

LAW ON HUNTING

CHAPTER 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

The following terms are used in the Law:

- 1) **Hunting areas** - territories suitable for game natural life and used for hunting;
- 2) **Game** - wild mammals and birds the processed products of which are used in national economy;
Suspended by Law of 05.06.1997;
- 3) **Game resources** - all game in the territory of Latvia;
- 4) **Game management** - system of natural resource utilization which in line with obtaining game production ensures the number of wild beasts for game fund and maintains the necessary habitat for game;
- 5) **Nature territories of special protection and usage** - territories determined by the statutory acts of Saeima or the Cabinet of Ministers;
- 6) **Hunting licence** - document permitting to hunt limited or unlimited game in the area determined in the licence;
- 7) **Limited game** - wild beasts for hunting of which a hunting licence is issued permitting to hunt beasts of only one origin;
- 8) **Unlimited game** - wild beasts for hunting of which a season hunting licence is issued;
- 9) **Hunting organization project** - a document approved by State Forest Service providing evaluation of the continuous hunting area; on basis of this document the number of limited game allowed to hunt is determined;
- 10) **Hunting site** - continuous hunting area managed by one owner of hunting rights;
- 11) **Hunting site management project** - a document elaborated by the owner of hunting rights providing game care organization and hunting resource utilization in the hunting site and compiled with hunting organization project;
- 12) **Hunting weapons** - a shotgun with a single barrel or with several barrels, combined shotguns and rifle guns charged with hunting munition;
- 13) **Hunting munitions** - prepared cartridge consisting of a shell with capsule, gunpowder and prodgy (hunting bullets, pellets, greengages) for shooting with a hunting weapon;
- 14) **Legal hunting appliances** - traps, pitfalls and other appliances of a definite type determined in the hunting licence issued by State Forest Service;
- 15) **Game trophies** - game horns together with skull (maxilla or frontal bone), taniary, skulls, and pelages.
- 16) **Hunting rights owner** - land owner or also land user until approving land ownership rights in the Landbooks in whose possession or usage existing land area includes hunting areas relevant to the provisions described in the Law.
- 17) **Hunting licence user** - hunting rights owner or other person to whom according to agreement pursuant to the law hunting rights owner has given his hunting rights and who is managing the game fund;
- 18) **Regulations on hunting** - statutory act approved by the Cabinet of Ministers determining the order of hunting.

Article 2

Law on hunting provides basic provisions on hunting management in the Republic of Latvia.

Article 3

Hunting shall be considered action the purpose of which is to chase, capture, and kill game as well as ownerless pets (dogs, cats) roving in hunting areas, and after owner's request to hunting rights users in written - escaped domestic animals.

Article 4

(1) State shall administrate (account and protect) the hunting resources in Latvia. State Forest Service and institutions of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development shall supervise utilization and protection of game in compliance with laws and regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers.

(2) Game becomes the possession of the physical or legal entity only after they have been hunted in compliance with the present Law and respective regulations.

(3) Hunting resources shall be used so as not to cause damage to other management sectors, to ensure protection and preservation of the game species, gene pool and its habitat.

Article 5

State Forest Service shall determine the hunting areas. They shall be divided into hunting rights owner areas and hunting agreement areas.

Article 6

Hunting rights user shall manage the hunting funds, but State Forest Service shall control hunting process, and accomplishment of hunting organization project. Exception shall be nature reserves and national parks where the accomplishment of hunting organisation is controlled respectively by administration of nature reserve or National Park.

CHAPTER 2 HUNTING LICENCE AND HUNTING RIGHTS

Article 7

(1) Hunter's licence shall be a basic document entitling to hunt, to purchase hunting weapons, and to receive hunting licence. The order of purchasing, registering, storing, and selling hunting weapons shall be determined by the Cabinet of Ministers, but the order of their usage shall be determined by the Regulations on hunting.

(2) Hunting with weapons shall be permitted provided they are registered with State Police institution as hunting weapons.

(3) Only hunting munitions shall be used for hunting.

Article 8

(1) Hunter's licence may be obtained by inhabitants of the Republic of Latvia who have reached the age of 18. Regional forest districts shall issue Hunter's licence after passing exam with the hunters' examination commission. The amount of knowledge to be tested shall be determined in Regulations on hunting. Hunter's licence shall be considered to be valid in all the territory of Latvia.

