



NORDIC HUNTING

– Securing Nature and Wildlife
for Coming Generations



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



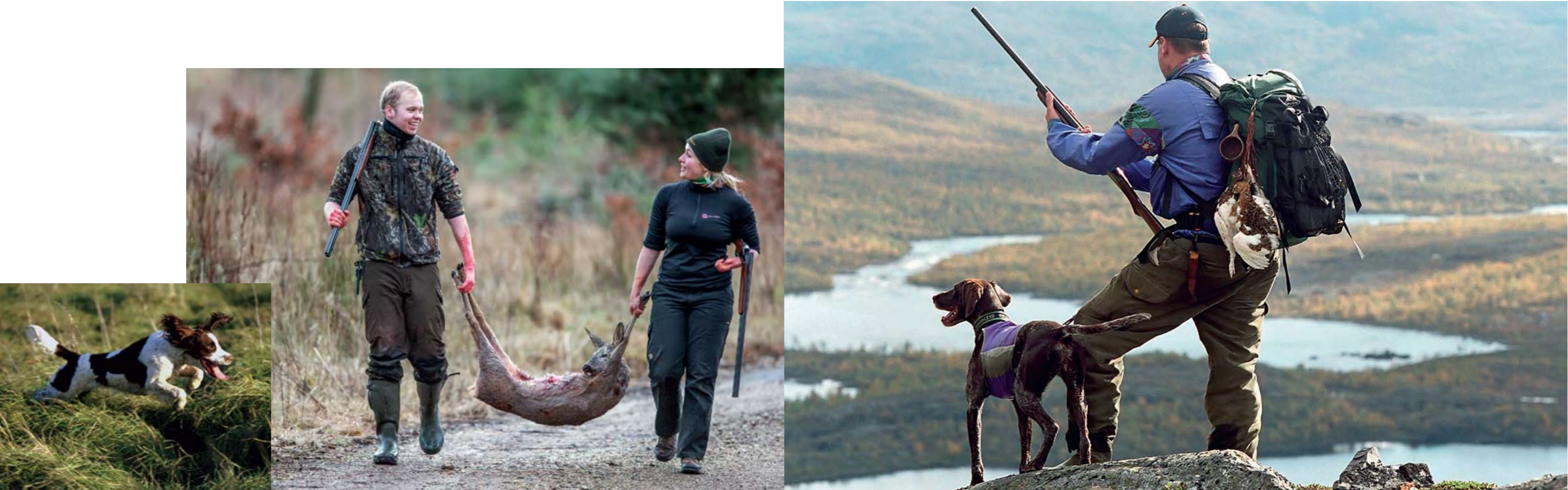
Nordic hunting – enriching people's lives

Every year more than a million Nordic men and women enrich their lives through hunting. For them it is more than just an activity, it is a natural and healthy passion that offers a welcome break from the bustle of daily life, bombarded by emails, mobile phone calls and the ceaseless demands of the modern world. All this is left behind when, as a hunter, you become part of nature, and all your senses become alive as a whole new world opens up to you.

In earlier times game meat formed a major part of the diet of many families. Today game remains a natural and sustainable food that is not only important to those who hunt but also to the whole rural economy. And for the individual hunter, there is a great reward in the pleasure of serving your family and friends a delicious, healthy and totally natural food that you have harvested yourself.

Add to this the very substantial contribution of hunters to wildlife management, biodiversity and conservation and you have the key to understanding the significance of hunting to Nordic societies.

Every year more than a million Nordic people – nearly 5% of the total population – enrich their lives through hunting. 6-12% of them are women.



Hunters and society

Large forests and wide open spaces dominate the Nordic countries' landscape and hunting is deeply embedded in their culture and national identity. Although hunting is carefully managed in public areas it costs little and is often free. As a result hunting is generally available to everyone, regardless of their social background or profession.

In rural areas hunting is often an integral part of daily life; indeed, for many people it is the main reason for living far away from the cities. In addition, hunting creates jobs and generates local income.

Meanwhile a new trend is emerging – the average hunter is no longer born into a hunting family with its roots in the countryside. Increasingly new hunters are drawn from the cities where they already have a well-established life before they decide to apply for a hunting licence. Their new activity will then take them far from home, and so hunting increasingly forms a link between town and country.

The Nordic hunting associations stress that hunters must be aware of their social responsibility and ensure that their activities are not only widely accepted but are also recognised as making a positive contribution to conservation.

