



# PURDEY

*Gun & Rifle Makers*

LONDON 1814

**Press release**

**STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 4<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020, 21.00 HOURS**

## **The 2019 Purdey Awards for Game and Conservation - Winners Announced**

“Winners of the 2019 Purdey Awards for Game and Conservation were announced last night, Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February, at a ceremony held at Apsley House, the residence of the Chairman of the judging panel, the Duke of Wellington.”

The Gold Award was won by The Irish Grouse Conservation Trust, Glenwherry Hill, Co. Antrim for their remarkable work in moorland recovery which allowed them to arrest and reverse the decline of the population of Irish Grouse.

The Silver Award was given to the Roxburghe Estate, Kelso for their Grey Partridge restoration project which has witnessed a stunning growth in numbers of breeding pairs as well as notable increases in other species such as Curlews and Oystercatchers.

The Bronze Award was given to Fridlington Farm Shoot, Sutton on the Forest, North Yorkshire in recognition of their passionate conservation work and specifically their remarkable success in using historic Marl pits to create a unique wild driven Teal shoot.

The Duke of Wellington, Chairman of the Awards judging panel, announced the 2019 winners of Purdey’s annual competition to find the UK’s most outstanding game and conservation projects. The recipients were presented with their awards by Sir Nicholas Soames, former conservative MP and Minister.

## **The Irish Grouse Conservation Trust, Co. Antrim wins the 2019 Purdey Gold Award**

The Gold Award was won by The Irish Grouse Conservation Trust, Glenwherry Hill, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland. The judges, when choosing the Trust for the Gold Award, sought to recognize and celebrate their innovative and hard work that has seen the flourishing of 1,000 acres of heather moorland host a successful reversal of fortunes of the population of Irish Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus hibernicus*).

The project which also comprises 6,000 acres of rough moorland, blanket bog and grazing, includes an impressive and equally significant array of stakeholders such as the RSPB, the GWCT, the

Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Police Service of Northern Ireland – Wildlife Protection, The College of agriculture and Queen’s University, Belfast. Such a collaboration has enabled the Trust to demonstrate the necessity and prudence of predation control and secure the support of conservation bodies in this control work.

The project employs the only Grouse Keeper on the island of Ireland, Alex Rodgers. Alex has adopted a studious program of controlled burning that works in conjunction with the grazing of the moorland with traditional hill sheep and cattle. Alongside this, with guidance from Professor Jim McAdam (Head of Grassland and Plant Sciences at Queen’s University, Belfast) the Trust have removed 100 acres of forestry with further woodland earmarked for removal. The result of all this work has been an impressive 10% improvement in moorland condition in the last ten years.

The Trust were presented with The Purdey Awards Trophy, the Gold Award and a cheque for £5,000.

### **The Roxburghe Estate, Kelso wins the 2019 Purdey Silver Award**

The Silver Award and cheque for £3,000.00 was given to The Roxburghe Estate in recognition and celebration of the success of their Grey Partridge restoration project.

The project was conceived and initiated by the past Duke of Roxburghe who knew the estate had enjoyed historic success in holding significant numbers of Grey Partridge until the 1960s. In 2012, having identified that field sizes had changed very little since the 1960’s an initial plan was drawn up which encompassed 3,400 acres of the estate, this contiguous block of land that included 7 tenant farms rests between The Tweed and The Teviot and by 2014 the project necessitated a full-time game keeper.

The project enjoys the close collaboration and support of the tenant farmers who have joined environmental stewardship schemes to ensure the best creation and management of the field margins and hedgerows essential to this fragile species. Details such as the cutting of hedges to an A-shape to provide better cover alongside the ploughing in of green manure ensures a rich food source.

The result of this sustained work and effort has been a wonderful increase in Partridge numbers and, crucially, other species such as Skylark, Meadow Pit, Linnet, Lapwing, Curlew and Oystercatcher. All of which make this an excellent entry thoroughly deserving of its Silver Award.

## **Fridlington Farm Shoot, Sutton on the Forest, North Yorkshire wins The 2019 Purdey Bronze Award**

Winning the Bronze Award and a cheque for £2,000.00 was given the Fridlington Farm Shoot. This North Yorkshire shoot was recognised for their passionate conservation work and specifically their remarkable wild driven Teal shoot.

The 2,500 acre farm is a mixed farm which has previously won the prestigious Yorkshire GWCT Award for wild Grey Partridge in 2013. However, whilst noting the numerous strips of winter wild bird cover and acres of new plantations it was for their innovative and unique approach to over 60 Marl Pits that the judges sought to recognise this entry.

Following advice from BASC with whom they have worked, the shoot only drive a limited number of the ponds on any one day the ensuring the Teal and other wildfowl have plenty of alternative ponds to shelter on.

This small private shoot represents the culmination of the hard work of all those involved and is a perfect illustration of what conservation and shooting can do and produce.

### **Special commendation**

A special commendation and a cheque for £1,000.00 has been given to Jamie Horner of The Iford Down Shoot, East Sussex. When visiting the Iford Down shoot the judges were universal and fulsome in their praise of Jamie Horner.

Since taking over the shoot in 2016 Jamie has worked passionately to create a habitat and environment that has recorded a staggering 80 different species. The commendation recognized Jamie not just for the remarkable work and success of Iford Down but equally for his work with the RSPB and in the community as a whole with whom he willingly engages so as to educate people as to the role shooting plays in the countryside.

## NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Purdey Awards for Game and Conservation have their origins in the Laurent-Perrier Wild Game and Conservation Awards, which were run annually by Laurent-Perrier Champagne (UK) Ltd from 1986 until 1998. James Purdey & Sons took over their Awards in 1999, with Laurent Perrier generously maintaining their support and connection through the provision of their champagne for the presentations ceremony, prizes for all the winners and finalists, and to assist the judges' deliberations at their twice yearly meetings.

The Panel of Judges is chaired by the **Duke of Wellington**. Members of the judging panel are;

- **The Duchess of Devonshire**
- **David Clark**, former Head Keeper at The Sandringham Estate
- **William Garfit**, author, artist, and former Laurent-Perrier Awards winner
- **Tim Furbank**, specialist seedsman and adviser on cover crops
- **Jonathan Kennedy** of CKD Kennedy Macpherson
- **Charles Nodder**, PRO National Gamekeepers Organisation
- **Jonathan Young**, Editor of The Field
- **Marcus Janssen**, Director of Sales for Schöffel and former editor of Fieldsports Magazine
- **Bertie Hoskyns-Abrahall**, Landed Estates Partner at Withers
- **The Hon. Jonathan Irby**, Managing Director of The Royal Berkshire Shooting School
- **Roddy Richmond-Watson**, Managing Director of West London Shooting School
- **Claire Sadler**, Lawyer and BASC Council member
- **Hamish Macdonald Lockhart**

<https://www.purdey.com/shooting-life/purdey-awards/history>

*For more information, estate images and post-Awards event images:*

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