

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS OF HUNTING TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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Abstract

Alternative forms of tourism in the last two decades have taken such a swing that they have begun to become dominant and slowly push the mass forms of tourism, and thus change the tourist map of the world.

The topic of this paper, Modern trends in hunting tourism in the Republic of North Macedonia, is current and of great importance for the development of this type of tourism as a form of alternative tourism. Physical-geographical factors allow for the representation of various species of game, which include certain species of animals and birds that live freely in the enclosure or in fenced areas, where they are bred, protected and hunted. Among many citizens, game hunting arouses great interest in hunting sports, creating conditions for the development of hunting tourism.

The Republic of North Macedonia has great potential to develop hunting tourism, but it also lacks a strategy for its development. If we emphasize the economic aspect of this process, and thus help to develop it, then we will all enjoy the benefits of hunting tourism. We also need to analyze the trends of hunting tourism in the neighboring countries that are more developed, in that regard we will apply some of their research and experiences and thus achieve our goal, the development of hunting tourism.

The methods used in this scientific paper are: descriptive method, analytical, cartographic, statistical and field research.

Keywords: Hunting tourism, hunting grounds, potential spaces, trends

1. Introduction

The Republic of North Macedonia is located in the southeastern part of Europe. It occupies the central part of the Balkan Peninsula. That is why we say that it is a European and Balkan country. Its territory stretches between 40 ° 50` and 42 ° 20` north latitude and 20 ° 27` and 23 ° 05` east longitude, with a total area of 25713 km². In the meridian direction, the greatest length is 170 km, and in the intermediate direction 215 km. Located in this part of Europe, it has a good and significant geographical position and is located at the crossroads of Central and Eastern Europe with its southernmost part and the Middle East. Such spatial features give it the opportunity for wide geographical contact and quality traffic connection. The good traffic situation is conditioned by the natural conveniences of the valleys, valleys and precipices through which and through which they conduct important communications and provide conditions for the formation of transport corridors that have a direct impact on the development of hunting tourism.

The development of hunting tourism is simply not possible without first conducting a geographical study of the area. The existence of slightly pleasant bio-climatic, hydrographic resources, relief forms, biogeographical features, ecologically clean environment occur as a basic factor for the development of rural tourism in our state. The geographical area is very heterogeneous and on that basis specific spatial units can be differentiated, which will have to be used for research and development of hunting tourism.

2. The tourist geographical position and the traffic connection of the Republic of North Macedonia as a precondition for the development of hunting tourism

To get a more appropriate idea of a region, region or country, and in order to understand the values and natural potentials that are available for the development of tourism and tourist movements, this component enriches the value of Republic of North Macedonia, also helps for long-term and tourism planning of hunting tourism.

The territory of RS Macedonia gravitates towards the Mediterranean pool, more precisely towards the eastern aquarium of the Mediterranean Sea. Nevertheless, our country is one of the continental countries, which means that they do not go out at sea; it is not a handicap in the development of tourism and especially of the alternative forms of tourism such as hunting tourism. This stems from the fact that this type of tourism does not depend on the sea or winter sports tourism. Examples of this can be found in countries that are leaders in the list of tourist destinations for alternative forms of tourism and hunting tourism, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and others (Душан Ј. 1985).

The Republic of Macedonia has a border with neighboring countries in a total length of 849 km. The entire border line runs through four natural units:

1. Mountain border - which leads through the mountains: Korab, Deshat, Krcin, Jablanica, Galicica, Baba Planina, Nidze, Kozuf, Belasica, Maleshevo mountains, Osogovo, German, Kozjak, Ruen to Skopska Crna Gora and Shar Mountain;

2. Low limit - which extends through: Debar valley, Pelagonija, Gevgelija valley and Kumanovo-Presevo valley;

3. Climate limit: Klulchka, Pcinjska and Kachanica gorge; and

4. Bodena (lake and river) border: which leads through: Lake Ohrid, Lake Prespa and Lake Dojran, and along the river border extends through Crni Drim and Vardar. The most favourable opportunities for traffic connection with neighbouring countries are the border crossings across the plains, gorges and water border areas, while there are limited opportunities through the border mountainous areas (Ристе Т., Живко А, 2011).

The number of official road border crossings in the Republic of Macedonia to the neighboring countries is 5, 15 (fifteen) road border crossings, of which:

- 3 (three) with the Republic of Bulgaria;
- 2 (two) with the Republic of Serbia;
- 2 (two) with the Republic of Kosovo;
- 3 (three) with the Republic of Greece and
- 4 (four) with the Republic of Albania.

