watchers [RSPB] have been running DEFRA for the past 20 years and they’re in Natural England as well. They’ve got their opinion on how to run the countryside and that is rather against what we have been doing.”*

Peter sees the imposing values of other RSs to be triggering further sanctions within game spaces which in this case links directly to grouse shooting. Frustration is evident too that there is detachment from the working practices involved in such rural traditions by those imposing the restrictions. In the South of England, on Marlott, generalised feelings of increasingly restrictive practice were also noted:

*Joe: “They [government officials] need to come and do a job that other people do for a few years and see for themselves. Soon they will limit how many birds we can shoot and release”.*

*Edwin: “yeah [agreeing]. There will be all sorts of this backdoor legislation”.*

In Edwin’s opinion, new legislation is being implemented without proper consultation with those it directly impacts. Edwin parallels the changes he sees happening in the UK with legislative changes to shooting policy in the Netherlands.

*“[in the Netherlands] they have a similar rural culture, but they [shoot participants] have been effectively banned from shooting. Their law prohibits you from breeding game and releasing it... I wish they’d leave it to the people that know what they’re doing, but that’s the problem, you’ve got people that don’t know running the muck. Experts don’t always have the answer” (Edwin).*

In Wales, the situation is seen as particularly precarious:

*“The future is bleak. The Labour Welsh government and MPs do not like shooting, they have made that blatantly clear. They like what we do, but they have this in-built hatred, everywhere we turn they’re trying to put new legislation in, making it difficult all the time” (Robert).*

Again, GM practices are shown to be met with obstruction, causing apprehension and resentment among those involved. Urban-based politicians are seen as out of touch with the realities of countryside management. While differences exist across upland and lowland estate-based shoots, all express concern over increased threat, misunderstanding and unwelcome policies disrupting traditions, livelihoods, and work.

#### 6.2.5. Pest and Predatory Control

*“I don’t necessarily agree with what a lot of people do for a living so long as it doesn’t have a huge impact on anyone, or it isn’t completely illegal, there is room for everyone’s ways, and I feel that we are victimised and persecuted for ours” (Robert).*

Finally, this section turns to one of the most widely appreciated areas of contention raised during the research project; ‘pest and predator control’. These practices are an active part of GM, involving the legal dispatch of certain wildlife species. While law and restrictions have changed to reduce the scope and scale of these practices (2.4.3), this research highlights continued conservation conflict. Today the killing of raptors is prohibited (see Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981) and many of the gamekeepers and land managers I met were keen to talk about their involvement in actively aiding the recovery of raptor numbers as well as work promoting other wildlife species. Yet contention remains as the associated GM practices that are considered societally acceptable are reduced (2.4.3). The research findings therefore highlight an increasingly bureaucratic trend, which is viewed by involved actors as an increasing infringement on their occupational practice and limiting to their perception of vital conservation efforts. A

collective argument is again built here which suggests a prejudice towards GMSP influences top-level governance.

*“We’ve got a local reserve down here and a lot of the local birds would not successfully fledge young without predator control, but nobody wants to listen about that. They just don’t understand [and] gamekeepers have been personally attacked [over it]” (Helen, GWT).*

Helen tells me about how predator control, for those she represents, is publicly shunned or at best, its existence ignored. Yet for her and many within the sector it is understood and justified as a vital part of GM and form of conservation practices (GWCT, 2020 Principles of Sustainable Game Management, p.3).

Helen frequently deals with accusations of illegal raptor persecution against gamekeepers and opposition to any form of predator control. She believes all gamekeepers deserve a fair trial and that their profession means they are often unfairly treated:

*“You are judged guilty not innocent and it’s a huge problem to prove your innocence. I had a young wife on the phone last week. They’d been raided at 7am, with a young family sit [ing] in one room guarded for the whole day [while the home was searched]. It’s very frightening. Another time, a gamekeeper [I know] was on the moor and this couple came along. The lady threw his trap into the woods and was abusive when he tried to explain what it was for. They don’t understand [sighs] and they’re vicious with their responses”.*

Helen draws attention to the impact of accusations on gamekeepers and their families, as she believes inherent prejudice is a significant threat to GM. I observed an incident where this conflict physically manifested, despite the lack of first-hand accounts. The day before I first met Archie his traps were dismantled by what he called “antis”, referring to people against GMSP. For Tinsworth, as a lowland estate close to an urban centre, this I am told is a problem that occurs frequently. Traps once set must legally be checked daily (gov.uk, 2023), so a gamekeeper quickly knows if their trap has been tampered with. This disruption adds to workloads and creates a sense of social marginalisation.

*“Antis’ keep destroying traps around pheasant feeders...they stop the vermin [grey squirrels]” (Archie, 2021).*

Archie's justification for the traps, alongside feeding his pheasants, is to help promote the small population of reintroduced red squirrels in the area. Figure 6.1 shows the illegally damaged trap. Head keeper Tim suggested putting up more signs to deter people coming near the traps, emphasising the physical clashes between external figures and GMSP, and both Tim and Archie's limited response capacity.



Figure 6.1. A broken squirrel trap, photo taken by Archie with permission, June 2021.

Box. 6.3. The gamekeeper who lost his pheasants, research diary notes, October 2020.

'I'm starting to build up a bit of a rapport with a gamekeeper I'm hoping to visit. We're on the phone but he's rather distracted. He mumbles that he has lost his pheasants! I try to be sympathetic but don't quite understand, but then he begins to explain how it works. He always feeds the pheasants in the same place, and this happens from when they arrive in the summer... it's now weeks until the shoot season starts, and all his birds have gone AWOL. His biggest concern is that they've wandered off into the neighbouring estate in which case, they can claim them, and he'll have no birds to produce on the first shoot day of the season. He's also concerned it's 'antis' [people against game shooting] who may have purposefully pushed the birds beyond the estate boundary...I think about how I'm sat in the park, in a city where I expect most people would be dumfounded if I tried to explain the person I'm on the phone to has lost an entire flock of half-wild half-tame pheasants...I texted him about a week later, a.) to again try arrange a visit and b.) out of curiosity whether the birds had re-appeared. It turned out they hadn't gone far, and his job, house, and his reputation were safe for another day at least'.

The Welsh Government has imposed more restrictions on GMSP (2.4.3), including general licences, which has led to criticism from the sector. As Robert highlighted, current legislation is counterintuitive to the conservation methods he sees as vital. Robert explained:

*"In Wales today, I can't even use a Larsen trap to trap crows until I have an amber or red listed bird nesting with chicks. So, say I have a yellowhammer nesting, I can't protect it until I know it's got eggs, and only then can I catch the crows...then I have them [the Welsh government] asking me, a gamekeeper, how we can get the curlew back in Wales...[laughs]"* (Robert).

For Robert, external regulation places more and more constraints on what he views as necessary conservation work, which he sees as damaging to wildlife and livelihoods within GM. The stance that trapping is a useful conservation mechanism is widely supported by sector representatives (see above), highlighting divergence from government policy. This research provides evidence of how GM especially views these debates and underlines the known contention regarding the topic of pest and predator control.

#### 6.2.6. Summary

Overall, 6.2 highlights a widely held belief among participants of the negative public perception of game management and the challenges this poses to gamekeepers' day-to-day work. Using pest and predator control as an illustrative example, the section



demonstrates how restrictions on GM practices are viewed as disregarding traditions, culture, and place-based knowledge. Furthermore, the section conveys how these external interventions have left gamekeepers feeling socially and culturally marginalised, which represents a significant threat to their place in rural landscapes. More broadly, the section suggests that new prioritisation and shifts in governmental and land management objectives are placing strain on game spaces to adapt. Despite the challenges, the sector enjoys strong support from representatives and the wider field sport community, as outlined in Phase One.

### 6.3. Recognising Internal Issues Within Game Management Spaces

*“There are multiple challenges looking to the future. Some of it is out of our hands, some is not” (Peter).*

*“I would hate to see the end of any form of shooting, although there are certain individuals that are capable of bringing the industry down” (Izzy, Wild Welsh Game).*

#### 6.3.1. Introduction

This section addresses claims made by some case study participants about the unsustainability of certain driven models of GMSP. These practices are highlighted as a threat to the livelihoods of those directly involved in GM, as well as the reputation of the entire shoot sector. Notably, although these factors are viewed as threats by some participants, in 4.2.4, large-scale driven or commercial GMSP is presented by some as non-problematic, revealing internal sector divisions across GMSP and a diversity of game management models.

#### 6.3.2. Profit Driven Shooting Practice

This subsection focuses on profit-driven shooting practice and the issues associated with the intensification of game management. Participants viewed the profit orientation as detached from the cultural origins of Britain’s organised GMSP and damaging to the sector’s reputation due to poor consideration of local environmental impacts. These findings are linked to changes in shoot clientele, including the growth of ‘new-money’

investment since the 1970s, GMSP intensification, and broader estate diversification (Martin, 2011b; Shrubsole, 2019).

Dolwyn's head keeper, reflecting on his career as a gamekeeper, discussed the growth trend towards new money markets and the association of this with what he saw as disconnection from rural traditions over the last 30 years:

*"When I started, it was old school [money] then suddenly we had the yuppy new money. The 1980 stock market boom meant everyone gained loads of money and affluence. The first time I ever saw a £50 note was after a day's shooting, bearing in mind that £10 was a lot! I soon realised that they [new money clientele] had no idea about the countryside, they just liked shooting. The trouble is that now, there's a load of shoot owners that don't have the countryside at heart because they're chasing that money [Robert signs]. The country gentleman might want to shoot 150 bird days, but the big hitting nasty financial people want to come and blast some things out the air. I abhor it when after a good day they [the shooters] turn to me and ask for more".*

Tim discusses growth of a similar clientele basis who now sustains most of Tinsworth's shoot days:

*"It's big businesspeople really. They are our big let days, the big money boys, a lot of them are linked to London somehow...they are not country people".*

To put this into context, Caldwell's manager Christopher gives me some estimates of price inflation of a day's grouse shooting:

*"There has been huge change over the last 40 years. In 1981 a day's grouse shooting might cost £1,200 on the Glorious 12<sup>th</sup> [the first day of the grouse shooting season, August 12<sup>th</sup>] a similar bag size today would probably be £20,000".*

On the flipside, Chigley shoot owner and manager, Alex, discloses that despite the small-scale nature of her 480-acre shoot, it is run on a commercial basis. She admits this comes with sacrifices to the established customs which traditionally surround GMSP. On Chigley even the beaters are contractually employed, rather than being local villagers, and every decision is financially evaluated:

*“I’m profit-driven...this is behind each and every decision. Seven years ago, we went over to selling a few commercial days...I decided to push the shoot as much as I could. The beaters are selected and come from elsewhere, I don’t have time to worry about them turning up with kids or not knowing the [beat] lines well”.*

The findings indicate an increase in financial pressures on ESs, which has led to more commercialised models, driven by shift in consumer preferences, as Chigley evidenced. Some key actors stress that this shift risks neglecting rural countryside codes, disassociation with the countryside and damaging carefully coordinated relations between the shooters, land, game, game managers and keepers, resulting in what some view as exploitative practices and wrongdoing. The next sub-section further explores this.

### 6.3.3. Intensive Practice



Figure 6.2. A game bird release pen ready for pheasant poults, on an intensive shoot, undisclosed location, authors photo, 2021.

Intensive practice according to some case participants is one reason GMSP has a negative public image. A significant focus of concerns raised surrounds the environmental and ethical consequences of such intensive practices, in terms of effect upon local ecological balance and game bird welfare. Figure 6.2 illustrates a large game bird release pen ready for pheasant poults, encountered during field work. Here the ground is bare owing to

herbicide application to ensure the pen could be secured efficiently without foliage limiting this.

Despite Alex's commercial model, she like many of the participants I spoke to remains critical of intensive practices and acknowledges the need for change:

*"Intensive release and game bags, to me, are the things that are key to the anti-shooting thing and the whole [negative] media image. We need to act. I am worried because I think that there are too many old guys, sorry, but I think there are [laughs]. Too many old guys who don't want to alter and change, and we just need to, we have got to do it" (Alex, Chigley).*

On the Dolwyn Estate, head keeper Robert discloses how despite the outward success of his well-established shoot, he feels pressure to expand its economic potential. This has led to the estate owner considering scaling up to bigger game bags, but the estates organic and outwardly environmental conscious credentials, so far, have prevented this:

*"I've been speaking to my boss, he's thinking about doing more 300-400 bird days because it is cheaper, a lot cheaper. It normally costs me £1000 with beaters and hospitality, if it's 200 or 400 bird days it's still £1000 quid, so I can see what he's saying."*

The economic appeal of increasing game bird numbers Robert considers, contributes to the negative public perception attributed to more intensive rearing approaches. He talked to me about intensive release pens he had witnessed elsewhere<sup>3</sup>:

*"I've got friends, one sent me a picture of his release pens and I think it is horrible, Chris Packham would be screaming about it, that it's repulsive and you're like 'come on lads!'"*

Peter, based on an upland estate, and Edwin and Archie on lowland estates, all shared similar sentiments:

*"Some shooters can be both greedy and ignorant and you'll see that in some places, they'll be embarrassed to tell you how many pheasants they put down" (Peter).*

*"There are unfortunately some shoots [that] are going to bring us all into disrepute. They run unsustainable numbers of birds in a very small amount of space. It doesn't justify something that is meant to be a sport" (Edwin).*

*“Commercial shoots are giving shooting a bad name; they’re making all shoots be tarnished with the same brush” (Archie).*

The reality of such intensive, commercial, and large-scale practices is described in conversation with Joe and Edwin on Marlott. They discuss the environmental and ethical consequences they perceive large scale intensive shooting models to be associated with:

*“When you feed that number of pheasants you keep them tight to the point of starving so they can’t go anywhere. When they get like that, they eat everything. If anybody could see where you feed your pheasants to keep them that tight, that is the thing that will do over shooting. It’s why they banned release on SSSI’s last year, because the big boys keep starving game, minimal feeding to keep costs down and it decimates everything” (Joe).*

*“It is a very bad practice, and you know it is not in keeping with the environment at all. It is a sad fact they exist, and it is something that we don’t want to be associated with, but it is impossible not to be, we try our best to be responsible” (Edwin).*

According to the case participants, a significant internal division within GMSP revolves around the use of large-scale, intensive, and commercialised models of shooting. These strategies are associated with a problematic reputation that affects the livelihood of other estates and gamekeepers. In turn, this is shown to be creating insecurity for those who have tried to distance themselves from these practices.

<sup>3</sup> As game bird release scale and figures are particularly controversial (I was warned not to broach this topic during the pilot phase of the project). I therefore left this open to participants to discuss game bird release in whatever way they felt able.

Box. 6.4 An alternative view of a commercial shoot day on an intensively managed game estate, field diary notes, November 2021.

‘The guns start to blaze. It’s a lot, I don’t know what I was expecting but I feel the pitter patter of tiny lead pellets like rain landing all over and around me. I remind myself the shots are firing up into the air but it’s still rather overwhelming and uncomfortable. It’s a massacre, so many bangs and watching birds drop from the sky. It’s a sensory overload and a reality check, so different from the upland grouse shoots I’d only known before, open moors and a few pitter patter shots, this is a mass onslaught in a winter wonderland. Warfare against pheasants. The guns get their target (500), well over, 622 birds and by 3.30pm they’ve flown off in a helicopter, back further South. With 23 shoot days approximated in a year that’s a lot of birds. I’m told this isn’t the case with every shoot day, though nobody seemed surprised by anything that day, nor the next’.

#### 6.3.4. Poor Game Meat Supply Chains – the Consequence

A theme also associated with the intensification of GMSP, particularly pheasant, has been the weak international supply chain associated with game meat. This was inferred by participants to be putting additional stress on gamekeepers and managers. Brexit trade protocols and Covid-19 were also shown to have exacerbated this situation by limiting the ability to move game on. As a result, gamekeepers and managers were evidently stressed, not only over the strength of their own localised game meat supply chains, but the reverberated effect of weak supply chains on the entire sector. However, the topic was also often considered taboo and carried a sense of shame amongst workers, which made it challenging to discuss. Given the lack of documentation on game meat supply chains, this topic was included, but needs exploring further.

Figure 6.3 displays pheasants in a game larder after a shoot day. These pheasants did have a game dealer waiting for all 622 of them, however the gamekeepers told me how hard it can be to ensure this, especially as they describe “the guns [shooters] are rarely interested in taking game home” and that often the best game markets, which are based in Eastern Europe, are threatened by Brexit.



Figure. 6.3. Pheasants in a game larder for cold storage after a shoot day, authors photo, November 2021.

For Alex, the issue with the supply chain is exacerbated by oversupply from large shoots and no cap on shot game driving down prices, especially for reared game birds like the pheasant. Alex alludes to the consequences of not getting game into the food supply chain:

*“We can’t keep burying our heads in the sand about it [shot game going to waste], you know, chucking away good quality birds or having birds that are only tailored for shooting [their flight ability or aesthetics] over the value of their game meat. They need to do both”.*

Robert discusses the lengths he and the estate owner have had to go to, to ensure their game reaches consumptive markets, a particular issue in a region cut off from major English game dealers:

*“We bought out the game dealers a couple of years ago because they were going bankrupt. Without a source taking our shot game, what is the point of shooting it? ...The boss and I sat around one night and wrote to all the local shoots, and we said, ‘if you throw £3,000 in the pot we will buy the company, we won't make any money but... it gets rid of all our game”.*

Edwin and Joe further the slim prospects of good game sales in the UK:

*“As of yet, the UK’s taste for pheasant and partridge is limited” (Edwin).*

*“This is what will end shooting, when people see how much pheasant goes to waste in the UK. Game dealers will pick through a van full of what, 7000, 3,500 thousand will just be sent into a pit because they have been shot to hell” (Joe).*

In all, the evidence gathered here indicates a weak UK game meat market, which is shown by participants to be yet another threat to the public perception of GMSP, as without a market for game meat the ability to justify game shooting is limited. Chapter 7, however, highlights how case participants, and the wider sector, proposes actions and potential solutions to this problem. In doing so it is hoped domestic consumptive game markets will be improved, strengthening the supply chain of game, and enhancing the public image of the sector.

### 6.3.5. Summary

This section has discussed the internal threats identified by participants within GMSP. The findings reveal monetary-driven intensification of shooting practice to be causing livelihood insecurity, blame, and pressure for case participants. This also harms the reputation and resilience of the sector they operate within and to be removed from social and cultural value traditionally associated with GMSP. Striking a balance between financial profit and socio-political acceptance is crucial but proves to be both divisive and a challenge within the sector as seen across multiple examples. What is more, attention is drawn to how some case participants believe that change is necessary to ensure continuity, as at this phase of the research project, intensive and commercial large-scale shooting were widely viewed as problematic.

Box. 6.5. To celebrate or to mourn a shoot day harvest, research diary notes, November 2020.

‘I receive a message from another keeper I’ve been trying to meet up with. It’s the first day of the shoot season and they have shot 700 birds he tells me with what I assume is pride and excitement. I congratulate him but don’t know whether to feel glee for my new acquaintance’s success, after spending a long summer caring these birds, or sadness that 700 pheasants have just fallen out of the sky to their death. I don’t really have anyone I can talk to about this without raising alarm, so I quietly jot it in my diary and turn to walk out into the equally mournful concrete jungle’.

## 6.4. Land Use and Access Competition

### 6.4.1 Introduction

*“It’s always an uphill battle...the evolution can overtake some of the historical stuff”* (Kevin, office employee, Dolwyn).

A key threat observed across case sites was a growing marginality and disjointedness between established land-based practices, and new and emerging land use and access priorities. The phrase ‘established practice’ refers to the customary and traditional methods of managing and using land, including agriculture, forestry, and field sports.



Attention here focuses mainly on how these tensions and changes affect estate-based game management and involved individuals.

#### 6.4.2. Recreational Land OR Land to be Worked: Maintaining Boundaries

The changing demands and expectations placed on the estate and broader rural landscape emerged as a key theme impacting both the daily operations and future considerations of GM within case sites. One notable factor was the impact of increasingly present recreational actors on the estates and specifically around land reserved for game management. This subsection directly addresses the degrees to which the estates maintained a boundary between spaces of established working practice, recreation, and public land use. Overall, the results highlight an increasing sense of threatened GM boundaries across land areas of the estates, underscoring the importance of finding ways to balance competing interests while maintaining the viability of an increasing number and diversity of estate-based sectors.

Figure 6.4 shows a public footpath that has been updated with a poster reminding visitors to stay on the marked footpath to minimise the impact of visitors' dogs disturbing the pheasant poults in the area. Several estates had such signs, many being new, as tensions between recreational land access and GM was shown to be exacerbated by post-lockdown public desires to access more green spaces (Åberg & Tondelli, 2021; Kay & Wood, 2022).



Figure 6.4. A sign displayed on a public footpath, indicating the presence of pheasant poults, authors photo, 2021.

#### 6.4.2. a. Adapting to Changing Access Demands

Marlott is an example of an estate which has welcomed visitors since the 1990s due to early efforts to diversify, with a heavy emphasis on tourism since Edwin took over its ownership. On site however, tensions were evident between established sectors and surging tourism within the idyllic Southwestern countryside. Edwin tells me that owing to tourist surges, they have recently created a new footpath. He discloses the careful logistics that went into considering where the path could go to avoid areas of the estate most actively managed for game, forestry, and farming:

*Edwin: "I wanted somewhere the tourists could walk without going on the fields. We say to people "right you can walk in there, but you mustn't walk in here". There's a public footpath here [points] and we have opened another which goes up to the woodland kitchen and outdoor restaurant [closed since Covid-19]. All that is fine, but we don't like them to go walking in any of these woods [points]..."*

[Joe, the gamekeeper, interrupts]

*Joe: "The woods are dangerous, we have got quad bikes going through there and the clay pigeon shoot that side [points], we just don't want people in those woods, and they shouldn't be in them because we have got forestry operations and all sorts of things..."*

*Edwin: "they will get an arrow through the head and then a tree will land on them [laughs]"*.

Edwin goes on to talk about how he and Joe "try to minimise holiday guests' interactions with the shoot". They also have adapted the shoots' schedule, so they now only shoot on days "the holiday cottages aren't occupied" (Edwin). This demonstrates ways the Estate juggles the various land management assets. This juggling act comes as the estate needs to meet expectations as both a working land area but also provide recreational opportunities for tourist guests, which Marlott, as Edwin shared, is increasingly reliant upon.

Dolwyn too is an estate which provides a considerable array of public assets. Like Marlott, Dolwyn was observed to have, while not particularly visible, boundaries between the public spaces and more working and private areas of the estate. Robert tells me how things have changed - in the 1990s he used to turn away walkers where the public footpath was unclear – today he recognises he must allow public use, at least within some areas of the estate.

*"As I say we are private, but [the owner] has opened up a farm walk, we sat in the office planning it out, where it would have absolutely no impact on the shoot or anything else really, but the walkers will get to see our two river corridors, the chickens, new hedges, llamas and then head back to the farm shop" (Robert).*

As with Marlott there is a sense that visitors are seeing a filtered version of the estate, with the elements of established working operations purposefully kept apart from public facing areas and activity. Interestingly, despite estate workers and Robert himself commenting on the precarious nature of shooting within Wales (6.2), Robert believes one of the reasons he remains in the job is to maintain an element of the boundary which makes this a private estate, albeit physical or emblematic:

*"[The owner] has said to me, 'if they ban shooting, you'll still have a job because it's a private estate and I want it private'"*.

Historically (1.5.3), and as Robert demonstrates, the maintenance of public-private boundaries was a major role undertaken by the gamekeeper. These findings evidence continuity of this, at least within these case examples. Yet today, this boundary can be blurry as Robert demonstrated during fieldwork how a gamekeeper may have a wider range of potential roles than those traditionally expected. Robert for instance facilitates sales pitches for game and other estate meat products to potential buyers and acts as Dolwyn's tour guide. Nonetheless what is still shown, even with the addition of new public-facing elements to the job, is that for gamekeeper's there is a sense of being on the front line of defining and maintaining the estate's private boundaries.

#### *6.4.2.b. Resisting Changing Land Access Demands*

Like Robert, Archie on the Tinsworth estate and the other keepers (Tim and Jim) talk about dealing with amplified demand for rural land access. Unlike Dolwyn and Marlott, Tinsworth is a very private estate, which showed reluctance to embrace increasing recreational visitors (or the diversification opportunities this could bring). When out during fieldwork Jim radioed Archie to tell him that he had spotted "some girls on his beat". This meant people had been seen off the dedicated footpaths and therefore trespassing. A snippet from my field diary recorded this incident:

*'There was some excitement when Archie was called by another keeper about four girls trespassing on his beat, bypassing the public footpath past the 'private' and 'keep out' signs. So, we go at full speed looking for the girls, tracking in the woods and fields. We didn't find them, but Jim is convinced they're hiding in the woods from us. I feel a bit like the police and I'm not sure whose side I am on'* (July 2021).

Being on the urban fringe such encounters are frequent. The management model here is particularly conservative which evidently exacerbates land access conflicts. Again, this highlights some of the feelings held over physically threatened boundaries and threat to working practice due to the increasing presence of non-working or recreational actors present on the estates. The findings also suggest the challenge of balancing what the estate landscape can offer and the demands and expectations of different groups within it.

For Highbeck, an estate which has also remained a relatively private and reserved working landscape, there was again some resistance displayed against the growing number of people looking to access Highbeck. Estate owner Harold explains how he has an aversion to how other estates are capitalising on increasing visitor numbers and how Highbecks' management team have no desire to replicate this:

*"I speak to people at [\*another estate\*] they charge people £12 a day just to come and sit in a field!"*

Physical restrictions on access to Highbeck were visible within estate bounds, which I asked Harold about:

*"You will see stones on the [road] verges, we are trying to manage the number [of visitors] by restricting the parking. Lots of things have gone into just managing people. We have put signs on carparks, gates on car parks, [we] probably won't shut them [visitors] out, but this is just to make people aware that this all belongs to someone" (Harold).*

Figure 6.5 shows the boulders Harold refers to, a form of physical restriction on access to Highbeck:



Figure 6.5. Boulders on roadside to prevent parking, Highbeck, authors photo, September 2021.

Overall, this sub-section examines how growing demands for public access are putting pressure on some case estates, which as evidenced is dealt with differently across estate models. For diversified estates, like Marlott and Dolwyn, there is a balance to be found between welcoming visitors (and their money) and maintaining more private spaces for established cultural continuums, including game management. For others, like Highbeck and Tinsworth, their management structure is currently in opposition to embracing any more than the essential public access rights. What is evident across all the case estates is that the boundaries between these various aspects and assets are increasingly being pushed, affecting how the estates and notably how game management can operate within them. Clashes between game management and other estate branches upheld by tourism are too shown to exist, raising questions about how estates can best handle increasing landed demands. What will be interesting to see is how such conflicts play out, within the estate framework(s) and for game management more specifically, across a much longer timeframe and beyond the initial effects on public behaviour amid a global pandemic (Covid-19).

#### 6.4.3. Physical Land Use Shifts: More Blurred Boundaries

*“Life is too short to be wedded to the old ways” (Edwin).*

This subsection examines how GM is argued to be threatened and, in some instances, marginalised within the estate and wider rural landscape. The impact of this is shown to vary across case examples. Here the need for land use adaptation is highlighted as necessary for the continuity of the wider state structure. Land use adaptation is, however, shown to come at a cost to the workers whose livelihoods are shown in some cases to be precariously placed within current land use structures.

##### 6.4.3.a. Land Management Priority Shifts

*“In today’s world it’s tough, I know Robert [the gamekeeper] has done a great job and one would hope that game management will always have a role to play in the right environment [but] it’s a challenge, that’s for sure” (Kevin).*

*“The other diversifications that the estate will likely move into are not supportive of shooting” (Alex).*

A growing issue observed during fieldwork was conflicts between established land-based practices and newer estate enterprises. Across some estates there was a feeling of growing friction between GM and other land uses, particularly public facing enterprises. This is leading to the displacement of land use operations which have historically dominated.

One key example of this was on the Dolwyn estate, where alongside increasing land access demands, the estate has diversified into skincare and foraging walks, both of which require a forager. Robert explains how he clashes over land use with this forager, Danielle:

*“We lock horns occasionally because he [just] turns up. The next time I will shoot at him to remind him that he must tell me where he is because otherwise, I might [really] shoot him.”*

...

*“Because I've been here forever, they [Dolwyn's estate management department] sort of have to turn around and say, 'check with Robert if it is alright'. Whereas if I'd only been here 5 or 10 years, it would be 'oh never mind the shoot, do what you want'. I think there would be quite a push from the office [estate management department] if you had got a younger gamekeeper in”.*

This anecdote is an example of a physical manifestation of the tensions of increasingly shared land-use and stakeholders operating across an estate land area. Especially here, tension exists between an established stakeholder and newly developing estate sectors, whereby both parties are reliant on the woodland but have different interactions with it. Historically on Dolwyn, game management shares land with only a few functions including forestry and farming, whereas now the land area is managed by many more enterprises.

Other employees on Dolwyn supported the existence of related tensions:

*“In today's world, it's tough, I know Robert [the head keeper] has done a great job but it is always an uphill battle...evolution can overtake some of the historical stuff, one would hope that that stuff always has a role to play in the right environment” (Kevin, office employee).*

*“Looking to the future...the farm will be here, but I’m not sure about anything else. You know they are looking to do [holiday] lodges and lots of different things to diversify and keep it [the estate] paying, it’s not going to be easy” (Billy, the butcher).*

In contrast Frithdale, as Peter explains is limited in its ability to diversify, because of the estate’s moorland topography:

*“...If we were down the valley we could expand into more tourism. We can’t do that to the same degree up here. Farmers are here to farm; they might have the odd B & B but that’s about it” (Peter).*

One-way Frithdale has the potential to change dramatically, especially with the current agri-environmental trajectory in which upland land areas are shown to be prime locations for carbon offsetting, through tree planting:

*“Somebody has already put an offer in for that land for £6,000,000 and they want to plant it with trees...It puts my community at risk, the local people employed here, I can't just turn it all over to trees and forget about them to claim a bit of money for carbon”.*

Peter illustrates an evident struggle between rising monetary and environmental value placed on such moorland areas, and his own ties to this land and its associated cultural traditions of use over the last two centuries.

In sum, new combinations of operations demonstrate varying degrees of compatibility with historically dominant operations like game management. New priorities in land use purpose and value trajectories were also shown to exist and be increasingly influential across case examples. While some actors acknowledge the necessity of change, others (namely gamekeepers) view it as an infringement upon their place within the estates, which leaves them in a vulnerable position amidst ongoing changes in practices and policies.

#### *6.4.3.b. Property Developments & Housing Pressures*

One land use issue which was widely observed during fieldwork surrounds the impact of external and internal building developments as well as growth in second homes and resultant population movements across case estates. These developments were



evidenced to threaten estate workers, including gamekeepers, who felt they infringed on their working practice but felt powerless to prevent them. Additionally, some estate managers and owners were shown to be embracing the post-lockdown Covid-19 UK tourism boom and linked to this, considering more property development.

One of the first things I reflected in my field diary when I arrived on Tinsworth in June 2021 related to this:

*‘On a go-along with Archie, I am taken to a ridge overlooking the estate boundary. He tells me to stand there and look out. It’s not hard to see. Just past the freshly baled hay fields is a huge concrete complex made up of machinery and builders who are a couple of weeks into producing a major housing estate. Billboard pictures demonstrate the idyllic green spaces dotted between tower blocks that will ironically displace this green field’. I asked Archie what happened, and he replied, “The farmer felt forced to sell his land to developers. He’s moved away so he’ll never have to look at what he’s done.”’*

Figure 6.6 depicts the aforementioned housing development under construction. For Archie, this development disrupts his working patterns. The presence of many people in game management areas will require additional logistics and raises concerns about disturbances to the birds and, again, the private boundaries of the estate.

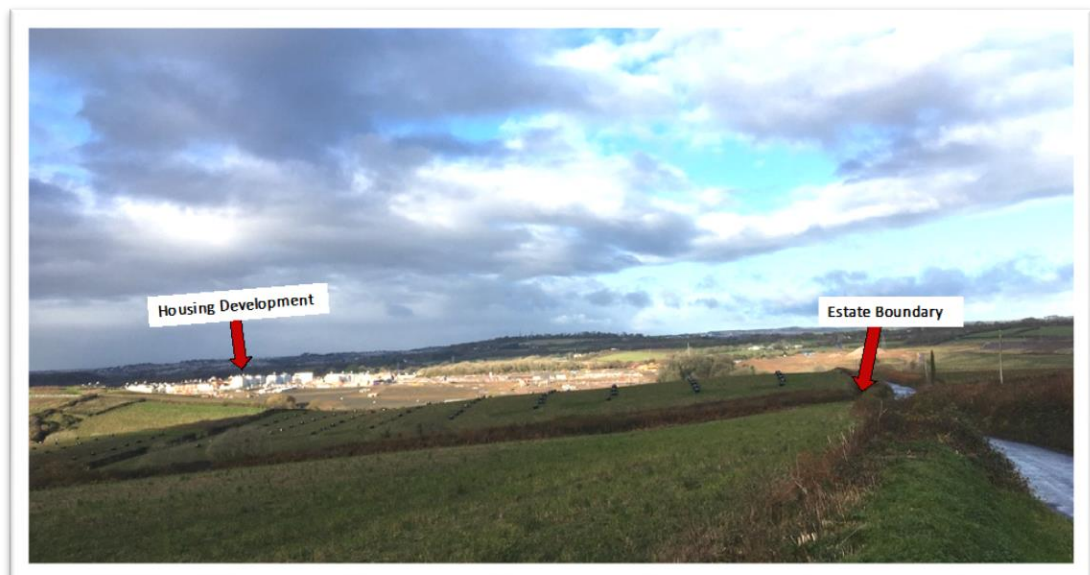


Figure 6.6. Overlooking new housing development on the Tinsworth estate, authors photo, November 2021.

