

NB: Unofficial translation

Legally binding texts are those in Finnish and Swedish

Hunting Act

(615/1993; amendments up to 474/2011 included)

Chapter 1 – General provisions

Section 1 – Scope of application

- (1) This Act applies to hunting and to capturing and killing of unprotected animals as well as to game management, compensation for damage caused by game animals, and keeping of dogs.
- (2) Where appropriate, this Act also applies to capturing and killing of mammals and birds protected by virtue of the Nature Conservation Act (1096/1996).
- (3) In addition to the provisions laid down in this Act, the provisions laid down in the Nature Conservation Act and the Animal Welfare Act (247/1996) shall be complied with.
- (4) Separate provisions are issued regarding the game management fees and hunting licence fees. (see Act on the Game Management Fee and Hunting Licence Fee 616/1993 and Government Decree on the Game Management Fee and Hunting Licence Fee 823/2001)

Section 2 – Definition of hunting

- (1) Hunting means the capturing and killing of wild game animals as well as taking quarry into possession by a hunter. Hunting also comprises luring, searching for, circling, stalking, chasing or tracking a game animal for hunting purpose, using a dog or other animal trained to hunt for searching, pursuing, or tracking a game animal, as well as keeping a hunting device at a hunting location ready for hunting.

Section 3 – Definition of game management

- (1) Game management means activities intended to increase, preserve, or improve a game animal population and the balance among different animal populations by regulating the size of game animal populations, preserving or improving game animal habitats, or by some other means.

Section 4 – The hunting year

- (1) The hunting year begins on 1 August and ends on 31 July.

Section 5 – Game animals and unprotected animals

- (1) Game animals include:
 - 1) rabbit, mountain hare, brown hare, red squirrel, European beaver, Canadian beaver, muskrat, nutria, wolf, farmed arctic fox, red fox, raccoon dog, bear, raccoon, badger, ermine, polecat, otter, pine marten, American mink, wolverine, lynx, Baltic ringed seal, harbour seal, grey seal, wild boar, fallow deer, red deer, sika deer, roe deer, moose, white-tailed deer, forest reindeer, and mouflon; and
 - 2) Canadian goose, greylag goose, bean goose, mallard, teal, wigeon, pintail, garganey, shoveler, pochard, tufted duck, common eider, long-tailed duck, goldeneye, red-breasted merganser, goosander, willow grouse, ptarmigan, hazel grouse, black grouse, capercaillie, partridge, pheasant, coot, woodcock, and wood pigeon.
- (2) Unprotected animals include:

- 1) bank vole, water vole, common vole, field vole, root vole, yellow-necked field mouse, brown rat, and house mouse; and
 - 2) raven (in the reindeer herding area), hooded crow, magpie, herring gull, great black-backed gull, domestic pigeon, and fieldfare.
- (3) Provisions concerning unprotected animals apply to a cat which has run wild.

Chapter 2 – **Hunting right, leasing of a hunting right and hunting permit**

Section 6 – *Hunting right of the owner of the area*

- (1) Unless otherwise provided below, the owner of the area is entitled to engage in hunting and make decisions on hunting.

Section 7 – *The right to hunt in public waters and within the economic zone* (1068/2004)

- (1) Persons residing permanently in Finland have the right to hunt in public waters of the sea and on islands and islets in such areas which belong to the State and whose possession has not been transferred to any other as well as within the economic zone of Finland. (1068/2004)
- (2) Persons whose domicile is in the municipality to which the public waters in whole or in part belong or on which they border have the right to hunt in public waters on lakes and islands and islets owned by the State in such areas.
- (3) The use of the right referred to in subsections 1 and 2 above may be restricted by decree should this be considered necessary for the preservation of a game population or for some other use of the area.

Section 8 – *The right of municipal residents to hunt on State-owned land*

- (1) Persons whose domicile is in a municipality of the Province of Lapland or in the municipalities of Kajaani, Hyrynsalmi, Kuhmo, Kuusamo, Paltamo, Pudasjärvi, Puolanka, Ristijärvi, Sotkamo, Suomussalmi, Taivalkoski, Vaala, or Vuolijoki have the right to hunt on State-owned land in their home municipality.

Section 9 – *Hunting in a nature reserve*

- (1) In addition, separate provisions apply to the right to hunt in nature reserves under the Nature Conservation Act.

Section 10 – *Hunting licence and regional quota* (159/2011)

- (1) A licence must be obtained for hunting or a regional quota established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry must be complied with in hunting if a game animal population other than that of game animal species listed section 26 is endangered by hunting or if this is required for the appropriate organisation of the hunting of the game animal species. Further provisions on the game animal species to be hunted by virtue of a hunting licence or regional quota, conditions for granting a hunting licence and regional quota and the procedures to be followed in granting these and other matters relating to a hunting licence and reporting of the quarry bagged by virtue of the hunting licence or regional quota are issued by Government Decree.
- (2) The annual quarry numbers of the hunt to be allowed by virtue of hunting licences and a regional quota may be restricted. Further provisions on the game animal species to which the restriction applies, maximum allowable quarry numbers, sex and age of the individual quarry animals, and the area to which the restriction applies may be issued by Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

- (3) The hunting licence referred to in subsection 1 is granted by the Finnish Wildlife Agency, and this is also responsible for monitoring hunting which is allowed by virtue of a regional quota.

Section 10a – *Withdrawing a hunting licence*

(159/2011)

- (1) The Finnish Wildlife Agency may, at the request of the police or Border Guard, withdraw a valid hunting licence referred to in section 10 or 26 if the holder of the licence violates the provisions on this Act or issued under it. The same applies to a violation of any essential licence conditions.
- (2) The holder of a withdrawn licence is not granted a new hunting licence concerning a similar animal during the same hunting year before the withdrawal of the earlier licence has been settled in a legally valid manner or the withdrawal is cancelled.

Section 11 – *Leasing a hunting right*

- (1) The owner of the area may lease the hunting right in whole or in part (*hunting lease contract*). The provisions in force concerning the leasing of the hunting right apply to the conveyance of the hunting right without remuneration, unless otherwise provided below.
- (2) A lease contract under the Land Tenancy Act (258/1966) provides the right to hunt in the leased area only if this has been specifically mentioned in the contract.

