

ABSTRACTS

SESSION 1: HUNTING TOURISM: SOCIAL, ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

North Hunt: Cross-country comparison on social Sustainability findings

David Watts and Colin Hunter, University of Aberdeen, Scotland

A key aim of the North Hunt project was to examine the 'social attitude environment', or conditions for social sustainability, for hunting tourism in Finland, Iceland, Scotland and Sweden. To do this, qualitative interviews were conducted in each country with a wide range of stakeholders. This presentation reports on that research. It begins by contextualizing the findings with reference to national characteristics and experiences of hunting and hunting tourism. It then considers stakeholders' perceptions of: the hunting tourism 'label'; how the general public views hunting tourism; the main impacts of the sector; and its prospects, opportunities and conditions for growth. The presentation concludes by exploring the implications of its findings for a northern European hunting tourism brand.

Evaluation of the use of expert models in game management

Fredrik Dahl and Maria Hörnell-Willebrand, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden

Conservation and management of wildlife populations requires information on the population status. This is especially important in areas where commercial hunting takes place to ensure that hunting is sustainable, and to provide information on population status of game species before hunting begins. A challenge for professional hunting entrepreneurs is to find the resources to monitor the game populations using scientific and quality assured methods.

Expert models are judgments of game density and/or population changes by people having a special interest and/or competence in the hunted species and populations. This study evaluates the use of expert models as an alternative to existing methods. We evaluated how expert judgments of game density and population changes related to population estimates based on established scientific methods for; willow ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*) which exhibits large annual fluctuations, and moose (*Alces alces*) which shows more stable population dynamics.

Within species the variation in expert opinion was larger within each expert group than between expert groups, indicating that no expert group was better in assessing population density than another. The variation was considerable smaller for moose than for willow ptarmigan. Expert's opinion of willow ptarmigan density and population change did not match official survey results. Expert assessment of moose densities however closely matched aerial survey results. This study shows the difference between expert opinion between small and big game species. For game species with relative small difference in density between years, expert opinion is a promising method for assessing population status before the hunting season starts.

Is the demand for hunting increasing or decreasing? The effect of demographic changes on the number of local hunters

Susanna Keskinarkaus, University of Helsinki, Finland

The Northern part of Finland is particularly significant as the most popular wilderness and hunting areas are located in the North where local residents have the right to hunt in their own municipality. Northern areas are experiencing a population decline due to an aging rural population and depopulation as more people move to urban areas. The presentation will show the rate and magnitude of these demographic changes affecting the number of hunters in the Northern Finland. Current hunting activity is estimated by combining demographic and hunter data. Municipal- and age-group level data show that in some municipalities up to 30% of inhabitants hold a hunting license (compared to the national average of 6%). Combining hunting



activity and demographic data suggests that the number of hunters may decline by up to 11% at the regional scale, whereas at the local scale the decline in hunter numbers may exceed 20%. The declining number of local hunters does not equate to a declining demand for hunting as the ecological surplus is distributed to hunting tourists. Changes in the demographic composition and number of local hunters are expected to affect the supply and demand of hunting tourism, hunting traditions and game management.

Hunting in Iceland - Wildlife management, birds and mammals

Steinar Beck, Environment Agency of Iceland, Iceland

The presentation will look at hunting rights and licences in Iceland, and examine the Icelandic 'hunting card' system. The talk will conclude with an overview of species and game management in Iceland.

HUNTING for sustainability

Justin Irvine, Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, Aberdeen, Scotland

HUNT is an interdisciplinary international research project, financed by the EU's 7th Framework program, looking into the wider meaning of hunting in the 21st century. Using hunting as a lens, HUNT aims to explore general aspects of the relationship between humans and nature, seeking ways to reconcile conflicts between people over hunting practices.

Session 2: Natural Heritage & Hunting

Glorious grouse, biodiversity benefits, and economic enhancement

Adam Smith, Director for Scotland, The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, Scotland

The shooting of red grouse in Scotland is a cultural phenomenon which has evolved over the last 150 years. An average of 5-10 red grouse are shot per km² annually, resulting in total bag sizes of around 250,000. Research and practice show that grouse harvest rates are sustained by land managers enhancing food quality, reducing predation pressure and minimising disease impacts to maximise grouse densities.

This suite of management activities has wider biodiversity effects. We found that it has saved over 900km² of heather moorland from loss to forestry and grassland in the last 50 years, protecting and enhancing Scotland's 75% global share of heather moor habitats and moorland species. Populations of upland wading birds and woodland grouse are also protected and enhanced by predator control, grazing management and muirburn (heather burning) for red grouse.

