

☛ A bucket is comfy to sit on, doesn't sink into the mud too much, and can carry a flask, spare cartridges, binoculars and a duck or two should you ever manage to shoot any. A bucket is also a useful aid to extricating oneself from the mud when you get stuck as it spreads your weight over a greater surface area – and in these conditions if you have any sense of adventure then you'll surely get stuck sooner or later – believe me!

Of course you can now purchase posh buckets with padded swivel seats and fancy prices to match. You can also source your own and paint them or cover them with cammo tape to suit. Five gallon buckets sold for home brewing are about the right size, and emptying them is quite enjoyable too.

Shooting from boats also involves shooting from a sitting position, with the added complications of being inherently unstable, constantly moving and frequently cramped. Naturally shooting from the confines of a boat can also be complicated by the presence of a companion or even by having a dog on board to consider. Be sure to have enough room to swing and manoeuvre if you wish to achieve a measure of success.

One thing that's always in my game bag or rucksack is a bum-sized piece of closed-cell foam. I source mine from surplus packaging, but a kneeling pad from a garden centre does the job equally well – if more expensively. When I'm fowling in an area with very narrow creeks and runnels I simply sit on the edge of a creek with my legs dangling over the edge, the closed-cell foam gives that extra bit of comfort and a certain degree of protection from the insidious damp and wet that would otherwise seep up through your game bag, with the potential for embarrassing afflictions later in life.

If I frequented these marshes on a regular basis I'd probably carry a three feet long plank, fitted with a strap or rope for carrying, so that I could place the plank across a small gutter and sit in comfort – either that or I'd secrete a few

lengths of scaffold board near to my favourite spots. Anything that helps to make your position more comfortable will also aid your shooting, if you're relaxed and not worried about getting wet or falling in a creek then concentration improves, and therefore you'll have more time to see and hear birds coming.

In the last year or two I've also been trialling a low-level seat, which was made for carp fisherman but is equally effective for wildfowling. It has an adjustable backrest, which, when you are effectively lying on the ground, supports your head and neck, provided you position it correctly. To all intents and purposes this is very similar to how an American layout blind works, but without all the fancy bits that cover you up and then spring open when you sit up to shoot. I find that keeping still eliminates the need for a cammo covering, but if you feel the need then it would be easy to fashion one. I know someone who has utilised an ex-army gore-tex bivy bag and is pleased with the results. If nothing else it would serve to keep the wind and rain at bay perhaps.

Obviously if you're effectively lying prone then you'll need to have a fair idea of the direction the birds will be coming from. Shooting in this position is even more restrictive than shooting from the sitting position. The plus side of this set-up is that it's very portable and very effective at lowering your profile, the down side being you can get too comfortable and nod off.

Whatever else you try, and I'm sure many will have differing ideas to those already mentioned, remember that comfort is the key, and that will lead to more confidence with your swing, improved accuracy and more time to spot birds. Of course there are inherent restrictions and limited arcs of fire when trying to shoot from a sitting or lying position, but hey, who said wildfowling was supposed to be easy?



The ultimate luxury – a carp angler's seat...
...which folds into something more portable



A closed cell foam pad can be covered
in camouflage material



A commercial kneeling pad would
benefit from the same treatment



The commercial seat pad
is a posh alternative