Section 12 – *Hunting lease contract, transfer of a lease and subleasing*

- (1) Upon the request of a party to a contract, a hunting lease contract must be made in writing and signed.
- (2) A lessee must not transfer the lease to a third party or sublease the hunting lease right to a third party in whole or in part without the lessor's permission.

Section 13 – *Term of a lease and termination of the lease contract*

- (1) A hunting lease contract is concluded for a fixed term or indefinite period.
- (2) A notice of termination of lease contract concluded for an indefinite period may be given at any time and the lease is terminated on the basis of the notice given when the period of notice expires. If there is no other agreement on the period of notice and notice is given on the lease contract not later than six months before the end of the hunting year, the lease is terminated on the last day of that hunting year. Otherwise the lease is terminated on the last day of the hunting year following the year in which notice was given.
- (3) If a lessee neglects the payment of rent, otherwise fails to comply with the terms of the lease contract or uses the hunting right wrongfully and the offence is not a minor one, the lessor may terminate the hunting lease contract without notice.
- (4) If a lessor fails to comply with the terms of a lease contract and the offence is not a minor one, or if the leased area is no longer suitable for hunting due to changes in circumstances, the lessee may terminate the hunting lease contract without notice.

Section 14 – *Continuation of a lease contract upon transfer of land ownership*

- (1) If a hunting lease area or a part thereof is conveyed to another party, the new owner of the area may give notice on the hunting lease contract and terminate the lease in accordance with the provisions laid down for hunting lease contract concluded for an indefinite period. If the new owner does not exercise his or her right to give notice within three months of being informed of the lease contract, the lease remains in force. If a deed of conveyance includes a provision on the continuity of a hunting lease contract or if the conveyee has otherwise approved the lease contract, the lease contract is binding on the conveyee.

- (2) Separate provisions are issued concerning mortgaging of the lease and the continuity of a mortgaged lease contract.
- (3) Where an area is sold by compulsory auction, a lease contract is binding upon the purchaser only if the lease has been mortgaged and the sale takes place in accordance with such terms.

Section 15 – *Game management in a lease area*

- (1) Unless otherwise agreed, a lessee has the right to carry out game management measures in a hunting lease area. If this is the case, the lessee must not cause damage or inconvenience to the owner or holder of the area.

Section 16 – *Hunting in an area under dispute*

- (1) In connection with a civil case concerning a hunting lease a court of justice may, in response to a demand made by a stakeholder, issue a temporary ruling on who is entitled to hunt in the area under dispute during the legal proceedings. Such a decision, which may not be appealed, remains in force until the court of justice decides upon the matter, unless the ruling is cancelled or amended prior to this.

Section 17 – *Hunting permit*

- (1) A holder of the hunting right under section 6, a hunting lease contract or a land lease contract may, under conditions laid down by the holder, grant a permit to hunt to another party (*hunting permit*) unless this is prohibited by the lease contract.

Section 18 – *Withdrawing and discontinuing a hunting permit*

- (1) Where a hunting permit has been granted free of charge, the holder of the hunting right may withdraw the permit without notice.
- (2) A permit issued for an indefinite period of time and against remuneration may be withdrawn, observing the terms of notice concerning hunting lease contracts made for an indefinite period. If the holder of a permit hunts or otherwise acts contrary to the permit conditions, the holder of the hunting right may withdraw the permit without notice.
- (3) When the holder of hunting right changes, hunting permits issued by the previous holder of the right are discontinued.

Section 19 – *Hunting in exceptional conditions*

- (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of this chapter, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry may decide that a specified game animal may be hunted in a specific area at a specified time without a hunting right in that area in order to prevent animal diseases or for some other health consideration or in order to ensure public safety or to prevent significant risk of damage to property.

Chapter 3 – **The practice of hunting**

Section 20 – *General requirements*

- (1) Hunting must be practised in accordance with the principles of sustainable use and so that game animal populations are not endangered, the natural environment is not unnecessarily damaged, the game population as a whole is not put at risk and no unnecessary suffering is caused to the animals.
- (2) Efforts must be made to safeguard continued reproduction of game animal populations through appropriate game management.
- (3) Hunting must not endanger or harm humans or the property of others.

Section 21 – *Shooting test*

(314/2005)

- (1) When hunting fallow deer, red deer, sika deer, roe deer, moose, white-tailed deer, forest reindeer or bear by means of a rifled bullet gun, shooting may only be carried out by a person who has passed a shooting test referred to in subsection 2. When hunting the game animals referred to above, shooting may also be carried out by a person who holds a valid certificate of a similar test taken in another country or who presents proof to the game management association that he or she has the right to hunt game animals of a similar size in his or her home country.
- (2) The game management association organises the shooting test and issues a certificate on the successful performance of the test in accordance with a formula approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and, where requested, a copy of this. The certificate is valid for three years from taking the test
- (3) Shooting tests taken in the Province of Åland are equivalent to those referred to in subsection 1.
- (4) Provisions are issued by Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry concerning
 - 1) content of the shooting test, method of performing the test and conditions for passing the test;
 - 2) requirements for the location where the shooting test is taken;
 - 3) requirements for firearms and cartridges used in the shooting test.

Section 22 – *Presenting a hunting card and shooting test certificate*

- (1) A hunter must carry the hunting card or a copy of this when hunting and upon request present this to a person who supervises the hunting referred to in section 88. A person hunting without carrying a hunting card he or she has acquired or a copy of this may nevertheless present the card or a copy of this within seven days to the person who performed the supervision or to the police.
- (2) The provisions of subsection 1 also apply to a shooting test certificate or copy of this referred to in section 21 when a hunter acts as the shooter in a cervid or bear hunt.
- (3) If a hunting card or shooting test certificate has been lost, the police may grant an extension of the deadline for the presentation until the relevant game management association has provided a copy.

