

## **On Approval of Hunting Rules**

Regulation of the Minister of the Environment, 15 June 1995, No. 28.

PUBLISHED:

RTL 1995, 45, 0

AMENDED VERSION:

Reg. of the Minister of the Envir., 25.04.97, No. 40

RTL 1997, 73, 418

For implementation of Articles 21(2)(3) and 24(2) of the Law on Hunting Management (Riigi Teataja I 1994, 30, 465), I hereby establish:

1. To approve the Hunting Rules of the Republic of Estonia (attached).
2. To allow the use of hunting license forms used prior to the date of effect of this Regulation until the finishing of their reserve.
- 3a. Documents certifying the passing of a shooting test, valid prior to the date of effect of this Regulation shall be valid until 1 January 1997.
3. To invalidate the “Hunting Rules of the Republic of Estonia” adopted with the regulation of the Minister of the Environment of 9 August 1991, No. 37 and with the regulation of the Director General of the Forestry Board of 9 August 1991, No 13.
4. To invalidate the regulation of the Minister of the Environment of 16 October 1992, No. 28 “On Amendments to the Hunting Rules of the Republic of Estonia”.
5. To invalidate the regulation of the Minister of the Environment of 27 November 1992, No. 33 “On Amendments to the Hunting Rules of the Republic of Estonia”.
6. To invalidate the regulation of the Minister of the Environment of 8 September 1993, No. 21 “On Amendments to the Hunting Rules of the Republic of Estonia”.
7. To invalidate the regulation of the Minister of the Environment of 21 March 1994, No. 9 “On Amendments to the Hunting Rules of the Republic of Estonia”.
8. To invalidate the regulation of the Minister of the Environment of 3 May 1994, No. 14 “On Adoption of the Format of, and the Procedure for Issuing, Hunting Licences”.
9. To invalidate the regulation of the Minister of the Environment of 10 March 1995, No. 14 “On Amendments to the Hunting Rules of the Republic of Estonia”. (RTL 1995, 3, pp. 1234)

10. This Regulation shall take effect on 1 October 1995.

**Minister of the Environment Villu Reiljan**

Approved

by the reg. of the Minister of the Envir.

of 15 June 1995, No. 28.

## **Hunting Rules**

### **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. For the purpose of these Rules, hunting means the tracking, catching, capture or killing of game. Presence on hunting grounds with kill or with hunting means shall be equalised with hunting. Catching, capture or killing of game which have intruded into towns or other settlements and pose a danger to human safety, killing of game which have been injured in a traffic accident, presence on hunting grounds with an unloaded hunting weapon in a rifle bag, or with a leashed hunting dog, as well as presence of armed public officers on hunting grounds while performing their official duties, shall not be regarded as hunting.

2. A hunting ground is any area that is suitable for free living of game and used for hunting purposes.

3. In case an injured or sick game is found, a licence for killing the game shall be issued by police, forest inspection or nature conservation authorities.

Appropriation of a game found dead or killed on conditions referred to in this Article or in Article 1 above, and appropriation of found hunting products (game meat; skin; horns, excluding cast horns) is prohibited. The owner of the hunting district and the Environmental Department of the relevant county must be notified immediately of such findings.

4. Taking of live game from their natural habitats, and keeping and breeding of game, is permitted only with the permission of the Minister of the Environment.

5. Damaging or destroying of natural or artificial nests of birds, excluding the hooded crow, and gathering of the eggs of birds, excluding the hooded crow, is allowed only with the permission of the Minister of the Environment.

6. In national parks, nature reserves and in hunting districts that lack a tenant, hunting for the purpose of regulating the numbers of game in the event of occurrence of game damage, or for scientific purposes, shall be organised in accordance with the procedure established by the Minister of the Environment.

7. Hunting is permitted for a person in possession of the right to hunt (a hunter). Documents certifying the right to hunt are: hunting certificate, hunting licence (licence for hunting game or big game), hunting weapon licence, and, in case of hunting with a hunting dog, the passport of the hunting dog (for a puppy - a birth certificate). A person who does not possess the right to hunt can participate in collective hunt as a beater.

8. A land owner possessing a hunting certificate, a hunting weapon licence and, in hunting with a hunting dog, the passport of the hunting dog (in case of a puppy - the birth certificate), can hunt within a landed property which is owned by him and is larger than two hectares within one ringborder, in accordance with the order established by law and by these Rules, without possessing a hunting licence, excluding hunting for big game.

