

Adam Calvert is a freelance shooting instructor with a global reputation, offering bespoke shooting instruction in addition to being a Fabbri ambassador.



Expert instruction

Q In the last month of the season should I be thinking about increasing pellet size or shot load? Or is this a bit of an old wives' tale?

A The debate on shot size is always an interesting one and many people, particularly of my father's generation, grew up shooting nothing but Eley Impax 28gram No.7s at everything. Now I come across lots of people who shoot nothing but 36gram No.4s as their standard load, from September partridge to January pheasants!

The key thing when choosing a cartridge is to make sure it is fit for purpose, no matter what the time of year. I think there is little debate that as pellet size increases striking energy and overall knock down power increases. We do need to take care we do not simply go for bigger shot size at the expense of pattern. Ultimately we are all looking for a vital organ strike and as a result a clean kill. But there is definitely a trade off between the individual shock delivered by a single pellet which may not hit a vital organ and a multiple strike by a number of pellets which can often result in a better kill as a result of a vital organ being struck.

It is my belief that copper coated shot gives better kills at range with smaller shot sizes, which I am convinced is related to the effect of excellent patterns and as a result better vital organ strikes.

I recommend increasing shot size later on in the season, as this is when the birds are at their strongest. It stands to reason because they are older. As a result they tend to fly higher and

As we move into January it can be wise to go up a shot size, as the birds may well be stronger.



we are often tempted to shoot birds sneaking out of the sides of drives. As a result we require extra striking energy delivered by a bigger pellet size, however in order to maintain pattern we need to increase the weight of shot we fire.

My cartridge recommendations are as follows for later on in the season. Choice obviously depends on what type of gun you are shooting but for my side-by-side users I advise 30gram No.5s or even 30gram No.4s and

for my over-under users I advise 32gram No.5s or 34gram No.4s.

Be careful not to increase payload too much and as a result suffer from massive recoil which is often counter productive in your shooting. ■