On the Chigley estate, the story is different. Alex, backed into a corner by debt, talks about how she chose to sell land to developers. She saw this as necessary to allow the continuation of estate operations and upkeep:

*“We sold three plots of land on the edge of the [local village] for building...that enabled us to bring some money back...getting a building plot was essential. Without those building plots...I don't think we would be able to afford to stay, it was a constant battle of making money...”*

For Alex, unlike the imposed developments surrounding Tinsworth, development here has been actively actioned. However, for both estates, there is a feeling of reduced power over the use of the land. Such pressure was noted especially around tourist hotspot areas. While new developments and expansion of holiday letting can be financially advantageous (Chapter 7), there was recognition of the threat this poses for established enterprises and actors.

Estate managers looking to cut-back on spending were also shown to be in a predicament, this time over estate workers housing. Helen from the GWT made clear affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges for gamekeepers and their dependents today:

*“Housing is a big issue, one of the biggest we have. In previous generations to compensate for a lifetime of long hours and so forth, there was a house [for gamekeepers] for retirement on the estate. But, as soon as property started to become more important that changed. Not many people will expect or receive a house on retirement and if they do it will be on commercial rent. There are those [estates] that do, but generally speaking the income from those cottages is too important. So, it's not easy for people...”*

While it was challenging to talk about such a sensitive topic with gamekeepers directly, I followed the topic of housing up with estate managers of Frithdale and Highbeck, Harold and Peter:

*“About 1/3 of our housing is rented, historically on long-term rent. As we go forward those houses will be renovated... however there will be affordability issues down the line for people that live locally...it's something that we are aware of. We want people in decent housing, but we do need to make some of that cost effective” (Harold).*

*“Holiday lets and second homes are outbidding anyone that wants to live here. A third of the properties up here are holiday homes. They’re outbidding anyone that wants to live here...What we earn up here is not relevant to what the national average earnings are...We have two keepers and rent them a house, otherwise they wouldn’t be able to do it on a keeper’s wage. In previous generations to compensate for a lifetime of long hours and so forth, there was a house for retirement on the estate...as soon as property started to become more important that changed. The income from the cottages is far too important today” (Peter).*

Figure 6.7 shows tenant cottages on Frithdale in a process of conversion to holiday lets.



Figure 6.7. Old tenant cottages being turned into holiday lets, Frithdale, authors photo, November 2021.

This section highlights how finances increasingly influence decisions made by estate management, which impacts the estates workforce, local community, and stakeholders beyond their physical bounds. The conflict between maintaining social housing and staff accommodation versus the financial need of the estates is a key concern for the community. Additionally in some cases, building developments which encroached land bordering estates serves to further complicate the picture of what estates can offer and who they should provide for.

## 6.5. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have explored the significant challenges and diverse threats perceived by case participants to be impacting game management operations and the spatial configurations of the estates. These threats were articulated and observed to have immediate and far-reaching impacts, affecting individuals, the estates, the Field Sports sector, and all their places within the rural framework.

Despite what is known to be a long history associated with estates' leisure pursuits and ability to withstand external economic and political forces (Martin, 2012), evidence from the case study estates shows that broader societal needs and values now have a significant influence on their frameworks. This is shown to materialise to physical threat on the work patterns, practices, and future livelihoods of game managers (gamekeepers). The chapter further examines specific points of tension, such as pest and predator control (discussed in 6.2) and the consequences of intensive practices and weak game meat supply chains (explored in 6.3).

Overall, this chapter underscores the importance of estate-based game management and the sector adapting and building resilience in the face of multifaceted threats. In the next chapter, I will explore the proactive measures currently being undertaken by estates and game management to address these challenges and improve the social, political, and economic resilience of the estates and their game management operations across rural landscapes of England and Wales.



## Chapter 7. Opportunity and Adaptation

### 7.1. Introduction

*“We are custodians of these places. Some [may] assume we could just sell up and go but that’s not what we are about. We try our best to keep everything going and we continue to diversify” (Edwin).*

Chapter 7 delves into the opportunities and adaptations confronting private estates and game management in the face of changing societal demands and threats. Through a multi-level examination of stakeholders from the GM sector, estates, and individual perspectives of key actors, this chapter uncovers the adaptive capacity of game management and the limits that exist at the case level. One key trade-off observed is the need for estates to provide a range of enterprises to societies’ growing demands, while also preserving the longstanding cultural traditions of game sport. This chapter highlights the varying levels of resilience, compromise, and reconfigurations undertaken by estates and the various involved estate actors in navigating this complex landscape.

Structured into three parts, part one (7.2) focuses on the estate and sector-level strategies to improve the image of game management and maintain a relevant profile. Part two (7.3) showcases ground-based efforts to redefine the role of gamekeepers as more publicly engaged figures and conservation stewards. While part three (7.4) highlights broader estate-level shifts towards the increased provision of public goods and services through land use and access changes.

Throughout the chapter, the diversity and distinctive nature of the private estate is explored, including power dynamics, values, and the unique landscapes they inhabit. The chapter serves to showcase the evolving nature of game management and the innovative approaches undertaken to address the precarity of the modern private estate in a rapidly changing spatial context.

Box 7.1. Pheasant Shoot Day, Field Diary Notes, November 2021

'I arrived in the farmyard to find a barn with white metal chairs in a large circle. There was a bar at the far left with two flasks of hot water, instant coffee, black tea, and hot sausage rolls. A check-in screen and paper forms, I added my emergency contact details and skipped the pay roll section. I mused whether contact details were needed just in case I was shot, weighting up who of my nearest and dearest would be least concerned by this scenario and scribbled down their details.'

'There was no formal briefing as such, just a fair bit of milling around and crude jokes. An assortment of people trickled in, sporting coordinated fleece gilets, wellies, leather walking boots, and flat caps. The keepers were dressed smart in estate tweeds, red knee-high socks, tweet gilets, and flat caps with brown boots, shirts, and ties adored with the creatures they spend more of their days with, pheasants and dogs. There was a fair few older men and a surprising (to me) number of women, and of course, dogs - springers, cockers, retrievers and even a 3-legged vizsla.'

'It was different from the grouse days, for a start, there were no pointers, and the people were, how do I phrase this with care, maybe not so ready to scramble over moors? We masked up onto a tractor trailer kitted out with seats. The guns were transported in a shiny ex-military vehicle that even had heating!?! I felt like I had entered another world, then again, I thought that when I first arrived on the estate.'

## 7.2. Addressing Negative Perceptions

*"Shooting needs to show that it is part of positive change rather than the cause of negative change...Done right [it] can be part of the solution to our woes and done badly it can be the cause"* (Patrick Galbreith, Shooting Times).

*"We are seeing more estates looking to engage the public in what they do and why. Education leads to understanding and that leads to care and support"* (Helen Benson, GWT).

### 7.2.1. Introduction

This section explores examples of how private estates and GM representatives are addressing negative public perceptions and redefining their relevance in the eyes of the public and political bodies. This sets the stage for the changes observed within case estates (7.3-4) and highlights the proactive approaches being taken by GMSP to play a more public and relevant role in the modern rural landscape.

### 7.2.2. Communicating over the Boundary Fence: Online Estate Presence

Throughout the research project, I noted some estates had improved their online presence and the level of information they publicly communicated, marking a departure from a traditionally held view of these estates as centred on private and exclusive reserves (Durie, 2008). However, the level of adaptation was shown to vary among the estates. Marlott, Dolwyn, Highbeck and Darrowby had recently updated their websites (between 2020-2022) while digital traces or even vague indication of their estates scopes were difficult to locate for Tinsworth, Chigley and Caldwell. Discussing these findings without de-anonymising the estates presented a challenge. However, this section outlines my observations and the first-hand accounts of estate owners and managers who recognised the importance of increasing their external engagement.

Marlott was a clear example of an estate that has made strides to improve its online presence and external engagement. Its website boasts captivating visuals and interactive pages that showcase the estates 'activities' (including the shoot in an environmental conservation branch), 'homes', 'environment actions', 'holidays' and 'agribusiness' all set against a picturesque rural backdrop and branded with the estate's logo. When I asked owner Edwin about the website, he remarked:

*"It's new [the website], I don't know how I did it in two weeks, it was ridiculous... I think that is where we are changing, in the past all these estates, us included, would not share anything at all, but we are now much more public facing".*

Edwin discussed how lockdown had provided the opportunity to pause and consider the image he wanted to project of Marlott, which ultimately led to a subtle rebranding and increasing the profile of what the Estate publicly offers.

Elsewhere Harold, on Highbeck, talked about how he had spent lockdown putting together and publishing on their website a "25-year strategy for the direction of the estate":

*"Life has changed a lot in the last 10 years [and] dramatically in the last couple, and it will change going forward. So, we've just got to ride that change and make sure that we have an eye to what the important things are...and will deliver them over the next 25 years".*

This publication highlights how the estate is taking steps, which include 1.) Social, 2.) Environmental and 3.) Commercial objectives to keep up with changing expectations and ensure that the estate remains relevant in its delivery over the next 25 years. The publication of this strategy is a clear indicator of Highbeck's desire to present a beneficial public perception of the estate as holding a relevant place within the rural mosaic. Highbeck's website too featured a green pastoral backdrop, dotted with upland wild bird species, showcasing its green and biologically rich landscape. I also noted the estate's website brands itself with the title of a 'sporting estate', listing how the shoot generates local employment alongside the gamekeepers being actively involved in the restoration and conservation of Highbeck's woods and moorland.

Dolwyn was another estate which had an obvious and purposeful public presence, my diary notes from July 2021 indicates how 'the estate could be spotted for miles around with signs directing people to the café and shop'. Though there was little indication of game shoot nor direct signage to suggest that this was a considerably larger part of its land management strategy. Dolwyn's website too bolstered an extensive list of products set against bold images of the owner overlooking green fields of the estate.

In contrast there was no indication that Tinsworth, Chigley, and Caldlow had updated their websites throughout the study period with only contact information or a vague indication of their estates' scopes virtually accessible. Web searches for Tinsworth brought up only historical traces of the estate and shoot's existence, a Facebook page for Chigley's shoot, and for Caldlow and Frithdale only news articles related to the estates.

Overall, these examples illustrate varying degrees to which the estates have adapted their external engagement and digital presence. Some clearly demonstrate attempts to become more publicly facing and communicate their role and purpose in the wider rural landscape. Game management too is also portrayed across the estates to varying degrees, perhaps indicating disparities in how this aspect of the estates' identity aligns with the overarching perception they want to present to a public audience.



### 7.2.3. Enhancing the Public Perception of Game Management (and Shooting Practise)

*“We have a real opportunity to reset some of the myths written and spoken about shooting and better inform the wider debate. To do this, we need to wake up and communicate more effectively with a public audience. We must be totally ethical, appreciate the impact of our behaviour, ensure positive outcomes, and push the good things we do. Education is crucial to keeping our pastime viable...It is vital we communicate effectively with a wider audience” (RS 9, BASC & GWCT member).*

Historically, GMSP has been viewed as an exclusive recreational activity (Hoyle, 2007). This section showcases efforts to improve public perception and enhance its image. Examples include scaling-back game shooting practice and improving the market and image of game meat as a means of achieving this.

Alex, the owner of Chigley, illustrated how her small shoot, and many like hers, are increasingly favoured over larger and more intensive models, and it is this small-scale that is the feature she proudly showcases. Although her shoot is commercial, Chigley’s average game bag is only 120 birds per shoot, a figure widely considered as below average. She notes:

*“I think [the shoot] is becoming more fashionable... I had the director of a high-end [gun] brand here last year. He chose to come to my little shoot ...he said he wants really good quality birds, with good hospitality, he does not want to pay ridiculous sums to shoot clouds of birds”.*

Alex continued:

*“What I hear is, people don't think it is terribly soulful to be shooting such high numbers of grouse and pheasants, when you're not sure when you put a shot up which one you have hit. Instead, they [can] come here and they always say, “I much prefer to shoot a bird that was memorable, [that] one bird was a hell of a good shot, it has really made me feel good... because it dropped like a stone out of the sky””.*

Alex’s comments demonstrate a potential shift in social attitudes towards good shooting practice. By running a small shoot, emphasising quality shooting and hospitality, Alex appeals to what, in her view, is a growing number of clientele who value ethical and scaled-back practices. This approach reflects a shift in social acceptance of game shooting and suggests that providers who prioritise these values may be ahead of a growing trend.

A scaled-back approach was also noted elsewhere further supporting the Chigley example:

*“I’d like to go back to before the 1970s. Advertise a 100-150 bird day. You’ll pay a premium to shoot [but] the day is about shooting. You’d get pie and a pint and a good chat”* (Robert, Dolwyn).

*“Going forward, we will be doing smaller bags, lower value, mini walked up and driven shoots, I think that sort of shooting is a better fit today”* (Max, Darrowby).

*“The reared shoots are waking up to less is more”* (Frithdale, Peter).

*“We are smaller and tighter [now]... in the old days you’d be looking at 8 drives, we don’t want to be doing that because you’ll be constantly hitting the same bird”* (Edwin, Marlott).

Further opportunity to improve the public image of GMSP are presented through the example of the re-positioning game meat as a relevant and high-quality British food product, which, in turn may improve public attitudes towards the sector, and at the estate or shoot level, this is shown to be an opportunity to further justify their livelihood. As Alex stated, the sector is working with estates and shoots to market game meat as a healthy and “environmentally friendly” food product.

Figure 7.1 shows vacuum packed pheasant ready for distribution on a shoot I visited.



Figure 7.1. Oven ready pheasants ready for giving out on a shoot day, authors photo, 2021.

While game is traditionally given out on a shoot day, as illustrated above, repeatedly during data collection I noted involved actors pushing for greater and purposeful integration of game into consumptive supply chains. One way of doing this has been the voluntary ban on lead shots:

*“When people get used to it it’s just like driving a new car” (Alex).*

A huge change currently taking place across the game sector is a voluntary 5-year phase out of lead which is widely recognised as a direct barrier to a reliable supply chain. Thus, the removal of lead opens potential to new markets and opportunity to improve the image of GMSP in the process. While some pessimism clearly remained over steel replacements, many of those I encountered accepted this was a compromise to enhance especially the reputation of GM:

*“It’s something we’re going to have to accept. It will be more justifiable to sell our game to supermarkets and in the public eyes it looks better” (Tim).*

*“It’s good news because we want to see people eating game” (Edwin).*

These accounts illustrate the new standards deemed necessary by involved actors to produce solutions to the challenge of a perceived poor reputation of GM. The result of this is an improved public image of the sector and thus greater potential for continuity. Some shoots too were shown to be working on their own solutions to improve and create more resilient markets for game meat. For instance, Edwin and Joe talk about how they offer cooked pheasant to shoot clientele and want to add game meat to their list of farm gate sales.

Edwin: *"It's cheaper [than chicken] ...game is free range [and] very low fat".*

Joe: *"It is high in protein too and tastes like chicken".*

Edwin: *"We feed [the shooters] game a lot [we have] Marlott spiced spatchcock partridge and game pie for lunch...Elevenses is full of the different game we've had on the estate. It is very deliberate; we make it very clear that that is the point. If the market can be increased in this country, then there would be a lot less wrong. The marketing of this lean, free range and generally organic protein will be the key to that being a success."*

Robert too sees an opportunity to re-marketize game products, which he states that though an "unfamiliar" product for much of the UK population "with a bit of processing and education" he hopes to see the sale of pheasant "burgers and sausages" as a mainstay in the estate's busy café'.

More broadly butcher Izzy talks about her experiences of tackling issues with the reputation associated with game meat. Izzy has tailored her profession to ensure there is a resilient supply chain for the game produced on the estate where her husband works as a gamekeeper. She talked about the prospect of engaging the British public with these products:

*"People, today, are more aware of buying locally grown and high welfare food. There is a growth of internet sales, as people try to source high welfare meat, meaning sales of game meat have a real opportunity to expand".*

The shift towards emphasising quality over quantity and reframing game as a high-quality and sustainable meat product is shown within the given examples to be countering

negative narratives and in the eyes of several participants is viewed as a means of future proofing the sector.

Box. 7.2. Grouse Shoot Day, Part One, Field Diary Notes, September 2021

'I stopped in the yard. There was a sort of sheltered area, basic, with a long bench like those you get in school halls. Even though it was 7am there was already plenty going on, 10+ keepers, and a lot of other people milling around clad in green, some bringing out their eager dogs from dusty trucks.'

'I gravitated towards the bench, where another girl sat. She had dyed dark hair, tanned skin, skinny waterproof green trousers, a Deerhunter gilet and a chocolate lab that matched her boots. There was also the estate's forester, gruff but down to earth with a big smile. Again, he was clad in green with a dark green coat, trousers, and brown boots. There was a lovely lady who introduced herself as working in the office of another local estate...it was her day off and she fancied a day beating. She told me how she had a little girl and a hawk she flies for fun... Another man said hello, he was wearing a cammo coat and black waterproofs, gaiters and brown boots. He told me he comes for the enjoyment and lives in a village 20 minutes away. He added that he likes beating because he gets to meet "people like me" adding "not to be sadistic, but it's good to come and see I'm fitter than people that are younger than me. I get to prove I can keep up!" I smiled.'

'The rest of the beat team was made up of keepers, many more than I imagine would be needed. The flankers and picking up team were an older group, several retired estate workers or local folk that fancied a slightly easier day...their words not mine!'

### 7.3. Resolving Internal Issues: Re-Profiling Game Management

*"Effectively in all this countryside stuff, you don't necessarily have the right people or the best people, you have the people you have. It's like the cogs in a machine" (Edwin).*

*"Just exposing people to things is hugely beneficial [and] can have an extraordinary influence on tolerance at the very least and we need a stack of that in the face of an urban based democracy" (Ian Coghill, NGO Education Trust).*

#### 7.3.1. Introduction

This section focuses on adaptation strategies observed and discussed during fieldwork on the estates' specifically focusing on ground-level practices. Examples include gamekeepers utilising public engagement and networking as educational tools to showcase the positive impact of their work on the land and local environment. These examples contribute to our understanding of the evolving expectations and actions of modern gamekeepers, emphasising what is considered legal and ultimately good practice in game management. Some examples also reveal evident adaptation and the presence

of tensions among different actors and stakeholders. Overall, the findings suggest successful efforts being made to challenge the stereotypical portrayals associated with individuals involved in game management, countering negative perceptions and challenging literary tropes that have portrayed them as immoral and difficult figures (MacColl, 1932).

### 7.3.2. The Public Facing Gamekeeper

*“Gamekeepers have got to learn, get decent training in how you go about things, make it palatable to the general public” (Christopher, Caldow).*

Examples here draw on how the gamekeepers I encountered are increasingly either placed in more public roles or have adapted their codes of conduct, especially around the public, to increase tolerance, support or understanding of their working practices.

On Tinsworth, Archie showed indications of changing his behaviour when engaged with members of the public and when not:

*‘During an evening of cover crop control [shooting pest species that are damaging crops] we meet the public footpath, basked in sunshine, and surrounded by wheat fields. We stopped by a couple at the top of the hill clearly enjoying the view. “Good evening” Archie calls. After blasting and grumbling, it’s funny to see the quick turn to charm with every stranger he encounters. Even when we meet someone he suspects has been “doing in his squirrel traps” Archie maintains his placid demeanour and charm. We chatted with the farmer, the shop owner, and other passers-by... no wonder the evenings are long! When I cautiously asked Archie what was with the laboured niceties, I was told jokingly, that these interactions are to keep “good PR [public relations]”’ (Field Diary Notes, Tinsworth, out with keeper Archie, June 2021).*

That same week Tim directly addressed changes in the public profiling of a gamekeepers work when I asked him if the role of gamekeeper had changed in his lifetime:

*You’ve got to be a lot cleaner and smarter, with your husbandry. Gone are the days of chucking shit on the floor [in reference to dispatched animals] or driving through the village with your gun showing. Everything you do must be justifiable and you should be able to show it to somebody. If at the end of the day you wouldn’t show it to somebody, you shouldn’t be doing it”.*

Tim motioned to stark changes he has witnessed in acceptable behaviour and action throughout his career. He emphasises, every action must be meticulous as the weight of them lies heavily upon critique of his occupation.

In a different instance, during my initial encounter with Edwin and Joe, I noticed Edwin appeared conscious of making a good first impression, particularly of my initial interaction with Joe. In contrast gamekeeper Joe's had a carefree attitude as he joined us in the yard. When he showed up, his boots were undone, and he was wearing dark sunglasses:

Joe: *"Alright?"*

Edwin: *"you've got your customer-facing shades on today then?"*

Joe: *"yeah"*

Edwin: *"you can't wear those horrible ones [laughs, looking towards me] ... he's got these terrifying wrap-around Robocop ones which he has been wearing..."*

[Joe interrupts]

Joe: *"there's too many flies around today"* (Field diary notes, June 2021).

Edwin's remark about Joe's sunglasses, suggest at least in Edwin's view that they might not be appropriate for an initial meeting with a visitor, or researcher. This indicates perhaps Edwin's consciousness of presenting a personable gamekeeper and overall positive impression of Marlott.

As the interaction advanced, and we headed out on a go-along, Edwin opened-up about the conscious efforts that go into maintaining good relations within and beyond the local community *"we do work hard on PR [public relations]"*. He gave me an example of this highlighting how he and Joe address people they encounter on the winding country lanes:

*"You've got to be very careful; you don't want to be rude to people in the lanes [talking about driving etiquette] you don't know who the hell they are, so you've got to be polite"* (Edwin).

This highlights efforts to maintain positive relations and image of Marlott within the immediate surroundings.

Returning specifically to game management, a public front put across by gamekeepers was also evident on the Dolwyn estate when out with Robert. My field notes reflect how

I felt like I was on a carefully choreographed guided tour more than a go-along to experience Robert's daily working role as a gamekeeper:

*'Robert from the start asked me what I wanted to get out of the visit. I said I just wanted to see what he did day-to-day. Robert's job seems to have developed into a figurehead for the shoot and conservation side of the estate operations...Robert is used to showing people around, he tells me tales ... from showing private school principals the estate's farm animals which their children will eat, to entertaining chefs and during the quiet days of lockdown birthday parties for local children' (Fieldnotes, July 2021).*

My whirlwind tour did however indicate shifts in Robert's role over his 30+ year presence as a gamekeeper on the estate. As he talked, he demonstrated the way his work has become much more multi-functional. With one major role being sales:

*"We have a sales pitch... I can bring chefs here and can say "look at this, this is what you are eating" [gestures across the field to the fallow deer]. It might not be exactly, but they can buy the situation [the landscape] you know it's a story... "it breaks my heart shooting them, and it's better that I shoot them than someone else" you know, I really sing the song ..."* (Robert).

Robert also holds a representational role in a leading GMSP organisational body. He works alongside the board of organisations to ensure a future for game shooting and to highlight the "good work of gamekeepers" (Robert). He further talked about why he is choosing now after nearly four decades in his profession to engage with the public and liaise with other key rural and game sport sector stakeholders through this role:

*"The reason I do it is because I believe, young keepers need a chance and without silly people like me spending hours on the phone fighting to keep things like the general licence, they will not be in the job in 20-years' time. In Wales it might not even be 10-years' time".*

A major cited reason for his involvement and dedication is because of the threat he feels his occupation is under, engagement offering a tangible opportunity to improve the situation.

Overall, the examples convey the changing nature of gamekeeping as a profession and a consciousness by those working alongside to sustain support, understanding and



influence opinion over the land and practices which uphold their livelihoods. The next section moves on to one specific dominant theme of influence.

### 7.3.3. The Countryside Steward

*“I feel that if [we] can get the right influential politicians to see what a gamekeeper actually does [then] I don’t think, Lesley Griffiths [the Welsh Minister for Environment and Rural Affairs] would turn around and say we are going to stop game shooting” (Robert).*

This section explores the reframing of game management to align with the recognition of increasing environmental land management expectations.

On Dolwyn, an estate driven by environmentally focused credentials, I asked Robert to show me around where he works. Throughout the go-along Robert pointed out the roles the keepers have had in improving habitat and wildlife prospects. We crouched on the ground in the field on Robert’s beat surrounded by wildflowers and grasses used as game cover:

*“We shoot pheasant and partridge up here, if it had been taken back by the farm it would have all been grubbed out. What we have done is allowed low cover to regrow over everything, creating a diversity of habitat...you don’t have to be in here for very many minutes to start seeing bees flying around”.*

Robert paused; we listened to the buzz of insects in the summer heat.

*“...and that is the plus of being organic. We have gained this from not intensively spraying for nearly 22 years. This has all come back and it blows my mind to think that if you were a conventional estate and you just give up the headland [area at each end of a planted field] by not spraying, you would get it all back, wouldn't you?” (Robert, July 2021).*

Figure 7.2 was taken during the above conversation.



Figure 7.2. Wild grasses in a field managed as a cover crop for pheasants, Dolwyn, authors photo, July 2021.

Robert then shows me into his pheasant pens (Figure 7.3), a stark contrast from some of the others I have seen and heard about (see example: Chapter 6, Figure 6.2). Robert highlights how this is the kind of management practice, referring to a lower stocking density and focusing on the creation of mixed habitat, that in his view will help generate a better image of the game management sector:

*“If this was an intensive pheasant shoot, this size pen might hold 10,000 birds, and you would see the environmental impact of that on the place”.*



Figure 7.3. Pheasant release pen, Dolwyn, author photo, July 2021.

Robert views his role to be one akin to an environmental steward, a role he wishes more gamekeepers were recognised for. He reflects on the role game management has played in landscape conservation, especially of woodland, beyond current planting schemes he believes the shoot is a key reason woodland remains, is restored, and created.

Through Robert's lens the shoot is part of a driving force behind environmental countryside stewardship. What I witnessed in Robert's example is a narrative of the environment and its conservation being integrated into game management. This trend was evident across the estates, even on Tinsworth, one of the most intensive and traditional estates I visited. Here, Archie viewed one of the greatest opportunities for his shoot to relate to this:

*"We are doing more conservation, we've been planting a lot of trees, and clearing some to help shrubs come through, bringing back hedgerows, planting more wildflower mixes and all that helps the environment and the pheasants. None of this would get done if it wasn't for the pheasants. If it wasn't for pheasant shooting it would just be arable [farming]. Less pesticides are used for cover crops ...whereas in the arable fields it's all sprayed off, there's no insect life for the birds or anything, which is thriving in the game covers".*

In Archie's eyes landscape restoration is incentivised and enhanced through game management. Again, a comparison to the surrounding monocultures of arable farming is used to form an argument that game management is at the forefront of estates' environmental policies and practices. He shows me with pride his newly planted mixed cover crops (Figure 7.4), gesturing comparisons to the monoculture of arable fields.

*"There is coleor and goldeneye kale [specific varieties of kale intended for game cover], linseed, chicory, mustard, maize, and lots of other things. It's something new we've been doing in the last 4 years - a variety...so many wild birds enjoy it"* (Archie, June 2021).



Figure 7.4. Mixed cover crop seedlings, Tinsworth, authors photo, June 2021.

On my go-along of Marlott, Edwin talked about how the shoot played a role in protecting the woodland from use for commercial forestry rotation by its continued use as game cover:

*"Farmers and landowners don't necessarily do the environmental management stuff because they are green sort of tree huggers, it is because there is a commercial reason to do so and that is the primary reason why most people are motivated to do anything. That is why shoots look after woodland, and that sort of thing, because they have to, if they don't look after woodland the shoot does"*

*not work. If we didn't have the shoot...it is very true that we wouldn't need to be wedded to all this wood and all these other bits and pieces, we wouldn't need them...what this is a happy by-product... There were a lot of comments saying 'oh well you should just want to do it' [laughs] and that is an interesting point isn't it? The problem is you've got to earn a living"*.

Edwin motions that without the shoot they may have felled the woodland. This again highlights an example of game management being articulated to play a key role in supporting environmental conservation. Albeit the direction of funding agri-environmental funding while not directly mentioned plays a large role in this (2.3.2).

For upland estates where Peter (Frithdale) and Mike (Highbeck) live and work, as they look to the future, they see a huge opportunity in holding an active role in the climate change mitigation through landscapes worked by game management:

*"We are working with the AONB and Rivers Trust to implement NFM [natural flood management] measures and restore peatland environments... Hopefully [we] will still be at the forefront of environmental stewardship" (Mike, estate employee, Highbeck).*

Peter previously talked about his issues with tree planting from a community/farming perspective (Chapter 6, p.217). Here, he demonstrates how this under new government funding has generated opportunities:

Peter: *"All of these woods were originally planted for shooting as well. Historically we planted a lot of it on very inaccessible ground to provide the right topography for shooting, in other words to get the birds up high".*  
NCC: *"For the pheasants?"*  
Peter: *"For the pheasant, that was what it was originally put in for...now they're paying us to plant native woodland that's what they're telling us to plant now, and it's not got a commercial [timber] value..."*

A key opportunity here is financial gain in tree planting. While they were already planting trees, albeit for game management and shooting purposes, the financial incentives equate to prospects for otherwise difficult circumstances outlined, by several ES respondents for upland estates.

#### 7.3.4. Summary

Overall, this section has showcased various strategies adapted across the case estates to develop a positive relationship between game management and the wider rural landscape, as well as with local communities and visitors. The need for such adaptations comes against estates facing increasing pressure to justify the use of private reserves, while also managing the economics of land use. Despite these challenges, the case estates demonstrate a vision for reshaping current land management towards a focus on more public facing practice and prioritisation of environmental outcomes, which offers an opportunity to maintain a relevant place for game management within this framework. This is shown to link closely to moves towards environmental stewardship, widespread critique of particularly large scale and commercial GMSP and aligns with government funding trajectories and agri-environmental payment schemes (Bateman & Balmford, 2018).

#### Box 7.3. Grouse Shoot Day, Part Two, Field Diary Notes, September 2021

'...On the first drive, we headed up in two vans onto the moor, it was raining in drifty sea like waves, not cold but the kind of rain that soaks you. There were over 13 dogs in the van with us, I loved that, springers, cockers, pointers. Everyone was given a GPS tracker they could press in an emergency, a white flag (or orange for the keepers) and we signed a risk assessment.'

'We stood out on that first drive for two hours, initially I stood alone, preparing myself for the line to move. After an hour I moved over to a keeper and the girl I met earlier and we chatted about the day, the year, how there's been little grouse on many of the estates this year due to the weather.'

'I liked it more than I thought I would, I felt like a country girl again, kind of in my element up on the moors, except for the whole shooting bit...that I'm not so used to.'

#### 7.4. Estate Land Use and Access Transition: Beyond Established Traditions

*"I would say the countryside is at a crossroads as far as the way it is managed. I'd like to think game shooting will have its time again, but I'm not as sure as I used to be"* (Peter, Frithdale).

*"It's a balancing act in this job...if everyone loves you then you're not doing a good enough job. You need to be firm but fair, that's the way we look at it...If you are a complete pushover [with the management], it will be game over because things need to change"* (Edwin, Marlott).

#### 7.4.1. Introduction

The management of the rural estates exemplified in this thesis are shown to be at a crossroads. While traditional land uses such as game management have long been a stable part of estate management, this section focuses on the exploration of new revenue generating opportunities with activities beyond the traditional realms of a country estate taking a more central stage (Huggins, 2008).

While several themes emerged, two key areas are explored here, leisure and tourism ventures and the growing use of the estates' natural capital assets including for environmental restoration, carbon capture and storage and green energy production. While these activities are identified as opportunities for estates' future viability, they also pose a threat to established land uses, including that of game management.

In all, this section explores the spatial arrangement of entrepreneurial and revenue generation within the bounds of the estate and highlights increasingly multi-functional landscapes. The section also explores examples of resistance and the inability to adapt practices, highlighting a diversity within the study of estates and estate-based game management.

#### 7.4.2 Embracing Tourism and Leisure Ventures

Although not a new phenomenon, an exacerbation of the provision of public land access and use was an evident trend within some case estates. This corresponded with the ESs survey report, where 64% of respondents saw tourism and leisure as a future area of entrepreneurial growth (Table 4.31). The case estate findings further support an exacerbation of this trend shown more broadly to exist elsewhere across Europe, with post-lockdown resulting in a summer tourist boom (Colomb & Gallent, 2022).

A key example of the expansion of recreational and tourist centred provision was demonstrated on Marlott. Edwin, in jest, described the estate's growing focus on tourist provisions as Marlott's "grockle farming". 'Grockle' refers to tourists and is a local dialectical colloquialism. Marlott has several luxury holiday cottages, alongside an

adventure centre offering a range of active leisure pursuits (including fishing, quad bike safaris, mountain bike trails and clay shoot). Edwin talked to me about how lockdown had been spent doing up some of the largest of these cottages (25 bedrooms), in anticipation of a growing UK tourism trend. The Figures (7.5-6) show one of the holiday cottages and entrance to the tourist adventure centre, which welcomes thousands of annual visitors. Edwin talked to me about the impressive range of enterprises Marlott embraces:

*“it’s a balance here, [this is] what you call a properly diversified estate. You have got the solar farm, holiday cottages, the adventure centre, farming, shooting, forestry, loads of other little enterprises like the restaurant and the forest school...There is a lot going on here, you can see some of it, but you wouldn't know it was all here...”*



Figure 7.5. Gated access to Marlott’s adventure centre, author photo, June 2021.





