UDC 338.43(2Rus)
LBC 65.32(470)

Assessment of the tourist potential of the region's hunting sector (case study of the Vologda Oblast)

Yu. N.
TRUDOV
ISEDT RAS Deputy Director-at-Large
trudov.y@mail.ru

The author, using his own methodology, through the example of the Vologda Oblast, reveals the main parameters of gross turnover in the hunting sector with regard to hunting services; provides methodological tools for calculating gross turnover of tourist services in hunting, determines the degree of development and prospects of the tourism potential of the hunting sector, the role of hunting tourism in the region's economic development.

Vologda Oblast, hunting industry, tourist services, estimation of the amount of services, development prospects.

One of the distinguishing features of hunting sector is that the level of its marketability has been increasing extremely slowly and commodity-money relations will never encompass the entire industry, the considerable part of which will be always based on the principles of subsistence farming, with hunting being for hunters themselves the source of products, used for home consumption. At that, they arrange hunting independently, without resorting to services provided by special hunting organizations. Such status is consolidated by the existing traditions and legislation. In particular, the existing legal acts established that at least 20% of the hunting lands of each subject of the Russian Federation are to remain public and cannot be transferred to legal entities and private entrepreneurs for conducting hunting [1].

It should be noted that the afore-said does not apply to the particular forms of hunting organization, which existed in the Soviet era and included state commercial farm units, large specialized procurement organizations and planned commercial killing of animals. Marketability level of hunting was, of course, significantly higher, as well as the utilization rate of hunting resources, however, at present with Russia's transition to market relations, these forms faded in importance almost completely [2].

Nevertheless, the general trends of socio-economic development are also reflected in this industry, and the market relations embrace ever-increasing part of hunting. The Federal Law of 2009 “About hunting and preserving hunting resources and about modification of separate legal acts of the Russian Federation”, certain articles of which are aimed at the improvement of the sector’s investment opportunities and increased competition, significantly affected the growth of the merchantability of the hunting sector.

The degree of the marketability of the hunting sector is determined by the share of commercial output (the cost of game, hides, horns, by-products and derivatives of wild animals) and the share of paid services in overall production. In terms of industrial classification, services in the hunting sector are considered as tourist activities, as they are provided in certain time periods and away from the consumer’s permanent residence [3], and the probable amount of these services under certain conditions is considered as tourist potential.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to evaluate the tourism potential at present, as no information about services turnover is actually presented. The only available source of information is the data submitted by legal entities and individual entrepreneurs – long-term users of hunting grounds (hereinafter, hunt users) for the state supervision in reports on the form No.2 TP (hunting) [4], in which section 4 provides for the collection of information on the proceeds from marketing products and services by types of hunting. But the given form does not differentiate, first of all, the turnover from marketing goods and services, and secondly, various types of services – for the organization of hunting, the accommodation of hunters, catering arrangements, roughing of trophies, as well as transportation and taxidermy services. In addition, official statistical data do not comprise adjustments for shadow turnover. Consequently, the state statistical materials are not a reliable source for evaluating turnover of services in hunting. Therefore, indirect methods of assessment are to be used, in order to achieve the research objectives.

The author attempted to identify the tourist potential of the industry using the example of the Vologda Oblast.

The Vologda Oblast is one of the regions of the Russian Federation with the most developed hunting. This statement is based on the data on the number of game species, the number of hunters, as well as the oblast estimates obtained in the international and trophy exhibitions, and it is shared by the majority of authors in the hunting media (visit, for example: http://vologdatourinfo.ru/hunting-fishing). However, the Vologda Oblast lags behind many other regions by the level of development of commodity-money relations in hunting industry. This lag is primarily manifested in the relatively small share of hunting lands transferred to long-term use (*tab. 1*).

It may be added that the policy of the authorities has been lately aimed at increasing the share of public lands. As noted in the public report of the dedicated government agency in this field – the Department for protection, development, and regulation of the exploitation of the Vologda Oblast fauna (hereinafter – the Department of Hunting), the work has been done in order to increase the area for more than 400 thousand hectares in the fulfillment of the Governor order on the optimization of lands, granted for long-term use, for the purpose of transferring them to public.

However, the same report notes that the assignment of lands is not completely terminated. In 2012, the Department of Hunting organized two auction activities for the right to conclude agreements concerning the hunting grounds in Mezhdurechensky District (area of 29.4 thousand hectares) and in Cherepovetsky District (area of 14.2 thousand hectares) [5].

