



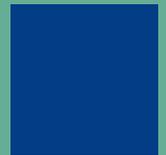
HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO  
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET  
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

**Ruralia Institute**



# **The Social Sustainability of Hunting Tourism in Northern Europe**

Anne Matilainen  
Susanna Keskinarkaus  
(eds.)



**Reports 59**





# The Social Sustainability of Hunting Tourism in Northern Europe

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Susanna Keskinarkaus  
(eds.)



Innovatively investing  
in Europe's Northern  
Periphery for a sustainable  
and prosperous future



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# 1. Introduction

**Anne Matilainen, University of Helsinki Ruralia Institute**

Sustainable development requires that social, economic and environmental issues are all taken into consideration (Rouhinen 1991, Sharpley, 2000; McKenzie 2004; Garrod et al. 2006). Previously, a lot of emphasis has been put into studying the economic and ecological dimensions of sustainability, and only during recent years has social sustainability been recognized as an equally important part of sustainable development research, particularly in natural resources or nature tourism (see e.g. Tolvanen 2004). Social sustainability can be defined as development which reinforces the individuals' control of their own lives and the results of socially sustainable development are distributed equitably (Rouhinen 1991, Iisakkala 1993 in Rannikko 2000). From the social sustainability perspective issues such as social cohesion, a sense of community and commonly accepted standards (Goodland and Daly 1996) social justice, cultural sustainability must be considered. Cultural sustainability requires that the development is in harmony with the culture and values of the individuals involved (Rannikko 2000).

In the literature, two ways of focusing on social sustainability in relation to other sustainability aspects, have been presented. In the first one, social sustainability, as well as economic sustainability, is seen simply as a means to enhance the overlapping goal of environmental sustainability. According to the second interpretation, the three spheres of sustainability are represented equally (overlapping circles -model) (McKenzie 2004). In this report the second approach is chosen. It must also be noted that all sustainability aspects are very strongly linked with each other and are difficult to distinguish and impossible to separate.

In rural areas, social sustainability has been considered through the living conditions of locals (i.e. stakeholders) in determining the use of the environment and natural resources (Rannikko 2000). The stakeholder approach has also been promoted in the management literature by arguing that transferring corporate social sustainability of business objectives is best undertaken by using the stakeholder approach (Clarkson 1995). Any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of a corporation's purpose can be seen as a stakeholder (Freeman 1984). In the context of multi-stakeholder networks (networks in which actors from civil society, business and governmental institutions come together in order to find a common approach to an issue that affects them all), stakeholders can be seen as "groups or individuals who can affect or are affected by the approach to the issue addressed by the network" (Roloff 2008). Considering multiple stakeholders in order to sustain social cohesion is especially essential in tourism as it unavoidably affects local communities and resources (see Tao and Wall, 2009). It is also vital to clarify what is sustained, for whom and at what level (Johnston and Tyrrell 2005).

Hunting tourism can be defined as a form of tourism, where a person travels outside his/her municipality of residence for the purpose of hunting (Alatalo 2003, Lovelock 2008, Keskinarkaus and Matilainen 2009). This definition includes both domestic and international travel for hunting. Hunting does not have to be the only purpose for the trip, but it is a central element in it. Hunting as a leisure activity as well as a form of tourism creates a lot of debates and attitudes for and against, both on a general level (see e.g. Karsikas 2000, Pouta and Sievänen 2001, Shelby et al 2008) and within hunting societies (see e.g. MKJ 2003, Petäjistö et al 2004, Valkeajärvi et al 2004, Nygård and Uthard, 2009; Liukkonen et al 2007). Hunting can be seen as traditional way of life or as marginal barbaric leisure activity, as a game management method or as a risk for ecological sustainability, as a potential business opportunity or as a local social event, and so forth. In any case hunting and hunting tourism typically create a lot of passionate positive or negative attitudes. Hunting is, after all, "a matter of life and death". Hunting tourism is

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a consumptive form of nature tourism and the scarcity of the game resource can lead to conflicts. Who should have primary access to game especially in common or State land areas, and how should hunting licenses be allocated: should the local people or the “rich tourists “ be prioritized? Hunting is also a deeply culturally embedded issue and the local hunting culture has its own influence on the locals’ opinions towards hunting tourism.

Social sustainability in all its forms is probably one of the most problematic issues concerning the development of the hunting tourism sector. The views of key stakeholder groups, such as landowners, local hunters and local people must be acknowledged for the sustainability of the operations and local communities in the long run. The general public’s view of hunting tourism is a delicate issue and their attitudes strongly influence the development of the institutional context of the sector.

In this research, the social sustainability of hunting tourism has been studied by analyzing the opinions of the key stakeholder groups in four northern countries: Iceland, Finland, Scotland and Sweden. Due to the differences in institutional settings between the countries, the studied key stakeholder groups varied a bit between the countries. In the Nordic countries quite similar stakeholder groups were considered important, while in Scotland with a significantly different hunting culture, also the stakeholders differed from the Nordic countries. The chosen stakeholder groups and their stakeholder role related to hunting tourism have been explained in the national reports.

The stakeholder opinions were studied by using a qualitative research approach in order to get a deeper understanding of the stakeholders’ opinions and the reasons behind them. Due to the heterogeneity of opinions towards hunting tourism in the general public, this group was seen as a group too vast to be reached reliably with a qualitative research approach. In addition, surveying this group was feared to bring too vague results regarding the actual social challenges apparent on the local level. The general public as a stakeholder group was excluded from this study but due to its importance, all interest groups were asked for their opinion on the general attitudes towards hunting and hunting tourism and foreseen changes in them. The data has been collected by using face-to-face theme interviews based on a joint transnational semi-structured framework in order to gain comparable data both on national and transnational levels. In addition to the joint transnational interview framework, some national themes were added to the interview guide in order to get deeper understanding on the country specific issues.

This report consists of country reports from Iceland, Finland, Scotland and Sweden describing the opinions of the key stakeholder groups of the hunting tourism sector towards commercial hunting tourism. The country reports are also published as independent reports in the project web pages ([www.north-hunt.org](http://www.north-hunt.org)) In addition this report includes a transnational comparisons section, which aims to summarize the results and highlight the differences and commonalities between the countries in order to highlight the key points of social sustainability of hunting tourism in the northern context.

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## 2. Social sustainability of hunting tourism in Iceland

Hjördís Sigursteinsdóttir, University of Akureyri Research Centre

Eyrún Jenný Bjarnadóttir, Icelandic Tourism Research Centre

### 2.1 Background

In the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity (2007) hunting tourism is by definition conducted by hunters who may travel considerable distances from their home and/or own hunting grounds in order to hunt. These hunters differ from hunters who mostly hunt in the area where they reside and have hunting rights.

Hunting is one of the oldest ways of using natural resources. As such it has impacts flora and fauna and whole ecosystems. Hunting tourism can be placed under the niche category of consumptive wildlife tourism; a small special sector of tourism, which appeals to a well-defined market segment (Lovelock, 2008; Lovelock & Robinson, 2005). Lovelock (2008) defines consumptive wildlife tourism as “a form of leisure travel undertaken for the purpose of hunting or shooting game animals, or fishing for sports, either in natural sites or in areas created for these purposes”. Activities that fall under consumptive wildlife tourism are listed in table 1.

**Table 1.** *Consumptive wildlife tourism activities*

| Consumptive Wildlife Tourism |                 |               |                 |             |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Hunting Tourism              |                 |               | Fishing Tourism |             |
| Big game/trophy              | Small game      | Skill hunting | Marine          | Fresh water |
| <b>Game ranching</b>         | Duck            | Bow hunting   | Coastal/estuary | Coarse      |
| <b>Big game</b>              | Game birds      | Black powder  | Charter boat    | Fly         |
| <b>Safari</b>                | Rodents         | Falconry      | Spear           | Adventure   |
| <b>Group</b>                 | Small predators | Trapping      | Big game        | Indigenous  |
| <b>Indigenous</b>            | Ferreting       | Songbirds     | Indigenous      |             |

(Source: Bauer & Herr, 2004 in Lovelock 2008)

Hunting tourism as consumptive wildlife tourism is multidimensional, culturally embedded, an adventure and an ecotourism experience (see e.g. Lovelock 2008). Radder (2005) has pointed out that the hunter’s experience is not necessarily driven by a single motive – such as to shoot animals, “but by a multidimensional set of interrelated, interdependent and overlapping motives”. These dimensions are i.e.:

- Spiritual: i.e. ideas of being in/experiencing the nature and reconnect with the land.
- Emotional: i.e. enjoying the challenge of the hunt, experiencing fun, and the thrill of the chase and adrenalin rush as well as having the senses heightened.
- Intellectual: i.e. experiencing new places, people, cultures, search for new adventure, seeing animals in natural environment and learning about wildlife.
- Biological: i.e. enjoying exercise/recreation, using the instincts and hunting for meat.
- Social: i.e. experiencing fellowship, being with family/friends and practicing heritage. (Radder 2005)

Iceland has a short history of hunting tourism and the activities related to the sector are scattered. Hunting activities mainly take place in the shoulder and off season of regular tourism. Traditionally hunting is seen more as a hobby than a business opportunity and as a common right available to all, providing that they have a license (Sigursteinsdóttir et al, 2007). Hunting in Iceland takes place both on private land and in commons. The commons are collectively owned. Landowners hold the hunting rights on their own property and have a right to lease them if they want. The current controlling system of hunting demands that all persons who intend to hunt birds and/or mammals in Iceland are required to obtain a firearms license and a hunting card. The latter is valid for one year at a time. All Icelandic hunters, who have a valid hunting card and a firearm license, are allowed to hunt in the commons as by definition, no one can legally prove their private ownership of these areas (Act 64/1994). Hunters are required to issue a bag report every year for all game species that they caught that year, even if none was caught. Foreign hunters are only allowed to hunt on private land (Regulation 291/1995). Foreign hunters need to obtain a short-term hunting license from the National commissioner of the Icelandic Police in Reykjavík and a short-term hunting card from the Wildlife Management Division of the Environment Agency of Iceland before hunting.

A vast majority of hunters in Iceland are native hunters, 97% of them being men and 3% women. Approximately 5% of the Icelandic population, 20 years of age or older had a valid hunting card for the year 2009. The proportion has increased in the last few years, except in the years 2003 and 2004, when it decreased. This decrease is closely related to a collapse in the ptarmigan population and, as a consequence, ptarmigan hunting was temporarily banned. In 2009 there was an increased interest in hunting, as can be seen in an increase of issued hunting cards, and from an increased participation in hunting license courses. About 9% more hunting cards were issued in 2009 than 2008 and there were approximately 49% increase in the participants of the license courses. Increased interest in hunting can be detected especially among women. 197 women had valid hunting cards in 2000 but in 2009 there were already 317. From the year 2006, the number of women participating in license courses has doubled with the greatest increase between the years 2008 and 2009. In 2008, 66 women participated in the license courses and in 2009 the number was 92. During the last few years the number of foreign hunters has been around 80-100 hunters per year or about 1% of all active hunters in Iceland (The Wildlife Management Division of The Environment Agency of Iceland).

In the last few years the leasing of land has become more prominent with varying prices, mostly dependent on demand. Atlantic puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), Pink-footed goose (*Anser brachyrynchus*), Graylag goose (*Anser anser*) and Rock ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*), have been among the most popular game species in Iceland. Shooting a bird when it is sitting on a rock is forbidden according to hunting regulations. Puffin is thus mainly hunted in pocket nets in Iceland. Ptarmigan hunting takes place both on private and common land. The population is not stable and it is estimated that major fluctuations occur on an average every 10 years. Ptarmigan hunting was banned in 2003 since estimations showed that the population had decreased immensely. Although there are no special legal limitation in terms of quantity of ptarmigan hunting, hunters are requested to limit it themselves to their personal needs. An earlier study indicated that the majority of hunters do limit their hunting when so requested and the main motivation to go ptarmigan hunting is first and foremost for enjoying a ptarmigan meal once or twice during the Christmas holidays (Umhverfisstofnun, 2003). In the past five years, the government has gradually shortened the ptarmigan hunting season; in 2005, the season lasted 45 days and in 2008 and 2009 the days were limited to 18.

Goose hunting usually takes place in open fields, farmed lands or along riverbanks. The most commonly caught goose is the Greylag goose which is mostly hunted in lowland Iceland in cultivated areas, where

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there is a high demand for hunting from the very beginning of the geese hunting season (20th of August) until most Greylag Geese have migrated to Europe in beginning of November. According to bag reports, 42 500 Greylag Geese were hunted in 2008, which makes the Greylag goose the third most hunted game in Iceland after puffins (54 000) and ptarmigan (48 000) (The Wildlife Management Division of The Environment Agency of Iceland).

## 2.2 Material and methods

Theme interviews were made in order to assess the potential of hunting tourism in Iceland. These were done on the basis of identified key stakeholder groups for Icelandic hunting tourism. Four groups of stakeholders were identified. These are:

**Landowners:** Almost all cultivated land in Iceland is privately owned and a hunter is legally required to get the landowner's permission to hunt on private land. According to the Icelandic Act on Hunting and Control of Birds and Wild Mammals (Act 64/1994) the landowner has complete control over who can hunt on his/her land. The landowners are also entitled to ban or constrain hunting on their land in any way they see fit. Although the landowner's right to control hunting their land is very clear in the law, there is an exception when it comes to reindeer hunting. Reindeer hunting rights are controlled by the government. The landowners are predominantly farmers and thus hunting activities mainly take place in the low season of regular farming and tourism activities. Both landowners who allow hunting on their land and landowners who don't allow hunting on their land are included in this stakeholder group.

**Entrepreneurs in the hunting tourism sector:** In the past few years a number of hunting tourism companies have been initiated. The total number is difficult to estimate as many of these companies also provide other kinds of tourism products e.g. fishing tourism, accommodation, catering, guide services and different kinds of activities. Icelandic hunting tourism companies mostly operate on private land, either their own land or land leased from landowners.

**Hunter organisations and local hunters:** There are a few hunting and shooting organisations in Iceland but most of them are small and locally based. On a national scale, Skotvís – Icelandic Hunting and Shooting Association is the biggest hunters' organisation in Iceland with approximately 2000 members. Skotvís was established in 1978 and the role of the organisation in general is to sustain a unified stance guarding the interests of those interested in shooting, hunting and nature conservation (Skotveiðifélag Íslands, Ed). Membership in a hunter organisation is not mandatory for hunters in Iceland and the opinions of the organisations don't necessarily reflect opinions of all Icelandic hunters. Also hunters outside of hunters' organisations are included in this stakeholder group.

**Policy makers and administration:** Hunting and hunting tourism takes place in rural areas. It is therefore important to include those involved in rural development and in protecting the interests of rural resources and the rural sector. These are thus one significant stakeholder group influencing the operational environment of hunting tourism. Landowners', agriculture and tourism organizations are included in this stakeholder group. Tourism has considerable impact on rural Iceland and tourism activities and service offerings are constantly evolving. Municipalities and regional development associations are also included in this stakeholder group since they form the general framework for rural development and tend to public interests.

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Twenty interviews with individuals (14 men and 6 women) from these stakeholder groups were conducted in Iceland and are listed in table 2 below. Individuals were chosen by convenience sampling. It soon became evident that there was an overlap between the stakeholder groups. Four out of five interviewed entrepreneurs were also local hunters and/or landowners and three interviewed policy makers were also landowners. Such overlaps between stakeholder groups are natural.

**Table 2.** *The interviewed representatives of different stakeholders groups and the interview codes.*

| <b>Landowners</b>             | <b>Local/Recreational hunters</b> | <b>Policy makers and rural developers</b>   | <b>Hunting tourism enterprises</b>             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Farmer, North-East of Iceland | Hunter, East of Iceland           | Innovation centre Iceland                   | Hunting tourism company, North-East of Iceland |
| Farmer, East of Iceland       | Hunter, capital area of Iceland   | The Farmer Association of Iceland           | Hunting tourism company, East of Iceland       |
| Farmer, West of Iceland       | Hunter, North of Iceland          | Agricultural Association in Eyjafjordur     | Hunting tourism company, East of Iceland       |
| Landowner in Eyjafjordur      | Hunter, East of Iceland           | Agricultural Association in Vest of Iceland | Hunting tourism company, East of Iceland       |
| Farmer, East of Iceland       |                                   | Development centre of East-Iceland          | Hunting tourism company, North of Iceland      |
|                               |                                   | Icelandic Tourist Board                     |  |
| <b>L1, L2, L3, L4, L5</b>     | <b>H1, H2, H3, H4</b>             | <b>P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6</b>               | <b>E1, E2, E3, E4, E5</b>                      |

The target individuals were initially contacted either by e-mail or by telephone. Almost everyone who was contacted was willing to participate or to recommend another person for the interview, with only one exception. The interviews were conducted during the period of November 20th 2008 – March 24th 2009. The interviews were individual semi structured theme interviews varying in length from 30-90 minutes. It was explained that participants would remain anonymous in the report and quotes would not be traceable to them. Semi-structured interviews have a flexible agenda or list of themes to focus the interview although the order of discussion might vary from one interview to another. This kind of interview structure is open and conversation-like and gives the participants an opportunity to give their opinion and explore the topics in question from a variety of perspectives (Jennings, 2005).

The interviews were conducted in places of the participants' choice such as at their work, at their homes, cafés or at the University of Akureyri. Six interviews were telephone interviews, since it was not possible to conduct them face-to-face. All of the interviews were digitally recorded with the consent of the participants. The interviews were analysed with a joint transnational framework which was based on the themes of the interviews. In addition, a number of subthemes were identified from topics the participants mentioned without being asked.

The following is based on the analysis of the interviews. No stand is taken as to whether the statements of the participants are right or wrong as they only reflect the participants' points of view as they appeared in the interviews.

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## 2.3 Results

The results are presented by the themes of the interviews.

### 2.3.1 Descriptions of hunting tourism

Interviewees were asked to give their own descriptions of what hunting as part of tourism consisted of. As one interviewee explained:

*“It is not tourism until you provide some kind of services” (L1).*

Some stakeholders did not view game as the property of the provider of the service since they felt that no one can claim game as their property. One participant described it as follows:

*“The providers of hunting tourism are traditional providers of tourism with hunting service as their specialty. The game is not their property. What is being sold is the use of land and service linked to hunting, satisfy basic needs such as in food and drink and providing facilities for resting and recreation (H1).”*

Interviewees were asked if they knew someone in hunting tourism in their area and most of them did know someone. Some stakeholders (mainly policy makers) mentioned reindeer hunting, which only takes place in East Iceland, as an example of hunting tourism in Iceland. Several interviewees mentioned that hunting is more than just shooting game as one hunter described it:

*“Hunting is not only shooting the game but also experiencing the nature and enjoying an outdoor activity. You are lucky if you shoot animals and it is fun but if you’d talk to hunters you realise that experiencing the nature and the silence is far more exciting. In the nature you are just two or three friends talking together, waiting for the game, shooting the game, and again it is just you and your friends talking together” (H4).*

### 2.3.2 Public opinion regarding hunting tourism

Interviewees were asked what kind of public opinions they perceived related to hunting tourism and were aware of. Some thought that the public opinion was positive, some mentioned it was unknown, and others thought that the public opinion was generally indifferent. The interviewees were generally aware that some people were against hunting for several different reasons.

Most interviewees thought that the public opinion towards hunting tourism was positive as long as the hunters treated the resource (game) and nature with respect and sustainably and acted in harmony with other activities in the same area. The interviewees also thought that the public would have very little tolerance towards hunters if they treated the nature with no respect, e.g. leaving empty cartridges or wounded/dead game behind. The interviewees generally believed that the public opinion could influence the development of hunting tourism. For some stakeholders it was important that the local community was at peace with the hunting tourism business. The words of one of the policy makers exemplify this view:

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*"It is very important that the hunting is at peace with other local residents. I do not think that the public opinion e.g. in the capital area, will interfere with hunting tourism in east Iceland mainly because the marketing is focused on specific groups. It is more important to be in peace with your neighbour since hunting grounds are not always in line with property boundaries on the map. I do not think that the public opinion generally matters, just the locals" (P4).*

Some stakeholders were convinced that the public will welcome further development of hunting tourism. As one explained:

*"I do not think that people are generally against hunting. Most Icelanders still have some connection to people in rural areas and there is nothing wrong with using the resources of the land in a responsible way. We are the nation of fisheries. Flying bird or fish in the sea, it does not matter" (H2).*

One stakeholder also said: *"The attitude in my community is positive as long as it can create jobs or income for the locals" (E4).* A few interviewees believed that hunting tourism had a more positive image than hunting in general, since the public was generally supportive of the development of rural tourism. For example one stakeholder mentioned that:

*"There are a number of farmers and landowners who provide facilities and activities for tourists which have a positive image. If hunting is linked to tourism it would change the public opinion into a more positive direction" (P1).*

Some stakeholders mentioned that the attitude towards goose hunting was different from the public attitudes to ptarmigan hunting. Some mentioned that there are people in Iceland who consider geese of no value and that the goose population should be controlled with hunting. One landowner claimed that the goose population was large and hunting was unlikely to influence the population. A policy maker also explained this view and added that there were great potential in goose hunting since the goose population is so strong. This gives reason to believe that the social carrying capacity for goose hunting is higher than for example for ptarmigan hunting.

Some interviewees mentioned that news of common hunting grounds overcrowded by hunters during the ptarmigan hunting season could be shocking to the public and would lead to a negative reputation of ptarmigan hunting in general. The stakeholders saw high volume hunting negatively and as being disapproved by the general public.

Almost every interviewee had positive attitudes to the development of hunting tourism. Negative attitudes could be detected from some hunters who feared that high prices could reduce their own hunting possibilities in some areas. Hunters were generally for developing hunting tourism as long as there was still a possibility for locals to practice their own hunting.

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### 2.3.3 Consequences of hunting tourism

#### Hunting tourism and local hunting culture

Interviewees were asked about the impact of hunting tourism on local hunting and the Icelandic hunting culture. Everyone was aware that hunting tourism would impact local hunting and possibly also the hunting culture. However, the interviewees did not agree about whether the impact would be positive or negative or to what extent.

*“Hunting tourism could indeed affect the possibilities of others and tradition and the roots in rural areas must be taken into consideration. [...] It could be risky to give “outsiders” privileges over local residents” (P5).*

This point of view was apparent with several policy makers. One hunter pointed out that *“actual freedom” in Iceland is to be able to walk around the nature, regardless of whether you are enjoying the nature as a photographer or as a hunter*” (H3). The same hunter also said:

*“I see it as my right as an Icelandic citizen to be able to hunt in Icelandic nature and I don’t have to pay many weeks’ worth of salary to do it. I can just go and hunt if I get permission from a landowner just as I have always done it. If this is sacrificed for some tourism interests then I think it’s a step back for hunting. There is a definite need to improve the hunting culture in Iceland but not when it comes to this ”(H3).*

In regards to using hunting rights, the policy makers agreed that locals and tourists should have equal opportunities, but some of them were sure that locals would not agree with this. As one interviewee put it: *“Locals do not object while there is enough for everyone”* (L4). Several others thought that at the moment there were enough hunting grounds for everyone because *“there are only few landowners who have commercialised their hunting grounds”* (H3). However, most interviewees knew that leases of hunting grounds and the sale of services related to hunting had increased.

*“Now, you have to pay for goose hunting and that is just natural. They [the landowners] own the fields”* (E3).

Most of the interviewees who hunt were worried about the development of hunting tourism and its potential impact on their own hunting activities. One of them said for example:

*“You have to have contacts with some landowners in order to practice goose hunting in Iceland. You can’t hunt there anymore if the hunting rights have been bought by someone else”* (H3).

He continued:

*“I don’t want to see hunting becoming a business in Iceland. I want this to be available for everyone. That it would be a privilege to be a hunter in Iceland and get some game without having to pay more for the game than it would cost from the supermarket ”(H3).*

Several others agreed with this point of view but no one questioned the landowner rights to control their privately owned hunting grounds. It is the landowner’s decision, what to do with the hunting rights. Most of the interviewees knew examples of hunters who did not respect the landowners’ rights and went hunting on privately owned land without permission. Some frustration could be detected amongst landowners when they talked about these hunters and they requested some sort of planning in order to prevent this kind of conduct. Other landowners also talked about the bad conduct of hunters.

*"Some don't even bother to pick up the dead birds. That should not be tolerated [...] no respect is shown to nature" (P3).*

Many of the interviewees talked about the hunting culture in Iceland, or the lack of one. One described hunting in Iceland as follows:

*"Hunting in Iceland is characterised by two things, bird hunting and hunting to survive and this usually is the fishermen's way of thinking, that is, to hunt as much as possible in the easiest possible way. At the same time many traditions abroad are characterised by a strict ethical approach to hunting, to respect the game. You get a strict upbringing as a hunter from an ethical point of view where high volume hunting is a negative thing. Strong traditions but here the traditions are weak, that is, the ethical point of view is defeated by high volume hunting" (H3).*

This hunter explained further that this was rooted in the fact that hunting in Iceland has mostly involved bird hunting and eliminating vermin. One of the interviewees thought that locals are more interested in hunting for the meat, but visitors would rather hunt to enjoy nature in a beautiful environment. Most of the interviewees were familiar with high volume hunting and were against it.

*"We are not interested in seeing hunters hunting without any limits and those hunters are profiting from selling the meat. But there is nothing wrong with people buying the hunting rights if their conduct in the hunting is responsible. The game is a limited resource" (P5).*

Some of the interviewees believed that high volume hunting was decreasing as typified by these quotes.

*"Some hunt for the meat, some enjoy experiencing the nature. There will always be hunters who behave badly and get greedy. This kind of behaviour often changes as the hunter gets older, especially if you go often out to hunt" (H2),*

*"We are moving away from the meat market towards a focus on experience and closeness to nature." (P6)*

*"We have to teach Icelanders to use the best of the hunting [...] Hunting is not only to walk around with a firearm and shoot. The game is a valuable resource." (P6)*

*"I like this kind of hunting [hunting tourism]. The aim of the hunting is no longer bringing 50 ptarmigans home. The focus is now on the experience of hunting which brings the hunting to a higher level." (L1)*

Some of the interviewees described hunting and hunting experiences as a social event: as spending time with friends and hunters in natural surroundings exchanging good hunting stories. Hunting activities are not necessarily the main part of the hunting trip, although they are the purpose.

*"It's a hobby. It's not just to pull the trigger. It's the experience to be out in rural areas, it is quiet and the surroundings are beautiful. Just to enjoy being outside and if you get to hunt anything, then you are lucky. It is fun to get some game, but the fellowship is also important. It is not just a question of hunting, but also experience and nature." (H4)*

All of the interviewees agreed that there was lack of management in hunting in Iceland. One interviewee, who believed that hunting tourism could have positive impact on the hunting culture, described:

*"This brings hunting up to a higher level. I hope that those who are thinking about going into this business think like this too. They have certain responsibilities, responsibilities to landowners to preserve their land." (L5)*

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Some of the interviewees were opposed to this:

*“We do have the management we need, and all talk about hunting as part of tourism would encourage sustainable hunting for good, is worthless to me. Just rubbish.” (H3)*

A few of the interviewees also said that a settlement between landowners of leasing all of their hunting grounds for hunting tourism was not foreseen in the nearest future. Meanwhile, there should be enough room for both hunting tourism and recreational hunting.

### **Impacts of hunting tourism on other rural activities**

Interviewees were asked about impacts of hunting tourism on other rural activities. It appeared in their answers that hunting tourism could indeed go along with other activities in the area, but it also appeared that it is not always so easy to organise. Many interviewees pointed out that hunting tourism can easily go along with other tourism in the area, especially with farmers who have adopted tourism into their farm. It was also pointed out that even though the development of new activities in rural areas is often limited, new activities were usually welcomed:

*“Every new activity in rural areas is a positive thing” (P2).*

Some interviewees, however, pointed out that hunting tourism does not always go along with other activities in the area, e.g. it would not be safe to conduct other kinds of nature-based tourism like hiking in the same areas as hunting during the hunting season for obvious reasons. One stakeholder mentioned some conflicts between hunters and other tourists and said:

*“Regarding reindeer hunting, it appears that there are fewer conflicts between tourists and hunters now, although they still occur. Now [...] guides for reindeer hunters are treating nature and the game with more respect and have been more careful and leave nothing behind” (H1).*

Interviewees also pointed out that not all landowners/farmers allow hunting on their land and hunters have to respect that. Potential conflicts between farmers and hunters regarding geese hunting and reindeer hunting were also mentioned. Some of the stakeholders knew examples where the traffic created by the hunters (who go geese and/or reindeer hunting) disturbed sheep grazing in the heath lands during hunting seasons.

### **Social aspects of hunting tourism**

The interviewees generally agreed that hunting tourism would have both positive and negative social impacts on rural societies and hunting. The positive impacts include, amongst other things, an increased variety of jobs, promotion of regions, and increased information flow to hunters (such as where they would be allowed to hunt on a certain area). The negative impacts mostly include clashes with the hunting activities of locals and possible conflicts with other pre-existing businesses in the region.

According to the results, it can generally be said that there must be space for both locals and visitors in order to reach social acceptance for developing hunting tourism. If hunting tourism is well organised and in consent with the society, it can be a very positive phenomenon and contribute to both the society and the hunting activities in the area.

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Interviewees all agreed that all supplementary activities in rural areas strengthen the areas as long as they are in harmony with the pre-existing activities. To have tourists visit an area is generally considered positive. A few of the interviewees mentioned that a consensus with the local community was especially important.

*“Good cooperation [with the local community] is necessary so that the tourism can work.” (E3)*

Another entrepreneur talked about his company's policy about leaving as much of the income as possible within the local community and cooperating with other people in the area who sell products or services to tourists, e.g. craftspeople.

One landowner said that he liked the idea that someone would manage the hunting activities on his land since he was very tired of hunters using his land without permission.

*“Most of the time, the hunters have gone where they want without permission. They may say that they have asked permission from some farmer and have crossed over three landmark fences. It is very positive that there is someone to [...] take care of the hunters so they won't go where they want and shooting everything that moves [...], someone who looks after how to go about and where is allowed to hunt.” (L1)*

Several interviewees also talked about lack of management of hunting. Managing hunting could be beneficial for both hunters and holders of hunting rights. Some interviewees clarified that control would also entail more information for hunters about hunting grounds and information on who would like to offer their land for hunting and who wouldn't. Increased knowledge would also benefit those who wish to preserve their private land. One interviewee told an example of a hunter who was fed up with the chaos and one weekend went to a tourism entrepreneur, who offered hunting.

*“Hunters want good hunting grounds where the hunting is controlled and where hunting is not conducted every day and the hunting grounds are left to “rest” in between. Then they know they will catch something.” (H2)*

*“He [had] a wonderful weekend, shot a few birds, and got great food and lovely weather. It was all crème de la crème [...] He had stopped struggling with asking some landowner's permission to hunt. Every field had been leased anyway. And if he got to hunt somewhere, there were ten other hunters there at the same time [...] There were men everywhere.” (P6)*

Some interviewees mentioned that not all hunters thought the development of hunting tourism was positive even though many pointed out some flaws in the current system. On the other hand another interviewee did not think that everyone could go hunting alone.

*“There is a certain regret of traditional hunting of birds and being able to go out and hunt with a certain feeling of freedom, but freedom is one of four basic social and emotional needs that need to be fulfilled in order for the human being to prosper.” (H1)*

*“Those hunters who want the service are the crème de la crème of hunters. Those who don't bother to pick up the empty cartridges and behave as they please are usually not the hunters who will hire a hunting guide. That is maybe the flaw that those hunters who behave well are taken care of while we should be taking care of those who don't. But that is difficult. Not everybody is willing to pay for hunting” (L1)*

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Several interviewees pointed out that landowners had started to charge for access to hunting grounds and not all hunters accepted this. A few interviewees mentioned that some hunters think that this development is controversial since they worry that hunting might become an expensive activity just like salmon fishing had become in some areas.

Some of the entrepreneurs have considered that different hunters have different needs. One entrepreneur described the development in his company: *"I have tried many things to find out what's interesting, what people enjoy"* (E3). However, some of the hunters were critical towards landowners and entrepreneurs who provide services to hunters. What they provide has to be relevant. One hunter had gone hunting with a tourism entrepreneur who focused on providing service to hunters. He described his experience as follows:

*"I have once paid for hunting. We were four who went hunting together. I didn't like it [...] They took 15.000 kroner for each firearm which is very much considering what we got for our money [...] The guide had already set up decoys and everything was prepared before we came [...] I was disappointed that I didn't get to do it myself."* (H2)

It was pointed out by some of the stakeholders that those hunters, who have secured access to good hunting grounds, were satisfied with their arrangement. However, some of the interviewees also pointed out that some hunters, particularly new hunters, face considerable entry-barriers in terms of finding good hunting grounds. This was particularly mentioned in relation to hunters who live in the capital area and have little connection with rural areas. The development of hunting tourism could be a positive thing for those hunters. However, some stakeholders thought that the system was generally confusing for hunters or newcomers. One hunter described this:

*"There is a lot of chaos going on and some hunters don't have the resources or the knowledge for figuring out the landmarks, what is allowed and what is not. They are insecure and don't even know how to gain access to land. It can be difficult [...] if you don't know the area or where to find the information."* (H2)

### **Ecological aspects of hunting tourism**

Interviewees agreed that hunting had impacts on nature and it is necessary to be aware of the limitations that nature and the game populations put on hunters and hunting tourism. Further development of hunting tourism can have both positive and negative ecological influences. The main positive impacts are more delivery of information and systematic monitoring of resources regarding to both the game and nature. The negative impacts entail over exploitation of game populations and damage to nature.

