

POLAND'S SUSTAINABLE HUNTING STRATEGY 2030 WITH 2035 PROSPECTS

COMMITMENT

COOPERATION

RESPONSIBILITY



SUPREME HUNTING COUNCIL
POLISH HUNTING ASSOCIATION
WARSAW 2025



Polski Związek Łowiecki

Polish Hunting Association • Association des Chasseurs Polonais

POLAND'S SUSTAINABLE HUNTING STRATEGY 2030 WITH 2035 PROSPECTS

WARSAW 2025

CONTENTS

FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH EDITION	3
FOREWORD	7
FROM THE AUTHORS	8
OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY	9
1. STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS	11
1.1. Legal Conditionality	11
1.2. Innovative Approach	14
1.3. Scope and Objectives of the Strategy	15
2. CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE OF THE ASSOCIATION	18
2.1. SWOT Analysis of the Association	18
2.2. Diagnosis of the Organization	19
2.3. Trends and Scenarios in the External Environment: Stakeholders	23
2.4. Mission and Vision of the Association	32
3. STRATEGIC CHALLENGES, OBJECTIVES AND TASKS	33
3.1. Strategic Challenges and Objectives – Synthetic Overview	33
3.2. Overarching Principles of Sustainable Hunting – The Decalogue of The Righteous Hunter	35
3.3. GOAL 1: The Natural Dimension – Preserving Biodiversity and Protecting Habitats	36
3.4. OBJECTIVE 2: Economic Dimension – Lasting Cooperation for Nature Conservation and Wildlife Population Management	45
3.5. OBJECTIVE 3: Social Dimension – A Positive Image – Serving Nature and Society	47
3.6. OBJECTIVE 4: Organizational Dimension – Modern Leadership and Effective Task Execution	54
3.7. Strategic Tasks	59
3.8. Organizational Instruments in The Strategy Implementation System	64
ANNEX 1: THE ASSOCIATION'S POSTULATES	66
ANNEX 2: ACTION PLAN	67

FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

Hunting is a unique skill – an ancient human practice shaped over millennia and passed down from generation to generation. Throughout history, hunting has continuously evolved in response to changing environmental conditions, shifting wildlife populations, and the advancement of tools and techniques. With the advent of the Neolithic Revolution, hunting began to develop along two distinct and independent paths.

The first path was rooted in utilitarian necessity. Focused on securing game meat and furs for trade and subsistence, this form of hunting was often practiced by the lower socioeconomic classes – either legally or through poaching. It served as a means of survival and economic livelihood.

The second path was defined by aristocratic tradition. Royal and courtly hunts gave rise to a rich cultural legacy marked by ceremonial customs, hunting etiquette, distinctive dress, specialized dog breeds, hunting music, and culinary traditions centered on wild game. These practices embedded hunting deeply into the social and cultural fabric of the nobility.

The first hunters appeared in Poland tens of thousands of years ago, while the codification of hunting rules and the first legal regulations took place around a thousand years ago. Poland's first king, Bolesław I the Brave (967-1025), introduced falcon *Falco peregrinus* protection, restrictions on beaver *Castor fiber* hunting and appointed special officials to oversee the species' protection and combat poaching. Subsequent rulers introduced new regulations, for example, Władysław II Jagiełło (1352/1362-1434) banned hunting from April to the end of August, during the period when peasants cultivated their fields. Similarly, a decree issued by King Sigismund III Vasa (1566-1632) established a reserve for the rare aurochs (*Bos primigenius*). Although such decisions were driven more by royal privileges and economic considerations than by environmental protection, they laid the groundwork for rational population management principles that have ensured the survival of many wild animal species to this day. It is worth noting that Poland has retained within its present legal framework the medieval term *master of the hunt* ("łowczy"), which originally referred to an official or ceremonial position in historical Polish royal courts; today, it denotes executive roles at the national, district, and hunting club levels within the Association, with the National Master of the Hunt serving as the chief executive of its Board. In addition, this continuity highlights the symbolic connection between contemporary Polish hunters and their ancestors who established hunting as an integral part of the national culture.

Today, the role and perception of hunters vary widely between countries, shaped by modern laws, public expectations, and conservation priorities. Yet across borders, hunting remains a deeply rooted practice – intertwined with national histories, ecological stewardship, and enduring cultural heritage. To fully understand



Photo by Marta Marcyniuk

modern hunting – particularly in its Polish context – it is essential to appreciate its historical dimensions and cultural richness. Poland’s model of sustainable hunting reflects a balance between tradition and responsibility, where ethical game management coexists with nature conservation and social engagement.

