

Hunting in Norway

Key figures

Area

385.155 km²

Protected areas

close to 15%, hunting occurs in regulated forms.

Population

4.8 million

Number of hunters

430 000 registered hunters, of these 196 300 paid the hunting license fee in 2008/2009.

Main game species

Big game: moose (*Alces alces*), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), wild reindeer (*Rangifer rangifer*), roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*).

Small game: willow grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*), ptarmigan (*L. mutus*), black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*), capercaillie (*T. urogallus*), hazel hen (*Bonasa bonasis*), mountain hare (*Lepus timidus*) and beaver (*Castor fiber*). Many waders, ducks and geese are also hunted in some areas.

Hunting in Norway

Norway has a wide variety of natural habitats providing good opportunities for hunting. And hunting is an important outdoor recreation activity for many Norwegians.

The game

Ptarmigan are the most commonly shot small game, accounting for close to 50% of all small game, whereas cervids dominate the big game harvest. The stock of both moose, red deer and roe deer has increased considerably since the 1970s. 36.500 moose and 35.700 red deer were shot during the hunting 2008/2009 season, and for the first time the red deer harvest exceeded the moose harvest.

Hunting rights

Land is either state-owned or private, and the hunting rights belong solely to the landowners. No hunting is allowed without the landowner's permission. However, landowners are free to sell hunting permits or let their land and hunting rights to others.

The hunter

The number of hunters has been stable in recent years. Annually around 190 000 persons pay the hunting license fee. Although hunting has traditionally been considered a man's activity, the number of female hunters has doubled over the last ten years. 6.8% of the hunting license fees paid in 2008/2009 were paid by women. A total of 3.100 foreign hunters were registered the same season, 7 out of 10 from Nordic countries.

Prerequisites for hunting

In addition to obtaining hunting permits from the landowner, all hunters must pay the yearly hunting license fee prior to hunting. First time hunters must pass a hunting proficiency test, involving a 30-hour course and a theoretical exam. Big game hunting also requires passing a shooting proficiency test before each hunting season.

HUNT is an interdisciplinary international research project, financed by the EU's 7th Framework Programme, looking into the wider meaning of hunting in the 21st century.



Photo: P. Jordhøy, J. Linnell, C. Næss, O. Strand

Recruitment

There is a steady recruitment of hunters. 12 200 persons passed the hunting proficiency test in 2008/2009, of these 22% were women.

Management

Hunting seasons for the different game species are laid down by the Directorate for Nature Management. However, landowners may limit the season to a shorter period. The local authorities issue quotas for the relevant species in their area, with the quota being distributed among landowners based on the size of their properties. For some species like moose and wild reindeer such quotas are specified with respect to age and sex of each animal that can be killed.

The rules of the game

The minimum age for small-game hunting is 16; for big game it is 18. Firearms, caliber and ammunition must be in accordance with the standards set for type of hunt and species. For moose, red- and roe deer hunting it is required to have a trained tracker dog available so that injured animals can be tracked down and humanely killed. The use of lead shot in small-game hunting has been prohibited since 2005. Hunting, or pursuing game, is not permitted from any motorized means of transport. The use of artificial light during hunting is generally forbidden, the exception is for shooting foxes on bait.

Controversies

Both the conservation and the hunting of large carnivores is controversial. Lynx are hunted as a game species, whereas wolf, brown bear and wolverine can be shot under special licenced control permits. The increasing introduction of bag limits and closed areas for ptarmigan hunting is also proving controversial.

More on Norwegian hunting

http://www.ssb.no/jakt_fiske_en/

<http://www.dirnat.no/content.ap?thisid=1002041>

http://www.niff.no/portal/page/portal/niff/artikkel?displaypage=TRUE&element_id=63397

<http://www.brreg.no/english/registers/hunter/>

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