Figure 7.6. Holiday cottages nestled at the heart of the Marlott estate, author photo, June 2021.

During the go-along Edwin added that “without an increase in housing” the estate would struggle to remain competitive in an area driven by tourism. This demonstrates how external population trends shape his land management decision making.

Chigley too was shown to be monopolising on the tourist boom. Alex shared how she is following similar societal trends, where alongside the decision to divide up her family home to create holiday accommodation she is hoping to place tourist accommodation at the forefront of her estates land-management model:

*“I am going to try and major in holiday accommodation, which is so logical now, with everyone wanting to stay in the UK, it’s the logical thing to do”.*

Peter (Frithdale owner) despite the topographical limits to what methods of diversification are feasible (6.4.3), talks about a future in which he could further monopolise the estates natural assets. While pessimistic of the implications of the local community he showed me some of the new holiday cottages that have emerged across the village. Peter talked about the potential to get visitors to embrace the remote nature

of the estate landscape with visions of a hotel (Figure 7.7) to accommodate the growth in visitors to the region:

*“I could soon burn a couple of million quid here [points and laughs]. There is a barn down there, I want to make into an exclusive hotel [gesturing to the dilapidated barn on the moor]. People would love to come up here because they come for the situation, don't they. I wouldn't alter it much; I'd keep the existing structure and people would come for miles [to stay here] because of its isolation”.*



Figure 7.7. Peter's future hotel ambitions, Frithdale, authors photo, November 2021.

On Dolwyn, the farm shop and café have been huge draws for tourists, while they do not yet offer accommodation, the office staff hinted that new moves were being considered to exploit the huge number of people that pass the estates doors each day:

*“It's a potential opportunity for us. We are looking at the next part of our diversification, there are glamping opportunities but there might be other rural accommodation solutions we could provide. What we are trying to do is provide all the solutions and make people [want to] stay in this area and use this as a base for exploration around the whole of North Wales” (Kevin).*

Max from Darrowby follows a similar line, also directly addressing how he may “roll back” the shoot to enable this.

*“Lucky for us, tourism and staycations are continuing, we’ve got more development opportunities here. Barns to convert and more holiday cottages continuing along that theme. There’s lots to be positive about...going back to the shooting, we will have to roll that back...As I said we’ve got the staff, the expertise, the equipment, the topography, and the demand to make it. So, yeah [there is] lots to be positive about here. Everybody’s got very into the lovely countryside during covid haven’t they. You can see that in rural house prices and demand and the fact people don’t need to be trekking into an office every day”.*

Max goes on:

*“We just spent £1, 000, 000 extending our water park for water sports mainly. We majorly revamped all of it in April and it’s been busy ever since”.*

So far, this section has provided illustrative examples of how several estates have scaled up and are shown to be responding to the increased demand for leisure and tourist provisions, heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite these trends, within the selected case examples, some of the other estates were shown to be continuing to prioritise the maintenance of the estates as private and bounded entities, actively discouraging, or showing little desire to embrace tourism and leisure markets.

For example, Highbeck manager Harold stated that he feels no need to draw in tourists as the estate was financially stable without this:

*“We are lucky, we have a bit of security [so] we have a really different driver to a lot of landowners that are struggling to keep the roof on...or keep water out of the roof” (Harold).*

Similarly, Tinsworth’s conservatively minded owner wished to maintain as Tim crudely puts it “the estate is his train set” implicating how Tinsworth remains focused on its owner’s recreational pleasure. Nevertheless, financial pressures and societal social trends towards public provision of goods are shown to be influencing several of the case estates’ decision-making and taking up more of their land areas. The trend indicates a meeting of the demands of new uses and expectations and financial security, often requiring change in the use of land previously reserved for game management and other established enterprises. Therefore, the results present to differing extents moves beyond preserving land for established traditions.

### 7.4.3. Environmental Land Use Moves

*“Environmental projects will aid the long-term rural prosperity of estates”*  
(Edwin).

*“What is going to happen is that most landowners or land users are going to need carbon to offset their emissions”* (Peter).

Environmental land use was another key area of investment identified across some of the case estates. This is supported by the results of the ES survey, which found that most respondents saw opportunities for investment in conservation and green energy (Table 4.31).

For several of the case participants, particularly estate owners and managers, investment in environmental land use was viewed as critical to the long-term prosperity of the estates. By aligning with government funding streams (Gov.uk, 2018) and exploring new markets, the estates were shown to be benefiting financially, while also making tangible contributions to climate and biodiversity mitigation and adaptation efforts. Key areas of growth in this regard include carbon capture and storage (carbon markets), green energy delivery, and direct mitigation of climate change and biodiversity losses through projects such as re-wetting moorland and afforestation.

While investment in environmental land use was viewed as a growth area for the long-term sustainability of the estates', it also raises tensions between different land uses and actors, given that such land use modifications often take place on land used for established means, including agriculture or game management. Despite these complexities, the estates recognise the importance of investing in environmental land use and actively pursue this as a means of ensuring their long-term viability.

Darrowby estate manager Max was upfront about his consideration of green energy and carbon capture as something the estate is well placed to invest in. Max stated:

*“I would like to do more renewable energy wise. We are talking about a large 200-acre solar farm. Natural capital and biodiversity net gain is an obvious emerging market. If we can capture carbon and sequester that in our grouse moors or forests that's an opportunity too which is emerging now”.*

Harold also highlights how Highbeck is actively contributing to more environmentally friendly land management and thereby can actively illustrate the estate responding to wider public calls for action on such matters. Harold gave specific examples of the changes that have been made in the last few years with the environment in mind:

*“Over the last 8-9 years we have done an awful lot where we have exposed peat, getting it re-vegetating and sucking carbon in. We are doing things with the woodland [and] expanding hay meadows [too]. It was all [hay meadows] here 50 years ago, but has been ploughed out and over slurried...we want to move away from using slurry and [using] a lot of fertiliser...”*

*“In the last 5 years the direction of travel has changed a lot. We have had a new owner take over [and] the outside world has changed dramatically. We now know a little bit more about climate change and what we can do about it. That’s a big driver... we are looking hard at what we do with the things on the estate that impact people outside the estate”.*

Harold further explained how the recent change in ownership has led to a shift in the estate’s management strategy, with a greater environmental focus. He gave examples of how the management team has taken steps to address local and wide scale environmental issues such as the overuse of agricultural chemicals, deforestation, and moorland drainage. These adaptation strategies highlight a more proactive approach to sustainable land management. Furthermore, they illustrate how Highbeck is responding to the increasing importance of green investments and natural capital, which generates financial capital for the estate and has wider benefits beyond the physical bounds of the estate.

Other recent estate adaptations were also discussed by Harold, including investments in hydropower and latterly in a biomass heater which supplies the estate’s main house and several tenant cottages, “ticking a few boxes, from a commercial perspective” (Harold). This further suggests financial deliberation in pursuing environmental land use trajectories. Figures 7.8-9 illustrates the return of wildflowers and hay meadows on

Highbeck due to the reduction of chemical usage, discussed above and observed during my visit:



Figure 7.8. Uncut upland wildflower meadow, Highbeck, authors photo, September 2021.



Figure 7.9. Sign stating no chemical use or cutting of roadside to protect wildflowers, Highbeck, authors photo, September 2021.

The evident direction of investment for Highbeck has a strong focus on further environmental land management moves, though interestingly as 7.4.2 has shown, little

interest in pursuing leisure and tourism. This therefore further demonstrates differences across estates in their means of ensuring long-term sustainability.

On Frithdale too, Peter showed me some of the projects taking place on the estate including re-wetting of moorland and afforestation projects (Figures 7.10-11). As elsewhere, these projects are incentivised by the direction of funding streams, once again shown to be heavily influencing the direction of land use and management (gov.uk, 2018).



Figure 7.10. Talking about re-wetting the peat moors with Peter, Frithdale, authors photo, November 2021.



Figure 7.11. Marginal land set aside for tree planting, author photo, Frithdale, November 2021.

Elsewhere in the lowlands, Kevin and Maddy, office staff at Dolwyn talk of opportunities for investing in what Kevin refers to as “the low carbon thing”, referring to natural capital. They too see this as a big investment over the next few years. The seriousness of their commitment to this is supported by Dolwyn’s recent investment in a new low-carbon officer whom I got the chance to speak to:

*“The whole low-carbon thing is part of our long-term diversification and future. That’s what we are trying to do...explore and try to get a baseline for everything that we are currently doing. Then we can start to explore commercial opportunities and make sure that we are doing the best that we can for a sustainable future. That’s for the future generations on this estate and in this area” (Kevin).*

*“It’s exciting, everything is changing...we are learning as we go along. There are lots of companies that will be looking to offset [carbon emissions], and we will at some point be capturing and capitalising on that opportunity. It’s still early days, but I’m working on it” (Maddy).*

A huge opportunity is illustrated here, in the form of monetising Dolwyn’s carbon assets. This is presented as a win-win by the office team as it will help mitigate climate change while also creating employment and generating financial assets for the estate. Yet, they



do not, at least directly discuss how such enterprises' growth may impact the estate's established assets and enterprises.

After discussing the potential for monetising Dolwyn's carbon assets with the office team, I had the opportunity to tour other aspects of the estates and seeing environmental land use moves with Keeper Robert. He showed me the various renewable energy projects on the estate, including hydropower, wind turbines, a 7000-panel solar park (Figure 7.12), and thermal energy. These projects, he explained, feed into the national grid and support Dolwyn's "journey to net zero [emissions]" (Robert). The renewable energy projects showcased by Robert demonstrate the estate's commitment to sustainable energy and represent a key component of their long-term diversification strategy.



Figure 7.12. Solar Park on Dolwyn, evident from the window of Robert's truck, author's photo, July 2021.

Continuing the topic of renewables, Edwin also shared his thoughts on the changes Marlott has made in this respect, with the installation of solar and wind projects:

*"They're going to become more important. Environmental projects will aid the long-term rural prosperity of estates if government funding for individuals enables renewable projects to be accessible. Plus, it is also more generally doing a good job for the environment which is the other thing".*

The intersection between new enterprises and game management was more actively deliberated on Marlott. For instance, Edwin admits the new solar farm does create a “nightmare” (Edwin) for Joe who “dogs in around solar panels” (Joe). However, both parties also recognised this was a compromise of the benefits this new land uses bring to the whole estate, including its financial viability:

*I don't like it [the aesthetics] any more than most people do but it serves a major purpose the rent that comes from that is about the same as a farm and that helps us to do a lot more of the other things we want to do" (Edwin).*

Figure 7.13 shows one of the estate fields, formally on Joe’s beat taken over by a solar park.



Figure 7.13. Solar Park evident in the distance, Marlott, authors photo, July 2021.

## 7.5. Chapter Summary

Overall, this chapter has explored current and future opportunities and adaptations across a range of case study examples of estates which continue game management and shooting practices.

The initial section (7.2), ‘Addressing Negative Perceptions’, explored efforts at both the sector and case-specific level to address negative public perceptions towards game

management and highlight the estates' relevance today. Key themes exemplified across the cases included the greater transparency of the estates and the profiling of scaled-back approaches to game management as well as a greater focus on enhancing the resilience of the UK game meat market. 7.3 'Re-Profiling of Game Management' provided ground-level adaptation strategies witnessed and discussed within the case studies. This saw the nuanced behavioural changes of gamekeepers to provide a more likeable public face (7.3.2) and present their work within the rural landscape as a relevant and necessary form of countryside stewardship (7.3.3). Together these two sections go some way to juxtaposing the association of the country estate as being solely private land reserves and some of the negative connotations associated with gamekeepers and game management (Hodgson et al., 2018). The third section (7.4) showcased two examples of land use and access changes beyond game management, this included the estates' varying levels of engagement with leisure and tourism provision (7.4.2) and environmental land use (7.4.3). Both examples to differing degrees were recognised as financial assets for the estates' and further means of establishing a purposeful contribution to wider societal needs and desires.

The chapter has also highlighted clues as to the differences in the prioritisation and opportunities for land use and management across case examples, with topography, estate value and management structure all shown to be factors in adaptations made. For instance, some estates are embracing transition while others are resisting due to this conflicting with their pre-existing commercial practices (Tinsworth) or misalignment with their operational outlook and management structures (Highbeck). Trade-offs were also acknowledged to be involved in the reallocation or increasingly shared use and management of estate land areas.

Box 7.4. Grouse Shoot Day, Part Three, Field Diary Notes, September 2021

'After two hours standing in the driving rain the morning is called off because of bad weather at 11am, back to the vans then to shelter for an early lunch. A keepers wife arrives with sandwiches, ham, beef, cheese and onion, egg and cress, quavers and beef crisps, mars bars, Twix, cans of Pepsi, lemonade, water bottles, lots to keep our energy up. There're stories of people fainting before now! People joke to me about jinxing the day but are lovely about it being my first ever beat day! Everyone knows my name too which is nice.'

'At lunch I sit with Josie and Barney, beaters too, who I met that morning. We talk about renting and rising house prices, how we couldn't live in places like this if it wasn't for rentals and how they keep communities going where elsewhere rich people are buying up areas and houses. We talk about the need to eventually buy though for security and how it won't ever be as nice as the rentals. I find out the cost of a shoot day is £32,000, today it's the landowners friends shooting, so not a let day. After an hour or so lunch we're off in the vans again, up and over valleys. We walk on foot, keeper either side about 200m away lining out over the moor, there's a lot of waiting between drives, standing around in cold or rain and just waiting. I think it's for the guns to get ready and have a chit chat. When all is set the keepers hear on their walkie talkies what the crack is. When we're ready, one of the keepers will start beating his flag and walking and then we all walk together keeping a rough line, its much less of a straight one than I'm used to, but I'm later told that's an [\*estate name\*] line, i.e., they're not usually that straight and move a lot quicker than on other estates!'

'We walk through heather, sphagnum moss, bog, high bracken overhead, down, and up gullies and you must keep up or risk being 'that person' who falls behind and that's not a good way to make friends...we're an odd bunch, old, young, slim, slightly wider but everyone seems to be keen for the hard work. We walk for what 30mins, hitting our makeshift feed bag flags against the earth, sky or whatever to make a noise and scare the birds in the direction of the guns. Sometimes a flock will rise, and the keepers will shout "flags out" and call to the birds to get them moving, the dogs stick around their owners, exciting, moving, chasing, picking up dead birds as we approach the guns. When the guns are in sight horns are blown either side, signalling a slow careful final march, I'm surprised we don't stop till we're with the guns, but I suppose they're shooting upwards after all.'



## Chapter 8. Discussion – Exploring the Challenges and Adaptations of the Estate-Game Management Nexus

### 8.1. Introduction

This research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current existence, challenges, opportunities, and adaptations within game management across a sample of English and Welsh private estates. By addressing existing knowledge gaps and examining the various components and actors involved, this study contributes to academic and policy discussions outlined in Chapter 2. Additionally, it offers a methodological framework that supports ongoing discussions and enhances our understanding of the contemporary interplay between game management, the estate, and actors involved within and beyond the physical boundaries of these specific sites, especially in the context of significant rural land use transition (Brown & Shucksmith, 2016; Burchardt et al., 2020).

The research findings present a nuanced and diverse representation of rural England and Wales today. Contrary to idyllic notions, this inquiry highlights the multifaceted and sometimes conflicting functions of our rural landscapes (Redpath et al., 2013; Slee, 2005). Throughout the thesis the private estates, like other rural areas, have been shown to be simultaneously valued and devalued, yet demonstrate remarkable resilience (Paas et al., 2021; Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019; Woods, 2011). However, game management, operating within them, once even more widespread across Britain's private estates, is shown to face significant internal and external challenges to its existence and spatial positioning. Nonetheless, the research findings demonstrate clear evidence of adaptability and determination of involved stakeholders to pursue value and relevance across various spatial levels. The findings also demonstrate shared directions and ambitions as well as compromises and conflicts which recognise the uniqueness of each individual case.

Briefly synthesising the findings, Chapter 4 provided a contextual overview, focusing on key relevant challenges, opportunities, and adaptations in the rural landscape.

Subsequent chapters introduced the case study estates (Chapter 5) and delved deeper into identified challenges and opportunities through qualitative examples (Chapter 6-7). These latter examples shed light on the implications of identified factors for various participants, including estate owners, managers and gamekeepers - a group known for their relative inaccessibility (Thomson et al., 2020). Although the present chapter does not explicitly revisit inductive themes (4.2.3.a), these factors are also acknowledged for their overarching impact on many aspects of the elaborated discussions.

The chapter is structured as follows: Section 8.2 examines the diversity of actors and land use practices within the estate-game management nexus (RO1), utilising an assemblage thinking approach to understand and interpret this. Section 8.3 explores the 'Key Threat Perceptions' identified in Chapters 4-6 and examines their relationship with estates, game management, and rurality. The aim is to address RO2, which investigates the main pressures faced by game management across estates and the wider countryside. Section 8.4 shifts the focus to 'Opportunities and Adaptations', utilising data from Chapters 4, 5, and 7 to explore RO3. Finally, section 8.5 summarises the key points discussed and provides a transition towards the conclusion.

Before delving into a detailed discussion, Figure 8.1 illustrates the interconnected nature of the challenges and adaptations across the game-estates. It also highlights some misalignments between the perception of challenges, their impacts and adaptation strategies at the estate management level compared to those specific to game management. The distinction becomes particularly evident at the case study level in the thoughts, behaviour and practices of gamekeepers, estate managers and owners.

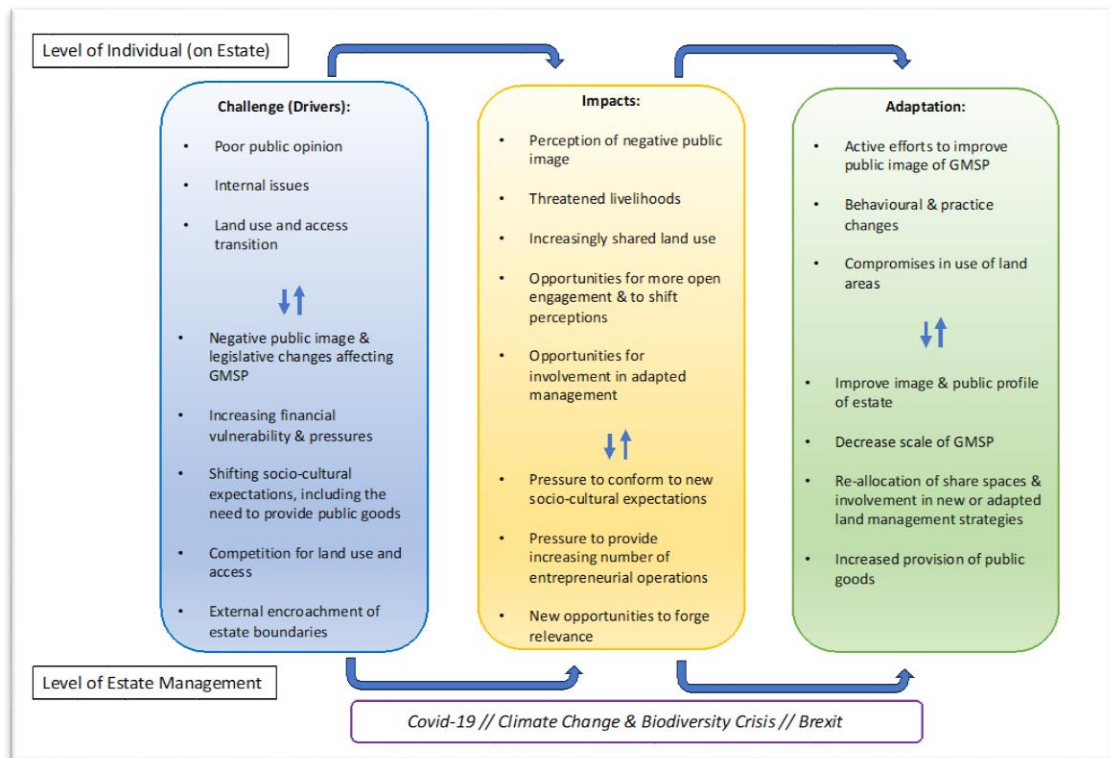


Figure 8.1. Diagram of Adaptation and Conflict within Estates with their GMSP operations (*demonstrating areas of compromise and adaptations which cannot or do not always align with current GMSP*), adapted from Gobin et al (2020).

## 8.2. Towards an Assemblage of the Game-Estate

Building upon relational approaches to conceptualise rural place relations (introduced in Chapter 2) this research has advanced the exploration of game management and private estates through the lens of assemblage thinking (DeLanda, 2016; Woods, 2015a, 2017; Woods et al., 2021). By employing this methodological framework, the project can bridge some gaps in our understanding of the work and lives of individuals within estate-based game management (Baker & McGuirk, 2017; Dovey, 2020).

While it has not been possible to delve into individual cases as complete place assemblages, the results presented in Chapters 4-7 align with recent interpretation of DeLanda's (2006, 2016) conceptualisation of rural place assemblages (2.2). Through the application of key concepts from this approach, a relatively comprehensive understanding of the actors, flows and networks within and beyond the private estate and game management are generated, shedding light on their position within the rural

landscape. Consequently, the exclusive and elite perception often associated with driven game management and the private estate (Martin, 2011b; Wightman et al., 2010) is somewhat deconstructed, revealing a nuanced working world. This analysis provides valuable insight into the diverse range of human and more-than-human actors that constitute these spatial configurations and their intricate interconnections, expanding existing rural scholarship (Sutherland & Calo, 2020; Woods et al., 2021). By responding to the call for first-hand perspectives into these worlds, this research contributes to the broader understanding of game-estates as workspaces and associated overlooked groups (Brooker et al., 2018; Thomson et al., 2020), especially as such groups are shown to pose unique place-based contributions to the framing of rural place relations.

Despite research highlighting game management to remain a prominent aspect of rural landscapes and land use (PACEC, 2014; Chapters 4-7), private estates, including the case studies identified in this study, are shown to no longer be largely defined by their sporting status. However, this research brings renewed attention to address the limited understanding of these estates by establishing a framework to identify and trace how game management is integrated into today's private estates and continues to have enduring meaning. Similar frameworks have been developed in other rural contexts, highlighting the enduring expressive meaning of declining industries like British wool or Canadian fisheries (Chapter 2.2.3; Jones et al., 2019; Woods, 2015a). In this research, the framework also allows for the identification and examination of significant moments, actions and processes that shape these assemblages, including the devaluation of game management due to shifting financial, political and social-cultural priorities (8.3). It also highlights how new forms of coding and associated practices, such as landscape restoration and wildlife conservation are creating renewed material value connected with game management (8.4). Consequently, the research project explored the current arrangement of these assemblages and the shifts in actors, resources, and power relations (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011).

Figure 8.2 illustrates the conceptual framework of a place assemblage applied broadly to the game-estate. Subsequent sections in this chapter delve deeper into these component parts, with a specific focus on the processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation,



which are explored as threats, opportunities and adaptations in Chapters 4-7, in line with the research objectives. For example, within the context of this assemblage, threats can be understood as causal factors that lead to the emergence of new land management or use priorities, which surpass the importance of game management (over coding). This shift in priorities results in the reduced significance of game management within the landscape, or its deterritorialisation (Woods et al., 2021). Deterritorialisation, or threat, encompasses the cycles that influence and are influenced by game management, leading to shifts in land use priorities and management practices. Conversely, territory and reterritorialisation (adaptation and opportunities) are represented through changed relations of exteriority (Baker & McGuirk, 2017).

In summary, this research has enhanced our understanding of the estate-game management nexus by employing the lens of assemblage thinking. It offers valuable insights into the dynamics of these assemblages, including the challenges they face and their capacity to seek opportunities for adaptive responses. Furthermore, it acknowledges the significant roles played by game-estate actors within the estates' and beyond.

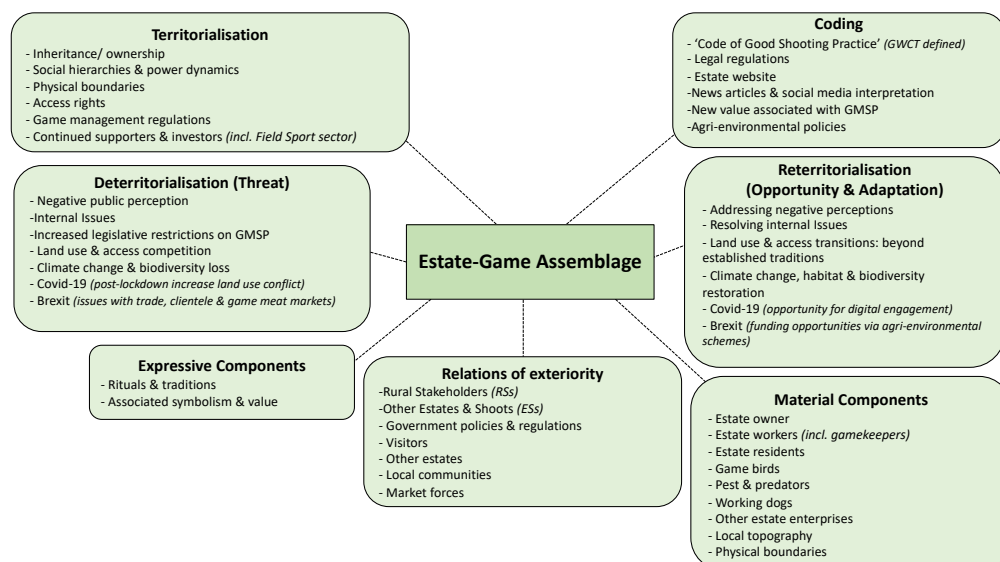


Figure 8.2. Analytical Interpretation of game management within the private estate using assemblage thinking as a conceptual framework.

### 8.3 Facing Key Perceived Threats

This section delves into the key perceived threats faced by estate-based game management, considering its interconnected nature with other land use and management practices. Discussed in detail in Chapters 4-6, threats are summarised in Table 8.1.

In alignment with a period characterised by major land management transition, the findings reveal factors that have the potential to undermine the prioritisation of GMSP as a land use priority. This is particularly evident due to the need for extensive designated areas to support GMSP, contrasted by the growing emphasis on the development of even more rural landscape multi-functionality (Burchardt et al., 2020; Livingstone et al., 2021; 2.3.3).

Table 8.1. Key Threats to estate-based GMSP

Threat	Description and Examples
Poor Public Perception	<p>Perception held by GMSP actors of oppression of their cultural traditions and livelihoods. This is shown to be leading to heightened tensions between stakeholder groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Detachment from rural realities</li> <li>○ Pest &amp; predator control</li> </ul>
Internal Issues	<p>Poor practices perceived to be taking place within other GMSP, with potential damaging implications for estate-based GMSP. This demonstrates the interconnected nature of different models and spatial sites of GMSP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Intensification of driven GMSP</li> </ul>
Land Use and Access Competition	<p>Perception of the increased marginalisation of GMSP within the estate and wider rural landscape due to new and emerging land use and access demands. Tensions with land used and managed for GMSP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increased recreational land use and access requirements</li> <li>○ Environmental objectives and biodiversity concerns</li> </ul>

### 8.3.1. Poor Public Perception

A significant threat first identified among Field Sports sector representatives and ES respondents in Chapter 4 was poor public perception. This was evidenced to have led to increased legislative restrictions on organisations and livelihoods involved in GMSP and subsequent conflicts between rural stakeholders. This narrative, initially introduced in Chapter 4, was explored further in Chapter 6.2. It sheds additional light on GMSP groups and individuals who felt their livelihoods, cultures, and traditions were increasingly being beleaguered and ostracised. Notably, 53% of the surveyed ES respondents identified 'Public Perception' as one of the major challenges they expected to face over the next 10 years (Table 4.28). This aligns with the concept of 'rural Other' first introduced in Chapter 2 (Clope; Little, 1997; Halfacree, 2003; Philo, 1997). In this context, participants felt that their identity or working position within the rural landscape was a factor in ostracization or confrontation. The findings reiterate studies of game management, including a Scottish report by Thomson et al (2020, p. 4) which found that 56% of game managers considered 'public perception' to be one of the most challenging aspects of their job. These findings also draw renewed attention to the work of MacMillan & Leith (2008, p. 483), who stated over 15 years ago that field sports were at a "significant crossroad" in terms of their place within the rural landscape, albeit this example focuses on a different field sport - deer management in Scotland.

An alternative minority view expressed by a small number of RS respondents (4.2.4) viewed GMSP as a symbolic practice that upholds socio-political power and is associated with historical and continued ethical and social justice concerns (MacMillan & Phillip, 2010; Neal & Walters, 2008; Woods, 2003, 2006). Again, this too highlights socio-cultural ostracization and supports actors' perception of being othered or discernments of poor public perception of them or their work.

These research findings contribute to the academic discourse on conflicts in rural areas, particularly regarding management priorities and wider shifting socio-cultural values (Shucksmith, 2018; Slee et al., 2014; Slee, 2005). This further highlights the ongoing centrality of associated sporting practices in multifaceted debates on land and resource relationships. While controversy surrounding field sports is not new (for example, Woods,

2003; 2.4.3), this study provides further evidence of the tangible impacts of such conflicts and debates for actors involved in game management, as well as the private estates they operate within and influence.

#### Detachment from Rural Realities

Adding depth to arguments over negative public perception expressed by involved actors was the belief that the public, in general, lacks awareness and understanding of the realities of rural life, particularly concerning practical aspects of land use and management associated with GMSP. This perception is accompanied by escalating digital and media conflicts including instances of online abuse. Media figures such as Chris Packham were central contributors to the negative perceptions of associated rural work and practices (see Box 8.1; also 6.2.2). This deepens negative perceptions and aligns with an ongoing legal challenge at the time of data collection, initiated by Packham and Wild Justice, an organisation he is prominently involved in. The challenge aimed to revoke the general licences that permitted gamekeepers, farmers, and landowners to control certain pest species (Case, 2019). Additionally, Packham's involvement in implementing restrictions on released game shoots led to a review and subsequent legislative restrictions near protected sites (Gov.uk, 2020a, 2020b). These actions were viewed by key actors as an assault on their rural knowledge and cultural traditions, perpetuated by individuals detached from rural realities.

Detachment was linked to reports of abuse towards gamekeepers and the conception of gamekeepers as a marginalised or 'Othered' rural working group (Clope & Little, 1997; Cross, 2021; Halfacree, 2003; Thomson et al., 2020). These debates echo prior literary discussions of prejudice and ignorance towards the ways of life and work of game and estate managers (Hillyard, 2007a; Latham-Green, 2020). Moreover, these debates harken back to the early 2000s when academic discussions revolved around the meaning and regulation of rurality, which led to the mobilisation of non-agrarian rural groups who felt threatened (Woods, 2003, 2009). As Wood (2003, p.309) argues, the central motive behind such defences lay in protecting "the rural" or "rural way of life" from external threats, conflicts or regulations related to rural space, land use, and management. Thus, by emphasising the fundamental role of GMSP as part of rural life, the disputes are built

around the core attachment of game management and shooting practices to rural identity. Consequently, any attack on this is perceived as an attack on rural identity (ibid, p.316).

Defence mechanisms employed by game managers (Chapter 4.3, 7) and the wider sector (4.2) against attacks on the Field Sport sector, estate-based game management, and individual actors is further discussed in Section 8.4.

**Box 8.1. Gamekeepers' perspectives on public detachment from their rural realities (from 6.2.2-3):**

Helen from the Gamekeepers Welfare Trust (GWT) highlights the influence of anti-shooting groups on mainstream media portraying gamekeeping in a negative light, contributing to the victimisation of gamekeeping as a livelihood (6.2.2). The impact of this extends to the potential removal of the term 'gamekeeper' from college course curriculums, replacing it with less politically charged terms like 'ranger'. Gamekeepers with children at school fear disclosing their parent's profession due to the risk of ridicule and ostracization (6.2.3).

Tim experiences discomfort wearing his uniform in public places, such as the pub, due to receiving disapproving looks (6.2.3).

Robert perceives a lack of willingness amongst individuals like Chris Packham and others in the conservation sector to consider alternative perspectives. This contributes to the strong aversion that Robert and other GMSP operators have towards these individuals, further exacerbating divisions between rural stakeholders (6.2.2).

### Pest & Predator Control

Another example illustrating the theme of 'poor public perception' relates to pest and predator control, which is a common responsibility carried out by gamekeepers as part of their game management duties (Box 8.2). These practices often face strong political opposition and public disagreement which was evidenced across the results (Chapters 4 and 6), and previous literary discussions (2.4.3; MacMillan & Leitch, 2008; Swan et al., 2020; Thirgood et al., 2000). While the shooting sector emphasises the ecological benefits associated with these practices, they frequently clash with mainstream conservation interests (ibid).

The results of this study revealed that legislative changes, particularly related to pest and predator regulations, were perceived as a significant threat to livelihoods, GMSP, and the Field Sports sector by the respondents (4.3.4, 6.2.5). These expressed concerns and defences came in response to growing political scrutiny. During the data collection period (2020-2021), there was a tightening of legislation, specifically through governmental reviews of general licences, prompted by lobbying groups questioning the practise. Respondents discussed the impact of further restrictions imposed on these general licences, particularly in Wales, which had significant implications for their work (BASC, 2022d).

