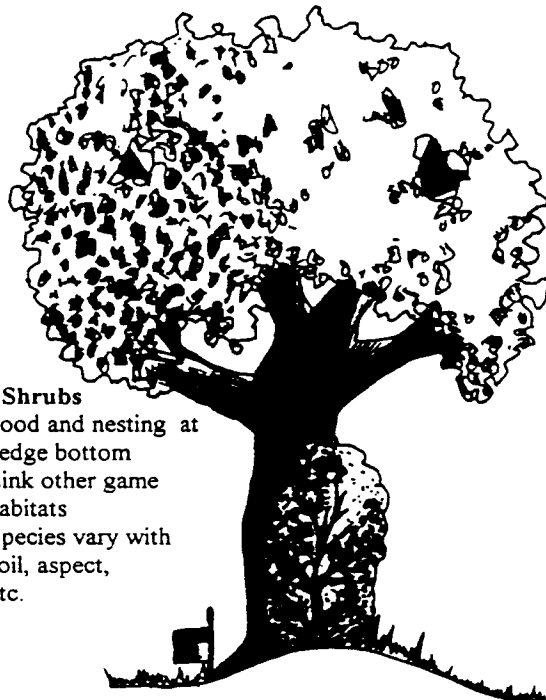


HEDGES, FIELD MARGINS AND SHOOTING



With a little effort, management of hedges and field margins can enhance shooting opportunities on your farm while benefiting a wide range of other wildlife. Management of these features should not be carried out in isolation but should take into account the location of other game habitats on the farm.



Hedge Shrubs

- Food and nesting at hedge bottom
- Link other game habitats
- Species vary with soil, aspect, etc.

Hedgerow Trees

- Roosting for pheasants

Gun Stand

- Field margins and hedges can provide excellent sport

Conservation Headland

- Food and cover for game chicks
- Particularly favours partridge

Game Feeder

- Holds birds in thick hedges
- Helps move birds between areas of cover

Hedge Bank

- Nesting for partridge and pheasant
- Adjacent grass margin is important

Grass Boundary Strip

- Nesting cover for partridge and pheasant
- Can be created on Set-aside

Hedges

New Hedges:

- Consider the location of new hedges carefully before planting. e.g. use them as corridors linking existing woods.
- Autumn is the best time for planting, but you can plant any time between November and March avoiding wet or frosty days. Species choice will depend on soil and topographic conditions.
- Standard trees should only be planted where they are a traditional feature of the local area. Avoid large spreading species such as beech and chestnut as they cast shade over the hedge. Suitable species include wild cherry, rowan and oak.
- Mark any new trees carefully and ensure that they are not damaged during routine hedge trimming.
- Consider creating a hedge bank with a new hedge. Grassy banks have high value for partridge.

Management for Game:

- Cutting and trimming should be every 2 to 3 years on alternate sides to retain berries which are important winter feed.
- Avoid any cutting between April to August when birds are nesting. Allow dead grass to build up at hedge bottom for partridge nesting.

- Coppicing or hedge laying can produce a thick stock-proof hedge valuable, for game. These are skilled forms of management and specialist advice is recommended.

- Hedge junctions can be expanded to produce additional cover.

Grant Aid:

- Grant aid for hedge management is provided for under the RSS. Grants for planting may be provided by your County Council (amenity value must be shown). Eg Borders Tree Grant Scheme.

Boundary Strips

- Can be managed in conjunction with field boundaries such as hedges. Plan carefully considering other habitats for game. Boundary strips can be included within non-rotational set-aside, but a minimum area of 0.3ha is required with a width of 20m.
- **Grass strips** of at least 1m around a field edge maintained by mowing, can provide nesting cover for game birds and are also attractive to hares. Allowing some more tussocky areas to develop will benefit nesting game birds.
- **Fallow** can be established by cultivating a seed bed and allowing broad-leaved weeds to establish naturally. This is more valuable to

game over a long period and best established where margins will be permanent.

Crop Margin

- Conservation headlands use reduced and regulated pesticide input on a 6m strip at the cereal crop edge, and can provide important food for partridge. They should be managed in conjunction with other field boundaries and margin features.
- Bug banks can be created within the cereal crop. These host insects which predate crop pests and therefore can provide crop protection as well as valuable nesting and feeding for partridge.

Further Information

For details of your local FWAG Group please contact FWAG at the National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2RX.
Tel: 024 7669 6699

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy in this information sheet. However, FWAG cannot accept liability for any errors or omissions.