(2) Regional Council or republic town council shall approve the hunters' examination commission after State Forest Service proposals including experts from State Forest Service, environment protection, State Police, as well as representatives from hunters' associations. State Forest Service establishing fees for taking exams and preparing hunter's licences shall fund the functioning of hunters' examination commission. The results of exam shall be recorded in minutes.

(3) Suspended by Law of 16.03.2000.

Article 9

(1) Hunters' examination commission shall be entitled to invalidate or temporarily disable hunter's licence as a result of violation of the present Law as well as Regulations on hunting. State Forest Service or hunters association established in compliance with Article 10 of the present Law shall initiate the case of imposing fines or invalidating hunter's licence.

(2) The respective State Police Institution shall be informed about hunter's licence invalidating or temporal disabling.

Article 10

Inhabitants of the Republic of Latvia possessing hunter's licence are permitted to hunt individually or form hunters' associations on voluntary basis and other public organizations as provided by law.

Article 11

(Suspended by Law of 18.03.2000 coming into force on 19.04.2000)

Article 12

The present Law, other laws, and Regulations on hunting shall determine organization of hunting in specially protected and utilized nature territories in order to control the number of wild beasts.

Article 13

Foreign citizens possessing hunting documents issued by State Forest Service of the Republic of Latvia and their own country shall be permitted to hunt in compliance with the present Law and Regulations on hunting.

Article 14

(1) Utilization of estates located in hunting areas shall be regulated by agreements signed by their owners and owners of hunting rights. These agreements shall be annexes of hunting site management project. Owner of hunter's rights shall start acting in a hunting fund after the hunting site management project is registered with State Head Forestry office.

(2) User of hunting rights shall not pass hunting rights over to the third person unless otherwise provided by provisions of the present Law.

Article 15

Provisions of statutory acts shall determine termination of using hunting areas. Owner of hunting rights shall cover expenses of hunting resource renewal provided they have decreased as a result of his action and provided such amends are described in agreement.

**CHAPTER 3
AMOUNT OF GAME SHOOTING
AND THE ORDER OF ISSUING HUNTING LICENCES**

Article 16

(1) The minimal hunting areas within which it is permitted to hunt limited game in respective hunting site shall be as follows:

- 1) roe deer hunting - not less than 200 ha including all the forest lands and fenceless agricultural lands;
- 2) wild boar, cow and calf of red deer hunting - not less than 1000 ha;

3) deer bull hunting - not less than 2000 ha;

4) elk hunting - not less than 2500 ha in areas which are named in hunting organization projects as elk funds, and 5000 ha in areas which are named in the project as red deer funds;

(2) In respect to elks, deer, and wild boars - forest areas or their parts and separate forest areas bigger than 30 ha shall be included in hunting areas.

Provided the provisions (1) and (2) of this Article prohibit hunting, owners of hunting rights shall be permitted to sign mutual agreements on organising limited game species care as described in hunting organisation project.

Article 17

State Forest Service shall annually determine maximum allowed number of limited game shooting in hunting areas in compliance with hunting organisation project.

Article 18

State duty shall be paid for hunting licences and permits to take hunting trophies out of the Republic of Latvia. Hunting trophies shall be taken out of the Republic of Latvia as provided in Regulations on hunting.

Article 19

(1) A fund shall be established for developing hunting fund.

(2) Fund resources shall be used for the following purposes:

1) monitoring of game population, and consequent additional necessary protection measures;

2) scientific research of game and its population;

3) participation in international hunting organizations and exhibitions;

(4) Cabinet of Ministers shall confirm the Statutes of the Fund.

(According to Law of 16.03.2000. enforced on 19.04.2000)

Article 20

(1) State Forest Service territorial offices or administrations of nature reserves and national parks in whose territory the respective hunting areas are located shall issue limited game hunting licences to hunting rights owners in the beginning of the hunting season. Administrations of nature reserves and national parks shall receive limited game hunting licences at State Forest Service and in a months time after the end of hunting season shall inform State Forest Service about the issued hunting licences and number of beasts hunted, as well as invalidate unused licences.