A central argument presented by case participants was frustration with what they perceived as a continuous assault on rural minority culture and tradition by external and distant groups and individuals, with Wild Justice being one of the prominent involved groups (Laville, 2023). The specific effects of this was evident in several case studies, where land workers and managers expressed their dissatisfaction that their land management techniques, which they considered crucial for conservation, were disregarded, and disrupted, despite the ecological benefits they witnessed and reported (Box 8.2).

**Box 8.2. Gamekeepers' concerns over obstructed conservation efforts and perceived public deformation of pest and predator control measures (from 6.2.5):**

Robert, an advocate for curlew conservation in Wales, believes that effective pest and predator control is crucial in the recovery of the collapsed curlew population. However, the restrictions on general licences hinder his ability to protect these vulnerable birds and promote successful breeding.

Archie's squirrel traps, essential for the preservation of red squirrel populations in the areas, are being destroyed, resulting in decline in their numbers.

Helen from the Gamekeepers Welfare Trust (GWT) highlights her experience in dealing with accusations of illegal raptor persecution against gamekeepers and opposition to predator control. She believes gamekeepers face unfair treatment and are often presumed guilty instead of innocent.

Figure 8.3 illustrates the traditional practice of gamekeepers displaying dispatched pests to demonstrate their credibility as an employee (Jones, 2009). Over time and as socio-cultural perceptions of pest and predator control have become more divisive issues of conservation conflict, the practice has become outdated and less publicly prevalent (Redpath et al., 2013; Redpath & Thirgood, 2009; Thirgood et al., 2000).



Figure 8.3. A gamekeeper's gibbet, displaying his pest control abilities, magpies on a line. Private collection, undisclosed locality, with permission, 1920s.

The study demonstrated the significant impact of public disapproval, leading to the reframing and in some cases changes in behaviour within game management which shape ideologies of involved actors' perceptions of good practice. Recent research and reviews have also focused on the relationship between game managements and sustained issues such as raptor persecution and wildlife crime (Hodgson et al., 2018; Swan et al., 2020).

Overall, the research findings highlight the significant and sustained challenge of poor public perception as a central issue for GMSP, consistent with the small amount of existing knowledge and experiences documented beyond the scope of this study (Swan et al., 2020; Thomson et al., 2020). Moreover, recent calls for temporary suspensions of game-bird release due to Avian Flu concerns, as advocated by conservation organisations

such as the RSPB (Laville, 2023). Such findings indicate that public debates and conflicts surrounding game management are likely to persist and intensify with ongoing impact of public perception on GMSP demonstrating the need for continued attention and consideration of such subjects, both within research and practice.

### 8.3.2. Internal issues

Internal divisions within GMSP have received limited scholarly attention, with previous studies primarily focused on divisions related to raptor persecution (Hodgson et al., 2018; Swan, 2017; Swan et al., 2020). This research however reveals a broader range of internal divisions within GMSP that has been largely overlooked. Contrary to the perception of a united front, respondents demonstrate significant differences in their outlook towards GMSP (4.2.4) and their behaviour and management strategies (4.3.4, 6.3). These divisions have implications for what the research participants consider publicly acceptable and sustainable for the sector.

Of particular concern are the local environmental and ecological impacts of certain management strategies, including large-scale driven or commercial practices. It is important to highlight these divisions to better understand the challenges faced by game management and to ensure sustainable and responsible GMSP practices going forward. The findings also shed light on deeper "social normative values, beliefs and cultures shifts" (Hodgson et al., 2018, p.332) aligning with broader transformation in intensive agricultural land management practices (Burton, 2004; Sutherland & Calo, 2020). This pattern also emerges as increasing attention is drawn to the ecological consequences of both lowland and upland forms of driven game management (Brooker et al., 2018; Mason et al., 2020; Werrity, 2019).

Overall, these findings indicate the need for reflection and potential changes within game management and the Field Sport sector, as well as additional efforts to address negative public perceptions associated with the causes of these divisions.



### Intensification of Driven Game Management

Internal division within GMSP included disagreements over the accepted scale and form of game management and shooting practice. While some respondents did not consider these factors to be inherently problematic, others expressed concerns about excessive large-scale GMSP posing a threat to the sector.

RS questionnaire respondents from the Field Sport sector had markedly differing outlooks. Some viewed the scale and type of management strategy as acceptable, with larger shoots having more financial resources to implement beneficial conservation measures, while smaller shoots were argued to face limitations in enacting positive environmental measures (4.2.4; Box 4.1). However, other representatives recognised excessive or overtly large GMSP as a threat to the sector (4.2-3). At the case study level, participants overwhelmingly considered intensive driven game management as a cause for concern (Box 8.3).

Box 8.3. Concerns of case estate manager regarding intensive driven game management (from 6.3.2-3):

Alex raises concerns about large-scale release of game birds and the focus on profit amongst both shoot managers and clients. This profit-driven attitude, with a strong emphasis on achieving big game bags, she viewed as detrimental to the public perception of GMSP. Alex notes that many "old guys" in the sector are resistant to changing these behaviours and attitudes.

Robert observes changes in the behaviour of his clients since the 1970s with particularly wealthy businessmen or what he calls "new money" clientele prioritising high numbers of driven game. He believes this shift moves shooting further away from being a country sport with a genuine connection to the countryside.

Edwin expresses fear about shoots that excessively release "unsustainable numbers" of game birds in small land areas, deeming it an unsustainable practice that undermines the integrity of the sport and risks bringing the entire sector into disrepute.

The disparity in the findings highlight the potential need for independent re-evaluation of what constitutes sustainable GMSP, in addition to publications such as The Code of Good Shooting Practice (2020). While historically regarded as a noble and honourable sport (Huggins, 2008), the commercialisation of large portions of the shooting sector in

the late 20th century led to a diversification of models and possibilities for game management, including the introduction of the sport to affluent businesspeople able to afford the once socially elite reserve (Martin, 2012). For example on Chigley, GMSP is a form of farm diversification rather than culturally associated with the tradition and grandeur of a private country estate (Hoyle, 2007). This shift again aligns with changing sociocultural values associated with GMSP, like observations made in the agricultural sector. Notions of behavioural adaptation and changes in perception of acceptable practise are notable among agricultural workers (Riley & Robertson, 2021; Rust et al., 2022; Sutherland & Calo, 2020), and in the case of this research, particularly estate managers and gamekeepers. The findings further reflect the condemnation of intensive game management and shooting practice, mirroring the scrutiny faced by intensive farming and the links to its ecological impacts (ibid). Furthermore, the acknowledgement of poor practices within GMSP and the need to redefine positive images and actions resonate with the growing emphasis on environmentally driven policies (8.3.1; Bateman & Balmford, 2018; Lefebvre et al., 2015; Thomas et al., 2019), a trend also observed in the agricultural sector (Naylor et al., 2018).

In summary, these findings provide valuable insights into the evolving values and practices associated with game management and shooting practice. They suggest a potentially growing misalignment among actors as these practices expand in terms of models and scales. While underscoring the significance of the sector and practitioners, they must reassess their approaches to changing societal expectations and address unsustainable practices in alignment with current considerations for sustainable and responsible practices.

### 8.3.3. Land Use and Access Competition

Another theme explored across the research relates to the challenges faced by estate-based game management due to evolving land management priorities. The findings revealed a notable shift in the material and expressive significance of GMSP within several of the estate's frameworks. This shift can be attributed to the changing priorities observed across the estates discussed in Chapter 4-7, where economic, political, and

social strategies less directly related to GMSP have gained increasing prominence. For instance, numerous case study estates (7.4) and represented ESs (4.3.4) have shifted their focus towards entrepreneurship and diversification of land-based activities, moving away from an emphasis on historically established activities including GMSP (Bateman & Balmford, 2018; Cusworth & Dodsworth, 2021; Durie, 2008). These trends link closely to broader patterns observed in rural land use transition, and the shift in land use priorities discussed in Chapter 2 (Bowditch et al., 2019; Halfacree, 2011; Riley, 2011; Woods, 2011). Findings also link to significant shifts in agricultural subsidies for productivity outputs (Livingstone et al., 2021) and decades of punitive taxation on private estate land ownership (Martin, 2011b) which have resulted in the need for new and extended asset seeking opportunities across the studied estates. Consequently, the success of several of them is now redefined by their capacity to offer a range of public goods, including recreational land use and access, as well as addressing environmental objectives and biodiversity concerns.

On a broad scale, the research findings illustrate how GMSP is increasingly caught amid competing priorities regarding land use and access. Therefore, the threats faced by GMSP are shown not to be isolated cases but to be symptomatic of broader transitions in land management and a nexus of multiple threats discussed in 4.2.3. These threats include climate change, biodiversity loss, the impact of Covid-19 and the consequences of Brexit, all of which are reshaping the countryside in terms of use, access and management to varying degrees. These trends align with the concept of the 'squeezed middle' proposed by Slee et al (2014), where growing policy and public demands for various public goods and services from rural land areas is challenging the established land management strategies and embedded practices. This section highlights key areas where these tensions are particularly prevalent, shedding light on the conflicts and challenges arising from these competing priorities.

Owing to such factors, the cohesion of established estate activities, including GMSP and livelihoods that rely on them such as gamekeeping, were shown to be at risk as new priorities emerged (4.3.4 and 6.4). This situation demonstrates a potential threat to the

land management practices and, consequently, to the identity and belonging of the actors involved in GMSP (Neal & Walters, 2006; Philo, 1997).

Figure 8.4 provides an illustrative example of significant estate-based land use transformation over time. As a key case study, Dolwyn has experienced substantial diversification and corresponding adaptations in land management practices in recent decades. This illustration presents the broader context of evolving estate management practices and changing priorities in rural areas. It highlights how game management, previously a prominent activity within the estate, is now marginalised due to shifting land use patterns and competing demands. This model emphasises the challenges and transformations occurring in rural land management, which restrict the range and scale of practices feasible within a given land area.

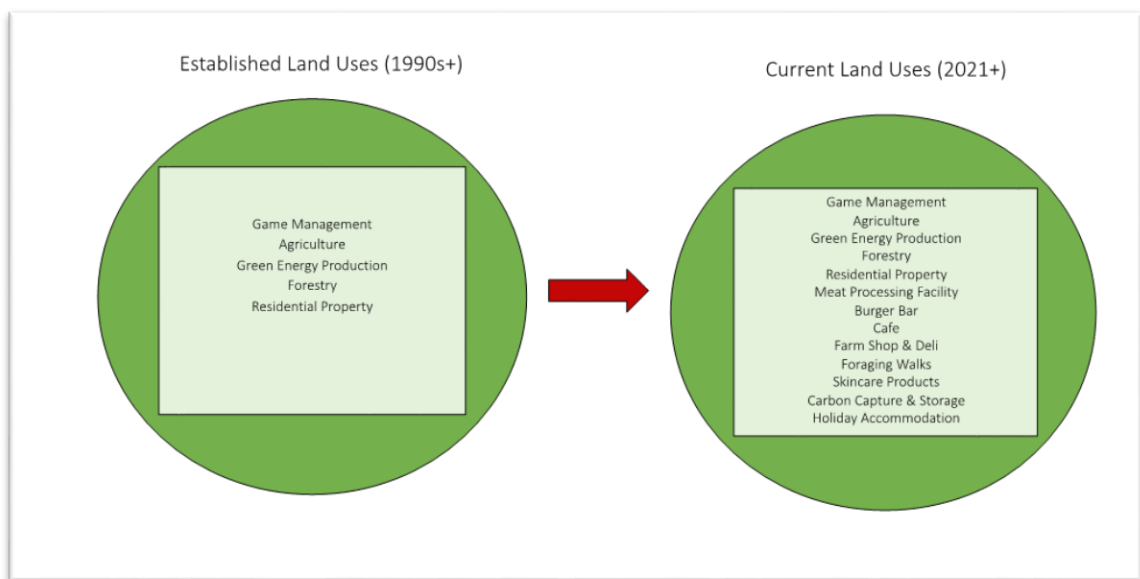


Figure 8.4. Land use transition model, using Dolwyn as an illustrative example, based on Slee et al's (2014) concept of a 'squeezed middle' in land use transition.

### Increased Recreational Land Use and Access

The conflicts examined in this thesis contribute to the discourse surrounding the emergence of increased public access to leisure activities and the prioritisation of consumptive land use on private game-estates. These conflicts were widely observed in studied estates. For example, Chapter 4.3.4, revealed that 22% of the surveyed ESs

identified major land use changes, including a rise in recreational users, as one of the biggest anticipated challenges within the next decade. Additionally, 64% of respondents believed their estate would become involved in tourism within the next 25 years. Examples illustrating these trends can be found in Box 8.4, drawing from 6.4.2.

Consequently, this research adds to the existing body of knowledge on the long-standing conflict between private land ownership and the growing demand for recreational land use and access to rural areas (Halfacree, 2012; Livingstone et al., 2021; Wightman et al., 2010). Many of these conflicts are shown to be concentrated within game-estates.

Box 8.4. Concerns raised by case estate manager and gamekeepers regarding increased recreational land use and access requirements (from 6.4.2):

A photograph of a footpath sign on the Tinsworth estate which has an additional poster stapled on the side asking the public to keep dogs on leads due to young pheasants in the area. The contrast of the footpath sign and estates' game department's poster are indicative of some of the conflicts between game management on the estate and recreational land users, particularly those with dogs.

Edwin discusses how footpaths on Marlott have been carefully placed so that they avoid areas where GMSP take place. This indicates a deliberate effort to separate recreational land use from activities related to game management.

Robert views part of his job, even today, to be about keeping the public away from "private" areas of the estate. This suggests concerns about maintaining privacy and security, including areas managed for GMSP.

In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, rural tourism surges were noted, albeit records of this to-date are better documented outside Britain (Åberg & Tondelli, 2021; Leach et al., 2021; McManus, 2022; Pileva & Markov, 2021). This has intensified the conflict between recreational activity, provision and land access and workspaces. Nonetheless, many of the case estates were shown to actively embrace these trends as opportunities for additional financial gains, supplementing established activities.

These trends align with a growing body of literature on the increased recreational use of land post-Covid (Colomb & Gallent, 2022; Phillipson et al., 2020). There is also extensive research exploring the shift in land use and management priorities, focusing on

generating income from rural recreational land users and providing publicly accessible goods, land, and services (Bateman & Balmford, 2018; Livingstone et al., 2021; Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019). Moreover, these trends are connected to literature on the deterritorialisation of established rural place assemblages, for instance through the influx of counter-migration (Jones et al., 2019; Woods, 2009, 2011) and broader relationship between migration and rural space relations (Halfacree, 2012; Heley, 2008).

Findings from this research therefore contribute to several strands of existing literature emphasising escalating tensions between game management, rural policy and the estates' increasing shifts to prioritise alternative land use and income generation, including through embracing leisure and tourism. Consequently, findings underscore the need for compromise between key actors and land use, particularly for those involved in game management and other established land practices. The findings also stress the evolving dynamics within game management and its relationship with broader societal trends and estate priorities.

#### Environmental Objectives and Biodiversity Concerns

This example delves into the complexities and conflicts surrounding environmental objectives and biodiversity concerns within the context of game management.

A key challenge lies in the intricate and influential relationship between the growth of environmental objectives and the prioritisation of land use, in accordance with the government's 25-year post-Brexit agri-environmental plan (gov.uk, 2018). These objectives primarily focus on natural capital and environmental goods, which intersect with game management in various ways.

One notable conflict arises from the necessity to accommodate new physical attributes required for environmental provisions, such as solar parks, rewetting of moorland, afforestation and the reduced scale of GMSP. This presents complications regarding shared spaces and relationships with established actors and practices (Box. 8.5). These are shown to further jeopardise the position of GMSP within the practical operations

taking place on the estate by creating additional complexities in relationships and practices associated with shared land use.

Box 8.5. Concerns raised by case estate managers and gamekeepers regarding increases in environmental objective and biodiversity concerns (from 6.4.2-3):

Joe, the gamekeeper at Marlott, shared his experiences of pheasants getting lost amongst solar panels, making it difficult to retrieve them with dogs.

Kevin, one of the office employees on Dolwyn, believes game management's future on the estate is less and less certain, as what he calls the "evolution", referring to growth in both recreational and environmental entrepreneurship on the estate is increasingly prioritised in terms of land use dedication and priority.

Peter weighs up the environmental benefit of large tree planting schemes on the marginal uplands he manages in Yorkshire (Frithdale) but is keen to highlight how such investment also comes at the risk of less long-term working land for the communities on the estate.

Returning to a broader focus, these findings provide further evidence of the ongoing changes in the economic and material role of land, including estate land areas that continue to be used for game management. Similar patterns can be observed in discussions surrounding the shift towards more ecological practices in agriculture (Riley 2011, p. 18).

The examples of land use and access competition exemplify Slee et al.'s (2014) conceptualisation of a 'squeezed middle' within rural spaces. They highlight shifts in internal and external dynamics, which have been observed in other rural areas (Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019; Woods, 2003). The impact of these changing spatial relations on game management depends greatly on the specific enterprises involved and the extent to which they consider their effect on game management.

While such competition for land use is not a new phenomenon, the findings of this study represent a significant moment for land use policy, practice and established land users (Burchardt et al., 2020). The findings also support the need for game management to adapt within estates, embracing new frameworks that accommodate a broader range of societal needs and desires. Diversified estates and the willingness of landowners and

managers to embrace change demonstrate better resilience strategies compared to those resistant to transformation. However, conflicts over land use, space constraints, and the cultural value of game within the rural and estate contexts are prevalent in all cases. Although game management may have a diminishing material role in the economic activities of highly diversified estates, its cultural significance and connection to rural traditions are recognised and preserved by those within and supportive of the sector.

#### 8.4. Seizing Opportunity and Navigating Adaptation

In addition to threats, Chapters 4, 5, and 7 highlighted opportunities, resilience, and adaptation strategies. These contribute to our understanding of estates', their game management departments, and gamekeepers striving to maintain relevance within the English and Welsh countryside (see Table 8.2).



Table 8.2. Key Opportunity and Adaptation for estate-based GMSP

Opportunity and/ or Adaptation	Description and Examples
Addressing Negative Public Opinion and Overcoming Internal Issues	<p>Efforts made at the estate and game management level to ensure continuity of GMSP as a viable livelihood. Actions taken to enhance the public image of both the estates and GMSP. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Media and Open Communication</li> </ul> <p>At the level of the gamekeeper, proactive measures taken to address negative perceptions of GMSP and the gamekeeping profession. Efforts highlight the interconnected nature of adaptation strategies used within the Field Sport sector. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Changing Role of a Good Gamekeeper</li> </ul>
Land Use and Access Adaptation	<p>Adaptation strategies at the estate management level to generate models of resilience. This can increasingly marginalise GMSP within the estate framework as new land use and access demands arise. Issues surrounding GMSP found to create tensions with existing land uses, but also offer opportunities for compromise and the development of solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Embracing Tourism and Leisure Access and Land Use</li> <li>○ Environmental Land Use Moves for Resilience GMSP</li> </ul>

#### 8.4.1. Addressing Negative Public Opinion and Overcoming Internal Issues

A recurring theme that emerged throughout the results chapters was the recognition of a growing need to improve the public image of private estates and game management practice (4.3.4, 7.2.2), as well as to address internal issues (8.3.2). These strategies mark a significant departure from the historical association of the private estate with elite and exclusive sporting pursuits (Durie, 2008). The findings therefore contribute to understanding rural landscapes as sites of evolving dynamics (Woods, 2006) and more

broadly the countryside as a space of complex and unstable relations (Bell & Osti, 2010; Woods, 2011). Within this context, the thesis showcases the innovation and efforts undertaken to forge greater levels of acceptance and value across private estates and within game management practices. Strategies employed to address the need for improved public opinion and to overcome internal challenges within the realm of GMSP are explored in the following sub-sections.

#### Media and Open Communication to Enhance the Public Image

At the level of estate management and the Field Sport Sector, there was consistent evidence of recognition and desire to reshape public perception and improve communication, particularly public outlooks associated with GMSP and the estates themselves via forward-thinking and contemporary models (4.2.3, 4.3.3. and 7.2.2). These efforts align with similar performative shifts observed in rural studies, where maintaining a place of relevance, particularly for threatened groups or individuals in the rural landscape is crucial (Edensor, 2006; Woods, 2010). Considering this, 58% (3/5) of RS respondents (Table 4.10) and nearly a quarter of ES respondents (25%) identified increased public education and engagement as key areas of opportunity. Box 8.6 showcases some examples.

Box. 8.6. Examples of Field Sport Representatives and Estate managers efforts to shape positive images and outlooks of the Estates' and GMSP:

Field Sport Representatives (4.2.3, 4.3.4) - RS Survey Respondents

Galbraith, an editor for the Shooting Times, acknowledges the impact of legislation and public perception of Field Sports. He provides examples of how certain features, like large commercial shoots and rook control, have been reduced in favour of activities that have a broader appeal, such as conservation efforts targeting deer or greylag geese (RS 22, Shooting Times Editor, Patrick Galbraith).

An anonymous Field Sport representative (RS) who is a member of both BASC and GWCT sees an opportunity to challenge misconceptions associated with shooting. They advocate increased public visibility and adherence to codes of good conduct within GMSP, focusing on promoting positive aspects of Field Sports (RS 9, BASC & GWCT member).

Estate Managers (4.3.4) - ES Survey Respondents

The manager of the Connelton estate emphasises the importance of public perception and the need to engage with the public as a vital aspect of game and estate management (ES 10, Connelton).

Saltmarsh's manager believes that one of the key opportunities lies in educating and establishing communication with the public to improve their understanding of game management and estate's efforts (ES 11, Saltmarch).

Estate Managers (7.2.2) - Case Study Participants

Edwin, Marlott's manager, utilised the Covid-19 lockdown period to revamp and update the estates website. He recognises the significance of this effort and emphasises Marlott's increased focus on engaging with people in recent years.

Harold, the manager of Highbeck Estate, has developed a comprehensive publicly published 25-year management plan for the estate. The plan showcases Highbeck's commitment to fulfilling various criteria, including, commercial, environmental, and social objectives.

The examples in Box 8.6 emphasise shared influential behaviour among estate management and the Field Sport sector, resonating with the need for adaptation, effective communication and to address public perception. These reflections also demonstrate a desire for positive change and a shift towards more ethical and transparent approaches within the sector. Furthermore, the examples showcase how tangible adaptations can directly reshape the current relevance and meaning associated with game management practices (Edensor, 2006).

To achieve these goals, the use of media channels and a desire for more open engagement was recognised as important. By leveraging various media platforms, estate managers and sector representatives can enhance their public image and capture a wider audience. This highlights the transcending of spatial boundaries and aligns with similar strategies that have been employed to foster positive associations within agricultural livelihoods and land management (Riley & Robertson, 2021; Sutherland, 2020).

In sum, the shared influential behaviour, desires for positive changes, and emphasis on effective communication and media engagement underscore the need for adaptation within estate management and the Field Sport sector. These efforts aim to reshape public perception, educate a wider audience, and promote more ethical and transparent practices, ultimately working to safeguard the continued relevance of such associated practices and private land holdings.

#### The Changing Role of a Good Gamekeeper

One noteworthy theme particularly evident in the case study estates was gamekeepers and their close associates' efforts to change narratives and behaviour associated with GMSP (7.2-3). Given the significance of this subject area within the research project, and lack of attention drawn to gamekeepers in prior Social Scientific research (2.4.2), the structure of this section deviates slightly to allow for a more substantive discussion on this subject matter. Table 8.3 draws on evidence gathered throughout the research project, summarising instances of narrative re-coding of estate priorities and game management strategies, including the role of the gamekeeper. This equates to new narratives of GMSP and 'good' gamekeeping.

Table 8.3. A comparison of historical and contemporary 'good' game management and shooting practice, with emphasis on the estate context.

Historical Strategies and Trends (1970+)	Contemporary Strategies and Trends (2021+)
GMSP implemented alongside a moderate number of established land uses.	GMSP occurring alongside increasingly multifunctional land uses.
Employment of a socially reserved workforce and maintenance of private estate boundaries.	Emphasis on a more socially engaged workforce, recognising the importance of a balance in the integration or separation between private and public spaces within this estate boundaries.
Growing scale of GMSP, including game release, land managed for game and emphasis on game bag size (yield focus).	The adoption of lower intensity game release and management practices, focus on quality rather than quantity of game as an output.
High input methods (chemicals, game bird numbers).	Reduced reliance on input methods such as chemicals and large game bird numbers for the shoot.
Emphasis on expansive pest and predator control, driven by desire to maximise yields.	Emphasis on maintaining a balance in pest and predator control, driven by the recognition of the conservation benefits associated with game management.
Focus on the cultural and traditional aspects of game management for sport.	Continued appreciation of the cultural and traditional aspects of the sport, but with a greater emphasis on the conservation benefits that game management can provide.
Emphasis on recreational value associated with game shooting.	Emphasis on public engagement with the estates and game management activities, recognising the importance of involving a broader range of groups and individuals.
Growing emphasis on achieving economies of scale by scaling up practices for profitability.	Prioritisation of maintaining the local economy, ensuring the continuity of GMSP alongside other more financially centred estate activities.
Limited emphasis on the value of game as a food source, resulting in relatively low value attributed to dead game.	Emphasis placed on recognising and improving consumptive markets for game as a food source.

The points emphasised in Table 8.3 expand the conceptualisation of the 'good farmer', (Burton, 2004; Sutherland & Calo, 2020), introduced in Chapter 2.2. This conceptualisation emphasises particularly where enhanced value is placed and how the actions of an individual are shown to relate to the perception of an Estate or even the entire Field Sport sector. Furthermore, this conceptualisation of 'the good gamekeeper' explores how these narratives have been influenced by socio-cultural shifts and punitive

legislative changes aimed at reforming GMSP. Examples of such narrative re-coding draw on evidence gathered throughout the research project.

Column one (Table 8.3) shows that from the 1970s onwards trends observed in GMSP, like those observed in agriculture, were driven by policy incentives. This includes a focus on high input, large yield and intensive or commercialised regimes (Burton, 2004), coupled with the recreational value of game shooting and the separation of this activity from public or publicly engaged aspects of land management. In contrast, the second column highlights significant adaptation in game management, with increased attention on developing a strong supply chain for (shot) game birds from shoots (7.2.3) and the ecological consequence of GMSP (7.3.3). De-intensification is also observed as a trend, with growing emphasis on promoting high biodiversity and landscape restoration as well as meeting more land use demands and involving more multifunctional uses (ibid). While there is some continuity in the relationship between GMSP, culture and tradition, renewed attention is given to other dimensions of game management, including output and broader engagement with those outside of the sector.

Two specific points from Table 8.3 will now be further explored: (a) Public Engagement and (b) Transitioning from Intense to Resilient Game Management, which further draw together points on reduced intensity of GMSP and resilient game meat markets. Also of note is the perception of a good gamekeeper, much like that of a good farmer, varies from estate-to-estate, based on their associated value and priorities. Despite these variations, there are overarching similarities in the desired outcomes associated with 'good' work.

#### a.) Public Engagement

Clear indications of attempts to improve public perception were evident. Some gamekeepers and managers presented themselves as conscious and welcoming individuals who adeptly navigate shared land and resources and engage with an increasing number of stakeholders and estate actors. They further were shown to position both themselves and those surrounding them as a "skilled workforce" employing sensitive approaches to justify contentious conservation practices, such as pest and

predator control (Thomson et al., 2020, p.1). Throughout 7.2 and 7.3, participants demonstrated awareness of their behaviour, not only in their interactions with me as the researcher but also in how they presented themselves to the wider public (Box 8.7).

Box 8.7. Examples of Gamekeepers Conscious Consideration of their public behaviour:

Tim, the head keeper on Tinsworth, recognised the cleaner and smarter husbandry. He emphasises the importance of justifiable management practices and states that gamekeepers must only be conducting work they would be show to others. He refers to historical poor practices and examples of intensive GMSP to emphasise the need for improvement.

Robert, another head keeper (on Dolwyn), emphasises the significance of advocating for the preservation of gamekeeping. He highlights the importance of actively engaging with public bodies to ensure opportunities for future generations of gamekeepers.

Archie demonstrates notable efforts to engage with the public when performing daily tasks. He maintains this attitude even in challenging situations, such as when he encounters someone he expects has been damaging some of his traps.

This clear demonstration of public engagement by gamekeepers has the potential to foster increased tolerance and connection between the gamekeepers or managers and a broader audience. Consequently, this contributes to enhanced narratives associated with GMSP and has the potential to improve relationships amongst polarised groups (Redpath & Thirgood, 2009). These adaptations further align with "new rules of play" that Sutherland and Cato (2020, p.533) discuss, thereby ensuring the continued relevance and significance of the gamekeeper, like that of the farmer within current rural frameworks (Cusworth & Dodsworth, 2021; Sutherland & Calo, 2020).

#### b.) Transitioning from Intense to Resilient Game Management

Examples of game managers, estate owners and gamekeepers' distancing themselves from intensive and commercial models of management was also a trend (Table 4.30), with 4.3.4 highlighting how 35% of ESs believed they would scale back game management over the next 25 years. Similarly, across estate examples (7.2), emphasis was placed on smaller and less intensive shooting profiles, with evident re-evaluation of what constitutes respectable shooting practice. While historically the value of a game-estate and its shoot were quantifiable, at least in terms of shot game (Durie, 2008), emphasis is

now shown at least within examples studied in this thesis on the quality of game bird management and the character of the shoot itself (Box 8.8).

Box 8.8. Examples of Estate and Shoot managers emphasising scaled back approaches to GMSP, taken from 7.2.3:

Alex, the estate owner, and manager of Chigley's acknowledges the controversial nature of large game bird numbers and believes offering fewer birds and focusing on a high-quality sporting experience is a more appropriate and justifiable option going forward. She also notes that clients seeking good sport are increasingly likely to prefer models like hers.

Max, the manager of Darrowby, plans to reduce the size of game bags and decrease the number of driven shooting days. Instead, he aims to introduce small walked-up shooting, which he considers more suitable for the present time.

Edwin, the owner of Marlott's estate, highlights how they have scaled back the shoot from eight drives in a day to a significantly lower number. This adjustment is made in response to ethical concerns associated with big game bird days.

The examples highlight the increasing importance of adopting scaling back approaches to game bird shooting and focusing on quality due to ethical considerations and changing sector trends. This shift aligns with concerns raised elsewhere about the ecological impact of large-scale driven shooting and the need to mitigate negative effects on non-target wildlife (Madden & Sage, 2020; Werrity, 2019).

Related to these trends, growing enthusiasm among estates were also evident in developing better markets for game meat. These trends were first recorded in 4.2.4, where a quarter of ESs highlighted supply chain difficulties as one of the biggest challenges they faced, but later 16% of ESs respondents highlighted improving the 'Sustainability of Shooting' as one of the biggest opportunities they saw ahead (Table. 4.29). This was further explored in 7.2.3, with examples drawn from this shown in Box 8.9.



Box 8.9. Examples of increased efforts to marketize game meat and establish viable markets for shot game, taken from 7.2.3:

Joe, the gamekeeper on Marlott, and Edwin, the estate owner and manager recognise the value of pheasant and partridge as good food products. They emphasise the lean and free-range nature of the meat. They believe that having viable markets for the game is crucial in justifying game shooting and management. They also make efforts to encourage shooters to eat game by pre-preparing it.

Robert, a head keeper on Dolwyn, discussed the efforts he and the estate owner have made to establish markets not only for game meat on their estate but also in the surrounding Welsh countryside. They have plans to sell pheasant sausages and burgers in the popular farm shop and food outlets on the estate.

Tim, the head gamekeeper on Tinsworth, recognises the importance of selling game meat for consumption in the eye of the public. This suggests that he understands the significance of presenting game meat as a viable food option to maintain support for the sector.

This prioritisation offers financial revenue and opportunities to improve socio-cultural capital, like the transitions observed in recent decades within deer and forest management on Scotland's larger estates (Bowditch et al., 2019; Glass, et al., 2013a; MacMillan & Leitch, 2008). The establishment of robust game meat supply chains, including the creation of local markets and removal of lead shot, indeed is shown to be gaining traction, particularly on larger and more diversified estates like Marlott and Dolwyn. These shifts not only enhance supply chain resilience and local distribution but also help mitigate effects of post-Brexit and Covid related trade disruptions which, although there is little prior data on, was evident in this study. Beyond this research too, the shooting and Field Sport sector is making greater efforts to ensure 'good practices' are being adopted, with the creation of the British Game Alliance (BGA - formally British Game Assurance) as a key marketing body. It launched the 'Eat Wild' campaign in 2018, tasked with the job of improving the social and economic UK value of game as a consumptive product (British Game Assurance, 2018a-b). Research findings correspond with such BGA campaigns to promote high quality game meat as an alternative to readily available poultry, marketed as a sustainable and wholesome British product. Research into this area is limited, a clear area for future study.

In all, social discourses and policy changes are playing a significant role in shaping land use practices and determining accepted or contested behaviours (Sutherland & Calo, 2020). This is also exemplified by the transition of certain case estates towards adopting even more multi-functional land uses in response to socio-political shifts, which in some instances conflict with and move away from GMSP, considered next.