Section 23 – *Restrictions on hunting in the interest of public safety*

(1469/2009)

- (1) If considered of particular importance for public safety or necessary to prevent the spread of easily spread animal diseases established under section 3 of the Animal Disease Act (55/1980), the Regional State Administrative Agency may prohibit or restrict hunting in a specific area for a fixed period. The holder of the hunting right and the landowner must be heard before issuing such a prohibition or restriction. Hearing is not required if the prohibition or restriction is due to preventing the spread of easily spread animal diseases.
- (2) The Regional State Administrative Agency must cancel the prohibition or restriction referred to in subsection 1 before its expiration if the need to keep such a prohibition or restriction in force ceases to exist.
- (3) The Regional State Administrative Agency in whose territory the section of the economic zone concerned is located is responsible for the tasks of the Regional State Administrative Agency referred to in sections 1 and 2 in the economic zone of Finland. Except for the border of the territory of the State Department of Åland, the borders of the territories of Regional State Administrative Agencies are considered to continue from the outer limit of the territorial waters without changing direction to the outer limit of the economic zone.

Section 24 – *Hunting from the shore in coastal areas*

- (1) On uninhabited outer islands of the sea, a person entitled to hunt in the water area may hunt waterfowl from an open shore belonging to another party.

Section 25 – *Restrictions due to residential areas, cultivated areas and transport routes*

- (1) An animal may not be shot within 150 metres of an inhabited building without the express permission of the owner or holder of the building.
- (2) It is not permitted to search for game in a yard or garden or pass through cultivated areas for hunting purposes before crops have been harvested or gathered without the express permission of the owner or holder of the area.
- (3) It is not permitted to shoot game across a railway or public road or when either the game or the shooter is on a railway or public road. Neither is it permitted to shoot grouse when they or the shooter are on a private road.

Section 26 – *Cervid hunting licence*

(159/2011)

- (1) A licence must be obtained for the hunting of fallow deer, red deer, sika deer, moose, white-tailed deer and forest reindeer.
- (2) The hunting licence referred to in subsection 1 above is granted by the Finnish Wildlife Agency. In granting hunting licences, it must be ensured that the cervid population is not endangered by hunting and that damage caused by cervids is kept at a reasonable level. In order to take damages to traffic, agriculture and forests into account, the Finnish Wildlife Agency must hear the relevant regional stakeholders on an annual basis. In granting hunting licences for areas referred to in section 8 above, consideration must also be given to equitable distribution of hunting opportunities.

Section 27 – *Conditions for granting a cervid hunting licence*

- (1) Granting of a cervid hunting licence is subject to the condition that the licence applicant has access to an unbroken area suitable for hunting. The minimum surface area is 1,000 hectares for moose hunting and 500 hectares for hunting other cervids. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry may decide upon exceptions to the above surface area requirements.
- (2) A cervid hunting licence is granted to an applicant or applicants who have the right to hunt the cervid referred to in the application in the area in question. In areas other than those referred to in section 8, a hunting licence may be granted for an area referred to in subsection 1 on the basis of no more than one application.

Section 28 – *Cervid hunting master*

- (1) The holder of a cervid hunting licence must name a hunting master. A person participating in a hunt must observe orders given by the hunting master. The hunting master may prohibit a person who fails to observe such orders from participating in the hunt.

Section 29 – *A new hunting licence*

(159/2011)

- (1) If a slain cervid was injured or ill so that more than half of it is unsuitable for human consumption and this has not been caused by the holder of the hunting licence, the Finnish Wildlife Agency grants the holder of the licence a new hunting licence in lieu of the old one free of charge.

Section 30 – *Authorisation to issue decrees concerning cervid hunting*

(159/2011)

- (1) Further provisions on application for a cervid hunting licence and the conditions to be attached to a licence to be granted as well as on the dogs and equipment to be used for cervid hunting, the tasks of the hunting master and other matters relating to the organisation of a hunt are issued by Government Decree.
- (2) A roe deer killed in a hunt must be notified to the Finnish Wildlife Agency for the monitoring of the development of the population. Further provisions on the information to be given and deadlines for the notification and procedure to be followed are issued by Government Decree.

Section 31 – *Disturbing a hunt*

- (1) It is prohibited to prevent or hinder a legal hunt by making a hunting device inoperational or to disturb the hunt in some other way.

Chapter 4 – **Hunting methods**

Section 32 – *Restrictions on the use of motor vehicles*

- (1) It is not permitted to chase or track a game animal for hunting purposes from an aircraft or land motor vehicle or a vessel or boat with the motor running.
- (2) It is not permitted to shoot at a game animal from an aircraft or land motor vehicle or from the cover of these or immediately upon stopping within 100 metres of these or from a vessel or boat with the motor running.
- (3) The provisions of subsections 1 and 2 above do not apply to putting down a wounded game animal in a sea area from a vessel or boat with the motor running.

Section 33 – *Hunting devices and methods*

- (1) The use of the following hunting devices and methods is prohibited:
 - 1) explosives;
 - 2) poisons and baits containing poison or anaesthetic substances;
 - 3) electrical devices causing loss of consciousness or death;
 - 4) artificial sources of light and aiming devices intended for night shooting that electronically enlarge or alter the picture;
 - 5) mirrors and other blinding devices;
 - 6) bird glues and nets;
 - 7) automatic weapons and self-loading automatic weapons with a magazine capable of holding more than three rounds of ammunition;
 - 8) killing by gas or smoke;
 - 9) the use of live animals as decoys;
 - 10) pitfalls and traps to which a firearm or spear or some other comparable device has been placed as well as other similar hunting devices which are dangerous to humans or domestic animals;
 - 11) iron traps which do not kill immediately; and
 - 12) use of lead pellets in the hunting of waterfowl as of 1 August 1996.
- (2) It is not permitted to use a sound-producing mechanical device as an aid in the hunting of cervids, grouse, and waterfowl.
- (3) Provisions on the prohibition to cause unnecessary pain and suffering to an animal are laid down in section 3 of the Animal Welfare Act. (159/2011)

Section 34 – *Further provisions on hunting devices and methods*

(314/2005)

- (1) Further provisions on the characteristics and use of weapons and other permitted hunting devices as well as on the procedures to be observed in permitted hunting practices are issued by Government Decree.
- (2) The use of permitted hunting devices and methods may be restricted by Government Decree so that a certain hunting device or method may only be used in specified areas or at a specified time or in the hunting of specified game animals.
- (3) Further provisions on the permitted use of hunting devices and methods prohibited by section 33 may be issued by Government Decree. (159/2011)