This Strategy invites international readers to explore and engage with a uniquely Polish vision of hunting – one that honors its past while shaping its future in alignment with global sustainability goals.

THE LEGAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF HUNTING IN POLAND

Under the law in Poland, wild game in its natural, free-ranging state is not the property of the landowner but is owned by the State Treasury. The Polish state has entrusted the responsibility for managing wild animal populations to hunters, more than 130,000 of whom are members of the Polish Hunting Association (Polski Związek Łowiecki – PZŁ, hereinafter called the Association). The organizational structure of the Association is three-tiered, comprising national, regional, and local levels. Membership in the Association is mandatory for all licensed hunters as well as for all hunting clubs operating as legal entities, ensuring unified governance and consistent implementation of game management policies across the country.

The state has assigned hunters a broad array of statutory responsibilities, including:

- Mitigating wildlife damage to agricultural and forest lands,
- Supporting endangered species through reintroduction programs and predator control – including the management of invasive alien species,
- Preventing and controlling animal-borne diseases such as rabies, African Swine Fever (ASF), and avian influenza.

The recent war in Ukraine has underscored the strategic role of hunters in national security contexts. Their familiarity with local terrain and proficiency in the use of firearms have made them valuable assets in civil defense and military support efforts. In response, Poland has introduced new legal measures that formally assign hunters a role in building national resilience. These measures have expanded cooperation between hunters and entities such as the military, fire services, police, and civil protection agencies, integrating hunters into broader emergency and crisis response systems.



Photo by Szymon Hartas

The diverse responsibilities and societal contributions of hunters in Poland have led to a clear linguistic and conceptual distinction between two terms that may seem similar at first glance but differ significantly in scope:

- “Myślistwo” – *Hunting in the strict sense* (sensu stricto), which refers specifically to the act of harvesting animals and related field practices.
- “Łowiectwo” – *Hunting in the broad sense* (sensu lato), which encompasses a wide range of hunter-led activities including wildlife management, cultural heritage (e.g., collecting, hunting music), dog breeding, shooting sports, education, and community engagement, or in other words sustainable management via hunting.

This broader understanding of hunting reflects the multifunctional role of hunters in Polish society – not only as game managers, but also as cultural stewards, public partners, and contributors to environmental and national resilience.

Hunters as Self-Financed Public Servants

In Poland, hunters carry out responsibilities mandated by the state – but do so entirely at their own expense, without receiving financial support from the national budget.

Hunters finance a wide range of activities essential to sustainable wildlife management and nature conservation from their personal resources. These include:

- Paying for mandatory training courses and licensing exams,
- Participating in specialized workshops, such as those on wildlife damage assessment,
- Purchasing firearms, ammunition, and other hunting equipment,
- Paying membership dues to their local hunting clubs and the Polish Hunting Association,
- Volunteering for patrols to prevent wildlife damage in agricultural areas,
- Breeding and releasing endangered species into the wild,
- Actively controlling invasive alien species (IAS) to protect native ecosystems.

In addition, as a new statutory obligation from 2025, hunters in Poland have also taken on tasks in the field of civil protection and civil defense. As part of the national system, this includes activities such as participat-



Photo by Robert Konieczka

ing in rescue operations, assisting with mass evacuation logistics, and supporting local government structures during crises or natural disasters.

All of these tasks – despite serving the public interest and national environmental goals – are funded privately by hunters, not taxpayers.

This model highlights the unique civic role of the Polish hunting community: one that combines voluntary service, environmental stewardship, and financial self-reliance in fulfilling duties that elsewhere might fall to publicly funded institutions.

A Call for Balanced Dialogue and Strategic Action in the Face of Ideological Polarization

Although wild game in Poland is legally the property of the state, a growing number of ideological activists assert their right to advocate for wildlife protection based on the belief that “every animal has a right to live.” While such positions are part of a legitimate public discourse, they have increasingly translated into radical and confrontational forms of activism. What began as cyberaggression directed at hunters in digital spaces has, in recent times, escalated into acts resembling eco-terrorism – including the placement of explosive devices under hunting stands. Despite the fact that hunters are fulfilling state-mandated responsibilities in wildlife management and environmental stewardship, they frequently encounter a lack of institutional support from public authorities. At times, they even face legislative and political pressure that seeks to restrict their activities through measures such as:

- Reducing the list of game species,
- Closing additional areas to hunting,
- Proposing bans on hunting during weekends,
- Introducing disproportionately restrictive medical requirements that could exclude thousands of hunters from active participation.