Interviewees were well aware of the limitation of the game and the nature and that using those resources require responsibility, especially in terms of making business out of hunting. According to the stakeholders, the limitations did not necessarily have to be negative since they could also be seen as an opportunity to encourage the development of a framework around hunting activities and the use of game.

*"Hunting should be within limits and there should be a framework around the use of game."* (E4)

*"For instance take company X. You have one man who is responsible for 10 or 20 fields on which he controls all hunting activities. He takes care of the fields so no field is over exploited. He is responsible for paying the landowners and taking care of the hunters during the hunting."* (E3)

Interviewees agreed that high volume hunting is socially and morally unacceptable and hunting should first and foremost be an outdoors activity, not a profession (hunting to sell meat). Control is therefore a vital aspect in terms of how to make use of the possibilities without over exploiting game populations in order to sustain hunting activities on prolonged basis. Like one entrepreneur said:

*"I also have to think about those hunters who have yet to come." (E1)*

Some interviewees talked about lack of management and structure around hunting and hunting activities as mentioned earlier. Some talked about the fact that almost every year search rescue teams are called out to look for lost ptarmigan hunters in the commons:

*"They drive in to the blue and oops, they get lost in the fog! They can't find their vehicle and don't know which way to go. They don't even have a phone or a compass. Many examples like this one could be prevented." (L1)*

Some interviewees connected management and safety together and felt that many upcoming situations, like the one described above, could be prevented. Some interviewees were very concerned about the nature and the equipment that some of the hunters are using today. The stakeholders mentioned e.g.

*"Hunters are now using off-road vehicles, such as ATVs that damage the nature. The nature is so sensitive especially during wet autumns and then you can cause permanent damages." (P5)*

*"You have to be very careful when it comes to hunting. The game is a limited resource and if everyone is focused on profiting from this, it can have serious consequences." (H1)*

### **Economic aspects of hunting**

Interviewees generally felt that hunting tourism had both positive and negative economic effects on rural societies and hunting. The positive impacts include amongst other things income to the area, better use of tourism infrastructure outside high season and the multiplier effects for other pre-existing activities in the area. The negative impacts mostly included clashes with the hunting activities of locals and possible conflicts with other pre-existing businesses or activities in the region (e.g. sheep farming or other kinds of tourism). Most of these have already been discussed in earlier segments above, and some will be discussed in the chapter concerning perceived opportunities and challenges later on.

Concerning positive impacts, the interviewees generally thought that it was possible to receive income from hunting. One hunter said:

*"If it is done sufficiently it can generate income in the local community, increase professionalism with tourism and improve locals' access to the resource." (H1)*

Some of the interviewees were not sure whether payment should be required, especially if a landowner only provided access to hunting grounds and no service. When asked about paying for ptarmigan hunting, a local hunter replied:

*"I have declined it, for paying maybe 5000 kroner for the shotgun in ptarmigan hunting. I have declined and phoned the next landowner where I know I can hunt for free. When there are no facilities being provided and you can get it for free elsewhere, then I think it is OK." (H2)*

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Even though most interviewees were positive towards paying something for access to hunting grounds, one hunter also warned that prices should be kept within limits. Some interviewees also worried about pricing development and the affect on domestic hunters.

*“You have to be careful with the prices and the word of mouth, that someone isn’t selling access to too many. Rumours of that kind of business spread out very fast amongst hunters.” (H2)*

*“I think that it will not take much for hunting to become an elite sport just like it is today in salmon fishing. It can cost a workingman a whole month’s salary to practice salmon fishing.” (H3)*

Another interviewee pointed out that it can’t be guaranteed that the profit from hunting tourism remains within the local community and exemplified:

*“Considerable amount of profit of hunting tourism around foreign hunters leaves the local community when external travel agencies organise the trips, here I am talking about reindeer hunting.” (H1)*

#### 2.3.4 Perceived opportunities in hunting tourism

Interviewees were asked about the possible growth potential of hunting tourism and who would be the beneficiaries. Almost every interviewee saw hunting and hunting tourism as an opportunity from both the game and service perspectives.

Interviewees mentioned mainly goose, ptarmigan, guillemots and fox as potential species for hunting tourism. As one stakeholder said:

*“The opportunities in hunting definitely lie in guillemots, goose and fox. The fox is an opportunity. The municipality pays a lot for fox hunting and that is something worth thinking about for the tourism companies. The fox is a vermin.” (P4)*

Also other interviewees mentioned fox hunting as potential for hunting tourism and one described the fox as a “clever opponent like the devil himself”. One stakeholder pointed out that fox hunting is conducted like deer hunting in other countries. Some interviewees mentioned that the population of the pink-footed goose is very strong and has grown in recent years and “the pink-footed goose is a bird which you can’t hunt everywhere”.

Most interviewees mentioned that many farmers have adopted tourism as part of their farm activities with great success and hunting could easily be one of the activities offered to the tourists. Landowners/farmers who are not involved with tourism can also benefit by offering hunting grounds and cooperating with those who provide tourism services. Most of the interviewees saw hunting tourism as an opportunity to create jobs in rural areas as well as creating tourism income in the shoulder season or off-season of regular tourism. Hunting tourism initiatives could help expand the tourist season. By providing the hunters with services such as accommodation, sustenance and other kinds of additional services the tourism infrastructure in rural areas close to the hunting grounds could be used for hunters. As one stakeholder said:

*“A lot of accommodation facilities are empty in the autumns, especially in October and November. There are a lot of summer cottages that are in use in June, July and August and already in September, they are empty.” (H2)*

Some of the stakeholders, however, pointed out that not everyone should consider going into the business of hunting tourism.

*“Take for instance one landowner who is selling accommodation and food, with guidance. [...] We have a good example at company A [which shall remain anonymous] where one individual has maybe started with being a guide and spotted an opportunity. He starts building up his company. [...] And other individuals, farmers who provide accommodation or whatever you have.” (P5)*

It was very clear in this interviewee’s mind that those, who want to make hunting a business opportunity for themselves, must have secured access to hunting grounds, offer what hunters need and be willing to concentrate on providing services. Some interviewees were also convinced that the potential of the area for hunting tourism depended on location.

Many interviewees were convinced that the best location would be nearby the capital area, but others thought that hunting tourism would be more suitable for sparsely populated areas and argued that in the countryside there are fewer conflicts with other activities and thus less need for monitoring and regulatory operational environment.

A better operational environment for hunting activities is something that most interviewees also mentioned and placed emphasis on. The operational environment also reflects the ecological part of hunting and preservation of the environment, which in turn would create an opportunity to control hunting activities by diminishing high volume hunting and encouraging quality. As one stakeholder said:

*“There are obvious opportunities in geese and ptarmigan hunting, first and foremost by designing a framework so that landowners are selling access to their land in an organised manner. Then there are possibilities to provide service in relation to that.” (E2)*

Some stakeholders also mentioned that a better operational environment could increase income for those who provide access to hunting grounds and those who provide services to hunters. One stakeholder said:

*“We need a better operational environment around hunting to maximise the revenue of hunting which we are not doing today. We are just hunting, hunting to provide food. The framework has to come from the people not from the government. Landowners and hunters need to set the framework together with help from support system as regional development and tourism companies ”(P6)*

The weakening links between the rural and the urban along with expanding generational differences will probably change hunters’ needs in the future. Hunters may have to travel considerable distances from their home in order to hunt. This creates opportunities for the tourism sector to provide services to fulfil the basic needs of these hunters e.g. accommodation, food and drink and providing facilities for recreation. These hunters differ from local hunters who hunt mostly in the area where they reside and have hunting rights. These hunters may not necessarily be familiar with the hunting grounds. This creates other opportunities to provide services for the hunters e.g. guiding. One of the interviewed entrepreneurs mentioned that the generational changes of hunters were followed by changes in demand and changes in the needs of the hunters. Today hunters are already getting used to the fact that landowners might demand payment of some sort for allowing them to hunt and the next generation of hunters might increasingly prefer to go hunting with a guide.

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### 2.3.5 Perceived challenges in hunting tourism

Interviewees were asked about challenges they perceived in hunting tourism. They mentioned that the short hunting season, weather conditions, game populations, hunting rights, local people and the economic recession could be obstacles for the development of hunting tourism. The interviewees agreed that hunting tourism would probably never become the main source of livelihood for anyone. One stakeholder said:

*“The hunting days are relatively few per year and the weather is unpredictable. It is very hard to start a business with so many unpredictable factors. It is not a good investment.” (P5)*

There was some talk about the weather conditions. In Iceland, good weather could mean a shorter hunting season, because the geese are still up in the mountains along with the sheep. It can be difficult for hunters to hunt geese up in the mountains without the risk of harming the sheep. Some of the stakeholders also discussed Icelandic game populations and that there are only a few game species to hunt in Iceland, especially from the perspective of foreign hunters.

*“We overestimate what we have here in Iceland [...] we are not that special.” (E4)*

Foreign hunters are not allowed to hunt in commons, which limits their hunting possibilities:

*“In Iceland, you can only hunt a few species and you can only offer foreign hunter to hunt goose and ptarmigan.” (H3)*

Several interviewees mentioned that game populations were limited resources that should be looked after carefully. One interviewee pointed out that “goose hunting is also offered in other countries than Iceland”. Another interviewee mentioned population fluctuations as a challenge. He also talked about other challenges and potential negative impacts:

*“...natural challenges, for example. If the ptarmigan population collapses. Some people are also opposed to hunting [...] Different things in society could also negatively influence hunting e.g. if ATVs are overused in order to move the game in front of hikers. Also if people don't respect nature, then they are simply not doing themselves any favours.” (P5)*

Many of the interviewees pointed out that many farmers (landowners) do not allow hunting. Some stakeholders also pointed out that the people themselves (or their mindset) could pose a challenge to the development of hunting tourism. It was e.g. mentioned that some farmers don't consider this kind of business worth the effort and don't believe that it could be profitable – not to mention those who are simply against hunting in general.

However, it is not only farmers or landowners, who might be against hunting and stand in the way of the development of hunting tourism. Several interviewees mentioned that many hunters did not like the development of hunting tourism, mostly because of its effect on their own hunting activities. As one interviewee said:

*“The development of hunting tourism can be hindered by hunters. Many hunters are not ready to change their hunting activities and want to hunt just as they have always done. They are the target group and if the target group doesn't want this, then what is the purpose?” (P2)*

The interviewees had different opinions about whether the economic collapse in Iceland would influence the development of hunting tourism. One interviewee said:

*“The number of hunters who need much service decreases in times like these.” (H2)*

One entrepreneur admitted that pricing was an obstacle in hunting tourism and could prove prohibitive, especially for domestic hunters, since: “the hunting package is expensive”. Several interviewees thought that money should be invested in the marketing of hunting tourism, regardless of the state of the economy.

*“Some men are just hunters in their hearts and those men will always do what’s necessary to go hunting, even to pay for hunting grounds.” (E2)*

*“It is a tradition for some hunters to go reindeer hunting and they will not make an exception.” (H4)*

### 2.3.6 Future trends of hunting tourism

Interviewees were also asked about their opinions on the future trends of hunting tourism in Iceland. Their reflections about the future were both positive and negative. Some of the interviewees predicted a continuous demand in goose and ptarmigan hunting although the attitude towards hunting in general would probably change. Some saw growth potential in tourism around reindeer hunting. Some stakeholders said that the sector’s biggest opportunity is increasing the service level of hunters because the amount of reindeer hunted was unlikely to increase in the near future due to quotas. There were, however, a few stakeholders who saw also opportunities in increasing the reindeer quota e.g. by allowing migrating reindeer herds to settle in new areas in Iceland.

*“The value of tourism will generally increase in Iceland in the next few years and hunting tourism will develop in the same way. I see special potentials for tourism around reindeer hunting, particularly if they will migrate to other areas.” (H1)*

The stakeholders predicted that there would always be people for and against hunting. Some said that there will always be hunters since being a hunter is a part of human nature. However, it was also pointed out that game populations are a limited resource that should be treated sustainably and with respect. It was also mentioned that hunting activities should be controlled without the risk of policing. As one hunter said:

*[Game populations] are a limited resource but it can easily be destroyed by greed and too many restrictions.” (H1)*

Most of the interviewees thought that high volume hunting was not acceptable and that kind of hunting would decrease in the future. Instead of bag, the focus of hunting should be on the experience. Some of the stakeholders predicted that services for hunters will increase in the future and that both the supply and demand of them will rise as well. Increased services, however, are likely to lead to increased costs of hunting. Some stakeholders predicted that landowners will more and more often charge hunters for access to hunting grounds on privately owned land. In that relation, some of the stakeholders mentioned that hunting tourism will mainly be offered on tourism farms in the future, since: “it has been considered easy to pay and take a package”. Some of the experienced hunters were worried about the possibility that increased costs would prohibit them from hunting as they were used to. Like one of them said:

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*“Whatever will happen in the development of hunting, it will probably make it more difficult for me to practice my hobby because it will probably just cost me more. No matter what the changes will be, it will cost more.” (H3)*

Some of the stakeholders predicted that the domestic market for hunting would decrease due to the economic situation in Iceland.

*“Hunting tourism will decrease in the next few years. There will be less money in it. Hunting is expensive and so, today the domestic market will decrease. People can’t afford this today!” (H4)*

Regardless of increased costs or increased services, most of the stakeholders thought that there would always be hunting grounds available for local hunters. These might not necessarily be the best hunting grounds though, since the best grounds are more likely to have higher leases due to greater demand. Some of the stakeholders also foresaw that there will always be landowners, who will not charge for access to their hunting grounds. Therefore, there would still be a chance for some hunters to go hunting for free, as they have always done. As one interviewee said:

*“I think that we are far away from reaching an agreement about creating a business of hunting. Some people sell access to their land and that will probably increase, but there will always be some people who will not do that.” (P5)*

Some interviewees also thought that there will always be landowners who are not interested in allowing hunting. There will also be many who are simply against hunting. That view might gain increased popularity in the future:

*“Of course there are groups who don’t want to allow hunting and that opinion could increase in the future. I don’t hear much about it but it wouldn’t surprise me if people would be against this just like whale hunting.” (L5)*

There were also predictions that tourism would continue to develop and increase in Iceland in the future and also hunting tourism as part of it. Some envisaged that hunting tourism would become more professional in the future and that hunters would require some sort of services. Therefore, great potential was foreseen for the development of hunting tourism. One of the stakeholders said:

*“People are discovering that this is a resource that has always been there, but they haven’t been creating service around it. There is definitively a market for it.” (P5)*

## 2.4 Conclusions

The term “hunting tourism” as a concept is relatively new, but it involves hunters travelling considerable distances from their home and/or own hunting grounds in order to hunt. Hunters’ access to hunting grounds can be different from one hunter to another. It is likely that the longer a hunter’s distance is to the hunting ground, the weaker their contact is to the region and vice versa. Therefore, the hunting tourists do not always have a strong social contact to rural regions and local people. This also influences the social sustainability of hunting. Social sustainability and cooperation with locals are considered among the most important factors in developing hunting tourism. It is clear that many stakeholders need to be involved when developing hunting tourism. This report has provided an overview of stakeholder opinions related to the development of hunting tourism in Iceland.

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Most of the interviewees linked the concept of “hunting tourism” with services related to hunting, such as accommodation, hunting grounds and guiding. Several interviewees put the hunter’s experience as the focal point of hunting activities. At the same time it was pointed out that hunting was more than shooting game. Hunting and the hunting experience was sometimes described as a social event, e.g. spending time with friends and family in the nature. Reindeer hunting, which only takes place in East Iceland, was sometime mentioned as an example of hunting tourism in Iceland.

The interviewees had different opinions when asked about how they saw the public opinion of hunting and hunting tourism at the moment. Some thought it was positive, some mentioned that no one knew the public opinion and others felt that the public opinion was generally indifferent. Most of the respondents thought that the public opinion is likely to be positive as long as the hunters treat the resource (game) and nature with respect and in sustainable way. It was also highlighted that hunting tourism must be in harmony with other activities in the same area. The stakeholders pointed out that the public had very little tolerance for hunters, who behave recklessly in nature. The hunter’s respect towards game and nature were thought to be especially important.

All of the interviewees were aware that an increase in hunting tourism would have an impact on local hunting and possibly also the hunting culture. However, the interviewees did not agree whether the impact would be positive or negative and to what extent. It was pointed out that non-local hunters might be prioritised over local hunters e.g. because of income they generate, but on the other hand there are enough hunting grounds for everyone at the moment. Many of the interviewees knew that access to hunting grounds was increasingly being sold out and service provided e.g. in goose hunting. Most of the interviewees who were hunters themselves worried about the likely impact of hunting tourism on their own hunting activities and were especially worried about increased costs and getting the worse hunting grounds for themselves. No one, however, questioned the right of the landowner to distribute the hunting rights. Most of the interviewees were familiar with high volume hunting and were against it. Some of the interviewees believed that high volume hunting was decreasing and the nature experience was becoming the focus.

All of the interviewees agreed that there was a lack of hunting management in Iceland. Some of the interviewees mentioned that the necessary management would possibly follow if hunting was commercialised, but management activities should also guarantee that locals would be able to hunt as well. Not everyone agreed with this opinion. The interviewees generally agreed that hunting tourism could have both positive and negative social, ecological and economic impacts on rural societies and on hunting in general (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Positive and negative social, ecological and economic impacts of hunting tourism

| Social impacts |  | Ecological impacts |   | Economic impacts |   |
|----------------|--|--------------------|---|------------------|---|
| Positive       |  | Positive           |   | Positive         |   |
| ■              | Increased variety of jobs                | ■                  | Information flow to hunters                   | ■                | Income to the area                                  |
| ■              | Promotion of regions                     | ■                  | Systematic monitoring                         | ■                | Better use of tourism infrastructure                |
| ■              | Information flow to hunters              |                    |   | ■                | Multiplier effects                                  |
| Negative       |  | Negative           |   | Negative         |   |
| ■              | Local hunters                            | ■                  | Unsustainable use of resources (game, nature) | ■                | Increased price for local hunters                   |
| ■              | Possible conflicts with other businesses |                    |   | ■                | Possible conflicts with other businesses/activities |

Generally, it can be said that there should be possibilities for both local hunters and hunting tourists in order to reach social acceptance for developing hunting tourism. If hunting tourism is well organised and in consent with the society it could be very positive and contribute to both society and the hunting activities in the area.

The interviewees agreed that hunting has impacts on nature and that it would be necessary to be aware of the limitations natural environments and game populations place on hunting and hunting tourism activities. Many of the interviewees pointed out that hunting tourism could fit well with the existing tourism in their region, especially farm tourism. Some interviewees on the other hand pointed out that hunting tourism does not always go along with other activities in the area. For example it would not be safe to conduct other kinds of nature tourism in the same areas as hunting during the hunting season for obvious reasons. Potential conflicts between sheep farmers and hunters regarding goose hunting and reindeer hunting were also mentioned. Interviewees also pointed out that not all landowners/farmers allow hunting on their land and hunters have to respect that.

Almost every interviewee saw hunting and hunting tourism as an opportunity both regarding the game and new services for hunters/tourists. Many interviewees mentioned that farmers have adapted tourism into their farming with great success and hunting could easily be adopted to be one of the activities offered by these farmers. Landowners/farmers who are not offering tourism services can also use other opportunities, e.g. by offering hunting grounds and cooperating with those who provide service to tourists. There are also opportunities for tourism companies to get better use of their facilities in the shoulder season or off-season to regular tourism. Initiatives of hunting tourism could therefore help expand the tourism season in Iceland. Interviewees mentioned mainly geese, ptarmigans, seabirds and foxes as potential game species for hunting tourism.

Some interviewees were also convinced that the opportunities to develop the hunting tourism depended on the location. A better operational environment for hunting and hunting activities is something that most of the interviewees also mentioned and emphasised. It was pointed out that a better framework could e.g. increase income, make hunting grounds more available for hunters and encourage responsible hunting. Most interviewees saw hunting tourism as an opportunity to create jobs in rural areas along with increased income. According to the interviewees, many issues are challenging for the development of hunting tourism, e.g. short hunting season, weather conditions, population fluctuations of game, hunting rights, the society and the economic recession. The interviewees agreed that hunting tourism would probably never become the main source of livelihood for anyone.

Some of the interviewees predicted that hunting would be more professional in the future and hunting tourism will increase. Some also predicted that the attitude towards hunting would probably change. It was pointed out that many people are simply against hunting and this opinion would gain in popularity in the future. Some of the interviewees also saw that hunting tourism would increasingly be offered by farmers/landowners. Most of the interviewees thought that high volume hunting was not acceptable and that kind of hunting would decrease in the future. Instead of focusing the on bag, the focus of the hunting activities would be on the nature experiences.

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### 3. Social Sustainability of hunting tourism in Finland

**Susanna Keskinarkaus, University of Helsinki, Ruralia Institute**

**Anne Matilainen, University of Helsinki, Ruralia Institute**

#### 3.1 Background

Hunting has a long tradition in the Finnish society and it still has a significant role in a lifestyle of many Finnish people. There are 300 000 hunting license holders in Finland making the amount of hunters approximately 6 % of the total population (Metsästäjien Keskusjärjestö 2003, Sievänen 2001). Hunting is most popular in eastern and northern Finland where there are municipalities where up to 38 % of the total population has passed the hunting exam (Keskinarkaus, 2008). The amount of hunters has been relatively stable during the last years. However, the amount of rural hunters is gradually decreasing due to the socio-demographic changes in the rural regions.

The majority of Finnish hunters are members of hunting clubs (Pellikka et al., 2007). In addition two national organizations, The Union of Finnish Hunters (MLL) and the Hunters' Central Organization (MKJ), have their unique roles in managing and representing Finnish hunters. All hunters are members of MKJ that has a law-stated role in game and hunter management. MLL on the other hand is a voluntary union with approximately 150 000 (50 % of Finnish hunters) members. Both of these organizations have a very strong position in the Finnish hunting policy process as they are consulted with proposed changes to hunting regulations, and their standpoint towards hunting tourism thus affects the institutional environment of the entrepreneurs.

The traditional role of hunting, the structure of land ownership and the extensive hunting club activities have provided reasonably good possibilities for leisure hunting for all social classes. In general, hunting rights are bound to landowning, but only approximately 40% of Finnish hunters are landowners (Ermala & Leinonen, 1995). The landowners typically rent the hunting rights to the local hunting club (over 4000 in the whole country) for nominal compensation. Renting hunting areas enables the formation of larger and more feasible hunting areas than the land area of just one owner may offer. In addition to hunting, the hunting clubs take care of game management, population level evaluations and surveillance of hunting on areas in their control. The clubs may also sell hunting licenses to external customers if so agreed.

Hunting is also possible on State land, which is mainly located in Northern and Eastern Finland. The residents of northern Finland have free small game hunting rights on State land in their home municipality. This right is protected by law (ML 615/1993) and is a historically long tradition with wide use and continuing strong support. Local hunting rights only apply to residents of the rural North and the issue is politically very delicate and often seen as compensation for "harsh living condition in the arctic northern areas". The free hunting right is very strongly defended by the Northern residents, whenever it is publicly discussed or debated. Residents of other parts of Finland and foreign hunters are required to buy a license to hunt on State land. Most of the hunters on State land are domestic hunters since there were less than 2000 foreign hunters in 2007 (less than 1 % of hunting cards). Almost one third of all Finnish hunters (equals almost 100 000 hunters) use State's land areas for hunting (Liukkonen et al 2007). About 40 000 small game licenses were sold to State land in 2008.

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Metsähallitus (Forest and Park Service) is a State enterprise that administers about 12 million hectares of State-owned land and water areas. It also distributes hunting licenses and estimates the hunting quotas based on game population estimations and the bag of local hunters. The remaining small game hunting quota is sold to permit hunters (hunters obligated to buy a license to hunt on State land) through the centralized system by Villi Pohjola (Wild North). Villi Pohjola is also a state enterprise and holds the sole rights to distribute State licenses. The licenses for the most popular hunting grounds are extremely sought after and can be sold out within an hour from the start of the sales.

In addition to the centralized sales system, Metsähallitus used to contract several entrepreneurs to sell hunting licenses to their hunting grounds. This system was abolished when the law governing Metsähallitus changed in 2005. According to the new interpretation, hunting license decisions are official state authority decisions that cannot be passed on to entrepreneurs. This seized the growth of the previously existing hunting tourism sector on State land and left entrepreneurs in an unsecure standpoint regarding their key resource, since the entrepreneurs are not allowed to sell licenses or buy "blank" permits for their customers. The license holder must be named upon buying. Therefore, hunting tourism entrepreneurs' business activities on State land are currently limited to providing basic tourism and guide services.

The Finnish hunting culture is typical Northern hunting culture (see e.g. Willebrand, 2008; Liukkonen et al 2007; Heberlein 2000; Matilainen ed., 2007) where maintaining ecological sustainability, the social nature of the hunting event and appreciation of the wilderness are central elements (Nygård & Uthard, 2009). The most important motives for hunting named by the Finnish hunters are peace and quiet of the forest, dog training, a sense of community and social contacts, nature experiences, physical exercise, gaining meat, game management and prohibiting damages caused by oversized game populations, rather than shooting (Metsästäjien Keskusjärjestö 2003, Petäjistö et al 2004, Valkeajärvi et al 2004, Nygård & Uthard, 2009; Liukkonen et al 2007). Also the ethical code for the Union of Finnish hunters specifically states that the amount of game must not be the primary goal in hunting. Hunting in Finland is based on natural game populations and game management focuses on ecologically sustainable harvesting. It has been stated in several general discussions that the hunting tourism in Finland can only be developed by respecting the Finnish hunting culture.

## 3.2 Hunting tourism in Finland

There are approximately 200 companies that actively sell hunting tourism in Finland. This includes professional hunting tourism companies selling high quality hunting packages and rural tourism companies offering a hunting possibility as an additional activity. Most of the companies are located in the northern, eastern and central parts of Finland and operate on a seasonal basis. Hunting tourism entrepreneurs don't necessarily own the land used in their business activities but operate on State land, hunting clubs' land areas or private land. Hunting tourism exists primarily for small game (grouse-species (*Tetraonidae*), mountain hare (*Lepus timidus*), and waterfowl) although large game (moose (*Alces alces*), bear (*Ursus arctos*)) is also hunted. It is argued that hunting tourism could improve the nature tourism sector especially in rural regions by prolonging the season in the autumns and diversifying tourism services. There is currently more demand for than supply of hunting tourism products.

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Recently there has been a lot of political discussion over hunting licenses on State land. The entrepreneurs claim that in order to maintain economically sustainable business activities, which could also have an influence on the regional economics of rural areas, they should be granted a certain quota of the licenses for the use of their customers. From a purely economic standpoint, a hunting license can be seen as a key resource in the production of a hunting product. To maximize the economic benefit, it could also be argued that the entrepreneur should have the possibility to price the license freely. However, the issue of hunting license access in Finland or development of hunting tourism in general is far more complex than purely an economic issue. Independent hunters argue that licenses sold to entrepreneurs diminish their hunting possibilities. The law, hunting traditions, stakeholder groups and personal feelings all dictate who has a primary hunting right on State land and also how strongly hunting tourism should be developed on private land areas. There is no consensus on whose interests should be prioritized and due to the ecological limitations, licenses to one group are deducted from the licenses sold to another group.

A central matter of concern for the companies, in addition to adapting to the ecological population fluctuations, is social sustainability (Keskinarkaus et al 2009). The views of key stakeholder groups, such as landowners and local hunters must be acknowledged and they must be involved in the process of maintaining the sustainability of the operations and local communities in the long run. The general public's view of hunting tourism is delicate but especially the attitudes of the key stakeholders can significantly influence the development of the sector. Landowners have right to withdraw access to the game resource. Local hunters on the other hand can influence the decisions of landowners. Also via the strong role of national hunting organizations, recreational hunters have significant power and influence over the hunting regulations especially on State land. Hunters' organizations have a very strong role in Finland in safeguarding the interest of individual hunters (Matilainen ed. 2007). Their stance towards professional hunting tourism and towards potential changes in hunting license policy, have significant effect on the development of the operational environment of professional hunting tourism companies. Policy makers create a part of the institutional framework and thus similarly affect the operating possibilities through institutions. Traditionally, the political pressure to safeguard equal hunting opportunities has been high and even the current wording of the hunting law mentions that the hunting possibilities on State land should be granted primarily to those domestic hunters without other reasonable hunting possibility.

In developing the hunting tourism sector, the Finnish traditional hunting culture should be a main consideration. Using the existing hunting culture as a starting point of the tourism development do not interfere with the local customs and traditions and maintains social relations instead of forcing a new model of hunting into a local culture. The affects of hunting tourism on the land use and hunting possibilities of the local people should be understood. Also the consequences of professional hunting tourism on recreational hunting through the hunting license sales must be considered. Game populations maintained for hunting tourism should not have a negative influence on the livelihood of local people (e.g. damages to forests). In Lapland, the livelihood of the Sámi people must also be taken into consideration. Sustainability in all its forms (ecological, social, economic) must be taken into account.

In this study, the aim is to find out the opinions of four critical interest groups towards hunting tourism: landowners, local/recreational hunters, policy makers related to rural development and hunting tourism entrepreneurs. The aim is to estimate what kind of social concerns influence the sector, how the future potential of hunting tourism is seen by different actors and under what conditions can both sector development and social sustainability be achieved.

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### 3.3 Material and methods

This study is based on inductive analysis (see Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990) of the social framework of hunting tourism, based on opinions of four critical interest groups of the hunting tourism sector. The following were chosen as critical interest groups on a national level: landowners, local/recreational hunters, policy makers related to rural development and hunting tourism entrepreneurs. The critical interest groups were chosen based on previous literature and studies (e.g. Matilainen ed. 2007) and discussions with the experts in the sector. The choices were based on the following argumentation:

#### **Landowners:**

- as mostly local people they form the immediate social circle of the hunting tourism companies
- according to the law, they hold the hunting rights on their land
- without their consent, access to hunting grounds is impossible
- they can dictate the cost of a key resource and are thus a relevant group regarding profit allocation

#### **Local and recreational hunters:**

- local hunters form the immediate social circle of the hunting tourism companies
- local hunters have a strong influence on local landowners and they can be landowners themselves
- recreational hunters have a strong political influence on the hunting organization on a national level
- the legislation guarantees primary hunting opportunity on State land to local hunters in the North and hunters without other reasonable hunting opportunity
- local hunters can be subcontractors to the hunting tourism enterprises through hunting clubs

#### **Policy makers related to rural development**

- decide on the development activities and their allocation in the region/municipality
- reflect the opinion of the local general public

#### **Hunting tourism entrepreneurs**

- hunting tourism activities provide a part of their livelihood
- uphold viability of rural regions
- are the driving force of the professional hunting tourism sector

In addition to these interest groups, three other groups were considered to possibly influence the development of hunting tourism. These are the general public, environmental NGOs and permit/independent hunters. Due to the research resources, the general public was seen as a group that is too vast to be reached reliably. The majority of the general public also isn't acquainted with hunting nor hunting tourism and mostly don't have an opinion of it. Surveying this group was seen to bring too vague results regarding the actual social challenges apparent on the local level. All interest groups were therefore asked for their opinion on the general attitudes towards hunting and hunting tourism. Especially policy makers can be seen as representatives of the general public. Permit hunters (private hunters hunting on State land areas with a purchased license) form a large recreational hunter group which is also a significant interest group concerning professional hunting tourism since both entrepreneurs and permit hunters compete for the same license quota. At the same time the permit hunters form a large poten-

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tial domestic customer group. To acknowledge the views of this group, national hunter's organizations were selected to be interviewed as representatives of also local/recreational hunters and previous studies were consulted to ensure that their concerns are addressed. Environmental NGOs could potentially have a significant role in shaping the business environment of hunting tourism. However, the acceptance of hunting in general is relatively good in Finland and since a big part of hunting tourism in Finland is independent tourism by permit hunters, the NGOs have not taken any strong, public position towards this topic. Therefore, this group was not selected as separate key interest group but instead their opinion was seen to be reflected in the general opinion. These aspects must nevertheless be taken into consideration when interpreting the research results.

The data is based on 27 face-to-face or phone interviews conducted with the key informants of each chosen stakeholder group. The interviewed actors for each interest group have been presented in table 1. The sampling of the interviewees was made by a purposive sampling approach in order to ensure manageable and informative data (see Patton 2002). In order to get a comprehensive picture of the opinions of interest group, the interviewees were chosen so that they represent different spatial levels from local to national. The aim was to find the key informants related to each interest group and in order to achieve this, in addition to purposive sampling, the so called snowball tactic was used. The interviewees were asked, whether some other key informant from their interest groups should also be interviewed. The classification of the interviewees to different interest groups was somewhat overlapping. In table 1, the interviewees have been categorized according to the interest group that they primarily represent.

The interviews were conducted during autumn 2008 and spring 2009. The length of the interviews varied from 28 minutes to 92 minutes. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewee and later fully transcribed in order to guarantee a rich data and to allow precise analysis. The interviews were based on a joint transnational semi-structured framework of themes developed together with other North Hunt –project partners and used in all participating countries (Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Scotland). The purpose of the themes was to allow fluent conversation while ensuring that all the main issues are discussed with every interviewee (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 1982) in order to gain comparable data. In addition to the joint transnational interview framework, some national themes were added to the interview guide in order to get deeper understanding on the country specific issues.