Section 35 – *Transportation of a hunting weapon*

- (1) A hunting weapon may not be transported in an area for which a person does not have a hunting right or permit without an authorised purpose or consent from the holder of the hunting right unless the weapon is unloaded and in a case. This does not, however, apply to a public road bordering on a hunting area.
- (2) A hunting weapon must be unloaded and placed in a case or a protected space in an aircraft, land motor vehicle or a vessel or boat with the motor running. This does not, however, apply to the transportation of a weapon in a sea area in the case referred to in section 32(3).
- (3) Off-road transportation of a hunting weapon in a motor vehicle is prohibited. A weapon may nevertheless be transported by a person performing official duties for whom it is necessary to have a weapon at hand due to the nature of the duties. The Chief Police Officer of the Police District may in individual cases grant permission to transport an unloaded hunting weapon in a case in the aforesaid motor vehicles when they are travelling off public or private roads at a certain time using a route stated in advance subject to the condition that the weapon is not used for hunting during transport. Further provisions on the transportation of a weapon by a herdsman carrying out reindeer herding tasks are issued by decree. (1268/1993)

Chapter 5 – **Protection of game animals and game management**

Section 36 – *Prohibition on disturbing game animals* (516/2002)

- (1) Game animals must not be disturbed in an area for which the person concerned does not have a hunting right or hunting permit for hunting the game animal in question.

Section 37 – *Protection of game animal species*

- (1) If required due to the preservation of a game animal population or securing undisturbed reproduction of a game animal species, the game animal species must be declared protected for a specified period or until further notice. Provisions on game animal species to be protected and on closed seasons are issued by decree. During a closed season a game animal may not be hunted or harmed nor may its mating, nesting, or the young be disturbed. (159/2011)
- (2) In a game reserve referred to in section 39 derogations from the general closed seasons may be made by a decision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Provisions on the holding of dog trials and dog training during a closed season are laid down in section 52.
- (3) Wolf, bear, otter, wolverine, lynx and harbour seal are protected at all times. (159/2011)

Section 38 – *Hunting restrictions*

- (1) If the population of a game animal species becomes endangered in its range or in a part of this, the hunting of the game animal species concerned may be prohibited or restricted by Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry specifies the area in which the prohibition or restriction is in force. A prohibition or

restriction may be issued for no more than three years at a time. A prohibition or restriction may enter into force within no less than two weeks of the issuing of the Decree. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry must hear the Finnish Wildlife Agency and the game management association whose territory the prohibition or restriction concerns before issuing the Decree. (159/2011)

- (2) If the game animal population recovers to a viable status, the prohibition or restriction must be repealed before its expiration.

Section 39 – *Game reserve*

- (1) If the conditions for the habitation and reproduction of game are particularly favourable on some particular island or group of islands or in some other clearly specified area, this may be defined as a game reserve.
- (2) Protection rules must be drawn up for the game reserve showing how the preservation of the characteristics of the area is to be secured and how the game of the area is to be utilised. During the breeding season of the game population, passage through the area may be prohibited or restricted to certain routes. The restrictions must not extend beyond what is necessary for game management.
- (3) The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry decides on the approval of an area as a game reserve as well as on the protection rules referred to in subsection 2 on the basis of an application from the owner of the area and after having heard the Ministry of the Environment. The owner must mark the boundaries of the area clearly in the terrain.
- (4) The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry may discontinue a game reserve upon notification from the owner or if there is reason to do so by virtue of changes in circumstances.

Section 40 – *Permit for certain game management measures*

(159/2011)

- (1) The Finnish Wildlife Agency may grant a holder of the hunting right a permit to capture game animals live by using hunting devices or methods which otherwise are prohibited for game management measures or for the farming of animals. For such a purpose, a permit may also be granted to capture animals during a closed season and to take eggs. Further provisions on the prerequisites for the granting of the permit and conditions to be attached to the permit are issued by Government Decree.

Section 41 – *Derogations*

(159/2011)

- (1) The Finnish Wildlife Agency may grant a derogation from protection, prohibition or restriction under sections 37 and 38 and 50(2) subject to preconditions laid down in sections 41a – 41c.
- (2) The Finnish Wildlife Agency may grant a derogation allowing to kill or capture a game animal or unprotected animal subject to conditions laid down in section 41a(1), 41b(1) and 41c also at a time other than during the closed season laid down under section 37.
- (3) In cases referred to in section 41a(1), 41b(1) and 41c the Finnish Wildlife Agency may also grant a derogation from the restrictions on the use of motor vehicles laid down in section 32, prohibitions on the hunting devices and methods laid down in section 33 and provisions on the transportation of the hunting weapon laid down in section 35 as well as the obligation to keep a dog on a leash laid down in section 51(1). The Finnish Wildlife Agency may also grant a derogation from the restriction on the use of motor vehicles laid down in section 32(2) and provisions on the transportation of the hunting weapon laid down in section 35(3) when the applicant is a person with permanent reduced mobility,

- (4) Further provisions on the procedure to be followed in granting a derogation, orders to be attached to the derogation, notification of quarry bagged by virtue of the derogation and assessment of the preconditions for the derogation may be issued by Government Decree. Provisions on the times when derogation from protection under section 37 may be allowed may also be issued by Government Decree.
- (5) The annual numbers of the quarry to be hunted by virtue of derogations and the regional quota referred to in section 41a(4) may be restricted. Further provisions on the game animal species to which the restriction applies, maximum allowable quarry numbers, sex and age of the individual quarry animals and the area concerned by the restriction may be issued by Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

Section 41a – *Preconditions for a derogation concerning certain game animals*
(159/2011)