Currently, Poland is the only country in the world where a ban – widely viewed as unconstitutional – prevents individuals under 18 from even passively participation in hunts.

In response to these growing threats, driven by elements of the “green ideology” and amplified by some politicians, media figures, and celebrities, the Polish Hunting Association has developed the *Poland's Sustainable Hunting Strategy 2030 with 2035 Prospects*. This Strategy is not only a policy tool and an in-house developed reform program, but also a defense of the legitimate role of hunters in modern society – rooted in evidence-based management, ethics, and national law. The Strategy is supported by a broad group of scholars, including experts in natural sciences, veterinary medicine, law, and social sciences. It reflects a growing awareness that today's hunters face new and complex challenges. To pursue their passion responsibly and fulfill the tasks entrusted to them by the state, hunters must be more than passive observers of social and environmental change – they must be active participants and thought leaders, shaping the future of conservation with professionalism and integrity.

Polish hunters have committed themselves to three core values:

- Commitment,
- Cooperation, and
- Responsibility.

The implementation of these principles goes beyond national boundaries. It is grounded in a broader European and international context, recognizing that only coordinated, pan-European efforts, led by the hunting community united through organizations such as the CIC and FACE, can ensure effective nature conservation and the long-term sustainability of hunting institutions – guided by the principles of balanced development and ecological responsibility.

Prof. Dariusz J. Gwiazdowicz, PhD, DSc

Chairman of the Committee for Science of the Supreme Hunting Council

FOREWORD

Dear Colleagues,

"One hundred years behind us, centuries ahead."

Those words were the motto of the 100th anniversary of the united All-Poland Hunting Association in 2023. We embrace these words with a profound sense of duty.

Motivated by the imperative to preserve and pass on the national heritage of Polish hunting – and its enduring contribution to the protection of our country's natural and cultural legacy – we have wholeheartedly welcomed the initiative of the Poznań District of the Polish Hunting Association to establish a dedicated team. This team was entrusted with developing the core framework of a historic and visionary document: *Poland's Sustainable Hunting Strategy 2030 with 2035 Prospects*.

This Strategy is more than a product of thoughtful deliberation and genuine concern for the future of hunting in Poland. It is a testament to the spirit of civic engagement – rooted in social solidarity, intergenerational responsibility, and a shared commitment to the common good: our native nature. It also reflects our Association's clear ambition to lead the way in addressing today's pressing challenges in conservation and natural resource management.

The Strategy has been formally adopted for implementation by the General Board and all districts of the Polish Hunting Association. It will also guide the future work of the soon-to-be-established provincial hunting councils at the voivodship level. These councils are envisioned as regional hubs for cooperation, knowledge exchange, and strategic alignment. While they are not yet statutory bodies of the Association, they are expected to play a key coordinating role in engagement with provincial public authorities – while fully respecting the autonomy of each district.

The development of this Strategy was made possible through the active participation of hunters and experts alike, whose thoughtful contributions and constructive feedback enriched every aspect of the document. To all of you, dear Colleagues, we extend our heartfelt thanks. We recognize and deeply appreciate the demanding, invaluable work you carry out each day on behalf of Polish hunting – whether in the field, in your communities, or representing our Association across professional, academic, and social spheres.

We sincerely hope that this Strategy will inspire and empower us to realize our collective vision – strengthening our Association and reinforcing the image of hunters as dedicated guardians of Polish nature.

May the message of this Strategy – rooted in commitment, cooperation, and responsibility – encourage us all to work together in a spirit of solidarity and integrity, united by our shared duty to safeguard the future of Polish hunting and the natural world we cherish.

**For the glory of Polish hunting!
With forest blessings,**

Eugeniusz Grzeszczak

National Master of the Hunt – Chairman of the
General Board of the Polish Hunting Association

Marcin Moźdzzonek

Chairman of the Supreme Hunting Council

FROM THE AUTHORS

Dear Colleagues,

This document is the culmination of many years of dialogue and reflection on the future direction of the development of hunting management in Poland.

From the outset, the authors of this Strategy grounded their work in the principles set forth by the National Delegates Assembly. These include recognition of the Polish Hunting Association as the sole hunting organization in Poland, the practice of game management within large hunting areas¹, and the principle that free-ranging game remains the property of the State Treasury.