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**Table 1.** *The interviewed representatives of different interest groups*

| <b>Landowners</b>   | <b>Local and recreational hunters</b>                          | <b>Policy makers and rural developers</b>              | <b>Hunting tourism enterprises</b>   |
|---|--|--|--|
| A representative of a union representing landowners, national actor | A representative of a hunters organization, national actor     | A representative of the Ministry, national actor       | A representative of Finnish Entrepreneurs, national actor                  |
| A representative of State land, national actor                      | A representative of a hunters union, national actor            | A representative of the Sámi, national actor           | A nationwide nature tourism company  |
| A representative of a collective forest, local actor                | A representative of a game management association, local actor | A representative of Finnish tourism, national actor    | A representative of a network of hunting tourism companies, regional actor |
| A private landowner, local actor                                    | A representative of a hunting club, local actor                | A representative of a Regional council, regional actor | A hunting tourism company, local actor                                     |
| A private landowner, local actor                                    | A representative of a hunting club, local actor                | A representative of a Joint Authority, regional actor  | A hunting tourism company, local actor                                     |
| A private landowner, local actor                                    | A representative of a game management association, local actor |  | A hunting tourism company, local actor                                     |
| A private landowner, local actor                                    | A representative of a hunting club, local actor                |  | A hunting tourism company, local actor                                     |
|   | A representative of a hunting club, local actor                |  | A hunting tourism company, local actor                                     |
| <b>L1 – L7</b>  | <b>H1 – H8</b>   | <b>PM1 – PM5</b>                                       | <b>E1 – E8</b>   |

## Data analyzing

The data was analyzed by using a common transnational analyzing framework in order to find out the relevant issues related social sustainability of hunting tourism. The whole analysing process was synchronised and agreed on jointly with the transnational research team via personal and video meetings. To ensure the quality of the national results, all phases of the analysis and interpretation of the data were a collaborative and iterative effort by the national research team. In case of any disagreements the data was jointly reanalyzed until a shared interpretation was reached. Although rather laborious, this way of utilizing analyst triangulation is often considered to increase the credibility of the research (Patton 2002) and also as Eisenhardt (1989) argues the use of more researchers builds confidence in the findings and increases the likelihood of surprising findings. The interviews covered topics like personal and anticipated public feelings of the interest group towards hunting tourism, expected positive and negative consequences of hunting tourism, arguments for and against hunting tourism, hunting tourism potential, and frame conditions for expanding and developing hunting tourism. In addition each interest group was asked group specific questions in order to find out issues especially important for the interest group in question.

The actual analysis included two different phases. Firstly, the interviews were read through several times and interview extracts for the joint analysing framework were selected and analysed. In the second phase, the sections of analysing framework were combined to more general themes describing the opin-

ions towards hunting tourism. To ensure the transparency of the data analysis, a number of interview citations are presented in the main body of text in order to make it easier for the reader to evaluate the interpretations that have been made.

## 3.4 Results

### 3.4.1 *How hunting tourism is perceived*

Some interviewees expressed their personal feelings toward hunting tourism and others spoke of their interest groups' views or the opinions of locals and the general public. The interviewees emphasized that some of their personal opinions could never be voiced publicly and referred to the disastrous consequences of some ideas such as suggesting that the free hunting rights of locals be abolished. The respondents demonstrated ambivalence towards some developments by talking about them from many different perspectives and sometimes concluding „I don't know what would be the right or wrong course of action“. This demonstrated the complexity and the delicacy of the hunting phenomenon.

There was a consensus that a limit exists to the expansion of hunting tourism and even those who supported hunting tourism gave many conditions to its expansion. The interviewees were permissive to different models of hunting. Hunting tourism as a business opportunity was seen as marginal but possible minding some conditions. Making a living off hunting tourism was not seen as an easy living due to the social and economic pressure combined with ecological uncertainties. The interviewees noted that the areas hunting tourism takes place can rarely be used for other kinds of tourism and therefore livelihood alternatives are hard to find.

### 3.4.2 *The concept of hunting tourism*

The interviewees in general saw hunting tourism as both foreign and domestic tourism, in which hunting was one of the main motives for the trip, but not necessarily the only motive nor the only activity. The use of local services was highlighted and it was seen that the local culture is closely connected to the hunting tourism. The respondents saw guide services as one central part of the hunting tourism product in addition to the more traditional elements of accommodation and catering services. The representatives of hunters emphasized the role of domestic tourism, when most of the other respondents did not separate domestic and foreign tourists so distinguishably. Both entrepreneurs and hunting clubs were mentioned as providers of hunting tourism. Pure nature and the special characteristics of the natural environment were mentioned as main elements of hunting tourism. The interviewees emphasized the central role of an authentic nature in the experience. Different game species were also mentioned, but not highlighted in hunting tourism definitions.

*“Hunting tourism is travelling that includes the possibility to go hunting. It doesn't have to be the only purpose of the trip but it can be one part of it. Accommodation is also an essential element as well as often catering and the hunting activity itself and services related to the hunt.” (L3)*

*“Hunting tourism includes good accommodation, good food, a good guide and good hunting grounds. Pure nature.” (E4)*

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### 3.4.3 Public opinion regarding hunting tourism

The respondents were asked how they saw the atmosphere regarding hunting both in their area as well as nationally. The respondents also pondered, what are the issues that affect how the locals and the general public see hunting tourism.

#### **How the locals are seen to experience hunting tourism**

Hunting tourism was described as an extremely delicate issue. The interviewees said that Finns shun the trophy-focused hunting culture and tend to steer clear if hunting is associated with such tourism. The respondents felt that people mostly understand that hunting tourism provides income, jobs and livelihood options for the region. Direct income from hunting tourism used on promoting the conditions for local hunting (building sheds and cool rooms) was seen as a positive thing. There was criticism that the game management tasks are attended to by locals and tourists just come to enjoy the results. Respondents also said that local clubs see their own work and fees as hunting investments and refuse to let anyone use these resources.

*"Maybe the people understand that hunting tourism brings money to the region and that money is used for their hunting cabins and such." (E1)*

Some saw that foreign tourists are seen more positively than domestic tourists due to their economic impact and the feeling of pride the locals get from seeing foreigners being interested in their area. Local hunters were also interested in providing an experience to foreign hunters. Valuing the local natural resources was seen as a two-sided phenomenon. On one hand the interviewees stated that it is a very positive thing that people from outside the region come because the locals also awaken to the attractiveness of their surroundings. People living in an area don't necessarily see it as unique and valuable because they are surrounded by the nature every day. On the other hand, locals feared that when landowners saw that people are willing to pay for land access, they would increase hunting leases for locals.

*"Most likely when one learns to appreciate one's own land or forest and receive income, the price goes up." (E1)*

The interviewees also mentioned that in areas with locals' free hunting rights, the locals felt ownership towards the land areas and the game as well regardless of ownership. Locals feel that even State land "belongs" primarily to the people living in the area.

*"There are thin, red lines, they are certain areas where one hunts moose (traditional places for each group) and certain ancient traditions. So people don't understand how someone can suddenly just appear there to hunt grouse with dogs: "Why do you come here, on my land?" (on State land)." (E4)*

Some felt that the locals may hunt the odd bird every now and then and therefore disapprove of tourists efficiently shooting a big bag with well-trained dogs, especially in the case of grouse. In the most Northern part of Finland where willow ptarmigan hunting is still a job for a few hundred locals, the locals saw the species more as currency rather than game. It was also mentioned that locals with their free hunting rights do not understand that someone would pay to hunt "for fun". This insinuates that the locals have a more practical outlook on hunting as a necessity rather than a recreation.

*"And as we in the North have the free hunting right for citizens, conflicts arise since people don't necessarily understand why someone would pay for hunting and hunt for so called fun." (E4)*

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Moose was not seen as such a precious and competed game species by the locals as for example grouse. Moose populations must also be controlled to prevent damages to e.g. forestry and traffic. The locals are well aware of this and it can affect their opinion of tourism hunting. Contradictory views were also presented and these interviewees argued that the locals didn't want outsiders to hunt moose because they did not see how this would benefit them. Respondents said that hunting clubs had had to discuss the limits of hunting tourism as it inevitably raises debate if certain types of moose licenses are reserved primarily for tourists and local hunters get what is left.

*"Arranging a moose hunt is met by "preferably not". They are neutral, they don't oppose it but they don't see what the advantage is for them." (E7)*

Some locals feel that unethical hunting is practiced by the tourists and they tell stories of the tourists hunting by car and shooting unusually big numbers of grouse. Some even resist bringing guests to their hunting areas. However, a view that hunting tourism would control hunting was also present. Respondents proposed larger hunting areas to make sure that hunters don't bump into each other. Larger areas along municipality limits also facilitate bigger groups getting a permit on the same area as the permits are not scattered on small areas. Hunters were considered to be a proactive customer group that would seek more quiet areas whenever possible.

*"The Finnish hunter, when he goes to hunt, like me: when I decide to go somewhere and see a car there, I won't stay but go a kilometre further. So the crowd automatically spreads in the woods, totally apart, they do not bump into each other." (E8)*

The respondents in some regions said that the start of the hunting season means the beginning of traffic for them. The interviewees said that people in rural areas are used to their quiet surroundings and disturbances can be a source of small grievances. All disruption in the nature is credited on the tourists no matter who caused it. Some interviewees wondered how hunting tourism could disrupt any locals in such vast areas. Most people saw that there were only a few individuals against hunting tourism and their primary reason for negative feelings was interpreted to be envy. Respondents also mentioned that locals could envy the entrepreneurs fortunes and therefore oppose hunting tourism in the area. One interviewee said that apart from envy, people do not have anything against hunting tourism.

It was also evident that people in adjacent municipalities had very different general attitudes to hunting tourism according to hunting tourism entrepreneurs. One interviewee contributed this to the different economic structure of the towns. He said that locals responded better to hunting tourism in areas that had an existing active tourism sector. People in areas where tourism was a new phenomenon, did not approve of hunting tourism either. The presence of an existing tourism sector was seen to shape people's attitudes due to the experience of benefits. In tourism areas people see the benefits of visitors to the area through increased economic activity with service providers. The amount of tourists in an area can also affect the locals' opinions towards tourism.

*"It was a surprise for me that adjoining municipalities are so different in their attitudes towards tourism. In one municipality all tourism related issues are taken positively due to the established tourism sector and an existing tourist destination. The next municipality is very cautious and skeptical about how hunting tourism would benefit them." (E7)*

Several interviewees mentioned that the locals supported hunting tourism or at least did not oppose it. This view was emphasized by saying that the locals are accustomed to receiving a livelihood from nature and thus selling a hunting opportunity was not seen as a strange phenomenon.

### **The opinions of general public's attitudes towards hunting tourism**

The interviewees saw a difference between the attitudes of locals and the general public. Southern Finland was seen as more detached from nature and this in return was seen to cause ignorance and environmental activism. Interviewees felt that the people living in northern Finland do not have strong feelings on the issue. There were also other comments on the increasing diversity of the perception of hunting in general (this will naturally effect the opinion towards hunting tourism as well). The big generation born after the wars is seen to have a natural stance towards hunting as a supplementing source of nutrition whereas the newer generation holds more environmentalists suspicious of hunting as a hobby and a livelihood. Respondents said that urban citizens have different values than those born and raised in the countryside and the nature protectionism will increase and cause opposing towards hunting whereas some people will still keep it as a hobby. The example of friends is seen as influential as many hunters are introduced to the hobby by friends or family.

*"Sometimes it feels that in cities, with no contact with nature, there are more "green" oriented people than any laws allow. Unwillingly these people cause big problems and catastrophes to nature." (E4)*

Many respondents noted that hunting tourism is unknown to most Finns and they neither recognize nor care about it. Respondents said that those who know what hunting is about support hunting tourism. They also reminded that this could change if the sector became a topic of wider interest. Others noted that the general strong support for hunting is due to the large amount of hunters. Hunting is familiar to all Finns because everyone knows at least one hunter and also that hunting in these nature conditions is not easy.

*"Almost every Finn knows a hunter from whom they learn about hunting, what hunting is. That they trudge in the bush freezing and wet and then get a rabbit or a bird and are so happy. They bring the bag home and call and SMS their friends that "hah haa – I got it!" and then they cook a festive meal of it. And through this hunter friend everyone is familiar with hunting." (H1)*

Entrepreneurs felt that hunting tourism is seen as a marginal activity and quite a challenging way to make a living. Some also noted that international marketing is easily affected by incidents with large media attention. Some also speculated that Finns understand hunting and pay no attention to isolated incidents, but Mid-Europeans might be more sensitive. People may question the need for hunting and the interviewees mentioned that opposition toward hunting tourism could increase if hunting is beginning to be deemed immoral. The interviewees mentioned that international trends will affect the acceptance of hunting also in Finland. The animal rights movement might question the justification of hunting as a hobby. It was noted that even with general acceptance hunting tourism is a niche market that can't be marketed to a wide target group.

*"There are negative issues if you look at international trends with animal rights groups and the justification of hunting for recreation." (PM3)*

#### *3.4.4 Effects of hunting and hunting tourism on other land-use alternatives*

The majority view was that hunting and other forms of forest use only support each other or have no effect. Respondents said that there are a lot of wilderness areas in Finland and therefore hunting tourism activities should not affect other land use or local hunting in a disturbing way. The respondents even seemed surprised by the question and checked how hunting and other land use could possibly be in-

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compatible. They said that hunters use the forest during a period when there are very few other people in the woods. Some saw that hunting still disturbs alternative land use less than other forms of tourism since hunters move in small groups and don't make noise.

### **Effects on other recreation**

The interviewees said that the tourism pressure from hunting is more evenly distributed than the location-focused attractions. Hunters mentioned that they attempt to use areas that are empty from other people. Hunting clubs especially in the North have such vast areas that they did not see moving to another location as problematic. Hunters also acknowledged that tourists may not want to experience hunting in any way during their outdoor activities and said that they avoid even bringing gun fire sounds to the vicinity of nature paths.

*"Well it depends on the scale but in my view it could easily be consolidated with other land use and tourism. Certain areas would have to be agreed where hunting tourism would be conducted. Area-wise it is quite a small portion of the potential we have." (L2)*

The interviewees noted that berry pickers and hunters have always coexisted without any problems and hunters only wish that people in the forests during hunting season would remember to wear visibility vests for security reasons. There were also views that mushrooms are the only thing in the forest in addition to moose during the hunting season and therefore there is no clash of different user groups.

*"Everyone circles the same areas but it has never been a problem. A berry picker has never been on my way during a hunt and likewise when I have been berry picking, hunters have not bothered me." (E2)*

### **Effects on other livelihoods**

Locals had experience of reindeer herding and didn't experience reindeer herding and hunting to be problematic to combine although the requirements of reindeer herding were mentioned to be alien to permit hunters from outside the reindeer herding area. Permit hunters may cause disturbance to the reindeer with hunting dogs that may treat the reindeer as game. Farming and hunting were mentioned to be ill-assorted and hunters at least need to remember not to walk through the crop or park in a way that blocks access to fields.

Bear viewing and hunting were not seen to match well together, especially at the end of August, which is parallel season for both bear watching and bear hunting. Shooting a bear in the vicinity of a carcass is illegal and a condensation of viewing cabins in a bear populated area was bound to evoke conflict between hunters and entrepreneurs. On the other hand wildlife watching entrepreneurs argued that gunfire sound frightens the bears. Hunting tourism and wildlife viewing were not seen as automatically incompatible although the ecological consequences of bear viewing were discussed in the Eastern part where hunters feared that feeding the bears for viewing can lead to remarkable conflicts between bears and human, when the density of bears grow extremely high in some areas and the bears get accustomed to humans.

*"There are such problems especially regarding bears: they have been so fully catered that border officials agree that it is only a time before something happens. Before the first funeral." (H5)*

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*"It is apparent that fed bears become tame and some, I would not say "fine" day, there will be an accident. We are making the same mistakes that have been done on the other side of the ocean." (H8)*

In addition to wildlife viewing and reindeer herding also forestry, mining and other tourism must be reconciled with hunting tourism in the same geographical area. This however was not seen as problematic and other considerations than reindeer herding and wildlife viewing were hardly mentioned in the interviews. One respondent noted that locals can't afford to be too radical in prioritizing different forms of land use since each provides different kinds of livelihoods and income. He therefore saw hunting tourism as compatible with reindeer herding and other nature tourism.

*"It is a two-sided issue because it benefits hunting tourism entrepreneurs who need to make a living. And grouse trappers and reindeer herders need to do their job. All are using the same land with the same rights and you can't be too strict in prohibiting certain livelihoods." (H6)*

### **Effects on local hunting**

Since locals in the rural North have the law-protected right to hunt on State land in their own municipality and hunting is a very popular recreational activity, local hunting was widely discussed in the interviews. The importance of acknowledging the locals' stance towards hunting tourism was repeated frequently by the interviewees.

### **Hunting clubs**

The hunting conditions of locals were mostly discussed in connection with hunting clubs since hunting clubs are the social cores of some rural villages. Also a third of Finnish hunters hold a membership in at least one hunting club (Svensberg & Vikberg, 2007). Hunting clubs were seen to have very unique and individual cultures and the interviewees said that one should not aim to change the culture of the clubs. The respondents noted that hunting clubs must have an opportunity to hunt in peace and the hobby must not turn into a burden, which could happen, if the hunting club would focus strongly on organizing customer hunts. There were comments, where the interviewees emphasized that hunting is one of the last social activities in the rural areas and people are not ready to give it up for commercial reasons. Moose hunting, which is done in groups and mostly coordinated through local hunting clubs, was highlighted as an event where people get together and have a chance to socialize with each others.

*"Our members have at least so far felt that hunting is one of the few countryside recreational activities that they have and the message has been that they don't want to give it up for outsiders, at least not on a large scale." (L3)*

The interviewees said that some hunting clubs are open to hunting tourism and others are not. This seemed to be dependent on the opinions of the most active members and also the resistance of the older generation of hunters. Some said that in a club there will always be those individuals that oppose changes. According to the interviews, some individuals also oppose the idea that some outsider would use resources paid for by the local hunters.

Some hunting clubs were willing to take hunting tourists for a limited time in the beginning of the season but were not ready to commit to a longer season because hunting is a hobby for them. According to the interviewees, there were internal discussions in the hunting clubs about the rules or sacrifices to be made for tourist hunters. Some individuals were bitter that bulls with antlers were primarily for tourists

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who did not bother to shoot cows that were thus left for locals. On the other hand, this system ensured maximum income for the hunting clubs and this was used as a justification for the system. There were views that the locals preferred the income over the antlers. Differing views on rules of who is allowed to shoot antlers was sealed through a closed vote and the majority of members supported the additional gain from tourism, even if they would have to pass on the chance to shoot bulls during tourist season. The contemporary amount of moose also contributes to the view that tourists may participate in the hunt as well since most hunting club members have already shot numerous moose. In the present systems the meat also remains with the club members and the hide goes to the hunter. Other clubs had done exactly the opposite and protected the beginning of the season for locals. They took customers later in the season when the locals had had a chance to use their vacation-time to hunt. There were also clubs that had agreed to help other clubs in case they received a customer rush, but did not engage in direct hunting tourism activities.

*"We (hunting club) have spoken of it (hunting tourism) and decisions have been made, too. If tourists come, the board is authorized to agree on the activities with the moose hunt leader." (H2)*

*"Let's say the negative outcome could be that, well the clubs and locals must have their own time, too. It can't be so that there are tourists 7 weeks of the season and they have 3 weeks in peace. It can't be too laborious..."*

*It causes bad blood, at least griping if the tourists shoot a big antler from under the local's nose. But when we had such problems with one group, we decided that we officially start hunting later and the first week is voluntary and locals may only shoot calves. All big moose are reserved for tourists. And there were complaints about why they don't shoot the cows. But the outcome was that with 4 foreign hunters shooting bulls and no time wasted on shooting cows and taking them to the cooler rooms, the foreigners shot 5 bulls which meant about 4000 Euros to the hunting club. So it goes through such positive examples but the system must always be told and followed." (E1)*

Entrepreneurs mentioned that hunting clubs are not businesses so they function differently. The entrepreneurs mentioned that the hunting club members must have the will to provide a fulfilling experience to the customer and the locals' knowledge of the hunting grounds plays a key role in assuring a rewarding hunting. The entrepreneurs noted that in the same area different hunting clubs had the opposite view towards hunting tourism. Others were willing to have tourists and make arrangements to ensure they deliver the product the visitor has paid for while others only wanted the tourist income but were unwilling to adjust their activities to accommodate the tourists. Some clubs expressed an interest to start hunting tourism on the condition that the entrepreneur would invest in their physical structures but for the entrepreneurs this presented a problem of continuity for hunting clubs as voluntary organizations could not be guaranteed to commit to a long-term contract.

*"It could be seen that the attitude of this club was that tourists could come and only be there and this is the price, as long as the customers didn't disturb them in any way." (E7)*

Entrepreneurs still chose to cooperate with hunting clubs and said that they could always apply for moose hunting areas of their own for their customers, but chose not to compete with the hunting clubs over the same areas. The entrepreneurs mentioned that they didn't wish to provoke envy. The entrepreneurs also saw that local acceptance to hunting tourism arise from the locals seeing that the profits benefit them. In addition the local hunters hold many roles as local land owners and local habitants so land-owner acceptance is closely tied to hunting club acceptance of hunting tourism.

On some areas where the moose license was sought as a shared license batch, economic benefit was distributed to the hunting club whose guest the tourist was as well as the hunting club on whose area the moose was shot. The respondents said that money activates and through additional resources hunting clubs were willing to invest in game management. Jointly owned forests had same rules for member hunters and outsiders: all had to apply for a license through closed bids. This was seen as a fair system as it would maximize the financial gain for all members, hunters or not.

*“Money matters. Without financing you can’t build a shed or buy meat boxes or electricity. When there is money, then people realize “Could we do this? Should we take out more food to the game?” (E1)*

Respondents said that a “not in my backyard”-phenomenon was apparent: that hunting tourism in general is ok as long as it is done “somewhere else”. Some saw that hunting tourism would not interfere with local hunting in any way but with the attitudes of locals of which some fear all outside influences. On private land hunting tourism in general is less controversial than on State land. People accept that landowners control their resource and that all hunters need to gain the landowner’s approval, local or not.

The risk with hunting tourism was seen to be that it could encourage unethical hunting practices if participants try to ensure bag for the customers. The interviewees saw no problem of crowding in the forests as the Finnish hunter prefers to avoid other people in the woods and therefore naturally seeks quiet surrounding. The interviewees did not wish for the amount of hunters in an area to increase.

The interviewees mostly saw that professional snaring is such a marginal phenomenon these days that hunting tourism didn’t have any effect of local, professional hunting. Bear hunting was also seen as a less interesting activity for locals and since it is individual or small-group hunting, it was not experienced to affect the local community or local hunters in any negative way. The interviewees emphasized that hunting tourism should be conducted openly and non-secretively but in such a way that it does not disturb locals.

In northern Finland the reason for the strongest resistance was named to be fear for local hunting rights. The respondents in the free hunting right zone highlighted that under no conditions can the hunting of locals be restricted in any way without serious consequences to the social and ecological sustainability of hunting. The primary reason to object hunting tourism was also a fear that it would eventually lead to economic objectives being prioritized over social ones. Locals in the North saw that their hunting opportunities must be the first priority and the remainder can be sustainably distributed to tourists.

### *3.4.5 Hunting tourism and landownership*

The general attitude and the attitude of landowners towards hunting were also seen as restraints to expanding hunting tourism. Some respondents said that business-based hunting tourism does not fit into the current system of giving hunting ground access to local hunters for free and turning hunting into a business would lead to the need of formal, written contracts of land use and responsibilities. This also raises a question of to what extent can the hunting privileges be used commercially e.g. by a local hunting club: are they granted only for the own use of local people or to be used as the license holder sees fit. Can hunting privileges be forwarded to customers and can financial gain be derived from another person’s legal resource?

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The interviewees worried that hunting tourism would result in higher hunting prices for all. Mostly this concern related to the landowners seeing the value of their resource and aspiring for a greater monetary profit. The other fear was that landowners would not approve of hunting tourism at all and would withdraw their lands from the use of local hunters as well. There was also anxiety that landowners would want to become hunting entrepreneurs themselves and use their lands themselves.

*“If one landowner breaks from the tradition and starts to organize hunting tourism, there is a great risk that the neighbouring landowner will join and terminate land leases to the hunting clubs.” (H7)*

Close cooperation with key stakeholders was mentioned as a key to fluent activities and a positive atmosphere around hunting tourism. Hunting tourism entrepreneurs thought that the attitudes might shift if the volume changed significantly, but now with small-scale hunting tourism the landowners haven't necessarily demanded a written contract. One model mentioned was that a third of the profits from hunting tourism should be allocated to the entrepreneurs, one third to the hunting club and one third to the landowner. The problem is that with the amount of landowners in a hunting area, the remainder per landowners would be a maximum of few Euros and cause huge calculating processes and distribution models.

*“But distributing a third [of the profits] to the landowners would mean allocating 0,50 Euros to each. I don't know how. Maybe throwing a good, big party that everyone enjoys: properly with a band and everything. Maybe that would be the way. Under no conditions would it be reasonable to allocate 50 cents here and there.” (E2)*

Interviewees with experience of hunting tourism remembered cases where landowners had seized renting land for hunting after unwanted conduct by renters i.e. tourists and also due to local pressure. One landowner on the other hand saw, that the hunters do a favor him and not the other way round. By controlling the amount of moose the hunters minimize forest damages caused by the moose. Some hunting clubs had experience of land owners trying to increase the prices of hunting area leases. When the church as a major landowner in the area attempted this, the resistance was so strong that the hunters threatened to leave the church.

There were fears that with the increasing population with “green” values, access to hunting grounds would decrease as land owners will no longer give hunting rights local hunting clubs and hunting grounds will become increasingly scattered. Growing away from nature was seen as the cause for negative attitudes towards hunting.

### *3.4.6 Consequences of hunting tourism and prerequisites for developing it sustainably*

#### **Ecological consequences**

Hunting tourism was not seen as a risk to ecological sustainability as population levels are carefully monitored and hunting can always be regulated through necessary restrictions. The system for ecological sustainability management exists and seems to enjoy vast trust. The respondents spoke of the ecological limits in an unquestioned and absolute manner. They saw that the license amounts decided by the common system gave accurate information of the sustainable levels of harvest and spoke of hunting tourism by allocating that amount between different interest groups. No-one suggested increasing the amount of licenses although some pondered methods of retaining more accurate population level data. There were also fears that the diminishing amount of local hunters would eventually reduce the amount of census data as well, since in the existing system the local hunters voluntarily collect it.

*"The game population estimations by game triangles will stop any day now... Small game hunting is quite insignificant in the end." (H8)*

The interviewees reminded that the amount of licenses sold must be carefully monitored and strictly regulated so hunting remains within ecologically sustainable limits. The respondents did not see this as a problem, though. They had faith in the sustainability of the current system and only highlighted, that any increases in the amount of hunters can't be done by increasing bag limits.

All interviewees saw the amount of natural game as the ultimate limit to hunting tourism expansion. It was also mentioned that news of any unethical behavior by the tourists or hunting tourism entrepreneurs would spread like wildfire and easily stain the whole image of Finnish hunting. The interviewees said that hunting tourism can't be developed from a purely customer-driven aspect, but the local culture must be taken into account. The uniqueness of the exotic, northern hunting must be preserved and hunting must maintain high moral standards.

*"People here have a very respectful attitude towards the law and they know that when something is forbidden, there is a logical reason for the regulation and also if something is permitted, there is a reason for that, too. So we can't be tempted to go into a customer-driven solution of shooting capercaillie from the road ... That's killing." (H1)*

The interviewees also discussed the appropriateness of the timing and the length of the hunting seasons as well as the size of the hunting areas. Respondents mainly felt, that grouse and moose hunting should begin earlier on autumn, when the weather conditions are still pleasant. Some criticized the system of strict hunting limits, even when game populations are high. Respondents also required the consensus data earlier and felt that data received in the summer is way too late for planning hunting. In addition, there were some concerns, that hunting tourism could have more difficulties in adapting to game population diminutions than recreational hunters.

The challenge is that entrepreneurs wish to have more guaranteed licenses for their customers and the issue of who gets the licenses is under continuing debate. Some entrepreneurs saw that during the years of low grouse population levels, the licenses should be sold through the entrepreneurs not to complicate their business conditions any further.<sup>1</sup> The locals in the North on the other hand argued that they should have the primary right to hunt on low population years. This right is already secured to the habitants of Lapland and eastern Finland, but not to the locals in other areas.

The interviewees saw that the population must be managed to prevent traffic accidents as well as forest destructions. The current moose calculation system was seen to be vague, but this did not risk the ecological sustainability due to the high population of moose and adjusting the licenses yearly according to sightings.

*"In moose hunting the sighting reports lead to the (population) results. And people have the conception that they should rather be undermarked, that if they mark the correct amount, there will be more outsiders." (H8)*

*"How could the license system work better. A few years ago we took the premeditated risk that we will now really hunt moose. And some people said that "Crazy! They will cease now." And they still haven't, even though we have harvested them for almost ten years. Although now licenses have been cut down so it was a success. But unless the popula-*

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<sup>1</sup> The large group of Finnish independent hunters can be expected to strongly protest this, but they are represented in this study by their associations which haven't been asked to comment this model. The independent hunters' views have been presented in a paper by Keskinarkaus & Matilainen at the ESRS congress in Vaasa in 2009.

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*tion hadn't been harvested heavily, perhaps something else than hunters would stop the moose. There would be a lot of serious traffic accidents and nature takes care of overpopulation eventually. By a disease or something." (H2)*

*"There are municipalities in Lapland where the moose hunters age and eventually drop out. Even with current population levels, if they are not heavily harvested, there are no more hunters to harvest them. It is already quite laborious to cull them and there are hunting teams where the members can't join the hunt anymore. They get their share of the meat but they are not active hunters anymore." (E8)*

Reindeer is not hunted in Finland as it is seen as a domestic animal, but reindeer hunting was proposed by a few interviewees. They based their argument on ecological reasons in addition to the economic ones. They saw that the current huge numbers of reindeer cause remarkable erosion.

*"The pastures are fairly worn and there is hardly any lichen anywhere. And the measuring worm destroys the birches at quite a speed. We should forest radical thoughts and start to think of the fact that the amount of reindeer should be cut and profits increased – but how?" (E4)*

The areal pressure of hunting tourism was one concern: a group of tourists should not be taken to the same location of consecutive days, because this will risk ecological sustainability of the game populations in the area as well customer satisfaction. Grouse populations were seen primarily to fluctuate due to the number of small predators (especially foxes), global warming and forest management solutions rather than hunting pressure, though. Many said that grouse populations have a pattern of fluctuating and limiting hunting on a low level year is reasonable and sufficient for sustainability.

The entrepreneurs did not conduct game population calculations, but they did in some areas participate in game management by hunting small predator species. Hunting tourism in the East was seen to be hindered by the wolf population, which some respondents argue to prevent hunting with dogs. Poaching was seen to be a notable ecological sustainability issue, however, not due to hunting tourism, but rather the collision of large carnivores and reindeer herding. The amount of large carnivores was seen as the cause for more positive attitudes towards hunters. Hunters are no longer seen as blood-thirsty and sneaky killers, but as people involved in game management.

*"Well the worst case scenario would be that there would be rich tourists who want to rent snowmobiles and run the reindeer over. I would think that would be the horror image. That they wouldn't hunt in the Northern manner. And also if the product grew so much that game populations couldn't manage it. One risk would also be if the locals saw that their game is taken. Let's keep in mind that it must be sustainable for the nature." (PM2)*

*"It has been noticed that when the game population levels are low, the bag amounts are low and the other way around. Hunting does not regulate game population levels but game population levels regulate hunting." (E8)*

On the positive ecological side, the meat attained from hunting was seen to have a smaller ecological footprint than meat produced and transported elsewhere. The ecological risk of hunting tourism was mainly seen to be unethical hunting practices. There were also comments of the garbage that tourists leave in the woods. The vast wilderness areas were mentioned as a Finnish strength by many but in some areas the scattered hunting grounds presented a challenge.

*"We are accustomed to hunting natural game, game produced by the nature." (H1)*

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### **Economic consequences**

The economic consequences of hunting tourism were mostly based on estimations of revenue it could bring to rural areas. The respondents cited figures they had heard or had experience of regarding hunting tourism to evaluate the economic significance of the sector. Economic issues were therefore seen as central when arguing for or against hunting tourism as a business. The changing rural living conditions were recognized by the respondents. They said that locals see how jobs have practically disappeared and admit that alternatives are essential. Existing tourism thus need to develop into potential new employees. Reindeer herding or living off natural resources no longer attracts youth. Hunting tourism was also seen as a tool to bring skilled workers back to the regions. One positive effect of hunting tourism was seen to be the signal it sends to locals, that their surrounding are valuable and the indication it gives to youth, that livelihoods in the rural areas are actually possible.

*“When you think what kind of a country Finland is, terrain-wise and about the amount of forests, hunting tourism is one livelihood what people live off. There are a lot of areas like this and hunting tourism brings a big portion of business here.” (E3)*

*“It is important for the whole municipality. Now that the big generations are retiring and need services, if there are no resources, there are no services. If we arrange things so that more tax income flows to the area, then all increases through tourism are welcomed because then we can create service for the area.” (E4)*

The positive economic impact for the locals would be increased services, increased job opportunities, increased economic activity in the region, more customers for businesses and financing for hunting clubs. The number of businesses could also rise, but there was no consensus on this and also on whether the number of businesses could be increased, without compromising social sustainability, which now is largely positive or neutral due to the minimal volume of the activities. The amount of customers was also seen to rise with more professional services being offered.

