The new hunting strategy of ThüringenForst

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ThüringenForst
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ThüringenForst
State forest organisation of Thuringia
# Forests in Thuringia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Area in hectare</th>
<th>Area in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ThüringenForst (green), other state forest (grey)</td>
<td>222,000</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authorities (blue)</td>
<td>93,000</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private (red)</td>
<td>223,000</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treuhand (yellow)</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>550,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forest species

- spruce (grey): 44 %
- pine (brown): 18 %
- larch (red): 3 %
- beech (green): 20 %
- oak (yellow): 6 %
- deciduous hardwood trees (red-brown): 5 %
- deciduous softwood trees (blue): 4 %
ThüringenForst - organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>unit</th>
<th>employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>headquarter in Erfurt</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Research and Competence Centre in Gotha</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 forestry offices with almost 280 forest districts</td>
<td>1020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two bases for own forest machines</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one forest education centre</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one tree nursery</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three school youth hostels for forest pedagogics</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ThüringenForst - main objectives

Two groups of duties

• (1) Responsibilities of public administration - for example:
  - proceedings according to forest law
  - management of private forests and forests of Local authorities
  - environmental education and forest pedagogics
  - forest aid
  - providing infrastructure for tourism

• (2) Management of 200.000 ha State forests
  - including game management of 184.000 ha
    (13 % of the hunting area of Thuringia)
Framework condition of hunting in Thuringia

• Hunting rights are closely related to land ownership
• The minimum size of a hunting ground is 75 ha
• The Lower Hunting Authority in the state forest is ThüringenForst
• Shooting plans are internally approved but for red deer coordinated with hunting communities
• Forest relevant game: roe, red and fallow deer, moufflon, (wild boar)
• Strong and conservative hunting lobby, trophy oriented (example: roe deer hunting season)
Why was a new hunting strategy necessary?

- Every year the Thuringian state forest suffers damages caused by game estimated about 6 Mio. €
- The damage is mainly caused by browsing and barking by red deer and roe deer
- The periodic game damage appraisal showed no positive development trend over the past years
- High expenses for the protection of the regeneration
- The potential of the natural regeneration is used for game food instead of the benefit of the forest owner
- Our past game management was not successful!
Our former hunting system

• Hunting was regarded as an important source of income:
  – Hunting areas were leased for high prices
  – Selling of guided hunting (individual shootings)
  – Selling of participation at driven hunt
  – Income from trophy hunting
  – High fines for wrong shoots (wrong age, wrong trophy)

• Restricted hunting (young game only!)

• Hunting and silviculture were organisationally separated in different departments
General principles of our new hunting strategy (1)

- The forest condition is the primary criterion for a successful game management
- Reducing property damage take priority over short-term revenues from hunting
- Hunting is oriented toward:
  - ecological and wild biological principles
  - new findings from good hunting practices
  - animal protection matters
  - requirements of food hygiene
General principles of our new hunting strategy (2)

• Hunting has to sustainably serve all forest functions
• Hunting in the Thuringian state forest aims to be an examples for other landowners and hunters
Objectives of our new hunting strategy

• Our game management aims at game stock, that:
  – take the winter grazing capacity of the habitat into account
  – allows natural regeneration of appropriate and stable mixed
    forests without protection against game damages

• reasonable relation between income from hunting and
  spending

• Participation of private hunters in the state forest

• Qualification and motivation of our own staff to
  practise success oriented hunting
New features of our hunting strategy

• Motivation
  Motivation and participation of our staff into the agreed and goal oriented hunting strategy

• Hunting based on wildlife biology insights
  Reduced hunting pressure and effort reductions for our staff by the introduction of shorter hunting seasons

• Success-oriented hunting
  – Concentrated hunting of female game and offspring to reduce the stock
  – Attractive hunting opportunity for private hunters
Motivated and success-oriented hunting

• Target agreement between the headquarter and forest offices and between forest offices and forest districts
• Every forest office develops its own hunting strategy
• Participatory approach
  – Targets and strategy are developed taking the ideas of the staff into account
• Hunting controlling using criterions like:
  – Percentage of new browsing and barking damage
  – Share of planted regeneration versus natural regeneration
  – Share of artificially protected regeneration
  – Relation between expenses and hunting success
Hunting as an official duty

- For every employee of ThüringenForst with an academic degree in forestry hunting is an official duty
- Individual hunting is no working time
- The hunting compensation depends on the personal hunting success
- The personal hunting engagement is taken into consideration for personal decisions
- Employees are encouraged to have hunting dogs
- ThüringenForst offers hunting qualification for its employees
Participation of private hunters