- (1) Provided that there is no satisfactory alternative and the decision is not detrimental to the maintenance of the species at a favourable conservation status in its natural range, a derogation referred to in section 41 may be granted for the capturing or killing of wolverine, wolf, bear, otter, lynx, European beaver, grey seal, harbour seal, Baltic ringed seal, polecat, pine marten and mountain hare:
 - 1) in the interest of protecting wild fauna or flora;
 - 2) to prevent serious damage, in particular to crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries, reindeer husbandry, water or other property;
 - 3) in the interest of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment; or
 - 4) for the purpose of research and education, repopulating and re-introducing of these species or preventing animal diseases.
- (2) A wolf, bear, otter, lynx and wolverine bagged as quarry by virtue of subsection 1 above belongs to the State and they must be delivered to a research institute which carries out research on game animals. The research institute must destroy the game animal, hand it over for a purpose of public good or sell it on the State's account.
- (3) A derogation concerning a wolf, bear, otter and lynx may also be granted for the selective and restricted capturing or killing of certain individuals in closely controlled circumstances.
- (4) In the reindeer herding area the derogation from protection referred to in subsection 3 above may also be arranged by virtue of a regional quota established by a Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Further provisions on the preconditions for granting a quota and notification of quarry bagged by virtue of a regional quota are issued by Government Decree. The Finnish Wildlife Agency is responsible for the monitoring of the derogation from protection allowed by virtue of a regional quota.

Section 41b – *Preconditions for a derogation concerning game birds and unprotected birds*
(159/2011)

- (1) Provided that there is no satisfactory solution and the decision is not detrimental to the maintenance of the species at a favourable conservation status, a derogation referred to in section 41 may be granted for the capturing or killing of game birds and unprotected birds referred to in section 5:
 - 1) in the interest of public health and safety;
 - 2) in the interest of air safety;
 - 3) to prevent serious damage to crops, livestock, forests, fisheries and water;
 - 4) for the protection of flora and fauna; or

- 5) for the purposes of research and teaching, of re-populating and re-introducing and for the breeding necessary for these purposes.
- (2) A derogation may also be granted to kill, capture, keep or to allow the otherwise appropriate utilisation of small number of birds other than the unprotected ones selectively and in closely controlled circumstances.

Section 41c – *Preconditions for a derogation concerning other game mammals*
(159/2011)

- (1) A derogation under section 41 concerning game mammals other than those referred to in section 41a may be granted to prevent serious damage, in particular to crops, forestry, fisheries, reindeer husbandry, farming of animals, waters or property or if this is necessary in the interest of public health, public safety or other important reason of public interest. A derogation may also be granted for the purpose of research and education, repopulating and re-introducing of the species.

Section 41d – *Withdrawing a derogation*
(159/2011)

- (1) The Finnish Wildlife Agency may, at the request of the police or Border Guard, withdraw a valid derogation if the holder of the derogation violates the provisions of this Act or issued under it. The same applies to an essential violation of the conditions of the derogation.
- (2) The holder of a withdrawn derogation is not granted a new similar derogation during the same hunting year before the withdrawal of the earlier derogation has been settled in a legally valid manner or the withdrawal is cancelled.

Section 42 – *Import and release to the wild of animals of foreign origin*

- (1) It is prohibited to import or release to the wild bird or mammal species of foreign origin as well as game animal strains of foreign origin without the permit of the Finnish Wildlife Agency. A statement on the permit application must be requested from the Finnish Environment Institute. The permit must be refused if significant harm may be caused by the measure to the natural environment or fauna. Orders on how the import and release to the wild are to be carried out may be issued in the permit. (159/2011)
- (2) The provisions of subsection 1 also apply to bringing an animal from the Province of Åland to another part of Finland and to the release of the animal to the wild there.

Section 43 – *Trade in game animals*
(1068/2004)

- (1) For the preservation of a game population, the sale of a certain game animal species hunted in Finland or in the economic zone of Finland may be restricted or prohibited in the whole country or in some part of the country or in the economic zone of Finland or some part of this by Government Decree.

Chapter 6 – **Hunting and game management in State-owned areas**

Section 44 – *Jurisdiction of authorities*

- (1) Decisions on game management and the use of hunting rights in State-owned areas are made by the authority that governs the area concerned unless otherwise provided in this Chapter.

Section 45 – *Leasing of a hunting area owned by the State*

- (1) A hunting lease contract in respect of State-owned areas may be made with a registered hunting association provided that there are grounds for regarding it as capable of managing the

obligations contained in the contract and appropriate organisation of the hunt. In leasing priority shall be given to an association whose members would not otherwise have reasonable opportunities to hunt.

- (2) A State-owned area of minor significance for hunting due to its size or location may be leased to a private person instead of a registered hunting association if this serves to promote the arrangement of hunting conditions.

Section 46 – *Hunting permit for State-owned areas*

- (1) A hunting permit for State-owned areas is issued in writing. The permit must specify the hunting season and the game animals which may be hunted. The permit conditions may order the recipient of the permit to notify the issuing authority of the numbers of the quarry bagged by a certain time.
- (2) If it becomes necessary to restrict the number of permits in a certain State-owned area, hunters who would otherwise not have reasonable opportunities to hunt are to be given priority in granting the permits.
- (3) Metsähallitus may grant a hunting permit to a foreigner for an area referred to in section 7(1) and 7(2) as provided by decree.

Section 47 – *Leases and permit fees for State-owned areas*

- (1) A hunting permit concerning State-owned areas is granted against a fee. No fee is charged from persons participating in a hunt organised by a State authority in an area that is in its possession. A State authority may grant a person who supervises hunting or conducts game management a hunting permit for the area where the action is pursued within the area governed by the authority without charge or for a reduced fee.
- (2) In determining hunting leases and permit fees, the aim must be that the income from the fees is sufficient to cover expenses arising from game management measures carried out by the State.

Chapter 7 – **Capturing and killing of an unprotected animal**

Section 48 – *The right to capture and kill an unprotected animal*

- (1) The owner or holder of an area is entitled to capture or kill an unprotected animal within the area. This right also applies when the hunting right for the area has been conveyed to another person by virtue of a hunting lease contract.
- (2) The owner or holder of a building, if the unprotected animal is encountered in a building or its yard, as well as the holder of a hunting lease right or a hunting permit is also entitled to capture or kill an unprotected animal, unless otherwise provided in a lease contract or permit.
- (3) The provisions of subsection 1 notwithstanding, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry may decide that, for the prevention of animal diseases, other health reasons, securing of public safety, or prevention of significant damage to property, a certain unprotected animal may be captured or killed in a certain area at a specified time without the permission of the owner or holder of the area or building.