(2) State Forest Service may issue hunting licences beyond the determined term and beyond the determined amount of game shooting in exceptional cases when vast damage is done to agriculture and forestry.

(3) Hunting rights user shall be permitted to hunt unlimited game only after receiving hunting licence issued by State Forest Service territorial office or administration of nature reserve or national park in whose territory the respective hunting areas are located. Administration of nature reserve or national park shall inform State Forest Service about the issued hunting licences and number of beasts hunted.

(Including amendments by the Law of 16.03.2000. enforced on 19.04.2000.)

**CHAPTER 4
GAME, TERMS AND TYPES OF HUNTING**

Article 21

- (1) List of game, terms and types of hunting shall be determined by Regulations on hunting.
- (2) Hunting with a goal to control infections shall not be forbidden neither by land owner or user nor by owner of hunting rights.

Article 22

- (1) Any hunting shall be reported to the local state forestry office beforehand. State head forester, state forester or their appointed State Forest Service officer shall control the hunting procedure.
- (2) Hunting with hunting appliances shall be permitted only with a permit in written issued by State Forest Service.

Article 23

Illegal hunting shall mean:

- 1) hunting within terms and time of day not complying with the Regulations on hunting;
- 2) hunting without hunter's licence (does not refer to chasers), hunting licence, and hunting weapons usage licence;
- 3) hunting provided hunting licence has not been filled at the site where game has been shot or wounded;
- 4) in areas closed for hunting;
- 5) hunting without land owner's or land user's and hunting rights user's agreement;
- 6) hunting in circumstances when beasts are fledging from nature catastrophes;
- 7) hunting using night vision devices which function on basis of invisible for human eye ray, as well as laser type or likewise optical sights (except for filament type lighting devices);
- 8) being in hunting areas provided an individual has not applied at the local forestry but the individual is possessing prepared for use (set or uncovered by proper cover) weapon or traps, nooses, or other hunting appliances, possessing obtained game production, as well as being on general roads with prepared for usage weapon;
- 9) any other action provided appliances and types of hunting used do not comply with the Regulations on hunting.

Article 24

- (1) Hunting or capturing of game for the purpose of scientific research, exhibiting in museums, breeding in a different place or keeping in captivity shall be permitted only with State Forest Service single permit.
- (2) Prohibited for hunting wild beasts shall be obtained, hunted or kept in captivity with a single permit of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development. Bringing game into the Republic of Latvia from another country shall be permitted only with a single permit of Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development and State Forest Service.

**CHAPTER 5
HUNTING RESOURCE SUPERVISION
AND LIABILITY FOR VIOLATION OF THE PRESENT LAW**

Article 25

(1) Supervision on enforcement of the present Law and other statutory acts relevant to hunting outside hunting areas shall be carried out by state and local communities police forces within the scope of their competence, but regarding illegal hunting - also officers of State Forest Service and Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development.

(2) State Forest Service shall carry out supervision in all hunting areas, but land owner or user and hunting rights owner shall carry out supervision in his own hunting areas. If necessary co-ordinated action of all units mentioned in this Article and Home guards shall be permitted for carrying out supervision in hunting areas and out of their bounds.

Article 26

In order to assess the damage done by the game to agriculture, domestic animals, and forestry State Forest Service shall establish commission including representatives from the respective local community, hunting rights users, and also the respective experts. The commission shall determine the amount of damage according to the methods approved by the Ministry of Agriculture. Hunting rights users shall cover the expenses unless provided otherwise by the agreement on transferring hunting rights. In case of dispute the court shall make the decision.

Article 27

Damage caused by physical or legal entity to hunting fund through violation of the present Law or other acts of law relevant to hunting shall be compensated as provided by law and to extent determined by the Cabinet of Ministers. The compensation shall be awarded in favour of the state.
(According to Law of 16.03.2000 enforced on 19.04.2000)

Article 28

For violating the present Law physical and legal entities shall be called to account as provided by law.

**CHAPTER 6
INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS**

Article 29

Provisions of international agreements shall be enforced in the territory of Latvia provided the signed international agreements provide other regulations on hunting than those in the present Law.