#### 8.4.2. Land Use and Access Adaptation

Building upon discussions on 'Land Use and Access Competition' (8.3), this section focuses on opportunities and resilience strategies related to game management actors in the case study and surveyed estates. The research findings showcase how these actors are actively working to maintain relevance amidst changing societal values and evolving purposes associated with rural land (Livingstone et al., 2021; Slee et al., 2014). This section refers to established examples of 'Tourism and Leisure Access and Use' and 'Environmental Land Use', highlighting adaptation as an opportunity rather than threat, contrasting with section 8.3. The observed shifts indicate the potential for private rural estates to contribute even more to society's broader needs by providing public goods.

#### Embracing Tourism and Leisure Access and Land Use

The findings highlight advancements in the provision of a breadth of enterprises and amenities within the estate framework, suited to a wider and more public audience. While provision of public goods by estates is not necessarily new (Macmillan et al 2010), this research shows renewed engagement today. These patterns demonstrate the use of place specific assets to generate more value via consumption based economic activity, alongside established provisions. Examples correspond with research elsewhere which highlights rural areas of the global North continuing to undergo substantive social and economic restructuring (Kordel, 2016; Livingstone et al., 2021; Munton, 2009; Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019). In sum, there is a wide spectrum of initiatives and financially rewarding activity that can be drawn from estates' land-based assets (Bateman & Balmford, 2018). In enacting such transition and further development of these enterprises, the estates, like other rural land holdings, can maintain relevance and demonstrate their responsiveness and resilience to socio-political value transitions. They maintain a necessary and desirable function, not least in the eyes of public and political

bodies (Halfacree, 1997; Woods, 2011). Such resilience and adaptation arguably parallel the level of changes and socio-economic turbulence which last took place after World War Two (Beckett & Turner, 2007; Thompson, 1990).

These trends are however not equally representative across the case estates. They are associated with certain factors, including (1) financial capacity for adaptation, (2) landowners' willingness to adapt, and (3) value system governing the individual estate. This fits in line with prior research on private estate transition and management, such as how diversification is often linked to resource abundance and more substantive economies of scale (Glass et al., 2013a; Hindle et al., 2014; MacMillan & Phillip, 2010), as well as ownership structure and attitude (Urquhart et al., 2012).

A very interesting trend is the increase in provision and improvement to established holiday accommodation within the estates, with a strong correlation between this and Covid-19 experiences (7.4.2; Box 8.10). Specifically, the combination of limited estate activity during the pandemic, including reduced shoot seasons, and the growing popularity of accessing rural land following the easing of restrictions, created an opportunity for several estates to venture into or expand their holiday accommodation offerings (Box. 8.10).

Box 8.10. Showcases examples of case study estates that have embracing holiday accommodation as a component of their land use diversification. Examples are drawn from 7.4.2:

Alex, the estate owner of Chigley, sees the logic in prioritising holiday accommodation. She has even divided her family home to include holiday rentals, indicating her commitment to embracing this aspect of as part of her business model.

Edwin, the owner, and manager of Marlott, mentions his diversification efforts dating back to the 1990s, which includes holiday lets. These initiatives have since expanded to engage more public facing activities. Edwin used the lockdown period to expand some of the larger holiday cottages on the estate, reflecting the ongoing investment in this area.

Peter, the owner of the remote upland estate Frithdale, considers the conversion of a run-down barn into a hotel as a means of attracting more tourists.

Kevin, an office employee on Dolwyn, shares that the estate is actively pursuing luxury holiday accommodation opportunities for the first time. This indicates a strategic decision to tap into the market for holiday rentals.

Max, the owner of Darrowby, has been converting barns into holiday cottages, aligning with the trends observed in the popularity of rural UK tourism in the summer of 2021. This suggests he too is capitalising on the demand for countryside holiday accommodation, a trend he expects to see continue.

This emerging field of post Covid-19 inquiry relates to pre-existing notions that rural areas with perceived aesthetic value are attractive to tourists (Halfacree, 2012). Private estates, with their closely controlled frameworks, are particularly suitable for such ventures. However, these shifts towards consumptive uses of the landscape can lead to increased homogeneity and place estates, amenities and actors into deeper and more competitive consumptive networks (Everett, 2012; Woods, 2007; Yarwood & Evans, 2000), potentially diluting individual identity. Nevertheless, embracing these consumptive uses opens niche opportunities for localised goods production and landscape engagement, which may enhance the public relevance of private estates. This, in turn, can challenge critiques of private estates as serving elite and exclusive functions, as has been a general perception for much of their existence (Hoyle, 2007; Martin, 2011b; Shrubsole, 2019). In summary, these adaptations demonstrate changes in rural life and activities, presenting current and future models of estates that actively engage with the public and blur traditional narratives (MacMillan et al., 2010; Wightman et al., 2010).

## Environmental Moves for Resilience GMSP

Another interesting observation evident across the research (Chapters 4-7) was a focus and desire for game management and shooting practice to be associated with positive environmental and ecological successes in land management and landscape interventions. These findings contribute to our knowledge and understanding of contemporary English and Welsh game management, and the interactions of gamekeepers across private estates and the wider rural landscape. Box 8.11 provides examples of some instances where gamekeepers and estate managers met during fieldwork were eager to demonstrate their work's positive environmental or ecological effects.

Box. 8.11. Examples of positive environmental land management practice on estates and within their GMSP strategies:

### Habitat Restoration:

Robert explained how wild and organic game cover has created a haven for wild insect life and natural food sources for wild birds as well as the pheasants he manages (7.3.3).

Archie angles the positive environmental outcomes to game management, comparing this to the damaging attributes of conventional arable agricultural management and heavy use of pesticides which he says are a mainstay of agriculture in this area of South-west England (7.3.3).

Peter highlighted the re-wetting and afforestation projects taking place in the moorlands his estate manages for pheasant and grouse (7.4.3).

Harold discusses the increased environmental attention his estate has on land management, including hay meadow restoration and re-vegetation of eroded peat areas (7.4.3).

### Pest and Predator Control:

Archie justifies grey squirrel traps which had been destroyed as a useful conservation method for bringing back the threatened population of red squirrel (6.2.5).

Helen believes despite the negative press gamekeepers still receive; many local wild bird's chick success rates would be much less without predator control (6.2.5).

Robert views the Welsh governments increasingly restrictive application of the general licence, for use by gamekeepers as hypocritical when conservation groups ask for the help of gamekeepers to reintroduce the curlew in Wales - a threatened wader bird species (6.2.5).

Through the given examples (Box. 8.11), GMSP is justified through its association with enhanced biodiversity and habitat prospects. These goals are achieved through management strategies such as pest and predator control and a shift away from intensive and monocultural management strategies. In several examples, actors involved in game management discussed how they feel blamed for issues relating to ecology and the environment, such as biodiversity reduction, hedgerow loss, peat degradation and other poor environmental land management practices (8.3.1). Attempting to disassociate from these practices, actors have created resilience pathways by offering tangible contributions to environmental restoration and wildlife conservation. These findings contrast the negative ecological associations also identified with GMSP in the literature review (2.4.3), especially associated with driven forms of GMSP, and align closely with the broader 'Codes of Good Shooting Practice' identified by the Field Sport sector (Countryside Alliance et al., 2020).

The research also highlights how estate-based game management continues to contribute environmental benefits and ecosystem services and can be justified through current and future policy direction towards environmental land management (2.3.2). For instance, it can involve carbon capture and storage through peatland restoration and afforestation, in line with other forms of rural land management adaptation (Bowditch et al., 2019; Cusworth & Dodsworth, 2021; Riley, 2011; Sutherland et al., 2016).

It is important to note nonetheless, that some estate models, represented through survey and case examples, show less drastic shifts and a continuum of established practices and norms are justified in the upholding of traditional cultural values. In these instances, resilience may be lower, as is their willingness to compromise their cultural and economic traditions of land use and management prioritisation. However, these remained a minority, with most findings supporting the trends mentioned above. Future investigation is needed to expand the body of research in this area and account for game management within policy transition, as discussed in 9.3.

## 8.5. Chapter Summary

Overall, the findings of the study align with prior research on the dynamic nature of land use and management systems, and the responsive nature of such systems to societal change (Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019). The results emphasise how game management continues to play a significant role in private estates and the wider rural landscape, shaping rural England and Wales today. This resonates with previous studies in Scotland (Bowditch et al., 2019; Higgins et al., 2002; Hindle et al., 2014; MacMillan et al., 2010) and those which have focused predominantly on documentation of this subject matter during the late 19th-mid 20th centuries (Hoyle, 2007; Martin, 2011).

Section 8.2 outlined how a methodological framework based upon assemblage thinking can aid interpretation of the private estate and game management, revealing the individuals and elements that exist within these spaces and their changing relationships. Section 8.3 addressed key threats to game management and the private estate framework, highlighting the interlink between public opinion and growing stakes in land use adaptation. These themes, to varying degrees, are changing the composition of estates, posing a threat to their current functioning, and particularly impacting established land management, including game management. These themes re-emerged and were explored further in Section 8.4, where adaptations and opportunities for game management and private estates were examined. Responses to societal shifts in the need and demands of the rural landscape were explored through the lens of game management and the private estate. A reframing of estate and game management involved greater consumptive land use and environmental landscape adaptations.

The case estates presented in Chapter 7, along with the responses from ES respondents (4.3) and representatives from the wider sector (4.2), demonstrate a desire to counteract the negative public image that undermines their contribution to the wider landscape (Bowditch et al., 2019). Adaptations therefore include shifts towards smaller, high-quality game management with ecological successes and a broader focus on providing public goods, observed across some cases and discussed as unnecessary by the Field Sport sector (Chapters 4, 6,7). Additionally, the case estates demonstrated a response to

pressing ecological and environmental concerns and policy directives (Chapter 2, 4.2-3, 7). Estates however also displayed different levels of adaptive capacity and response, with larger and more diversified examples exhibiting greater capacity and willingness to adapt management strategies, consistent with previous findings (Glass et al., 2013a; Hindle et al., 2014). Topography is also identified as a factor contributing to the lack of diversification and continued heavy reliance on field sport on some estates (4.3.2, 5.4, 6.4.3). These varying factors all warrant further exploration.

For game sport and management, certain landscape-level adaptations can coexist with new configurations and even enhance the justification of game management as environmentally beneficial. However, these broader estate adaptations also place game management in an increasingly precarious position, where practices must undergo significant changes to remain justifiable within the current and future estate and wider rural land use shifts and policy directives. Conceptualisations such as of the 'good farmer' (Burton, 2004; Sutherland & Calo, 2020) and the 'squeezed middle' (Slee et al, 2014) offering a usefully means to express adaptation and the interconnectedness of estates and game management across rural spaces and beyond. While estate-based game management strategies are shown to be continually evolving, they also demonstrate an enduring presence.





## Chapter 9. Conclusion - Our Green and Pleasant Land Revisited: Exploring the Changing Dynamics of the Estate-Based Game Management Nexus in England and Wales

### 9.1. Contribution

#### 9.1.1. General Summary

This research has brought attention to longstanding and enduring features relating to the rural landscape - the presence of landed estates which can be traced back to the Norman Conquest and the continuity of driven game management practices which in its current form dates to at least the mid-19th century (Beckett & Turner, 2007; MacMillan & Phillip, 2010). The study makes substantial progress in filling some of the gaps in current Social Scientific engagement with this subject matter. For instance, critical debates about the future of rural land use and management, including prominent topics of land access and ownership, animal ethics, ecological considerations, and environmental concerns.

To achieve the outlined aims and objectives, the research has focused on the current manifestation of these game-estates through a two-fold qualitative study approach. This allowed the examination of key involved actors and components, placing them and game management within a broader framework amidst current significant rural land transition (Brown & Shucksmith, 2016; Burchardt et al., 2020).

In doing so the research project enriches our knowledge of some of the key pressures and opportunities faced at various spatial scales from the Field Sport Sector, game-estates, to individual actors. Further showcasing some of the adaptation strategies being created, continuing to forge relevance, and ultimately aiming to ensure succession. As well as further substantiating existing engagement with particularly marginalised key stakeholders, including understanding the "drivers, concerns and motivations" of gamekeepers (Thomson et al, 2018, p. 40; Thomson et al., 2020). The research therefore

makes a timely contribution to current understanding of estate-based game management in the English and Welsh countryside. The subject matter is embedded into landscapes that are today tasked with responding to multiple and often conflicting undertakings.

Before discussing the constraints (9.2) and potential future research areas identified in this thesis (9.3), a summary that directly re-visits the research aim and objectives (Box 9.1) is provided.

Box. 9.1. Research Aim and Objectives (Revisited):

Aim:

*To explore the contemporary and changing place of estate-based game management within the present-day English and Welsh countryside.*

Objectives:

RO1. To identify and explore the **diversity** of actors and land use practices that currently encompass the estate-game management nexus via application of assemblage as a methodological framework to better understand and interpret these sites.

RO2. To examine what key **pressures** are present today within game management, across the estates and through the wider countryside and explore game management's adaptations to them.

RO3. To examine what key **opportunities** are present today within game management, across the estates and through the wider countryside and explore game management's adaptations to them.

### 9.1.2. RO1: Diversity of Actors and Land Use Practices

To comprehensively explore and better understand game-estates, this research utilised the concept of place assemblage as a framework. This allowed for an examination of the diversity of actors and concomitant land use practices. Further, this enabled the interpretation of the spatial manifestations and dynamic relationships associated within and beyond these particular rural localities.

The first major research phase analysed the estates' position in the rural landscape from various perspectives, including a range of key rural stakeholders and estate models (Chapter 4). This included firstly drawing attention to seven interlinked Rural Stakeholder sub-sectors (*Field Sports, Charity & Campaigns, Environment & Conservation, Land Management, Recreational Activity, Education & Research and Rewilding*). The stakeholders not only stated their position on game management but also the drivers behind pressures and opportunities they perceived as impacting them. While 67% of the respondents represented the Field Sports sector this still provided a valuable breadth of knowledge, experiences and practices situated across the multi-functional rural landscape. It also provided insight into widescale patterns and trends affecting a range of stakeholders and factors that are specific to GMSP. A questionnaire survey of Estates and Shoots across England and Wales ran in tandem with this. This questionnaire captured data which highlighted a range of models, structures, practices, and actors embedded specifically within the game-estate nexus. Together, the implementation of these questionnaires yielded a substantial amount of data, enabling a comprehensive understanding and placement of game-estates in the present context. This was particularly valuable as it helped to address absences in the existing literature, while establishing a contextual framework for studying game-estates. These questionnaires served to bridge knowledge gaps and provided solid foundations for situating the study within broader scholarly discourses.

The study proceeded to examine specific case study examples, providing a deeper exploration of how game-estates currently manifest within England and Wales. These case studies are detailed in Chapters 5-7.

In total, eight case studies were conducted, consisting of four key and four supporting illustrative examples. This approach allowed for a focused and nuanced analysis of lived experiences, concerns and opinions of the actors involved. These actors included gamekeepers, estate owners, shoot and estate managers, as well as other estate workers. A key attribute of this multi-dimensional framework is that it contributed to a range of debates over land use and management, centring on an angle which was identified early in the project as sorely in need of up-to-date research, especially in the case of

gamekeepers where independent research has been largely neglected (Thomson et al., 2020).

This research suggested that such non-agrarian rural working groups are often present-day manifestations of marginalised 'rural Others' (Cloke & Little, 1997; Halfacree, 2003; Thomson et al., 2020). By including their perspectives, the research also addresses the importance of acknowledging the diversity of individuals involved. This is particularly relevant in the current context where debates surrounding game management and private land ownership are highly contentious. These debates reflect discussions that emerged in the early 2000s, which aimed to define and regulate rurality (Woods, 2003, 2009). As a result of these discussions, non-agrarian rural groups, like those examined in this research, were shown to be mobilising in defence of their interests and livelihoods. By acknowledging and studying these non-agrarian rural working groups, the research contributes to greater and more inclusive understanding of the current rural dynamics involved.

The research provides a detailed profile of game spaces, enhancing our understanding of what are still very much live elements in the landscape continuum. Also, much needed attention is brought to the relationships that game-estates and key actors have and play within the contemporary rural framework. By emphasising the importance of recognising and evaluating the diverse stakeholders and practices involved in rural space sheds light on complex interactions between people, place, and the environment. This research enriches our understanding of the connections and interdependencies within such game spaces, offering valuable insight into their functioning and significance within the broader rural context.

### 9.1.3. RO2: Pressures

The research highlighted how game management faces significant pressures at multiple levels within the rural landscape. Factors identified as prominent issues by key actors included matters of poor public perception, internal issues, and land use and access competition. All of which were shown to create substantial challenges to game management, particularly within the private estate framework (Chapters 4-7). The

research identifies the cumulative effects of these pressures, which pose specific risks to the livelihoods of the gamekeepers and operations involved.

In terms of poor public perception, the research draws attention to the thoughts and feelings of involved GMSP actors. Specifically, it focuses on those at the estate level who felt that they faced prejudicial condemnation, punitive legislation, and were targeted for their roles in GMSP (Chapter 6).

Another key finding related to the increasingly complex interplay and evident tensions between game management, private land management, and the broader needs and desires placed on rural land areas. These findings emphasised the need to reconsider the material and expressive roles assigned to game management within and beyond the estates, particularly in response to the increasing diversified and multifunction needs and desires for the rural landscape (Brouwer & Van Der Heide, 2012; Rønningen & Flemsæter, 2019; Sutherland et al., 2016). Game management within these estate frameworks was found to be in a precarious position, with contentions arising at various scales and angles. This included shifts in estate entrepreneurship to reflect growing areas of interest, particularly in the provision of public goods (including tourism and leisure) and solutions to climatic and biodiversity concerns. Here, the concept of a 'squeezed middle' introduced by Slee et al (2014) in relation to the Scottish uplands was expanded. This conceptualisation helps to explain how game management and key actors are increasingly compelled to compete for both material and expressive landscape value. While these trends were shown to be most pronounced on more diversified estates, as the direction of rural policy moves in favour of multifunctional rural landscapes the cumulative effect is to put much pressure on the future of game management within landed estates more generally (Bateman & Balmford, 2018; Defra, 2021b).

Considering the cumulative pressures faced by game management within the estates, their future is presented to be uncertain. It is further evident that significant action must be taken to develop estate-based models of game management that can effectively address a growing range of current needs and expectations. This leaves little margin for error or poor behaviour, especially regarding legal compliance relating to pest and

predator control, as well as all forms of driven game management (Chapter 6). Overall, these circumstances generate considerable unease among key stakeholders regarding their future livelihoods and operations, as they face increasing scrutiny of the practices that underpin GMSP.

#### 9.1.4. RO3: Opportunities

Despite all the outlined pressures, the game-estates and broader field of game management and field sports exhibited remarkable adaptive capacity in addressing the challenges they faced. This adaptability is driven by the widespread recognition of the need to evolve to changing circumstances, capitalising on the unique landscape assets associated with each estate. Various key opportunities were shown to have emerged from this realisation, redefining the landscape value of GMSP, improving public communication, and re-strategizing rural place relations and landscape integration within shifting estate use and management frameworks.

The identified areas for opportunity and adaptation include effectively responding to shifting public opinion and the addressing of certain internal issues concerning GMSP. Additionally, navigating land use and adapting access strategies were shown to play a critical role in shaping current and future game management practices within the estates and wider countryside.

In terms of responding to shifting public opinion and internal issues, game management was shown to be able to transition to more resilient methods and practices, shifting behaviour to include more public and open dialogue of GMSP, greater embracement of smaller scale practices and a return to focus on cultural traditions, alongside linking GMSP with landscape preservation and conservation (Chapter 7). At the game management level this expressed in changes to behaviour and practices. The conceptualisation of the 'good gamekeeper' is useful here drawing on established understanding of the 'good farmer' (Burton, 2004; Sutherland & Calo, 2020), highlighting a re-coding of estate priorities and game management strategies to create new narratives of good GMSP and to establish just how they can adapt and embrace opportunities (Chapter 8). For instance,

they could give less emphasis on intensive practice, be more open to at least some forms of public engagement, and further develop suitable markets for game meat.

The findings also highlight the potential for the estates to contribute to a greater focus on a broad range of public demands. For instance, there are opportunities to diversify into leisure and tourism, coexisting with active game management in other areas of the estates, as well as exploring more environmentally friendly land use within and beyond established land-based activities. While these adaptations may deviate from traditional notions of gamekeeping and game management, they present avenues for continuity of GMSP within the rural landscape.

#### 9.1.5. Overall Summary: Answering the Aim

In conclusion, this research project aimed to:

***Explore the contemporary and changing place of estate-based game management within the present-day English and Welsh countryside.***

This research project is framed within the conceptual acceptance that only a partial picture can be captured of a complex and nuanced landscape phenomenon (Woods et al., 2021). What is clear is that the place of estate-based game management is one which is continually evolving. With various stakeholders, from the Rural Stakeholders who steer the direction of rural land use and access, the Field Sports sector which directs many of those involved in GMSP, estates who base both cultural and material value on its continuum, to the gamekeepers whose livelihoods are interwoven with it; there is widespread acknowledgement of the changing nature of its spatial positioning. Additionally, the research emphasises the importance of the contextual setting of game-estates and the individuality of each estate, while also identifying shared influences and patterns among actors, estates, and practices. Crucially, too, the research recognises the multifaceted expectations placed on the land where these practices occur.

Within this context, the game-estates examined in this thesis provide a lens to critically interrogate the market-driven model underlying our society, showcasing the ongoing reorganisation efforts to address challenges and ultimately demonstrate the resilience of

estate-based game management. As Michael Woods (2011, p. 264) said of rurality in general terms, there are many ways it can be "imagined, described, performed and materialised" and this is the case for game-estates too. In any case, no longer can these practices nor the private landholdings that uphold them be justified merely as "a plaything amongst the super-rich" (Bujak, 2007, p.3). Increasingly, game management and the conduct of estates are in the spotlight. This context necessitates the need to bring direct attention to those who are involved in these practices and spatial sites to really understand what is happening within such vital landscapes. It is with this I argue that the heyday of estate-based GMSP is over, and it is certainly hard for any but the most wishful reader to imagine a revival to a level on a par with that of the Edwardian era (Martin, 2011). It is however certainly conceivable that a place for these practices, albeit in a reduced and perhaps different spatial arrangement, will for now at least find a way to remain.

Ultimately, this research sought to encourage a focus on and broader thinking about game spaces, game-estates, and game management, as well as key actors involved in these contexts. In doing so, this thesis serves as a foundation to foster a larger conversation about the complexities and dynamics around game management and private estates within the ever-changing countryside. It is hoped that this research does just that in furthering exploration and dialogue around game management situated within the private estate.

To conclude, this research makes a significant contribution to understanding estate-based game management across England and Wales, particularly its place-based manifestations situated within the wider context of rural transition. By exploring the diversity of actors, land use practices, pressures, and opportunities within the game-estate nexus, the research enriches our knowledge of these complex sites. It emphasises changes in public perception, the need for adaptive strategies, and alignment with broader land use and management objectives. The findings therefore provide valuable insights for stakeholders involved in estate-game management and to inform future research directions in this field.



## 9.2. Constraints of the Research Project

This section outlines some of the constraints faced within the research project, despite it fulfilling the outlined aims and objectives. Where possible the effects of these were mitigated throughout the research project and future research recommendations (9.3) will seek to overcome identified shortcomings.

### 9.2.1. Pandemic Research

While the immediate effects of a global pandemic may have diminished, it would be wrong to overlook the magnitude of physical and emotional turmoil that arose from conducting this thesis during the Covid-19 pandemic. Key civic lockdown events taking place between March and December 2021 in the UK are a standout factor here (Institute for Government Analysis, 2022).

The fieldwork took place amid numerous waves of government-imposed lockdowns, periods which deeply disrupted the established working patterns of the sectors, organisations, and individuals the project relied on. This is without dwelling in detail on the magnitude of human loss to life, with over 67,350 deaths registered across England and Wales during 2021 due to Covid-19, many of which impacted on the communities for which I required access (ons.gov.uk, 2021, p.1).

As a result, the originally planned immersive, ethnographic research strategy had to be abandoned. This led to a period of hastened re-evaluation and exploration of what could be possible, interrogating recent articles on remote qualitative research inquiry in the hope of finding answers on how one can conduct such research during an all-encompassing event (Dodds & Hess, 2020; Jowett, 2020; Kaye, 2020; Postill, 2017). The resulting two-phase strategy formed the outcome of this. Notably, it involved reducing in-person engagement and the subsequent development of two digitally dispersed questionnaires (Phase One). The second phase (Phase Two) comprised of case study research which was designed to allow for both in-person and remote investigation dependent on local authority Covid-19 protocols and participants preferences for engagement (Chapter 3).

Consequently, the adapted research strategy resulted in a larger pool of data and a broader focus compared to the originally intended study. Despite such setbacks and restructuring of the project, the resultant work provided a more comprehensive framework in an area that has received limited attention. This allowed the research to encompass rural stakeholders and estate engagement at the questionnaire level as well as interviews and observation with relevant estate-based participants.

This adapted research strategy did however account for some of the inconsistencies present in the data set. This included heavier emphasis on geographical areas that I could access and limitations on the amount of place-based data that could be collected.

Despite these setbacks, the adaptations and mitigation strategies adopted during the research project served as a test of the resilience of the research strategy (and researcher). Key adaptations further demonstrated the strength of the strategy, as it proved to be flexible and adaptable. Elements could easily be drawn on within future work (9.3). Another advantage of this strategy was that the variation in data consistency, particularly within case study estates, helped to maintain anonymity and reduce the traceability of participants and their respective locations (Saunders et al., 2015).

### 9.2.2. Data Bias

Another constraint of the research project was the potential presence of data bias, which could influence the quality and reliability of the recorded data. However, conscious efforts were made to mitigate the effects of such bias and ensure the overall quality and reliability of the research findings.

One form of acknowledged bias is research bias, which can arise when the researcher has prior knowledge or association with the research area, as outlined in the 'Positionality & Reflexivity' section (Chapter 3). This section laid out why it was important to recognise that such familiarity or preconceived notions could influence the interpretation of results (Longhurst, 2016; Winchester & Rofe, 2010). To address this potential bias, Chapter 3 outlined the significant efforts made to critically negotiate this, including the use of a

research diary. Moreover, clear advantages were also highlighted in researching in an area where the researcher had familiarity (Bell, 1994; Heley, 2011; Pini, 2004).

Respondent bias, particularly in the form of social desirability effect was also considered. This bias was observed during both phases of data collection and has been well-documented in previous research (Fetterman, 2009; Longhurst, 2016; Oerke & Bogner, 2013). I was particularly conscious of the potential for participants to respond in ways that supported idealised images of themselves or game management and the game-estates. For example, respondents often emphasised conservation efforts they perceived game management to be associated with (Chapters 4-7). While this may be the case, it is important to note that these perspectives may overlook opinions held by other Rural Stakeholders (4.2.4) and may not fully reflect ongoing reviews of management strategies and practices highlighted in the literature review (Chapter 2).

To counterbalance this bias, I integrated research diary reflections as an alternative narrative voice in boxes throughout the results Chapters (4-7). Additionally, multiple research methods were employed to identify patterns in the claims being made, providing a more balanced narrative (Engin, 2011; Freeman, 2020; Nadin & Cassell, 2006).

By actively acknowledging and addressing potential sources of bias, the research project established a strong foundation for its findings and ensured the robustness of its conclusions.

### 9.2.3. Partial Picture

Although the research project provides valuable insights and perspectives on game management practices within the sampled estates, it is important to reiterate that the data gathered has never aimed to be highly generalisable or provide a complete picture (Creswell, 2013). It is however worth documenting factors that further limited the ability to offer a more comprehensive overview of private estates practising game management.

A significant factor contributing to this limitation was the lack of coherent and up-to-date registry of such landholdings within England and Wales (Shrubsole, 2019; Spike Lewis & Haf, 2020). This is despite the knowledge that approximately 36,000 landowners, comprising just 0.06% of the English and Welsh population, own half of this rural land (Shrubsole, 2019, p. 21) and that game management is widespread, covering over two-thirds of rural land areas in England and Wales (BASC, 2016, p.3). These absences of comprehensive data made it difficult to obtain a representative sample of private estates engaging in game management (Chapter 3). Consequently, the data collected only represented a specific subset of estates which were accessible based on the circumstances outlined in the preceding sub-sections. The findings and conclusions drawn from this research should therefore be interpreted only within the context of the addressed sample.

### 9.3. Future Research

There are ample opportunities for future research inquiry focused on game spaces, game-estates, private estates, and game management. Here, are a few possible avenues for future investigative study most closely related to the findings of this research.

#### 9.3.1. Comparative Data Sets

To enhance the validity and applicability of the project findings and their transferability to the wider research population, a comparative data set holds great promise. Two of the many potential avenues to consider here include a.) A follow-up study, revisiting the existing case study and questionnaire respondents 12-18 months following the completion of the initial research project. B.) A largescale and/or more longitudinal research strategy. Both would produce greater validity, reliability, and potential generalisability of research findings (Leung, 2015).

In terms of a follow-up study, conducting additional research in this area would provide valuable insights into the concerns and opportunities experienced by individuals involved in game management and across the private estates. This includes gamekeepers, shoot and estate managers, and other relevant groups. Such a study would also facilitate a more

in-depth analysis of the impact of the various factors that have been identified. For instance, specific studies could independently address public perception, changes in land use and access, or internal issues, as well as any of the key themes raised in Chapter 4, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, the effects of Covid-19 and the implication of post-Brexit scenarios, particularly regarding agri-environmental policies.

A largescale study and/or longitudinal research strategy based on game-estates in England and Wales also has potential to make valuable contributions. Firstly, this approach could directly address absences regarding the precise locations and other missing details associated with private estates practising GMSP across England and Wales, substantiating existing works (Shrubsole, 2019; Spike Lewis & Haf, 2020). Such research endeavours would have the potential to provide better understanding of variability across estates, including their management strategies, game bird species prioritisation, ownership structure, topography, future direction of land use and management priorities. This would also align well with previous studies on estate sustainability, such as work conducted by Glass et al (2012) in Scotland. Additionally, such a study could provide a platform to examine and establish independent research on models of 'good practice' within game management. These models could then be adopted at numerous scales, from the individual actor level, whole estate or even licensing regulation and policies, to generate specific benefits for the local environment, ecosystem, and communities. This approach builds on the conceptualisation of the 'good gamekeeper'. Accessing the data sets needed to conduct such research or securing a large and diverse research population may however face multiple barriers due to the controversies and absences that have been identified throughout this research project.

### 9.3.2. Moves Beyond Game Management (for the Private Estate)

Another interesting and contemporary avenue for future research inquiry could involve the consideration of estate that are undergoing significant shifts in their GMSP outlooks, as well as choosing to transition towards different land management practices and entrepreneurial ventures entirely. This line of inquiry aligns with current governmental environmental planning initiatives (Gov.uk, 2018), and reflects the growing public and media interest in rural areas focusing on landscape restoration and capitalising on stored

carbon, including the notable investments in afforestation (Bunce et al., 2014; Burton et al., 2019). Moreover, the rise in rural leisure and tourism within the estate framework, as evidenced in several of the case study estates examined in this thesis, particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic deserved attention (Agnoletti et al., 2020; Bakalova et al., 2021; Davies, 2021; McManus, 2022; Zoğal et al., 2022). To gain a comprehensive understanding in this respect, it would be valuable to focus on capturing the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of the local communities and rural working populations who will be directly affected by these developing land management transitions.

### 9.3.3. Research on the Consumptive Game Meat Supply Chain

Exploring the investment of estates and Field Sport representatives in the consumptive game meat supply chain would, yield valuable insights, as suggested by a BASC report (2016, p.3), which highlighted that game meat is currently considered an undervalued and underutilised food item, with an estimated worth of £61 million to the UK economy. Conducting further independent reviews of this supply chain would enhance our understanding of its contribution and the local and global interconnectedness of game meat within place assemblages, building on the work of Woods et al (2021) and others (Anderson, 2012; Jones et al., 2019; Woods, 2015a). Given the limited knowledge about these often-international supply chains, including poult and egg production, and considering the context of the recent context of Avian Flu (Laville, 2023) and the annual release of over 57 million kept game birds into the UK countryside annually (Aebischer, 2019), additional investigation would be valuable.

### 9.3.4. More-than-Human Research within Game Spaces

Another fruitful area of future investigation, expanding studies on game meat, game estate and more broadly game spaces would provide a more direct focus on the inclusion of relevant more-than-human actors. This direction is pertinent, given the growing interest in Geography and other Social Sciences in expanding the scope of research to better encompass a range of more-than-human rural actors (Buller, 2015; Carter & Charles, 2018; Raven et al., 2021; Yarwood & Evans, 2000). For example, studying the roles of grouse, pheasants, partridges and working dogs, who are crucial to GMSP but

often overlooked, would be insightful. Addressing the absence of research on the lives of these beings would also further address remaining absences of 'rural Others' (Philo, 1997) that are largely absent from academic contribution. Tackling such absences of non-agrarian more-than-human actors that uphold identified game spaces and private estates will only enhance contemporary understandings of such sites, actors, and their evolving relationships.

#### 9.3.5. Future Research Summary

In conclusion, there are numerous promising avenues for future research in the field of game management, private estates, and game spaces. Opportunities encompass the use of comparative data sets, the implementation of largescale and longitudinal studies, closer examination of evolving game management practices, the exploration of the game meat supply chain, and the consideration of the involvement of more-than-human actors. Pursuing any of these research avenues would contribute to the expansion of knowledge and the exploration of the complexities associated with the unique form of game spaces which exist here in the UK.