This traffic-geographical position caused the following international roads to pass through Macedonia:

- E75 - Gdansk, Katowice, Bratislava, Budapest, Belgrade, Skopje, Athens, Cairo;
- E65 - Malm., вивиноучие, Prague, Brno, Bratislava, Zagreb, Rijeka, Dubrovnik, Podgorica, Pristina, Skopje, Tetovo, Ohrid, Bitola, Lamia, Kalamata, South Africa;
- E852 - Brindisi (Italy), Durres, Ohrid (connection with E65) and
- E871 - Sofia (connection with E79, E80 and E83), Kumanovo (connection with E75).



Figure 1. Map No. 1 Traffic map of RS Macedonia (mk.wikipedia.org)

In the system of TEM-Trans-European highways, one of the most important places is occupied by the North-South highway, i.e. the road E-75. The starting point of this route is in Helsinki, but the main road connection starts from Gdansk (Poland) and ends at the far south in Greece, from where it continues on the waterway to Africa, i.e. Asia Minor (Душан Ј.,1971).

All this is a confirmation of the fact that with the tourist location and excellent traffic connection, the area of the Republic of North Macedonia has the opportunity to offer outstanding opportunities for the development of modern hunting tourism.

3. Bio-geographical characteristics, forests as a prerequisite for the development of hunting tourism in the Republic of North Macedonia

When we analyze the natural conditions in RNM such as: location, climate, relief, pedological-geological construction of the terrain, hydrological-hydrographic characteristics, etc., are all elements that enable the survival and development of many plant and animal species. Therefore, our country is one of the countries with rich biodiversity. Many plant and animal species are relics endemic.

From all this we can conclude that the location of RN Macedonia allows to develop a diverse animal world, and this is the main basis for the development of hunting tourism.

P.N. Macedonia covers an area of 2,543,200 ha. According to the latest data from the special plans for economic management of forests for economic purposes (condition, 2018), the total forest area in RNM is 1,091,857.59 ha, of which 835,055.82 ha are the total overgrown area and 256,801.77 ha of uncultivated forest area (bare). It should be noted that there are another 80,000 ha or 7.32% of forests and forest land of small economic significance, for which no Forest-economic bases have been developed.

The overgrown forest area includes 255,444.74 ha of high-stemmed forest plantations, 546,179.40 ha of low-stemmed forest plantations, 14,459.50 ha of forest crops and 18,978,18 ha are wide. According to the same data source, the total wood reserve is 75,939,573 m³, ie 91 m³ / ha. The total annual return is 1,616,782 m³, or 1.93 m³ / ha.

The total projected stage for 10 years is 10,948,149 m³, or 1,094,815m³ per year. Its utilization is 75%.

According to Statistical Yearbook of R.S. Macedonia 2018 (January 10, 2011), State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia In Macedonia, state-owned forests account for 90.14% of the total forest area, while the total share of timber reserves is 92.20%. Private forests account for 9.86% of the total forest area, with a total share of 7.8% of the timber reserve (ЈП Македонски Шуми 1998-2018, (2018), which is the main basis for the development of hunting tourism.

According to the hunting law, regulates the cultivation, protection, hunting and use of game and its parts, and this is a good basis for the development of modern hunting tourism.

In the table we will divide and count all types of animals and birds of RN Macedonia that are provided for hunting according to the law.

Table 1. Table with the types of game allowed for hunting in RN Macedonia

Mammals		Birds	
Larg animals	Small animals	Larg animals	Small animals
common deer, dama dama, roe deer, wild boar, mouflon, bear, wild boar, lynx, wolf, gravel.	Rabbit, squirrel, bizarre mouse, dormouse, pole, otter, fox, wild cat, golden marten, white marten, small weasel, creature, badger.	great bustard.	small bustard-sprayer, hazel grouse, pheasant, polish partridge, rock partridge , quail, conturnix-woodpecker, common wood pigeon or pigeon caveman, European turtle dove, Eurasian collared dove, woodpecker, woodpecker, hornbeam or gargle blue clover, red-haired cough, sturnus, etc.

Source: Hunting Act (extwprlegs1.fao.org)

From all the species listed in Table 1, we can conclude that hunting in RNM has great potential to develop, and on this data we can build modern propaganda for the development of hunting tourism.

