



NORDIC HUNTING

– Securing Nature and Wildlife
for Coming Generations



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Hunting is for everyone

Hunting is a common activity in the Nordic countries. Around one million Nordic hunters – nearly 5% of the total population – go hunting each year. In general, people from all backgrounds and professions have the opportunity to enjoy the pleasures of hunting.

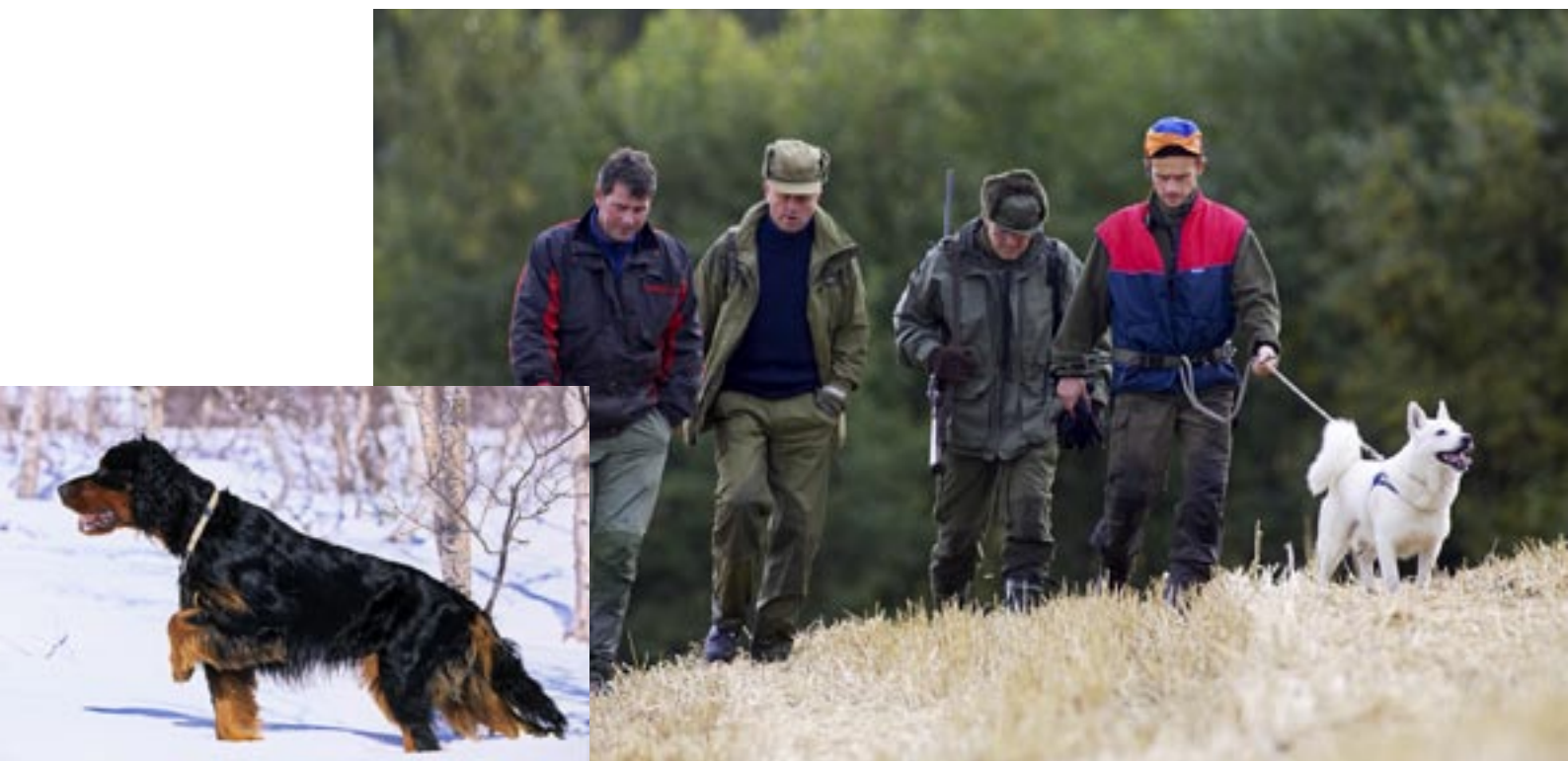
Hunting is part of the Nordic culture and national identities. Nordic hunters are very well organized, and are heavily engaged into wildlife management. Most hunting is done in public areas, both on land and at sea, under the auspices of a fully administered system that is either low cost or completely free. Hunting is part of many peoples' everyday life, and generates income for those living in the vast, sparsely populated areas in the north. Many consider hunting to be part of their quality of life.

The majority of Nordic hunters are men, but women are increasingly showing greater interest. For instance, every fourth person who passes the hunters' exam in Sweden is a woman.

- The Nordic countries include Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland

- The total population of these Nordic countries amounts to approximately 22 million people

Approximately one million Nordic hunters – nearly 5% of the total population – are involved in hunting each year.



Nordic hunting is well organized

The national hunting associations currently organize approximately 80 percent of all Nordic hunters. In Finland this figure is 100 percent.

The high number of organized hunters enables a constant flow of information about the latest developments in conservation, hunting legislation and wildlife knowledge.