9. A hunting certificate is an official document that gives the bearer the right to obtain a hunting licence and the right to individual hunting. The right to obtain a hunting certificate can be exercised by natural persons who are at least 18 years of age, have passed a hunting proficiency test and have paid the state duty.

## **II. HUNTING LICENSES**

10. Hunting licences are big game hunting licence and game hunting licence (Annex 1). Big game hunting licences are issued only for hunting the game listed in Article 46 of these Rules.

11. A hunting licence is issued by the manager of a state hunting district, the tenant of a tenant hunting district or the owner of a private hunting district.

12. The issuer of a hunting licence is obliged to keep a record of the issuing and returning of hunting licences and of the data presented on a hunting licence (Annex 2).

13. When issuing a hunting licence, the following data shall be presented on the licence:

- 1) the name and address of the issuer of the licence;
- 2) the first name and family name of the holder of the licence;
- 3) the issuing date and period of validity of the licence;
- 4) the allowed place for hunting (a hunting district or a part thereof);
- 5) the name of the species of big game whose hunting is permitted and, where necessary, the sex and age group; for other game the name of the species and, where necessary, the number of specimens.
- 6) special requirements for hunting established by the issuer of the hunting licence, by a rental hunting contract, a contract on the use of game stock or by other legal acts;

7) the stamp of the issuing legal person and the signature of the officer issuing the licence.

14. A hunting licence can be amended only by the issuer. A hunting licence is not subject to extension.

15. The issuer of hunting licences shall preserve copies of all issued hunting licences, returned licences and hunt lists for the period of three years.

16. The person who has been issued a licence for hunting big game can forward the licence to another person in possession of the right to hunt. Responsibility for ensuring legitimate use of the hunting licence lies with the person who has been forwarded the licence. In collective hunt, responsibility for legitimacy of the hunt lies with the leader of the hunt.

17. The price of a hunting licence shall be determined by the issuer of the licence.

### **III. ORGANISATION OF HUNT**

18. Organisation of hunt must not prejudice the legitimate rights and freedom of other persons. A hunt shall be organised in accordance with the management plan of the hunting ground, the hunting rental contract, contracts concluded between the owners or holders of the land and the hunting tenant on possible uses of the land and on terms of hunting, or in accordance with contracts on the use of game stock.

19. In a land area owned by a private person and not bounded or marked in accordance with the established procedure, hunting is permitted, in case a relevant contract exists, from sunrise to sunset, unless the land owner and hunting tenant (holder of hunting licence) have agreed otherwise.

20. In a land area owned by a private person and bounded and marked in accordance with the established procedure, hunting is permitted in accordance with the order agreed between the owner or holder of the land area and the hunting tenant (holder of hunting licence).

21. The use of a waterside path of a waterbody in the course of a hunt shall not be restricted.

22. Collective hunting is participation of several hunters in a hunt on the basis of a hunt list to which a hunting licence (licences) is (are) attached, and under the leadership of a hunter elected as hunt leader.

23. A hunting licence is opened at the beginning of each hunting day with marking the date on the licence. In collective hunt, the existence of a hunt list shall be marked on the licence. A licence for hunting big game shall be signed by the holder of the licence or by the hunt leader.

24. A hunt leader is obliged to:

- 1) prior to the hunt, instruct all participants of the hunt in the requirements of hunting safety, in the game species permitted to be hunted, and in the special conditions marked on the hunting licence. Receipt of the instruction shall be verified by the participants by signing the hunt list;
- 2) verify that the hunters possess documents certifying their right to hunt and that their hunting means conform with the requirements established by these Rules. A hunter whose certifying documents or hunting means do not conform with the requirements established by these Rules can participate in a hunt as beater;
- 3) verify the conformity of the clothing of the participants of the hunt to the requirements of Article 51 of the Hunting Rules;
- 4) eliminate the persons intoxicated as a result of consumption of alcohol, narcotic or psychotoxic substances from the hunt;
- 5) organise the hunt in a manner that secures the safety of participants of the hunt and any other persons;
- 6) if a person is injured in the course of the hunt, take all appropriate measures for the provision of assistance to the injured person and for preliminary recording of the event and the circumstances under which it took place. The leader of the hunt must report all accidents connected with the use of firearms immediately to the police and the manager of the hunting district.

