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DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HUNTING TOURISM SECTOR NPA “BELARUSIAN SOCIETY OF HUNTERS AND FISHERMEN”

Hunting tourism, whose main purpose is catching trophy animals, became ingrained in hunting sector activities. “Belarusian society of hunters and fishermen”, the oldest public association, did not become an exception. One of the main objectives of this association, leased about 60% of the hunting grounds of the country, is to ensure the condition for the realization of the right to hunt. For this reason, management associations have a certain specificity of activity on the organization of hunting tours.

In general, in RSPA BSHF dominate fields, which account about 56.2% of the total areas, the most productive forest hunting grounds are equal to 38.6%. The area of forest hunting grounds and their qualitative characteristics largely determined by the number of hooved animals in hunting sector. The highest number of hunting tours with foreign hunters was in 2013. After that a recession was observed. The largest number of foreign hunters visited Vitebsk region. More than 90% of hunters come from Russia, the proportion of hunters from the EU countries increased more than in 2 times (7.1%) in 2015.

The maximum amount of game meat, got by foreign hunters was in 2013 and 2014. In the past few years the demand for roe deer, the highest amount of which was in 2015.

Quantity reduction of foreign hunters led to a decline of revenues from hunting tours, starting from 2014 moreover there is an expenses decline for one hunter.

Key words: hunting tourism, hunting trophy, normed view.

Introduction. In order to raise the income of hunting sector of the Republic of Belarus it is necessary to find modern approaches to activity organization. One of the key issues is the development of international hunting tourism. Hunting product for tourists is quite a specific thing and includes not only traditional services but also the possibility to obtain a hunting trophy. Thus, an image of the whole hunting sector is formed by the quality of provided services. For successful development of hunting tourism a number of conditions should be observed, where the key condition is the presence of hooved animals that can be seen as hunting trophies for foreign tourists. At the same time hooved animals are of interest of native hunters, so their interest should be also taken into account. In this context, hunting sectors of the republic state public association “Belarusian society of hunters and fishermen” are really experienced in hunting management.

Thus, on the one hand in accordance with the Presidential Decree no. 450 from July 17 2006 “main issues of public society “Belarusian society of hunters and fishermen” one of the main goals for RSPA (republic state public association) “Belarusian society of hunters and fishermen” (BSHF) is “... the creation of conditions for hunting and amateur fishing” and on the other hand, providing foreign hunters with all the necessary services.

Main part. RSPA organizational structures “Belarusian society of hunters and fishermen” rent 60% of hunting sector area. It is also should

be mentioned that the forestry area is equal to 38.6% of the total area, field area is equal to 56.2% and wetland area is 5.2%. In the context of the regions, the largest forestry area is in Gomel region (45.6%) and the least area is in Brest region (32.8%).

Potential of the hunting sector territory is realized through the number of game animals and first of all hooved animals. In its turn, the number of hooved animals depends on availability of sufficient forest lands [1]. It is especially important for organization of hunting on trophy animals for foreign hunters.

However, the area of hunting lands is not always the only determining factor, quality characteristics of hunting areas and the anthropogenic effect is also vital. According to the review conducted by RSPA “BSHF” the highest number of tours was carried out in Vitebsk region. In general, in 2015 the number of such tours for foreign hunters decreased (Fig. 1).

Due to the downsizing of bison population, it is replaced by other hooved animals especially by roe deer within the structure of catch. By the way quantity of roe deer trophies is steadily increasing. And in 2015 it was equal to 706.

In the dynamics roe deer catch by foreign hunters (in Vitebsk region) in terms of regions is declined. Though within a context of decrease of roe deer catch. While in Belarus the catch of roe deer by foreign hunters increases (Grodno region – in 2.6, Brest region – in 1.3), in Vitebsk region a decline is observed (Fig. 2).

