

## Grouse shooting season stays on target

Grouse shooting appears to have weathered the recession despite a rise in prices, it has emerged as estates prepare for the season's opening on the "glorious 12th" of August.

By Julie Henry

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Wealthy enthusiasts from around Britain are digging deep in to their bank accounts to pay for shooting while the weak pound attracted business from Americans and Europeans.

Phil Pugh, northern regional director of the British Association for Shooting, told the Financial Times: "Prices are slightly up, indicating the demand in the market. Last year was a particularly good season and people were keen to repeat their bookings."



Grouse shooting contributes at least £30m a year to Scotland's economy Photo: KIPPA MATTHEWS

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In Scotland, which has the most grouse moors, agents also report brisk business.

Robert Rattray, a partner with CKD Galbraith, said: "Interest in grouse appears to be undiminished, in spite of the

economic situation."

He said prices of £130 to £150 a brace, before value added tax and commissions, were being achieved with nearly all bookings coming from the UK.

"Most grouse shooting is done in private parties – certain people are prepared to spend what it takes to have a day's grouse shooting," he said.

The activity contributes at least £30 million a year to Scotland's economy and supports about 950 full-time jobs, according to the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust.

However, while agents say the cost of the most exclusive grouse and pheasant shoots has remained firm, the recession is taking a toll on midlevel driven pheasant shooting.

On less prestigious estates, which might offer fewer birds, the numbers of bookings are down by about 10 per cent.

"There's definitely been a drop in the market in terms of days, but people are coming back to take the best days," said Mr Duncan.

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