25. Prior to a hunt for big game, the holder of hunting licence or the leader of the hunt shall inform the land owner or holder about the time and place of the hunt, in case such requirement is contained in the contract between the manager of the hunting district and the land owner or holder.

26. Hunting may be carried out only in the hunting district or part of hunting district marked in the hunting licence.

27. Participants of a hunt are obliged to obey all legitimate orders of the leader of the hunt.

28. Only those hunters who possess a document certifying that they have passed a shooting test can participate in an elk, deer, bear or wild boar hunt as hunters.

The results of a shooting test are valid for two years.

In case a rifled hunting weapon is used, having passed a shooting test is mandatory in any type of hunt.

29. In a hunt for big game, the hitting or injuring of the game shall be recorded on the hunting licence immediately after verifying the result of the shot. A big game may not be taken away from the place of hitting before the hitting has been recorded on the hunting licence. If a big game is injured, the date and time of causing the injury shall be recorded immediately on the hunting licence.

30. If a big game is injured, the hunt must be continued until the animal is caught. If it is not caught within 24 hours from the moment of injuring, the hunting licence shall be regarded as used. Exit of the hunting district is permitted if this is necessary in pursuit of an injured big game. Articles 19, 20 and 26 of these Rules shall not be applied in the event of pursuit of an injured big game. Catching of an injured big game in a place not marked on a hunting licence shall be reported immediately to the manager of the relevant hunting district by the leader of the hunt (holder of hunting licence). When an injured big game is caught, the hunting district in which it was caught shall be marked on the hunting licence in addition to the time of catching.

31. If an injured big game is not found, the leader of the hunt (holder of hunting licence) shall report this to the manager of the hunting district within 24 hours.

32. In a hunt for other game, the holder of the hunting licence (leader of the hunt) is obliged to mark the name, number and, if possible, sex of the caught animal(s), and the date of catching, on the hunting licence immediately after the end of the hunting day.

33. A hunter on whose name the hunting licence is issued shall return the used licence to the issuer within ten days from the catching (injuring) of a big game, or from the expiry of the deadline marked on the licence.

#### **IV. MEANS OF HUNTING**

34. Allowed means of hunting are:

- 1) firearms with smooth or rifled barrel certified as hunting weapons in accordance with the established procedure, excluding fully automatic firearms;
- 2) semi-automatic firearms with magazine capacity of up to two cartridges certified as hunting weapons in accordance with the established procedure;
- 3) trapping means (box-traps, muskrat weirs, encircling nets, lift-nets for live-catching of beaver, instantly killing iron traps (iron traps of conibear and similar type));
- 4) bounding flags;
- 5) means of decoy;

6) optical sights, excluding optical sights intended for night shooting and those equipped with a feeder;

7) hunting knives;

8) hunting dogs.

35. Elk, deer, brown bear and wild boar may be hunted for with a weapon with smooth or rifled barrel. The calibre of the rifled barrel must be at least 6.5 mm and the weight of bullets in the cartridge at least 9.0 g.

36. Elk, deer, brown bear and wild boar may be shot only with bullets. In a hunt for these species it is prohibited to load the weapon with, and to shoot with, a cartridge loaded with full jacket bullets.

37. Side fire cartridges can be used only for shooting pine marten, polecat, American mink, muskrat and birds.

38. Traps must be located in such way that they are safe for other animal species and humans. A tag with the number of hunting certificate must be put on the trap or in a visible place near a hidden trap, whereas the visibility, preservation and readability of the tag must be ensured for the whole catching period.

## **V. METHODS OF HUNTING**

39. Methods of hunting include sneaking hunt, ambush hunt, decoy hunt, chasing hunt, burrow hunt and catching of game.

40. It is prohibited to hunt in a manner which damages or destroys the habitat of game, or in a generally dangerous manner, including:

1) hunting by means of iron traps (excluding iron traps of conibear type or iron traps with similar working principle and with instant killing effect), self-shooting devices, explosives, electricity, bird glue, poison, snare, or traphole;

2) chasing of game by motor vehicles and shooting from or using a motor vehicle;

3) using an artificial source of light or a mirror when shooting a game;

4) shooting a game from aircraft;

5) use of a bow, crossbow, air rifle, pistol, revolver or a firearm with a silencer or laser sight;

6) catching or shooting a game escaping from a natural disaster or in a helpless situation;

7) digging up the burrow of the raccoon dog, the fox, or the badger without a relevant hunting licence;

41. Parts of burrow dug open during a burrow hunt must be closed by the hunter immediately after the end of the hunt.

42. The Minister of the Environment can issue licences for hunting for scientific purposes using hunting methods not listed in Article 39 and by hunting means not listed in Article 34 of these Rules.