Table 1. Assignment of hunting grounds to long term users in separate subjects of the Russian Federation*

RF subject	Total area of hunting grounds, ha	Area of assigned hunting grounds, ha	Share of assigned hunting grounds, %
Vologda Oblast	**14 2910 400**	**5 482 305**	**38.36**
Leningrad Oblast	7 439 000	6 869 000	92.34
Yaroslavl Oblast	3 293 700	2 904 700	88.19
Novgorod Oblast	4 872 914	4 046 340	83.04
Kostroma Oblast	5 677 900	3 089 600	54.41
Pskov Oblast	4 943 810	2 162 496	43.74
Republic of Karelia	17 532 600	7 555 140	43.09
Tver Oblast	8 000 000	7 398 800	92.49

* As of January 1, 2011.
Source: the report data of Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology. Available at:http://www.mnr.gov.ru/news/detail.php?ID=127672&sphrase_id=268034

As of January 1, 2013, 56 hunting users – legal entities with 5232.6 thousand hectares of assigned hunting grounds operate on the territory of the region. The largest hunting user is the Regional public organization "the Vologda Oblast hunting and fishing society", with about 2.8 million hectares, making up 53% of the total area of hunting grounds, transferred for use. This organization is represented in 19 districts of the oblast, and has 10 incorporated regional offices. Other major hunting societies are LLC Vologda hunting (180.5 thousand hectares of hunting grounds), Vologda regional public organization "Hunting and fishing society of MVD veterans" (132.3), Vologda regional public organization "Hunting and fishing club 'Hunter'" (128.6), LLC Centre 911 (119.9) and LLC GORA (94) [5].

Hunting users have different organizational and legal forms, areas of assigned hunting grounds, material-technological and staff resources, as well as different objectives of activities. During the 11th Interregional exhibition of tourist service and technologies of hospitality "North Gate" (2012) at the round table "Issues concerning the organization of hunting and fishing tourism in the Vologda Oblast", organized by the Department of Hunting, a survey among the executives of the hunting grounds users was conducted. The respondents were offered to choose possible objectives concerning the establishment of hunting entities in order of importance without priority ranking.

As follows from the data, only 9% of the polled executives of the entities entrepreneurial activities pointed to business activities. However, 83% of users, assigned to 33.9% of the total region's hunting grounds, note that the achievement of the main goal is combined with business activities. Moreover, it is necessary to take into account that even the users, who do consider themselves engaged in business activities, give licenses and permissions for hunting such animals as duck, goose, rabbit to everyone who has applied for the license (except in cases where rated capacity may be exceeded). The provision of services to hunters arriving to the territory of the hunting entity is the economic substance of the license, the form of which is approved in accordance with the procedure established by law. According to the abovementioned public report of the Department of Hunting, 32 978 of such licenses were granted in 2012 (by the number of permissions) [5].

In compliance with the research objective, in addition to the question on the purpose of establishing the hunting entities, the questions were asked with regard to the share of hunts, conducted with the purpose of sale in the total volume of hunts for each type of game animals;

Table 2. Survey results concerning the objectives of the activities of hunting entities

Purpose of establishing the hunting entity	Number of responses, %	Area of territory, thousand hectares	Share in the oblast hunting lands
Provision of services to the founders of the entity	5	108.3	0.8
Business activities	9	311.0	2.1
Establishment of business contacts related to the organization's operating activities	3	264.8	1.9
Provision of services to the founders of the entity and business activities	29	3 262.0	22.8
Business activities and the establishment of business contacts related to the organization's operating activities	17	297.6	2.1
Provision of services to the founders of the entity, establishment of business contacts related to the organization's operating activities	6	315.1	2.2
All the answers	28	675.7	4.7
Unanswered, unable to choose an answer	3	94.1	0.7
Total:	100	5328.6*	37.3

* Area, assigned to users, as of February 1, 2012 [6].

share of hunts, the execution of which requires additional services (transfers, huntsman escort, accommodation, nutrition, roughing of trophies, taxidermy), as well as whether (and how) the trophy qualities of hunted animals are taken into account when summarizing the results of the hunt.

Due to differences in the users' approaches to methods of evaluating trophy animals when processing the results of the survey, the following tools have been used.

Since in the Vologda Oblast the trophy quality of the bear is more frequently estimated by its weight, in cases when the users present in advertising an assessment by the system of the International Council for game and wildlife conservation (CIC), its rough translation to weight was applied. Such translation is valid, as animals reach a certain trophy quality at a certain age and have rather standard weight at that age.

Due to the fact that the CIC assessment is more frequently applied, when assessing "roaring" moose and boars, the average advertising value was used by the estimate. If advertising assessments were based on the weight of moose horns or the length of boar tusks, the approximate CIC assessment was determined on the basis of the age of the hunted animal and the weight of moose horns or the length of boar tusks.

The average age of hunted animals was determined on the basis of the filled stubs of hunting licenses, handed over to the Department of Hunting in accordance with the procedures, established by the Department of Hunting. The weight, age and gender of the hunted animal is stated in the stub. The average weight of hunted bears can be determined on the basis of their average age, and a rough CIC estimate on the basis of the age of the moose and the boar.

The average weight of hunted bears in 2012 amounted to 124.5 kg and made up less than 51 points by CIC estimate, age of hunted "roaring" moose – 4.5 years and approximately 260 points, the length of boar tusks was approximately 26 cm and made up about 118 points.