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Nordic hunting – safeguarding nature

Hunters are great conservationists. Across the Nordic countries thousands of local clubs and a huge number of individual hunters work to protect wildlife and habitats at both local and regional levels. Hunters happily admit that they themselves benefit from nature conservation, but their efforts have a much greater significance for society as a whole: they help to ensure a richness of biodiversity, and strengthen the populations of both game and non-game species.

No other group has the same number of qualified and dedicated people on the ground, and this unique capacity is widely acknowledged in the Nordic countries. As a result hunters' associations are responsible for providing special services to national authorities, which may include monitoring species, the reduction of alien invasive species and tracking animals wounded in road and train collisions.

As a result 85% of the populations of Nordic countries have a neutral or positive attitude to hunting.

Hunters' conservation efforts ensure that future generations can enjoy and appreciate nature and will inspire them to conserve it.



Nordic hunting is wise use of natural resources

Nordic hunting is based on the wise use of natural resources. Wise use implies that hunters harvest the surplus from game populations in a manner that is sustainable. This is possible because many game species are able to reproduce at a high rate.

For example a pheasant hen can lay a clutch of ten eggs, and if all the eggs hatch and all the chicks survive in each clutch the result would be over 121 million pheasants in just ten years. However, in nature's tough world most individuals die of disease, predation and weather. Under the right conditions hunting replaces these natural controls, because for most species surplus populations exist during the autumn and early winter, which coincides with the seasons when they are harvested. As a result populations will not diminish over time and game meat can be enjoyed on a sustainable basis.

For large game animals wise use is ensured by using biological data on population sizes and tolerances to determine the appropriate level of hunting. Comprehensive co-operation between wildlife authorities, research communities and hunters ensures a sound professional platform on which to base management decisions.

All harvested game is either used for human consumption (meat, fur) or is culled for management purposes, such as the need to limit invasive species.

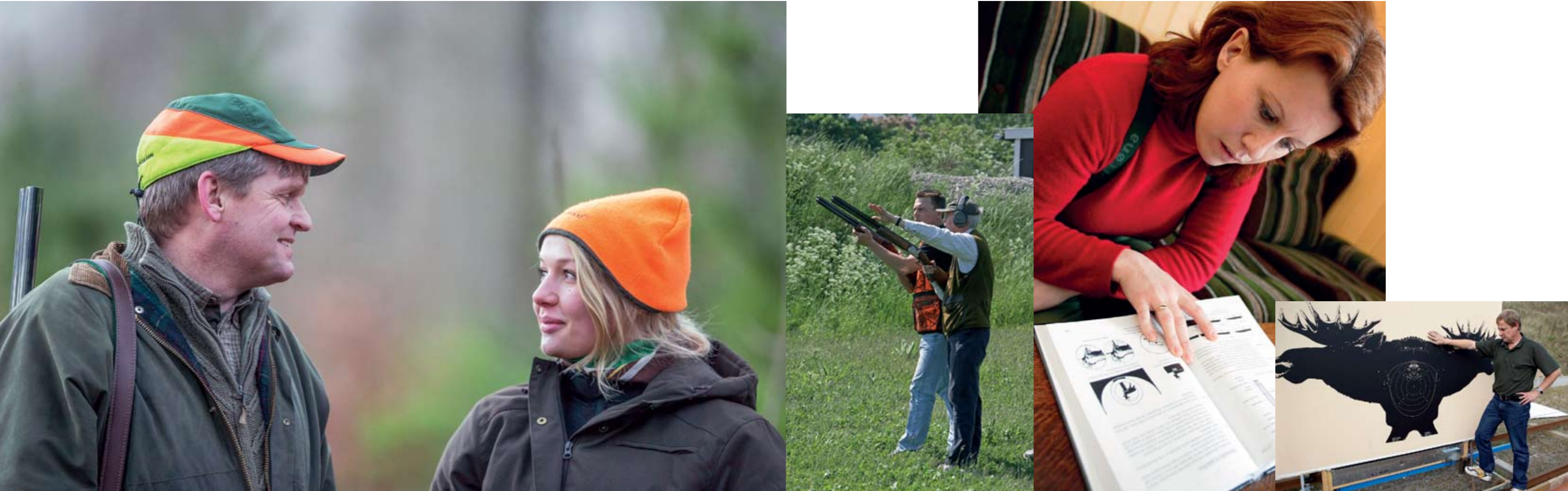
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Hunting is worth billions

It has been estimated that hunters annually spend more than 16 billion euros in Europe. There is no complete overview of the economic benefit of hunting in the Nordic countries, however there is no doubt that the amount is colossal. The sum includes:

- The environmental value of hunters' contributions to nature conservation, including creation and restoration of habitats.
- Hunters' contributions to government wildlife research, including game counts, wildlife monitoring and combating invasive species.
- The purchase of equipment and licences by hunters, as well as the value of game meat.
- The health benefits to one million people, who enjoy nature, get exercise and enrich their lives.
- The value of hunting as an important social and cultural activity in rural areas which contributes to social cohesion in communities and in integrating newcomers.
- Thousands of jobs related to hunting.

