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# **The permit hunters' opinions towards professional hunting tourism and the current hunting license policy as a perquisite of social sustainability**

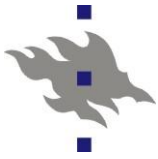
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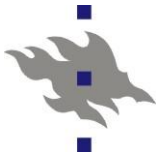
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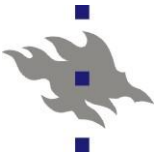
## Central Concepts

- **Permit hunter (lupametsästäjä):** mainly domestic hunters required to buy a hunting license to hunt on the state-owned land. Typically go on a self-arranged trip.
- **Professional hunting tourism:** includes hunting tourism in which the companies sell high quality, "full service" hunting packages including e.g. accommodation, catering, guiding with or without dog , sauna etc. services.



## Background: Hunting in Finland

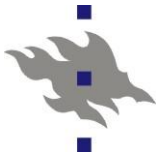
- 300 000 hunters in Finland (6% of the total population).
- A very popular hobby, especially in rural areas in Eastern and Northern Finland, traditionally an "everyman's hobby".
- Hunting rights are bound to landowning. On States land areas (> 12 milj. ha), Metsähallitus estimates the hunting quota and distributes the hunting permits through a centralised system.
- In 2008 Metsähallitus sold 39 462 small game hunting licenses.
- The Union of Finnish Hunters and the Hunters' Central Organisation have a significant role in administrating domestic hunters and safeguarding their interests.



## The location of State's land areas

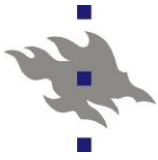


(Metsähallitus, [www.metsa.fi](http://www.metsa.fi))



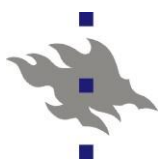
## Background: Hunting tourism in Finland

- Approx. 150 small companies (1-3 employers)
- Mostly located in the Northern, Eastern and Central parts of Finland
- Operate on a seasonal basis, typically also other nature tourism activities
- Hunting tourism could help to continue season of tourism companies especially in remote rural areas
- At the moment hunting licenses on State's land are sold individually to the hunters, not to the enterprises for their own use → insecurity of the central factor of production in hunting tourism
- Recently political discussion, whether entrepreneurs should have a part of the hunting license quota in order to improve business activities



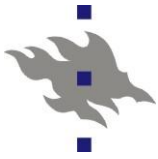
## Why are the permit hunters a relevant stakeholder group? 1/2

- The permit hunters and hunting tourism companies/their customers compete for the same quota of small game hunting licenses on State land.
- According to Mitchell et. al. 1997 attributes defining critical stakeholders: *power, legitimacy, urgency*
- The permit hunters:
  - *Power*: indirect power. As a group of approx 40 000 ( and "big unions") great influence via political processes in prioritising hunting activities on State's land.



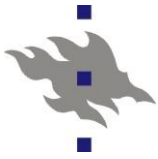
## Why are the permit hunters a relevant stakeholder group? 2/2

- The permit hunters:
  - *Legitimacy*: the legislation traditionally prioritises providing relatively equal hunting opportunities to all citizens. The wording of the current hunting law (Metsästyslaki 615/93): primarily hunting right on State land must be granted to those without other reasonable hunting opportunity.
  - *Urgency*: indirect influence methods (political processes, attitude environment) do not take place very fast, but are very difficult to backtrack



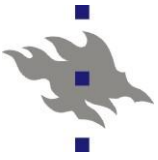
## The aim of the study

- To find out the permit hunters' opinions towards professional hunting tourism on State land areas and map out the arguments used for and against professional hunting tourism .
- Focus on the hunting season 2008.
- Focus on small game licenses and State land areas.



## Data and methods

- Both quantitative and qualitative approach chosen to improve the quality of data and deepen the understanding. (e.g. Denzin 1978, Seale 1998, Gelo et al 2008)
- Population: hunters having a permit for one of the 9 most competed hunting areas on State land within the first two weeks of hunting season.
- E-mail survey
  - conducted in Dec 2008, targeted to all with e-mail address (response rate 48 %, n=314)
- 50 phone interviews conducted in Jan-Feb 2009
  - Semi-structured thematic interviews, 10-30 min, all recorded