*“In these small municipalities it is important to get people here, to bring money.” (E2)*

The entrepreneurs highlighted the role of financial motives for the hunting clubs concerning the willingness to develop hunting tourism activities. One interviewee emphasized the importance of clarifying the gain to the local hunting club by immediately calculating the value of the hunt: day fee, shooting fee and trophy fee and transferring the money right away after hunting event. He also liked to remember the hunting clubs with gifts to upkeep social relations. Hunting clubs were also seen to economically gain from hunting tourism through released price pressure: investments funded by tourists would restrain the need to raise membership fees to finance the needed structures.

Although the customers using professional hunting tourism services bring more money to the hunting tourism companies and services, they are said to spend less on the area than independent tourists. Due to their tight arranged schedules they may have rare opportunities to spend time or money elsewhere than in the entrepreneur's facilities. Some entrepreneurs mentioned that they take their customers to the local shopping centres, in which the foreign tourists and their families spend considerable sums. One estimate was that for every three hunters there is an extra person accompanying the trip as a regular tourist. These persons usually spend time in other activities and shopping while the hunters are in the woods.

Domestic tourists were seen as quite stingy and unwilling to pay for anything. As a trend though, people were seen to be more and more willing to pay for services and understand that other people's time is worth money. The prices of hunting tourism services were seen as low compared to what the foreign tourists were willing to pay, but expensive compared to what domestic hunters are accustomed to pay.

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Pricing was mentioned as an economic challenge for the sector, since the entrepreneurs were quite confused by questions such as "How much does a grouse cost?" They also mentioned that a considerable investment could be needed because owning a large, coherent hunting area is a prerequisite for a successful business on a wider scale. Otherwise the entrepreneur takes a huge risk in investing in a business that is totally dependent on other owners' resources and the good will of others. The entrepreneurs wished that the sector would be seen as a part of the tourism sector also in regional development plans. In addition, the entrepreneurs mentioned the prices of subcontracting such as transportation to be one challenge for them in designing the hunting tourism package.

For the entrepreneurs, the economic impact of hunting tourism would be increased revenues. Hunting tourism through entrepreneurs was also seen to diversify economic activity of the region, since entrepreneurs could inform the hunters of other services. The customers of entrepreneurs were seen as more likely to spend the night in a rented cabin instead of a tent and buy catering services instead of cooking themselves. Hunting tourism was also seen as an additional activity for rural tourism companies and a method to extend the season.

The negative consequence of the current license system is that in addition to losing customers because they can't be guaranteed a license, the entrepreneurs may also lose the income of the whole party since the whole group usually cancels if some of the members are able to attain a license and others are not. A system where neither the hunters nor the entrepreneurs know whether the hunting trip will take place is neither customer nor entrepreneur -friendly.

*"Hunting tourism is a livelihood for us. The season would be way too short to live off professionally if hunting tourism was taken away. It would be a hobby then." (E3)*

Demolishing Wild North's sole right to distribute State licenses was seen as one solution to relieve financial pressure on the sector since Wild North now competes with SME's in the sector. Packaging the license with other services is considered illegal but since Wild North sells both the licenses and hunting tourism services with considerably marketing and land access resources, it was seen to hinder the development of other entrepreneurs in the sector.

*"Hunting tourism, just like tourism in general, must provide revenue for the region and the locals. Perhaps the best way to develop the sector would be to abolish Wild North's monopoly position and arrange tourism by private entrepreneurs cooperating. I think the regional economic effects would be greater this way." (PM5)*

There were many views that the current hunting tourism activities on State land should be legalized to facilitate economic development in the area. The respondents hoped for an equal system, where the hunting tourism opportunities regarding licenses would not be only in the hand of a few actors.

*"Small entrepreneurs have criticized Metsähallitus because in the previous system they were permitted to sell licenses but now the licenses must be attained from Wild North." (PM5)*

*"Hunting tourism on State land will grow and Wild North as an organization with a ready sales organization and channels, which have been built with the tax payers' money, could be a key actor in selling the services as a travel agent for the entrepreneurs. Not like now when they practice hunting tourism themselves and often compete with local SME's." (E4)*

The economic impact of hunting tourism for the landowners was generally low, but some jointly owned forests maximized the financial value of all activities including hunting rights. The value of the license for State was also estimated to rise as entrepreneurs would be willing to pay more for the license, if they had a right to package it with a hunting service. The entrepreneurs would then carry the risk for the license being sold. The entrepreneurs noted that they can't be expected to compensate every landowner monetarily and if every actor decides to maximize their income through this business sector, it can't be profitable anymore. Rumors of the magnitude of the financial gain from hunting tourism created local discussions on how to receive a share of the income.

It was mentioned that positive experiences from hunting tourism could expand to tourism in general from the economic perspective as well as others. Some interviewees felt that increased hunting tourism should go through entrepreneurs and hunting packages since this way tourist hunting could be controlled better and financial value to the region better secured. A development scenario, where all licenses would be allocated to customers of professional hunting tourism businesses, was not seen likely and therefore, even in the most optimistic statements, only a certain portion of licenses could be given to the customers of hunting tourism enterprises. There was a pretty common view that hunting tourism has restricted potential, but not with the rules of the liberal economy. Several interviewees mentioned that all tourists in rural areas have significant impact on the economy, but hunting as a sector will not be a bonanza for anyone. The respondents saw that a few, selected entrepreneurs could act within sustainable limits, but the hunting activities or the number of entrepreneurs could not grow freely.

### **Social consequences**

The importance of selling Finnish hunting in its traditional form was central starting point in the interviews. The respondents spoke of the whole experience of hunting in Finland: sitting by the campfire, spending time with friends, walking in the wilderness and enjoying the scenery. The primary focus of the hunt must not be on the bag, but game must still be present to make the walk in the forests a hunting trip. The tourists should be provided with realistic expectations of weather conditions and bag probabilities. The psychological meaning of hunting was also mentioned as a positive side on hunting: the experience of hunting is lived again, when preparing a meal from the valuable bag.

*"The world becomes a better place every evening when getting together after hunting."  
(to socialize and talk together) (H1)*

Hunting tourism was feared to increase the general amount of people in an area causing possible risks such as shooting accidents. The interviewees emphasized the need for tourists to act considerately and as if they were visiting someone's home. This, they described, means not causing disturbance and not parking in such a way that complicates other land use. They also said that good hunting behaviour is inherited rather than learned in schools. Interestingly though the problem was related more to the domestic hunting tourists originally from the region. The interviewees noted that total strangers to the area would go to the trouble of finding out, what kind of behaviour is allowed and what is not. Short-time visitors, who are impossible to track down, were seen to cause most trouble.

*Interviewee 1: "Hunters must remember not to cause disturbances when moving in different places. During moose season, they can't park in places that prevent farmers' access to fields. They should remember ..."*

*Interviewee 2: "... landowner rights..."*

*Interviewee 1: "... proper behaviour."*

*Interviewee 2: "... It is, if you don't get it from your mother's breast, you won't get it at all. Schools don't teach proper conduct." (L4)*

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Many interviewees mentioned “envy” as a major social constraint for hunting tourism. The respondents feared that hunting tourism could increase envy of entrepreneur’s success and jealousy of hunting ground access. The fundamental role of equal treatment of all parties clearly rose from the interviews. Any sign of secretiveness by the organizer of hunting tourism was seen to quickly lead to a negative atmosphere.

*“But of course, if there are lots of non-local hunters on State land, it might provoke envy. If the game bird populations are low, people think that the locals should get them.” (PM1)*

One social consequence of hunting tourism is introducing international hunting to locals. Local hunters have also been proud to demonstrate Finnish game management and advance the Finnish reputation as a hunting country. It was mentioned, that locals are typically suspicious of tourists in the beginning, but quickly warm up to them when spending time together. Many mentioned how hunting tourists are talked about for a long time afterwards in a very warm and proud tone. Hunting tourism could also provide insights to locals of hunting habits elsewhere. One interviewee said that the locals were surprised by the skills of the tourist hunters, because their prejudice had been that the tourists would shoot anything at sight. The interviewees speculated that trips to foreign hunting grounds could lower the level of acceptance for hunting tourism. This development is facilitated by the increasing language-skills of locals. They also suspected that after a few visitors the opinions of the adversaries would change for the more positive, especially when they would see that the tourism provides income.

*“We learn to appreciate both hunting and our municipality when we see that someone is willing to pay...” (E1)*

*“One very positive aspect is that hunting tourism provides an opportunity to keep the countryside inhabited. Hunting takes place in the countryside, in the middle of nature and not in urban cities. It creates opportunities for entrepreneurs when handled properly.” (E5)*

The interviewees saw that locals grew to appreciate their hobby through foreign tourism and seeing how people were willing to pay for what is ordinary for them. They might see the unique features of Finnish hunting, when reflecting on the stories of the foreign tourists. Finnish hunters are proud of the equality of Finnish hunting society. Hunting is not only an upper class activity and all hunters participate in handling the bag. Foreign hunters in turn attain an understanding of the context of Finnish hunting and know what is spoken of when Northern issues are decided upon in Europe.

*“(Hunting tourism) is a way to promote Finland to hunters so when policy makers present Finnish hunting abroad or talk about it or justify the importance of large carnivore management, the people who have been in Finland and seen the reality and met Finnish hunters, have a more accurate view of practices than someone who thinks this is like Italy: that the rules exist but people do as they please.” (H1)*

The respondents also saw positive effects of hunting tourism to the whole area, not only those involving organizing hunting trip. Foreign people could be introduced to the conditions of rural life in Finland in a „cultural exchange“-way. The respondents said that it would also be good to show locals that rural areas are not just peripheral regions, but actually destinations for some. Foreign tourists were also seen to bring the locals closer to each other in trying to ensure that the tourists would return. There was also a view that outsiders in the area could make the locals put aside their old quarrels.

The interviewees pondered the role of different actors in organizing a hunting tourism event and it became evident that even though from the social sustainability point of view, the hunting clubs should be involved in hunting tourism somehow, they can’t be expected to carry the responsibility for customers.

Hunting is a hobby for them and therefore totally based on voluntary work. Increasing hunting tourism could become a burden for the members of the clubs. Also compromising the members' own hunting possibilities to the advantage of tourists could pose a social sustainability risk.

The utmost concern regarding hunting tourism for people in the North was how it would affect the hunting opportunities of locals. Especially moose hunting is seen as a major social event without which the village would be socially remarkably poorer. The function of hunting was seen to be much more than hunting itself. Hunting is seen to be also a social medium. The equal rights and responsibilities of all hunters joining a hunt were also highlighted as preconditions for sustainability. They saw that the hunting opportunities of Finnish citizens should be secured, before selling hunting to foreign tourists. Giving land access to hunters has been axiomatic in rural areas and changes in how the landowners treat their resource could cause social conflict. The traditional hunting areas are common knowledge to locals and in the northernmost part locals traditionally even consider all land to be for common use.

*"We want to keep the untamed wilderness as a local right, regarding willow ptarmigan. As long as there are those who hunt like our ancestors did." (H6)*

The interviewees clearly wished to expand tourism but not at any price. Paying attention to the social issues and relationships was seen as essential, if not the most important, condition for developing the sector. The interviewees, including SMEs, mentioned that the entrepreneurs must pay more attention to social issues than to pure profit maximization. On the other hand the respondents also worried about the customers and said that the experience must be authentic and can't be aimed at high volume at the expense of quality.

The respondents said, that the rules and roles in hunting tourism event must be agreed upon beforehand so at the time of the hunt everything is clear and predefined: who shoots, how the bag is treated, who keeps the meat etc. Since hunting is an emotional event, situations that are ill prepared can turn into social conflicts. The image of hunting was a concern for the interviewees. They noted that any unethical hunting behaviour by the tourists would not only besmirch the hunting tourism sector and the entrepreneurs, but the international image of Finnish hunting. In addition to ecological sustainability, this would have maybe even more severe consequences to social sustainability. One interview noted that international hunting tourism in Finland can be promoted, if branding is done truthfully to avoid disappointed customers and reclamations.

*"Definitely according to the Finnish hunting culture: we hunt the way we hunt and the foreigners, "when in Rome, do as the Romans do". (E2)*

### 3.4.7 Future trends of hunting and hunting tourism

In general the interviewees saw that the amount of local recreational hunting will decrease in the future in remote rural areas based on the socio-demographic changes (aging, immigration) in these areas. The change will not be eminent within a decade but will escalate when the currently active population ages. It was a rather common vision of all interviewees that the local hunting club members are ageing and that in the future there may be problems in controlling oversized game populations, like moose or small predators. The amount of women as hunters was seen to increase, but this will not change the declining trend of local hunters.

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*"It may not show clearly within ten years but after that villages will become desolate quickly." (H5)*

*"The amount of local hunters has been decreasing for a long time due to ageing and the younger people moving away." (E4)*

In general it was also seen that fewer and fewer young people take up hunting as a recreation activity in the future. There will always be the active young hunter generation as well, but in general the popularity of hunting as a hobby was seen to decline. There were also fears raised concerning the proposed changes to the gun license legislation, according to which the minimum age limit for gun possession would be raised. In addition to handguns, this would influence the possession of hunting guns, which could even more direct young hunters to other hobbies.

Nevertheless, it was highlighted that there is a growing demand on hunting and hunting licenses also in the future, even the amount of local hunters might decrease. The general opinion was that there is a strong interest e.g. from the hunters from southern Finland or Central Europe to come and hunt in northern areas as so called permit hunters.

The interviewees also detected that the attitudes towards hunting tourism are gradually changing to a more positive direction. The respondents suspected that the hunting clubs have woken up to the fact that hunting teams are declining and are more eager to accept tourists. It was also mentioned that the younger generation is taking over in the boards of local hunting clubs and they generally have a more positive attitude towards hunting tourism as they see it as a source of livelihood as well as a tool to keep the countryside populated. The more positive attitudes of the younger hunters were also explained by the fact a growing amount of them have themselves been in the role of the tourist. The older generation has not systematically visited other than local hunting areas and therefore has more critical approach towards hunting tourism in general. In general the interviewees suspected that hunting tourism activities will expand in the future with the change of generation as there are fewer opposers in younger generation.

*"There is a clear change but it will not show until the change of one more generation, after that there may be possibilities to operate..."*

*The older generation have lived their lives on the area and have seen nothing else and they have the thought that „we don't accept visitors“." (E3)*

There were also fears that the public attitudes towards hunting in general would become more negative, when the contact to rural lifestyle is lost due to urbanization. Hunting is still widely accepted among all inhabitants in the North, but it was seen that in the southern parts of Finland and in the cities the attitude environment is already quite different. This has direct effect also to the business environment of hunting tourism. The respondents also mentioned that those who feel most strongly against hunting, are those that usually know least about it. Also when other types of wilderness use activities continue to increase hunting as a recreation activity might suffer in having to compete with alternative land use.

*"I'm afraid of juxtapositions such as fox hunting in England." (E5)*

In general the respondents saw that hunting tourism will expand to some extent both on State and private land areas. The growth on private land areas was seen more likely than on State's land. Development potential was especially seen in developing the professionalism of the current businesses rather than increasing the number of companies. This was also seen to increase the demand for other tourism

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services in the area. However, there was also a consensus that hunting tourism will never be a large nature tourism sector, but rather an additional activity to other nature tourism and one way to continue the tourism season in the autumn. All interest groups highlighted that hunting tourism should not increase total hunting pressure, but should be based on allocating the current hunting amount.

*"It will never be a big business but it might be a good niche." (E5)*

*"It will be a speciality more than a method to fill the autumn season." (PM1)*

The entrepreneurs and policymakers based their growth estimations of the sector on the amount of foreign hunters. The increasing amount of foreign hunters was seen as one already existing trend in hunting tourism. Landowners and local hunting clubs mentioned domestic hunters as main customers of hunting tourism products. They saw more potential in domestic hunting tourism, since domestic tourists are already accustomed to the Finnish hunting culture and local conditions. Especially people who are originally from the rural hunting regions and have moved elsewhere were seen as a very potential group to come back as tourists and also bring friends with them. Domestic tourists were also seen as a group with diverse interest in different game species and not only trophy ones.

*"Hunting tourism will increase and I believe it will be seen as a business opportunity. Even though it is small for us ordinary citizens but it is there." (H8)*

Moose and deer species were seen as the most potential game species concerning hunting tourism. It was apparent that population fluctuations and the current small game license policy cause too much uncertainties for hunting tourism activities based on grouse species, even though demand is high. Some respondents had ideas of new or underutilized game species regarding hunting tourism, like different deer species or beaver. Some suggested developing mountain hare or small predator based products for hunting tourism, but on the other hand recognized the common price level and location of Finland to raise basic travel and accommodation costs for the foreign hunting tourists so high that mainly only moose is the prominent game species for foreign markets. Some respondents speculated on the possibility of selling bear hunting but bear hunting was seen as very special hunting, not suitable to all customer groups and the amount of licenses is too low considering hunting tourism. In addition some newer hunting techniques, like bow-hunting, were mentioned as potential hunting tourism innovations.

The demand for hunting tourism is often established through word-of-mouth and happy customers keep coming back. The respondents saw that there is especially foreign demand for Finnish wilderness conditions with silent surroundings, lack of people and absence of roads. Finnish hunters saw that even walking and operating in the Finnish wilderness could be a challenge for foreigners but this could be used as our advantage by making sure that the tourists know what is being sold: a Finnish wilderness experience.

The interviewees saw that tourists continuously require more services in the products. The role of high quality accommodation and catering was highlighted and a clear change in the customs of hunting tourists was visible towards more luxury accommodation, food and guide services, even though at the same time there were suspicions whether domestic tourists would be interested in buying these kinds of services. Also the role of other activities in the hunting tourism products (fishing, wild life watching, sightseeing) were emphasized. The increasing amount of families as customers was seen as a clear trend. Concerning the regional economics this was seen as a very desirable since the wives and children consume other services while the hunters hunt.

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*"Perhaps in the direction that there is a growing need for guides and let's say, better service. People want to accommodate comfortably. The level of service has changed. Now that people spend the day in the cold woods, other services must work." (E3)*

*"Families have come along. Some just to photograph or such." (E1)*

The companies selling hunting tourism products were seen more professional than earlier and the degree of professionalism was expected raise. This professionalism was also seen as a reason for the estimated future growth of the sector.

*"The professionalism will increase gradually." (E5)*

### 3.5 Conclusions

Based on the results, social sustainability can be seen as the most critical and challenging factor concerning the development of hunting tourism sector. Social sustainability is often discussed via economic and ecologic issues. Economic and ecological consequences can have direct affects on the environment but social factors are indirectly apparent through economic, ecologic and social changes. In line with the view that sustainability evaluations must encompass all elements of sustainability and no element can be treated as an independent variable, social sustainability in this report has been examined through all other aspects of sustainable development: the economic and the ecological. The key question in social sustainability is: sustainability for whom? Different social actors have their own values and goals and these are not always compatible with the objectives of another group. It has been stated that transferring corporate social sustainability to business objectives is best undertaken by using the stakeholder approach (Clarkson 1995). Also in this study the aim has been in evaluating and trying to understand the opinions of the key stakeholder groups of hunting tourism. According to the results, each stakeholder group had very heterogeneous opinions towards hunting tourism, and social sustainability can't be managed by treating the stakeholders as one unanimous group. Some issues were, however, highlighted more clearly within certain stakeholder groups.

When analyzing the results of this study, it must be noted that hunting tourism is currently a quite invisible phenomenon in Finland. As such, it is neither opposed nor promoted in public. Also the general opinion towards hunting in Finland is rather positive or neutral. The interest groups of hunting tourism see the matter of developing the sector mainly as a question of prioritizing the needs of different actors and reasonably allocating a limited amount of licenses. The interviewees mostly highlighted that hunting tourism at a certain, small scale, was acceptable, but most likely any attempts to significantly expand hunting tourism activities could compromise the social acceptance of the sector. The majority of the respondents did not want to "over commercialize" hunting and based this argument on maintaining the national hunting culture and the preserving traditional use of nature. Aggressive attempts to develop hunting tourism without safeguarding the local hunting opportunities were expected to meet strong opposition from all parties.

As a conclusion, local people did not mind hunting tourism activities in their area or in general as long as they did not interfere with their own hunting possibilities. This can be explained by the fact that local hunters' rights are protected by law and they know that the current license policy does not threaten their hobby. In addition to local hunters and hunting clubs, a significant group of recreational hunters is the permit hunters. Permit hunters (commonly referred to as "lupametsästäjät") are the domestic hunters required to buy a license to hunt on State-owned land. This distinguishes them from the local hunters

in the North, who have the hunting right due to their place of residence. Typically permit hunters are recreational hunters travelling from the southern parts of Finland to Lapland to hunt once or twice a year. In that sense they can be seen as domestic hunting tourists, but they can also be very independent travellers and refrain from purchasing tourism services. Permit hunters and the customers of hunting tourism entrepreneurs compete for the same quota of small game hunting licenses and therefore are a very important stakeholder group concerning professional hunting tourism development. With strong unions their stance towards professional hunting tourism can have significant consequences for development of the sector. The permit hunters are a heterogeneous group concerning their opinions towards hunting tourism. Their interests have recently been comprehensively examined in a paper concerning the social sustainability of hunting tourism on State land (Keskinarkaus & Matilainen, 2009). A study of the attitudes of permit hunters on State land shows that the majority of permit hunters oppose the idea of allocating a certain quota of licenses to entrepreneurs even though most support hunting tourism in general.

Landowners, who hold the key resource of land access in hunting, were quite neutral towards the current volume of hunting tourism activities, but it was apparent in the interviews that expansions in professional hunting tourism could change the system from "automatic" land access to hunting clubs to a system where hunting land access must be more appropriately compensated. This would impede hunting for both hunting clubs and entrepreneurs.

The entrepreneurs paid great attention to the social sustainability of their business and acknowledged its significant role for their business activities. They were willing to make necessary compromises for social sustainability such as cut down the length of the hunting tourism season and refrain from applying for a moose hunting area for their customers. Instead, they chose to work with the hunting clubs even though this sometimes complicated their planning.

Policy makers saw hunting tourism as a niche business opportunity and were thus primarily interested in its economic impact. They had a very neutral stance towards hunting tourism but were also aware of the views of the different interest groups. Our hypothesis that the policy makers would represent the general public gained some support from the fact that all groups saw the opinion of the general public quite similarly.

All groups saw hunting tourism as a business opportunity that could be moderately advanced under certain conditions. Interestingly, even though the ecological sustainability is the determinant of the future of the hunting tourism sector, all interviewees had such trust in the monitoring systems that no-one saw the ecological limitations to be a matter of special concern. This would naturally change if the current system was threatened. The focus of discussion was the social sustainability of hunting tourism and the interviewees colorfully described the importance and meaning of hunting for their interest group. All groups saw the value of hunting tourism to be mainly its economic effect but were not willing to prioritize the economic arguments over social ones. Even the entrepreneurs themselves spoke of the limits within which their sector could be developed. According to the results hunting tourism can't develop into mass tourism, not only based on ecological population limitations but also due to the social framework of the sector. The development of the sector must be consistent with the values, culture and traditions of Finnish hunting to be able to have long term business potential.

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## 4. Social sustainability of hunting tourism in Sweden

**Fredrik Dahl, Wildlife, fish and environmental studies, SLU**

**Göran Sjöberg, Wildlife, fish and environmental studies, SLU**

### 4.1 Country background

Hunting has a long tradition in Sweden and is well established in society. In Northern Sweden 30–40 % of the people live in a household where someone hunts, while the figure for Sweden as a whole is 13 % (Ericsson and Heberlein 2002; Ericsson et al. 2005). More than 80 % of the Swedish people are favourable to hunting (Ericsson and Heberlein 2002). Earlier, hunting was essential for survival, in particular for settlements in rural areas. Today hunting is mainly a recreational activity, although in Northern Sweden, game meat still makes a large contribution to the food supply (Ericsson et al. 2005).

Every landowner has the hunting rights to his or her property, regardless of whether it is large or small. If landowners do not want to exercise these rights, they can let them out in whole or in part. Hunting takes place on most land areas where it is legally permitted. Approximately 50 % of the land in Sweden is owned by the state or by forest enterprises, particularly in the Northern and central regions of the country. On the majority part of this land the hunting rights are let out to individuals or hunting associations. In areas where the availability of land is limited, co-operation is necessary to ensure sustainable hunting. Owners of hunting rights in various areas often pool their rights to form larger management areas. Co-operation is particularly necessary for moose hunting and other big game to ensure sustainable use. In Northern Sweden, where there is a small amount of people living in large areas, it is quite possible to obtain a place in a hunting team or even rent some land of your own without excessive costs. This is, however, not the case in the southern part of the country where practically all hunting grounds are occupied and hunting rights or club memberships are very expensive.

In most of Europe, and also in sizeable cities in Sweden, hunting is generally seen as a sport for the rich. However, the Swedish hunter is usually an ordinary worker and hunting is seen as a common right. This is probably a remnant from the time when people hunted for food in vast and largely untouched forests, plentiful with game. Today, there are still large areas in Northern Sweden where the hunting pressure on small game is very low. People are nowadays increasingly moving south and to the big cities to work. Although the hunter of today often lives in a city, there is a strong tradition to return "home" for the annual moose hunt when rural villages come back to life for a few weeks. For many hunters, hunting is today mainly a recreational hobby, but is still considered very important to their physical and mental wellbeing. In a recent study the majority of the respondents claimed that no other hobby could ever replace hunting, if they were forced to quit (Willebrand 2009).

The overall interest in recreational hunting has been fairly unchanged over the last decades. The profile of the hunters, however, has shown some changes as described above. There are roughly 286 000 hunters in Sweden. Most hunters are men, but more and more women are taking up hunting. 13 900 women were granted a hunting permit in 2004, an increase by 400 compared to the previous year.

In southern Sweden there is a long tradition of hunting tourism, especially on large private estates. Hunting tourism in the north is a fairly new phenomenon, catching up speed in the early 1990's. A large

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number of hunting tourism companies developed and started up when the grouse hunting on the state owned land in the mountain range was opened up for the public in 1993.

#### *4.1.1 Legislation and actors*

Sweden is committed to the long-term conservation of viable populations of wild animals occurring naturally in the country and using the natural environment sustainably. Game management is governed by legislation based on international conventions, including the 1992 convention on biological diversity. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the central government agency for hunting and game management issues, while County Administrative Boards are responsible for these issues at regional level. The two national hunting organisations, the Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management (Svenska Jägareförbundet) and the National Hunting Federation (Jägarnas Riksförbund), help by spreading news and information on hunting and game management issues. A third hunting organisation is Sveriges Yrkesjägarförening, which caters for professional hunters, mainly those stationed on the estates in southern Sweden. In principle, all wild mammals and birds are protected. The hunting regulations determine which animals can be hunted and when this can be done. Some twenty species of mammals and forty or so species of birds can be hunted during the periods specified in the regulations. In general, an unlimited number of individual animals can be felled during the general hunting season, but with some species like moose, the County Administrative Board determines how many animals may be felled.

Since 1985 all new hunters have been required to pass an examination comprising five separate parts, both theoretical and practical. Passing this examination is an essential pre-condition to possessing firearms. However, foreign visitors can obtain permission to bring their own firearms and use them in Sweden. Those possessing a firearm license for hunting weapons issued before 1985, are not required to take the new Swedish hunting examination. This also applies to foreign citizens hunting for no more than three months in Sweden.

Everyone who engages in hunting must pay an annual game management fee of SEK 250 to obtain a hunting permit for the season. The money is used for purposes such as game management and providing information on hunting issues. Apart from the hunting permit, the hunter also has to obtain a license for the specific area, where the hunting is to take place (if this area is not owned by the hunter). In hunting tourism activities, it is the responsibility of Swedish hunting hosts to ensure that these requirements are fulfilled.

No special legislation in addition to general hunting regulations exists regarding hunting tourism. However, most County Administrative Boards want to be informed about such activities when the hunting tourism products involve hunting on areas managed by the county authorities. There are also counties that require written agreements.

Some hunting and fishing rights are associated with reindeer husbandry rights (Ekström 2005). Members of Sami reindeer herding districts have the right to hunt and fish on outlying land within the foraging land belonging to the mountainous forage areas and former nomadic Sami land. However, this may take place only when reindeer husbandry is permitted in the area. The hunting and fishing rights of the reindeer herding community members apply both on Crown land and on private land. The right is not restricted to hunting for household needs, which means that reindeer herding district members also have the right to hunt and fish for commercial purposes. Under the Reindeer Husbandry Act nei-

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ther the reindeer herding district nor the individual member may transfer hunting and fishing rights to another person or group of people. The reindeer herding district may, however, give a former member of the reindeer herding district the right to hunt and fish for household needs within the reindeer herding district foraging area. Hunting and fishing was originally basic to the Sami livelihood. Income from hunting and fishing was taxable. To this day, tax on Sami hunting and fishing is levied via the reindeer herding enterprise, both as sold goods and as personal consumption of products from the enterprise. Up until the 1960's, ptarmigan hunting in the form of winter hunting with a gun or snare was the most economically significant hunting form for the Sami people. Since the 1960's moose hunting has become considerably more important to the reindeer husbandry economy. A competitive situation arises on land where rights are granted to other moose hunters. The most intense conflicts of interest are on private land, where the Sami people also have hunting rights. Sami hunting and fishing tourism is carried on through hunting and fish management associations or by individual reindeer herding community members. The operations are small scale and usually carried on as a complementing source of livelihood to reindeer husbandry.

#### 4.1.2 *Definition of hunting tourism*

When hunters travel they become hunting tourists. The definition of a hunting tourist is a person who leaves his/her usual environment (home or workplace) for at least 24 hours to hunt. A hunting tourist can of course have other activities during the hunting trip, but the hunt should be the primary reason for travelling in order to be labelled "a hunting tourist". (Alatalo 2003)

A hunting tourism enterprise is a company selling hunting to tourists. The hunting tourism trade is then a trade made up of all these companies together and including all active hunting tourism companies. Whether or not a company is an actual hunting tourism company is not always apparent without consulting the company in question (Alatalo 2003).

The following categories of companies arrange hunts in Sweden (Alatalo 2003):

- Companies selling hunting, hunting packages and hunting arrangements.
- Companies working as brokers, acting as middle men or salesmen for other companies.
- Companies specializing on guiding, searching for wounded animals or sale of hunting guns and equipment.
- Companies arranging hunting on properties they own, but not selling these "openly" to hunters but mainly use hunting as representation for their customers
- Companies (often farms) who, instead of leasing out their land, sell a number of hunts per year, including lodging, and who often find their customers through advertising in hunting magazines.

Alatalo (2003) used the following definition of a hunting tourism company: "A company selling hunting, lodging, food, guiding etc, or a combination of these, to hunting tourists". Using this definition, she found that there were about 260 hunting tourism companies in Sweden. Of these, 60 were found in the county of Norrbotten, a little over 40 in the county of Västerbotten, and 35 in the county of Jämtland.

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### 4.1.3 *Aim of the study*

The aim of this study is to find out the opinions of four critical interest groups towards hunting tourism in Sweden: hunting tourism entrepreneurs, local/recreational hunters, policy makers related to rural development, and landowners. More specifically we aim to assess what kinds of social concerns influence the sector, how the future potential of hunting tourism is seen by different actors and under what conditions both sector development and social sustainability may be achieved.

## 4.2 Material and methods

### 4.2.1 *Stakeholder groups*

The critical interest groups were chosen based on previous literature and studies (e.g. Matilainen ed. 2007, Willebrand et. al. unpublished report) and discussions with the experts in the sector:

**Hunting tourism entrepreneurs:** Hunting tourism today is a small sector in the two northernmost counties of Sweden, Norrbotten and Västerbotten. Most of the companies are small, but there is an assumed potential for providing jobs in this trade for a considerably larger number of people in rural areas than today. As mentioned above, there were about 100 hunting tourism companies in the two counties in 2003. Many of the companies today are members of the existing networks, Swedish Lapland Hunting Network and Västerbottens jakt- och fiskegille. Together these have about 40 member companies. The entrepreneurs are a crucial group for organizing hunting possibilities for tourists and creating local job opportunities in rural areas.

**Recreational hunters and their organisations:** Local hunters are an important group in Northern Sweden, namely Upper Norrland (includes Norrbotten and Västerbotten). The proportion of active hunters in the population was in 1998 12.1% in the county of Norrbotten, and 15.4 % in the county of Västerbotten. This should be compared to the figures for the county of Stockholm, 1.2 %, or that of Sweden as a whole, 3.4% (Willebrand et al. unpublished report). The 42 000 hunters in these two counties make up 15% of hunters in the whole country (Mattson et al. 2008). Local hunters are an important stakeholder group for the hunting tourism trade, since they are potentially using the same resources – hunting grounds and available game. They may also benefit from game management done by tourism entrepreneurs. Local hunters have a potentially lower ability to pay hunting leases than commercial hunting tourism operators. There are two main national organizations for hunters in Sweden, the Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management, and the National Hunting Federation. The first-mentioned is by far larger so we have concentrated on that organization to represent hunters in this study.

