



Social Sustainability of Hunting Tourism in northern Sweden

Fredrik Dahl & Göran Sjöberg
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Aim of the study

- To find out the opinions of four critical interest groups towards hunting tourism: 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

Presentation Outline

- Aim of presentation
- Information gathering approach
- Introduction – defining hunting tourism
- Results:
 - Defining hunting tourism
 - Game species/context
 - Attitudes to hunting/hunting tourism
 - Major perceived positive impacts
 - Major perceived negative impacts
 - Trends
 - Prospects/opportunities for growth
- Concluding overview/implications

Aim of Presentation

- To provide an overview of Swedish findings from WP2 of North Hunt project on the 'attitude environment' relating to hunting tourism
 - Key findings from Sweden
 - Draw out key similarities and differences between national stakeholder groups

Information Gathering Approach

- Essentially *qualitative* approach
- Interviewees drawn from four *key stakeholder groups*; hunting entrepreneurs, landowners, hunters and hunting organisations and policy makers
- Findings based on 18 *key informant interviews* (face-to-face or by phone) using an agreed/common interview schedule
- Some informants belonging to several groups – overlap between groups

Introduction

- When hunters travel they become hunting tourists. The definition of a hunting tourist in previous Swedish studies is;
 - “ a person who leaves his/hers usual environment (home or workplace) to hunt. The period away from home must be at least 24 hours. 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 hunting tourist (Alatalo 2003)”

Results

Definitions of hunting tourism

- Stakeholders answers agree to a large extent with Alatalo's (2003) definition of hunting tourism
- Main definitions, independent of stakeholder group belonging, include travelling (abroad or within the country), with the main purpose of the travel being hunting
- Independent of stakeholder group most interviewees agree that hunting tourism is a part of nature tourism
- Several interviewees, independent of stakeholder group, argue 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 natural and non-dramatic in northern Sweden

Results

Definitions of hunting tourism (cont.)

- Most interviewees argue that “real” hunting tourism will have to include a full arrangement
- Selling just a hunting permit for a day or two to a private hunter is generally not considered “real” hunting tourism, even if it would include spending the night due to the hunting

“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”

Results

Game species

- Largest today – willow ptarmigan in the mountains and moose in the forest land
- Capercaillie and black grouse increasingly important
- Brown bear, waterfowl, mountain hare, red fox and wolf are mentioned as complements or future potential

Results

General attitudes to hunting tourism:

- **Hunting** in general: familiar and accepted as part of (national and local) culture
- **Hunting tourism:** A majority of the interviewees, independent of stakeholder group belonging, believe the public is carefully positive towards hunting tourism
- Although;
"Most people probably have very limited knowledge of hunting tourism and thus are indifferent on the matter"
- 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 gas-, food-, and lodging sales, and/or creating local job opportunities
- More nature tourism – less shooting probably positive among the public according to several stake holders

Results

Stakeholders attitudes to hunting tourism:

- Among the interviewees, only the hunters were slightly sceptical towards a development of hunting tourism
- The main argument being a fear of more expensive hunting for the local hunters
- In rural Sweden, hunting maintains economic, social, and cultural values.
"Hunting is a necessity, part of the livelihood for many local hunters in northern Sweden"
- In general though, hunters did not have anything against selling hunting if it does not affect the local hunting negatively
- Even though the hunter group could not entirely conform to the strict commercial thought 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"
- Commercial hunting is very positively looked upon among the land-owners, the policy makers and of course the hunting entrepreneurs, but similar to the view of the hunters, only as long as it do not affect the local hunting negatively

Results

Major perceived positive impacts:

- The main socially positive consequence of hunting tourism is a positive rural development
- Income can be generated for hunting entrepreneurs. Positive economical effect on the trade with bi-products such as gas, food and lodging
- Management of game and habitats for hunting by the hunting tourism companies provides public goods at private expense

Results

Major perceived negative impacts:

- If 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 especially more expensive hunting for the locals
- Too much hunting can result in less game which will also affect neighbouring areas
- Too many hunters gathering can have a negative impact on other rural activities in some cases, such as ptarmigan hunting in the mountains affecting the reindeer herding negatively