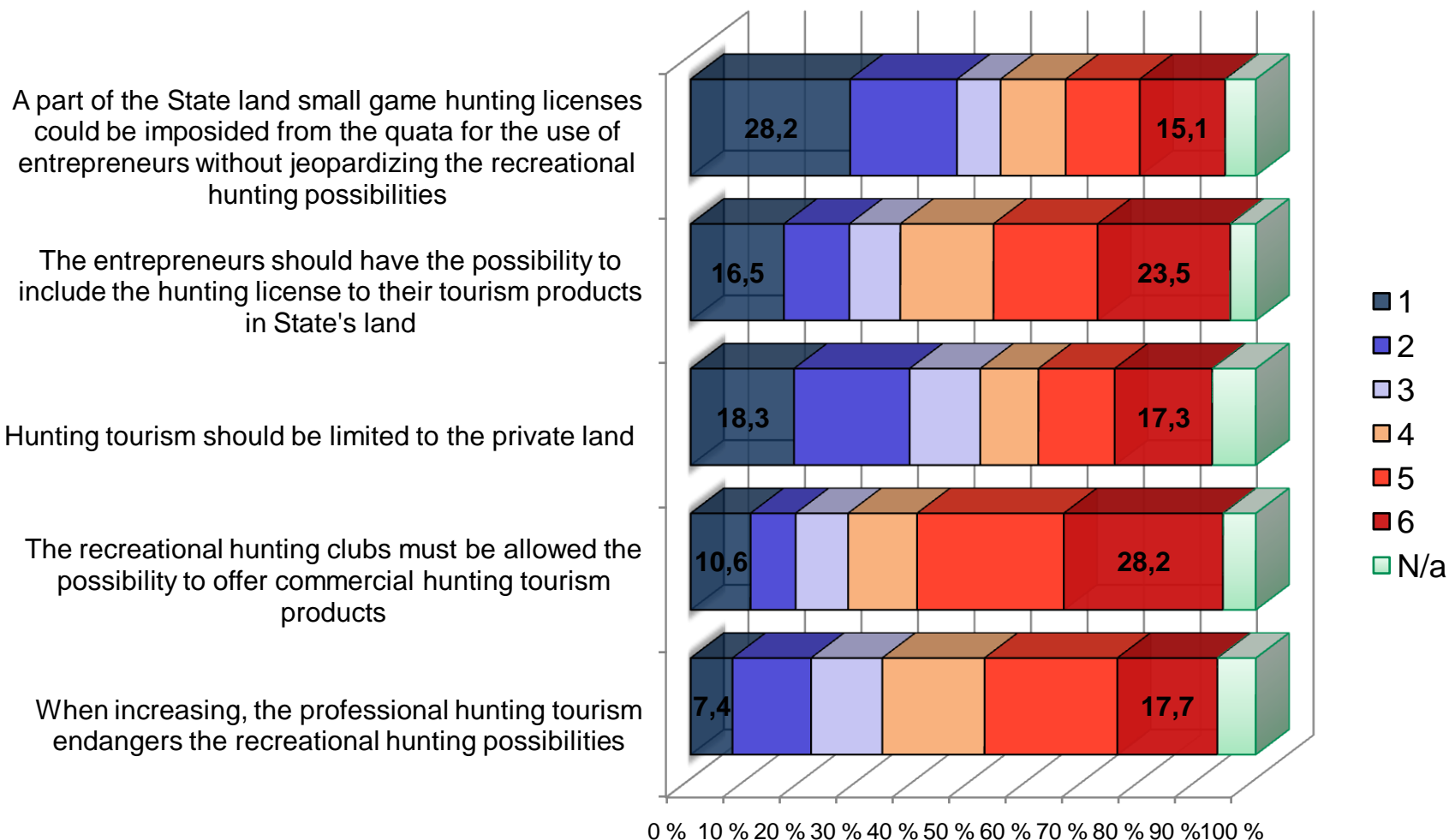
## Results





# Permit hunters' opinions based on the e-mail survey

(1= completely disagree, 6= completely agree)





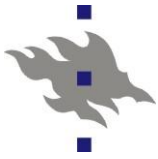
# Arguments against professional hunting tourism 1/2

- My own hunting possibilities will decrease because
  - hunting trip prices will increase
  - there will be less licenses for independent hunters
- I, as a citizen of Finland, partly own the State forests and am therefore entitled to primary hunting rights
- I don't need them
  - I don't need the services and therefore they don't need to exist



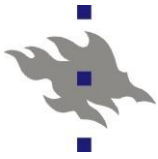
# Arguments against professional hunting tourism 2/2

- We must protect the traditional Finnish hunting culture. Hunting tourism would
  - lead to “over commercialization” in the form of the tourists’ needs being prioritized over the (domestic) permit hunters
  - increase conflicts
  - result to more people in the forests
  - change the system from faire to the rich and affluent having greater hunting opportunities
  - increase regional hunting pressure



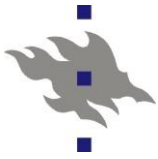
## Arguments for professional hunting tourism 1/3