## References

- Åberg, H. E., & Tondelli, S. (2021). Escape to the country: A reaction-driven rural renaissance on a Swedish island post COVID-19. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *13*(22).
- Adams, W. (2012). Private and networked: Large Conservation Areas in Scotland. *Ecos*, *33*(3–4), 24–33.
- Adams, W. N., & Hodge, I. (2014). New Spaces for Nature: the re-territorialization of biodiversity conservation under neoliberalism in the UK. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *39*(4), 574–588.
- Aebischer, N. J. (2019). Fifty-year trends in UK hunting bags of birds and mammals, and calibrated estimation of national bag size, using GWCT's National Gamebag Census. *European Journal of Wildlife Research*, *65*(4).
- Agnoletti, M., Manganelli, S., & Piras, F. (2020). Covid-19 and rural landscape: The case of Italy. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, *204*.
- Almstedt, Å. (2013). PART I Chapter 1. Post-productivism in rural areas: A contested concept. *Natural Resources and Regional Development Theory*, 8–22.
- Anderson, B., Kearnes, M., McFarlane, C., & Swanton, D. (2012). On assemblages and geography. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, *2*(2), 171–189.
- Anderson, B., & McFarlane, C. (2011). Assemblage and geography. *Area*, *43*(2), 124–127.
- Anderson, F. (2017). *Tweed*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Anderson, J. (2004). Talking whilst walking: A geographical archaeology of knowledge. *Area*, *36*(3), 254–261.
- Anderson, J. (2012). Relational places: The surfed wave as assemblage and convergence. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *30*(4), 570–587.
- Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G., & Lawless, M. (2019). Using Zoom Videoconferencing for Qualitative Data Collection: Perceptions and Experiences of Researchers and Participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *18*, 1–8.
- Argent, N., & Plummer, P. (2022). Counter-urbanisation in pre-pandemic times: disentangling the influences of amenity and disamenity. *Australian Geographer*.



- Aspers, P. (2009). Empirical Phenomenology: A Qualitative Research Approach (The Cologne Seminars). *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 9(2), 1–12.
- Atkinson, J. (2002). Four Steps to Analyse Data from a Case Study Method. *Association for Information Systems - ACIS 2002 Proceedings*, 38.
- Atkinson R, & Flint, J. (2001). Accessing Hidden and Hard-to-Reach Populations: Snowball Research Strategies. *Social Research Update*, 33(33).
- Avery, M. (2015). *Inglorious: Conflict in the Uplands*. Bloomsbury.
- Avery, M. (2017, August 12). Half a Million Reasons Why it's time to Give up the 'sport'. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/aug/12/grouse-shooting-glorious-twelfth-times-up-for-inglorious-victorian-sport>; Accessed: 28.4.2020.
- Bakalova, I., Berlinshi, R., Fidrmuc, J., & Dzijuba, Y. (2021). *Covid-19, Working from Home and the Potential Reverse Brain Drain*.
- Baker, T. A., & Wang, C. C. (2006). Photovoice: Use of a participatory action research method to explore the chronic pain experience in older adults. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16(10), 1405–1413.
- Baker, T., & McGuirk, P. (2017). Assemblage thinking as methodology: commitments and practices for critical policy research. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 5(4), 425–442.
- BASC. [British Association for Shooting and Conservation]. (2016). *The role of shooting in landscape scale land management*. [White Paper]. <https://www.moorlandassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Research-White-Paper-Shooting-Landscapes.pdf>; Accessed: 9.6.2020.
- BASC. (2022a). *Ammunition*. <https://basc.org.uk/ammunition/>; Accessed: 4.1. 2023.
- BASC. (2022b). *Gamekeeping*. <https://basc.org.uk/game-and-gamekeeping/gamekeeping/>; Accessed: 11.5.2022.
- BASC. (2022c). *General Licences*. <https://basc.org.uk/gl/>; Accessed: 4.1.2023.
- BASC. (2022d). *General Licences - Wales*. <https://basc.org.uk/gl/wales/>; Accessed: 27.12. 2022.
- BASC. (2022e). *Quarry species & shooting seasons*. <https://basc.org.uk/advice/quarry-species-shooting-seasons/>; Accessed: 4.1.2023.
- Baska, M. (2020, August 12). *Half of managers fear staff are burning out because of Covid-19*. People Management. <https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/article/1745001/half-of-managers-fear-staff-are-burning-out-because-of-covid-19>; Accessed: 31.5.2022.

- Bateman, I. J., & Balmford, B. (2018). Public funding for public goods: A post-Brexit perspective on principles for agricultural policy. *Land Use Policy*, 79 (June 2018), 293–300.
- Bear, C., & Eden, S. (2011). Thinking like a fish? Engaging with nonhuman difference through recreational angling. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 29(2), 336–352.
- Beckett, J., & Turner, M. (2007). End of the old order? F. M. L. Thompson, the land question, and the burden of ownership in England, c.1880-c.1925. *Agricultural History Review*, 55(2), 269–288.
- Bell, M. (1994). *Childerley: nature and mortality in a country village*. Chicago Press.
- Bell, M., & Osti, G. (2010). Mobilities and ruralities: An introduction. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 50(3), 199–204.
- Bennett, J. (2014). Using Diaries and Photo Elicitation in Phenomenological Research: Studying Everyday Practices of Belonging in Place. *Using Diaries and Photo Elicitation in Phenomenological Research: Studying Everyday Practices of Belonging in Place*, 1–20.
- Bowditch, E. A. D., McMorran, R., Bryce, R., & Smith, M. (2019). Perception and partnership: Developing Forest resilience on private estates. *Forest Policy and Economics*, 99 (December 2017), 110–122.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2006), 77–101.
- Brenner, N., Madden, D. J., & Wachsmuth, D. (2011). Assemblage urbanism and the challenges of critical urban theory. *City*, 15(2), 225–240.
- British Game Assurance. (2018a). Post-Brexit Exports of Game to the EU. In *British Game Assurance*. <https://www.britishgameassurance.co.uk/update-post-brexit-exports-of-game-to-the-eu/>; Accessed: 4. 1. 2023.
- British Game Assurance. (2018b, October 18). Eat Wild with the British Game Alliance. <https://www.britishgameassurance.co.uk/eat-wild-with-the-british-game-alliance/>; Accessed: 24.1.2023.
- British Game Assurance. (2023). *British Game Alliance Response to RSPB WWT Letter*; <https://www.britishgameassurance.co.uk/bga-response-to-rspb-wwt-letter/>; Accessed: 19.2. 2023.
- Brooker, R. W., Thomson, S., Matthews, K., Hester, A., Newey, S., Pakeman, R., Miller, D., Mell, V., Aalders, I., Mc Morran, R. and Glass, J. (2018). Socio-economic and biodiversity impacts of driven grouse moors in Scotland: Summary Report. *SEFARI*. pp.1-

19. <https://sefari.scot/research/socioeconomic-and-biodiversity-impacts-of-driven-grouse-moors-in-scotland>; Accessed: 28.4.2020.

Brooks, S. (2019). Brexit and the Politics of the Rural. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 60(4), 790–809.

Brouwer, F., & Van Der Heide, C. M. (2012). *Multifunctional rural land management: economics and policies*. Routledge.

Brown, D. L., & Shucksmith, M. (2016). Framing Rural Studies in the Global North. *Routledge International Handbook of Rural Studies, 2016*, 1–26.

Brown, L., & Durrheim, K. (2009). Different Kinds of Knowing. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(5), 911–930.

Bryman, A. (2012). Social Research Methods. In *Oxford University Press* (4th ed.).

Bujak, E. (2007). *England's Rural Realms: Landholding and the Agricultural Revolution*. Tauris Academic Studies.

Bullard, J. (2010). Health & Safety in the field. In N. Clifford, S. French, & G. Valentine (Eds.), *Key Methods in Geography* (pp. 49–58). Sage publications.

Buller, H. (2015). Animal geographies II: methods. *Progress in Human Geography*, 39(3), 374–384.

Bunce, M. (1994). The armchair countryside. In *The Countryside Ideal* (1st ed., pp. 37–76). Routledge.

Bunce, R. G. H., Wood, C. M., Smart, S. M., Oakley, R., Browning, G., Daniels, M. J., Ashmole, P., Cresswell, J., & Holl, K. (2014). The landscape ecological impact of afforestation on the British Uplands and some initiatives to restore native woodland cover. *Journal of Landscape Ecology (Czech Republic)*, 7(2), 5–24.

Burchardt, J., Doak, J., & Parker, G. (2020). Review of Key Trends and Issues in UK Rural Land Use - Living Landscapes Project Final - Report to The Royal Society. (Issue August).

Burgess, R. G. (1981). Keeping a research diary. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 11(1), 75–83.

Burr, V., & Dick, P. (2017). Social Constructionism. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Social Psychology*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Burrell, C. (2020, January 27). Rewilding the Landscape. [Video]. In *University of Sheffield*. <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/landscape/news/conservation-pioneer-and-subject-best-selling-book-wilding-give-public-lecture-sheffield>  
[https://digitalmedia.sheffield.ac.uk/media/Charlie+Burrell+%22Rewilding+the+Landscape%22+10.03.2020/1\\_rqp9ezqb](https://digitalmedia.sheffield.ac.uk/media/Charlie+Burrell+%22Rewilding+the+Landscape%22+10.03.2020/1_rqp9ezqb); Accessed: 31.3.2020.

Burton, J. F. R., Forney, J., Stock, P., & Sutherland, L. A. (2021). *The Good Farmer: Culture and Identity in Food and Agriculture*. Routledge.

Burton, R. J. F. (2004). Seeing through the 'good farmer's' eyes: Towards developing an understanding of the social symbolic value of 'productivist' behaviour. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 44(2), 195–215.

Burton, V., Metzger, M. J., Brown, C., & Moseley, D. (2019). Green Gold to Wild Woodlands; understanding stakeholder visions for woodland expansion in Scotland. *Landscape Ecology*, 34(7), 1693–1713.

Butler, R. (2021). Youth, mobilities and multicultures in the rural Anglosphere: positioning a research agenda. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 44(16), 63–82.

Bye, L. M. (2003). Masculinity and rurality at play in stories about hunting. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift- Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 57(3), 145–153.

Cahill, M. K. (2002). Who Owns Britain: The Hidden Facts Behind Landownership in the UK and Ireland. In *Journal of Chemical Information and Modelling*. Canongate Books Ltd.

Campbell, L. M., Gray, N. J., Meletis, Z. A., Abbott, J. G., & Silver, J. J. (2006). Gatekeepers and key masters: Dynamic relationships of access in geographical fieldwork. *Geographical Review*, 96(1), 97–121.

Carpiano, R. M. (2009). Come take a walk with me: The 'Go-Along' interview as a novel method for studying the implications of place for health and well-being. *Health and Place*, 15(1), 263–272.

Carter, B., & Charles, N. (2018). The animal challenge to sociology. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 21(1), 79–97.

Case, P. (2019, September 16). *General licences for wild bird control*. Farmers Weekly. <https://www.fwi.co.uk/news/farm-policy/general-licences-for-wild-bird-control-tell-defra-your-views>; Accessed: 19.1.2023.

Casey, E. S. (2001). Between Geography and Philosophy: What Does It Mean to Be in the Place-World? *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 91(4), 683–693.

Cawley, M., & Gillmor, A. D. (2008). Integrated rural tourism: Concepts and Practice. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(2), 316–337.

Celestina, M. (2018). Between trust and distrust in research with participants in conflict context. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 21(3), 373–383.

Chang, J. S. (2017). The Docent Method: A Grounded Theory Approach for Researching Place and Health. *Qualitative Health Research*, 27(4), 609–619.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Sage Publications.

Christophers, B. (2018). *The New Enclosure: The Appropriation of Public Land in Neoliberal Britain*. Verso.

Cieem. (2020, April 6). Heather Burning Banned on Moors in Northern England. *Cieem*. <https://cieem.net/heather-burning-banned-on-moors-in-northern-england/>; Accessed: 2.2.2023.

Cloke, P. (1997). Country Backwater to Virtual Village? Rural Studies and The Cultural Turn. *The Rural*, 13(4), 311–320.

Cloke, P., & Little, J. (1997). *Contested Countryside Cultures: Otherness, marginalisation and rurality*. Routledge.

Cloke, P; Marsden, T; Mooney, P. (2006). *Handbook of Rural Studies*. Sage Publications.

Clout, H. (1972). *Rural Geography: An Introductory Survey*. Pergamon Press.

Cohen, P. A. (2001). *The symbolic construction of community* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Colls, R. (2020). *The Sporting Life: Sport and Liberty in England, 1760-1960*. Oxford University Press.

Colomb, C., & Gallent, N. (2022). Post-COVID-19 mobilities and the housing crisis in European urban and rural destinations. Policy challenges and research agenda. *Planning Practice and Research*, 37(5), 624–641.

Cope, M., & Kurtz, H. (2016). Organizing, Coding, and Analysing Qualitative Data. In *Key Methods in Geography*.

Corlett, Sandra; Mavin, S. (2018). Reflexivity and Researcher Positionality. In G. Cassell, C; Cunliffe, A; Grandy (Ed.), *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods: History and Traditions* (pp. 377–398). Sage Publications.

Cornwall, A., Jewkes, R. (2001). What is participatory research? *Social Science & Medicine*, 53(9), 1667–1676.

Countryside Alliance, The National Gamekeepers Organisation, Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, Scottish Land & Estates, Game Farmers Association, The Moorland Association, Country Landowners Association, Scottish Gamekeepers Association, Shooting & Country Sports Advocacy, National Game Dealers Association, & British Association for Shooting & Conservation. (2020). *The Code of Good Shooting Practice*; <https://www.codeofgoodshootingpractice.org.uk/>; Accessed: 10.2.2022.

Cox, G., & Winter, M. (1997). The beleaguered 'other': hunt followers in the countryside'. In P. Milbourne (ed.) *Revealing Rural 'Others'* (pp. 75–87). Pinter.

Creswell, W. J. (2013). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage publications.

Cross, M. (2021, January 18). Gamekeepers suffer abuse on a daily basis. *Shooting UK*. <https://www.shootinguk.co.uk/features/abuse-of-gamekeepers-118486>; Accessed: 12.5.22.

Crotty, M. (1998). Research Design. In *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*.

Crow, G. (2008). Part two: Present practice and potential recent rural community studies. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(2), 131–139.

Cusworth, G., & Dodsworth, J. (2021). Using the 'good farmer' concept to explore agricultural attitudes to the provision of public goods. A case study of participants in an English agri-environment scheme. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 38(4), 929–941.

Darby, W., J. (2000). *Landscape and Identity: Geographies of Nation and Class in England*. Routledge.

Darke, P., Shanks, G., & Broadbent, M. (1998). Successfully completing case study research combining rigour, relevance and pragmatism. *Information Systems Journal*, 8, 273–289.

Davies, A. (2021). COVID-19 and ICT-Supported Remote Working: Opportunities for Rural Economies. *World*, 2(1), 139–152.

De Vaus, D. (2002). Administering Questionnaires. In *Surveys in Social Science* (5th ed., pp. 122–146). Allen & Unwin.

DEFRA [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs]. (2018a). *Health and harmony: The future for food, farming and the environment in a green Brexit* (Cm 9577); [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/684003/future-farming-environment-consult-document.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/684003/future-farming-environment-consult-document.pdf). Accessed: 30.1.2023.

DEFRA. (2018b). *Moving away from Direct Payments: Agriculture Bill - analysis of the impacts of removing Direct Payments*; <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/about/research>; Accessed: 30.1.2023.

DEFRA. (2021a). *Enabling a Natural Capital Approach guidance*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green->; Accessed: 13.2.2023.

- DEFRA. (2021b). *Environmental Land Management and Public Money for Public Goods*. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/955920/ELM-evidencepack-28jan21.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/955920/ELM-evidencepack-28jan21.pdf); Accessed: 30.1.2023.
- DEFRA. (2021c). *Farming is Changing* (Issue June). [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/986879/farming-changing.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/986879/farming-changing.pdf); Accessed: 29.11.2021.
- DEFRA. (2021d). *Wild Birds: General Licence Review Background and summary of survey responses*. [www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra); Accessed: 17.3.2023.
- DeLanda, M. (2006). *A new philosophy of society: assemblage theory and social complexity*. Continuum.
- Delanda, M. (2011). *Philosophy and simulation: the emergence of synthetic reason*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- DeLanda, M. (2016). *Assemblage Theory*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Dodds, S., & Hess, A. C. (2020). Adapting research methodology during COVID-19: lessons for transformative service research. *Journal of Service Management*.
- Dolton-Thornton, N. (2021). Rewilding and re-peopling in Scotland: Large-scale land managers' perspectives and practices. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 86, 36–45.
- Done, A., & Muir, R. (2008). The Landscape History of Grouse Shooting in the Yorkshire Dales. *Rural History*, 12(02), 195.
- Dooley, T., & Ridgeway, C. (2019). *Sport and Leisure in the Irish and British Country House*. Four Courts Press.
- Dovey, K. (2020). Place as Assemblage. In T. Edensor, A. Kalandides, & U. Kothari (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Place* (1st ed., pp. 21–31). Routledge.
- Dowling, R., Lloyd, K., & Suchet-Pearson, S. (2017). Qualitative methods II: 'More-than-human' methodologies and/in praxis. *Progress in Human Geography*, 41(6), 823–831.
- Durie, A. J. (2008). Game Shooting: An Elite Sport c .1870–1980. *Sport in History*, 28(3), 431–449.
- Durie, A. J. (2013). Sporting tourism flowers - The development from c. 1780 of grouse and golf as visitor attractions in Scotland and Ireland. *Journal of Tourism History*, 5(2), 131–145.

- Dwyer, C. S., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). Reflection/Commentary on a Past Article: "The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research". *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), 54–63.
- Edensor, T. (2006). Performing rurality. In *Handbook of Rural Studies* (pp. 484–495). Sage Publications.
- Edensor, T. (2010). Walking in rhythms: Place, regulation, style, and the flow of experience. *Visual Studies*, 25(1), 69–79.
- Emel, J. (1995). Are you man enough, big and bad enough? Ecofeminism and wolf eradication in the USA. *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*, 13(6), 707–734.
- Emerson, R., Fretz, R., & Shaw, L. (2011). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Second Edition*. University of Chicago press.
- Emery, S. B., & Franks, J. R. (2012). The potential for collaborative agri-environment schemes in England: Can a well-designed collaborative approach address farmers' concerns with current schemes? *Journal of Rural Studies*, 28(3), 218–231.
- Engin, M. (2011). Research Diary: A Tool for Scaffolding. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 10(3), 296–306.
- Evans, J., & Jones, P. (2011). The walking interview: Methodology, mobility, and place. *Applied Geography*, 31(2), 849–858.
- Evans, N., Morris, C., & Winter, M. (2002). Conceptualizing agriculture: A critique of post-productivism as the new orthodoxy. *Progress in Human Geography*, 26(3), 313–332.
- Evans, R. (2019, October 29). Grouse-shooting estates face ban on burning of peat bogs. *The Guardian*. [https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/oct/29/grouse-shooting-estates-face-ban-on-burning-of-peat-bogs#:~:text=The%20government%20has%20been%20developing,a%20minister%20has%20told%20parliament](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/oct/29/grouse-shooting-estates-face-ban-on-burning-of-peat-bogs#:~:text=The%20government%20has%20been%20developing,a%20minister%20has%20told%20parliament;); Accessed: 31.10.2019.
- Everett, S. (2012). Production Places or Consumption Spaces? The Place-making Agency of Food Tourism in Ireland and Scotland. *Tourism Geographies*, 14(4), 535–554.
- Fairhead, J., Leach, M., & Scoones, I. (2012). Green Grabbing: A new appropriation of nature? *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 39 (2), 237–261.
- Feber, R. E., Johnson, P. J., & Macdonald, D. W. (2020). Shooting pheasants for sport: What does the death of Cecil tell us? *People and Nature*, 2(1), 82-95.
- Fetterman, D. M. (2009). Ethnography. In *Applied Social Research Methods* (2nd ed., pp. 543–588). Sage Publications.



- Fielding, S. (2000). The importance of being Shaun: self-reflection and ethnography. In *Ethnography and Rural Research* (pp. 66–80). The Countryside and Community Press.
- Fink, A. (2003). *The Survey Handbook* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Food Standards Agency. (2017, December 19). *Lead-shot game*. <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/lead-shot-game>; Accessed: 17.3.2023.
- Fowler, F. J. (2014). *Survey Research Methods* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Francis, C. (2019, November 27). The horrific effects of moor burning. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/nov/27/the-horrific-effects-of-moor-burning>; Accessed: 28.4.2020.
- Freeman, C. (2020). Multiple methods beyond triangulation: collage as a methodological framework in geography. *Geografiska Annaler, Series B: Human Geography*, 102(4), 328–340.
- Garlick, B. (2019). Cultural geographies of extinction: Animal culture among Scottish ospreys. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 44(2), 226–241.
- Geertz, C. (1998 October, 22). 'Deep Hanging Out'. In *The New York Times Review of Books* 45(16), 69–72.
- Gibbs, G. (2007). *Analysing Qualitative Data*. Sage Publications.
- Gillham, B. (2000). *Case Study Research Methods*. Continuum.
- Given, L. (2012). The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods. In *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Sage Publications.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Aldine.
- Glass, J., McMorran, R., Price, M., & McKee, A. (2012). *Working Together for Sustainable Estate Communities: Exploring the potential of collaborative initiatives between privately-owned estates, communities, and other partners*.
- Glass, J., Morran, R. M., & Thomson, S. (2019). *The effects associated with concentrated and large-scale land ownership in Scotland: a research review Report prepared for Scottish Land Commission*. Available online: [https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/downloads/5dd7d807b8768\\_Research-Review-Concentrated-ownershipfinal-20190320.pdf](https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/downloads/5dd7d807b8768_Research-Review-Concentrated-ownershipfinal-20190320.pdf); Accessed: 31.8.2021.

Glass, J., Price, M. F., Warren, C., & Scott, A. (2013a). *Lairds, Land and Sustainability: Scottish Perspectives on Upland Management* (J. Glass, M. Price, C. Warren, & A. Scott, Eds.; 1st ed.). Edinburgh University Press.

Glass, J., Scott, A., & Price, M. F. (2013b). The power of the process: Co-producing a sustainability assessment toolkit for upland estate management in Scotland. *Land Use Policy*, 30(1), 254–265.

Gobin, A., Hien, L. T. T., Hai, L. T., Linh, P. H., Thang, N. N., & Vinh, P. Q. (2020). Adaptation to land degradation in southeast Vietnam. *Land*, 9(9), 1-25.

Gordon, A. (2008). *Ghostly matters: Haunting and the sociological imagination*. University of Minnesota Press.

Gov.uk. (2018). A Green Future: Our 25 Year Environment Plan. In *Gov.Uk*. [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications); Accessed: 4.12.2019.

Gov.uk. (2020a, February 21). *Defra sets out review into releasing gamebirds on protected sites*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/defra-sets-out-review-into-releasing-gamebirds-on-protected-sites>; Accessed: 13.10.2020.

Gov.uk. (2020b, October 30). *Defra concludes its review into releasing gamebirds on and around protected sites*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/defra-concludes-its-review-into-releasing-gamebirds-on-and-around-protected-sites#:~:text=The%20review%20has%20now%20concluded,from%20the%20point%20of%20release>; Accessed: 10.1.2023.

Gov.uk. (2021). *Heather and grass burning rules and applying for a licence*. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nuisance-smoke-how-councils-deal-with-complaints>; Accessed: 2.2.2023.

Gov.uk. (2022). *Guidance: Bird flu rules if you keep game birds*. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bird-flu-rules-if-you-keep-game-birds#releasing-game-birds-into-the-wild>; Accessed: 4.1.2023.

Gov.uk. (2023). *Trapping wild birds: standard licence conditions (GL33)*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-licence->; Accessed: 3.5.2023.

Gov.wales. (2015). *The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*. <https://www.gov.wales/well-being-of-future->; Accessed: 30.1.2023.

Gov.wales. (2019). *Brexit and our land: Securing the Future of Welsh Farming* (Issue October); Accessed: 8.9.2021.

Greenhough, B. (2014). More-than-human Geographies. In R. Lee, N. Castree, R. Kitchin, V. Lawson, A. Paasai, C. Philo, S. Radcliffe, M. S. Roberts, & C. W. Withers (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Human Geography: Two Volume Set* (pp. 94–119). Sage Publications.

Grenier, R. S. (2009). The role of learning in the development of expertise in museum docents. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 59(2), 142–157.

GunsOnPegs. (2023, January 3). What is a big bag? *Scribehound*, 1–9.  
<https://www.gunsonpegs.com/articles/shooting-talk/s/game-shooting-census/what-is-a-big-bag#:~:text=A%20big%20bag%20is%20only,no%20game%20keeper%20no%20shoot>; Accessed: 7.4.2022.

GWCT [Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust]. (2020). *Principles of Sustainable Game Management*. [www.gwct.org.uk/principles](http://www.gwct.org.uk/principles); Accessed: 3.5.2023.

GWCT. (2021a, May 12). Defra publishes Interim Licence for Gamebird releasing on or near EU designated sites. <https://www.gwct.org.uk/blogs/news/2021/may/defra-publishes-interim-licence-for-gamebird-releasing-on-or-near-eu-designated-sites/>; Accessed 19.6.2023.

GWCT. (2021b). *Pheasant: Phasianus Colchicus*. Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust. <https://www.gwct.org.uk/game/research/species/pheasant/1/4>; Accessed: 20.2.2023.

GWCT. (2022a). *Lead ammunition today*. Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust. <https://www.gwct.org.uk/advisory/lead-ammunition/today/1/4>; Accessed: 20.2.2023.

GWCT. (2022b). *Upland Definition*. Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust. <https://www.gwct.org.uk/research/habitats/upland/#:~:text=Upland%20is%20usually%20defined%20as,hare%2C%20red%20and%20black%20grouse>; Accessed: 21.11.2023.

GWCT. (2023). *Disease control on grouse moors*. Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust. <https://www.gwct.org.uk/policy/briefings/driven-grouse-shooting/disease-control-on-grouse-moors/>; Accessed: 13.2.2023.

Hadfield, D. (2022). General licences in Wales: no rooks, magpies or jackdaws. *Fieldsports Channel*. <https://www.fieldsportschannel.tv/welshgenerallicences/>; Accessed: 17.3.2023.

Halfacree, K. (Forthcoming). Towards a revanchist British rural in post-Covid times? A challenge to those seeking a Good Countryside. *Geographical Journal*.

Halfacree, K. (1993). Locality and social representation: Space, discourse and alternative definitions of the rural. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 9(1), 23–37.

Halfacree, K. (1996). Out of place in the country: Travellers and the 'rural idyll'. *Antipode*, 28(1), 42–72.

Halfacree, K. (1997). Contrasting Roles for the Post-Productivist Countryside. In J. Cloke, Paul and Little (Ed.), *Contested Countryside Cultures: Otherness, Marginalisation and Rurality* (pp. 70–93). Routledge.

Halfacree, K. (2003). Landscapes of rurality: rural others/ other rurals. In *Studying cultural landscapes* (pp. 141–163). Arnold.

Halfacree, K. (2006). Rural space: Constructing a three-fold architecture. *Handbook of Rural Studies*, 44–62.

Halfacree, K. (2011). Rural Consumption in the Era of Mobilities. *Population, Space and Place*, 224 (March 2011), 209–224.

Halfacree, K. (2012). Heterolocal Identities? Counter-Urbanisation, Second Homes, and Rural Consumption in the Era of Mobilities. *Population, Space and Place*, 18(2), 209–224.

Halfacree, K. (2014). Jumping Up from the Armchair: Beyond the Idyll in Counterurbanisation. In M. Benson & N. Osbaldiston (Eds.), *Understanding Lifestyle Migration: Theoretical Approaches to Migration and the Quest for a Better Way of Life* (pp. 92-118). Palgrave Macmillan.

Halfacree, K. (2016). Still 'Out of Place in the Country'? Travellers and the Post-Productivist Rural. In *Rural policing and policing the rural* (pp. 123-136). Routledge.

Halfacree, K., & Barcus, H. (2018). *An Introduction to Population Geographies: Lives across Space*. Routledge.

Halfacree, K., & Williams, F. (2021). Advancing rural as 'something more than a human estate': Exploring UK sheep-shaping. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 87, 375-385.

Hamilton, L. (2016). Ethnography beyond the country and the city: Understanding the symbolic terrain of rural spaces. *Ethnography*, 17(3), 297–308.

Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation. *Visual Studies*, 17(1), 13–26.

Hart, J. (1975). *The Look of the Land*. Prentice Hall.

Harvey, D. (2001). Globalization and the "Spatial Fix". *Geographische Revue: Zeitschrift Für Literatur Und Diskussion*, 3(2), 23–30.

Hay, I. (2010). Ethical Practice in Geographical Research. In N. Clifford, S. French, & G. Valentine (Eds.), *Key Methods in Geography* (pp. 35–48). Sage Publications.

Heley, J. (2010). The new squirearchy and emergent cultures of the new middle classes in rural areas. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 26(4), 321–331.

Heley, J. (2011). On the potential of being a village boy: An argument for local rural ethnography. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 51(3), 219–237.

- Heley, J., & Jones, L. (2012). Relational rurals: Some thoughts on relating things and theory in rural studies. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 28(3), 208–217.
- Hey, D. (2011). Kinder Scout and the legend of the Mass Trespass. *Agricultural History Review*, 59(2), 199-216.
- Higgins, P., Wightman, A., & Macmillan, D. C. (2002). *Sporting Estates and Recreational Land Use in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*. Report for Economic and Social Research Council (Issue November).
- Hillyard, S. (2007a). Chapter 5: Game Shooting in the United Kingdom (Sam Hillyard, 2007). In *The Sociology of Rural Life*.
- Hillyard, S. (2007b). Representing the Rural. In *The Sociology of Rural Life* (pp. 135–151). Berg Publishers.
- Hillyard, S. (2015). Rural putsch: power, class, social relations and change in the English rural village. *Sociological Research Online*, 20(1), 43-58.
- Hillyard, S., & Burrige, J. (2012). Shotguns and Firearms in the UK: A Call for a Distinctively Sociological Contribution to the Debate. *Sociology*, 46(3), 395–410.
- Hindle, R., Thomson, S. G., Skerratt, S., McMorran, R., & Onea, P. (2014). *Economic contribution of estates in Scotland: An economic assessment for Scottish Land and Estates*. <https://scottishlandandestates.co.uk/sites/default/files/library/Economic%20Contribution%20of%20Estates%20in%20Scotland>; Accessed: 14.3.2022.
- Hodgson, I. D., Redpath, S. M., Fischer, A., & Young, J. (2018). Land Use Policy Fighting talk: Organisational discourses of the conflict over raptors and grouse moor management in Scotland. *Land Use Policy*, 77(May), 332–343.
- Hollander, G. (2010). Power is sweet: Sugarcane in the global ethanol assemblage. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37(4), 699–721.
- Holloway, I. (1997). *Basic concepts for Qualitative Research*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Holloway, S. (2005). Articulating Otherness? White rural residents talk about Gypsy Travellers. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30(3), 351–367.
- Home, R. (2009). Land ownership in the United Kingdom: Trends, preferences, and future challenges. *Land Use Policy*, 26(Suppl. 1), 103–108.
- Howley, P., Donoghue, C. O., & Hynes, S. (2012). Exploring public preferences for traditional farming landscapes. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 104(1), 66–74.

- Hoyle, R. W. (2007). *Our Hunting Fathers: Field sports in England after 1850* (W. Hoyle, R, Ed.). Carnegie Publishing Ltd.
- Hudson, P. (1992). *Grouse in Space and Time: The Population Biology of a Gamebird*. the Report of the Game Conservancy's Scottish Grouse Research project & North of England Grouse Research Project. Game Conservancy.
- Huggins, M. (2008). Sport and the British Upper Classes c .1500–2000: A Historiographic Overview. *Sport in History*, 28(3), 364–388.
- Hughes, G. (1992). Tourism and the geographical imagination. *Leisure Studies*, 11, 31–42.
- Hunt, R. (2019). Neglected rural geography: Exploring the quiet politics of ‘out-dwelling’. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 37(2), 219–236.
- Hyers, L. (2018). *Diary Methods: Understanding Qualitative Research*. Oxford University Press.
- Ingold, T. (2000). *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling, and Skill*. Psychology Press.
- Institute for Government Analysis. (2022). *Timeline of UK Government Coronavirus Lockdowns, March 2020 to December 2021*. <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/data-visualisation/timeline-coronavirus-lockdowns>; Accessed: 13.6.2023.
- Iphofen, R., & Tolich, M. (2018). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research Ethics* (1st ed). Sage Publications.
- Jarvie, G., & Jackson, L. (1998). Deer forests, sporting estates and the aristocracy. *Sports Historian*, 18(1), 24–54.
- Jauhiainen, J. S., & Moilanen, H. (2012). Regional innovation systems, high-technology development, and governance in the periphery: The case of Northern Finland. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift-Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 66(3), 119-132.
- Jefferies, R. (1896). *The Gamekeeper at Home: Sketches of Natural History and Rural Life*. Smith, Elder & Co.
- Jensen, R, R., & Shumway, J, M. (2010). Sampling Our World. In J. Gomez, Basil; Jones, P (Ed.), *Research Methods in Geography* (pp. 77–90). Blackwells.
- Jones. (2006). Non-Human Rural Studies. In Cloke, P., Marsden, T., Mooney., P. *Handbook of Rural Studies*. Sage Publications.