**Policy makers:** This group includes the government's officials in the County Administrative Boards, which have a double role as both managers of government-owned land and acting as a control agency for the Swedish hunting legislation and regional hunting policies. There are also local politicians and officials among other tasks promote local enterprises. Government officials are important because they provide the sector framework by interpreting Swedish law and establishing regional policies for hunting, for example setting quota for grouse hunting in the mountains and for moose hunting. These regulations and their interpretations affect the hunting entrepreneurs' activities. This is why policy makers have been chosen as one main stakeholder group in this study.

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**Landowners:** In northern Sweden, forest land is to a large extent owned by the government and by large forest companies. Land in the mountain region is government-owned to an even larger extent. The government owns land mainly through the agency Fastighetsverket, the state-owned forest company Sveaskog and the government's conservation trust. There are, however, also substantial areas of private-owned forests and other land, in particular along the coast and in the river valleys. Private land-owners are organized in LRF Skogsägarna, with about 3 700 members in the county of Norrbotten and 7 400 in Västerbotten. Landowners are a vital stakeholder group for the hunting tourism trade, since they control access to hunting grounds and the hunting right is bound to land owning. Different categories of land-owners have slightly differing roles. The company Sveaskog, in contrast to others, has "facilitating hunting tourism" as one objective on its land and also has a division aimed to initiate such activities. The Fastighetsverket agency does not manage its land above the so-called cultivation limit, but this is done by the County Administrative Board. Forest companies let the hunting rights on large areas to local hunting clubs or to private individuals (for example hunting entrepreneurs).

The above-mentioned four stakeholder groups were all approached in this study. There are also other stakeholders that were not studied, who might also have significant role for the development of hunting tourism. These were identified, but given lower priority in this study due to the available resources. These identified stakeholder groups were:

**Tourism organizations.** These organize and market tourism business in general, on a regional level, or in niche sectors such as hunting tourism or ecotourism.

**Government agencies.** Examples of these are the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, which is involved in the hunting regulation, and the Swedish Forest Agency, which controls forestry and distributes EU funding for rural development. These agencies only indirectly influence the hunting tourism sector.

**Reindeer herding communities.** Reindeer in Sweden are owned by Sámi families organized in reindeer herding communities. They are an important stakeholder group in parts of northern Sweden. The hunting activities are obliged not to interfere with reindeer herding. Members of the reindeer herding communities also have special hunting rights, allowing them to hunt game on the reindeer herding grounds (Jordbruksdepartementet 1971). They thus sometimes use the same game resource as other local hunters and hunting tourists. The reindeer herding communities are organized in the SSR or Sámid Riikkasearvi. The Sámi population at large is represented by the Swedish Sami parliament.

**Researchers and other expert units.** Researchers of the universities are in a way also a part of the working environment of hunting tourism. The universities' role is to search, organize and distribute knowledge of land-use, game resources and other matters crucial for the sector. In this way they may indirectly influence the conditions of hunting tourism and other stakeholders. In the project area there are three universities, Luleå university of technology, Umeå university, and SLU (the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences). In addition, the ETOUR institute at Mid-Sweden University specializes in tourism studies.

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#### 4.2.2 Methods

The data of this study is based on 18 face-to-face or phone interviews conducted with interviewees from each of the four stakeholder groups. Some of the interviewees represented several stakeholder groups and were, in those cases, asked to make a division between their roles, rendering totally 22 answers (Table 1). In order to get a comprehensive picture of the opinions of stakeholder groups, the interviewees were selected so that they represented different spatial levels from local to national. The aim was to find the key informants related to each stakeholder group and in order to achieve this, the interviewees were asked, whether some other key informant from their stakeholder groups should also be interviewed (the snowball method). The interviews were conducted during spring and summer 2009. The length of the interviews varied from 26 minutes to 68 minutes. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewee to allow precise analysis. The interviews were based on a joint transnational semi-structured framework of themes developed together with other North Hunt project partners and used in all participating countries (Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Scotland). The purpose of the themes was to allow fluent conversation while ensuring that all the main issues were discussed with every interviewee in order to gain comparable data.

**Table 1.** *The interviewed representatives of different stakeholder groups*

| <b>Landowners</b>   | <b>Local/Recreational hunters</b>                          | <b>Policy makers and rural developers</b>              | <b>Hunting tourism enterprises</b>   |
|---|--|--|--|
| A representative of a forest company, national/regional actor | A representative of a hunters organization, national actor | A representative of a Regional council, regional actor | A hunting tourism company, local actor                                     |
| A representative of a forest company, national/regional actor | A representative of a hunters organization, regional actor | A representative of a Regional council, regional actor | A hunting tourism company, local actor                                     |
| A representative of a forest company, national/regional actor | A representative of a hunters organization, regional actor | A representative of a Regional council, regional actor | A hunting tourism company, local actor                                     |
| A representative of a collective forest, local actor          | A representative of a hunters organization, regional actor | A representative of Swedish tourism, regional actor    | A representative of a network of hunting tourism companies, regional actor |
| A representative of State land, regional actor                | A representative of a hunting club, local actor            | Local politician                                       | A representative of a network of hunting tourism companies, regional actor |
| A representative of State land, regional actor                |  |  |  |
| A representative of State land, regional actor                |  |  |  |
| L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, L6, L7                                    | H1, H2, H3, H4, H5   | P1, P2, P3, P4, P5                                     | E1, E2, E3, E4, E5   |

The data was analyzed by using a common transnational analyzing framework in order to find out the relevant issues related social sustainability of hunting tourism. The actual analysis included two different phases. Firstly, the interviews were worked through several times and interview extracts for the joint analysing framework were selected and analysed. In the second phase, the sections of analysing framework were combined to more general themes describing the opinions towards hunting tourism. To ensure transparency of the data analysis, a number of interview citations are presented in the main body of text

in order to make it easier for the reader to evaluate the interpretations that have been made. For further details on the methodology see the Finnish report above.

## 4.3 Results and discussion

### 4.3.1 Definitions of hunting tourism

In the present study, interviewees from all stakeholder groups were asked to answer the question "What is hunting tourism / what does hunting tourism mean to you". Their answers match to a large extent with Alatalo's (2003) definition of hunting tourism. Main definitions, independent of the stakeholder group in question, included travelling (abroad or within the country) with the main purpose of the travel being hunting. Independent of stakeholder group most interviewees (all but one hunter, see below) also agreed that hunting tourism is a part of nature tourism. Several interviewees also argued that all tourism has a common ground including services, marketing, and food among others. Hunting tourism is not seen as extreme in any sense; it is just the hunting part that is different from other touristic concepts like fishing or skiing tourism, and hunting in itself is considered a natural and non-dramatic activity in northern Sweden. Most interviewees argued that "real" hunting tourism will have to include a full arrangement, as the following citation demonstrates.

*"Hunting-guiding-guest is crucial, but the whole product; lodging, guiding, dogs, food, other services is necessary to "productify" the product and make it "real" hunting tourism." (E5)*

Selling only a hunting permit for a day is generally not considered "real" hunting tourism even if it would include spending the night in the for hunting. In northern Sweden especially, there is a tradition of selling day permits for small game on many hunting grounds. This type of permit is usually very cheap, 4–10 Euros/day. Small game hunting is, as opposed to moose hunting, not seen as a big issue and it has always been cheap to buy a day permit in Northern Sweden. The same system does not exist for the big game. Today also hunting entrepreneurs use such day permits and add on services such as guiding, food, lodging etc. Another issue that was raised by most interviewees and connected to the definition of "real" hunting tourism was professionalism and the quality of the arrangement.

Most interviewees consider "real" hunting tourism to be a trade still in its initial phase and with good prospects for the future. While landowners, policy makers and entrepreneurs see this biological asset as a commercial opportunity to create jobs in the rural areas by refining the product (hunting) and selling it, hunters do not conform entirely. One hunter argues that hunting in itself is more than just recreation for the local hunters:

*"It is a necessity, part of the livelihood for many local hunters in northern Sweden." (H3)*

In rural Sweden, hunting maintains economic, social, and cultural values. Moose hunting is the most important form of hunting because of its economic value (Mattsson 1990, Mattsson et al. 2008) and social function (Heberlein 2000). In rural parts of northern Sweden, 38 800 moose were harvested in 1998 (>0.8 moose for each hunter), and the most households use meat from game at least once a month (Ericsson et al. 2005) even though there may not be a hunter in each household. In households with hunters, the majority of the meat eaten is game and originates from own hunting (Willebrand et al. 2001).

Even though the hunter group could not entirely conform to the strict commercial ideology of hunting tourism, all of the interviewees in the hunter group had, themselves, participated in arranged commercial hunting.

*“The more experience one has, the more positive you will get (to hunting tourism), if it is arranged in a good way.” (H1)*

#### 4.3.2 General atmosphere and personal opinion

The interviewees' opinions about the public's opinion regarding hunting tourism were differentiated. A majority of the interviewees, independent of stakeholder group, believed public opinion to be cautiously positive, although as one interviewee put it:

*“Most people probably have very limited knowledge of hunting tourism and thus are indifferent on the matter.” (L1)*

When hunting tourism became popular in northern Sweden in the 1990's, especially when the grouse hunting on state owned land in the mountain range was opened up for all hunters in 1993, a large number of hunting tourism companies were established. Some of these companies were not so responsible on how they used the land, serviced the guests and managed influences caused to the local public, in trying to earn “easy” money, and the business soon got a negative stamp. Hunting tourism is still considered a somewhat doubtful business among parts of the public, even though today's companies, in general, are very professional according to all stakeholder groups. It is important to regain the confidence of the public in the rural areas and this takes time. According to several interviewees, independent of stakeholder group, there is a need for good examples showing a positive development for the rural area due to hunting tourism, for example showing positive effects on gasoline, food, and lodging sales, and/or creating local job opportunities.

The stakeholder group of local hunters perceived public opinion slightly more negatively than the other groups. They highlighted that a negative influence on local hunting would also lead to a negative attitude among the public since most people have a hunter in their family or among close relatives. It is also important to follow the rules and regulations and not create negative headlines in the media. Among the public, hunters found it likely that hunting by locals and by hunting tourists is seen in a similar manner, so that if a person is negative towards hunting in general, this person will also be negative towards hunting tourism. The opposite is also likely. Creating job opportunities was thought to be more important for the public than for the local hunters themselves. The hunters also thought that if the focus is on selling an experience and the nature atmosphere rather than shooting, there will be a larger acceptance among the public.

Among the interviewees, only hunters were slightly sceptical towards the development of hunting tourism. The main fear was hunting becoming more expensive forcing the local hunters to stand back in favour of hunting guests able to pay more. In general though, hunters did not have anything against selling hunting, if it does not affect the local hunting negatively. Commercial hunting is very positively looked upon among the landowners, the policy makers and of course the hunting entrepreneurs. All agree, however with the local hunters that it should not affect local hunting negatively, for example by raising the lease-prices for the local hunters.

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### 4.3.3 Consequences of hunting tourism

#### **Social effects of hunting tourism**

The main positive consequence of hunting tourism according to the entrepreneurs and several other stakeholders is positive rural development. The social effect of a socially skilled entrepreneur can be an increased engagement to the village and the area by the locals. Old cabins are restored, signs are written in English and local fishing is improved, all to promote the village and the local culture. People are usually interested in displaying these things and are proud to do so if they are asked, usually not demanding any economic gain of their own. This is not specific only for hunting tourism, but could be an influence of any type of rural activity if the entrepreneur succeeds in promoting local involvement.

*“Hunting tourism is economically positive for the rural communities from the bi-products being sold, and socially from spreading our culture.” (E5)*

Respect for the local hunting culture and a high social competence is absolutely necessary in order to be successful, according to all stakeholder groups. As soon as someone is excluded, feels so, either physically (e.g. by losing their access to hunting) or socially (not allowed to be a part of the “inner circle”) the attitude becomes negative and spreads fast. Usually it is not the money involved that is most important, but the feeling of being left out. When properly managed and conducted in cooperation with the local community, hunting tourism can be very positive and contribute to both the community and to local hunting. People feel proud to show their village and culture and the companies increase their revenue.

*“If consideration is taken to the local people’s recreational areas [“social key biotopes“], it [hunting tourism] will usually be considered positive.” (E5)*

If, however, consideration for the local hunting culture is left out, hunting tourism is considered strictly negative by all stakeholder groups and the positive attitude is replaced with a fear of more expensive hunting for the locals.

Socially, hunting tourism can help spread the local culture. In the rural part of Northern Sweden all tourists, independent of their main purpose with the visit, are important. However, too many hunters gathering can have a negative impact on other rural activities in some cases. Ptarmigan hunting in the mountains can e.g. affect the reindeer herding negatively. In these cases, it is important that the hunting is managed with care regarding to the reindeer husbandry. Particularly in these areas the social skills of the entrepreneurs are crucial according to the policy makers.

#### **Economic effects of hunting tourism**

The economic effects of hunting tourism on other rural activities were in general considered positive by all stakeholder groups. Hunting tourism attracts people to the area and contributes to the local economy. Economically considering, all the interviewees saw hunting tourism as any other branch of tourism. Hunting tourism is seen as one of many tools in sustainable rural development. It is considered socially more acceptable to sell small game hunting than big game such as moose. Small game does not have the same value, neither in meat nor in recreation. The main negative economic effect that was put forth, mainly by the hunter group, was more expensive hunting for the local hunters.

### **Ecological effects of hunting tourism**

Too much hunting may result in lower abundance of game, a consequence which will also affect neighbouring areas. None of the interviewees, however, seemed to suggest this scenario other than theoretically. Most interviewees agreed that the hunting tourism companies have to be especially careful not to overharvest the resource they live from. By being a positive example for other hunters and by intensive ecological management, hunting entrepreneurs will gain the respect and trust of the local hunters. According to the interviewees, the hunting tourism business and the entrepreneurs can become ambassadors and positive examples in game management, ethical considerations, and spreading knowledge about game and the local hunting culture. There is, and should be, higher expectations of the entrepreneur than normal hunters, ecologically, socially and economically. However, one landowner also saw a risk in being too careful. By saving productive moose cows in order to increase the population, the entrepreneurs may, for example, come in conflict with the landowners, causing large forest damage through too dense moose populations.

On state-owned land in the mountains the most successful entrepreneurs may also be a threat to the grouse populations. Very efficient entrepreneurs could potentially shoot the population up to the last grouse and create an example of "the tragedy of the commons" according to one policy maker. In 2009, however, the grouse hunting in the county of Jämtland was cancelled due to estimation results indicating a very small population. The County Administrative Board therefore decided to cancel hunting thus eliminating the risk of overharvesting (also by private hunters). Such a decision, however, creates other problems, for example for the long time planning of the entrepreneurs, forcing them to cancel already booked customers on a very short notice. The importance of long-term planning is elaborated further below.

#### *4.3.4 Prerequisites for developing the sector*

The problem that needs to be solved most urgently according to several interviewees from different stakeholder groups, is how to combine local hunting and commercial hunting in an optimal way. Several interviewees, independent of stakeholder group argued that exclusive, expensive, high quality arrangements with few guests could be one solution.

*"It is better if few pay as much as many, such a product is also much more stimulating to develop." (P4)*

Two main conditions for developing the sector put forth by almost all interviewees were access to hunting grounds and professionalism of the entrepreneurs. Today almost all hunting grounds in Northern Sweden are already leased by local hunting teams. Even though several studies (Willebrand et. al. unpublished report, Nilsson 2005) suggest that the mean age of the Swedish hunters is high, and that few young people are taking up hunting, almost all areas are still used by the remaining members. As long as the hunting teams pay their rent, follow the rules and regulations associated with hunting in general, and hunt according to the suggested outtake, all interviewed landowners agreed that they would never retrieve an area to let to an entrepreneur instead. Retrieving an area without a good reason would not be socially acceptable according to all stakeholder groups. The forest companies are in general positive towards letting hunting grounds to hunting entrepreneurs, but only if the land is not used by local hunters. Some landowners also considered several leases on the same ground, for example leasing the bear and small game hunting to an entrepreneur and the moose hunting to the local hunting team. On State-owned land in the mountain range, entrepreneurs are allowed to arrange hunts on the same ground where also private hunting takes place. Usually this works well to some extent, but there is no long-term

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certainty that the hunting tourism companies will be allowed to keep a permit for a specific area. If the hunting pressure on a hunting ground is too high, it will be closed by the County Administrative Board (acting as manager of the public land). There are currently, however, a couple of pilot areas, where exclusive rights can be leased to one party. This in general has been working well for the entrepreneurs. It is doubtful, though, if such a system can be established on larger areas, since the local hunters are then excluded from hunting, which was not the idea when the state owned land in the mountain range was opened up for hunting in 1993.

Most of the interviewees also saw a need for more and better educated entrepreneurs to increase the quality of the arrangements and entrepreneur professionalism. The hunting entrepreneur has typically been a hunter that has tried to transfer his or her hobby into a living. Usually this was not considered a very good idea by several interviewees, especially if you expect to do a lot of personal hunting at the same time (e.g. L1, L2, E1). Successful entrepreneurs have accepted (or always known) that hunting tourism, as any other type of tourism, is more about providing services than about hunting. Also the number of these high quality entrepreneurs was mentioned by an entrepreneur as a condition for positive future development.

*“It is important that there are enough entrepreneurs on the market, partly so that the travel agencies dare to commit to northern Sweden hunting tourism, and partly because the competition is spurring others.” (E3)*

Other general personal reflections from the interviewees were that it is important to conduct hunting tourism in an organized manner, i.e. that the professionalism of the entrepreneur is crucial. If they are to succeed, it is also as much due to the entrepreneurs' social skills as to the biological prerequisites. The business activities will be doomed if either of the two are missing.

*“You will remember a good arrangement for a long time, but you will never forget a bad arrangement!” (H3)*

The policy makers argue that long-term rules and regulations of hunting rights are necessary for the entrepreneurs to dare to commit to the business. During the last few years on State-owned land in the mountain range, the entrepreneurs have not known if they dare book customers until just a few weeks before the hunting begins, which is not a very sustainable system. The interviewed entrepreneurs said that it is less important, which rules and regulations are decided on (which they can adapt to) as long as they are consistent for a number of years. Policy makers also suggested some kind of common organization or council that would gather together the entrepreneurs. This was also suggested by one hunter representative. Further, it was highlighted that the reindeer husbandry has to be taken into account on State-owned land. As long as it is possible to combine these two activities, hunting will be acceptable, but when the reindeer husbandry starts suffering due to hunting or hunting tourism, a conflict will entail. Reindeer husbandry has a legal priority on State-owned land in the mountain range. Large land areas are already shut down for hunting due to movements of reindeers, or other activities of the reindeer husbandry (P1, P2, P3). Combinations between hunting tourism and other types of tourism were promoted by the interviewed landowners. Also the entrepreneurs said that it is good to combine hunting with other types of activities, such as fishing or hiking.

The entrepreneurs saw the land access problem as the most important problem to be solved. As one solution, it was suggested to set a certain part of land aside solely for hunting tourism activities, at least on State-owned land. Such areas could be kept open even in years of poor game populations since there are too few companies to significantly affect the populations. This would ensure long-term commitment

to the companies since cancelling the hunts in the last minute causes a negative image of the company. However, most entrepreneurs argued that they would, and already do, communicate with the booked hunting guests and if the game is scarce they are aware of this. Entrepreneurs may even suggest that the guest come another year to avoid the risk of getting a bad reputation of cheating people to come when there is no game. Entrepreneurs further suggested that more products have to be developed in order to make hunting tourism in Northern Sweden more interesting. Another problem that came up was the short hunting season in Northern Sweden. Snow makes hunting impossible relatively early in the autumns.

The interviewed hunters believed that hunting tourism can expand in the future if the local hunters can be convinced that it is a good idea. Many of the conditions for increasing hunting tourism in the future are already met, or will be so in the close future:

- The game resource is usually sufficient.
- The land owner structure, with large forest owners, makes it easier to find suitable areas (although they may be let today).
- The social climate regarding hunting tourism among the local hunters is constantly improving.

The hunter representatives saw several possibilities for the development of the sector, one being the mainstream hunting tourism enterprise, where a few companies sell high quality hunting arrangements in exclusive areas to minimize conflict with local hunters. However, also other forms of hunting tourism such as exchange hunts and hunting as a guest in a hunting team are getting increasingly popular and likely already have a higher economic turnover than hunting arranged by professional entrepreneurs. The value of these hunts mainly consists of social or socioeconomic values and they do not generate job opportunities, at least not in the same way as professional hunting tourism. Very little is known about the volume and economic effect of these types of hunting tourism. It is likely though, according to the hunters, that this informal hunting tourism may help improve the acceptance of professional hunting tourism by making hunting tourism in general less "dramatic".

#### *4.3.5 Perceived future trends of hunting tourism*

According to the policy makers and land owners/managers, a lot of new hunting tourism companies (specialised on willow ptarmigan hunting) emerged all over the state-owned parts of the mountain range, when this land was opened up for small-game hunting for the general public in 1993. Today the trend is that the number of companies offering this kind of hunting is decreasing, mainly due to a change in legislation in 2007, which made it difficult for the companies to book guests and plan the hunting in advance. If the legislation is not changed most policy makers believe the decrease will continue.

The hunting entrepreneurs also saw that grouse hunting tourism in the mountains has decreased. In general, their opinions indicate a slight overall decrease in the number of companies (also in the forest land) during the last ten years, but also that the remaining companies are better educated and more professional than before. There are more guided arrangements today and there is a trend of the amount of combined hunting–fishing companies increasing, which has also led to more professional solutions. There is also a trend that the focus of the customers has changed from Northern to Southern Sweden. Today there are a lot of cheap wild boar hunting arrangements in southern Sweden competing with the moose hunt of the north.

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*“In the 1990’s customers were mainly companies buying representation hunts, and could afford expensive arrangements, today the guests are usually private persons” (E3).*

Landowners (mainly forest companies) felt that there is a trend towards an increase in the volume of hunting tourism on forested land, but that the increase is rather slow. They also said that it is good, if the process is not too fast since it is important to find a balance between local hunting and hunting tourism. The possibility for expansion comes from the old hunters quitting hunting and the fact that a large part of the young people are moving away from the rural areas and never start hunting like they would have traditionally. In combination, these two factors set land and game quota free. The process is, however, very slow, since it is usually a team that leases the land and the other team members tend to keep the land. Most companies believed the proportion of hunting tourism on their grounds will increase, and maybe double in the coming ten years but it must be remembered that the starting point is on a very low level today. At the moment there is a lack of political interest for this sector and several interviewees also saw a need for a sector organization that would gather the companies together and strengthen the sector. There also have to be high quality entrepreneurs to run the business and, according to the landowners, there is currently a lack of good entrepreneurs apart from those that already are fully involved. The hunters saw no increase in the number of hunting tourism companies in the future. However, if using the definition of hunting tourism as staying at least one night with the purpose of hunting, the trend is that hunting tourism is definitely increasing, due to exchange hunts and guests in the ordinary hunting teams. Hunters also see a potential for increasing hunting tourism for the companies, if the game populations are sufficient and the quality of the arrangements is high.

#### 4.3.6 Other perspectives

There are a lot of emotions involved in local hunting. Not even the entrepreneurs are always willing to sell their private hunting even when offered a lot of money. There is a very strong territorial behaviour in Northern Swedish hunting culture. Hunting tourism has a bad reputation from the past and it will take time to change negative opinions. However, according to several interviewees the social meetings related to hunting tourism are widening the views of both the local hunters and the local residents and creating extra social value, not only measurable in monetary terms. Further, even though local hunting and professional hunting tourism are not always fully compatible, they both promote hunting in general:

*“In a European perspective, where the acceptance of hunting in general is much lower, hunting and hunting tourism are definitely on the same side.” (H1)*

Hunting tourism is also considered an important part of the tourism development in the rural areas in the future, for example by creating an opportunity for tourism entrepreneurs to survive also during the autumn, which is the low season for most other types of touristic enterprises.

#### 4.3.7 Stakeholder-specific questions

In addition to joint questions in each country there was a possibility to include some stakeholder-specific questions as well as some country-specific questions to the interviews. Their results are presented in this section.

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**Landowners**

All large landowners, forest companies and the State had been requested to let land for commercial hunting, some since the beginning of the 90's. None of the interviewed smaller, private and commons landowners had ever been asked to let land for commercial hunting. They also thought it unlikely that they would consider letting land for this purpose since the owners want the hunting rights for themselves and the compensation for each landowner would be negligible.

Today the proportion of land let for commercial hunting ranges from 0 to 2%. The most progressive forest company in this aspect, Sveaskog (which is State-owned and has a mission from the state to develop commercial hunting tourism), has approximately 2% of their land in commercial hunting, the goal being a maximum of 5%. More is not considered realistic according to Sveaskog, as well as the other forest companies given the existing high pressure from the local hunters today. Instead of mass tourism they rather wish to see a small number of high quality companies, which the forest company will also have time to support. No un-leased grounds exist today, but when there some come up, they will prioritize hunting tourism companies, although decisions will be made on a case-to-case basis.

Lease prices for local hunting ranged from 5 Euros per hectare in the North to 80 Euros in the South for one of the forest companies. The price of the lease contract for the entrepreneurs is usually more expensive than for private hunting teams in all forest companies. The difference is challenging to estimate but one interviewed company mentioned doubling the price once the business had taken off, while initially it could be much lower. One company takes bids on the lease contracts, the bidding being open for everybody. Usually the hunting tourism companies can afford to pay more than private hunters. Even though the market shapes the prices, the highest bidder doesn't always get the lease contract. High ethical standards and a prioritization of hunting tourism companies are also taken into account. Public and other stakeholder opinions significantly affect at least the largest forest companies. It is considered very important that the rural community is not affected negatively due to commercial hunting. Forest companies do not, for example, withdraw hunting grounds from local teams that are not misbehaving in order to let to hunting tourism companies. The local hunting teams are important for the forest companies as well in their moose management. One interviewed company claimed they were not especially interested to increase commercial hunting too much since the local hunters are easier to manage when it comes to which type and how many moose need to be shot. Yet another company has a list of how to prioritize between different interest groups, prioritizing their personnel first, then local people, customers connected to the forestry and finally other commercial business. However, as mentioned before, none of the interviewed forest companies had anything against hunting tourism; some even prioritize entrepreneurs before local hunters in letting land, often with the argument that it is positive for the development of the local community and can create some job opportunities.

The commercial hunting taking place on forest company land usually aims at packaged products and high quality. All interviewed companies have (or have had if not active today) at least one meeting with the entrepreneurs each year. Typically they have continuous contact over the year. The cooperation can be very intense, where the forest companies try to help the hunting tourism SMEs with for example marketing. The forest companies have high ethical demands on the entrepreneurs leasing land, where having high social skills for interacting with the local hunters is seen as very important, and having a good ecological education is also considered positive.

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### **Policy makers**

Hunting tourism does not have any big role in the rural development plans today. However, hunting tourism and/or nature tourism are mentioned in several organizational plans and strategies of the County Administrative Boards. According to the results, the county boards are not against a development of hunting tourism on the state owned land, and several of them would, in fact, welcome an expansion. If having to choose between recreational hunting of private persons and hunting tourism though, they prioritize recreational hunting. Most interviewed policy makers believed however, that it is quite possible to combine commercial and recreational hunting in a sustainable way. Most policy makers also said their organization will support enhancing hunting tourism, although most do not see that it is their role to lead the development: "this is up to the hunting tourism industry" (P1). The respondents mentioned that they will, however, listen and when possible also help with the development as long as it doesn't intrude with other types of nature activities, such as reindeer husbandry or recreational hunting.

### **Entrepreneurs**

All interviewed entrepreneurs saw landowners (forest companies or the State in the mountain range) as their main stakeholder group. Most entrepreneurs felt that their cooperation with the landowner worked very well once they got hold of a hunting area. If there were local hunters in the neighbouring areas, these were also considered as a very important stakeholder group. A good relationship with the local community was seen as the key to success. Other important stakeholders put forth in the interviews were reindeer herders, power plant companies, mining companies and the public. Nevertheless, all involved stakeholders were considered important. The business may work with only a landowner-entrepreneur relationship, but will function much better involving also the local community as well as other stakeholders, in a positive relationship. In addition to the stakeholder relationships, entrepreneurs highlighted the importance of focusing on the institutional environment of hunting tourism and the current laws and regulations in the future.

### **Recreational hunters**

The recreational hunters considered themselves being partly involved in the hunting tourism business, for example by mediating hunting opportunities through their hunting magazine. The main purpose of this mediation is to provide their members with hunting possibilities, preferably cheap. It is increasingly popular to go to other places to hunt which makes many members of hunters' organisations hunting tourists. Also hunting entrepreneurs are using hunting magazines to promote their companies. This is in general considered acceptable by the hunter's organisations as long as it does not influence their members' or the local hunting teams' possibilities to hunt. Usually the relationship between local hunters and hunting tourism enterprises is very good. According to the interviewees hunters in the forest land are usually more positive towards hunting tourism than hunters in the mountain areas. Most of the interviewees felt that the hunters' attitude towards hunting tourism is more positive today than it was 20 years ago. Most controversies between recreational hunters and hunting tourism today take place on State-owned land in the mountain area, where willow ptarmigan is hunted. If, however, the commercial hunting of moose were to increase, many interviewees believed there would be conflicts since the moose is considered much more valuable, both economically and socially. Other sources of controversy were believed to depend on where the customers come from and how they act towards the locals. Pure "jealousy" was also seen as one potential source of discrepancy. Finally, controversies were seen to arise, if the local hunters would lose their hunting opportunities, if the cost of hunting for the locals would increase, or if the game resource would decrease due to the commercial hunting.

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## 4.4 Country conclusions

A hunting tourist is a person who leaves his/hers usual environment for at least 24 hours to hunt (Alatalo 2003). Most interviewees from all stakeholder groups agreed with this definition, but also argued that “real” hunting tourism includes a full arrangement of services such as lodging, guiding, dogs and food. Selling merely a hunting permit for a day is generally not considered “real” hunting tourism by the interviewees.

Essentially all stakeholder groups found hunting tourism acceptable, even positive, and believed that the general public do so as well, as long as hunting tourism doesn't interfere with the local hunting culture. The hunters were the group with the most negative attitudes towards hunting tourism. However, if properly managed, they saw no reason why it could not be developed further. Many hunters had themselves also participated in commercial hunting, which might make them more positive to the idea. The general trend of the opinions toward hunting tourism among recreational/local hunters is much more positive today than it was 20 years ago.

In analyzing the results it was difficult to separate the opinions of different stakeholder groups concerning the consequences of hunting tourism, possibly with the exception of the local hunters. All groups seemed to agree also on the general frame conditions for developing the sector.

The main considerations against hunting tourism are a fear of more expensive hunting for the locals and less game due to over-harvesting of the game resource. The main positive impact of hunting tourism on the other hand can be positive rural development. Economic gain for the hunting entrepreneurs was naturally mentioned by most stakeholder groups, but not necessarily as the main positive consequence. Income from hunting tourism can be generated directly, such as for hunting entrepreneurs, but also indirectly from the trade with bi-products such as gasoline, food and lodging. Management of game and habitats for hunting by the hunting tourism companies further provides public goods at private expense.

The challenge that was raised as the most urgent in need of solving was how to combine local hunting and commercial hunting in an optimal way. Several respondents, independent of stakeholder group, argued that exclusive, expensive high quality arrangements with few guests could be the optimal solution.

Two main frame conditions for development of the sector were put forth by almost all respondents. These were access to hunting grounds and professionalism of the entrepreneurs. By being a positive example for other hunters, by involving the local community and through intensive ecological management, hunting entrepreneurs can gain respect and trust from the local hunters. Most stakeholder groups also suggested establishing some kind of common organization or council to gather the entrepreneurs together and provide a stronger voice for their common interests. Combinations of hunting tourism and other tourism activities were also promoted by several stakeholders, partly in order to create more professional tourism entrepreneurs and partly in order to complement the activities with each other since hunting mainly takes part in the time of year when other tourism activities have a low season.

Other stakeholder-specific remarks differentiating the different groups were:

- The policy makers and the entrepreneurs argued that long-term rules and regulations of the hunting rights are necessary for the entrepreneurs to dare to commit to the business. During the recent years on the State-owned land in the mountain range, the entrepreneurs have not known if they can book customers until just a few weeks before the hunting begins.
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- The entrepreneurs see land use as the most important problem to solve. One solution mentioned was to set a certain part of land aside solely for hunting tourism, at least on State-owned land. Entrepreneurs also suggested that more products have to be developed to make hunting tourism in northern Sweden more interesting.
- Hunters see several possibilities of development, one being a mainstream hunting tourism enterprise where a few companies would sell high quality hunting arrangements in exclusive areas to minimize conflict with local hunters. Also other forms of hunting tourism such as exchange hunts and guest hunting in a hunting team are getting increasingly popular. The value of these hunts lies on social and socioeconomic values. Exchange and guest hunts may, however, help improve the acceptance for the professional hunting tourism by making hunting tourism in general less dramatic.

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## 5. Social sustainability of hunting tourism in Scotland

**David Watts, University of Aberdeen**

**Colin J. Hunter, School of Geosciences, University of Aberdeen**

### 5.1 Introduction of the study

The aim of this study was to map out the opinions of the critical stakeholder groups towards hunting tourism. The aim is to estimate what kind of social concerns influence the sector, how the future potential of hunting tourism is seen by different actors and under what conditions can both sector development and social sustainability be achieved.