Section 49 – *Devices and methods for hunting an unprotected animal*

- (1) The capturing and killing of an unprotected animal must be performed so that no danger is posed to any person, domestic animal, game animal, or protected animal.
- (2) Hunting devices and methods referred to in paragraphs 1-3, 5-7 and 9-11 of section 33(1) may not be used in the capturing and killing of an unprotected animal. Nevertheless, a substance referred to in section 33(1)(2) may be used for the capturing and killing of unprotected animals other than birds as well as cats that have run wild.

- (3) The restrictions of section 32(1) and 32(2) must be observed when using motor vehicles for the capturing or killing of an unprotected animal. In addition, the provisions of section 25(3) concerning a game animal apply to capturing or killing an unprotected animal.

Subsection 4 has been repealed by 159/2011.

Section 49a – Permission to derogate from the prohibition concerning devices and methods for hunting an unprotected animal

(159/2011)

- (1) The Finnish Wildlife Agency may grant a permission to use a device or method for hunting an unprotected animal which has been prohibited under section 49(2).
- (2) A derogation referred to in subsection 1 above may be granted to prevent serious damage, in particular to crops, forestry, fisheries, reindeer husbandry, farming of animals, waters or property or if this is necessary in the interest of public health, public safety or other important reason of public interest. A derogation may also be granted for the purpose of research on species.

Section 50 – Further provisions on capturing and killing an unprotected animal

(159/2011)

- (1) Where necessary, further provisions on hunting devices and methods allowed for capturing or killing an unprotected animal and their use are issued by Government Decree.
- (2) An unprotected animal may be designated for protection or the capturing and killing of an unprotected animal may be restricted by Government Decree.

Chapter 8 – Keeping a dog

Section 51 – Obligation to keep a dog on a leash

- (1) Between 1 March and 19 August, a dog must be kept on a leash when outdoors or so that it may be immediately put on a leash.
- (2) Subsection 1 does not apply to:
 - 1) a dog kept with the permission of the owner or holder in a yard, garden, or fenced area reserved for the keeping of a dog;
 - 2) a dog younger than five months;
 - 3) a dog engaged in shepherding, guiding, guarding or other service tasks of a similar nature;
 - 4) a dog carrying out a task for the police, Customs, Defence Forces, or the Border Guard;
 - or
 - 5) a dog which is being trained for a task referred to in subsections 3 and 4.
- (3) Derogation from the obligation referred to in subsection 1 above may be made when a dog other than a hound is being used for hunting. A derogation from the prohibition may also be made when a pointer or other bird dog is being trained without disturbing protected game animals during their breeding season.

Section 52 – Dog trials and training

- (1) The Finnish Wildlife Agency may grant a permission to derogate from the obligation laid down in section 51(1) for the holding of a dog trial or dog training. A dog trial and training must be carried out so that protected game animals are not disturbed during their breeding season. (159/2011)
- (2) The protection of cervids notwithstanding, hunting trials for dogs to be used in the hunting of cervids may be arranged and such dogs trained from 20 August to the end of December. Similarly, hunting trials for dogs to be used in other hunting may be arranged and such dogs

trained from 20 August to the end of February. A dog trial and training must be carried out so that protected game animals are not harmed.

- (3) However, a permit granted by the Finnish Wildlife Agency is required for arranging hunting trials and for training of dogs to be used in the hunting of wolf, bear, otter or lynx. (159/2011)

Section 53 – Keeping a dog on another person’s land

- (1) A dog may not be kept unleashed on someone else’s land without the permission of the landowner or the holder of the hunting right.
- (2) A landowner or holder of the hunting right has the right to remove from the area or impound a dog whose presence violates subsection 1. If in hunting with the aid of a dog the chase or bay passes into the area of another, the owner or holder of the hunting right of the area must allow the chase or bay to continue undisturbed for half an hour. If the owner of the dog has not collected the dog within this time, the owner of the area or the holder of the hunting right has the right to halt the chase or bay and to remove the dog from the area or impound it.
- (3) The provisions of subsection 1 above do not apply to the cases referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 of section 51(2).

Section 54 – The rights of a hunting warden in the supervision of dogs

- (1) If a person referred to in section 88 encounters a dog whose presence in the area violates the provisions of sections 51 and 52, he or she is entitled to impound the dog.

Subsection 2 has been repealed by 159/2011.

Section 55 – Measures concerning the impounding of a dog

- (1) Where a dog has been impounded under sections 53 or 54, the owner, if known, or the police must be notified of this without delay.
- (2) The owner of a dog who wishes to have an impounded dog returned must claim it within ten days of the notification of the impounding. If a dog is not claimed within the said period or within 15 days of the time when the impounder notified the police of the matter, the ownership of the dog passes to the impounder. The previous owner is nevertheless entitled to claim the dog from the impounder as long as the dog continues to be in his or her possession by paying the fee and compensation referred to in subsection 3.
- (3) Where a person other than a State authority has impounded a dog, the owner of the dog must pay the impounder a fee equivalent to the game management fee as well as compensation for having taken care of the dog. Where a State authority has impounded a dog, the owner of the dog must pay the State compensation for its care. The amount of compensation payable for the care of a dog is provided by decree.

Chapter 9 – Hunting and game management authorities and associations

Section 56 – Authorities and associations

(159/2011)

- (1) The supreme authority in the management and supervision of hunting and game husbandry is the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.
- (2) The provisions laid down in the Act on the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute (1131/1987) apply to the tasks of the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute.
- (3) Provisions on the Finnish Wildlife Agency and game management associations are laid down in the Wildlife and Game Administration Act (158/2011).

Sections 51-71 have been repealed by 159/2011.

Chapter 10 – Consequences of action which is contrary to law

Section 72 – *Hunting offence*

(234/2011)

- (1) Punishment for a hunting offence is laid down in Chapter 48a, section 1 and 1a of the Penal Code.

Section 73 has been repealed by (516/2002).

