



Best Practices in Sustainable Hunting

A Guide to Best Practices From Around the World



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Contents

Best Practices in Sustainable Hunting

Foreword, <i>Jan Heino</i>	1
Preface, <i>Dr. Rolf D. Baldus, Gerhard R. Damm and Kai-Uwe Wollscheid</i>	3
Recreational Trophy Hunting:	
What do we know and what should we do?, <i>Gerhard R. Damm</i>	5
Wildlife: Can it Pay its Way or Must it Be Subsidized?, <i>Dr. Rolf D. Baldus</i>	12
Trophy Hunting for Endangered Species, <i>Dr. Ute Grimm</i>	17
Sustainable Hunting Tourism – Position Paper of the CIC Tropical Game Commission	20
Position Statement of the IUCN Caprinae Specialist Group on Trophy Hunting	23
Position on Trophy Hunting of the WWF South Africa	25
Sustainable Conservation and Grassroots Realities – Lessons from the Conservation Programme in Torghar, Balochistan, Pakistan, <i>Luc Bellon</i>	27
Conservation and Use of Wild Ungulates in Central Asia – Potentials and Challenges, <i>Stefan Michel</i>	32
Trophy Hunting in Sub Saharan Africa: Economic Scale and Conservation Significance, <i>Peter A. Lindsey</i>	41
Namibia Communal Area Conservancies, <i>L. Chris Weaver and Theunis Petersen</i>	48
Hunting as a Tool for Wildlife Conservation – the Case of Sheep Hunting in Mexico, <i>Raymond Lee</i>	53
CIC – International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation	59



FOREWORD



Wildlife management and conservation can provide excellent opportunities for rural development. Sustainable use of wildlife significantly contributes to local and national economies in many parts of the world, and I very much welcome the initiative to share best practices and experiences in this area, launched by our colleagues from the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC).

As the leading UN agency in international efforts to combat hunger and poverty, FAO helps developing countries and countries in transition to improve their agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices and to ensure good nutrition for all. In pursuit of rural development, food security and poverty alleviation, FAO supports its member countries in formulating policies for conservation and sustainable use of renewable natural resources through informed participatory processes.

FAO's involvement in the wildlife sector has evolved over the years. FAO pioneered internationally funded field projects on wildlife and protected area management in the 1960s and maintained this momentum well into the 1990s. Between 1975 and 1996, FAO guided the implementation of more than 200 projects related to wildlife and protected areas in 85 countries.

Over time, the complexity of conservation activities has increased inexorably. FAO's activities have changed considerably, including a reduction of field work. However, simultaneously our work now encompasses formulation of policies and legislation, involving all relevant stakeholders and working with local communities to meet their needs. Given its neutrality and recognized expertise in policy, institutional and legal matters, FAO is particularly able to support member countries in wildlife policy and law development. Large international non-governmental organizations have significantly increased their involvement in projects over the years and are now the major implementers of field activities.

In February 2008, member countries attending the sixteenth session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission and its Working Party on Wildlife and Protected Area Management requested FAO support and assistance in, among others, examining the potential for sustainable use of wildlife and creating enabling environments for allowing nature tourism, sustainable hunting tourism and other forms of wildlife use. The delegates also strongly confirmed the importance of wildlife for rural development in Africa and its relevance in the delivery of FAO's mandate in food security and poverty alleviation.

FAO believes, in keeping with the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the UN Millennium Development Goals, that partnerships are the way forward for delivering sustainable development and poverty eradication. We are increasingly working with partners in our wildlife-related activities, as in our other areas of work.

Our cooperation with CIC provides a good example of the mutual benefits that can be drawn from such partnership. The organizations complement each other in developing an enabling framework for sustainable use of wildlife and in developing wildlife and hunting policies and laws. FAO benefits from CIC's extensive membership, broad experience and diversity in practical wildlife management. CIC members provide valuable inputs for the fine-tuning and finalization of FAO's work on wildlife policy and legislation. A joint

network of specialists from CIC and FAO is improving exchange of information and sharing of policy expertise. FAO then provides a neutral forum for discussing the best practices and policy options.

I am pleased to see our collaboration increasing over the years. Our collaboration in addressing wildlife issues in Central Asia, dating back to the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit in 2002, has been very fruitful. This publication on Best Practices in Sustainable Hunting Tourism, available both in English and Russian, is one of the concrete results. I again sincerely thank CIC for taking the initiative to publish for the first time a compilation of best practices in sustainable hunting. I hope it will significantly contribute to sharing of knowledge and experience across the world, to serve decision-makers and practitioners in developing the wildlife sector in their countries.



Jan Heino
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PREFACE

The United Nations Member States adopted the Millennium Development Declaration with the objective to significantly reduce worldwide poverty until the year 2015. This requires increased economic growth, more jobs, higher incomes and better opportunities, in particular for the poor and in disadvantaged areas. However, development should not be pursued at any cost: The environment needs to be protected, harmful emissions must be reduced, biodiversity should be maintained and forests and wildlife ought to be conserved in accordance with national legislations and the provisions of International Conventions.