Direct income from shooting, spending on these management operations and wider income streams mean that grouse shooting remains a key economic driver for remote rural communities. We have found that it supports farming and tourism at little or no cost to the public, potentially contributing at least £30 million to Scotland's GDP per annum.

These public benefits or ecosystem services are derived from investment in rural management primarily for a sporting return. Those investing recognise a loss minimisation, capital growth model is often the most likely economic outcome and therefore seek to invest over periods exceeding 15 years. If public benefits are to be retained policy support for the activities which support this investment pattern need to be encouraged in light of contemporary changes in ecosystem pressures on grouse productivity.



Developing hunting tourism in Scotland

Fiona Newcombe, Research and Data Manager, Deer Commission for Scotland, Scotland

The purpose of the presentation is to give an overview of deer hunting tourism in Scotland. Deer are a key part of the imagery of Scotland. Deer hunting, referred to as stalking, is an iconic part of Scottish culture, particularly in the Highlands. Deer stalking in Scotland is closely linked to land ownership, and has particular social acceptance issues which will be presented. The presentation focuses on red deer, although reference will be made to sika, fallow and roe deer.

In the first part of the presentation, deer management is explained, including counting, fencing, feeding, planning, the stalk, gralloching and processing the carcass. The roles and motivations of the stalker, land owner, guests, Deer Management Groups, sporting organisations such as BASC Scotland and the Deer Commission for Scotland are described briefly. Current issues in wild deer management are discussed, and the national deer strategy Wild Deer: A National Approach are presented.

The second part of the presentation focuses on the development of deer stalking as a business. It includes the Best Practice Guidance and events. The work of the Country Sports Tourism Group in developing wild deer stalking is described. Changes in supporting activities such as wild deer watching and the growth of venison markets are also presented. The role of research, learning from other experiences and issues such as communications and language will also be discussed.

Supporting sustainable deer management in the Cairngorms National Park

Will Boyd-Wallis, Senior Land Management Officer, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Scotland

Wild deer are integral to the many ecosystems that make up the landscapes of the Cairngorms National Park. "Supporting sustainable deer management" is one of the seven Priorities for Action in the current Cairngorms National Park Plan. The challenge of developing a collective understanding of 'sustainable deer management' and ensuring the long term viability of the deer and their habitats in the National Park is being met by the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group. The group (CDAG) comprises Deer Management Groups, community, public agency, NGO conservation and sporting/hunting representatives. CDAG has agreed a set of principles that help to define a code for 'sustaining the deer resource'. The principles acknowledge the functions of all interest groups in the management of deer. They are based on a spirit of respect for: i) the public interest in deer management, ii) the value of varied and contrasting estate objectives across the National Park and iii) the significance of the key role that landowners play as stewards of the countryside.

Mar Lodge Estate – A case of discord or harmony with conservation on a Highland sporting estate?

Chris Hewitt, Property Manager, Mar Lodge Estate, National Trust for Scotland, Scotland

Mar Lodge Estate has been a Royal Hunting Forest, the Epitome of a Victorian sporting estate, then a sporting tourism estate with a hotel. In 1995 it was bought by the National Trust for Scotland in order to conserve its natural and cultural assets as well as ensuring accessibility to the public for recreation and enjoyment.

At the time of its purchase the stalking of deer was a major source of income to the estate and the population was about 4,500 Red deer. Throughout the estate, however, there were signs of overgrazing by deer and it was recognised that deer numbers had to be reduced dramatically for habitats to begin the slow process of recovery. At the same time the conditions of the purchase required the tradition of Highland sport to be continued on the property and to demonstrate the harmony of conservation and sport.



Deer numbers have been significantly reduced now to a level of about 1,650 on the estate as a whole. There are visible signs of the recovery of the habitats and sport, in the form of stalking, grouse shooting and fishing continues to provide significant income for the estate.

This transition has not been easy and is still not fully complete. We have had to address the changing of attitudes for the management of the estate, public perceptions of the change, the acquisition of new skills and the development of new ways of promoting sport and sporting packages.

Developing reindeer hunting: From recreation to hunting tourism

Gauti Jóhannesson, Advenutra ehf, Iceland

Following an introduction of the reindeer in Iceland, the talk will focus on how reindeer hunting has evolved from a recreational activity where the main objective was to provide meat, to commercial hunting tourism for local and foreign hunters. I will also discuss the obstacles the hunting tourism industry is facing in introducing and maintaining our businesses. Finally, I discuss the realised and potential influence of hunting tourism on rural communities and areas.