

SERVICES OF THE HUNTING TOURISM INDUSTRY IN SOUTH-EAST HUNGARY

KAROLY BODNAR¹ – ATTILA LENART¹ - ERIKA SKOBRAK BODNAR¹

¹*University of Szeged Faculty of Agriculture
Andrassy u. 15., Hodmezovasarhely, Hungary
bodnar@mgk.u-szeged.hu*

Abstract: *The aim of the study was to present the different kind of enterprises and organisations which provide hunting activity and also wide range of offers on rural tourism. Most of the hunted species belong to the small games. Beside hunting and the related activities the hosts arrange accommodation, catering and gastronomic specialities, cultural programs, shopping and recreational or wellness activities for example relax in the famous Hungarian thermal spas. The composition of guest hunters and their demands were also discussed.*

Keywords: *hunting tourism, service providers, game species, South-East Hungary*

INTRODUCTION

Wildlife tourism is tourism based on encounters with non-domesticated animals. These encounters can occur in either the animals' natural environment or in captivity. It includes activities historically classified as 'non-consumptive', such as viewing, photography and feeding, as well as those that involve killing or capturing animals, particularly hunting and recreational fishing. Wildlife tourism can entail: attractions at fixed sites, tours, experiences available in association with tourist accommodation (HIGGINBOTTOM, 2004). Hunting tourism is one of selective types of tourism that is based on the use of natural resources. As the game and preserved natural wildlife habitat are the main motive in hunting tourism trends, hunting tourism planning should be. It is clear, that the hunting tourism is more developed in those areas where ecologically, socially and economically factors are favourable. Hunting and hunting tourism are closely connected, and their development is interrelated. In order to develop hunting tourism, it is necessary for the hunting ground to have attractive game species as well as the preserved natural environment. On the other hand, to be invested in hunting, i.e. in the protection of wild animals, and in the construction of technical and breeding facilities, in the infrastructure etc., hunting is one of the most important sources of financing, because always a certain amount of funds generated through hunting tourism returns to the hunting grounds in the form of investments in hunting (MARKOVIĆ ET AL., 2012).

The main factors that contribute to the choice of tourism destinations identified by tourists are: price, quality of services, travel agencies offers, friends review, others (sites, specific publication) (TOADER ET AL., 2014).

Counting to gradual recovery of this industry, hunting organisations must be oriented to offer services that are most sought for in a hunting-tourist market, and that are easy to fulfil, mostly regarding restrictive regulations of European Union. This is mostly trophy hunting of roe bucks and other large game, game bird hunting during the summer season, and gradually, when a situation gets more normal, to increase number of breeding species and offer other species of small game, mostly pheasants (RISTIĆ ET AL., 2009).

Tourism and the rural one can contribute to a long-lasting development of rural regions. Some of these contributions are mentioned by RUSU (2007), such as:

- a long-lasting utilization of tourism resources (optimal operation, development, protection and preservation)

- maintenance of natural, cultural and social diversity of the rural space;
- integration of agro-tourism in the local, regional and national development planning and strategy;
- development and promotion of the tourism offer, as well as, creation of a general, technical and civil infrastructure (e.g. accommodation and attractions).

The classification of tourist accommodation units related to rural tourism, such as a coded form of the integration of the comfort level and of the scale of services, is based on reputation and a set of requirements, criteria and standards of services. In the European Union, not only the classification system of the tourism accommodation units for rural tourism differs from country to country, but there is also a significant diversity of the comfort level, regarding the level and the classification criteria (FORIS, 2014). The rooms in hunting lodges are usually fitted with modern furniture; a mini bar, a TV, a hi-fi set, a phone and a fax machine ensure relaxation and entertainment. At some places also a restaurant is open for guests from the morning until late in the evening and offers a wide choice of meals from game dishes to vegetarian food satisfying all needs. The guests possibly can enjoy a sauna, a bar, a room for playing cards and a wine-cellar (SKOBRÁK-BODNÁR – BAJORHEGYI, 2007).