- My own hunting possibilities will increase due to
  - greater flexibility in planning the place and time for the trip
  - the possibility to secure next year's trip in advance for the whole group
  - the possibility to book all services at once
  - the option of buying a license from an entrepreneur



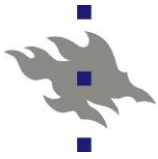
## Arguments for professional hunting tourism 2/3

- Hunting tourism entrepreneurship will benefit regional economics and the rural countryside by
  - creating jobs
  - providing livelihood
  - enlivening the region
- Hunting tourism should be supported because other livelihood options in the North are rare
  - Entrepreneurs should have the license selling rights because otherwise business planning is not possible
  - Selling hunting licenses with other services would increase the companies' revenues
- Being an entrepreneur myself, I sympathize with their position



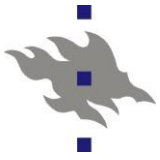
## Arguments for professional hunting tourism 3/3

- Hunting tourism entrepreneurs will control hunting tourism by
  - monitoring nuisance tourists
  - having knowledge of the local hunting areas
  - being aware of the reindeer herding system
  - serving the unskilled (young and old) hunters



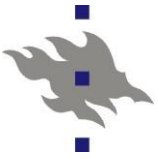
## License policy

- With a limited number of licenses the hunters fear that allowing entrepreneurs access to licenses would decrease the amount of licenses available for permit hunters and therefore limit their hunting possibilities
- The alternative view was that access to licenses and hunting possibilities would increase because licenses from entrepreneurs would be more convenient to arrange
- Some respondents would give a portion of the licenses to entrepreneurs under the (conflicting) conditions that
  - One group: The licenses are sold to everyone and not packaged
  - Another group: One can buy a license with accommodation i.e. When renting a cabin



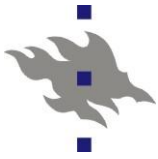
## Conclusions





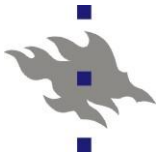
## Conclusions

- Whose benefit should be prioritized: hunting tourists or entrepreneurs.
  - Permit hunters are both customers of the hunting companies advocating entrepreneur permits and independent travelers opposing reduction of their access to hunting permits.
  - Entrepreneurs advocate hunting license sales permits due to economic reasons.



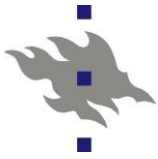
## Conclusions

- The permit hunters' opinions towards professional hunting tourism are clearly polarized to positive and negative opinions
- The permit hunters reflected their opinions on anticipated influences of professional hunting tourism to their own hunting possibilities
- The opinions varied based on whether the respondents saw themselves as potential customers of the hunting tourism enterprises or not.
- Other than economic factors explain the permit hunters' opinions towards hunting tourism
- Permit hunters generally do not see themselves as hunting tourists as customers of the entrepreneurs but as domestic, independent hunters



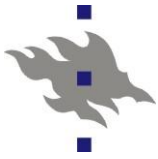
## A summary of main points

- Permit hunters are an essential stakeholder group
- This group is heterogenous in their stance toward professional hunting tourism:
  - Permit hunters cannot therefore be treated as a harmonious group but rather as a group consisting of customers or supporters and those protecting their own hobby.



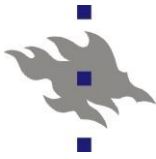
## Stakeholder management implications

- The permit hunters' critique is targeted against the industry rather than an individual entrepreneur.
- An individual entrepreneur's possibilities to manage this stakeholder group is very limited
  - An entrepreneurs' only viable option to manage this stakeholder group is to organize within the sector in order to distribute a common message of hunting tourism's objectives.
- This message should honestly and objectively emphasize
  - respect for the Northern hunting culture,
  - collaboration with local hunting clubs and
  - the positive effects to the local economy.
- The image on a small sector is easily ruined by individual mistakes.



## Discussion

- Economic view
  - Is the purpose of hunting license to secure hunting opportunity to all or gain maximum value from land?
- The challenge with a limited resource is that there is much more demand than supply. Hunting permits in the most popular destinations are sold out whether they are sold to permit hunters or entrepreneurs. To whom the permits should go to is simply a question of allocation.
- Since permits are controlled by the state, neither the entrepreneurs nor the permit hunters control the licenses that the social sustainability depends on.



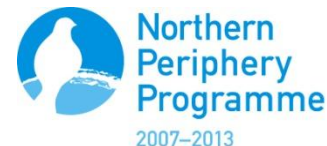
## Thank you!

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The results are based on the work of two projects: *Metsästyksen liittyvät erätalouden mallit valtion mailla* (funded by Metsähallitus) and *North Hunt* (funded by Northern Periphery 2007-2013 programme)



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