### 5.2 Material and methods used to conduct the research

The main data source for this research was 25 qualitative interviews conducted with hunting tourism stakeholders. These have been supplemented with information from academic and other published research. Most interviews were conducted by telephone, although a few were conducted face-to-face where this was more convenient for the interviewee. Interviews were organised using the semi-structured topic schedule developed by the international project team. Interviews were recorded and fully transcribed; transcripts were available to interviewees on request. As some interviewees opted to remain anonymous, all respondents were anonymized. Thus, the interviewees listed in Table 1 have been given a code, which is used whenever their views are summarised or quoted. Qualitative analysis software was used, but transcripts were coded manually.

#### 5.2.1 Stakeholders

Hunting tourism is well-established in Scotland and several bodies exist to represent the interests of those involved in the sector. Representatives of six such bodies were interviewed (see Table 1). Interviewees were asked which other bodies the project team ought to interview. By this means, the project team is confident that the views of the main industry representative groups are represented in the analysis. In addition, it was considered important to interview representatives of tourism promotion bodies, given the importance of the sector to the tourist industry in Scotland<sup>2</sup>. As Table 1 shows, representatives of two such bodies were interviewed. The work of a number of government departments and statutory bodies also has an impact on the hunting tourism sector. Representatives of three of the most important of these bodies were interviewed.

In addition to stakeholders, it was considered important to interview providers of hunting tourism. Interviewees were identified using convenience sampling. Five employees of sporting estates were interviewed: three land managers and two head gamekeepers. Repeated invitations to Scotland's largest public-sector forest landowner to participate went unanswered. Early interviews highlighted the important role played by sporting agents, two of whom were interviewed.

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<sup>2</sup> It has been estimated that shooting tourism supports a total of £240 million (€205 million) GVA in Scotland's economy and supports about 11,000 FTE jobs (PACEC, 2006).

**Table 1.** *Typology of stakeholders interviewed*

| <b>Interviewee Code</b> | <b>Employer type</b>         | <b>Employer's subsidiary activity (if any)</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| NH201                   | Conservation body            | Landowner                                      |
| NH202                   | Industry representative body | Conservation body                              |
| NH203                   | Industry representative body |  |
| NH204                   | Tourism promotion body       |  |
| NH205                   | Conservation body            | Landowner                                      |
| NH206                   | Conservation body            | Landowner                                      |
| NH207                   | Statutory / Govt body        |  |
| NH208                   | Statutory / Govt body        |  |
| NH209                   | Management body              |  |
| NH210                   | Tourism promotion body       | Industry representative body                   |
| NH211                   | Industry representative body | Management body                                |
| NH212                   | Industry representative body | Conservation body                              |
| NH213                   | Conservation body            | Landowner                                      |
| NH214                   | Landowner                    | Management body                                |
| NH215                   | Sporting agent               |  |
| NH216                   | Industry representative body |  |
| NH217                   | Statutory / Govt body        | Management body                                |
| NH218                   | Landowner                    | Management body                                |
| NH219                   | Industry representative body |  |
| NH220                   | Landowner                    | Management body                                |
| NH221                   | N/A [Hunting tourist]        |  |
| NH222                   | Landowner                    | Management body                                |
| NH223                   | Landowner                    | Management body                                |
| NH224                   | Animal welfare organisation  |  |
| NH225                   | Sporting agent               |  |

Scotland has a number of environmental and animal welfare organisations, some of which are also significant rural landowners. Thus, employees of three land-owning conservation bodies were interviewed, along with a representative from an animal welfare organisation. A second animal welfare organisation declined to participate.

Hunting tourists proved difficult to recruit. Low-cost methods – such as articles in publications aimed at hunting tourists and an e-shot provided by a hunting tourist membership body – yielded only one interviewee. However, a representative of at least one body with a large hunting tourist membership was interviewed, and several other interviewees (e.g. the gamekeepers, sporting agents and one of the tourism promotion body representatives) are keen hunters. Therefore, the project team is confident that hunting tourists' views are better represented in the analysis than the paucity of hunting tourists listed in Table 1 might suggest.

Although all interviewees listed in Table 1 represent a particular type of stakeholder, several represent more than one. An attempt to indicate the plural roles undertaken by interviewees is made in column three, which lists the known subsidiary activity of 14 interviewees' employers. As noted above, some conservation bodies are land-owners. Moreover, a number of those working in the sector also work for hunting or wildlife management bodies, and a number of industry body representatives either work or have worked as hunting tourism providers.

## 5.3 Results

### 5.3.1 Definition of hunting tourism

When defining 'hunting tourism' in the Scottish context it is necessary to distinguish between the activity and its description. Many stakeholders found the phrase 'hunting tourism' to be problematic. Therefore, this section is divided in two. First, it outlines the problems that stakeholders raised with reference to the term 'hunting tourism'. Secondly, it summarises the activities to which stakeholders referred when discussing hunting tourism.

#### **Definitional issues**

Stakeholders understood the idea of hunting tourism. An employee of an industry and conservation body gave a precise definition of it: 'anybody travelling, but particularly paying, to enjoy managed sport' (NH212). This quotation refers to three key concepts – payment, management and sport – that require explanation.

The issue of payment is crucial to hunting tourism in Scotland. Several stakeholders pointed out that hunting tourism is a commercial activity and that people pay to take part in it (NH201; NH206; NH215; NH216; NH217; NH220). It may seem unnecessary to make the monetary exchange explicit. In Scotland, however, it has been, and continues to be, obscured. This has its roots in the history of Scottish sporting estates, whose owners would invite guests to join them in shooting parties during the hunting seasons. Hunting tourists are still habitually referred to as 'guests' by those working in the sector (e.g. NH214; NH218); one sporting agent noted that

*'I use the term guests rather than clients' (NH225).*

The term 'guest' is ambiguous because it can refer to hospitality provided either free or for payment. Its continued use by the hunting tourism sector in Scotland has connotations of social class: one is the guest of the sporting estate which, more often than not, will claim aristocratic associations. Here, then, is the first reason why stakeholders found the phrase 'hunting tourism' to be problematic: the higher-spending hunters are called guests, not tourists. Indeed, for many in the sector, "customer" remains a 'dirty word' (NH210). As the representative of an industry body put it:

*"what's slightly different in Scotland is that we have the Scottish estate which is...quite iconic: so you have the lodge, and you have that whole...historical culture and community. The keepers wear estate tweed; there is a whole sort of culture there which I think people buy into" (NH219).*

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Thus, the game keeper (who accompanies and guides the hunting party) becomes a liveried servant by wearing tweed (hard-wearing wool) clothing woven in a pattern unique to the estate. Therefore, it is arguable that the tradition of referring to hunting tourists as guests has been preserved partly as a means of helping to package hunting as a heritage tourism product, by the purchase of which the 'guest' can not only hunt but can also experience a simulacrum of British aristocratic life during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

However, the use of the term 'guest' also serves as a reminder that not all participants buy their hunting as part of a tourism package. The holder of hunting rights (who may or may not own the land) may undertake some or all of the available hunting themselves along with invited guests. For example, a head gamekeeper (NH223) explained that the land owner (presumably with guests) takes about twenty per cent of the available upland grouse shooting each year; while a third party leases the right to rear, release and shoot pheasants on a lowland part of the estate, not as a commercial venture but for their own (and their friends') use. In Scotland, therefore, there is a good deal of both commercial and non-commercial hunting tourism, between which it is not always easy to distinguish.

The issue of management is important to Scottish hunting tourism, for two reasons. Firstly, Scotland has little wilderness: hunting tourism, and particularly its most expensive forms, takes place in highly managed environments. As a representative of a land-owning conservation body argued, upland heather moorland, which is essential for driven grouse shooting, has been 'expanded artificially by years of burning and overgrazing, or heavy grazing' (NH201). While other stakeholders would probably take exception to the adjective 'artificially', the extent of the landscape's active management is not in doubt.

Secondly, hunting tourism itself is also heavily managed. Not surprisingly, this tends to be most prevalent for the most expensive activities. For example, one industry representative estimated that almost all deer stalking is accompanied (NH211). For deer hunting, small parties (often one or two) will usually be guided by a stalker, whose job it is to get them close enough to the quarry to take a clean shot. For driven grouse, a much larger number of people will be involved, in addition to the hunters, including beaters, loaders and retrievers. This is partly to try to ensure a high level of customer service but there is also a surveillance element. Staff aims to ensure that hunters behave appropriately. They also have an asset protection role, controlling predators and vegetation, and guarding against infringements of property rights. As one individual, who rents hunting rights on an estate, observed:

*"it's surprising actually that you may think you are out in a remote part of it, and you are seen...So there is quite an eye kept on what goes on by the landowners even on blocks of land that are so large; it's surprising how...the jungle drums work" (NH221).*

The issue of sport is also vital to hunting tourism in Scotland. As one industry representative observed: '[t]he term hunting is not a term we would use in Scotland; we would tend to use country sports or field sports' (NH203; also NH211). Interviewees provided two explanations for this. First, the verb 'hunt' denotes pursuit of quarry. However, a significant proportion of Scottish game bird shooting is 'driven'; hunters stand in one place while birds are driven towards them. As a representative of a land-owning conservation body put it: 'standing on a hill and having birds driven to you, and just pointing the gun in the air and shooting, it doesn't really strike me as hunting' (NH213). One interviewee – who represented a statutory body (NH208) – questioned the extent to which the term 'hunting' could be applied where a species' numbers are heavily managed, either indirectly through land management practices (e.g. grouse) or directly by rearing and releasing large numbers of quarry (e.g. pheasant). Such practices, they implied, produce a set of ecological limits and relationships with the quarry species that differ from what

they understand as hunting, which they appeared to define as the pursuit of species whose environment and numbers are not heavily managed.

Stakeholders' second explanation for preferring the word 'sport' is that: 'hunting is a term in the UK context which is usually associated with fox hunting: mounted packs following foxes' (NH202). Three interviewees were at pains to point out that mounted fox hunting was largely an English phenomenon (NH210, NH212, NH214), although it was also present in Wales (Milbourn, 1997) and parts of southern Scotland (NH214). Hunting with dogs was outlawed in 2004, after a prolonged and acrimonious campaign, and it seems clear that stakeholders prefer not to use the term 'hunting' in the Scottish context in order to try to distance hunting tourism from mounted fox hunting, which has negative connotations.

### **Hunting tourism activities**

Numerous quarry species are sought by hunting tourists. All stakeholders referred to deer stalking. This: 'is different from anywhere in the world, because we have the red deer out on the open hill and we have to...stalk them carefully and skillfully to get within...a safe comfortable rifle shot' (NH203; also mentioned by NH201; NH202; NH203; NH210; NH212; NH216). Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) are the most important quarry, followed by roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), which have tended to be hunted in woodland but are increasingly prevalent in open upland areas, with some sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) (which interbreed with red) and fallow deer (*Dama dama*) also taken. It is more usual to hunt the males; females tend to be culled. Two other mammals were mentioned as quarry for hunting tourists: rabbit and hare.

Regarding birds, red grouse (*Lagopus lagopus scotica*) were the most-mentioned quarry (noted by nineteen respondents). One industry representative estimated that grouse shooting is the highest-earning hunting tourism activity (NH203). Two respondents said that the Scottish system of driven grouse shooting, whereby large areas of heather moorland are intensively managed in order to maximise the wild population of red grouse which are then driven towards hunting tourists positioned at butts, is also unique (NH205; NH212). However, it is generally acknowledged that driven grouse shooting is in decline in Scotland. Six interviewees also mentioned the availability of walked-up grouse shooting, whereby hunting tourists and, if required, estate staff walks through the landscape using dogs to flush grouse from cover. Other bird species mentioned as quarry for hunting tourists include: pheasant; partridge; woodcock; snipe; ducks; geese; and pigeon. Of these, pheasant are reared and released, geese and pigeon are wild, and partridge and ducks can be either. No mention was made by interviewees of woodcock and snipe being reared and released.

Game fishing was the only other hunting tourism activity mentioned by more than one or two stakeholders. Some spoke of trout but the most important species here is salmon. According to an industry representative, salmon represent one of the three 'principle resources' (NH203) of the Scottish hunting tourism sector, alongside red deer and grouse. Seven interviewees mentioned them in the same breath (NH202; NH203; NH208; NH217; NH218; NH224; NH225).

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### 5.3.2 Consequences of hunting tourism

#### Public opinion regarding hunting tourism

Interviewees tended to associate different opinions with five distinct groups of people; although not all identified all five. The largest group identified was the 'general' public, thought to represent between 95 and 99 per cent of the population. The other groups identified were: members of the public who engage in outdoor activities, such as wildlife watching, walking, camping, climbing and kayaking; rural dwellers, who tended to be sub-divided by length of residence; those who are against hunting and/or the use of firearms; and those who are involved with hunting tourism. As the term 'public opinion' was interpreted as referring to those not directly involved in hunting tourism, the discussion will focus of the first four of these groups.

Eleven interviewees stated that the general public do not understand hunting tourism and the role it plays in land management (NH203; NH204; NH207; NH209; NH214; NH215; NH216; NH217; NH222; NH224; NH225). Three suggested that hunting tourism is not much of an issue for the general public (NH201; NH212; NH214). However, more were concerned that ignorance, combined with an attitude of sentimental anthropomorphism, continued concern over the use of firearms, hostile media coverage and stereotypical perceptions of hunting tourists, served to perpetuate what a landowner's representative called 'a high degree of public resistance to what are termed blood sports' (NH222). The issue of media coverage will be touched on below (where the perceived views of the fourth group are discussed). Here, the discussion of perceived public opinion will concentrate on anthropomorphism, concern over the use of firearms and stereotypes of hunting tourists.

It is sometimes remarked that the British, and particularly the English, are 'a nation of animal lovers'. This view seems to be shared by some interviewees. Three detected hostility to hunting on the basis of the 'Bambi syndrome' (NH203; NH217; NH225). The reference is to the eponymous Disney film about a 'family' of anthropomorphised deer; and the use of it betokens a belief on their part that a large proportion of the general public regard such animals as 'cute' and 'innocent', and therefore as undeserving of being shot. One interviewee (a land manager) reflected that:

*"we are very irrational about the way that we relate to the other species on the planet... why should we regard a brown rat as a sinner and a seal as a saint? Because they all in a sense have some negative and positive impacts on other species and on habitat"* (NH214).

Such 'irrational' views, it was claimed, result from a lack of contact with animals in the rural environment (e.g. NH203). A landowner's representative put it thus:

*"[Y]ou tend to see a change of opinion from people that have...come up to the Highlands on holiday and seen red deer and think they are lovely and beautiful and like to look at them. Until they hit one in their car or they buy a property up here and have all their roses ravaged by them. Once they have had some direct, close-up personal experience of them the attitude tends to change slightly"* (NH220).

This comment demonstrates that, while there is a perception that the general public is not particularly sympathetic to hunting, there is also a belief that public opinion can be changed. One industry representative argued that the sector needs to hire media professionals and 'advertising people to swing public perception' (NH203) in favour of hunting tourism. A number of interviewees reported that this was already happening. A tourism promotion body representative noted that they had recently seen television programmes that took a positive view of hunting (NH210), and an industry representative

remarked that series such as Kill it, cook it, eat it are part of a growing public understanding 'of game and game produce as good' (NH219). Indeed, the tourism promotion body representative cited above took the view that, while the public perception of hunting tourism was not as good as they would like, 'we are in a stronger position than we have been for a few years' (NH210).

Set against this is continued public concern over the private ownership and use of firearms. Four interviewees mentioned Dunblane, a Scottish town where a licensed firearms owner shot dead 16 school-children and their teacher in March 1996 (NH201; NH211; NH220; NH221). The relevance of this tragic event to hunting tourism was that it led, as one hunter noted, to a renewed public questioning of the appropriateness of civilians possessing firearms (NH221). This interviewee claimed that public opinion had a significant influence on the subsequent tightening of UK firearms legislation.

The third negative aspect of general public opinion raised by interviewees is the stereotype of hunting tourism as being the preserve of the wealthy elite. Six respondents, from almost the whole range of stakeholder types, claimed that hunting tourism, or at least certain aspects of it, continues to be perceived as elitist (NH209; NH210; NH213; NH216; NH220; NH222). Interviewees suspected that the general public thought of hunting tourism as an activity undertaken by the rich (NH201; NH202; NH204; NH210; NH215), 'the gentry' (NH220) or 'toffs' (NH219). Eight suggested that such stereotypes are based partly on class prejudice (NH202; NH203; NH210; NH213; NH214; NH215; NH216; NH220); a view informed, for at least one (NH203), by the current UK Government having banned hunting with dogs. This interviewee detected a change in Scotland, however, where there is a minority Scottish National Party (SNP) administration. As they put it:

*"we no longer have the Labour dogma...we may well have nationalist dogma but that's not affecting the country sports. That [the SNP] doesn't have the class issue, and most of the Labour Party stuff against country sports I am fairly sure is class-generated" (NH203). That this would seem to be a reflection of public opinion was implied by an interviewee who hunts in both England and Scotland, and who thought that hunting tourism is more accepted in the latter country than the former (NH221).*

Nevertheless, Scottish hunting tourism remains firmly rooted in the tradition of the nineteenth-century country-house hunting party, which was the preserve of the wealthy and the landed elite. It is significant that four interviewees used the adjective Victorian when speaking of hunting tourism (NH203; NH213; NH214; NH218). Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 to 1901 and the royal family's regular visits to Balmoral in north-east Scotland (which were timed to coincide with the grouse season and continue to this day) did much to popularise hunting tourism among the elite. Thus, for one industry representative, 'top end' hunting tourism resembles a 'Victorian house party' (NH203); and, as a land manager remarked of recent investment in grouse shooting: 'it's very much in the Victorian tradition' (NH214). From this it can be deduced that, not only is the Scottish hunting tourism experience often marketed as a form of heritage tourism, but that some of the investment in the infrastructure necessary for it (and in particular for the three key species – red deer, red grouse and salmon) is perceived as being conducted in the same spirit.

Members of the second and third 'strands' of public opinion mentioned by interviewees – people pursuing outdoor leisure activities and rural dwellers – appeared to be differentiated from the general public by their direct exposure to rural areas and by their greater susceptibility to persuasion of the utility of hunting tourism as a combined management and income generation tool. As a land manager explained:

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*"I have seen so many times the transforming effect of...putting somebody on the hill with a professional stalker for the first time, I mean they think it's all about shooting something. And...they don't want to do it or...they are unsure if they want to do it, [but] very often... by the time they come back not only have they overcome their scruples and possibly shot a stag but they have also had an insight into the life of the man who has taken them up there and into...how the countryside ticks" (NH214).*

Second-hand experience can also be influential. As a gamekeeper remarked: 'you get people who are ignorant but once they know what is actually happening – if you can sit down and explain to them, this is our harvest sort of thing – some of them understand' (NH223). Rural dwellers, and especially long-term residents, were considered to have more understanding of and support for hunting tourism (NH203; NH217; NH220).

The fourth strand of public opinion identified by stakeholders was 'anti-hunting'. For some interviewees, this attitude was connected with the anthropomorphising tendency outlined above. As a landowner's representative commented:

*"you know, a particular individual is quite happy to come and trap moths and spiders on the estate...but killing a woodcock, that's...anathema. [Such visitors make s]ome interesting value judgments about how pretty and how large and how warm and cuddly an animal is as to whether its justifiable for it to be killed or not" (NH220).*

This interviewee had also come into contact with people who had a moral objection to the killing of animals:

*"I have had people saying...OK, I accept that the most efficient way of managing deer numbers is by shooting, but it ought to be done only by paid professionals. It's morally wrong that somebody should enjoy...and pay to do that as a leisure activity...[T]hey went as far as saying that we ought to specifically employ people who didn't like doing it" (NH220).*

It is not clear how widespread such 'moral' objections to hunting tourism are in Scotland, but they appear to have made themselves felt. A representative of a landowning conservation body, for example, emphasised that their employer does not market hunting tourism on the land that it owns<sup>3</sup> (NH204). Moreover, they also stated that, where the culling of deer and predators (foxes and crows) takes place, it is undertaken by trained, paid hunters (not hunting tourists) on the basis of research that has demonstrated its necessity (NH205). A representative of another land-owning conservation body felt that there is: 'an increase in the animal welfare/animal rights agenda against the sport of hunting' (NH201), although they did not think that this view was held widely among their employer's membership.

Nevertheless, one interviewee regarded hunting tourism as being under siege from hostile sections of public opinion, notably vegetarianism and an 'increasingly vocal animal welfare' (NH203) lobby. Such generalisations risk caricaturing Scottish animal rights organisations. A representative of one, for instance, said that:

*'[h]unting is not something that we tend to get involved in because lawful hunting in this country tends to be to quite a high standard' (NH224).*

Nevertheless, there appear to be some more 'radical' animal rights groups in Scotland. Two such groups were approached for interview: one did not respond to repeated approaches; the other declined to take part as they perceived that North Hunt advocates an expansion of hunting tourism. It has not proved

<sup>3</sup> Although in some instances hunting rights have been retained by previous owners.

possible, therefore, to explore the extent to which, or the reasons why, such groups oppose hunting tourism.

Several interviewees expressed the view that the sector has lost ground to opponents of hunting tourism. An industry representative identified a:

*“culture that once something is taken off the quarry list it will never ever get back on irrespective of how prolific it becomes. It’s all part of the attrition of what is...referred to by that side of the argument as blood sports” (NH203).*

However, more controversial currently is the issue of predator control. One Government employee (NH207) noted that the hunting tourism sector has been adversely affected by recent publicity concerning the persecution of raptors and the snaring of ground predators (such as foxes). The prohibition on raptor control is a source of frustration to some interviewees (e.g. NH203). Illegal killing (usually with poisoned bait) does occur and, although the number of cases is small, they are widely reported<sup>4</sup> and there can be little doubt that they damage the public image of the hunting tourism sector. The use of snaring is legal but has been the subject of considerable recent debate in Scotland. A government employee claimed that:

*‘it’s been one of the biggest campaigns that the [Scottish] Government has had to deal with in terms of people writing in...we’ve had a lot of pressure on that’ (NH207).*

This interviewee went on to remark that the hunting tourism sector had not been very effective at putting the case for snaring to the law-makers in the Scottish Parliament.

Thus, although opposition to hunting tourism was characterised by one industry representative as ‘small but vocal’ (NH212), the sector does not appear to have been very successful in combating it. Five interviewees acknowledged that the sector needs to improve its public relations activities (NH203; NH214; NH216; NH218; NH220) in order to get its key messages across, shed its ‘elitist’ image (NH216) and attract new participants. This latter issue was considered particularly important with respect to the need to attract more young people into hunting tourism (NH211, NH214; NH220; NH225); although a tourism promotion body representative noted that steps are being taken to try to do this (NH210).

Although the sector has not been particularly successful in its public relations it is clear that the public acceptability of hunting activities has been reflected on by stakeholders and that there is debate over issues that are perceived to be controversial. One of these concerns bag sizes. One land manager said that:

*“large volume game shoots where the game have been reared...especially to shoot are a bit difficult to justify and explain to people, particularly when they are carried out in public view. ...I think huge...shoots should be a thing of the past” (NH214).*

This interviewee was particularly concerned about intensive pheasant shoots; a view echoed by a representative of a land-owning conservation body: ‘the next kind of focus is moving very much on to pheasant shooting and questioning the ethics of animal welfare of pheasant shooting’ (NH201). In fact, the main animal welfare issues appear to relate more to the intensive rearing of game birds rather than to bag sizes per se. An animal welfare organisation representative said that their employer wishes to see: ‘significant improvements in their conditions...and is also opposed to pinioning, brailing, debeaking<sup>5</sup> and [the] use of spectacles or blinkers on game birds kept in rearing pens’ (NH224).

<sup>4</sup> The discovery of a poisoned buzzard carcass in the north of Highland local authority on 24 July 2009 was reported by the UK broadcast media ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/highlands\\_and\\_islands/816855.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/highlands_and_islands/816855.stm)).

<sup>5</sup> Pinioning is the surgical removal of wing tips to prevent flying permanently; brailing is the tipping of the wing to render the bird temporarily flightless; and debeaking is the cutting back of a piece of the upper beak to prevent feather picking and cannibalism.

### **Hunting tourism and local hunting culture**

Scotland has a well-developed hunting tourism sector. Despite this, fourteen interviewees said that there is a local hunting culture (NH202; NH203; NH205; NH207; NH209; NH210; NH213; NH214; NH218; NH219; NH220; NH222; NH223; NH224), two claiming that it is strong (NH209; NH210). However, as with the term 'hunting tourism', several were unsure what was meant by 'local hunting culture', and this may have coloured their response to the question. For instance, some interviewees compared the situation in Scotland with their experience of other northern European countries or North America. Thus, one industry representative compared Scotland with the US state of Colorado, where: 'locals can buy their ticket and go on to public land and hunt; but we don't have that culture here at all' (NH211). Similar contrasts were drawn by another five respondents (NH205; NH209; NH214; NH215; NH219).

Therefore, while the popular view was that there is a local hunting culture, at least in parts of rural Scotland, it was viewed as being distinct from that existing in other countries of which interviewees had knowledge. Interviewees adduced a number of reasons for this. One, representing a statutory body, noted that the right to shoot: 'generally goes with the ownership or occupation of land' (NH217). This means that hunting rights are effectively a form of property. Not surprisingly, therefore, they have been commodified. The combination of these factors means that the right of landowners to let or sell them tends to take precedence over the hunting activities of locals (NH202; NH206; NH210; NH214; NH218; NH222). Indeed, two interviewees with responsibility for land management noted that they did not allow 'informal' local hunting because of the risk to other hunting income and the administrative burden that doing so would entail (NH214; NH218). One industry representative recalled that conflicts arose when local hunters were displaced by the commodification of goose shooting rights, but took the view that most accepted that income from hunting tourists was necessary to keep estates going (NH202).

In fact, for those species that lend themselves to commercial exploitation, there cannot be said to be distinct local hunting culture. Locals must pay, just like hunting tourists, which is what they effectively become by doing so. As a land manager put it:

*"we do have shooting parties locally but the way that a customer has to present themselves to us really is as a group...at a commercial scale so to speak. In other words there need to be enough people to justify having somebody to look after them or to give them a piece of ground of their own. So we need them to present themselves as groups rather than individuals generally speaking" (NH214).*

Some interviewees involved in land management knew of instances where locals have done so (NH214; NH222; NH223). Two of them (NH214; NH223) commented that fishing lends itself best to such local arrangements as it is easier to administer.

Where there is more likely to be a distinct local hunting culture is in the hunting of 'pest' species such as rabbits (NH207; NH223) and wood pigeons (NH207). A couple of interviewees said that the hunting of rabbits would often be done on an informal basis. As a gamekeeper put it: 'the locals that just want to go out for a shot, they just phone up and say "is it OK if I go for a shot at the rabbit?"' (NH223). Nevertheless, other estates do not permit such informal hunting (NH214; NH218). Moreover, three interviewees noted that there is commercial hunting of these species available (NH202; NH210; NH219) and another saw the expansion of such activities as a means by which the hunting tourism sector could develop (NH215). It is reasonable to argue, therefore, that the commodification of such species will tend to result in their removal from local hunting culture.

There are two additional outlets for the expression of local hunting culture. One is by providing assistance for labour-intensive hunting tourism events, especially driven grouse shoots, which require large numbers of people to drive game towards the hunters, load their guns and retrieve the carcasses. Four interviewees noted that such helpers might be allowed, as recompense, to 'get something for the table for themselves' (NH218; also NH209; NH210; NH215; NH218). Lastly, and of more recent origin, there appears to be a growth, or at least legitimisation, of local hunting culture in areas where estates have been purchased by their former tenants under community 'right to buy' legislation. For example, on one such estate:

*"they have set up a hind<sup>6</sup> stalking club, whereby they have thirty or forty individuals who are members and they can all go and shoot one or two hinds, which arguably they might have been doing anyway but now they are doing it legitimately" (NH217).*

However, it is unlikely that there will be a major reduction in hunting tourism on community-owned estates. As one interviewee suggested, the costs of management are such that it is likely that every effort will be made to maximise income (NH220). In this respect, it is notable that the stalking club mentioned above is for hinds, which are a much less valuable hunting commodity than stags.

### **The impacts of hunting tourism on other rural activities**

Rural Scotland is multifunctional. Even remote upland areas (e.g. the Cairngorm plateau) are grazed by animals, such as deer, that are exploited commercially. In most areas, therefore, the same land will host a number of activities. Based on the comments made by stakeholders, the interactions of hunting tourism with recreational rural land users, and with other land uses, will be discussed separately.

The relationship between hunting tourism and other rural land users changed significantly as a result of the 2003 Land Reform Act: walkers have a 'right of responsible access' anywhere outside the curtilage of dwelling places, provided they follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. This means that people can, and do, walk into areas where hunting tourism activities are taking place. Among such, one former gamekeeper remarked, there would always be some: 'that went out of their way to be awkward because they had anti-sporting views' (NH216). The potential for walkers to disrupt deer stalking was mentioned by ten interviewees (NH202; NH206; NH210; NH211; NH215; NH216; NH217; NH218; NH221; NH225). A couple – an industry representative and a sporting agent – said that this was a particular problem in parts of western Scotland (NH202; NH225), with the former adding that it was also considered to be a problem in the north and parts of central Scotland. One interviewee also took the view that there is potential for conflict between hunting and nature tourists, as the latter might disrupt the hunting activities of the former (NH204).

Although the potential for conflict between hunting tourism and walkers was the largest concern to emerge from the interviews, it may not be as significant as some feared. For one thing, although the 'right of responsible access' is relatively new, the impact of walkers on hunting tourism is not. As a former gamekeeper remarked, an estate where they worked coped with the issue long before the legislation was passed because it lay in an accessible area popular with walkers and climbers (NH216). As they said, although deer movements were influenced by walkers, hunting tourism activities were adapted to compensate for this. Another interviewee – a land manager for a land-owning conservation body – said that, although they had been concerned that new conflicts would arise as a result of the 2003 legislation, research that their employer had conducted found that conflicts did not increase significantly (NH206). This interviewee went on to note that, as a means of minimising the potential for such conflicts, their

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<sup>6</sup> A hind is a female red deer.

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employer has stopped hunting tourism activities from taking place at weekends, when the highest numbers of visitors are experienced. This is likely to mean the loss of only one day's hunting tourism per week as such activities traditionally do not take place on Sunday (NH203). A couple of interviewees mentioned that there is a system whereby prospective walkers can call a telephone number to find out whether there is scheduled to be any hunting tourism on their proposed route (NH208; NH211), and one land manager commented that a similar, internet-based, service is under development (NH214).

The only other concern about conflict between hunting tourism and other recreational rural land users, mentioned by two interviewees, was the simultaneous use of the same watercourse by salmon anglers and canoeists or kayakers (NH210; NH211). Some of Scotland's premier salmon rivers, such as the Spey, are also popular with kayakers and canoeists, and it has been claimed that these craft disturb the fish (NH210). However, this interviewee took the view that there is productive dialogue between those who organise these activities:

*'they actually manage it very well: the landowners and the...kayaking associations have got together and they are working it out' (NH210).*

Overall, it seems reasonable to suggest that, once the changed relationship between different types of recreational land user, consequent on the introduction of the 'right of responsible access', has had time to 'bed in', the disturbance of hunting tourism by other rural activities is unlikely to increase markedly. However, the achievement of a new equilibrium has required some disruption and curtailment of hunting tourism activities, and may require more in future. Interviewees' comments suggest that this is most likely to take the form of further restrictions on weekend hunting, or the alteration of the timing or the place of such activities, in response to changes in quarry behaviour, in areas popular with walkers and climbers.

The relationship between hunting tourism and other land uses may also be changing. For example, it was noted that changing habitat management priorities can conflict with the continuation of hunting tourism at its current level (NH205; NH208; NH217). An example of this is re-forestation (NH217). The Scottish Government intends to increase the amount of forest cover in Scotland by almost half, so that it covers about 25 per cent of rural land by the second half of the century (Scottish Executive, 2006: 15). This has implications for the amount of hunting tourism that can take place in areas selected for re-forestation, as the number of deer in them must be low enough to allow trees to grow.

There have also been significant changes, since the early 2000s, in the relationship between livestock farming and hunting tourism, especially in remote and upland Scotland. For instance, the number of sheep in parts of north and west Scotland has declined significantly in the last ten years, by up to 60 per cent in some areas (SAC 2008). One interviewee observed that grouse hunting in their area has: 'pretty well...flittered away to nothing, mainly due to the high tick levels that we have. That's pretty much coincided with the demise of the sheep flock' (NH216). The implication here is that the removal of sheep, which would have been dipped twice-yearly to control tick infestation, has removed an important check on tick numbers, and that their consequent increase has had a detrimental effect on the breeding success of red grouse. In addition, sheep and cattle grazing are important habitat management tools (NH212), and one interviewee noted that, where sheep farming has ceased to be economically viable in its own right, some sporting estates have introduced their own flocks in order to manage the habitat for hunting tourism.

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## Economic aspects of hunting tourism

The main negative economic aspect of hunting tourism is the widespread perception that it usually makes a loss for its providers. This view was expressed by a range of interviewees, including: managers working for landowners (NH206; NH214; NH222); an employee of a land-owning conservation body (NH201); an employee of a statutory body (NH209); an employee of a tourism promotion body (NH210); and two industry representatives (NH211; NH212). Indeed, one of the latter observed that their employer's research shows that about 70 per cent of providers of hunting tourism facilities do so at a net cost (NH212). This problem appears to be particularly acute for driven grouse:

*'it's very clearly established with grouse shooting: the more intensively you manage it for commercial reasons the more you lose' (NH206).*

However, the situation for deer also seems problematic. One interviewee (NH216) estimated that annual sporting revenue from stags they manage comes to about £10,000, with an additional £9,500 coming from the sale of carcasses – from stags shot by tourists and hinds and calves culled by gamekeepers – for processing into venison. However, the cost of wages and equipment is about £31,000, resulting in a net annual loss of about £10,500. Moreover, they saw little prospect either for a significant increase in venison prices (a point also made by NH203) or for increasing the revenue per stag, through several interviewees thought that this might be possible.