Assimilating some of the perennial values of the villages in some tourism facilities result in the rural tourism products of high value and difficult to mistake. The modern marketing presents a product from the perspective of expectations of a consumer and of the measure in which it can meet such expectations (PETROMAN ET AL., 2014). The thermo-mineral waters of the region offer many possibilities for further development of existing spas and for the development of new spas. With more investments in the spa infrastructure, with better marketing activities and training of highly qualified staff, this type of tourism could largely benefit the economy of the region and also the economy of the whole country (TOMIC ET AL., 2013).

The aim of the study was to present in general the different kind of enterprises and organisations which provide hunting activity and a main focus was on a wide range of offers on rural tourism in the South Great Plain Region.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Data collection was carried out both primer and secondary ways based on interviews at hunting associations and based on the National Game Management Database. Also a SWOT analyses was made on the facilities of the region.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hunting tourism means the invitation and hosting indigenous and foreign guest hunters. Hunters from Hungary are usually coming to our region for hunting of small games from those areas where the predominance of big games can be observed. Most of the foreign hunters are visiting our hunting grounds from Italy, Germany, Spain, Austria and other neighbouring countries. The main game species of the region are the following: red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), fallow deer (*Dama dama*), roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), hare (*Lepus europaeus*), ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) and mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*). The characteristics of the region's hunting bag show the dominance of small games (Table 1-2). The hunting with large hunting bag is popular among foreign hunters. To serve this demand hunting associations should increase the number of animals with artificial propagation and release them in free areas and enclosures also.

Table 1

Number of hunted big games (hunting bag) in the region (2013/2014)

County	Red deer	Fallow deer	Roe deer	Wild boar	Mouflon
Bács-Kiskun	1856	1057	2757	5330	0
Békés	58	1485	3145	1108	0
Csongrád	51	153	2318	4440	0
Total region	1965	2695	8220	10878	0

Source: authors from National Game Management Database

Table 2

Number of hunted small games (hunting bag) in the region (2013/2014)

County	Hare	Pheasant	Partridge	Mallard
Bács-Kiskun	11827	28773	135	638
Békés	29636	66795	121	13720
Csongrád	18394	28303	210	13223
Total region	59857	123871	466	27581

Source: authors from National Game Management Database

The hunting tourism generally needs high quality accommodation with special features. Usually the accommodation is not a hotel, but a comfortable hunting lodge. These lodges are located in the periphery of the settlements or at the hunting grounds. They offer single and double rooms or apartments with bathrooms or showers are provided. The guests who need broader choice of relax or recreation activities can take part in carriage driving, horse-riding, cycling, angling, hiking and can participate in photo safaris, etc.

A list was prepared of the regional attractions without completeness. The collection focused on spas, cultural amusement, and rural sites and programs. The most popular spas in the region are the following:

- Hagymatikum Spa Makó,
- Spa Orosháza-Gyopárosfürdő,
- Thermal Spa Kiskunhalas,
- Castle Spa Gyula,
- and almost every settlement of the region has its own small spa, but all of them has therapeutic effect.

Several types of cultural places and events are offering their services for the guests. All around the year different kind of gastronomic, cultural or folk festivals recommend enjoyable program. Excessively popular events for hunters are the celebrations of Hunting Days in every county, where the most fascinating events are the Hubertus masses (Photo 1).

Among others cultural programs are offered by local theatres (National Theatre Szeged and Jókai Theatre Békéscsaba) and the National Historical Memorial Park in Ópusztaszer (Feszty-panorama, historic exhibition, Open-air Ethnographic Collection) is also a memorable place to visit.

For the partners of the hunters or for the lady hunters also can choose from so called “ladies’ programs”.



Source: Jozsef Horvath

Photo 1: Hubertus Mass, Csongrád (2012)

A SWOT analysis was carried out.