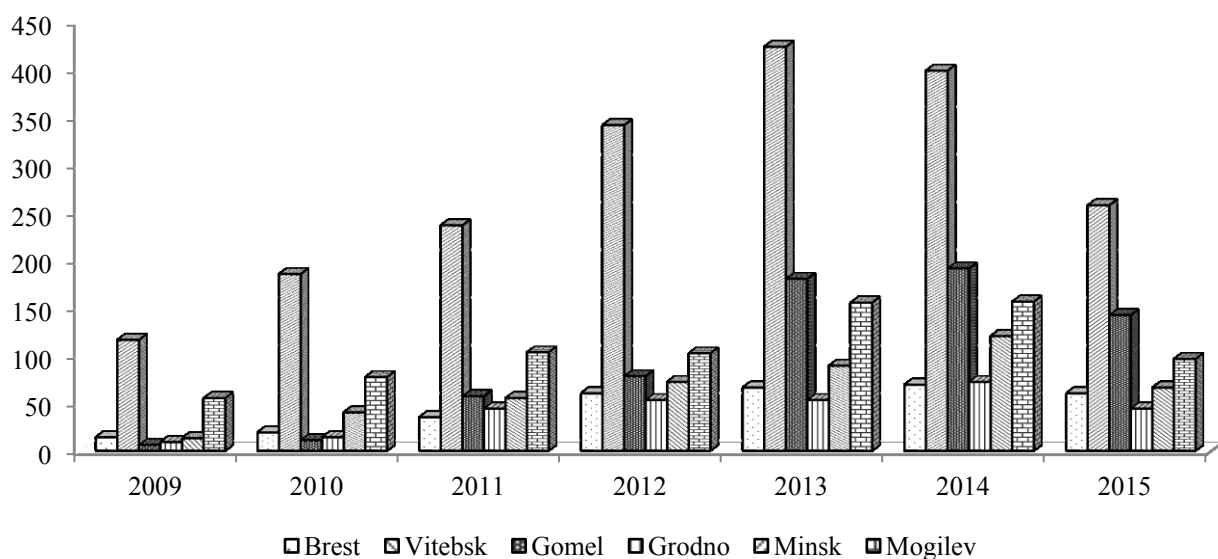


Fig. 1. The number of tours for foreign hunters carried out by RSPA "BSHF"

Total amount of elk catch also increased until 2013–2014, when stabilization by the number of caught animals was observed (208–200 individuals). In 2015 there was a decline of number of animal catch. This fact can be explained by reduction of purchasing power of Russian citizens, which form a major part of foreign hunters. The highest number of caught elk is in Vitebsk region. Thus, in 2013–2014 about 59–67.7% of elk were caught by foreign hunters. In 2015 this figure fell more than in a half and was equal to 36%. The importance of boar for hunting tourism development was increasing till 2012 but outbreak of African swine fever caused the loss of this importance of boar for hunting sector.

The largest number of hunters that visit our country is from Russia, but at the same time the number of hunters from the European Union in 2015 has increased more than in 2 times in comparison with 2014 (Fig. 1).

In the present situation sectors of RSPA "BSHF" as well as other hunting sectors are looking for new development directions. And one of such directions is expansion of red deer and creation of conditions for full functioning emerging population. Red deer successfully adapt to forest-hunting lands moreover its population increases in case of good protection.

There is a gradual increase of red deer population, caught by foreign hunters. And despite of the fact that at present time red deer does not play a significant role as a trophy, the growing trend demonstrates that in future that kind of species should come to the fore of RSPA "BSHF" sector.

In considering hoofed animals in total, the overall percentage of adult males is equal to 50–68.4%; current year animals – 18.7–37.5% (Fig. 2). There is a constant strong demand for male roe

deer trophies, the part of which is 31.6–33.9%. The part of red deer trophies is equal to 16.5–26.9%, but in general decrease of trophy animals catch is observed.

One of the key factors determining development of incoming tourism is the attitude local hunters. As recent studies showed, the problem that bothers local hunters is their right on hunting on hoofed animals as well [2]. In this regard, the tension caused by amount of hoofed animal trophies can occur between the administration of hunting sector and foreign hunters on the one hand and local hunters on the other. One of the RSPA "BSHF" objectives is provision with right on hunting that is why this criterion is a very important issue. Thus, the number of hoofed animals that were caught in the last four years doesn't exceed 22.2%, however the number of some animals decreased and in 2015 the number of elk was equal to 8.1% and red deer – 11.4% but for example the number of roe deer increased from 10.4% in 2012 to 16.3% in 2014 and to 16% in 2015.

Decline in the number of hunting tours led to the decrease of income in the RSPA "BSHF". But the main reason of reduced demand is the decline of monetary resources that depends on organization of tour with the involvement of at least one foreign hunter (Table 3).

Such tendency can indicate on reduction of purchasing power and on quality reduction of some trophies as well. By the way cost of trophies creates revenue structure. Possibly, to some extent both of these tendencies can exist.

Within the general framework the largest income is generated by the number of caught animals that are equal to 47.1–53.5%. Other incomes depend on the room and board services.