43. Hunting with a hunting dog, excluding burrow hunting, is permitted in a hunting district where the area of hunting grounds within one ringborder is at least 500 hectares.

44. Hunting dogs can be used for searching for an injured or dead game.

If a hunting dog kills a raccoon dog or an American mink during a hunt, the killed animal shall be regarded as the kill of the owner of the dog regardless of the type of the hunt and a relevant note shall be made on the hunting licence.

45. It is prohibited to let a dog run loose in a hunting ground.

## VI. GAME SPECIES AND HUNTING SEASONS

46. Big game are as follows:

elk (*Alces alces*), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), wild boar (*Sus scropha*), roedeer (*Capreolus capreolus*), brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) and lynx (*Felis lynx*).

47. Other game are as follows:

wolf (*Canis lupus*), fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), raccoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*), badger (*Meles meles*), American mink (*Mustela vison*), polecat (*Mustela putorius*), pine marten (*Martes martes*), mountain hare (*Lepus timidus*), European grey hare (*Lepus europaeus*), beaver (*Castor fiber*), musk-rat (*Ondatra zibethicus*), cormoran (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), bean goose (*Anser fabalis*), great white-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*), greylag goose (*Anser anser*), Canadian goose (*Branta canadensis*), barnacle goose (*Branta leucopsis*), widgeon (*Anas penelope*), gadwall (*Anas strepera*), teal (*Anas crecca*), mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), pintail duck (*Anas acuta*), garganey (*Anas querquedula*), shoveller (*Anas clypeata*), red-headed pochard (*Aythya ferina*), tufted duck (*Aythya fuligula*), scaup (*Aythya marila*), common eider (*Somateria mollissima*), long-tailed duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), common scoter (*Melanitta nigra*), velvet scoter (*Melanitta fusca*), goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), hazel hen (*Bonasa bonasia*), partridge (*Perdix perdix*), bald coot (*Fulica atra*), snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*), common gull (*Larus canus*), black-headed gull (*Larus ridibundus*), herring gull (*Larus argentatus*), great black-backed gull (*Larus marinus*), domestic pigeon (*Columba livia f. domestica*), wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*), fieldfare

(*Turdus pilaris*), rook (*Corvus frugilegus*), hooded crow (*Corvus corone*), raven (*Corvus corax*).

(Regulation of the Minister of the Environment of 25.04.97, No. 40, date of effect 20.05.97)

48. Hunting is allowed in the following periods:

1) for wood pigeon as decoy, ambush and sneaking hunt, and with a leashed hunting dog, except a hound, from 1 August to 31 October;

2) for cormoran, anserines (greylag goose, white-fronted goose, bean goose, Canadian goose, teal, mallard, widgeon, pintail duck, garganey, shoveller, gadwall, common eider, red-headed porchard, tufted duck, scaup, common scoter, velvet scoter, long-tailed duck, goldeneye), hazel hen, bald coot, gulls (black-headed gull, common gull, herring gull, great black-backed gull), woodcock and snipe as decoy, ambush and sneaking hunt, and with a hunting dog, except a hound, from 20 August to 31 October; for anserines, gulls and bald coot on the sea, on Narva reservoir, Lake Võrtsjärv, Peipsi and Pihkva lakes to 30 November;

(Regulation of the Minister of the Environment of 25.04.97, No. 40, date of effect 20.05.97)

3) for partridge only with a standing pointer from 1 September to 31 October;

4) for fox and raccoon dog as decoy, ambush and sneaking hunt all the year round; as burrow and chasing hunt and with a hunting dog from 1 October to 28 February;

5) for pine marten and polecat with box traps or with iron traps, as ambush or sneaking hunt, and with a hunting dog, from 1 November to 28 February;

6) for American mink with box traps and as sneaking or ambush hunt all the year round;

7) for badger as burrow hunt from 1 October to 28 February;