Strength

- Traditions of hunting in Hungary.
- The region is rich in thermal water.
- Many festivals, holidays, theatre shows, concerts, exhibitions and sports contest are organized in this region.
- There are schools and educational system for tourism and for hunting.
- There are non governmental organizations for tourism organization and associations for hunting.
- Well-trained professional hunters at hunting organizations.
- Strict legal regulation of hunting and game management.
- Local economy and the hunting tourism mutually reinforce each other.
- The produced game meat is valuable.

Weakness

- Gradually reducing hare population.
- Disagreement between farmers and hunters due to the damages caused by game animals.
- Not too much variety of landscape.
- Big differences in accommodation facilities.
- Not every member of the involved staff able to speak one or more foreign languages.

Opportunity

- Extended partnership between settlements throughout Europe.
- Development of cross-border project in the Euro region.
- Organization of national and international festivals.
- Projects for reconstructions of the roads of the region.

- Modernized telecommunication services (mobile phone, internet, cable TV).
- Good community infrastructure (water supply system, drainage, electricity, gas stations, etc.).
- Involvement of local communities and authorities in tourism domain.

Threats

- Migration of young population to cities and abroad.
- More and more people are living under the living standard in rural and less favourable areas.
- Lack of international airport in the region.
- Too much competitors in the DKMT region with similar facilities.
- More and more guest hunter asks for short time hunting but with large hunting bag.

CONCLUSIONS

The South Great Plain Region is rich in games and offers good hunting facilities for guest hunters. The different types of accommodation possibilities are usually means hunting lodges with several services. Mutual interest has the hunters and local society to increase the income from the foreign guest hunters. The number of domestic guest hunters will reflect the position of domestic hunting and the regional development.

REFERENCES

1. **FORIS, D.** (2014): Study regarding the classification of tourism accommodation units for rural tourism within the EU member states. *Lucrări Științifice, Seria I*, 16 (4): 38-43.
2. **HIGGINBOTTOM, K.** (2004): Wildlife tourism: An introduction. In: Karen Higginbottom (Edit): *Wildlife tourism. Impacts, Management and Planning*. Common Ground Publishing Pty Ltd., Altona, Australia
3. **MARKOVIĆ, V. - DAVIDOVIĆ, N. - ARMENSKI, T. - BRADIĆ, M.** (2012): Principles of sustainable development of hunting tourism in Vojvodina Region. *Geographica Timisiensis*, 21 (1): 77-89.
4. NATIONAL GAME MANAGEMENT DATABASE (<http://www.vvt.gau.hu/>)
5. **PETROMAN, I. M. - CSOSZ, I. - PETROMAN, I. - MARIN, D. - MOMIR, B. - BEJAN, C.** (2014): Rural tourism products from the Banat area demanded by European tourists. *Scientific Papers: Animal Science and Biotechnologies*, 47 (1): 338-342.
6. **RISTIĆ, Z. A. - MARKOVIĆ, V. - DEVIĆ, M.** (2009): Development of hunting tourism in Vojvodina. *Geographica Pannonica*, 13 (3): 105-114.
7. **RUSU, S.** (2007): The rural tourism in Arad county. Achievements and perspectives. *Lucrări Științifice, Seria I*, 9 (1): 447-452.
8. **SKOBRÁK BODNÁR, E. - BAJORHEGYI, T.** (2007): Hunting services in the Hungarian South Great Plain Region. *Lucrări Științifice, Seria I*, 9 (1): 551-556.
9. **TOADER, C.S. - BRAD, I. - SÂMBOTIN, D. - HURMUZACHE, T. C. - MARTIN, S. C.** (2014): Aspects regarding factors that contribute to the choice of tourism destinations by tourists. *Lucrări Științifice, Seria I*, 16 (4): 140-143.
10. **TOMIĆ, N. - STOJSAVLJEVIĆ, R. - STAMENKOVIĆ, I. - BERIĆ, D.** (2013): The use of geothermal energy resources in the tourism industry of Vojvodina (Northern Serbia). *European Researcher*, 42 (2-3): 443-454.