Table 1

Foreign hunters arrivals in the RSPA “BSHF”

Years	Foreign hunters arrivals				
	Overall, pers.	Including the representatives of, %			
		Russia	CIS countries	European Union	Other countries
2012	2,002	93.9	2.2	3.7	0.2
2013	2,609	91.6	1.4	7	–
2014	2,455	96.3	0.5	3.2	–
2015	1,497	92.5	0.2	7.1	0.2

Table 2

Number of animals, caught by foreign hunters in the RSPA “BSHF” sectors, species

Years	Animal species					
	Elk	Red deer	European roe deer	Boar	Capercaillie	Grouse
2009	45	1	124	466	17	37
2010	61	1	208	761	18	24
2011	100	13	311	834	17	10
2012	95	18	313	862	15	13
2013	208	19	545	179	23	23
2014	200	25	610	–	30	34
2015	150	22	706	–	26	25

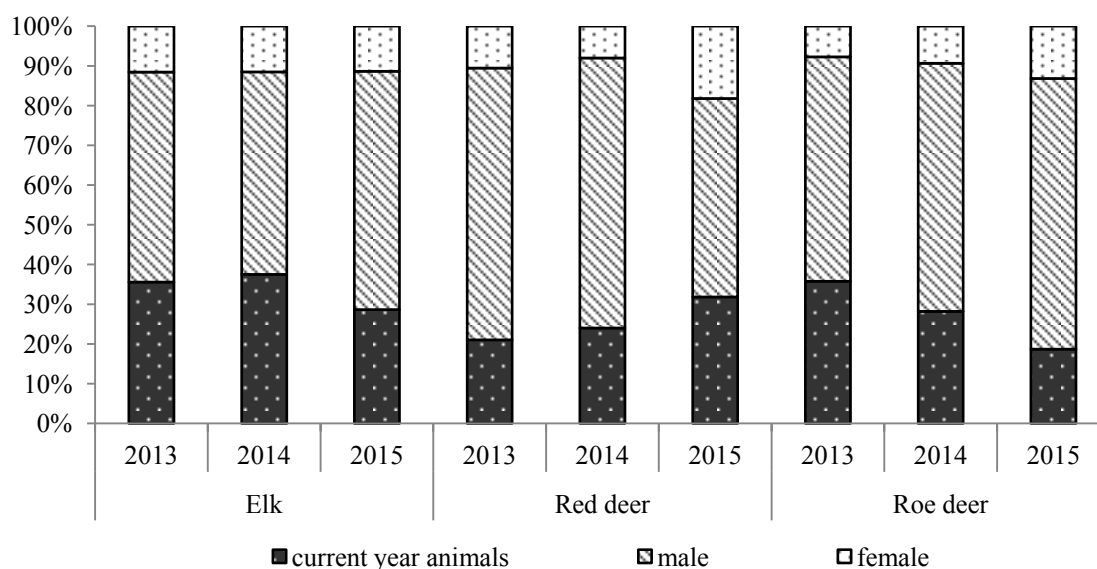


Fig. 2. The structure of hooved animals caught by foreign hunters in the RSPA “BSHF” sectors

Table 3

Incomes from hunting tours in the RSPA “BSHF” sectors

Years	Hunting tours with foreign hunters, pcs.	Foreign hunters, pers.	Income		Average income	
			Overall, thous. euros	In percentage	Per one hunting tour, euros	Per one hunter, euros
2009	213	615	241.8	8.4	1,135.2	393.2
2010	346	1,037	362.0	10.4	1,046.2	349.1
2011	530	1,629	652.8	21.7	1,231.7	400.7
2012	706	2,002	772.6	20.2	1,094.3	385.9
2013	966	2,609	1,173.4	21.1	1,214.7	449.8
2014	1,006	2,455	952.1	19.9	946.4	387.8
2015	665	1,497	527.5	16.4	793.2	352.4

Conclusion. RSPA “Belarusian society of hunters and fishermen” beside its primary function of ensuring the implementation of hunting right for the participants also is quite successfully engaged in the development of hunting tourism. Moreover it provides national economics with foreign exchange.

In an economic downturn, because of tourist flow decrease and outbreak of swine fever sig-

nificance of bore was lost for further hunting development.

Today RSPA “BSHF” is counting on red deer that is in interest of foreign hunters. Roe deer becomes increasingly important in terms of trophy hunting. However selective hunting on male species of roe deer and red deer can have a negative effect on its future population and lead to decrease of their trophy qualities.

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