

Hunting management and hunting-related values

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Abstract

Aim of the present analysis is to show how the attitude towards hunting management depends on hunting-related values. 237 standardized questionnaires have been distributed to hunters of Northern Hellas (Macedonia and Thrace) and the data were processed through Pearson test after normality test. Contrary to the hunters who regard hunting merely as a “sport”, these who regard it as a “life way” support long-term, more “eco-centric” and sustainable solutions like habitat improvement and predator control (and not, for example, release of quarries). This group of hunter is negative to more intensive hunting guarding, as it does not tolerate to have its “reliability” questioned and to be “policed” in his “life way”. Hunters who consider hunting to be not only a “male” but also a “female” activity present also a similar attitude. Hunters who feel respect to the quarry desire control of predators, so that they assure more opportunities to kill it themselves in a “respectful” way (quick and accurately). Moreover, they want to feel “the value of the defeated which gives glory to the winner”. Hunters who seek social distinction through hunting desire quick increase of quarry population through release and predator control in order to increase the probability to catch them and to gain thereby in prestige within his hunter companion. Hunters who search for beautiful landscapes during hunting are negative towards release of quarries as this spoils the quietness and the “naturalness” of landscape. They rather desire intensive guarding. In conclusion basic hunting management alternatives (quarry release, habitat improvement, predator control and intensive hunting guarding) are correlated with certain hunting-related values.

Keywords: wildlife management, hunting view, mentality, value system

1. INTRODUCTION

The inadequate strategic planning for the hunting activity in Hellas causes consequences to wildlife and to humans [1]. The hare-hunters of Thessaloniki, for example, believe that the improvement of hunting quality is required. For the achievement of this aim they declare “willingness to pay” provided that it is ensured that their money will effectively serve the aim for which it is intended [2].

Many wildlife managers claim that human attitudes are the most challenging problem [3]. The wildlife managers should take into consideration simultaneously environmental, social and economic conditions [4]. Not all hunters are characterized by the same social features and the need of a Sociology of Hunting becomes every year stronger [5]. Hunting management is not only a matter of policy-making but also a matter of individual values which determine the mentality and thereby the attitude of hunters to management strategies [6].

Aim of this analysis is to show how the attitude towards hunting management depends on hunting-related values. These can be dimensioned as follows: a) position of hunting in the relevance system of the hunter, and b) pedagogic function of hunting. In particular, the position of hunting in the relevance system can be analyzed as follows: 1) regarding hunting as “life way”, 2) regarding hunting as a simple “sport”, 3) acceptance of gender equality concerning hunting. The mentality influence is here defined as inspiration of certain feelings to hunters like 1) respect to the quarry, 2) social distinction, and 3) appreciation of beautiful landscapes.

2. METHOD

237 standardized questionnaires have been distributed to hunters of Northern Greece (Macedonia and Thrace) and the data were processed through cross-sectional analysis. Pearson test has been applied. Focused interviews with hunters groups have been conducted before the research design in order to operationalize the initial explanatory variables. In depth interviews with individual experienced hunters and participating observation have been used in order to interpret the results.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The hunters who participated in the research varied from 20 to 79 years old (average: 46) and their education involved either not holders of a degree or graduates of all the educational levels (30% of the sample were high school graduates). A significant number of hunters ask for control of predators and hunting guarding (42.6% and 50.9 % respectively). Release (28.7%) and the improvement of habitat (26.9%) are of a mediocre demand. And last in demand comes feeding (2.8%) and the settlement of bars (6.5%). Finally, there is a percentage that does not express an opinion (1.9%).

3.1 Position of hunting in the relevance system of the hunter

In Table 1, we notice that the position of hunting in the system of values affects the general trend of the hunter as far as the means are concerned. In contrast to the hunters that see hunting as “a simple sports activity”, those who view it as “a lifestyle”, are in favor of the “eco-centric” and “sustainable” solutions (habitat improvement and predator control) solutions that slower bring more permanent results and provide the chance of survival. At the same time, this category of hunters are negative to intense hunting guarding, since it does not like to be considered untrustworthy and be under control when hunting. A similar approach show those who would like their daughter (if having one) to become a hunter. Those, in turn, would not treat their daughter as an object of any sort of narcissistic exploitation. In other words, they do not try to raise her as a son, but they think hunting is a meaningful lifestyle that goes beyond the “barriers” and the prejudice of the “social gender” which sees woman as a representative of “passivity”, non violence, non aggressiveness etc. If they were acting with narcissism they would not present alike beliefs with those who view hunting as a lifestyle.

