

## Daniel O'Brien

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday 20 January 2021 15:53  
**To:** WildBirdDeclarations  
**Cc:** Cllr. Fionnán Fitzgerald  
**Subject:** Re: Derogation for landowners to shoot certain wild birds

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

In relation to The Derogation to shoot certain wild birds I made the following observations, thanks for taking the time to read this email,

Yours,

Cllr Fionnán Fitzgerald

[REDACTED]

Tralee  
Co. Kerry

[REDACTED]

The growing of cereal crops such as wheat, oats and barley is a process that involves much work, skill and farm husbandry. Underpinning it all the farmer is dependent on weather and the element of luck. Profit margins have reduced over the years and this has seen many exit the industry.

Tillage crops as they ripen and develop are attractive to birds as a feeding ground during the summer months generally from early July to the end of August. The main species of bird that attack cereal crops are crows and wood pigeons. The problem can become huge if one's attention is taken away from the problem for any small length of time and again if the crop 'lodges' or falls during wet and windy weather which allows birds to enter and exit the crop with great ease. Massive financial losses can be incurred over the matter of a few days or even less.

Wood pigeons are capable of destroying acres of crops particularly when they have no fear of invading the fields. Managing and controlling them during this period is a time consuming process. Various methods are employed such as the erection of scarecrows, the laying of twine at crop edges, the use of mechanical bangers and regular walking of the crops.

None of these methods have any major effect on removing the threat of bird infestation without the regular use of a shotgun. The use of a shotgun for the tillage farmer is not for sport or fun, it is not to willingly destroy wildlife. The object of its use is to frighten birds such as the wood pigeon until the season is over and the crop is harvested and in an effort to minimize the loss of the crop.

A change in the practice would remove from tillage farmers the most effective way of controlling the wood pigeon and the threat of it infesting cereal crops.

I implore and call on The Minister along with the Department and The NPWS to draw back on any drastic decision and to work with tillage farmers on this issue. The reason given for control of the wood pigeon is to 'prevent serious damage to arable crops' yet a change in the derogation would stop this from being done during the very time when the crop is vulnerable to being attacked by the wood pigeon.

People's livelihoods, way of life and the viability of rural and agricultural life are in danger of being undermined at a time when the tillage industry has many serious threats looming over it.