4. Defining the term hunting and hunting tourism

To roughly define the term hunting tourism, it is first important to follow the definition of hunting game.

Thus, according to Article 53 of the Law on Hunting, game hunting means search, capture, delusion, surveillance, shooting and capture of live game. Hunting game is also collecting eggs from feathered game, hanging game and its parts, horns, skins and more.

For hunting tourism in the professional literature we cannot find some more comprehensive papers that, among other things, will more accurately interpret this interesting and more popular term, ie activity or, as it is said in the introductory part, specific professional activity.

According to Marich: *Hunting tourism is a movement, stay and assistance to hunter-gatherers in natural areas, i.e. hunting grounds, in which the main factor for meeting human needs are wild animals and the very act of their hunting* " (Марич Р. 2003).

According to Marinovski "*Hunting tourism is a special type of tourism that has developed thanks to the passion of hunters to hunt outside their hunting units and pay certain fees*".

General assumptions and conditions for hunting development are:

- proximity and availability of hunting destinations;
- access to hunting grounds, infrastructure, accommodation, etc. ;
- political stability of the country and the region;
- the richness of the animal world of the location;
- the existence of an appropriate institutional and legal framework;
- market orientation towards hunting tourism as a source of income;
- existence of specialized travel agencies for mediation (МАРИНОВСКИ, 2003).

Hunters are like picnickers, tourists motivated by the prehistoric need of man to procure food and fur, to win trophies, but also to escape from the stressful and exhausting urban everyday life and in his free time to enjoy the natural surroundings. The interest of RN Macedonia for the development of hunting tourism derives from its economic importance, due to the high prices of the arrangements, as a rule, they are available only for the elite category. RN Macedonia has a rich flora and fauna which is the basis for the development of hunting tourism.

According to Sztecic, hunting tourism, i.e. hunting and tourism product, has several dimensions such as:

- *Recreational component*- presupposes psychophysical engagement of hunter-tourists in the appropriate hunting sites by providing adequate conditions, i.e. content, such as: making available the appropriate species of hunting game, functional ability to perform hunting activities, according to but also for comfortable accommodation, food and transport of hunter-tourists to and from the planned hunting grounds, recreational-entertainment and other contents before and after the hunting activities, etc.
- *Ecological component*- or dimensions, implies natural originality of hunting grounds. On the one hand, it provides the necessary conditions for the existence of trophy and non-trophy game species, and on the other hand, a quality stays of tourists in healthy natural environments.

- *The economic component-* is manifested through the realized financial effects of the hunting tourism, ie the hunting tourism on the one hand, as well as in the investment sphere, on the other hand. The second staff envisages continuous and sufficient investment in the cultivation of quality game species and the provision of other suitable conditions and contents that motivate and stimulate the optimal tourist effort and profitable operation of enterprises and other organizations in the field of hunting and tourism economy.
- *Educational component-* is manifested in the sphere of education and formation of hunting and tourism staff on the one hand and the training and improvement of hunters, i.e. hunter-tourists, on the other hand. Education is a permanent improvement of the staff employed in hunting and tourism enterprises, organizations and associations, are realized in the appropriate educational institutions within the school system. Their professional profile presupposes the ability to perform all hunting-tourist activities, as well as the ability to conduct training for the tourist-hunters themselves.
- *The cultural dimension-* is somewhat less pronounced but is realistically present given the important cultural and spiritual potentials of the very specific hunting-tourist clientele. Thus, similarly to other types of alternative tourism, many hunter-gatherers, in addition to basic activities or hunting, need to get acquainted with the cultural goods of the tourist hunting destination. Visitors to cultural institutions also play an important role here, especially if they are related to the theme of hunting and hunting activities (Штерич, 2007).

5. Necessary infrastructure for development of hunting tourism

For the development of hunting tourism, the existence of the functioning of the hunting infrastructure is of great importance, such as hunting tourist facilities (hunting houses and hunting lodges), then the places for testing weapons, picnics, barbecue places and means of hunting-tourist transport.

Hunting houses are numbered in the accommodation facilities of hotel type and are located in the hunting grounds. They serve for the stay of hunters-tourists while they fight in them, i.e. they have an extremely purposeful character. Today, in most hunting grounds, the comfort in such facilities has been raised to the highest possible level. Important features of the hunting lodge are: their architecture, which must correctly identify the areas where the hunting grounds are located, is also the interior should always be built of natural materials, more useful than those located in the hunting ground or in its immediate vicinity. Care should also be taken to ensure that they are not overcrowded. In addition, cottages should be built in the immediate vicinity of these buildings to accommodate hunting dogs, with a fenced area for free movement.