Table 1. Relevance system and hunting management strategies (Pearson’s coefficient and significance, *P<0.05, **P<0.01).

	Release of quarries	Habitat improvement	Predators control	Intense guarding
Hunting as a lifestyle	-.060	.231(**)	.241(**)	-.199 (**)
	.356	.000	.000	.002
Hunting as a sport	.051	-.155(*)	-.144(*)	.045
	.433	.017	.026	.488
If he had a daughter he would	-.185(**)	.242(**)	.186(**)	-.084

Similar Sokos et al. [1] found that the hare-hunters of Thessaloniki, who prefer habitat improvement as more effective management measure, begun hunting in smaller age, they are doing more excursions for hunting every year and usually live in suburban and not in urban area of the city.

3.2 Pedagogic function of hunting

Those who enhance the feeling of enthusiasm towards the quarry want its protection from predators (Table 2), so as to maximize the chance to hunt it themselves in a way that is characterized with dignity (quick death with only one shot) and they want to feel “the sense of the defeated one and the honor of being the winner”. Those who hunt because they want to achieve social superiority want quick increase of quarries through release, so as to have the high chance of catching it themselves and feel more prestigious over other hunters. Finally, those who hunt because they enjoy beautiful landscapes, they are negative to the increase of population density through release (which disturbs the tranquility of the landscape and the evolution which is “independent” and “natural”). They want stricter guarding, so as to minimize illegal hunting and turbulence in general. In addition, even if guarding focuses on illegal hunting, it probably creates an additional sense of security for the admirers of beautiful landscapes.

Table 2. Pedagogic function of hunting (Pearson’s coefficient and significance, *P<0.05, **P<0.01).

	Quarries releases	Predators control	Intense guarding
Feeling of the quarry’s respect through hunting	-.095	.184(**)	.032
	.142	.004	.625
Feeling of social superiority through hunting	.130(*)	.138(*)	-.060
	.045	.032	.359
Love for beautiful landscapes through hunting	-.186(**)	.059	.173(**)
	.004	.362	.007

4. CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Contrary to the hunters who regard hunting merely as a “sport”, these who regard it as a “life way” support long-term, more “eco-centric” and sustainable solutions like habitat improvement and predator control (and not, for example, release of quarries which have low survival into the wild [7]). Such solutions bring more permanent effects and provide more survival opportunities to the quarries. Simultaneously, these hunters are negative to more intensive hunting guarding, as they do not tolerate to have its “reliability” questioned and to be “policed”. Hunters who consider hunting to be not only a “male” but also a “female” activity present also a similar attitude.

Hunters who feel respect to the quarry desire control of predators, so that they assure more opportunities to kill it themselves in a “respectful” way (quick and accurately). Moreover, they want to feel “the value of the defeated which gives glory to the winner”. Hunters who seek social distinction through hunting desire quick increase of quarry population through release and predator control in order to increase the probability to catch them and to gain thereby in prestige within their hunter companion. Hunters who search beautiful landscapes during hunting are negative toward release of quarries as this spoils the quietness and the “naturalness” of landscape. They rather desire intensive guarding.

In general, it is advisable to create the feeling of hunting as a “way of life”. This deep feeling does not lead to over-harvesting of quarry population but rather to sustainable use of resources. Hunters who

consider hunting as a “way of life” and not just as a “sport” can play a determinant role in the pedagogic dimension of hunting by influencing other hunters.

Limitation of this research is that the sample was collected only from Northern Greece. In future, larger sample from the whole country as well as from other countries can be collected in order to check whether these results are replicable in areas with different ecological conditions, hunting systems and “tradition”.

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