Along with the survey, the author analyzed the on-line advertisements of the users of hunting grounds. 3 users have own web-sites with commercial proposals; 9 users posted proposals with detailed description of the types of services and their costs on the web-sites of travel agencies; 19 users are mentioned on various sites as organizations providing services in the hunting sphere. The share of hunting grounds, assigned to the three aforementioned

Table 3. Imputed value of services of the Vologda Oblast hunting industry, 2012

Type of animal	Share of commercial hunting* in total hunting, according to the survey, %	Official hunting, animal units	Number of hunted animals, animal units	Average cost of a trophy according to advertising, thousand rubles	Average cost of services according to advertising, thousand rubles**	Cost of the trophy with additional services	Total cost of hunting per an assigned territory, thousand rubles
Bear	54.3	372	201	45.5	9.0	54.5	10954.5
Moose	27.1	1187	321	37.2	12.3	49.5	15889.5
Boar	24.7	1427	352	16.5	9.8	26.3	9257.6
Wolf	12.2	232	28	35.1	18.0	53.1	1486.8
“Roaring” moose	64.2	94	60	38.8	9.3	48.1	2886.0
Grouse	12.1	1217	127	9.3	8.2	26.5	3365.5
Total							43839.9

* Hunting for hunters-tourists is defined traditionally in the Vologda Oblast as “commercial” hunting (unlike game hunting that implies hunting at no charge or at a nominal pay including taxes and duties). This name rather accurately reflects the essence of the phenomenon, so it will be used by the author.

** Without regarding the hunting success ratio. Not all hunts are successful. If hunting is not successful, only the cost of services is paid. In this case the cost of one trophy would account for higher cost of additional services. This coefficient varies for different species of animals, and it is higher than throughout the region on average, in case hunting is organized by the specialists of the hunting sector. If necessary, this coefficient also can be considered, however, the author does not use it, as on the whole, the error increases slightly. Other types of hunting, such as lynx hunting, beaver hunting, black grouse and wood grouse hunting in winter, fox and hare hunting, can be also neglected due to their rare occurrence.

categories of users, makes up 31% of the total area of the oblast hunting grounds. It should be also noted that there are online advertisements promoting the organization of hunting entities belonging to non-registered users.

The results of processing the survey data and estimation of service costs are summarized in *table 3.*

Thus, the cost of total commercial hunting, executed by users in the Vologda Oblast by 3 types, denoted in table 3, can be estimated at 43.8 million rubles. The cost of licenses, issued by users for the payment for the hunting of public animal species is also to be added. The cost of licenses varies according to the hunting season (spring season, autumn-winter season) and to users. The information concerning costs can be easily obtained in the course of the telephone survey prior to the beginning of each season. In 2012 the average cost of the license amounted to 1250 rubles. Therefore, users received approximately 41.2 million rubles, and their total revenue made up 85 million rubles.

Taking into account that 5232.7 thousand hectares of land are assigned to users, their income from 1 hectare can be estimated at 16.24 rubles. It should be noted that this income for one year is much higher than the payment for the execution of the hunting agreement, established by the RF Government – 10 roubles per 1 hectare of land in a lump sum, when concluding an agreement for the term from 25 to 49 years. Non-random is the increase in the auction price for the right to conclude hunting agreements and the increase in the number of proposals on concluding hunting agreements made by organizations with long-term licenses [5].

Proceeding from the amount of gross income of hunting users, the tourist potential of the hunting industry can be roughly estimated. This potential is equal to the actual income and possible increase in the foreseeable future.

It is difficult to expect that the merchantability degree of the industry and increase in the share of commercial hunting will change in a short period of time.

However, if the regional authorities switch their position with regard to the assignment of hunting grounds, the share of public lands, in accordance with the law, may be reduced to 20%. Hence, 6200.4 thousand hectares of hunting grounds can be assigned additionally. At the income of 16.24 rubles from 1 hectare, the total revenue of hunting users can make up 185.8 million rubles that will correspond to approximately 0.1% of the oblast gross regional product.

The assessments of the tourism potential of the oblast hunting sector, made by the author, can be compared with the results obtained by individual hunting entities, engaged in the business activities on the development of the hunting tourism (Among publicly available web-sites, visit, for example, http://wildlife.by/node/962). These comparisons have shown that the proposed method based on the conducted survey and the study of the advertisements of the hunting users, allows resolving the task, set in the present research – to evaluate the current level of the development and tourism potential of the oblast hunting sector with high degree of accuracy.

References

1. Federal Law No.209 of July 24, 2009 "About hunting and preserving hunting resources and about modification of separate legal acts of the Russian Federation" (edited on December 6, 2011).
2. Sukhomirov G.I. Improving the organization and management of Russia's hunting farms. Vestnik Okhotovedeniya. V. 7. No.1.
3. Birzhakov M.B. Introduction to tourism: textbook. Saint Petersburg: PH "Gerda", 2004.
4. On approval of the form No.2-TP (hunting): Rosstat order No.441 of August 9, 2012.
5. Public report of the Department for protection, development, and regulation of the exploitation of the Vologda Oblast fauna. Available at: http://okuvshinnikov.ru/files/zip/kirillov.pdf.
6. Register of legal entities, engaged in the exploitation of fauna. Available at: http://vologdaoblast.ru/ru/government/executive_power/index. php?id_16=90.