- Jones, D. (n.d.). History of red grouse shooting. *Field Sports Journal*, 1–11.  
<https://fieldsports-journal.com/fieldsports/shoot/history-of-red-grouse-shooting>;  
 Accessed: 20.2.2023.
- Jones, D. (2015). *Game Shooting: An Illustrated History*. Quiller Publishing.
- Jones, D. (2017). *Gamekeepers Welfare (A History)*.  
[www.thegamekeeperswelfaretrust.com](http://www.thegamekeeperswelfaretrust.com); Accessed: 6.10.2022.
- Jones, E. L. (2009). The Environmental Effects of Blood Sports in Lowland England since 1750. *Rural History*, 20(1), 51–66.
- Jones, L., Heley, J., & Woods, M. (2019). Unravelling the Global Wool Assemblage: Researching Place and Production Networks in the Global Countryside. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 59(1), 137–158.
- Jones, O. (2003). The restraint of beasts': rurality, animality, Actor Network Theory and dwelling. In *Country Visions* (pp. 450–487). Pearson.
- Jones, P., Bunce, G., Evans, J., Gibbs, H., & Hein, J. R. (2008). Exploring space and place with walking interviews. *Journal of Research Practice*, 4(2), 1–9.
- Jowett, A. (2020, April). Carrying out qualitative research under lockdown. *London School of Economics Impact Blog*.  
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2020/04/20/carrying-out-qualitative-research-under-lockdown-practical-and-ethical-considerations/>; Accessed: 26.11.2020.
- Kay, J. B., & Wood, H. (2022). 'The race for space': capitalism, the country and the city in Britain under COVID-19. *Continuum*, 36(2), 274–288.
- Kaye, K. L. (2020). Internet-Mediated Research. *the British Psychological Society*  
<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/ethics-guidelines-internet-mediated-research>;  
 26.11.2020.
- King, A. C., & Woodroffe, J. (2017). Walking interviews. In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences* (pp. 1–22). Springer.
- Kinkaid, E. (2020). Can assemblage think difference? A feminist critique of assemblage geographies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 44(3), 457–472.
- Kinney, P. (2017). Walking Interviews. *Social Research Update, University of Surrey*, 67, 1–4.
- Kordel, S. (2016). Selling ruralities: how tourist entrepreneurs commodify traditional and alternative ways of conceiving the countryside. *Rural Society*, 25(3), 204–221.
- Kusenbach, M. (2003). Street Phenomenology. *Ethnography*, 4(3), 455–485.

Larsen, S. (2013). *Rural geography*. Oxford University Press.

Latham, A. (2003). Research, performance, and doing human geography: Some reflections on the diary-photograph, diary-interview method. *Environment and Planning A*, 35(11), 1993–2017.

Latham, A. (2010). Diaries as a research method. In S. Clifford, N; Cope, M; Gillespie, T; French (Ed.), *Key Methods in Geography* (2nd ed., pp. 189–202). Sage Publications.

Latham-Green, T. (2020, September). Executive Summary of a PhD Thesis: 'Understanding the social impact of participation in Driven Game Shooting in the UK'. *Research Gate*. Available online: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344191124\\_Executive\\_Summary\\_of\\_a\\_PhD\\_Thesis\\_'Understanding\\_the\\_social\\_impact\\_of\\_participation\\_in\\_Driven\\_Game\\_Shooting\\_in\\_the\\_UK'](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344191124_Executive_Summary_of_a_PhD_Thesis_'Understanding_the_social_impact_of_participation_in_Driven_Game_Shooting_in_the_UK'); Accessed: 1.12.2020.

Laville, S. (2023, June 18). *RSPB calls for suspension of game-bird releases over avian flu fears*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/18/rspb-calls-for-suspension-of-game-bird-releases-over-avian-flu-fears#:~:text=The%20RSPB%20says%20there%20should,released%20for%20the%20shooting%20season>; Accessed: 22.5.2023.

Law, J., & Mol, A. (2008). Globalisation in practice: On the politics of boiling pigswill. *Geoforum*, 39(1), 133–143.

Leach, M., MacGregor, H., Scoones, I., & Wilkinson, A. (2021). Post-pandemic transformations: How and why COVID-19 requires us to rethink development. *World Development*, 138.

League Against Cruel Sports. (2016). *The Case Against Bird Shooting*, 1-12. Available online: [https://www.league.org.uk/media/filer\\_public/66/de/66de74d3-972d-482f-a8e7-22c1e016db44/the\\_case\\_against\\_bird\\_shooting\\_2016\\_\\_\\_league\\_against\\_cruel\\_sports.pdf](https://www.league.org.uk/media/filer_public/66/de/66de74d3-972d-482f-a8e7-22c1e016db44/the_case_against_bird_shooting_2016___league_against_cruel_sports.pdf); Accessed: 14.1.2021.

Lefebvre, M., Espinosa, M., Gomez Paloma, S., Paracchini, M., Piorr, A., Zasada, I., & Piorr, A. (2015). Agricultural landscapes as multi-scale public good and the role of the Common Agricultural Policy. *Public Health Titles*, 58(12), 2088–2112.

Legislation.gov.uk. (2016). *Environment (Wales) Act [2016]*. (part 1) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/contents/enacted>; Accessed: 30.1.2023.

Legislation.gov.uk. (1981). *Wildlife & Countryside Act*. [1(1) (a) WCA 1981]. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>; Accessed: 3.5.2023.



- Leung, L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 4(3), 324.
- Li Murray, T. (2007). Practices of assemblage and community forest management. *Economy and Society*, 36(2), 263–293.
- Little, J., & Austin, P. (1996). Women and the rural idyll. *Journal of rural studies*, 12(2), 101–111.
- Livingstone, N., Gallent, N., Hamiduddin, I., Juntti, M., & Stirling, P. (2021). Beyond agriculture: Alternative geographies of rural land investment and place effects across the United Kingdom. *Land*, 10(11), 1–22.
- Lobley, M., & Potter, C. (2004). Agricultural change and restructuring: Recent evidence from a survey of agricultural households in England. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 20(4), 499–510.
- Longhurst, R. (2016). Semi-structured interviews and focus groups. In N. Clifford, S. French, T. Gillespie, & M. Cope (Eds.), *Key methods in geography* (pp. 143–156). Sage Publications.
- Lorimer, H. (2000). *Guns, Game and the Grandee: Deerstalking in the Scottish Highlands*. 7(4).
- Lorimer, H. (2005). Cultural geography: The busyness of being ‘more-than-representational’. *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(1), 83–94.
- Lovelock, B. (2008). An Introduction to consumptive wildlife tourism. In *Tourism and the Consumption of Wildlife: Hunting, Shooting and Sport Fishing*. Routledge.
- Lowe, P., Murdoch, J., Marsden, T., Munton, R., & Flynn, A. (1993). Regulating the new rural spaces: the uneven development of land. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 9(3), 205–222.
- MacColl, E. (1932). The Manchester Rambler [song]. *On Black and white: The Definitive Collection* [released 2000]. Cooking Vinyl.
- MacKenzie, M, J. (2017). The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism. In *The Empire of Nature*. Manchester University Press.
- MacMillan, D. C., & Leitch, K. (2008). Conservation with a gun: Understanding landowner attitudes to deer hunting in the Scottish Highlands. *Human Ecology*, 36(4), 473–484.
- MacMillan, D. C., Leitch, K., Wightman, A., & Higgins, P. (2010). The management and role of highland sporting estates in the early twenty-first century: The owner’s view of a unique but contested form of land use. *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 126(1), 24–40.

- Macmillan, D. C., & Phillip, S. (2008). Consumptive and non-consumptive values of wild mammals in Britain. *Mammal Review*, 38(2–3), 189–204.
- MacMillan, D. C., & Phillip, S. (2010). Can economic incentives resolve conservation conflict: The case of wild deer management and habitat conservation in the Scottish Highlands. *Human Ecology*, 38(4), 485–493.
- Macpherson, H. (2016). Walking methods in landscape research: moving bodies, spaces of disclosure and rapport. *Landscape Research*, 41(4), 425–432.
- Madden, J.R., & Sage, R. (2020). Ecological Consequences of Gamebird Releasing and Management on Lowland Shoots in England: a review by rapid evidence assessment of natural England the British association of shooting and conservation. *Natural England Evidence Review NEER016*. Natural England, Peterborough.
- Madden, J. R. (2021). How many gamebirds are released in the UK each year? *European Journal of Wildlife Research*, 67(4).
- Manfredo, M. J., Teel, T. L., & Bright, A. D. (2003). Why are public values toward wildlife changing? *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 8(4), 287–306.
- Marsden, T., Murdoch, J., Lowe, P., & Ward, N. (2012). *The differentiated countryside*. Routledge.
- Marshall, J., & Mills-Sheehy, J. (2021). Agriculture subsidies after Brexit. In *Institute for Government* (Issue October 2021).
- Marshall, K., White, R., & Fischer, A. (2007). Conflicts between humans over wildlife management: On the diversity of stakeholder attitudes and implications for conflict management. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 16(11), 3129–3146.
- Martin, J. (2011a). British game shooting in transition, 1900-1945. *Agricultural History*, 85(2), 204–224.
- Martin, J. (2011b). The transformation of lowland game shooting in England and Wales since the second world war: The supply side revolution. *Rural History*, 22(2), 207–226.
- Martin, J. (2012). The transformation of lowland game shooting in England and Wales in the twentieth century: The neglected metamorphosis. *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 29(8), 1141–1158.
- Marvin, G. (2003). A Passionate Pursuit: Foxhunting as Performance. *The Sociological Review*, 51(2), 46–60.
- Mason, L. R., Bicknell, J. E., Smart, J., & Peach, W. J. (2020). The impacts of non-native gamebird release in the UK: an updated evidence review. RSPB Research Report No. 66. RSPB Centre for Conservation Science, Sandy, UK. *RSPB Research Report*, 66.

- Matthews, H., Taylor, M., Sherwood, K., Tucker, F., & Limb, M. (2000). Growing-up in the countryside: children and the rural idyll. *Journal of rural studies*, 16(2), 141-153.
- McCarthy, J. (2005). Rural geography: Multifunctional rural geographies - Reactionary or radical? *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(6), 773–782.
- McCarthy, J. (2008). Rural geography: Globalizing the countryside. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(1), 129–137.
- McCarthy, T. (2019). A Sporting politician: George Wyndham (1863-1913). In T. Dooley & C. Ridgway (Eds.), *Sport and Leisure in the Irish and British Country House* (pp. 183–187). Four Courts Press.
- McFarlane, C. (2011). The city as assemblage: Dwelling and urban space. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 29(4), 649–671.
- McGuinness, M. (2009). Putting themselves in the picture: Using reflective diaries in the teaching of feminist geography. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 33(3), 339–349.
- McGuirk, P. M., & O’Neill, P. (2016). Using Questionnaires in Qualitative Human Geography. In *Qualitative research methods in human geography* (pp. 246–273). Oxford University Press.
- Mckee, A.J. (2013a). The Laird and the Community. In J. Glass, F. P. Martin, C. Warren, & A. Scott (Eds.), *Lairds, land and sustainability: Scottish perspectives on upland management* (1st ed., pp. 108–134). Edinburgh University Press.
- Mckee, A. J. (2013b). *The Role of Private Landownership in Facilitating Sustainable Rural Communities in Upland Scotland*. [Doctoral Thesis]. University of Highlands and Islands Repository. <https://pure.uhi.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/the-role-of-private-landownership-in-facilitating-sustainable-rur>; Accessed: 28.4.2020.
- Mckee, A. J. (2015). Legitimising the Laird? Communicative Action and the role of private landowner and community engagement in rural sustainability. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 41, 23–36.
- Mckee, A., Warren, C., Glass, J., & Wagstaff, P. (2013). The Scottish private estate. In J. Glass, M. Price, C. Warren, & A. Scott (Eds.), *Lairds, land and sustainability: Scottish perspectives on upland management2* (pp. 63–85). Edinburgh University Press.
- McKenzie, C. (2000). The British big-game hunting tradition, masculinity and fraternalism with particular reference to the ‘the Shikar Club’. *Sports Historian*, 20(1), 70–91.

- McKie, R. (2020, October 11). RSPB calls for new laws on game bird shooting. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/11/rspb-calls-for-new-laws-on-game-bird-shooting>; Accessed: 13.10.2020.
- McLafferty, L, S. (2010). Conducting Questionnaire Surveys. In *Key Methods in Geography* (2nd ed., pp. 77–88). Sage Publications.
- McLeod, C. M. (2007). Dreadful/delightful killing: The contested nature of duck hunting. *Society and Animals*, 15(2), 151–167.
- McManus, P. (2022). Counterurbanisation, demographic change and discourses of rural revival in Australia during COVID-19. *Australian Geographer*, 1–16.
- McMorran, R., Bryce, R., & Glass, J. (2015). Grouse shooting, moorland management and local communities. Community Perceptions and Socio-Economic Impacts of Moorland Management and Grouse Shooting in the Monadhliath and Angus Glens. *Commissioned Report*.
- Midgley, J., & Adams, J. (2006). *A New Rural Agenda*. Newcastle, UK. The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR).
- Milbourne, P. (2003). Hunting ruralities: Nature, society and culture in ‘hunt countries’ of England and Wales. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 19(2), 157–171.
- Mischi, J. (2013). Contested rural activities: Class, politics and shooting in the French countryside. *Ethnography*, 14(1), 64–84.
- Monbiot, G. (2020, February 11). If we want to cut flooding, we should stop burning the moorland. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/feb/11/flooding-moorland-river-calder-flooded-peatlands>; Accessed: 28.4.2020.
- Morgan-Davies, C., Wilson, R., & Waterhouse, T. (2015). Use or Delight? History of Conflicting Hill Land Uses in Scotland – A Review. *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 131(2), 98–122.
- Munsche, A. P. B. (1981). The Gamekeeper and English Rural Society, 1660-1830. *Journal of British Studies*, 20(2), 82–105.
- Munton, R. (2009). Rural land ownership in the United Kingdom: Changing patterns and future possibilities for land use. *Land use policy*, 26, S54-S61.
- Murray Li, T. (2014). What is land? Assembling a resource for global investment. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 39(4), 589–602.
- Murton, R. (2008). *The Rural: Critical Essays in Human Geography*. Routledge.

Nadin, S., & Cassell, C. (2006). The use of a research diary as a tool for reflexive practice: Some reflections from management research. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, 3(3), 208–217.

Nair, D. (2021). “Hanging Out” while Studying “Up”: Doing Ethnographic Fieldwork in International Relations. *International Studies Review*, 23(4), 1300–1327.

Naples, N. A., & Sachs, C. (2000). Standpoint epistemology and the uses of self-reflection in feminist ethnography: Lessons for Rural Sociology. *Rural Sociology*, 65(2), 194–214. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1549-0831.2000.tb00025.x>

Natural Resource Wales. (2022, July 11). *Natural Resources Wales Call for evidence to inform the development of NRW’s approach to regulating the release of gamebirds (common pheasant and red-legged partridge) in Wales.* <https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/news/blog/call-for-evidence-to-inform-the-development-of-nrw-s-approach-to-regulating-the-release-of-gamebirds-common-pheasant-and-red-legged-partridge-in-wales/?lang=en>; Accessed: 27.12.2022.

Naylor, R., Hamilton-Webb, A., Little, R., Maye, D. (2018). The ‘good farmer’: farmer identities and the control of exotic livestock disease in England. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 1, 3–19.

Neal, S. (2002). Rural landscapes, representations and racism: Examining multicultural citizenship and policy-making in the English countryside. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25(3), 442–461.

Neal, S., & Agyeman, J. (2006). In The New Countryside? Ethnicity, nation and exclusion in contemporary Britain (Neal & Agyeman, 2006). In *The new countryside? Ethnicity, nation and exclusion in contemporary rural Britain.*

Neal, S., & Walters, S. (2006). Strangers asking strange questions? A methodological narrative of researching belonging and identity in English rural communities. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22(2), 177–189.

Neal, S., & Walters, S. (2008). Rural be/longing and rural social organizations: Conviviality and community-making in the English countryside. *Sociology*, 42(2), 279–297.

Newby, H. (1986). Locality and rurality: the restructuring of rural social relations. *Regional Studies*, 20(3), 209–215.

Oerke, B., & Bogner, F. X. (2013). Social Desirability, Environmental Attitudes, and General Ecological Behaviour in Children. *International Journal of Science Education*, 35(5), 713–730.

Ons.gov.uk. (2021). *Deaths due to COVID-19, registered in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics.*

O'Reilly, K. (2014). Key Concepts in Ethnography. *Key Concepts in Ethnography*, 119–124.

Orr, W. (1982). *Deer Forests, Landlords & Crofters*. Humanities Press.

Paas, W., Accatino, F., Bijttebier, J., Black, J. E., Gavrilesco, C., Krupin, V., Manevska-Tasevska, G., Ollendorf, F., Peneva, M., San Martin, C., Zinnanti, C., Appel, F., Courtney, P., Severini, S., Soriano, B., Vigani, M., Zawalińska, K., van Ittersum, M. K., Meuwissen, M. P. M., & Reidsma, P. (2021). Participatory assessment of critical thresholds for resilient and sustainable European farming systems. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 88, 214–226.

PACEC [Public and Corporate Economic Consultants]. (2014). *The Value of Shooting: The economic, environmental and social contribution of shooting sports to the UK*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jen.2007.12.003>; Accessed: 2.1.2023.

Pacione, M. (1995). The Geography of Deprivation in Rural Scotland. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 20(2), 173–192.

Parker, C. (2009). Tunnel-bypasses and minarets of capitalism: Amman as neoliberal assemblage. *Political Geography*, 28(2), 110–120.

Patchett, M., Foster, K., & Lorimer, H. (2011). The biogeographies of a hollow-eyed harrier. *The afterlives of animals: A museum menagerie*, 110–33.

Phillipson, J., Gorton, M., Turner, R., Shucksmith, M., Aitken-McDermott, K., Areal, F., Cowie, P., Hubbard, C., Maioli, S., McAreavey, R., Souza-Monteiro, D., Newbery, R., Panzone, L., Rowe, F., & Shortall, S. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic and its implications for rural economies. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 12(10).

Philo, C. (1997). Of Other Rurals. In *Contested Countryside Cultures: Otherness, Marginalisation and Rurality*. Routledge.

Philo, C., & Wilbert, C. (2000). *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Pileva, D., & Markov, I. (2021). Counter-urbanization and “return” to rurality? Implications of COVID-19 pandemic in Bulgaria. *Glasnik Etnografskog Instituta*, 69(3), 543–560.

Pini, B. (2004). On being a nice country girl and an academic feminist: Using reflexivity in rural social research. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 20(2), 169–179.

Pope, A. (1713). *Windsor-Forest*. Available online. <http://virginia-anthology.org/alexander-pope-windsor-forest/>; Accessed: 21.3.2023.

- Postill, J. (2017). Remote ethnography: studying culture from afar. *Routledge Companion to Digital Ethnography*, 61–69.
- Pottinger, L. (2020). Treading carefully through tomatoes: Embodying a gentle methodological approach. *Area*, 1–7.
- Previte, J., Pini, B., & Haslam-mckenzie, F. (2007). Q methodology and rural research. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 47(2), 135–147.
- Raven, M., Robinson, D., & Hunter, J. (2021). The Emu: More-Than-Human and More-Than-Animal Geographies. *Antipode*, 53(5), 1526–1545.
- Redpath, S., & Thirgood, S. (2009). Hen harriers and red grouse: Moving towards consensus? *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 46(5), 961–963.
- Redpath, S. M., Young, J., Evely, A., Adams, W. M., Sutherland, W. J., Whitehouse, A., & Gutierrez, R. J. (2013). Understanding and managing conservation conflicts. *Trends in ecology & evolution*, 28(2), 100-109.
- Reed, M. (2008). The rural arena: The diversity of protest in rural England. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 24(2), 209–218.
- Revive. (2020). *Revive: The coalition for grouse moor reform*. <http://revive.scot>; Accessed: 31.1.2023.
- Richards, C. (2004). Grouse shooting and its landscape: The management of grouse moors in Britain. *Anthropology Today*, 20(4), 10–15.
- Ridgwell, S. (2021). ‘K is for Keeper’: The roles and representations of the English gamekeeper, c. 1880-1914. *Rural History*, 33(1), 1-22.
- Riley, M. (2010). Emplacing the research encounter: Exploring farm life histories. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(8), 651–662.
- Riley, M. (2011). Turning Farmers into Conservationists? Progress and Prospects. *Geography Compass*, 5(6), 369–389.
- Riley, M., & Robertson, B. (2021). #farming365 – Exploring farmers’ social media use and the (re)presentation of farming lives. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 87, 99–111.
- Riley, M., Sangster, H., Smith, H., Chiverrell, R., & Boyle, J. (2018). *Will farmers work together for conservation? The potential limits of farmers’ cooperation in Agri-environment measures*. 635–646.
- Robbins, P., & Fraser, A. (2003). A forest of contradictions: Producing the landscapes of the Scottish Highlands. *Antipode*, 35(1), 95–118.

- Rønningen, K., & Flemsæter, F. (2016). *Multifunctionality, rural diversification and the unsettlement of rural land use systems* (pp. 312-322). Routledge.
- Rose, G. (2008). Using photographs as illustrations in human geography. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 32(1), 151–160.
- Rose, G. (2016). Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials. In *Sage Publications* (4th ed.).
- Rosin, C., Dwiartama, A., Grant, D., & Hopkins, D. (2013). Using provenance to create stability: State-led territorialisation of Central Otago as assemblage. *New Zealand Geographer*, 69(3), 235–248.
- Rothery, M. (2007). The wealth of the English landed gentry, 1870-1935. *Agricultural History Review*, 55(2), 251–268.
- RSPB [Royal Society for Protection of Birds]. (2023). *About the RSPB - The RSPB*. <https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/>; Accessed: 17.3.2023.
- RSPB. (2022). *Driven Grouse Shooting in the uplands*. <https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/policy-insight/agriculture-and-land-use/farming-land-use-and-nature/uplands/driven-grouse-shooting/>; Accessed: 1.3.2022.
- Rust, N. A., Stankovics, P., Jarvis, R. M., Morris-Trainor, Z., de Vries, J. R., Ingram, J., Mills, J., Glikman, J. A., Parkinson, J., Toth, Z., Hansda, R., McMorrnan, R., Glass, J., & Reed, M. S. (2022). Have farmers had enough of experts? *Environmental Management*, 69(1), 31–44.
- Sage, R. B., Hoodless, A. N., Woodburn, M. I., Draycott, R. A., Madden, J. R., & Sotherton, N. W. (2020). Summary review and synthesis: Effects on habitats and wildlife of the release and management of pheasants and red-legged partridges on UK lowland shoots. *Wildlife Biology*, 2020(4), 1-12.
- Saldanha, A. (2006). Reontologising race: The machinic geography of phenotype. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 24(1), 9–24.
- Salmons, J. (2016). *Doing Qualitative Research Online* (1-100). Sage Publications.
- Salmons, J. (2020, April 28). *When the field is online: Qualitative Data Collection* [video]. NVivo by QSR International. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swuTF7Q4gTs>; Accessed: 1.2.2021.
- Sandom, C., & Wynne-Jones, S. (2019). Rewilding a country: Britain as a case study. In N. Pettorelli, S. Durant, & J. Du Toit (Eds.), *Rewilding*. Cambridge University Press.
- Saunders, B., Kitzinger, J., & Kitzinger, C. (2015). Anonymising interview data: challenges and compromise in practice. *Qualitative Research*, 15(5), 616–632.



Secor, A. J. (2010). Chapter 12: Social Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups. In J. Gomez, Basil; Jones, Paul (Ed.), *Research Methods in Geography: A Critical Introduction* (4th ed., pp. 194–208). Blackwells.

Shrubsole, G. (2019). *Who Owns England? How We Lost Our Green & Pleasant Land & How to Take It Back*. William Collins.

Shrubsole, G., & Powell-Smith, A. (2020). *Who owns England?*  
<https://whoownsengland.org/>; Accessed: 8.12.2020.

Shucksmith, M. (2012). Class, Power and Inequality in Rural Areas: Beyond Social Exclusion? *Sociologia Ruralis*, 52(4), 377–397.

Shucksmith, M. (2018). Re-imagining the rural: From rural idyll to Good Countryside. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 59, 163–172.

Sibley, D. (2003). Geography and psychoanalysis: Tensions and possibilities. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 4(3), 391–399.

Sibley, D. (2006). Inclusions/exclusions in rural space. In P. Cloke, T. Marsden, & P. Mooney (Eds.), *Handbook of Rural Studies* (pp. 401–410). Sage Publications.

Slee, B., Brown, I., Donnelly, D., Gordon, I. J., Matthews, K., & Towers, W. (2014). The 'squeezed middle': Identifying and addressing conflicting demands on intermediate quality farmland in Scotland. *Land Use Policy*, 41, 206–216.

Slee, W. R. (2005). From countrysides of production to countrysides of consumption? *Journal of Agricultural Science*, 255–265.

Smith, D. P., Phillips, M., Culora, A., & Kinton, C. (2021). The mobilities and immobilities of rural gentrification: Staying put or moving on? *Population, Space and Place*, 27(7), e2496.

Spike Lewis, A., & Haf, S. (2020). *Who Owns Wales: Pwy Bia Cymru*.  
<https://whoownscymru.wordpress.com/>; Accessed: 3.2.2023.

Sramek, J. (2006).? Face Him Like a Briton?: Tiger Hunting, Imperialism, and British Masculinity in Colonial India, 1800-1875. *Victorian Studies*, 48(4), 659–680.

St John, F. A. V., Steadman, J., Austen, G., & Redpath, S. M. (2019). Value diversity and conservation conflict: Lessons from the management of red grouse and hen harriers in England. *People and Nature*, 1(1), 6–17.

Stake, E. R. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Sage Publications.

- Stanley, L & Wise, S. (1990). Method, Methodology and Epistemology in feminist research process. In *Feminist Praxis: Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology* (pp. 20–62). Routledge.
- Stearns, P. M. (2008). The Right Sort of Woman: Victorian Travel Writers and the Fitness of an Empire. *Journeys*, 9(1), 21–35.
- Stockdale, A. (2004). Rural Out-Migration: Community Consequences and Individual Migrant Experiences. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 44(2).
- Stockdale, A. (2010). The diverse geographies of rural gentrification in Scotland. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 26(1), 31–40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2009.04.001>.
- Storey, D. (2004). A sense of place: rural development, tourism and place promotion in the Republic of Ireland. In L. Holloway & M. Kneafsey (Eds.), *Geographies of Rural Cultures and Societies*. Ashgate.
- Sutherland, L. A. (2020). The ‘desk-chair countryside’: Affect, authenticity, and the rural idyll in a farming computer game. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 78, 350–363.
- Sutherland, L. A., & Calo, A. (2020). Assemblage and the ‘good farmer’: New entrants to crofting in Scotland. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 80, 532–542.
- Sutherland, L. A., Toma, L., Barnes, A. P., Matthews, K. B., & Hopkins, J. (2016). Agri-environmental diversification: Linking environmental, forestry and renewable energy engagement on Scottish farms. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 47, 10–20.
- Swan, G. J. F. (2017). *Understanding conservation conflicts surrounding predation and game shooting interests [Doctoral Thesis, Exeter University]*. University of Exeter Repository. <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10871/32644?show=full>; Accessed: 18.11.2019.
- Swan, G. J. F., Redpath, S. M., Crowley, S. L., & McDonald, R. A. (2020). Understanding diverse approaches to predator management among gamekeepers in England. *People and Nature*, 2(2), 495–508.
- Taylor, L. (2016). Case Study Methodology. In S. Clifford., N. Cope, M. Gillespie, T. & French (Ed.), *Key Methods in Geography* (3rd ed., pp. 581–595). Sage Publications.
- Taylor, G. W., & Ussher, J. M. (2001). Making Sense of S&M: A Discourse Analytic Account. *Sexualities*, 4(3), 293–314.
- The National Gamekeepers’ Organisation. (2022a). *About Gamekeeping*. The National Gamekeepers Organisation. <https://www.nationalgamekeepers.org.uk/about-gamekeeping>; Accessed: 17.05.2023.

The National Gamekeepers' Organisation. (2022b). *Gamekeeping Jobs - Gamekeepers Welfare Trust*. The National Gamekeepers' Organisation.  
<https://www.nationalgamekeepers.org.uk/about-gamekeeping/gamekeeping-jobs>;  
Accessed 21.6.2022.

Thirgood, S., Redpath, S., Newton, I., & Hudson, P. (2000). Raptors and red grouse: Conservation conflicts and management solutions. *Conservation Biology*, 14(1), 95–104.

Thomas, E., Riley, M., & Spees, J. (2019). Good farming beyond farmland – Riparian environments and the concept of the 'good farmer'. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 67, 111–119.

Thompson, F, M, L. (1990). Presidential Address: English Landed Society in the Twentieth Century I Property: Collapse and Survival. *Royal Historical Society*, 40(1990), 1–24.

Thompson, M. (2007). The land market, 1880-1925: A reappraisal reappraised. *Agricultural History Review*, 55(2), 289–300.

Thomson, S., McMorran, R., & Glass, J. (2018). *Socio-economic and biodiversity impacts of driven grouse moors in Scotland: Part 1. Socio-economic impacts of driven grouse moors in Scotland*. 1-54.

Thomson, S., McMorran, R., Glass, J., McMillan, J., & Spencer, M. (2020, October). The Employment Rights of Gamekeepers. *Commissioned Report to the Scottish Government*. Available online. <https://sefari.scot/sites/default/files/documents/Part%20%20-%20Gamekeeper%20Employment%20Rights.pdf>; Accessed: 26.3.2021.

Thummapol, O., Park, T., Jackson, M., & Barton, S. (2019). Methodological Challenges Faced in Doing Research with Vulnerable Women: Reflections from Fieldwork Experiences. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, (18), 1-11.

Tidball, K. G. (2014). Wildlife Conservation. In A. C. Michalos (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*. Springer.

Tindley, A. (2018). 'All the arts of a radical agitation': Transnational perspectives on British and Irish landowners and estates, 1800–1921. *Historical Research*, 91(254), 705–722.

Tingay, R., & Wightman, A. (2018). *The Case for Reforming Scotland's Driven Grouse Moors*. [www.orbit.scot](http://www.orbit.scot); Accessed: 28.4.2020.

Urquhart, J., Courtney, P., & Slee, B. (2012). Private woodland owners' perspectives on multifunctionality in English woodlands. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 28(1), 95–106.

- Valentine, G. (1997). 'Oh yes I can.' 'Oh no you can't': Children and parents' understandings of kids' competence to negotiate public space safely. *Antipode*, 29(1), 65–89.
- Vesey-Thompson, M. (2023). *Grouse Shooting*. Glorious Game. <https://www.gloriousgame.com/grouse-shooting>; Accessed: 20.2.23.
- Wang, C., & Burris, A. M. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment. *Health Education & Behaviour*, 24(3), 369–387.
- Ward, N., Jackson, P., Russell, P., & Wilkinson, K. (2008). Productivism, post-productivism and European agricultural reform: The case of sugar. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 48(2), 118–132.
- Warner, M. (2018). How to write a Case study. In *Local Content in Procurement* (Issue 1). Available online. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351278089-5>; Accessed: 28.7.2021.
- Warren, A. (2019). Open spaces, the landed classes, and the Boy Scouts, 1908-39. In T. Dooley & C. Ridgeway (Eds.), *Sport and Leisure in the Irish and British Country House* (pp. 258–276). Four Courts Press.
- Warren, C. R., & Mckee, A. (2011). The Scottish Revolution? evaluating the impacts of post-devolution Land reform. *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 127(1), 17–39.
- Watts, D., Matilainen, A., Kurki, S. P., Keskinarkaus, S., & Hunter, C. (2017). Hunting cultures and the 'northern periphery': Exploring their relationship in Scotland and Finland. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 54, 255–265.
- Werrity, A. (2019). *Grouse Moor Management Review Group*. Report to the Scottish Government. (Issue November).
- Wightman, A. (1996). *Who Owns Scotland?* Canongate.
- Wightman, A. (2004). Hunting and hegemony in the Highlands of Scotland: a study in the ideology of landscapes and landownership. In *Noragric Working Paper* (Issue 36). cabi:20043173232.
- Wightman, A., Higgins, P., Jarvie, G., & Nicol, R. (2010). The Cultural Politics of Hunting: Sporting Estates and Recreational Land Use in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. *Culture, Sport, Society*, 5(1), 53–70.
- Wightman, A., & Tingay, R. (2015). The Intensification of Grouse Moor Management in Scotland. *League Against Cruel Sports*. <http://parkswatchscotland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Andy-Wightman-1384-LACSS-A4-Land-Reform-Report-AW-LR-3.pdf>; Accessed: 14.11.2019.

