

# Understanding Leading in Game Bird Hunting

Understanding lead is essential for successful game bird hunting. Lead is where the hunter aims and fires ahead of a moving bird rather than directly at it. This is necessary because game birds fly quickly—if you aim at their current position, your shot will usually miss, as the bird will have moved before the shot arrives.

Think of it this way: to hit a moving target, you must anticipate where it will be. The distance you aim ahead of the bird is called the lead. The faster the bird is flying, or the further away it is, the more lead you will need.

A useful way to visualise lead is to imagine painting the bird with a brush. Swing the gun smoothly from behind the bird, following its flight path. Pull the trigger while the bead of the sight is slightly ahead of the bird, and continue the swing after firing. This ensures the shot meets the bird in its future position rather than passing behind it.

A classic tip hunters use is:

**“It’s better to miss ahead than behind.”**

This reminds you that undershooting the lead usually results in a miss, while aiming slightly ahead gives your shot the best chance to hit the target.



Swing from behind along the line of the bird's flight path.



When you're crossing the head, squeeze the trigger.



Keep swinging past the bird. Don't stop when you fire.