Urbanization is proceeding quickly and more and more people live far removed from nature. Yet all over the world there are men and women who are still depending upon wildlife for survival, and their interactions with nature and wildlife form important elements of their cultures and lifestyles. Traditional and recreational hunting supports the livelihoods of them.

Fortunately wildlife is a renewable resource. It can be utilized forever, provided the use is sustainable. Many game species have a remarkable vitality and can tolerate even high utilization levels. Fortunately the reproductive cycle of most game species is short, especially when compared to trees, which need decades or even centuries to grow after having been cut. Wildlife populations can recover quickly, even where commercial overexploitation occurred, provided the surviving populations kept their genetic diversity and the respective habitats remain intact.

There are many ways how wildlife may be used; these could be subsistence, commerce or trade, recreation and tourism. In all cases such wildlife use takes place on land. Wildlife use consequently competes with other forms of land use. Land is nearly everywhere a scarce commodity and growing populations increase the demand for land. There have been many very well meant efforts advocating the total protection of wildlife, yet none of those considered the social and economic consequences for the people living on the land with or close to wildlife. It is a fact that total protection makes wildlife lose its economic value; consequently wildlife comes out second best in the competition for the most appropriate land use.

International Conventions and Agreements, like the “Convention on Biological Diversity” and the “Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity”, confirm the right and the need for the sustainable use of natural resources. Contrary to the opinion of many, sustainable use does not rule out the protection of wildlife and natural environments, e.g. in the form of national parks. Resource use and human interventions, particularly in those areas, need to be minimized, however. But, in most protected national parks, wildlife populations have to be managed to balance their impact on other species and on vegetation. These management processes may include hunting. Sustainable use and long term protection of wildlife do not contradict, but complement each other; they are two sides of the same coin. Together they constitute “conservation”, as per the definition of the World Conservation Union.

Of all wildlife uses, hunting tourism is of particular economic relevance. Hunting has the potential to generate extraordinarily high revenues with a minimal take-off of individual game animals – usually older male specimens. Hunting tourism can therefore develop into an economic and social force of considerable impact in underdeveloped rural, remote and agriculturally marginal areas. At the same time, a significant potential for abuse and malpractices is inherent in hunting tourism: corruption, fraud, overshooting of

quotas, bad management, loss of wildlife numbers and biodiversity. There are examples of bad practices from virtually all continents.

On the other hand there are also many best practices, which show the opposite, and which bear witness to the positive impact hunting of tourism on wildlife, habitats and the people who live with wildlife and manage it. Therefore, hunting tourism is widely accepted as an integral part of rural development. However, every effort has to be made that hunting and hunting tourism are practiced in a proper and sustainable way in order to fulfil its role as a positive management tool and powerful incentive! Hunting can generate revenue for conservation and at the same time provide economic and social benefits for the rural populations who share the land with wildlife and bear its direct and indirect costs.

The discussion and development of best practices in recreational hunting and hunting tourism are a significant responsibility of the hunters. Hunters have to demonstrate to the non-hunting public that they are conscious of the consequences hunting brings about and that they accept responsibility for the wild resources they are using.

The *International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation* (CIC) is today active in 83 countries as an international, politically independent advisory body. The membership includes governments (32 Member States around the world), hunting and conservation associations, universities, experts in a variety of research fields and well as dedicated private individuals. The CIC plays an active role in the worldwide efforts to keep hunting sustainable and to develop hunting, and especially sustainable hunting tourism, into a powerful instrument for conservation, human development and poverty alleviation.

Hunters and other conservationists are discussing best practices and synergies between hunting and conservation already for many years; the dialogue has produced positive outcomes, uncovered negative trends and assisted in countering undesirable developments. Yet the work is far from over. These efforts were by-and-large divided by language barriers, and therefore rather limited in their outcomes and potential influence. On one side of the world, English is being used as principal language, whereas in hunter-conservationist circles of vast areas of Europe and Asia issues are being discussed in Russian only. We may conclude that important developments and information in the one or other language are unavailable to those who do not speak both, thus limiting a solution-oriented dialogue and an exchange of ideas across continents.

Hunting tourism plays an important role in the Russian Federation, the states of the Caucasus, in the republics of Central Asia and in some other states, where Russian is used as *lingua franca*. The discussion on *best* versus *worst practices* in hunting and hunting tourism, the exploration of methods on how to optimize benefits and minimize impacts and how to use regulated sustainable hunting as a tool for conservation needs to overcome the language barrier.

In order to stimulate the dialogue between the English and the Russian speaking part of the world and in order to create a basis for the interchange of ideas, the CIC and the FAO jointly present this booklet with relevant articles about the interactions of hunting, conservation and governance in a Russian English edition.

A future project will aim at publishing a booklet with papers available only in Russian for the Anglophone world. We are confident that this first effort will assist in enlisting the future help of native Russian speakers in order to promote a rewarding dialogue across the language barrier.

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