- The participation of private hunters in the state forest is an important objective of ThüringenForst
- Wide range of very attractive Hunting offers
- Fees are small but conditions are challenging
- Every offer includes generous shootings and no limits for female game and offspring
- We try to build up long term relations with good private hunters
Examples for hunting offers for private hunters (1):

- **“Young hunter” permit:**
  - 100 € fee for one year, no extra fee for driven hunts
  - No limits for female hoofed game and offspring, some young male deer

- **“Ranger” (“Waldläufer”) permit:**
  - 30 € fee for one year, no extra fee for driven hunts
  - 270 € penalty fee if less than 6 ruminant hoofed game are shot within one hunting season (individual hunts only, no driven hunts)
  - No limits for female hoofed game and offspring
  - Young male deer after 6 ruminant hoofed game (older one after 15)
Examples for hunting offers for private hunters (2):

- “Game meat” permit:
  - 6 €/ha and year for one hunting area
  - After 3 ruminant hoofed game are shot each additional hoofed game can be bought for only 0.50 – 1 €/kg

- “Driven hunt” permit:
  - 20 € fee (no fee for hunting dog owners)
  - No limits for game except older red deer, fallow deer and moufflon
  - Incentives by opportunity to shoot an older deer
3 methods to keep driven hunts attractive:

1. “Fee”-Method:
   – After paying 50 € before the driven hunt one older male red deer, fallow deer or moufflon can be shot
   – No refund if not successful

2. “Success”-Method:
   – After 2 ruminant hoofed game (female, offspring and roe deer only) are shot one older male red deer, fallow deer or moufflon can be shot

3. “Lottery”-Method:
   – One older male red deer, fallow deer or moufflon can be shot if the hunter successfully takes part in the “Deer-Lottery”
   – (20 % Chance)
The shooting share of employees and other hunters

2012
- Mitarbeiter: 41%
- Gäste: 19%
- Hundeführer: 12%
- Dritte unentgeltlich: 9%
- Dritte entgeltlich: 19%

2013
- Mitarbeiter: 38%
- Gäste: 19%
- Hundeführer: 12%
- Dritte unentgeltlich: 10%
- Dritte entgeltlich: 20%

2014
- Mitarbeiter: 37%
- Gäste: 10%
- Hundeführer: 11%
- Dritte unentgeltlich: 11%
- Dritte entgeltlich: 23%
Efficient hunting guided by game biological principals

• Interval hunting:
  – Periods of intensive hunting alternate with periods without any hunting
  – Less hunting pressure, more hunting success
  – Intense hunting during periods of high game activity, no or less hunting during breeding period

• Less individual hunting and more driven hunts
  – Less hunting pressure, more hunting success
  – Using suitable loud and slow hunting dogs

• Shooting training
  – Obligatory Shooting before every hunting season
  – Proved annual participation at shooting training (moving targets)
The share of individual and driven hunt

- **Einzel**: Green
- **Beweg**: Yellow
- **Fall**: Purple

**2012**
- Damwild: 57 Einzel, 39 Beweg, 5 Fall
- Muffel: 64 Einzel, 34 Beweg, 2 Fall
- Rehwild: 65 Einzel, 29 Beweg, 5 Fall
- Rotwild: 61 Einzel, 32 Beweg, 6 Fall
- Schwarz: 42 Einzel, 55 Beweg, 3 Fall

**2013**
- Damwild: 57 Einzel, 38 Beweg, 5 Fall
- Muffel: 64 Einzel, 50 Beweg, 7 Fall
- Rehwild: 64 Einzel, 32 Beweg, 4 Fall
- Rotwild: 54 Einzel, 37 Beweg, 9 Fall
- Schwarz: 56 Einzel, 39 Beweg, 4 Fall

**2014**
- Damwild: 49 Einzel, 49 Beweg
- Muffel: 45 Einzel, 52 Beweg, 3 Fall
- Rehwild: 63 Einzel, 33 Beweg, 3 Fall
- Rotwild: 51 Einzel, 46 Beweg, 3 Fall
- Schwarz: 25 Einzel, 73 Beweg, 2 Fall

**Total**
- 23 Einzel, 27 Beweg, 3 Fall
First results

• We started our new hunting strategy in 2013: It is too early for data based evidence
• But there is positive feedback from the district foresters and from private guest hunters
• Higher participation of private hunters
• Upward trend of the shooting quota
Number of roe deer shot in Thuringia

Quelle: Jagdstatistik TMIL
Number of red deer shot in Thuringia

Quelle: Jagdstatistik TMIL
Wir machen den Wald. Für Sie!