

# Creating the ultimate... *woodland flushing point*



Austin Weldon is our advisor for central England and has in-depth knowledge of gamekeeping, deer-stalking and wildlife habitat management.

**M**any driven shoot managers will have experienced the frustration of having birds flush in large uncontrollable numbers. Very often the guns will be busy reloading while the birds are sailing over the gun line. How do we avoid this? How can we trickle birds steadily over the guns? It all boils down to having enough thick, carefully managed cover at the flushing end of the drive.

Firstly, we need to choose the best flushing point. If you have high points in the landscape, make the most of them. This will create challenging shooting, but even if you don't have West Country elevation, engineer it so that the birds have around 200 to 300 yards of open space to cross to reach an area they see as home. The greater the distance, the higher they will climb to enable a long glide to safety. Ideally the guns should be positioned at the point when the birds finish flapping and reach the glide phase. Combined with a side wind, this is one of the most challenging sporting targets in the world.

For more advice please contact us on 01425 651013.

**Butterflies** were more than double the number in game woods than non-game woods in East Anglia.



Once you've chosen the location for the flushing point, then you need to grow the cover thick enough to act as a safe refuge.



You should consider leaving some tall trees or a hedge at the front of the wood so the birds have to fly over an obstacle to escape. The ideal pheasant ascent angle is 30 degrees or three outstretched fists one on top of the other. Placing stops or a sewing line at, or near, the front of the drive will stop birds running to the front and flying low through the guns.



In woodland, the tall trees in the canopy will need thinning to let light reach the floor and give the birds an easy exit without hindrance, which can tire them out. Sky-lighting like this will also promote the growth of shrubs and one of the very best which is often happy to volunteer its services, is the bramble.



Other species to consider to provide good shrub growth are native privet, thorns, dogwood (right) and short rotation hazel coppice.