On the basis of these comments, there are prima facie grounds for arguing that hunting tourism in Scotland is not economically sustainable. Although, in the absence of published quantitative evidence, this must remain an hypothesis, some interviewees considered it a fact of life that hunting provision must usually be subsidised. According to one (a land manager), there are two main ways in which this tends to occur:

*'you can subsidise it either by...being very wealthy and having money to burn – and there are lots of examples of that, and always have been, in Scotland – or by having a...group of businesses where there are enough profit centres to carry the loss centres, of which the sporting enterprises may well be one' (NH214).*

This begged the question: why do hunting tourism providers keep going when most lose money? Interviewees provided two rationales for this behaviour. First, two argued that the economic benefits of hunting tourism provision tend to be capitalised into the value of the land (NH209; NH212), a conclusion apparently supported by survey evidence<sup>7</sup>. Secondly, hunting tourism revenues provide an element of cost recovery for activities that would continue in their absence (NH201; NH211; NH214). As three interviewees explained, hunting facilities are often maintained because the owner (or lessee) of the sporting rights wants to hunt and to provide hunting opportunities for invited guests (NH214; NH222; NH223). Thus, selling hunting to tourists reduces the overall cost of their own hunting.

Interviewees also identified four positive economic impacts from hunting tourism. First, economic benefit can accrue to the owner of hunting rights if they let them (NH206; NH214; NH222; NH223). Such income is likely to be 'very modest' (NH214), but at least two interviewees noted that their employers profit from such arrangements (NH206; NH222). However, letting sporting rights is not without problems, which arise from the multifunctionality of the land. Where different people are managing land on a single estate for hunting, agriculture and forestry, their different objectives can be difficult to integrate (NH212). Nevertheless, such difficulties were not considered insuperable (NH206).

<sup>7</sup> MacMillan and Leitch (2008: 482) cite a report of a survey by CKD Galbraith that concludes that capital gains on sporting estates between 1982 and 2006 out-performed the FTSE 100 index.

The second economic benefit provided by hunting tourism is employment in rural areas (NH202; NH203; NH206; NH207; NH208; NH210; NH212; NH213; NH214; NH215; NH217; NH218; NH220; NH223; NH225). Some interviewees suggested that this is most pronounced in remote areas (NH202; NH210; NH215; NH220). In some remote areas, hunting tourism represents one of the few ways of generating income from the land (NH201; NH214; NH215; NH217; NH219); making those areas perhaps overly dependent on hunting tourism employment (NH214). Many of the jobs supported by hunting tourism are part-time or seasonal, some of which are filled by seasonal migrants from EU accession countries (NH223). Another noted that part-time hunting tourism work was part of the portfolio of income generating activities undertaken by rural dwellers (NH203), and it is certainly the case that many UK upland farmers, for example, are pluri-active (Bowler et al. 1996).

The third economic benefit provided by hunting tourism is an economic multiplier effect in rural areas (NH202; NH203; NH207; NH209; NH212; NH213; NH214; NH217; NH218; NH219; NH220; NH222; NH223; NH224; NH225). In discussing this kind of economic benefit, interviewees made reference to published reports (e.g. PACEC 2006). There seems little sense, therefore, in discussing them in detail here. Interviewees mentioned the following types of enterprise as significant beneficiaries of hunting tourism: hotels; restaurants; and retailers of outdoor clothing, firearms and other hunting equipment. A couple of interviewees noted that money spent by hunting tourists in such places will tend to circulate in the rural economy (NH220; NH225), as they will tend to employ local people and buy from other local enterprises. Some interviewees also claimed that upmarket city shops and retailers of high-quality Scottish produce also benefit from the spending of those who accompany hunting tourists but do not hunt themselves. For example:

*“especially at the higher end of the market it tends to be...either a family, or certainly a husband and wife holiday, and the wives will come and they will do shopping traditionally in the quality places like Jenners<sup>8</sup>, it's a really high quality store. They would tend to use Aberdeen, Edinburgh, maybe Inverness if they happen to be away up [there], but they are going to spend an obscene amount of the husband's money: while he is out shooting grouse, they are going to make sure they have their whack as well” (NH203).*

The fourth economic benefit that hunting tourism was cited as creating stems, paradoxically, from the very fact of its being perceived to be a net cost to most landowners. Two interviewees said (NH208; NH212), and a third implied (NH214) that the maintenance of hunting tourism facilities and habitats represents a significant inward investment into rural Scotland. Moreover, it is undertaken at private expense (NH203; NH211; NH212; NH214; NH217; NH218), in contrast to upland farming (NH203; NH212) and forestry (NH212), both of which receive public subsidies. There is some force to such arguments. The economic conditions facing farmers in Scotland's uplands and islands were the subject of an inquiry by the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2008, which concluded that farming there is not economically sustainable and that land managers should continue to receive public payment for the non-market goods that they provide (RSE, 2008). By undertaking animal and habitat management activities, which help to maintain a rural landscape that is valued and visited by non-hunting tourists (NH212; NH213; NH214; NH217; NH220), three interviewees pointed out that hunting tourism providers are supplying public goods at private expense (NH211; NH217; NH218).

<sup>8</sup> An upmarket department store in Edinburgh.

## Ecological aspects of hunting tourism

It was around the ecological aspects of hunting tourism that the clearest difference between different groups of interviewees emerged. This concerned the types of habitat that interviewees wanted to see in rural Scotland. For those in the 'conservationist' group, the issue revolved around adjectives such as 'natural'. For example:

*"Compared with lots of other countries...there is [almost] no natural tree line whatsoever, which implies there is something not quite right. Now, having said that, you have then also got this situation where the heather moorland that's been created, totally artificially, or certainly expanded artificially, by years of burning and...heavy grazing..." (NH201).*

A consequence of maintaining large heather moorlands is that other types of habitat, notably woods and forests, are sacrificed. This is interpreted as unnatural by some conservationists:

*'we have a relatively small native woodland resource in Scotland, and if you are preventing succession, natural succession, then...you are not going to increase those areas of habitat unless it's through...planting elsewhere' (NH205).*

Yet the maintenance of such habitats is considered a form of conservation by representatives of the hunting tourism sector (NH203; NH215), who argued that it benefits non-quarry species (NH203; NH207). Moreover:

*"There is no evidence that it's producing environmental damage; on the contrary it appears to be producing healthy upland ecosystems which then provide a wide range of very acceptable ecosystem services, such as water filtration and water management' (NH212).*

The withdrawal of such management was considered as damaging:

*"let's for instance say that hunting tourism was removed,...game keeping was removed from an area: not only would you have degradation of habitat, for instance heather moorland, but you would have a reduction in predator control. Foxes wouldn't be being controlled so then that would have knock-on effects on other wildlife, which would then be more heavily predated upon, and suddenly the whole ecological balance is changing' (NH219).*

However, while there is a distinction between the types of habitat desired by conservationists and providers of hunting tourism, there is no clear-cut dividing line between these two groups in terms of their attitudes towards the ecological impacts of the land management practices associated with hunting tourism. For instance, all the conservation body representatives (NH201; NH205; NH206; NH213) acknowledged that sporting land management practices provide some ecological benefits and that their removal would, in certain cases, result in habitat and landscape degradation. Conversely, many industry representatives were alive to the ecological disbenefit of some land and game management strategies (e.g. NH202; NH206; NH212; NH214; NH215; NH216; NH222).

In fact, both undertake similar land management practices for the same avowed purpose: conservation. Two examples prove this point. First, both land-owning conservation bodies and hunting tourism providers practice predator control, especially of foxes and corvids (e.g. NH203; NH205; NH211; NH212; NH221). Secondly, the four land-owning conservation bodies undertake deer control (NH201; NH205; NH206; NH213), paying professional stalkers to cull them (e.g. NH205) and, in some cases, also charging tourists to hunt them (e.g. NH206). One conservation body representative reported that the number of professional stalkers required for conservation management can exceed the number required for sport-

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ing management (NH206). This is because the goal of the former is to reduce deer numbers sufficiently to allow vegetation to regenerate, while the goal of the latter is to maintain a 'shootable surplus' for estate owners and hunting tourists (MacMillan and Leitch 2008).

It is necessary, therefore, to find another way of conceptualising the different attitudes of interviewees towards the ecological sustainability of hunting tourism. This necessity arises because interviews demonstrated differences, and even a polarisation of opinion in some cases (e.g. with regard to the control of birds of prey: cf. NH203 and NH205), between attitudes towards the appropriate management of land on which hunting currently occurs. One means of doing so might be to make use of a concept from agricultural geography – multifunctionality – as it has been developed by Hollander (2004) and Wilson (2007; 2008; 2009). Wilson argues that agricultural multifunctionality can be regarded as a spectrum, going from weak, which is associated with productivist action and thought, to strong, which is 'predicated on ensuring the protection of the environment, healthy farming and rural communities' (Wilson 2009: 270). The utility of employing a multifunctionality perspective can be illustrated by examining interviewees' attitudes to the management of two of Scotland's key quarry species: red deer and red grouse. With red deer (and, increasingly, roe deer) the multifunctionality problem can be expressed as a lack of predation leading to high numbers that inhibit vegetation regeneration. This conflict with the Scottish Government's aim to almost double tree cover by the second half of the century (Scottish Executive, 2006: 15). For, as a land-owning conservation body representative put it:

*'if you are trying to regenerate trees you need less than five deer per square kilometre... that's quite a low density and you have to walk quite a long way before you see any deer. Whereas a lot of estates that are managed for recreational shooting tend to have densities of between twenty and forty per square kilometre' (NH206).*

Thus, the multifunctionality challenge is to reduce the number of deer to a level whereby tree cover increases. No interviewee suggested that this should be done at the expense of hunting tourism. However, it is hard to see how this can be avoided entirely. For, as MacMillan and Leitch (2008) make clear, many hunting tourism providers seem to regard the maintenance of relatively high densities of deer as important for the provision of a 'shootable surplus'.

The multifunctionality problem for red grouse mirrors that for deer. For, as two land-owning conservation body representatives remarked, the management of heather moorland for driven red grouse shooting is 'effectively a grouse monoculture' (NH201; also NH213). It depends on 'very intensive predator control' (NH201) and the use of veterinary techniques such as dosing<sup>9</sup> (NH205) to try to maximise bird numbers. Such techniques are analogous to those used in productivist farming, where crop yields are maximised by the application of industrial fertilisers and pesticides. Indeed, the comparison is made explicit through the use of the word 'monoculture'. Some in the hunting tourism sector are also concerned about this aspect of grouse moor management. A land manager, for example, reflected that maintaining driven grouse moors means 'managing...with one species in mind' (NH214).

The key challenge, in multifunctionality terms:

*'is the established association between managed grouse moors and either poor breeding success or...absence of certain birds of prey. So, from a conservation point of view, there is some concern that there appears to be persecution of birds of prey taking place in areas commonly associated with grouse management' (NH202).*

<sup>9</sup> The putting out of medicated grit for red grouse.

An industry representative put the matter starkly:

*'so far no way has been found of making hen harriers uncontrolled co-exist with grouse in any number at all' (NH203).*

They are lobbying for the legalised control of some birds of prey in order that driven grouse shooting can be maintained. However, such efforts will be resisted. For example, while acknowledging that the presence of hen harriers can adversely affect the management of moorland for driven grouse shooting, a representative of one land-owning conservation body said:

*'the challenge for people that are involved with driven grouse moor management is to show that they can manage their sport sustainably and work within the law' (NH205).*

To be 'sustainable' in this context driven grouse moor management must be able to produce a landscape that is multifunctional in that it can support both driven grouse shooting and a population of birds of prey. Its ability to do so remains a matter for debate.

### **Social aspects of hunting tourism**

Interviewees made few points that can be placed unambiguously in this category. Most, such as the benefit that visitors get from 'iconic' upland hunting tourism landscapes containing 'bonnie purple heather hills,...and glens, and roaring deer' (NH212; also NH211; NH213), are hard to disentangle from economic aspects discussed in section 2d. Others, such as the health benefits of being outdoors and getting physical exercise (NH212; NH220), are not unique to, and are unlikely to be a significant social benefit from, hunting tourism. One interviewee suggested that, by encouraging participation from social groups that are currently under-represented in hunting tourism, the sector could take on a pedagogic role, teaching people about how Scotland's rural areas work and about the connections between livestock and food (NH220)<sup>10</sup>. However, this social benefit has yet to be realised to any significant extent.

The main social benefit mentioned by interviewees was that the employment provided by sporting estates can aid the survival of rural communities, particularly in remote areas (NH210; NH213; NH217; NH218; NH219). Some (e.g. NH214) made the point that the hunting sector has not shed labour at the same rate as other land-based industries, such as agriculture, thereby magnifying the sector's socio-economic importance in certain localities. However, one interviewee (NH214) also made the point that this increased reliance on sporting estate employment made such communities even more vulnerable to the vicissitudes of red grouse shooting: its most labour-intensive but unpredictable activity.

In addition, an employee of a statutory body stated that the management of deer is not as socially inclusive as it might be (NH217). This is significant because deer are a common resource in Scotland. Sporting rights confer entitlement to shoot deer only when they venture onto land over which those rights are held. Thus, many rural dwellers with a de facto interest in this common resource are not consulted over its management. However, there are signs that this may change in the future. Moreover, the growth of community ownership of sporting estates means that more local residents will become involved in consultations by virtue of being part-owners of the land.

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<sup>10</sup> This suggestion has also been made by MacMillan and Leitch (2008: 483).

### 5.3.3 Recent developments in the hunting tourism sector

It proved difficult, when analysing interviewees' discussion of recent changes in the hunting tourism sector, to identify trends from the responses. Various developments were identified, but none could be described as a trend, either because few interviewees mentioned them or because their impact was not considered to be widespread. Thus, while this section discusses recent developments under three headings – context, perceptions and actions– it does not suggest that they represent trends.

Several interviewees perceived a change in the political context for hunting tourism since the election of a minority SNP government in 2007. One government employee said that

*'the present administration are much more...positively disposed towards...country sports'*  
(NH207).

This view is shared by some who work in the sector (e.g. NH203; NH214). The reason that this change in Scottish government has been well received was touched on in section 2a. In sum, it relates to the perception that the Labour Party (which governed Scotland in coalition until 2007 and which still governs the UK) was perceived as being against hunting tourism (NH203), whereas the SNP are perceived to have a more positive attitude towards the requirements of Scotland's rural economy and the role of hunting tourism within it (NH203; NH214; NH219). However, one interviewee, while acknowledging that there had been a change in government attitude towards the sector, said that it had not been particularly significant (NH215).

Notwithstanding this positive development, one industry representative believes that the sector remains under siege from bodies whose ultimate aim is to outlaw hunting (NH203). They interpret the UK's ban on hunting with dogs, and the recent controversy over the use snaring for predator control, as battles in an ongoing 'attrition of what is...referred to by that side of the argument as blood sports' (NH203). However, none of the four representatives of land-owning conservation bodies, nor the interviewee who works for an animal welfare organisation, said that hunting ought to be stopped. Indeed, the latter explained that 'hunting is not something that we tend to get involved in because lawful hunting in this country tends to be to quite a high standard' (NH224). Nevertheless, it is notable that two land-owning conservation bodies deliberately forego income from hunting tourism (NH201; NH205). As one of their representatives stated, they are determined to ensure that culling and predator control undertaken on their behalf are done to the highest professional standards (NH205). This is, arguably, an implicit critique of hunting tourism, where the shot is taken by recreational hunters.

Within the hunting tourism sector probably the most notable development is the growing perception among estates that they need to increase their income (NH204; NH209; NH210). For example:

*"I think the pressure is there to try and...make the running of...rural properties more commercial...and more viable. And that's not just private landowners; I mean there are a whole host of people who now own land and estates who are trying to run businesses with those properties. So...I think there is a...drive coming from within'* (NH209).

Another interviewee welcomed this changing attitude as a departure from a still-prevalent problem, that: 'overall...the industry does not see itself as a commercial product' (NH210). An example of this changing attitude is a growing awareness of the need to market hunting tourism more effectively (NH210; NH214; NH219). This is a significant development in a sector that still tends to rely on repeat business (NH214; NH215; NH223) and 'word of mouth' recommendation (NH203; NH211; NH214; NH215; NH216;

NH218; NH221; NH225). Individuals in the sector are making increasing use of electronic media, such as the internet and e-mail, for marketing (NH210; NH215; NH225). However, their use is not without risk. A representative of an animal welfare organisation recalled a recent furore in southern Scotland

*'about an albino roe deer that the landowner had on the internet auctions for the highest rates to shoot it. That gained a lot of negative publicity' (NH224).*

These developments suggest that the hunting tourism sector is starting to look beyond its traditional activities and customer base. As it does so, some interviewees have decided that the sector has underpriced itself and that this needs to change. This suggests a growing awareness of the international market for hunting tourism (though sporting agents have long been aware of it). Three interviewees said that Scottish red deer stag hunting has been too cheap by international standards (NH202; NH209; NH214); something that one ascribed, at least in part, to a tendency to view them as 'vermin' (NH214), which is likely to have a negative impact on attitudes to its marketing.

This leads to the last group of recent developments: actions. For, as one industry representative remarked, a growing perception that red deer stag hunting has been underpriced has led, over the past couple of years, to some estates increasing their prices for high quality stags by more than fifty per cent (NH202). However, such a strategy is unlikely to succeed throughout Scotland. In the north and west conditions are not conducive to the production of trophy animals (NH220) and it is unlikely that the prices can be increased significantly there (NH216). Nevertheless, there is evidence that, at least in some areas, demand for red stag stalking exceeds supply. As one gamekeeper said: 'we could sell it twice over if we needed to' (NH218). In addition, there has been a recent increase in the marketing of hind stalking (NH209; NH214), and at least one other interviewee noted that there appears to have been an expansion in roe stalking (NH210).

By contrast, several interviewees noted that there has been a decline in driven red grouse shooting (e.g. NH202; NH212; NH220; NH225). A number of factors were cited as contributing to this: the enormous expense of managing a grouse moor (NH212); cold and wet spring weather (NH202; NH203; NH220); predation (NH202; NH203; NH205); increased tick numbers (NH216); and an approximately 'eight year cycle of peaks and troughs tied in with [infestation by] parasitic worms' (NH202). Whatever the precise combination of factors in each case, the general result has been a significant decrease in the ability of grouse moors to produce a 'shootable' surplus consistently (NH214; NH215). The economic sustainability of driven red grouse shooting is, therefore, doubtful (NH212). As one land manager remarked, when asked why their employer runs a driven grouse moor:

*'we do it because we always hope that we will get a bumper year at the grouse, because then we don't make a loss, but they don't happen very often' (NH214).*

While some estates can still afford to take such risks, this is unlikely to be the case for sporting agents. They survive on commission from sales of hunting tourism (NH225) and must make a considerable investment (in time if not in cash) in putting together tour packages (NH215) several months before that year's breeding success can be known. If grouse numbers are too low to shoot, their investment is lost. A sporting agent said that they have reduced the amount of driven grouse shooting they market for this reason (NH215). However, for estates that can still generate reliable driven grouse shooting, there may be an opportunity to increase income. For four interviewees took the view that the demand for grouse shooting comfortably exceeds the supply (NH202; NH203; NH210; NH214).

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A number of estates have sought to use grouse moors for other hunting tourism activities. One of these is the provision of walked-up shooting, which will usually include grouse but will commonly provide the hunter with a smaller, mixed bag (NH202). Others have sought to provide driven quarry by rearing and releasing red-legged partridges (NH202; NH210). It is not clear what hunting tourists make of this development. However, based on interviewees' stress on the importance and uniqueness of driven red grouse shooting, it could be argued that the Scottish hunting 'brand' might suffer over time. A more immediate set of problems associated with the large scale rearing and release of red-legged partridges is that, according to one industry representative, they draw in predators and can pass on disease to red grouse (NH202). Both outcomes will, of course, hinder any recovery of red grouse numbers.

Several interviewees commented that sporting estates, as well as exploring ways of getting more out of their existing resources and activities, have begun new enterprises. The main one mentioned was 'nature tourism' activities (NH202; NH204; NH208; NH209; NH211; NH212; NH214; NH217; NH220), including: Land Rover safaris, where people are driven around an estate to view animals; guided walks to view animals and, in some cases, their display areas; and 'camera stalking', which resembles deer stalking except insofar as the 'shot' is taken with a camera. The common feature of these activities is that they are non-consumptive. Although 'camera stalking' activities on some estates are also used as an opportunity to cull deer, where the customer has no objection (NH220). However, although nine interviewees highlighted the growth of nature tourism, it cannot be claimed to represent a trend among hunting tourism providers. For, although most interviewees could name some estates where nature tourism takes place, the same examples were cited repeatedly. This confirms a tourism promotion body representative's view that the number of enterprises providing nature tourism activities is small (NH204). Moreover, other interviewees pointed out that the success of nature tourism enterprises is location-dependent (NH212; NH214). Footfall is limited in remote rural areas and the right of responsible access means that people can undertake nature tourism activities on their own for free. So, it can be argued that nature tourism is only likely to be economically viable where a particular event can be more or less guaranteed (e.g. a black grouse lek) or where the site of the tour has good trunk road access and is within easy reach of urban areas.

#### *5.3.4 The future development of hunting tourism*

Interviewees identified several opportunities for the development of hunting tourism in the short to medium term. This section discusses these under two headings: opportunities to expand hunting tourism provision; and the potential for adding value to existing activities.

##### **Opportunities to expand hunting tourism provision**

There was disagreement over whether there are opportunities to expand hunting tourism provision in Scotland. Five interviewees took the view that there is little scope for additional provision (NH202; NH210; NH211; NH214; NH223), although in some cases (e.g. NH214; NH223) their opinion appeared to be limited to the area in which they work. Others claimed that there is under-utilised land that could be used for hunting tourism (NH203; NH219; NH225). Two interviewees said that publicly-owned land – notably forestry – does not currently host any hunting tourism (NH209; NH217). Because much of upland Scotland is unfenced (MacMillan and Leitch, 2008: 474), it is almost certain that deer culling takes place on such land and it could be that there is potential to open it to hunting tourism. However, the agency responsible for managing Scotland's public forestry did not participate in the research, so their view on this is not known.

A couple of industry representatives said that the decline of livestock farming in parts of Highland (SAC, 2008; see section 2c) presents an opportunity to expand deer stalking on former grazing land (NH202; NH203). Others, however, were more circumspect: one pointing out that any scope for such expansion is hard to predict because it would depend on the type and management of the habitats concerned (NH217). Moreover, domestic livestock have been integral to the management of sporting land. As noted in section 2c, the dipping of sheep was cited as a means to control the tick population (NH216), which influences the productivity of game birds (notably red grouse). Another interviewee noted that, where farmers have withdrawn sheep because they are no longer economic, some estates have reintroduced them as a habitat management tool (NH212). A third claimed that cattle can also play a role here, because they can muddy the ground, thereby encouraging heather regeneration (NH203). Thus, it would be overly simplistic to equate a reduction in livestock farming with a potential to increase hunting tourism. Any such expansion will depend on local conditions and will be difficult to predict.

While opportunities for an expansion of the amount of land managed for hunting tourism appear uncertain, interviewees identified potential for an increase in certain types of activity. Of these, the possibility of increased hind stalking was the most-mentioned, by eight interviewees (NH201; NH203; NH207; NH209; NH210; NH216; NH217; NH218). Hinds and calves are culled in the winter and in many areas the targets set by deer management groups go unmet (MacMillan and Leitch, 2008: 475). Some estates already offer hind stalking (e.g. that managed by NH214) and three interviewees suggested that there could be a market for hunting tourists to participate in the annual cull (NH203; NH210; NH217). A tourism promotion body representative was enthusiastic about this, arguing that it could be a way of bringing in new and younger hunters by offering them a challenging physical experience at reasonable cost (NH210). Others, however, were sceptical of the commercial potential of hind stalking. Two were not convinced that there is much of a market for it (NH207; NH208), partly on the basis of the short days and difficult conditions. Five also pointed to the technical difficulties of integrating hunting tourism with the annual cull (NH208; NH210; NH216; NH217; NH218). Key among these is the perception that the presence of hunting tourists would decrease cull efficiency by reducing the number of deer that could be shot on any particular day (NH217; NH218). However, one interviewee (NH218) took the view that this problem could be reduced if hind stalking rights were let to a third party.

Scotland's growing roe deer population was considered by four interviewees as presenting an opportunity for increased hunting tourism (NH207; NH210; NH213; NH220). Two of these noted that numbers are increasing in lowland areas and that there is scope for farmers to let stalking on a modest scale (NH210; NH213). The Scottish Government's policy of increasing tree cover by almost fifty per cent prompted two interviewees to identify woodland stalking (NH215) and the introduction of 'high seat' forest deer hunting (NH220) as future opportunities for expansion.

Fewer opportunities were identified for expanding the numbers of game birds (either individuals or species). One industry representative commented that it would be relatively easy and cost-effective for estates to rear and release additional pheasants (NH203). However, it seems unlikely that many will do so. Intensively managed shoots seem to be falling out of favour (with the partial exception of driven red grouse), partly because of their perceived environmental consequences (see section 2c) and partly because public opinion is perceived to be against them (see section 2a). In addition, one gamekeeper argued that, while an increase in pheasants was possible on their estate, their increased presence in the estate-owner's garden would not be tolerated (NH223). Although this is only one instance, the importance of the maintenance of such amenities should not be underestimated: as another interviewee noted, the garden is considered an important part of the heritage of the estate (NH214) and heritage, as has already been argued, is important to the hunting tourism sector. Two interviewees took the view

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that there is capacity to expand driven red grouse shooting (NH212; NH215). However, another was equally firm that this is minimal (NH210). Moreover, the considerable investment required, and the uncertainty of the harvest, make this an unpromising financial 'opportunity', though it may be that some very wealthy owners will continue to invest in driven red grouse moors as a means of maintaining or enhancing the capital value of their estate<sup>11</sup>.

Instead of increasing game bird numbers, the main opportunity in this part of the sector was considered to be increasing the amount of walked-up shooting (NH201; NH202; NH215). Bag sizes will be lower, meaning that such hunting may generate less revenue per customer. However, it is less intensive, in terms both of bird management (though it will not eliminate the need for red grouse management or the rearing and release of other species such as red-legged partridge and pheasant) and the number of staff required (NH201; NH215). In addition to being cheaper to run (NH202) and less intensive (and therefore potentially more likely to contribute to a multifunctional rural environment), walked-up shooting may also increase revenue from certain 'pest' species (e.g. wood pigeon and rabbit), as these will tend to form part of the bag (NH202). However, a disadvantage of this is that it might, as noted in section 2b, further reduce scope for the legitimate expression of local hunting culture.

### **Opportunities to add value to existing hunting tourism activities**

Interviewees suggested several ways in which the sector could add value to the provision of hunting tourism. These are summarised under three headings: changes to the way that the value chain operates; improved marketing; and the provision of new products and services.

Regarding the first of these, one land manager noted that they would be able to generate a modest rent by letting out the hunting rights on the estate they manage (NH214), thereby externalising the high risks and frequent losses inherent to some hunting tourism operations. Some institutional landowners already do this (NH206; NH222). However, the consequent loss of direct control over the land can be a significant disincentive to do this (e.g. NH214).

Another interviewee suggested that sporting estates could take responsibility for all aspects of hunting tourism delivery, thereby eliminating the use of, and the fees paid to, sporting agents (NH209). Some large estates will have the economies of scale required to make this worthwhile, and those with a solid base of repeat custom may not currently require others to do any marketing for them (e.g. NH223). However, market intermediaries play a significant role in the sector, as evidenced by the aim of one tourism promotion body to create a web portal where hunting tourists can check for available sport (NH210). Moreover, some estates do not pay agents' fees (e.g. NH220), the latter having to generate income in other ways (e.g. by charging a higher retail price than the estate does). Moreover, given the unpredictability of quarry numbers, and the uneven standards of customer service among providers, the involvement of intermediaries is unlikely to decline significantly.

As noted by MacMillan and Leitch (2008: 474), live deer are a common resource but dead ones are the property of the holder of the hunting rights over the land where they fall (i.e. they do not belong to the person who shoots them). Thus, four interviewees suggested that hunting tourism providers could add value to deer carcasses by processing and possibly retailing them (NH209; NH216; NH217; NH220). Numerous Scottish farmers have taken such an approach, processing and/or selling their produce directly to consumers through outlets such as farm shops and farmers' markets (Watts et al. forthcoming). Thus, is neither surprising nor unreasonable that some hunting tourism enterprises are looking to market venison

<sup>11</sup> The importance of capital values is mentioned by MacMillan and Leitch (2008: 482) and in section 2d.

(and other game) in this way. Some (e.g. NH220) already have arrangements with local butchers to process meat for them. However, one interviewee, with experience of adding value in this way, cautioned that profit margins 'are not huge' (NH216) and that economies of scale and, if retailing is attempted, a favourable location are essential if such an enterprise is to be sustainable economically.

Interviews also suggested that the sector could add value to existing hunting capacity by providing new products and services (NH201; NH209; NH211; NH213; NH216; NH220). These are summarised below, in no particular order. One industry representative suggested that the traditional means of selling hunting tourism, by the week for parties of a given size, could be changed in order to provide shorter breaks for those who are cash-rich but time-poor (NH202). However, this would increase administrative costs for providers, and probably require greater use of market intermediaries and better marketing. A land manager said that they would like to combine the provision of hunting tourism with other income-generating activities, such as: tuition for beginners; game management education; and crafts and outdoor activities (NH220). Another suggested that additional revenue might be raised from hunting tourists by allowing them to buy the carcasses of deer they shoot and charging to process them (NH211).

Lastly, eight interviewees saw scope for the provision of nature tourism activities based on the presence of game and other species, such as birds of prey, capercaillie and black grouse (NH202; NH204; NH209; NH212; NH214; NH217; NH220; NH222). It was noted in section 3 that some estates already do this; and the difficulties mentioned there limit the opportunities for its expansion. Chief among these were predicted low demand in remote areas (NH212; NH223) and the difficulties of running such an enterprise with existing staff resources (NH214; NH222). However, three interviewees said that there is an opportunity to secure a modest income from nature tourism activities by charging third party specialist operators a fee (effectively a rent) for taking nature tourists onto their land (NH211; NH214; NH222).

## 5.4 Conclusions: actions required to ensure a sustainable future for the hunting tourism sector

This section discusses the actions that interviewees claimed the hunting tourism sector needs to take if it is to remain sustainable in Scotland. The recommended actions are grouped under four headings: institutional and legal; economic; ecological; and social<sup>12</sup>. While these headings might seem to range more widely than the 'attitude environment' that is the focus of this report, they are presented in this way for two reasons. First, as they represent interviewees' views on the actions that the hunting tourism sector should take in order to remain sustainable, they are part of the 'attitude environment' for the sector, even if they refer to matters that would appear to be outside it. Secondly, the concepts of ecological, economic and social sustainability are mutually influential. Thus, to focus on interviewees' attitudes to the latter to the exclusion of their attitudes to the others seemed inappropriate.

### 5.4.1 *Institutional and legal environment for hunting tourism*

Interviewees suggested four changes to the institutional and legal environment for hunting tourism. Most contentious was the suggestion that control of currently-protected predators should be allowed. Two interviewees said that game bird management draws in additional birds of prey and that this 'surplus', if not controlled, threatens to make some hunting tourism activities unsustainable (NH203; NH211). However, this issue is one of the key 'battle lines' over the ecological sustainability of hunting tourism.

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<sup>12</sup> Although 'institutional and legal' are, arguably, 'social' issues, they are separated here for ease of reference.

Thus, campaigning for such control may provide ammunition for those who seek to erode the sector's social sustainability.

The second suggestion was that land managers should be allowed to conduct controlled heather burning after the current cut-off date of 31 March. One interviewee's (NH203) rationale for this was that, in some places heather often fails to dry out sufficiently to allow burning on the normal 8-10 year cycle. They said that, where this could be shown to be the case, permits to undertake later burning should be issued. This would, they conceded, adversely affect the breeding success of ground-nesting birds, but would be justifiable on the basis that it is a necessary part of habitat management for driven grouse shooting. However, given that the economic and ecological sustainability of driven grouse shooting are doubtful, the cost to the hunting tourism sector of being seen to push for such additional burning, in terms of negative publicity about the damage to bird life, may outweigh any advantages that success (presuming it could be achieved) could bring.

A third suggestion was that Scotland should make it easier for hunting tourists from abroad to bring firearms into the country (NH211). However, although UK procedures are cumbersome, the extent to which this represents a significant barrier for hunting tourists who wish to shoot in Scotland is not known. Moreover, firearms legislation is 'reserved' to the UK Government in London; the Scottish Government has no authority over it. Thus, research would be required before any judgement could be reached on whether it would be worthwhile for the sector to lobby for such a change.