The environmental and the health benefits of hunting to society are enormous.



International co-operation

Conservation knows no boundaries, and the basis for hunting and conservation is increasingly influenced by EU legislation and international agreements. Co-operation with other stakeholders is therefore crucial to the Nordic hunting associations and involves both the relevant authorities and other associations, including farmers, bird watchers and nature conservationists.

The Nordic Hunters' Alliance is represented in Brussels through the European hunting association FACE, which speaks for 7.5 million hunters. In addition, the Nordic hunting associations have their own representatives who have regular contact with MEPs and the EU Commission.

At global level the NHA is a long-time member of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC). In 2013 the NHA was granted observer status to HELCOM (the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission).

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Ensuring safe and responsible hunting

Anyone who wishes to hunt in Nordic countries must first undergo compulsory training and pass a written examination.

The object is to ensure high ethical standards and prevent unnecessary suffering by the animals we hunt. Emphasis is placed upon such aspects as judging proper shooting distances, and research in Denmark has shown that by exercising discipline over the distance at which they shoot, hunters have substantially reduced wounding rates in waterfowl and thereby increased the acceptance for hunting.

Education and training are therefore two of the most important activities of 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.

There is a heavy emphasis on safety and best practice. As a result serious hunting accidents are extremely rare. In private homes it is compulsory to store guns and ammunition securely and the authorities check who has firearm licences.

Nordic hunters must undergo compulsory training and pass an examination before they are allowed to hunt.



People must come first

EU decisions have wide-reaching consequences for the everyday life of citizens in every nook and cranny of Europe. The Nordic Hunters' Alliance places great value on the EU's proximity principle, which seeks to ensure that political decisions are made as close to the citizen level as possible. The management of large carnivores, which are generally recovering throughout Europe, is an example. In particular, the increase of the wolf population has a great effect on life in rural areas and has awakened strong emotions in local inhabitants. The NHA believes it is crucial that people who live in these areas are accepted as key stakeholders, and that national management plans are widely accepted.

The NHA also supports the idea of adaptive management through which, for example, migratory bird species are managed on the basis of scientific data. This ensures that hunting is controlled in the light of changing populations, and therefore runs with the grain of nature, rather than against it.

Experience has shown that co-operation between agencies, non-governmental organisations and local users often gives the best results for both wildlife and people.

It is crucial that people who live in areas with large populations of wolves and other large carnivores have a say and that national management plans are widely accepted.



Organization

The following associations are organized under the umbrella of the Nordic Hunters' Alliance (NHA):

- Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management (www.jagareforbundet.se)
- The National Association of Huntsmen (www.jagarnasriksforbund.se)
- Danish Hunters' Association (www.jaegerforbundet.dk)
- Finnish Hunters' Association (www.metsastajaliitto.fi)
- Norwegian Association of Hunters and Anglers (www.njff.no)
- Hunting and Shooting Association of Iceland (www.skotvis.is)

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

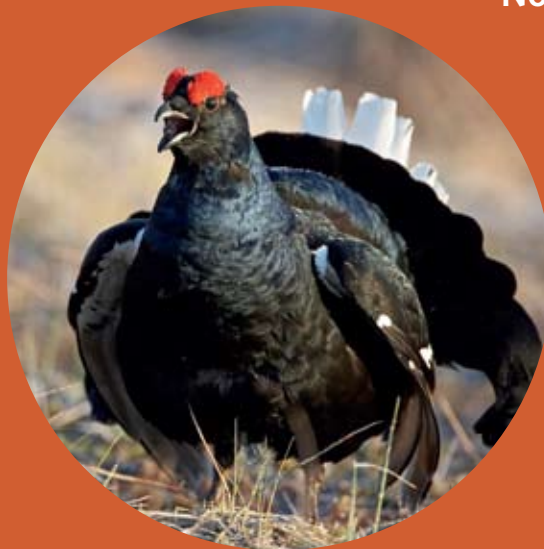


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Nordic Hunters' Alliance

www.nordichunters.org



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