Section 74 – *Hunting violation*

(234/2011)

- (1) A person who deliberately or through negligence hunts
- 1) in violation of a prohibition or restriction laid down in or under section 20(3), 23(1), 32, 33(1), 33(2) or 38(1) or
 - 2) during a closed season referred to in section 37(1) or section 37(3) without a hunting licence referred to in section 10 or 26, derogation referred to in section 41 or 49a or permit referred to in section 52(3) or in violation of a regional quota laid down under section 10 or 41a(4),
- shall be sentenced to a fine for a *hunting violation* unless the action is punishable under Chapter 48a, section 1 or 1a of the Penal Code or unless a more severe penalty is laid down for it in other law.
- (2) A sentence for hunting violation is also imposed to a person who deliberately or through negligence
- 1) acts contrary to a restriction due to residential areas, cultivated areas or transport routes referred to in section 25,
 - 2) hunts without a permit contrary to a restriction on the use of hunting devices or methods laid down by decree issued under section 34,
 - 3) transports a hunting weapon contrary to the prohibition in section 35,
 - 4) disturbs a game animal contrary to the prohibition in section 36,
 - 5) organises a cervid hunt contrary to section 28 without a hunting master or hunts contrary to an order or prohibition issued by a hunting master under section 28,
 - 6) acts contrary to a provision on cervid hunting licences or obligation to notify of the quarry laid down in a decree issued under section 30 or a condition attached to a cervid hunting licence under the decree,
 - 7) acts contrary to a notification obligation laid down in a provision of section 10(1), 41(3) or decree issued under 41a(4) concerning a hunting licence, derogation or regional quota or an order included in a hunting licence or derogation by virtue of the decree,
 - 8) hunts without using the equipment laid down for cervid hunting by decree issued under section 30,
 - 9) as a hunting master fails to perform a task laid down for him or her by decree issued under section 30,
 - 10) hunts or act as a hunting master without having paid the game management fee laid down in the Act on the Game Management Fee and Hunting Licence Fee (616/1993),
 - 11) acts as a shooter without having passed the shooting test laid down in section 21,
 - 12) fails to present the hunting card or shooting test certificate in the manner laid down in section 22 or
 - 13) hunts or acts as hunting master contrary to a hunting prohibition imposed under Chapter 48a, section 6 of the Penal Code.

Section 75 – *Violation of provisions laid down in the Hunting Act*
(516/2002)

- (1) A person who deliberately or through negligence
 - 1) causes damage to a game animal or disturbs its mating, nesting or young during a closed season laid down by decree issued under section 37(1),
 - 2) enters a game reserve without permission contrary to a restriction or prohibition issued under section 39,
 - 3) imports or releases to the wild a bird or mammal species of foreign origin or a game animal strain of foreign origin or brings an animal from the Province of Åland to other parts of Finland or releases such an animal to the wild in other parts of Finland without the permit laid down in section 42 or contrary to the conditions of the permit,
 - 4) fails to observe a prohibition or restriction concerning the sale of game laid down by decree issued under section 43,
 - 5) captures or kills an unprotected animal without a permit contrary to the prohibition laid down in section 49 or provision of a decree issued under section 50,
 - 6) keeps a dog loose contrary to the prohibition laid down in sections 51-53 or
 - 7) abandons or deserts a cat contrary to the provision of section 85;
 shall be sentenced, unless a more severe penalty for the action is laid down in other law, to a fine for the *violation of the provisions of the Hunting Act*.
- (2) A person who renders a hunting device inoperational or otherwise disturbs a hunt in order to prevent or hamper another person's legal hunting contrary to section 31 are also sentenced for violating the provisions of the Hunting Act.

Section 76 – *Illegal hunting and concealment of illegal quarry*
(516/2002)

- (1) The penalty for illegal hunting is laid down in Chapter 28, section 10 of the Penal Code.
- (2) The penalty for concealment of illegal quarry (pouched game) is laid down in Chapter 48a, section 4 and 4a of the Penal Code. (234/2011)

Section 77 has been repealed by 516/2002.

Section 78 – *Hunting prohibition*
(516/2002)

- (1) Provisions on hunting prohibition are laid down in Chapter 48a, section 6 of the Penal Code.
- (2) A new hunting card is not issued to a person to whom a hunting prohibition has been imposed during the term of the prohibition.

Section 78a – *Notification by a court of justice on hunting prohibition*
(386/2010)

- (1) A court of justice must notify the keeper of the register of hunters and the police of the domicile of the person to whom a prohibition has been ordered of a decision by which a hunting prohibition has been ordered.
- (2) Where necessary, provisions on the obligation of court of justice to make the notification by entering the information on the decision to the decision notification system of the national information system of the judicial administration or by delivering the information to the Legal Register Centre to be forwarded to the keeper of the register of hunters and the police of the domicile of the person to whom a prohibition has been ordered are issued by Decree of the Ministry of Justice. The provisions laid down in the Act on the National Information System of the Judicial Administration (372/2010) and under it apply to making the entry and delivering the information.

Section 79 – Compensation to a holder of the hunting right

- (1) If a game animal has been hunted without the permission of the holder of the hunting right of the area or otherwise in violation of the hunting right of another party in circumstances where the other party was entitled to hunt or take the game animal concerned, the party whose rights have been infringed is entitled to claim, according to his or her preference, either the game animal or its value regardless of whether the hunting has been contrary to this Act for other reasons as well. The value of the game animal is determined on the basis of the guideline values for live game animals established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

Section 80 – Forfeiture

(876/2001)

- (1) If a game animal has been hunted contrary to the provisions of this Act or a decree issued under it and no other party was entitled to hunt or take the game animal concerned, the animal or its value is adjudged forfeit to the State. The value of the game animal is determined in the manner laid down in section 79. Otherwise the provisions of Chapter 10, sections 1-4 and 6-11 of the Penal Code (39/1889) shall be complied with as applicable.
- (2) If the hunting of a game animal referred to in subsection 1 requires a hunting licence under section 26, the hunter must at the same time be ordered to pay the neglected hunting licence fee to the State. (159/2011)
- (3) If an unprotected animal has been captured or killed contrary to the provisions of this Act or a decree issued under it, the provisions of Chapter 10 of the Penal Code must be complied with as regards forfeiture.
- (4) Chapter 10, section 4(1)(1) of the Penal Code applies only if the criminal offence on which forfeiture is based is an action referred to in section 72 or a deliberate action referred to in section 75(5). (516/2002)

Section 81 – Illegal hunting device

- (1) If a person performing supervision of the Hunting Act referred to in section 88 encounters a prohibited hunting device or a hunting device set up ready for hunting in a prohibited or unauthorised manner, he or she may confiscate it or render it inoperational. The police must be notified of a hunting device which has been confiscated or the device must be forwarded to the police for storage without delay.
- (2) Further provisions on the returning to the owners or the disposition of hunting devices which have been confiscated or are being kept in storage by the police are issued by decree.