- Wild Justice. (2020, February 26). *Wild Justice seeks judicial review of gamebird releases*. <https://wildjustice.org.uk/general/wild-justice-seeks-judicial-review-of-gamebird-releases/>; Accessed: 23.12.2022.
- Wilkin, A., & Liamputtong, P. (2010). The photovoice method: Researching the experiences of Aboriginal health workers through photographs. *Australian Journal of Primary Health, 16*(3), 231–239.
- Williams, R. (1973). *The Country and the City*. Paladin.
- Wilson, G. (2001). There and back again? Exploring the (un) changed natural and mental landscapes of European agriculture. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 26*(1), 77–102.
- Winchester, H., & Rofo, M. (2010). *Qualitative Research and Its Place in Human Geography* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Winchester, S. (2021). *Land: How the Hunger for Ownership Shaped the Modern World*. William Collins.
- Winter, M. (2004). Geographies of food: agro-food geographies-farming, food and politics. In *Progress in Human Geography* (28)5, 664-670.
- Wood, E. J., Rogers, D., Sivaramakrishnan, K., & Almeling, R. (2020, May). Resuming Field Research in Pandemic Times. *Social Science Research Council, 1–5*.
- Woods, M. (1998). Mad cows and hounded deer: political representations of animals in the British countryside. *Environment and Planning A, 30*(7), 1219–1234.
- Woods, M. (2000). Fantastic Mr Fox? Representing animals in the hunting debate. *Animal Spaces, Bestly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations, 1993*, 182–202.
- Woods, M. (2003). Deconstructing rural protest: The emergence of a new social movement. *Journal of Rural Studies, 19*(3), 309–325.
- Woods, M. (2005). *Contesting Rurality: Politics in the British Countryside*. Routledge.
- Woods, M. (2006). Redefining the ‘Rural Question’: The New ‘Politics of the Rural’ and Social Policy. *Social Policy & Administration, 40*(6), 579–595.
- Woods, M. (2007). Engaging the global countryside: Globalization, hybridity, and the reconstitution of rural place. *Progress in Human Geography, 31*(4), 485–507.
- Woods, M. (2009). Rural geography: Blurring boundaries and making connections. *Progress in Human Geography, 33*(6), 849–858.

Woods, M. (2010). Performing rurality and practising rural geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34(6), 835-846.

Woods, M. (2011). *Rural*. Routledge.

Woods, M. (2015a). Territorialisation and the assemblage of rural place: Examples from Canada and New Zealand. *Cultural Sustainability and Regional Development: Theories and Practices of Territorialisation*, 29–42.

Woods, M. (2015b, September). Power and Place in the Global Sugar Assemblage [Conference presentation]. *RGS-IBG Annual International Conference*. University of Exeter. <https://slideplayer.com/slide/8040239/>; Accessed: 18.12.2020.

Woods, M. (2017, June 9). Assemblage, Place and Globalization. [Conference presentation]. *International Symposium Assemblage Thinking*. University of the Aegean, Department of Geography. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2l3agcxgLPQ>; Accessed: 20.1.2021.

Woods, M., Fois, F., Heley, J., Jones, L., Onyehialam, A., Saville, S., & Welsh, M. (2021). Assemblage, place and globalisation. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 46(2), 284–298.

Woodward, R. (1996). 'Deprivation' and 'the rural': an investigation into contradictory discourses. *Journal of rural studies*, 12(1), 55-67.

World Land Trust. (2022). *Area Converter*. <https://www.worldlandtrust.org/get-involved/educational-resources/area-converter/>; Accessed: 23.12.2022.

Wynne-Jones, S., Strouts, G., & Holmes, G. (2018). This is a repository copy of Abandoning or Reimagining a Cultural Heartland? Understanding and Responding to Rewilding Conflicts in Wales-the case of the Cambrian Wildwoods. *Environmental Values*, 27(4), 377–403.

Yardley, M. (2015, October). The history of the pheasant. *The Field*. <https://www.thefield.co.uk/shooting/the-history-of-the-pheasant-22364>; Accessed: 30.5.2019.

Yarwood, R., & Evans, N. (2000). Taking stock of farm animals and rurality. *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places*, 1997, 98–114.

Yin, R. K. (2008). Designing Case Studies. In M. Maruster, L; Gijzenberg, J (Ed.), *Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 359–400). Sage Publications.

Young, J. (2015, November 18). *The 20 best pheasant shoots in Britain - The Field*. The Field. <https://www.thefield.co.uk/shooting/the-20-best-pheasant-shoots-in-britain-30528>; Accessed: 2.6.2021.

Zođal, V., Domènech, A., & Emekli, G. (2022). Stay at (which) home: second homes during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(1), 125–133.



## Appendices

### Appendix A: Tables of initial questionnaire inquiry key details

Table A.1 Database criteria for Rural Stakeholder (RS) questionnaire survey

Organisation Name	Vision/Aim	Brief Description of Organisation)	Contact Details	Website	Stance on Game Shooting <i>(Supportive, Against, Unable to Disclose)</i>	Email Address
-------------------	------------	------------------------------------	-----------------	---------	---	---------------

Table A.2. Database criteria for Estates and Shoots (ES) questionnaire survey

Estate or Shoot Name	Location	Size (Acres)	Primary Activities	Owner	Phone Number or Address	Email	Website	Additional Information
----------------------	----------	--------------	--------------------	-------	-------------------------	-------	---------	------------------------



## Appendix B: Example cover letter

### Invitation to participate in a study examining Rural Futures & Game Sport

Dear Stakeholder,

My name is Natasha, a researcher interested in large scale changes to rural spaces, with a personal background connected to a Northern English Sporting Estate. This PhD research has given me the opportunity to explore further the complexities of this rural life. My project centres on the changing place of game sport and the wider rural within the 21<sup>st</sup> century and investigates the pressures and opportunities the sport and local communities face, and how they are adapting to them.

In more detail, my PhD research is multi-levelled, beginning with this survey of rural stakeholders to assess wide-scale patterns and themes across the rural sphere. Phase 2 involves asking landowners and managers similar questions on changes, pressures, and opportunities. Phase 3 will involve case study research within England and Wales to assess what this all means on the ground for rural community members living and working within, and connected to, the sporting landscape.

You have been selected to receive this survey as an organisation or individual who is closely associated with the English and/or Welsh countryside, thus having a stake in its future. Your participation would be greatly appreciated as your opinions are most important in helping me to build as wide and deep an understanding as possible.

To complete the questionnaire, please click on the following link:

[LINK REMOVED]

This survey aims to gauge the varying stances of stakeholders in the English and Welsh Countryside and to determine what part they feel game sport has in this countryside. It will take approximately 15-30 minutes to complete. The questions ask primarily about your, or your organisations, experiences, and opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. All answers will be treated confidentially and can be completed anonymously.

It would be appreciated if you could complete this questionnaire by the 25th of March 2021. Please return it via the linked form or email [ADDRESS REMOVED]. Return of the survey will be considered as your consent to participate in my research. If you would prefer to complete the survey over the phone a telephone call can be arranged to do so.

Any further questions you have about this research can be directed to me at the email address provided. Finally, please feel free to encourage other groups and organisations who may have a stake in the English/Welsh Countryside to take part in this project. You can do this simply by forwarding the email link you received from me to them or by contacting me to do so.

Thank you very much in advance for your participation.

Yours faithfully,

Natasha Coleman

[ADDRESS REMOVED]

Any further questions can be fielded either directly to the researcher - Natasha Coleman [ADDRESS REMOVED] or to her supervisor Dr Keith Halfacree [ADDRESS REMOVED]

Any complaints concerning the way this research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher or, if an independent person is preferred, to the University's Human Research Ethics Officer: [ADDRESS REMOVED].

Ethics Approval Code: 011220/3281.



## Rural Futures & Game Sport Survey.

[Questionnaire Intended for Rural Stakeholders]

Conducted by Natasha Coleman [REDACTED] School of Geography, Swansea University.

Please answer all questions that apply to you or your organisation. Your response will be used for the intention of this research project only and remains confidential. The survey can be answered in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation. If completing anonymously it is helpful if you can give a broad framing of the perspective you are coming from. For example: "fell walker"// "wildlife conservation employee"// "gamekeeping support organisation employee".

The survey should take approximately 15- 30 minutes to complete, survey submission will provide consent for this data to be used for the sole purpose of this research project.

About the research:

This research project focuses on game sporting estates, syndicates and communities within England and Wales. Specifically, it is exploring rural change, including what pressures and opportunities game shoots and local communities face today and how they may have or plan to adapt to them. The research is multi-levelled, beginning with THIS survey which engages with rural stakeholders to assess what they see as challenges, changes and opportunities ahead for them and the wider countryside. The second stage involves asking landowners and managers directly similar questions of challenge, change and opportunities. The third stage will involve case study research in several locations to assess what this all means on the ground for rural community members living and working in this landscape, now and in the future.

Please also share the survey:

Feel free to encourage other groups and organisations who may have a stake in the English & Welsh Countryside to answer the survey. You can do this simply by forwarding the emailed link you received to them or contacting me to do so.

Any further questions can be fielded directly to the researcher - Natasha Coleman [REDACTED] or to her first supervisor Dr Keith Halfacree [REDACTED]

## Introductory Section

Section 1 aims to gain an idea of the different stakeholders across England and Wales and how they are involved within the countryside. It also aims to gauge how some of the big challenges currently facing the countryside are impacting these rural stakeholders and associated individuals.

Please insert organisation name, your name or a broad indicator of your position as a rural stakeholder if you wish to complete the survey anonymously:

Example: Woods Trust, John Smith, Project Coordinator or if anonymous: National Conservation Group Employee.

Your answer

---

Q.1. How are you or your organisation involved in rural land use and practises?

Your answer

---

Q.2. As the countryside changes & stakes in it grow, what big challenges does your organisation and its work face?

Feel free to bullet point. If completing as an individual, what challenges does your relationship to, or use of, the countryside face?

Your answer

---

Q.3. On a scale of 1-10 how concerned are you about the impact of BREXIT upon your organisation and/or the wider countryside?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all concerned           Very concerned

Q.4. Please elaborate on the potential implications of Brexit if you wish.

Your answer

---

Q.5. On a scale of 1-10 how concerned are you about the impact of COVID-19 on your organisation and/or the wider countryside?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all concerned           Very concerned

Q.6. Please elaborate on the potential implications of Covid-19 if you wish.

Your answer

---

Q.7. On a scale of 1-10 how concerned are you about the impact of CLIMATE CHANGE and BIODIVERSITY LOSS upon your organisation and/or the wider countryside?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all concerned           Very concerned

Q.8. Please elaborate on the potential implications of Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss if you wish.

Your answer

---

Q.9. What opportunities do you think your organisation will see in the next 10+ years? Feel free to bullet point.

If completing as an individual, what opportunities do you see with your relationship to the countryside in the next 10+ years?

Your answer

---

Q.10. How do you think the challenges and opportunities noted above will impact more widely on the countryside?

Your answer

---

## Relationship to game management & shooting.

The countryside is a space where multiple practices, management and stakes overlap. This section aims to gage how you perceive game bird management & shooting to fit into the 21st century countryside.

Q.11. Where do you as an organisation or individual stand on game bird shooting?

- Pro (Supportive of practice)
- Anti (Against the practice)
- Unsure
- Unable to clarify stance
- Neutral
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Q.12. Does your opinion differ for different SCALES or models of game shooting & management? Please state & give further details if you wish.  
(for example: large commercial vs small syndicates).

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Q.13. Does your opinion of different TYPES of game sport & management differ?  
Please state & give further details if you wish.  
(i.e. driven sports, walked up, upland or lowland game management & shooting).

Your answer

---

Q.14. What is the reason for the last two (Q12 & 13) responses?

Your answer

---

Q.15. Are you seeing shifts in game management and shooting?  
Select multiple if you wish.

- Yes - Very Positive Shifts
- Yes- Some Positive Shifts
- No - Not Seeing any Shifts
- Yes - Some Negative Shifts
- Yes- Very Negative Shifts
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Q.16. If you are seeing shifts (see Q15) please expand on what you think the most prominent ones are.

Your answer

---

---

Q.17. How do you think these challenges or opportunities will impact more widely on game management and beyond?

Your answer

---

---

Q.18. Is DIVERSIFICATION in or beyond game sport something you are doing or aware of happening?

Yes

No

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q.19. If yes to Q.18 what do you see is driving this diversification?

Your answer

---

---

Q.20. If you recognise change to game management & shooting, what impact do you think this will have on the COMMUNITIES who live and work within, and around, the game shoots?

Very Positive Impact

Fairly Positive impact

Neither positive nor Negative Impact

Fairly Negative Impact

Very Negative Impact



Q.21. Describe what you think the impacts of change [to game management] will be to the local community?

Your answer

---

Q.22. If you see ongoing change [to game management], what impact do you think this will have on the LOCAL ENVIRONMENT & ECOSYSTEMS within and around places with organised game management?

- Very Positive Impact
- Fairly Positive Impact
- Neither Positive nor Negative Impact
- Fairly Negative Impact
- Very Negative Impact
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Q.23. Can you expand a little on the impact of changes to game management on the local environment and ecosystems.

Your answer

---

### Final Question(s)

Q.24. Do you have any further points you would like to add? Can you recommend any other organisations or individuals to contact for this research project?

Your answer

---

Thank you for taking your time to complete the survey.

If you have any more questions or feedback please use the contact information given:  
Natasha Coleman // Supervisor, Dr Keith Halfacree



## Future of Game Sport, Estates & Communities Survey.

[Questionnaire intended for Shoot Managers or Employees]. If this does not apply to you but you are interested in responding to my Rural Stakeholders Survey please get in touch using the email below.

Conducted by: Natasha Coleman [REDACTED] School of Geography, Swansea University.

Please answer the following questions that apply to you or your organisation, as your response is a valuable contribution to this research. Your response will be used for this research project only and will remain confidential. Responses will be ANONYMISED within the research write-up. Responses can be answered in a personal capacity or on behalf of the organisation you represent.

If you have any further questions or concerns please get in touch as I really want to hear what \*you\* have to say on these issues.

The survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

### About the research:

This research project focuses on game sporting estates, syndicates and communities within England and Wales in the 21st Century. Specifically, it is exploring what pressures and opportunities the sport and local communities face and how they may have or plan to adapt to them. The research is multi-levelled, beginning with a survey engaging with sporting estate stakeholders to assess common patterns and themes. The second stage, which is this questionnaire, involves contacting landowners and managers directly to ask about changes, challenges and opportunities for them and their communities. The third stage will involve case study research within England and Wales to assess what this all means on the ground for rural community members living and working within and connected to the sporting landscape.

Please also share the survey:

Feel free to encourage other groups and organisations who you feel have a stake in the English & Welsh Sporting Sector or wider countryside to answer the survey. You can do this simply by forwarding the email link you received to them or contacting me to do so.

Any questions can be asked either directly to the researcher - Natasha Coleman [REDACTED] - or to her supervisor - Dr Keith Halfacree [REDACTED]

## Section 1 - Introduction

This section is to gain an idea of the estate or land that you manage so as to build-up a picture of the different forms of game shoots across England and Wales.

Q.1. What is the name of the estate/ shoot you represent and/ or rough location?

Example: Gardolfy Estate, NW England or anonymous example: XXX, NW England.

Your answer

---

Q.2. Approximately how long has the land been owned or leased by the same shoot or organisation?

5 yrs or less

6-10 yrs

11-15 yrs

16-20 yrs

21-30 yrs

31-40 yrs

41-50 yrs

51+ yrs

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q.3. What is your role within this estate or shoot?**

If Other please specify.

- Sole Owner
  - Shared Owner
  - Manager or Land Agent
  - Gamekeeper
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Q.4. What is the nature of the ownership or lease of the land?**

Please tick as many as apply.

- Established Resident Owner (5 or more years)
- New Resident Owner (within last 5 years)
- Community Ownership
- Absentee (not main residence of owner)
- Leased tenancy
- Owned Farm Shoot
- Rented Farm Shoot
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Q.5. Please state the area of the land managed in acres?

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q.6. Please state the scale of the shoot in terms of average game bag per shoot?

Example: 100 head

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q.7. Is the main shoot activity walked up or driven?

Walked-Up

Driven

Both (driven & Walked-up)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q.8. What is the landscape of the shoot / estate like?

Upland / hilly

Lowland / flat

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Q.9. What are the main uses of this landscape? Please tick as many as apply.

- Game Shooting
  - Tourism & Leisure
  - Residential Property
  - Commercial Property & Business
  - Conservation Management & Initiatives
  - Agricultural (Meat & Dairy)
  - Agricultural (Arable)
  - Forestry
  - Holiday Rentals
  - Renewable Energy Scheme(s)
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q.10. What game do you primarily manage on your shoot(s)?

- Pheasant
- Partridge (red-legged)
- Grouse (red)
- Duck (mallard)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Q.11. How is the shoot managed?

Syndicate

Private Estate

Private Let

Farm

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q.12. How many employees does your estate, organisation or group have? If this shifts for shoot days please specify.

This question is asking about your entire operations not solely the shooting. For example:  
Day to Day: 15 (gamekeepers, household staff, forestry)// Seasonal: 25 (+ beaters, catering).

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q.13. Do you see your model of shooting as typical of game shoots across Wales & England today?

Yes

No

Q.14. In response to question 13 above, why do you think this?

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2 - Changes

This section seeks to discover shifts in game shooting, game management and estates in the 21st century. It also aims to highlight what is driving these changes.

Q.15. What do you think are the main challenges that your shoot (& wider organisation) faces over the next 10+ years?

Your answer

---

Q.16. What do you think are the main opportunities that your shoot (& wider organisation) face over the next 10+ years?

Your answer

---

Q.17. What implications, if any, do you feel Brexit will have on your organisation?

Your answer

---

Q.18. Where do you see your organisation in 25 years time (2045) and what do you think it will be doing?

Your answer

---



Q.19. Which, if any, of the following do you see happening more in the game industry & wider rural over the next decade(s)?

Please tick all that apply.

- Green Energy Production
- Rewilding
- Residential Property Rental
- New or Changed Business Initiatives
- Tourism (including Property)
- Switch away from Shooting
- Rural Population Change
- Intensification of Practices
- Commercialisation
- Local Policy Change
- Conservation Initiatives & Actions
- Business Property Rental
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q.20. If you wish, please say more about any of the anticipated changes noted in the last question:

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Q.21. What do you think are the main drivers of the shifts you have noted above?

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Q.22. Which, if any, of the following external factors do you feel are impacting strongly on your local community, land, organisation or shoot?

If you select other please specify.

Brexit

Covid-19

Policy changes

Weather & Climate Change

Lobbying Groups

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q.23. Could you give a little detail on how any of these external factors are impacting on you?

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Q.24. Which, if any, of the following internal factors are impacting strongly on your local community, land, organisation or shoot?

Ownership changes

Management changes

Population change

Landscape change

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 3 - Impacts

This section focuses on the impact on the ground of the changes, opportunities and challenges mentioned previously. By answering these questions you will help to build a picture of what the consequences are likely to be for the sporting industry and wider rural landscape. You may use bullet points or full sentences.

Q.25. How do you think the changes, challenges, and opportunities you listed above are impacting the COMMUNITIES who live and work within and around the sporting estates or related industry?

Your answer

---

Q.26. How you think the changes, challenges, and opportunities you listed above are impacting the local ENVIRONMENT & ECOSYSTEMS within and around the sporting estates or related industry?

Your answer

---

Q.27. Do you think the changes, challenges, and opportunities are leading to shifts in your estate's or organisation's activities?

Your answer

---

Q.28. How does conflict with media and lobbying groups impact on your organisation and work, if at all?

Your answer

---

## Section 4 - Some Final Questions

Q.29. Can you name any other estates, shoots or organisations that you think it would be interesting for me to cover in this study?

Your answer

---

Thank you once again for taking part. By completing this survey you are adding your voice, a voice from those on the ground within the sporting communities, to the information I am gathering about estates and game shoots today.

Q.30. Finally, could I contact you again for the possibility of giving me further help with this research?

If completed anonymously I still need some form of identification to contact you again. All responses will be anonymised during transcription.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

[Back](#)

[Submit](#)

[Clear form](#)

## Appendix E: Examples of case study application to rural research

Researcher(s)	Topic/ Theme(s)	Methods	Location Site	Timeframe
Bowditch et al (2019)	Understanding Forest resilience: Private estate managers decision-making & experiences, objective shifts and increased environmental decision making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spatially tracked walking interviews with land-managers</li> <li>2. Collaborative stakeholder discussion (group discussions between the land managers)</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish highlands 4 x regionally diverse sites</li> <li>• included 12 estates</li> </ul>	2 years
Fisher & McKee (2017)	Community resilience assessing asset transfers in community and factors influencing community dynamics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Semi-structured, in-depth qualitative interviews: Residents (members of households in community including farmers &amp; business owners) &amp; relevant key actors</li> <li>2. Observation within community events</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 x critical case – a rural community in Scotland</li> <li>• (Anonymised)</li> </ul>	2 years
Heley (2010)	Analysis of middle class boundary making in rural villages and sites such as the pub, hunt and shoot	Situated in-depth Ethnography: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Detached observation</li> <li>2. Informal conversation</li> <li>3. Semi-structured interviews</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anonymised Singular Village Located in England</li> <li>• 3 x sites: pub, shoot, hunt</li> </ul>	1 year (6 x separate long-term visits, up to 8 weeks).
Hillyard (2015)	Rural micro-politics – shifting class and power dynamics through ethnographic research of a village	Ethnography: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Semi-structured interviews</li> <li>2. Informal conversation</li> <li>3. Archival research</li> <li>4. Documentary analysis</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English rural village- North Norfolk</li> </ul>	3 x 3-4 week visits
McKee, (2013)	Investigates the prospects and problems of sustainable estate management through the eyes of those who own, manage, live and work on these estates.	6 x in-depth Immersive case sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household questionnaires</li> <li>• Questionnaire survey of private landowners</li> <li>• Interviews with key actors</li> <li>• Observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upland Scotland</li> </ul>	2 x weeks living and working on each of the 6 estates
Riley (2010)	Changing farming practices and the importance of place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-depth Interviews</li> <li>• Observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peak District 64 farms</li> </ul>	2 years
Wilson (1992)	Affect of landownership on local development via analysis of social and economic structures and land use conflicts	Case study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentary/historical analysis – reports</li> <li>• Semi-structured interviews (landlords, land agents, tenant farmers and owners)</li> <li>• Interviews with 'key agents' in region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Pennines</li> <li>• 4 named estates across N Pennines region</li> </ul>	1 year, 4 x named estates
Woods (1998)	Stag hunting and rural conflict	Case study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document/ literary analysis of event over 2 year timeframe</li> <li>• Actor-Network Accounts: Focused on different perspectives: hunter's, lawyers, Anti-hunt campaigners</li> </ul>	Local authority area, Somerset County Council, South West England	2 years (1993-1995)

## Appendix F: Photography guidelines followed during fieldwork

Things that will NOT be photographed or record
Individuals (faces will be blurred to preserve anonymity)
Things which could identity your location (i.e., road signs, estate logos, well known landmarks)
Vehicle registration plates
Anything illegal (it is up to you here what you choose to show me)

<p>Things that you could show me</p> <p>Remember this is about what this landscape and work means to you and what your experiences are. Anything recorded will be used for this research project alone, will be treated in confidence and will not be shared further without your consent.</p>
Show me the landscape where you work/live?
What does this landscape mean to you? How could you show me this?
Show me your beat? Or somewhere you go a lot within the estate landscape?
Show me what life or work is like here day to day?
Show me your game birds?
Show me other animals you work with or interact with?
Show me how things are changing or something that has changed? (In 1 year/ in 10 years)
Show me what you would like people who do not understand this life to see?
Show me something you do not like about work/life here?
Show me how things change seasonally?
Show me what you wear every day?
Show me what conservation or environmental work you have done or see happening here?
Show me something I would not expect of your work/lifestyle/landscape?
Show me some of the problems you or this landscape face?

Appendix G: Field research ethics approval 2020

<p>FIELD RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL (Dec 2020). Project Title: Reconfiguring the place of the game sport and its assemblage(s) within England and Wales today: challenge, change &amp; opportunity in the 21st century. Applicant Name: Natasha Coleman Submitted by: Keith Halfacree</p>
<p>Having examined the information included in the above application, this committee has decided to: <u>Approve this application.</u> With the following reputation risk to the University: Low Risk</p>
<p>Reject this application and allow for resubmission provided the ethical issues raised by the College Ethics Committee/AWERB Group below are addressed Return for minor amendment/clarification (please resubmit using the 'Resubmit minor amendment' option for a quick turnaround for approval)</p>
<p>The COS ethics committee have no concerns, note the advice from Reviewer 2 (19/11/2020): ***** REVIEWER 1 - 18/11/2020 Recommendation: APPROVED (Low Risk)***** I have no concerns with this project. The methodology is designed to be ethical and covid - 19 safe. ***** REVIEWER 2 - 17/11/2020 Recommendation: APPROVED (Low Risk)***** No concerns. Participant information should note the ethics approval number when it is received. The rural stakeholder cover letter, at the bottom it should note researcher not research.</p> <p>Ethics Approval Code: 011220/3281.</p>

## Appendix H: Example participant information sheet



### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Rural Futures & Game Sport Study - Challenge, Change & Opportunity in the 21st Century.

You are invited to participate in the above research study. To make an informed decision as to whether to participate you should understand what the project is about, what your involvement would require and how the information will be used. Please read the following information to guide your decision: if you have any questions please ask. Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary.

Natasha Coleman, PhD Researcher, Swansea University, Department of Geography

████████████████████

#### 1. What is the purpose of the study?

My research aims to:

- Highlight what and who make up an estate/shoot community.
- Investigate the changing place of game sport and rural communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Investigate the pressures and opportunities the sport and local communities face and how local populations / estates / shoots are adapting to them.

This stage of the project involves studies in several parts of England and Wales to assess what day-to-day life is like for rural community members living and working within this landscape and what they see their future to look like.

#### 2. Who is conducting it and why?

My name is Natasha and I'm a PhD researcher based in Swansea University's Geography Department. I am interested in how the countryside is changing. Why? Well, I have a personal background connected to a northern English sporting estate and I have been lucky enough to be given the opportunity to study for a PhD the complexities of this rural life.

#### 3. Why have you been chosen?

You have been invited to take part as someone who lives/works within land managed for game shooting. Your opinions will be incredibly useful in helping me build a deep understanding of the changes, challenges, and opportunities your communities and the wider countryside faces.

#### 4. What will happen if I take part?

If you agree to participate, we will undertake an informal and friendly discussion about your experiences of rural life framed within a game management/rural community setting, so that I can gain a wider understanding of today's countryside from their communities. What exactly this will involve will depend on Covid-19 restrictions at the time... and your personal preferences. This is what I am hoping for:

- A. Up to 1½ hour socially distanced walking & informal chat where you can show me where you live and places of significance [outdoor only!]. With permission, this will be audio recorded and I may take photographs (no faces or identifiable objects/sites). All data will be anonymised.  
OR
- B. We will have an online meeting on video conferencing software Zoom. You could share some photographs to aid a discussion about living and working within the game shooting and/or rural world to give me a real idea of what life in these places is like through your eyes.



5. What else do I need to know?

- Anonymity. You may be seen by others in your community walking with me – we can discuss this beforehand and how you would like to respond to this situation. I will also make every effort to disclose to the entire community the nature of my presence and work, none of which should cause concern. If need be, we can change the time of our meeting or have a conversation online instead.
- Data Protection. All data (including location & participants) will be anonymized. It will be stored on an encrypted hard drive and not used for anything other than my study without your full written consent.
- Weather/Terrain. All interviews will happen in daylight hours and interviews conducted outdoors. Where possible we will reschedule to prevent being outdoors in adverse weather conditions.
- Covid-19. I will self-isolate prior to entering your community and take a Covid-19 test before arrival. I ask that we both always respect social distancing of 1.5 metres and that if you display any symptoms, we re-arrange our meeting. Please let me know beforehand any concerns you may have. All research can be virtual (online) should you wish not to meet in person.

6. What are the benefits of taking part?

This is a real opportunity for those of you who live and work on the ground to share your perspectives and experiences. This is something which has largely been ignored in both academia and the mainstream media. I hope to bring attention and real-life knowledge to complex debates, shed light on taken-for-granted aspects and share your varied accounts of this life and work. This seems especially important given wide-scale changes currently taking place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century countryside and beyond.

- A summary report of the entire projects' findings - including Rural Futures & Game Sport Survey data from both Rural Stakeholders & Anonymized Estates/Shoots across England & Wales will be made available.
- Opportunity for shoots to request for specific themes to be explored or followed up within their communities.
- Entire PhD published following completion and opportunity for a focus group to network with others who participated.
- Opportunity to showcase to a wider audience how Estates/shoots form a part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century rural landscape and the work that they are doing in such spaces.

7. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. All data collected from the interviews, such as recordings, along with any personal data not in the public domain will be stored on an encrypted and password protected device. Where data is used in my academic work, every effort will be made to ensure anonymity. After my research is completed, I hope to write a short summary report accessible to you and others that may be interested – again all will be anonymised.

8. What if I have any further questions?

Please ask at any time either directly to me - Natasha Coleman [REDACTED] - or to my PhD supervisor at Swansea University - Dr Keith Halfacree [REDACTED].

Thank you very much for your attention and I very much look forward to meeting with you soon,

*[Researcher Signature Removed]*

Any complaints concerning the way this research project is conducted may be given to the researcher or, if an independent person is preferred, to Swansea University's Human Research Ethics Officer:

[REDACTED]

Ethical Approval Code: 060521/3827.

## Appendix I: Rural Stakeholders geographically located within Scotland

Scottish Rural Stakeholder (RS) Respondents:

Trees for Life, Alan McDonnell (RS 39)

North Highland College, Program Leader, including gamekeeping (RS 7)

Scottish Land and Estates Moorland Director, Tim Baynes (RS 27)

Appendix J: Breakdown of additional surveyed private estate and shoot information

Code	Pseudonyms	Respondent Role	Scale (Acres)	Type of Game	Shoot Type (Walked Up or Drive)	Game Bag
ES 1	Highbeck	Other	28000	Pheasant & Red Grouse	Driven	200
ES 2	Fitton	Manager or land agent	13500	Pheasant & Partridge (red-legged)	Driven	300
ES 3	Tinsworth	Gamekeeper	3500	Pheasant & Partridge (red-legged)	Both	300
ES 4	Darrowby	Manager or land agent	20000	Pheasant & Partridge (red-legged), Red Grouse	Driven	250
ES 5	Abergarth	Shared Owner	1000	Pheasant	Driven	200
ES 6	Cragwich	Manager or land agent	23000	Pheasant & Partridge (red-legged), Grey Partridge	Both	100
ES 7	Disham	Manager or land agent	11000	Pheasant & Partridge (red-legged)	Driven	220
ES 8	Houlton	Manager or land agent	20000	Pheasant & Red Grouse	Driven	230
ES 9	Dulldale	Other	200000	-	Both	-
ES 10	Connelton	Gamekeeper	5600	Red Grouse	Driven	160
ES 11	Saltmarch	Sole Owner	800	Pheasant & Partridge (red-legged), Duck (Mallard)	Driven	200
ES 12	Marlott	Sole Owner	2000	Pheasant & Partridge (red-legged)	Driven	200
ES 13	Barnstonworth	Manager or land agent	15000	Pheasant & Partridge (red-legged)	Driven	350
ES 14	Mertonford	Manager or land agent	30000	Pheasant, Reg Grouse, Grey Partridge	Driven	150
ES 15	Kembleford	Sole Owner	1800	Pheasant & Partridge (red-legged), Duck (Mallard)	Driven	200
ES 16	Malbry	Sole Owner	9000	Pheasant, Partridge (red-legged), Red Grouse & Duck (Mallard)	Both	100
ES 17	Eastvale	Manager or land agent	35000	Red Grouse	Driven	300
ES 18	Woodston	Gamekeeper	2500	Pheasant	Driven	175

ES 19	Gwilyn Dale	Shared Owner	5000	Pheasant, Duck (Mallard), Snipe & Woodcock	Both	35
ES 20	Chigley	Sole Owner	480	Pheasant & Partridge (red-legged)	Driven	120
ES 21	Denley	Manager or land agent	2000	Pheasant & Partridge (red-legged)	Driven	160
ES 22	Caldlow	Manager or land agent	32000	Pheasant & Red Grouse	Driven	300
ES 23	East Proctor	Sole Owner	6000	Pheasant, Partridge (red-legged) & Red Grouse	Driven	200
ES 24	Frithdale	Shared Owner	6400	Pheasant & Red Grouse	Both	100
ES 25	Tilling	Manager or land agent	3500	Pheasant	Both	-
ES 26	Danbury	Manager or land agent	6250	Pheasant, Partridge (red-legged) & Duck (Mallard)	Driven	-
ES 27	Everington	Manager or land agent	15000	Pheasant, Partridge (red-legged) & Red Grouse	Driven	250
ES 28	Little Hangleton	Manager or land agent	5000	Pheasant	Walked-Up	20
ES 29	Limmeridge	Shared Owner	5000	Pheasant, Partridge (red-legged) & Red Grouse	Both	250
ES 30	Polearn	Manager or land agent	2500	Pheasant	Driven	150
ES 31	Gillitie	Other	10000	Pheasant, Partridge (red-legged), Red Grouse, Duck (Mallard) & Grey Partridge	Both	-
ES 32	Trevean Head	Shared Owner	2000	Pheasant & Partridge (reg-legged)	Driven	300
ES 33	Llareggub	Manager or land agent	7500	Pheasant & Partridge (reg-legged)	Driven	270
ES 34	Seaburgh	Manager or land agent	7000	Pheasant & Partridge (reg-legged)	Driven	200
ES 35	Fenchurch	Manager or land agent	4500	Pheasant & Partridge (reg-legged)	Driven	300
ES 36	Dolwyn	Gamekeeper	12500	Pheasant & Partridge (reg-legged)	Driven	250