



Silenced shotguns have become more acceptable in recent years thanks to the huge rise in popularity of moderated rifles for pest control.

Mossberg .410 shotgun: It ain't a thing of beauty, but this moderated Mossberg pump shotgun is a brilliant tool when it comes to vermin control.

Mossberg .410 shotgun: There always used to be a stigma attached to silenced .410 shotguns.

Anybody using one was invariably branded a poacher - especially in the days when pheasants made decent money at the local market. Some poaching still goes on of course, but nowhere near the scale it used to be. And that's down to the price commanded by a gamebird these days: the few pence they sell for means poaching is no longer worthwhile, and certainly not worth the risk of prosecution.

Now poaching is no longer fashionable or profitable you would've thought the silenced .410 had become something of a rarity. Not so. There are now more small bore guns around today with moderated barrels than ever before.

The reason for this is simple: silenced shotguns have become more acceptable in recent years thanks to the huge rise in popularity of moderated rifles for rabbit, fox and deer control. For small vermin and rabbit control a small bore is ideal, especially when fitted with a moderator. One gun that's becoming increasingly popular for this type of work is the American made Mossberg pump action, a no-frills shotgun that's soundly made, reliable and affordable. It's distributed by York Guns and the Hushpower moderator is fitted by the Saddlery and Gunroom company.

In basic specification this gun comes with a 3in chamber and 24in barrel carrying cylinder choke. To enable it to be held on a shotgun certificate the magazine capacity has been restricted to two with a third cartridge in the chamber. Bigger capacity magazines can be bought as long as you've got dispensation from your local firearms department to own one on a firearm certificate.

The pump action is both smooth and positive with the safety catch being neatly positioned on the gun's top tang. Mossberg have fitted it with a wood stock and fore-end, and treated all metal parts to a blued finish. The addition of the sound moderator makes the barrel length 26in overall.

In the past the only way to sound moderate this model was to retro fit a Hushpower tube that fixed snugly over the end of the barrel. The disadvantage here was the process added extra length to the gun, making it unwieldy and difficult to move in confined spaces.

With this new conversion, the moderator is much longer, but it comes back over the barrel almost to the fore-end. There is a 2in increase in length to the barrel but this is quite manageable and you soon get used to the gun's pronounced forward lean.

Moderators work by dissipating sound waves from behind the shot load and this Hushpower conversion does it via a series of carefully cut holes towards the barrel's muzzle end. These are placed at precise distances to ensure the maximum amount of noise can pass into the moderator's baffle system for dissipation before the shot exits the muzzles. This gun and system muffle the crack of a shot very efficiently.

The verdict

The Mossberg is about as plain as you can possibly get, but there's no doubting it's a very effective gun for pest control, especially in areas where noise is likely to be a problem, such as nearby residential areas or farm livestock. It scores low for styling, but this is a working tool, not a thing of beauty.

Build quality: 6

Handling: 4

Styling: 5

Value for money: 6

The Mossberg Hushpower .410 is distributed through Saddlery and Gunroom 01959 573089 email: huspower@btconnect.com