Hunting huts are also accommodation facilities that are strictly purposeful, except in certain cases only for hunter-gatherers and their guides and hosts. They, unlike the first ones, are characterized by their modesty because they serve only as places for temporary rest, ie possible overnight stays. Hunting huts are located at a greater distance from hunting houses, their size is 3.5-5m and they are built of a combination of wood and stone. Similar to hunting houses, several houses should be built here to accommodate hunting psi.

Place for testing weapons- at the beginning of each hunt, and especially the tourist one, it is necessary that the hunter always controls his weapon, that is, to test the rifle with which he will perform the hunting actions, regardless of whether it is his or someone else's. These places should meet the basic criteria for testing weapons, that is, they should be built in well-secured spaces, and then they should be away from hunting grounds, so as not to disturb the game.

During the organization of the hunt, the hosts should always take care of the guests to provide them with all the benefits and pleasures. One of them should be preparing at least one meal during the day, and sometimes two. For that purpose, the grill is considered the most authentic. It, like other infrastructure facilities, should be designed exclusively for hunters.

When tourist hunters arrive at the hunting grounds, their transport from the most attractive locations requires appropriate means of transportation, such as jeeps, trucks, horses, and in winter conditions sledding and skiing. This is done so that they do not get tired and waste time, because the hunting days are limited. In addition to them, the means of transport are also needed for the transport of their cattle, hunting equipment, equipment, food and beverages, etc.

6. Hunting and economic areas as potential spaces for development of hunting tourism

Based on the physical geographical characteristics and other specifics, the territory of RN Macedonia is divided into 11 hunting areas. In determining them, the boundaries of the former municipality are taken into account, according to the territorial division of 1996, because they are withdrawn according to the geographical model (ridge, hill, river, valley) (Kesarot O, 2013).

Table 2. Review of the hunting grounds in the RN Macedonia

Hunting area and total area	Municipality	Hunting area
1-Pelagonija hunting area 408,279 ha	Prilep	Dolneni, Topolcani, Krivogashtani and Vitoliste
	Bitola	Bistrica, Novaci, Bach, Staravina, Mogila, Kukurecani, Capari and Dobrushevo
	Demir Hisar	Sopotnica
	Krushevo	Wheat
2-Ohrid - Prespa hunting and economic area 183,743 ha	Resen	-
	Ohrid	Belchishta, Kosel, Mesheishta
	Struga	Lukovo, Delogozda, Labunista, Velesta, Vevcani
	Debar	Center Zupa
3-Kichevo-Brodsko hunting area 173,624 ha	Kichevo	Drugovo, Oslomej, Vranesnica, Zajas
	Macedonian	Samokov and Plasnica
4-Polog hunting area 168,717 ha	Gostivar	Negotino, Polog, Vrapciste, Rostuse, Mavrovi Anovi, Cegrane, Dolna Banjica, Srbinovo, Vrutok
	Tetovo	Dzepciste, Tearce, Brvenica, Kamenjane, Bogovinje, Shipkovica, Zelino, Jegunovce and Vratnica
5-Skopje-Kumanovo hunting and economic area 276,105 ha	Skopje	Gazi Bab, Gjorce Petrov, Karpos, Kisela Vod, Centar, Cair, Suto Orizare, Zelenikovo, Petrovec, Ulinden, Sopiste, Saraj, Kondovo, Cucer-Sandev, Aracinovo, Studenicani
	Kumanovo	Lipkovo, Orasec, Klechovci and Staro Nagorichane
6-Med.- Vardar hunting economic area 220, 525 ha	Veles	Bogomila, Gradsko, Caska, Izvor
	St. Nikole	Lozovo

7-Krivorech hunting area 109,524 ha	Kratovo	-
	Kriva Palanka	Rankovce
8- Bregalnica hunting area 214,435 ha	Kochani	Cheshinovo, Obleshevo, Zrnovci, Orizari
	Vinica	Blatec
	Probishtip	Zletovo
	Stip	Karbinci
9- Vlainsko-Maleshevo hunting and economic area 139,233 ha	Delchevo	Makedonska Kamenica
	Berovo	Pehchevo
10-Strumica hunting and economic area 168,695 ha	Radovish	Konche, Podaresh
	Strumica	Novo Selo, Vasilevo, Bosilovo, Kuklish and Murtino
11-Dolno-Vardar hunting and economic area 282,772 ha.	Kavadarci	Konopiste, Rosoman
	Negotino	Demir Kapija
	Valandovo	-
	Gevgelija	Miravci, Bogdanci and Star Dojran
Total area 2 345 652 ha		

Source: Hunting Act (extwprlegs1.fao.org)

From table no.2 it can be seen that the hunting area in RN Macedonia is just over 91%. The largest such area is Pelagonija hunting area with 408,279 ha or 17% of the total territory, followed by Dolno-Vardar hunting area with 282,772 ha or 13% of the total territory of RN Macedonia.