8) for hares with a hound, greyhound or burrow dog from 1 October to 31 January; the Regional Environmental Department may grant permission to shoot hares found in fenced gardening farms all the year round;

9) for muskrat with a weir, encircling net or instantly killing iron trap, or as ambush or sneaking hunt, from 1 October to 28 February;

10) for beaver with a weir, encircling net or instantly killing iron trap, or as ambush or sneaking hunt, from 1 September to 15 April;

11) for wolf with all allowed means and methods, except iron traps, all the year round;

12) for lynx as decoy, ambush, sneaking and chasing hunt from 15 November to 28 February;

13) for bear as ambush and sneaking hunt from 1 August to 30 September and as ambush or sneaking hunt and with a hunting dog, except hound, from 1 October to 31 October;

14) for elk as decoy, ambush and sneaking hunt from 15 September to 30 September; as decoy, ambush, sneaking and chasing hunt and with a hunting dog, except hound, from 1 October to 15 November;

15) for red deer as decoy, ambush and sneaking hunt from 1 September to 30 September; as decoy, ambush, sneaking and chasing hunt and with a hunting dog, except hound, from 1 October to 31 January;

16) for wild boar as ambush and sneaking hunt all the year round, except for a sow with piglets from 1 February to 30 September; as ambush, sneaking and chasing hunt and with a hunting dog, except hound, from 1 October to 28 February;

17) for roedeer as decoy, ambush and sneaking hunt from 1 June to 15 November, of which:

for buck from 1 June to 30 September;

for females and kids from 1 September to 15 November;

18) for hooded crow and domestic pigeon as decoy, lurking and ambush hunt or with a crow weir all the year round;

19) for grey heron, rook and fieldfare outside the breeding period for the purpose of regulating the numbers as ambush and lurking hunt with a licence issued by the County Environmental Department;

(Regulation of the Minister of the Environment of 25.04.97, No. 40, date of effect 20.05.97)

## **VII. HUNTING SAFETY**

49. Each hunter is obliged to ensure complete safety in the hunt and in the handling and keeping of a hunting weapon.

50. The hunting weapon must be kept unloaded in a bag on any means of transport, except when hunting from a boat; in towns and other settlements; and when going to and

coming from the hunt. When changing shooting positions during a hunt, an unloaded hunting weapon can be also out of a bag in a means of transport.

In gathering and resting sites the hunting weapon must be kept unloaded and disengaged. Weapons that cannot be disengaged due to the nature of their construction must be kept with the lock open.

A hunting weapon is regarded as unloaded when it has no cartridges in the barrel and in the magazine attached to the weapon.

51. All participants of a collective hunt for big game are obliged to wear a red or orange jacket or vest.

52. It is prohibited:

- 1) to attend a hunt intoxicated as a result of consuming alcohol, narcotic or psychotoxic substances;
- 2) to give a hunting weapon for use to another person without a relevant licence;
- 3) to leave a hunting weapon unattended in a place accessible for other persons;
- 4) to point a hunting weapon at a human;
- 5) to hunt with a hunting weapon which is technically out of order;
- 6) to shoot at a sound or at the movement of branches (grass, reeds, etc.) or at a badly visible figure (in fog, rain, against the sun, etc.), and in the direction of any seen houses;
- 7) to hit an injured game with a hunting weapon;
- 8) to cross barriers (ditches, footbridges, fences, etc.) with a loaded hunting weapon;
- 9) to put a loaded hunting weapon out of one's hands;
- 10) to leave the shooting place wilfully before the end of the chase;
- 11) to shoot in the direction of beaters without prior verification of complete safety;

12) for beaters to attend a chase with a loaded hunting weapon, except when shooting a game standing within the chase area in a chase hunt with a hunting dog;

13) to designate intensively used public roads as hunting lines;

14) to start tracking an injured game before the end of the chase;

15) to shoot across the heads of or from between people on a boat, to shoot when standing on a boat, and to change places on a boat in case there is a loaded firearm on board;

16) for beaters to cross the hunting line before a relevant signal.

## **VIII. LIABILITY**

53. In the event of breach of the Hunting Rules, criminal, civil and administrative liability shall be applied to the guilty person in accordance with the law.

54. Pursuance of the Hunting Rules shall be inspected by inspection authorities and public officers designated in the Law on Hunting Management and other laws.