Hunting associations are among the oldest organizations in the Nordic countries and the Nordic Hunters' Cooperation (NHC) was initiated in 1897. Most of the hunters' organizations hold public commission, obliging them to provide services to national authorities.

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Nordic hunting – safeguarding nature

Nordic hunters acknowledge that they have a positive interest in maintaining suitable habitats for wildlife – for both game species as well as wild fauna and flora.

Nordic hunters, therefore, contribute enormous voluntary resources to restoring and maintaining wetland habitats for waterfowl each year.

Efforts are also made to restore and maintain other wildlife habitats on farmlands. Tens of thousands of hectares are planted and cared for in order to ensure safe feeding and cover for wildlife.

In addition, hunting provides an important source of revenue to local land-owners, which motivates them to maintain quality habitats for game and other species.

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Nordic hunting is wise use

The Nordic hunting model is based upon the philosophy of using natural resources wisely.

Wise use implies that hunters harvest the surplus from game population resources in a sustainable manner. Surpluses exist during the autumn and early winter seasons for most species, which coincides with the seasons in which they are harvested.

Big game hunting, moreover, is based on biological data regarding game population sizes and tolerances for harvesting. Such systems typically involve specific quotas for the number, sex and age of animals that can be harvested by hunters.

● Independent polls have shown that app. 80% of the general public in the Nordic countries support or are neutral towards hunting.

Wise use implies that hunters harvest the surplus from game population resources in an ecologically and socially sustainable manner.



Nordic hunting - a natural part of wildlife management

Hunters participate in the monitoring of game populations and thereby contribute directly to their proper and scientific management.

They are prime providers for censuses of, for instance, moose, deer and large carnivores, and they provide data of all harvests. The comprehensive cooperation between wildlife authorities, research communities and hunters ensures a sound professional platform on which to base management decisions.

Nordic hunting organizations conduct many management-oriented projects on behalf of management agencies, and they contribute to wildlife-related research. For instance, Swedish hunters annually donate around 405,000 euro on a voluntary basis. Out of the fees they pay for their hunting licenses another 1,900,000 euro is earmarked for wildlife research purposes.

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Nordic hunters cooperate nationally and internationally

Cooperation with other stakeholders is crucial to the Nordic hunting associations.

The best and most lasting solutions are achieved when there is a broad consensus between all stakeholders and organizations, as other friends of nature apart from hunters have legitimate and equitable interests regarding conservation.

The cooperation involves both the relevant authorities and other organizations, i.e., landowners, nature conservationists and animal welfare societies. Many of the hunting organizations have a public commission to organize training of hunters, wildlife monitoring, research, and service to the authorities – arrangements sometimes labeled “co-management.”

Finally, the Nordic hunting associations coordinate their national and international efforts. Conservation knows no boundaries, and the basis for hunting and conservation is increasingly influenced at the European and the global level through international agreements and legislation – and via political relationships between nations.

Cooperation with other stakeholders is crucial to the Nordic hunting associations.



Nordic hunting – a safe and responsible passion

Any citizen who wishes to hunt in Nordic countries must first undergo compulsory training and pass a written examination. All those who wish to hunt large game species must also pass a shooting proficiency test.

The objective is to ensure that hunting ethics and morals are high and that game is taken without unnecessary suffering. Emphasis is placed upon such aspects as judging proper shooting distances. Research in Denmark has shown that hunter discipline regarding shooting distances helps reduce crippling rates in waterfowl.

Education and training are therefore two of the most important activities for the Nordic hunting associations. They educate many thousands of hunters, wildlife managers and other nature enthusiasts annually on topics ranging from hunter safety and conduct to biology and conservation.

Much emphasis is placed on safety and best practices, and the responsibility of the hunting team leaders is highlighted through special high-level training courses. Serious hunting accidents are therefore extremely rare.

The objective is to ensure that hunting ethics and morals are high and that game is taken without unnecessary suffering.



Nordic game meat: Quantity and quality

Game meat is an important staple in the households of many hunters.

In Norway, game meat accounts for 3% of total meat consumption. In Finland, hunting contributes more than 8 million kilograms of meat per annum, and in Sweden 70% of all households enjoy game meat at least once a year.

Hunters also derive particular pleasure from dining on meat they themselves have brought to the table. The hunters, their families and their guests can thus enjoy food harvested from coastal waters, woodlands, or alpine areas. Game meat is of the highest quality, both in terms of its ecological and health benefits.

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Organization

All larger hunting associations in the Nordic countries are organized in the Nordic Hunters' Cooperation (NHC). These include:

- Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management
- The National Association of Huntsmen (Sweden)
- Danish Hunters' Association
- The Icelandic Hunting Association
- Hunters' Central Organization (Finland)
- Finnish Hunters' Association
- The Norwegian Association of Hunters and Anglers

NHC members cooperate closely and have common strategies and policies relative to Nordic matters and international issues. The NHC also functions as the Secretariat for the Nordic region of the Federation of European Hunting Associations of the EU (FACE).

Nordic hunting associations place great importance on cooperation between the 36 European countries represented in FACE (the voice of 7.5 million hunters within the EU). NHC members are also very active in the CIC (The International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation) and strive to attain the greatest possible coordination and cooperation between hunters worldwide. The NHC is also a member of the IUCN (The World Conservation Union) and is actively involved in major international issues and conventions.

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