From the above material we can conclude that hunting has a large area where it can be practiced, and this will result in the development of hunting tourism which is in the peak stages of the development of RN Macedonia.

7. The situation and trends for development of hunting tourism in RN Macedonia

Hunting tourism in RNM is similar to some other countries in the region; it coincides with the development of hunting itself. Unlike many European countries in which hunting tourism is a special type of business and from which a large amount of foreign currency is realized, in this area it is at the very beginning. I say that for the reason that so far there is not a single scientific-professional institution that will deal with this issue and which will raise the hunting level on the level of hunting tourism. The main emphasis would be on the hunting-tourism product to better build the tourist propaganda that will contain the modern trends of hunting tourism and to be placed on the territory of RNM and on the foreign market.

The biggest threat to the future development of hunting tourism in RNM is the disorganized and uncontrolled over-exploitation of game, hunting during hunting, protection of endemic species from extinction, lack of funds for conservation of natural resources, development of mechanization and urban expansion and the role of animal welfare organizations (Борис Т., Иван Д., Илија Д..1978).

Today's or current problems of hunting and hunting tourism in RNM relate to inadequate accommodation offers, frequent incompetence of employees in the field of hunting tourism, unregulated statistical sources, lack of promotions and some other important problems that should be addressed urgently to follow the trends for the development of hunting tourism.

In addition, we will list some detailed procedures for strategic hunting tourism planning:

- To prepare the strategy for a period of 5 to 10 years, including annual programs and operationalization of three years;
- Defining planning objectives - resources, research methodology, defining development goals;
- Resource analysis;
- Analysis of legal provisions that regulate tourism and hunting tourism;
- Development potential analysis;
- Defining and developing a "management body";
- Cost-benefit analysis of individual projects (www.biznisvesti.mk).

Lately, hunting tourists have come with tour operators, mainly from the United States, Russia, but also from Bulgaria, Serbia, Canada, and New Zealand. Lately, we have also been from Turkey, and to our great satisfaction, the hunters from Spain and Italy, who had fewer due to the economic crisis in Europe, are returning to us. Currently, state hunting grounds in Macedonia are leaders in the Balkans. Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia have been behind us for three years. The hunt in Jasen is conducted solely on the basis of annual agreements with licensed tour operators around the world. The agreements provide hunting packages for certain types of game and terms when the hunt can be realized. Based on this, we can conclude that hunting tourism in RN Macedonia has a perspective.

8. Conclusion

The paper analyzes the main factors that affect the development of hunting tourism in RN Macedonia. As main factors i singled out the tourist geographical position and traffic connection, bio-geographical characteristics as an important element for hunting development, the term hunting and hunting tourism, the necessary infrastructure for hunting tourism development, hunting grounds and the situation and trends for hunting tourism development.

Given the highlighted problems of Macedonian hunting tourism, certain shortcomings can be addressed and mitigated by implementing the following measures:

- Promoting the beauty and richness of the hunting fund, the attractiveness and complexity of hunting as a sport, hunting resources, as well as the forms and opportunities for development of hunting tourism as a sustainable form of tourism;
- Intensive promotion of hunting destinations, organization of local and national level of international shooting competitions;
- Involvement of the population in the rural areas in the hunting and tourist offer in addition to the offer of accommodation as appropriate, ambience and indigenous products, renewal of existing and construction of new accommodation and catering facilities near hunting grounds;
- Recognition of the demand for Macedonian tourist hunting destinations, especially of EU hunters, development of elite hunting tourism at attractive hunting destinations, connection of various businesses and activities to get acquainted with the opportunities for investment in development and promotion of hunting tourism;
- Protection of hunting resources from all forms of damage, introduction of effective hunting service;
- Establishment of a hunting agency that will deal with all the obligations arising from the promotion, marketing and supply of hunting and hunting tourism at national and international level.

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