Results

Trends

- Policy makers – negative in mountains
- Entrepreneurs – negative in mountains & forest
-although higher quality today
- Land owners – positive, but slow increase
- Hunters – no change, but positive trend if taking
“non commercial hunting tourism” into account

Results

Growth prospects/opportunities:

Land owners

- Main conditions for the increase are that there is access to free land to lease, but even so there also have to be qualitative entrepreneurs and they are largely missing today
- Local hunters are decreasing – will possible free land for hunting tourism
- Forest companies and state are in general positive towards hunting tourism – development of rural areas, income for entrepreneurs and higher profit for forest companies (although marginally)
- Today from 0-2% of forest companies land are let to hunting entrepreneurs (depending on which company), they foresee that maximum 5% can be let in the close future because there is still a high demand for hunting leases from local hunters
- Careful selection of entrepreneurs– high quality essential, both ecologically and socially
- Even though positive towards hunting tourism – not at any price, may be more valuable with a positive relationship with local hunters

Results

Growth prospects/opportunities:

Policy makers

- Long time rules and regulations most important to solve
- Hunting tourism no big role in the County Administrative boards rural development plans today – although mentioned
- The County Administrative boards in the three northern counties neutral to positive towards hunting tourism
- Having to choose – local hunters will, however, always be prioritised over hunting tourism, and reindeer husbandry will be prioritised over both (by law)
- Will support, but not lead the development
- Some kind of common organization or council that gathers the entrepreneurs would be positive, this view is also mentioned by other stakeholder groups

Results

Growth prospects/opportunities:

Entrepreneurs

- The land issue is most important to solve, maybe by setting a certain part of the land aside for hunting tourism, at least on the state owned land
- Similar to the policy makers the entrepreneurs also argue that long time rules and regulations are necessary for a sustainable system
- Land owners are the main stake holders according the entrepreneurs
- The business may work with only a landowner – entrepreneur relationship, but will work much better involving also the local community as well as other stakeholders in a positive relationship
- Entrepreneurs also suggest more products have to be developed to make hunting tourism in northern Sweden more interesting

Results

Growth prospects/opportunities:

Hunters

- Hunters see a potential for increase for the hunting tourism companies if the game is sufficient and the quality of the arrangements are high
- Usually the relationship between local hunters and hunting tourism enterprises are very good
- Hunting tourism can increase in the future if the hunters can be convinced that it is a good idea, but not otherwise
- Many of the conditions for an increased 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 hunters is constantly improving

Concluding Overview

- Main definition of hunting tourism, independent of stakeholder group belonging, include travelling (abroad or within the country), with the main purpose of the travel being hunting. At least 24 hours away from home
- Most interviewees however argue that “real” hunting tourism will have to include a full arrangement

“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”

Concluding Overview

- Among the interviewees, only the hunters were partly sceptical towards the development of hunting tourism
- The main argument being a fear of more expensive hunting
- 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, but similar to the view of the hunters, only as long as it do not affect the local hunting negatively

Concluding Overview

- The problem most urgent to solve for a future positive development, according to several interviewees from different stakeholder groups, was to combine the local hunting and commercial hunting in a positive way
- Social acceptance is regarded as important as the biological resource
- Several interviewees, independent of group belonging, argued that exclusive, expensive, high quality arrangements with few guests is the solution
- Two main conditions for development of the sector were put forth by almost all interviewees; access to hunting grounds and professional entrepreneurs
- Entrepreneurs suggest setting a certain part of the land aside for hunting tourism

Concluding Overview

- Hunters see several possibilities of development;
 - One being the traditional hunting tourism enterprise, where a few companies sell high quality hunting arrangements in exclusive areas to minimize the conflict with local hunters
 - However, also other forms of “hunting tourism” (according to the wider definition of hunting tourism), such as exchange hunts and hunting as a guest in a hunting team, are getting increasingly popular and are likely already today having a higher economic turnover (socioeconomic value) than hunting arranged by professional entrepreneurs
- Legislation and organization of the hunting on the state owned land in the mountains has to be resolved

Thank You!