#### 5.4.2 Economic sustainability of hunting tourism

If Scotland's hunting tourism sector is to be economically sustainable it must, a representative of a tourism promotion body argued, come to see itself as 'commercial' (NH210). As an industry representative noted:

*'[t]here are still...substantial numbers of entirely private estates owned by very wealthy people who simply invite their friends to shoot, to come and stay with them' (NH203).*

Moreover, several interviewees believe that a significant proportion of hunting tourism activities are run at a loss, primarily because they are considered a means of recovering part of the cost of providing such facilities for the estate's owners, friends and family. To a significant extent, therefore, the Scottish sporting estate is, as it has been for 150 years, one of the outstanding UK examples of the 'consumption countryside' (q.v. Marsden, 1999). For such estates what has been termed the 'hardness of commerce' (NH210) is likely to be absent from their attitude to hunting tourism.

Even where the provision of hunting tourism facilities has become an economic necessity, the 'consumption countryside' legacy lives on in the tendency to refer to tourists as guests. This has connotations that continue to influence the treatment of hunting tourists. For instance, it can:

*"breed a mentality behind how you deliver the sport, and if you think you [i.e. the hunting tourist] are very lucky to be here and say: actually, I will treat you how I would like to treat you thank you, rather than we are very lucky to have you on the estate buying our sport and providing money for the estate..." (NH210).*

This quotation illustrates the depth of the cultural transformation implied by the interviewee's argument (cited above) that hunting tourism providers must become 'commercial' in outlook. Moreover, as will

become clear below, it is no exaggeration to state that many, perhaps most, of the actions that interviewees regard as necessary if the sector is to be economically and socially sustainable stem from, or are related to, the need for such a cultural transformation.

Nowhere is this point better illustrated than with regard to the quality of service provided to tourists when they are not actually hunting (the quality of the sport itself was considered excellent). Seven interviewees said that there was considerable room for improvement in the non-sporting experience of hunting tourists (NH209; NH210; NH211; NH214; NH216; NH219; NH225). One sporting agent was particularly concerned about the standard of accommodation:

*“half the battle with a lot of the Scottish estates, the lodges [where hunting tourists stay], they are big old Victorian places and they need bringing up into the twenty-first century... There has got to be an investment in the infrastructure...People...don't want five star luxury but they want plenty of hot water, and somewhere warm and dry to come home to” (NH225).*

Some interviewees also expressed concern about the way in which hunting tourists were treated. One noted that it is not always easy to contact an appropriate person at the estate before arrival and that some owners view hunting tourists an encumbrance (NH210). Another, a gamekeeper, remarked that some colleagues would do well to improve their customer relations skills:

*“you don't really want some grumpy old Highland stalker who sort of hardly says a word from morning until night...And that's where the tourism aspect comes in, you have got to be able to relate to these people [hunting tourists] and make them feel welcome, and give them an experience that makes them want to come back” (NH216).*

There is a growing recognition of such issues within the sector and evidence that things are beginning to change. For example, one interviewee stated that training in customer service is now being given to gamekeepers (NH210). However, another industry representative was sceptical about the benefits of such training (NH211), suggesting instead that the improvement of accommodation and catering standards are more urgent.

Another area of customer relations that was said to require reform is marketing. Suggested improvements covered both its 'how' and 'what' aspects. Regarding the former, five interviewees called for higher quality marketing of hunting tourism (NH202; NH210; NH214; NH219; NH221). Comments ranged from the suggestion that the quality of promotional material required improvement (NH210) – although it should be noted that some sporting agents already provide high-quality marketing material (NH225) – to the necessity of providing accurate and easily-accessible information on what hunting opportunities are available (NH202). Informal mechanisms, whereby estates have a list of people whom they call if additional sport becomes available, and from among whom they will usually find a buyer for it, work satisfactorily in some cases (NH223); but the perceived requirement for a more formalised 'marketplace' has led one tourism promoter to seek to create a web-based 'shop window' for estates.

Regarding the 'what' aspect of marketing, three interviewees pointed out that the sector needs to recognise that it operates in an international market and that hunting tourists go elsewhere if they are not satisfied with what is on offer in Scotland (NH210; NH219; NH225). Two strategies were said to be required in order to adapt to this situation. First, the sector must start to provide variants on the kinds of hunting tourism available (NH210). As noted in section 4a, interviewees have identified new products (e.g. hind stalking, short breaks) in order to expand the market for hunting tourism. Nevertheless, several said that Scotland must focus on what makes its hunting tourism unique, and that these attributes

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should be emphasised in its marketing. These include: the quarry that are particularly associated with Scotland, notably red deer, red grouse and salmon (NH210; NH215; NH225); and the tradition of the Scottish sporting estate (NH210; NH219). There is an irony here, as this 'traditional' ethos has also been interpreted as a problem for the sector. However, what these two interviewees are suggesting is that the heritage aspect of hunting tourism should continue to be emphasised while 'modern' levels of service are introduced. Such a strategy is not without risk, however, as it could perpetuate some of the negative public attitudes to hunting tourism, for example with regard to its perceived 'elitism'.

### 5.4.3 *Ecological sustainability of hunting tourism*

Interviewees identified a number of actions that hunting tourism providers need to take to ensure that their activities are ecologically sustainable. Their comments have been grouped under three broad headings: general principles to which the sector must adhere; the management of deer numbers; and the management of intensive bird shoots.

Representatives of land-owning conservation bodies outlined three main principles by which the hunting tourism sector must abide if it is to be ecologically sustainable. Firstly, there needs to be evidence, on the land that it manages, of 'natural processes' (NH201) of woodland and tree line regeneration. For this to occur, they argued, it is necessary to reduce current levels of deer grazing. This issue is discussed further below, in relation to deer management. Secondly, any harvest taken must be proportionate to the sustainable population of the quarry species (NH205). This seems relatively uncontroversial and is likely to generate the response, from those involved in providing hunting tourism, that this principle underlies what they already do. However, the land-owning conservation bodies' representatives coupled it with a third principle: that the hunting tourism sector must operate without having a negative impact on other species (NH205; NH213). Given what has already been reported (e.g. in section 2a) on the controversies surrounding the killing of birds of prey and the use of snaring, it is likely that these aspects of ecological sustainability will remain a key 'battle line' between the hunting tourism sector and conservation bodies more widely (i.e. not just those that own rural land).

With regard to deer, some interviewees from the hunting tourism sector (e.g. NH201; NH206) agreed with representatives of land-owning conservation bodies that numbers are too high and require greater control. Indeed, there can be little doubt of this, as cull targets frequently go unmet (MacMillan and Leitch, 2008: 475). Although MacMillan and Leitch (2008: 482) suggest that landowners are reluctant to cull deer as they want to retain a 'shootable surplus' for themselves and/or hunting tourists, one land manager commented that reducing overall numbers will not necessarily mean a reduction in stags (NH216). However, whether this theory can be tested under current conditions is doubtful. For, as another interviewee remarked, the current approach to controlling deer numbers is ineffective (a point also made by MacMillan and Leitch, 2008: 475).

There is less agreement about the ecological sustainability of intensive-managed – and particularly driven – bird shoots. A representative of a land-owning conservation body took the view that there is little ecological justification for hunting red grouse, as they are not considered to be agents of habitat change (NH201). In addition, and as was noted in section 2e, the management of driven grouse moors is analogous to productivist agriculture; and although it produces some biodiversity benefits (e.g. for other ground-nesting birds), it can make little claim to fit with the three broad principles of ecological sustainability outlined above. Moreover, it remains unclear whether Scottish heather moorlands can sustain sufficient numbers of red grouse with the consistency required to prompt a revival in the number of

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driven shoots. However, one interviewee pointed out that more research is needed into what contribution heather moorland can make to carbon sequestration (NH217). If a significant contribution can be established, it could be argued that the habitat management that makes driven grouse shooting possible is more sustainable ecologically than appears to be the case at present.

#### *5.4.4 Social sustainability of hunting tourism*

A number of actions suggested by interviewees for making hunting tourism more socially sustainable are concerned with broad strategies of public engagement, but two noted that there is also a need for action to improve the social sustainability of hunting tourism at the local level. These are discussed in turn.

The hunting tourism sector needs to make improvements in the way that it puts its case, both to the public and to politicians (NH206; NH207). The recent controversy over snaring shows that much needs to be done here (NH207). Several interviewees also argued that the sector must better inform the general public about the benefits of hunting tourism: the ecological benefits of managing land for hunting (NH203; NH210; NH211; NH214; NH216); the social and economic benefits provided by the sector (NH203; NH211; NH214); and the environmental, economic and health benefits of consuming game (NH203; NH211).

In addition, two interviewees emphasised that the hunting tourism sector, and sporting estates in particular, should do more to empower rural communities. As one land manager put it, sporting estates need to demonstrate to their local communities that the money generated by hunting tourism makes a contribution to the local economy (NH220). Significantly, this comment was made by a land manager for a community-owned estate. Although few in number, such estates are, arguably, at the vanguard of attempts to break the traditional association between rural land ownership and the wealthy elite. This puts them at the 'sharp end' of the financial realities facing sporting estates, because they do not have substantial private wealth with which to subsidise loss-making activities. It was outside of the remit of these interviews to ask whether an estate owned by the local community will prove more sustainable than a traditional sporting estate. However, community ownership may make them more sustainable socially.

The other way in which it was suggested that sporting estates should empower local communities is in the way that decisions are made about deer management. A representative of a statutory body stated that rural residents, who live in landscapes shaped by deer, and onto whose land they may roam, have tended to be excluded from management decision-making concerning what is, in law, a common resource (NH217). This interviewee did not have a firm view on what form the inclusion of rural residents should take, so long as the outcome is that we 'share the benefit that those common resources bring as equitably as we possibly can' (NH217). As an example of this, they cited a community-owned estate which has set up a hind-stalking club, alongside its hunting tourism operations, so that local people can take a more active role in, and can benefit directly from, deer management on the estate. Such an approach would appear to have much to recommend it. It is clear, from MacMillan and Leitch's (2008) research, and from comments made by interviewees, that Scotland's 'deer problem' is unlikely to be solved without changes in the way that they are managed. Moreover, the interviews conducted for this report suggest that the change recommended by MacMillan and Leitch (2008: 481) – an increase in commercial hind stalking – is likely to have a limited impact. The conclusion of this analysis is that more radical action,

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in the form of greater community empowerment and involvement, is likely to be necessary if Scotland's 'deer problem' is to be resolved. Improved social sustainability is likely to be a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for the ecological sustainability of Scotland's deer population.

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## 6. Cross-Country Comparison on Social Sustainability Findings

**Colin Hunter, School of Geosciences, University of Aberdeen**  
**David Watts, University of Aberdeen**

### 6.1 Introduction

A key component of the work of the 'North Hunt' project involved gauging the 'social attitude environment', or conditions for social sustainability, for hunting tourism and its further development in Finland, Iceland, Scotland and Sweden. To this end, and as reported in detail in individual Country Reports, qualitative research, based on semi-structured key informant interviews, was undertaken in each country, across a wide range of stakeholder groups, including: hunting tourism entrepreneurs, local and recreational hunters, landowners and policy makers. There was considerable overlap between stakeholder groups and interests, perhaps particularly in Iceland and Scotland; for example, a landowner also acting as a hunter and hunting tourism business entrepreneur. Nevertheless, we are content that we canvassed a broad range of key informant opinion upon which to base the findings reported here and in individual Country Reports.

The purpose of this short review is to identify broad similarities and differences across national social sustainability findings, where these emerged with sufficient clarity. Such a comparison is a necessary prerequisite in, for example, examining the possibility of creating or proposing a northern European hunting tourism 'brand' or image, albeit at this stage largely from a social sustainability perspective.

The review begins by briefly contextualizing findings with reference to national characteristics and experiences of hunting and hunting tourism, as these may profoundly influence stakeholder group and wider attitudes towards the future growth of the hunting tourism sector. Reactions to the hunting tourism 'label' are then followed by an examination of how the general public may perceive hunting tourism. This leads on to a consideration of the major perceived impacts of hunting tourism, where the lens of social sustainability was used as a way of also incorporating economic and ecological issues into our interview discussions with key informants. Prospects, opportunities and conditions for growth in the sector are then compared across the countries involved, before concluding with an exploration of the overall implications of our findings for a northern European hunting tourism brand.

### 6.2 National Hunting and Hunting Tourism Contexts

Of central importance here is the extent to which each nation has a tradition of 'popular' hunting by locals (i.e. a hunting culture expressed through localised activities and within local community groups), and if/how this articulates with an established or emerging hunting tourism sector. Even at this stage, and before the description of our findings begins, it is clear that the nations involved show considerable diversity in these baseline characteristics; actually, a desirable feature when considering what lessons might be learned more generally from across these four nations.

Broadly speaking, Finland, Iceland and Sweden have strong 'popular' hunting traditions, with relatively high proportions of their populations regularly engaging in hunting either as a social/hobby activity or, to a lesser extent, for the provision of meat. To quote an entrepreneur from Finland:

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*“In our area people in general hunt and fish and derive their livelihoods from nature.”*

The changing demographic of these nations, however, suggests at least the prospect of diminishing interest in hunting over the longer term. The emphasis in Finland, Scotland and Sweden is often on larger animals; these being the most valued through hunting tradition. Hunting tourism is fairly clearly embedded as an economic activity within areas of Finland and Sweden, but is newer and less familiar in Iceland. By contrast, whereas Scotland has a long tradition of tourists ('guests') engaged in 'trophy' hunting on large sporting estates in the Highlands, there is little within Scottish tradition that now manifests itself as a widespread 'popular' hunting culture.

Key informant reactions to the label/descriptor of 'hunting tourism' therefore varied between nations, from being a generally familiar, well understood and accepted term (Finland, Sweden), to one that is new, with neutral associations (Iceland), to one that many in Scotland found inappropriate, preferring the term 'guest' to 'tourist' as more befitting of perceived attributes of cultural heritage (where, nonetheless, paying overnight 'guests' are of course still tourists according to academic definition). Potentially at least, the ground already appears prepared for markedly different between-country attitudes towards the impacts and opportunities associated with hunting tourism.

Additionally, the game species traditionally or peripherally associated with hunting tourism also differ to some extent across the four countries involved, and it is worth making the point early on that attitudes towards hunting tourism may vary within one country according to the particular game species in question; for example, perceived potential conflicts between tourists and local hunters may be more acute for some game species. Although a mix of bird, small mammal and large mammal species may be shot or trapped in each of the four countries, and on both privately owned and state/common land, the number of traditional, key species involved is small in the case of Scotland (red deer and grouse), but larger elsewhere, even extending to bear in Sweden. Indeed in Scotland, the tradition of large, privately owned sporting estates has further removed the main game species from access by local populations:

*“We do have shooting parties locally but the way that a customer has to present themselves to us really is as a group... at a commercial scale” (land manager, Scotland).*

### 6.3 Attitudes to Hunting and Hunting Tourism

Not surprisingly, given the traditions alluded to above, hunting was generally perceived by key informants to be widely accepted or tolerated amongst the general populations of Finland, Iceland and Sweden, as a facet of cultural tradition, although perhaps less so in Iceland and amongst urban dwellers more generally. Within Finland and Sweden in particular, key informants expressed the view that less tolerance or acceptance of hunting amongst some groups reflected a degree of ignorance of the need to, for example, manage the populations of certain species in order to prevent habitat loss and damage. Interestingly, the prevailing attitude in Scotland was perceived to be more likely to be negative towards hunting in general, due to its highly elitist associations, and in Scotland there does appear to be a real problem in many areas caused by overgrazing by red deer populations.

One should not, of course, infer in the case of Scotland a direct causal link between any dominant negative societal view of hunting and poorly managed red deer populations, as many factors influence the latter. Conversely, and as discussed in more detail in later sections below, the clear enthusiasm for hunting at least amongst many groups and individuals within the other countries involved in this study

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brings its own potential problems; not least, the nature of the relationship (perceived or real) between local 'traditional' hunters and hunting tourists/tourism entrepreneurs.

Turning now to key informant perceptions of societal attitudes towards hunting tourism more specifically, it may be too much to claim that generally accepting attitudes towards hunting translated into the perception of general societal acceptance of hunting tourism. Rather, the perception of our key informants was expressed perhaps rather more weakly, with public opinion reported as broadly neutral or indifferent. Often, and more simply, the perception was that the general public remains unaware of hunting tourism activities and opportunities. For example:

*"Most people probably have very limited knowledge of hunting tourism and thus are indifferent on the matter" (policy maker, Sweden).*

Findings suggest a more pervasive negative attitude in Scotland, and also considerable sensitivity and scepticism in Finland, although certain types of hunting tourism and for some game species (e.g. high volume shoots for grouse and ptarmigan) were thought to be viewed unfavourably in the other countries too. The view of a Scottish land manager illustrates this point:

*"Large volume game shoots where the game have been reared... especially to shoot are a bit difficult to justify and explain to people... I think huge... shoots should be a thing of the past."*

Where key informants expressed their own personal attitudes towards hunting tourism products in general terms, it does seem fair to suggest that the dominant attitude was one of 'cautious optimism', qualified by the view that the sector is, and should continue to be, a small, niche market or segment; a consumptive form of broader nature-based tourism (although hunting tourism was not generally regarded as a form of nature-based tourism in Scotland). Building on this nature-based theme, many key informants in Finland, Iceland and Sweden, appeared to stress the importance of the holistic experience involved in hunting tourism, and the opportunity or requirement to 'showcase' their respective wilderness environments and the potential benefits of interacting with nature that hunting tourism offers. In other words, it was felt that hunting tourism products should be about more than just the hunt or kill:

*"Hunting-guiding-guest is crucial, but the whole product; lodging, guiding, dogs, food, other services is necessary to productify [sic] the product and make it real hunting tourism" (entrepreneur, Sweden).*

Indeed, it was quite frequently suggested that those involved in promoting and providing hunting tourism should encourage realistic expectations with regard to the conditions and likely success of the hunt.

Clearly, specific characteristics of hunting tourism products are critical in determining the form and extent of associated impacts, both positive and negative, and perceptions of impact are now considered in the following section.

## 6.4 Major Perceived Impacts of Hunting Tourism

The summary provided here relates to both impacts that were perceived to be occurring now and impacts which may arise in the future should the hunting tourism sector expand. The issues that arose for contemporary and future impact were the same in any case to a very large extent, and interviewees often conflated responses when answering questions on impact.

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### 6.4.1 Positive Impacts

There appeared to be strong cross-country consensus for positive economic benefits from hunting tourism. Although key informant responses normally and primarily referred explicitly to perceived economic benefits, these are also, of course, of benefit in social terms (e.g. in maintaining the populations and cultural integrity of small rural communities). Key contributions to the socio-economic sustainability of remote rural areas were perceived to be in supporting or enhancing income and employment, through, for example, the diversification of rural tourism activities and business products. Another key perceived benefit was in extending the normal tourist season, allowing the more prolonged and efficient use of tourist infrastructure, such as holiday accommodation. Appropriate hunting tourism products were also thought by some to act (potentially) as a catalyst in improving not just the breadth of tourism-related opportunities for development in an area, but also the quality of service provision to tourists, carrying the prospect of higher economic returns from rural tourism.

Other perceived beneficial impacts, albeit emerging less strongly in a cross-country sense, were actually quite diverse in character, extending beyond narrow economic impact concerns. For example, a sense of local pride in being able to attract (particularly overseas) visitors to an area, perhaps linking in with the strong feeling reported above that hunting tourism should provide the opportunity to showcase the natural, wilderness beauty and cultural heritage of local environments. There was also a sense that hunting tourism could make an important contribution to the control of game species populations, helping to maintain habitats for the wider benefit of society.

More prosaically, it was felt by some participants that hunting tourism allowed better access to hunting facilities and services for locals, bringing in money directly to local hunting clubs to help maintain their facilities, and thus membership. There was even the perception that the presence of hunting tourism may help to promote more 'professional' attitudes amongst some hunters, with improved understanding of acceptable hunting practices and safety issues. Indeed, and perhaps in Iceland in particular, there was a perception that the growth of hunting tourism might act as a catalyst for the development of improved wildlife management frameworks more generally.

### 6.4.2 Negative Impacts

The issue that came across very strongly in Iceland, Finland and Sweden was that of possibly strained relationships between local hunters (or the local hunting culture/tradition) and tourist hunters or hunting tourism entrepreneurs. To some extent, this can be viewed simply as a (potential) clash of the old and the new (tradition versus entrepreneurship), but, critically, it is also a very clear demonstration of the perceived existence of social as well as ecological limits to the development of hunting tourism, often compounded by a feeling of 'ownership' of local environments and their natural resources by resident hunters, even where local hunting grounds are on common or state-owned land. The importance of respecting what were described as "social key biotypes" was emphasised by one Swedish entrepreneur:

*"If consideration is taken to the local people's recreational areas...it [hunting tourism] will usually be considered positive."*

Whilst there was little evidence found of major problems currently in the relationship between local hunter and tourist hunters/entrepreneurs, very real concerns were raised with regard to the future expansion of the hunting tourism sector. These concerns can be summed up as a loss of opportunity for

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local hunters to pursue their traditional way of life. The precise mechanisms that might lead to such a loss of opportunity varied within and between countries, but included both direct and indirect effects, for example: the over-commercialization or over-production of hunting tourism leading to increased general competition for, and scarcity of, at least some game species; spatial restrictions on areas open to traditional hunting; and, increased requirements to obtain, or competition for, hunting permits or licenses leading to new or increased financial costs for local hunters.

In Scotland, by contrast, where there is little by way of a tradition of local hunting groups or clubs, negative associations with hunting tourism were frequently based on perceived ecological and habitat management issues, although there was considerable disagreement apparent amongst interviewees. Whereas some key informants argued that hunting tourism caused some estate owners and managers to overstock the land with red deer preventing forest regeneration, others argued that there was a 'public good' derived from moorland management practices on private estates in maintaining Scotland's almost iconic heather moors (e.g. regular burning to support grouse populations). Elsewhere, negative ecological impacts were more associated with potential changes to natural habitats caused by over-hunting, although there were fears expressed in Sweden about the possible over-population of moose by landowners in order to provide shootable surplus. In Finland, concern was expressed about possible over-population by some species should local hunting decline, although there appeared to be considerable faith in the system of game and habitat management already in place.

Concerns over the public acceptability of high volume, driven (grouse) shoots also emerged in Scotland, and were echoed elsewhere (e.g. Iceland) amongst many interviewees. In Scotland, such concerns may be linked to a generally less favourable attitude towards hunting, and the maintenance of large private 'sporting estates' that were not perceived by some interviewees to be economically viable and necessarily the best way to sustain the socio-economic integrity of local communities. Speaking of the need to subsidise hunting provision in Scotland, one land manager explained that:

*"You can subsidise it either by... being very wealthy and having money to burn... or by having a... group of businesses where there are enough profit centres to carry the loss centres, of which the sporting [hunting] enterprise may well be one."*

A more widespread economic concern across the nations involved was the potential for greater economic leakage out of local communities should hunting tourism become commercialised in ways that was not well integrated with local community services and skills.

### 6.4.3 A Summary Reflection on Perceived Impacts

Whereas there was near universal cross-country consensus amongst our interviewees of the current and/or potential socio-economic benefits of hunting tourism, the broad outcome for perceived negative impacts was perhaps more complex, and it is important not to over-generalise from findings. Although very clear and similar concerns emerged in Finland, Iceland and Sweden about hunting tourism resulting in the possible loss of opportunity for local hunters to pursue traditional lifestyles, there were nuances or details in the findings for each country that should not be forgotten.

Indeed, a general lesson that could be drawn from national findings is that both attitudes to hunting tourism and the negative impacts associated with hunting tourism products and businesses varied not just within and between national stakeholder groups, but were even finely tuned according to particular game species. Thus, for example, particular sensitivities and/or a greater potential for conflict between

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traditional and tourist hunters emerged with respect to ptarmigan in Iceland, grouse in Finland, and moose in Sweden. Taking Finland as an example of such diversity of opinion, it is clear that not all hunting clubs for instance adopt the same attitude and approach to engaging with hunting tourism entrepreneurs, with factors such as the age distribution of members an important influence on attitude to hunting tourism and, hence, perception of impact. Individuals may also hold complex attitudes to hunting tourism:

*“Favouring entrepreneurs will result in conflict, there is no way round that. The hunting clubs are the last active associations in these villages. And they need certain structures and the like... there are some visitation arrangements and they are good” (hunter representative, Finland).*

Additionally, a geographical dimension to attitudes towards hunting tourism and its perceived impacts was evident in findings from Sweden, and Sweden also provides a good example of a situation where an existing legal framework (in this case relating to reindeer husbandry on state land) has very direct consequences for the potential to expand hunting tourism activity, with commercial hunting a lower priority than reindeer husbandry or the needs of local hunters.

However, it would have been unrealistic to have expected wholly, or even predominantly, consistent impact (and attitude) messages to have emerged within and between the stakeholder groups, and across the nations, involved in this study. That said, some common benefits and problems associated with the development of hunting tourism have been confirmed or identified through our impact work. But, our investigation also demonstrates the need for national and local sensitivities to be reflected in particular hunting tourism development strategies, and there will always be a dualism or tension between what can be generalised, internationally, and factors that are more specific to national and local conditions. Ultimately, sustainable hunting tourism can only be operationalised successfully as a community-based endeavour.

## 6.5 Prospects and Opportunities for Growth

The dominant view, expressed across all four nations, was that there is undoubtedly considerable scope for expanding the hunting tourism sector. This must be a central message to be taken away from our investigation. To some extent, both broader demographic and land ownership/use factors evident across the nations involved present an improving trend of opportunity upon which more directed and specific action can be taken to expand the hunting tourism sector along the lines described above; for example, a decline in the number of traditional hunters, and the local hunting culture, presents an opportunity to attract new participants to hunting through the provision of hunting tourism experiences. A notable degree of consensus also emerged as to some necessary, or at least desirable, features of an expanding hunting tourism sector, with a key theme throughout being that hunting tourism should somehow ‘add value’ to both local communities and the tourist experience.

In particular, it was felt that hunting tourism should remain a small, niche market, allowing providers to offer products that are both highly professional in character (e.g. using very well trained, local staff), but also sensitive and adaptable to local attitudes and needs, building, for example, on local services and capacity in tailoring and providing suitable products. Thus, it was thought possible to develop high quality experiences (including accommodation and catering), attracting high spend, perhaps especially foreign, tourists with low rates of economic leakage out of local areas. At the same time, however, there was also thought to be scope to diversify the product range, with some forms of hunting tourism aimed more at

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the domestic market. Indeed, our findings suggest that the growth of the hunting tourism sector need not be reliant just on an expansion of bespoke and highly tailored 'hunting holidays', but also through the provision of, nonetheless well-managed and highly professional, shorter hunting trips taken as part of an individual or family holiday, with greater emphasis on the provision (expansion) of associated high quality services for hunters and other family/party members.

Almost irrespective of the precise character of the hunting tourism experience, there was a persistent view amongst our participants that hunting tourism should be marketed more holistically; i.e. as an opportunity to interact with (and learn about) nature 'in the wild' and the local culture. There is much in common here with the broader concept of 'ecotourism' (e.g. Hill and Gale, 2009). Although the consumptive use (killing) of wildlife would not fall within most definitions of ecotourism, a comparison with the principles of ecotourism is appropriate because of its recognition of the importance of respecting both ecological and socio-cultural limits to the development of tourism. The broad philosophical principles of sensitivity to local natural and cultural environments that underpin the theory and (to a lesser extent) practice of ecotourism, appear particularly appropriate to the brand of hunting tourism that our key informants wished to see emerge: small scale, community-based enterprises that build upon, indeed are embedded within, the cultural and environmental attributes of particular locations.

Moreover, our findings suggest a willingness, indeed expectation, on the part of many existing hunting tourism entrepreneurs to operate within such boundaries. In the words of an entrepreneur from Finland:

*"[Hunting tourism] must unquestionably follow the terms of the Finnish hunting culture... like we want hunting to be conducted."*

In this regard, it is important to note the widely proffered view that an expansion of the hunting tourism sector need not be achieved only through new business start-up, but could also occur, at least in part, through the growth and diversification of existing hunting tourism businesses.

Turning now to more detailed perceptions of specific opportunities for expansion in the hunting tourism sector, it is perhaps at this point that particular national and local sensitivities and differences come more to the fore. That said, opportunities were consistently framed in terms of a drive for diversification and enhanced professionalism and quality (including the better marketing of hunting tourism opportunities). For example:

*"[Expanding hunting tourism] is a matter of arrangement, and in my opinion, if handled correctly, there is potential for expansion, diversification and also a shift into a more customer-driven focus" (hunter representative, Finland).*

The greater use of different or currently peripheral game species, linked to the better retailing of game meat in some cases, also featured. In Finland, for example, possibilities that emerged were the hunting of 'non-trophy' game species such as some deer species, hare and beaver, especially for the domestic market, with hunting by bow also mentioned as a means of promoting new forms of hunting tourism. In Sweden, the possibility of multiple leases on the same area of land was raised, allowing tourists to hunt some species, such as bear and smaller game, whilst leaving the hunting of moose to locals. Combined hunting and fishing products were also proposed in Sweden, as was the expansion of guest hunting as part of a local hunting team. In Iceland, new or expanded opportunities were perceived by respondents to exist in relation to several alternative game species, including the pink-footed goose, arctic fox and reindeer, whilst in Scotland proposals included an increase in red deer hind stalking, and the hunting of roe deer as an alternative to red deer.

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As well as opportunities, there were also barriers that quite clearly emerged within the nations studied. It is perhaps particularly difficult to generalise here, given the different regulatory contexts and systems involved, but key perceived difficulties related to issues such as access to suitable hunting rights/grounds, and uncertainty, year-on-year, over game species numbers and the response of local and national authorities to population fluctuations making it difficult for hunting tourism businesses to plan ahead and/or establish themselves.

## 6.6 Conclusions and Implications

Given clear differences between the nations involved in terms of, for example, the current nature and extent of hunting tourism activity, it is perhaps surprising that strong cross-country commonalities emerged from our research. These were particularly evident with respect to perceived (socio-)economic benefits of hunting tourism, threats to traditional hunting opportunities (especially for the Nordic countries involved), and in terms of a vision for the character or attributes of a successful (sustainable) hunting tourism sector.

Although more detailed research is certainly required, perhaps particularly directed at better understanding sub-national, local, contexts and attitudes for developing hunting tourism, findings reported here do clearly suggest that, overall, the attitude environment for expanding the hunting tourism sector is quite positive. However, it is also clear from findings that the sector must develop in ways that respect national and local sensitivities, whether these relate to cultural tradition or ecological impact, and, indeed, build upon and embed local social and environmental attributes into the very character of hunting tourism products. For example, potential conflict between tourists and local hunters may be more readily avoided should growth in the hunting tourism sector focus on less socially sensitive species at the local level.

It is appropriate, therefore, to conceptualise hunting tourism not just as a consumptive form of nature-based tourism, but also as a sector that aspires to enact key principles of ecotourism concerned with respecting limits to growth. Indeed, reference to ecotourism is also appropriate in terms of developing a brand image or product typology for hunting tourism. Views expressed by our key informants clearly point to a sector that remains small-scale; more 'up-market' than 'mass market', where adding value to both the tourism product(s) and the well-being of local communities is an imperative for appropriate forms of development.

Discussion must continue as to what the nations involved in this study can learn from one another, but it is already apparent that Scotland's hunting tourism industry, for example, could learn much from those in Finland and Sweden should changes in land ownership and land use patterns provide appropriate hunting tourism development opportunities. Conversely, the other countries may, particularly perhaps in marketing terms, benefit from the emphasis placed in Scotland on the idea of the hunting tourist as a 'guest' rather than simply as a customer, helping to promote a brand image of, and for, the tourist as a 'favoured visitor' engaging with places with special features of natural and cultural heritage. Of course, in Scotland, the emphasis on 'guest' is intimately linked to a highly elitist form of hunting tourism and debates over rights to land and access to game resources. Nonetheless, the 'guest' connotation may well resonate well with tourists and local communities elsewhere in the sense of how hunting tourists are incorporated, albeit temporarily, into the social and economic fabric of local communities.

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This uniqueness of place must, paradoxically, be an important component of the northern hunting tourism brand image. Whilst it is possible based on what we have learned to set out clear and generalisable principles for the development of hunting tourism (such as it being small-scale, up-market, and embedded within existing local socio-economic attributes and activities), specific opportunities to develop appropriate products are driven by specific local (and national) perceptions and needs; for example, in relation to the identification of suitable game species and in the management of access to hunting grounds.

Thus, sustainable hunting tourism in the context of a northern hunting tourism brand implies both a common doctrine and different national and local development trajectories. In determining specific pathways for the development of hunting tourism, the priorities of local communities must inform decision making, with the establishment of inclusive forums for discussion and debate, such as the reference groups formed as part of the North Hunt project, a key element in this process.

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## Authors in alphabetical order

Bjarnadóttir Eyrún J. Icelandic Tourism Research Centre, Iceland  
ejb@unak.is

Dahl Fredrik, Wildlife, fish and environmental studies, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden  
fredrik.dahl@ekol.slu.se

Hunter Colin, School of Geosciences, University of Aberdeen, Scotland  
c.j.hunter@abdn.ac.uk

Keskinarkaus Susanna, University of Helsinki Ruralia Institute, Finland  
susanna.keskinarkaus@helsinki.fi

Matilainen Anne, University of Helsinki Ruralia Institute, Finland  
anne.matilainen@helsinki.fi

Sigursteinsdóttir Hjördis, University of Akureyri Research Centre, Iceland  
hjordis@unak.is

Sjöberg Göran, Wildlife, fish and environmental studies, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden  
goran.sjoberg@adm.slu.se

Watts David, University of Aberdeen, Scotland  
d.watts@abdn.ac.uk

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