

<http://fp7hunt.net>

## Hunting in Spain

### Key figures

**Area** 504.645 km<sup>2</sup>

### Protected areas

Close to 10 %. Protected areas include Special Protected areas (SPAs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) in the Natura 2000 network, and natural protected areas (National Parks, Natural Parks and others). Hunting occurs in regulated forms in most of these areas. However, it is not allowed in others, such as National Parks.

**Population** 46.6 million

### Number of hunters

925.000 hunters (in 2006)

### Main game species

#### Big game

Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), Fallow deer (*Dama dama*), Pyrenean/Cantabrian chamois (*Rupicapra pyrenaica*), Iberian ibex (*Capra pyrenaica*), Mouflon (*Ovis aries*), Aoudad (*Ammotragus lervia*), Wolf (*Canis lupus*)

## Hunting in Spain

In Spain, hunting is a traditional activity of cultural, social and economic importance. More than 30.000 hunting estates cover approximately 80 % of the Spanish territory.

### Hunting rights

In Spain, game species are defined as “res nullius” (hunnable while they are on one's land, but do not belong to the owner of the land). Land is private in most cases (or state-owned occasionally). On some occasions, the landowner is the hunting manager. Alternatively, landowners must give a permission (for example, via renting their land) to the latter.

### Prerequisites for hunting

All hunters must pay a yearly hunting license in each of the Spanish regions where they hunt (a license per region – regions regulate hunting and conservation laws in a federal way). The main license allows them to hunt small game species, whereas a special fee must be paid to hunt big game species. In most regions (but not all), hunters must pass a hunting exam the first time they apply for the hunting permit. In addition to obtaining the hunting license, hunters must also obtain a firearm permit and a special insurance.

### The hunter

The number of hunting licenses substantially increased from the 1950s (0.2 million) to the 1990s (1.4 million). However, it has progressively declined over the past 2 decades. Near 1 million licenses were expended in 2006. Most of the hunters are males. Although currently increasing, the number of female hunters is still extremely low. In the 1990s, > 25.000 foreign hunters came to Spain every year, but this number must be higher at present.

### Recruitment

The recruitment of hunters is currently quite weak. In fact, this seems one of the main reasons explaining the current decline in hunting licenses recorded in Spain.

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### Main small game

European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), Iberian hare (*Lepus granatensis*), Brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*), Red-legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa*), Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*), Bobwhite quail (*Colinus virginianus*), Common wood-pigeon (*Columba columba*), Rock pigeon (*Columba livia*), Stock dove (*Columba oenas*), Turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*), Eurasia collared dove (*Spreptopelia decaocto*), Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

Many waders, ducks and geese are also hunted in some areas. Moreover, some other game-birds such as *Turdus* spp and *Sturnus* spp are also hunted, sometimes in big numbers, in some regions.

### The game

European rabbits and red-legged partridges are the most commonly shot small game species (4 and 3 million respectively were harvested officially during 2003). Wild boar and red deer are the most frequently hunted big game species (119.000 wild boar and 59.000 red deer were officially harvested during 2003). While the hunting bags of the main big game species tend to increase, those of the small game species decrease or remain stable.

### Management

Until a few decades ago, local non-profit hunting societies were predominant in most areas of Spain. However, hunting management has become a new agrarian land use of great economic importance in some of these areas, and consequently the use of hunting management practices has greatly increased. The main management tools utilized to date include habitat management (e.g. scrub clearing, establishment of crops, creation of refuges), control of hunting pressure, predator control, translocation and release of captive reared individuals, medical treatment, supplementary food and water, etc .

Hunting seasons for the different game species are laid down by the authorities of each of the Spanish regions. However, hunters may limit the season to a shorter period. Quotas are typically regulated by hunters, but they may be regulated also by regional authorities on some occasions.

### The rules of the game

The minimum age for hunting is 14. Nevertheless, hunters under 18 must hunt always together with their tutors. Firearms, caliber and ammunition must be in accordance with the standards set for the type of hunting and species. There are many other rules of the game but they are specific for every hunting modality and they usually change between regions.

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## Controversies

**Territorial conflicts:** In many cases land owners are not the hunters (who pay a rent to the land owner for hunting there every year). In these cases, the land owners have frequently interests different than hunting, such as agriculture or forestry. Conflicts can arise, for example, when game species cause damages to crops. Other conflicts arise when farmers modify the habitat without taking into account the opinion of the hunters. For example, the selection of the harvesting dates, the use of pesticides or the conservation of hedgerows, among other topics, are usually sources of conflict between farmers and hunters.

**Social conflicts:** An important (but unquantified) proportion of people in the current society do not consider correct the fact of killing an animal for pleasure, and hence hunting. This is a typical source of conflict between hunters and environmentalists

**Conflicts between hunting and biodiversity conservation:** The conflicts between hunting and conservation are frequent and varied. For instance, a high hunting pressure is considered among the main causes of the decline of some game species. Moreover, the use of some management strategies, such as predator control (and, in particular, the illegal use of poison as a means of predator control) or restockings and translocations (the use of which is increasing rapidly in recent decades, both for partridges and rabbits, as a means of increasing population density locally, as well as big game, as a means of increasing trophy quality), can pose a great risk for biodiversity conservation.

## More on Spanish hunting

<http://www.fecaza.com>

<http://www.trofeocaza.com>

<http://www.naturalezaycaza.com>

<http://www.unacaza.es>

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