Section 82 – Right to institute criminal proceedings

(474/2011)

- (1) If in consequence of a hunting violation or a violation of the provisions of the Hunting Act only the rights of a private party have been violated, a public prosecutor may not prosecute unless the injured party notifies that criminal proceedings should be instituted.

Chapter 11 – Miscellaneous provisions

Section 83 – The right of ownership of a game animal found dead

(159/2011)

- (1) A game animal found dead belongs to the holder of the hunting right of the area if the said person has the right to hunt the same game animal species in the area.
- (2) If a game animal referred to in subsection 1 was hunted by virtue of a hunting licence, the holder of the hunting right of the area is entitled to keep the animal if he or she so desires

provided that he or she has the same kind of hunting licence. In other cases the animal belongs to its hunter.

- (3) If no party holds the hunting right or hunting licence for the game animal, a game animal found dead may not be taken into possession, unless otherwise provided below.

Section 83a – Derogations to the right of ownership of a game animal found dead
(159/2011)

- (1) If a grey seal or Baltic ringed seal is found dead in fishing gear in a marine area, it belongs to the owner of the gear.
- (2) If a cervid, roe deer or wild boar has been killed in traffic or put down due to a traffic accident, it belongs to the game management association of the area where the accident took place.
- (3) Antlers shed by cervids belong to the person who finds them.

Section 83b – Right to bury or dispose of a dead game animal
(159/2011)

- (1) If a game animal found dead causes inconvenience, the party suffering from the inconvenience may bury the game animal or dispose of it at his or her own cost.

Section 83c – Notification obligation concerning a dead game animal
(159/2011)

- (1) A wolverine, lynx, bear, other and wolf that is found dead must be notified without delay to the research institute which carries out game research and the game management association of the area. A dead animal or parts of it may be delivered to the research institute upon its consent and at its cost.
- (2) A game animal found dead referred to in section 83(2) must be notified without delay to the holder of the hunting right and the game management association of the area.
- (3) Further provisions on making the notification are issued by Government Decree.

Section 84 – Treatment of an animal which is in a helpless state

- (1) Efforts must be made to help an animal referred to in this Act which is ill, injured, or otherwise in a helpless state or to notify the owner of the area, holder of the hunting right, or the police of the matter.
- (2) If the animal is in such a condition that keeping it alive would apparently cause it an unreasonable degree of suffering, the finder may put down the animal even if the finder is not entitled to capture or kill the animal in question in the area or if the animal is protected at the time.
- (3) The provisions laid down in this Chapter concerning animals found dead apply to an animal which has been put down.

Section 85 – Taking care of a cat

- (1) Abandoning and deserting a cat acquired as a pet is prohibited.

Section 86 – Claiming possession of a dead unprotected animal

- (1) A dead unprotected animal may be kept by the person who found it.

Section 87 – Compensation for damage caused by game animals
(106/2009)

- (1) Provisions on compensations for damages caused by game animals are laid down in the Game Animal Damages Act (105/2009).

Section 88 – *Supervision of the compliance with the law*

- (1) The police, Border Guard, customs authorities and hunting wardens referred to in the Wildlife and Game Administration Act are responsible for supervising in their respective jurisdictions that the provisions concerning hunting are complied with. (159/2011)
- (2) In State-owned areas, the compliance with the law is supervised by officials to whom the supervision task is laid down or designated.
- (3) A landowner or holder of the hunting right is entitled to supervise the compliance with this Act in their own area.
- (4) If an obligation based on provisions issued in this Act or under it is neglected, the Regional State Administrative Agency may, on the notification of a supervisory authority or an association referred to in this Act or on the application of the party whose right or privilege the matter concerns, order the neglecting party to fulfil the obligation subject to a threat of fine or threat that the neglected obligation is ordered rectified at the neglecter's expense. (1469/2009)

Section 89 has been repealed by 159/2011.

Section 90 – *Provisions on rectification and appeal*

(159/2011)

- (1) Provisions on making a claim for rectification and appeal of the decision made by the Finnish Wildlife Agency and game management association are laid down in the Act on Game Management Administration. In a matter concerning a derogation referred to in section 41 above the right to appeal is also held by a registered local or regional association the purpose of which is to promote nature or environmental protection.

Section 91 – *Further provisions*

Further provisions on the implementation of this Act are issued by decree.

Section 92 – *Entry into force*

- (1) This Act enters into force on 1 August 1993.
- (2) This Act repeals the Hunting Act of 13 April 1962 (290/1962), with subsequent amendments.

Section 93 – *Transitional provisions*

- (1) A registered weapon the use of which was allowed by the Act repealed by this Act for hunting purposes but is now prohibited by section 33(1)(7) may be used in hunting for a period of three years from the entry into force of this Act.
- (2) If the rules of procedure of the Hunters' Central Organization, game management districts, and game management associations ratified prior to the entry into force of this Act include provisions contrary to this Act, the provisions of the Act shall be complied with. The rules of procedure must nevertheless be amended to conform to the Act without delay, but no later than within two years of the entry into force of this new Act. An election carried out prior to the entry into force of this Act remains in force for the period for which the person has been elected for the position or task.
- (3) Hunting lease contracts made and hunting permits issued prior to the entry into force of this Act remain in force. Permits issued by authorities under the Act repealed by this Act remain in force.
- (4) Decisions issued by a State Provincial Office under section 30(2) of the Act repealed by this Act remain in force, but not longer than until the end of 1995.