We are fully aware of the ongoing public and political discourse surrounding the potential reform of the national hunting management model. However, the risk analysis conducted during the development of this Strategy has confirmed that the current framework remains conducive to the sustainable growth of the Association. Our greatest challenge today is not the system itself, but the mindset, involvement, and commitment of the people within it.

Our foremost task is to demonstrate – through daily, responsible actions – that hunting is an indispensable tool for the conservation of natural resources. Only once we have earned the trust and understanding of the broader public can we consider meaningful adjustments to the model of hunting in Poland. Change must begin with us.

It is our hope that this Strategy will serve as a catalyst for coordinated, forward-looking action across all levels of the Association. We invite you to study its contents with care and openness. We encourage a constructive spirit in its interpretation and wish you fulfillment in your ongoing work for the benefit of nature.

With sincere appreciation,

On behalf of the authors,

dr Szymon Hałas

Chairman of the Strategy Development Committee

¹ A hunting area is a defined zone where hunting is permitted. Under Polish law, its minimum size is 3,000 hectares. It is leased to a specific hunting club, which is responsible for any damage to crops caused by designated game species within its boundaries. Note that hunting rights in Poland are not linked to land ownership. The Polish legislature concluded that long-term, rational management of game resources and the effective achievement of objectives in nature conservation—particularly with regard to managing game populations—would be impossible within a system of fragmented (small) hunting areas.



Photo by Adrian Czech

OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

ENVIRONMENT

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

COOPERATION

ENGAGEMENT WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS

IMAGE

EVERYDAY COMMITMENT TO NATURE AND BUILDING PUBLIC TRUST IN HUNTING ACTIVITY

ORGANIZATION

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT, EFFECTIVE STRUCTURE, MODERN LEADERSHIP

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE HUNTING?

According to the **Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats** (ratified by Poland in 1995) and the **European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity** (2007), sustainable hunting is defined as:

The use of wild game species and their habitats in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biodiversity or hinder its restoration.

This approach ensures that biodiversity is maintained at a level that meets the needs and aspirations of both present and future generations. At the same time, it allows hunting management to remain a recognized and accepted social, economic, and cultural practice. Sustainable hunting guarantees the **conservation of wild animal populations and their habitats**, providing broad societal benefits and enhancing the ecological capacity for responsible use by other legitimate actors in natural resource management.

Hunting management – rooted in **tradition, ethics, and legality** – remains the most effective method of managing wildlife populations. Integrated within a broader conservation framework, it represents a **unique and irreplaceable tool** for maintaining ecological balance and conservation of natural resources.

In line with the hunting ethos and legal principles, the notion of “use” in the definition of sustainable hunting imposes a **dual responsibility** on hunters:

- **To actively protect** both game and protected species, as well as their habitats.
- **To regulate game populations** through responsible harvest, ensuring proper physical condition of animals, interspecies balance, and the ethical acquisition of venison or trophies—according to the principle of fair and equitable sharing of nature’s benefits.

Use Sustainable hunting involves the responsible:	Conservation of Natural Resources (Biodiversity) Ensuring the long-term conservation and sustainable use of wildlife and ecosystems:	Maintaining the Acceptance of Hunting as a Legitimate Activity Upholding hunting as a socially, legally, and ethically accepted practice due to its:
Use of game species	Resources for present generations	Social values
Use of natural habitats	Resources for future generations	Economic benefits
Protection, conservation and harvest (acquisition)		Cultural heritage

Table 1: The scope of the term “sustainable hunting”

SUSTAINABLE HUNTING IN THE BROAD SENSE

HUNTING SHOOTING
ARCHERY
FALCONRY

HUNTING SIGNALS AND MUSIC
HUNTING LANGUAGE
HUNTING LITERATURE

SUSTAINABLE HUNTING IN THE NARROW SENSE

ACTIVE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF GAME AND PROTECTED SPECIES

ELIMINATION OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES AND PREDATOR CONTROL

HABITAT PROTECTION/CONSERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF WILDLIFE LIVING CONDITIONS

GAME BREEDING AND INTRODUCTION

WILDLIFE POPULATION MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING HUNTING PLANNING

HUNTING AND NATURE EDUCATION

POPULATION CONTROL OF GAME AND PROTECTED ANIMALS

HUNTER TRAINING

PREVENTION AND MITIGATION OF WILDLIFE DAMAGE IN AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

HUNTING AND HARVESTING

ORGANIZATION, TRADITIONS, CUSTOMS, ETHICS
WEAPONS, AMMUNITION, EQUIPMENT, VEHICLES
HUNTING TOURISM
TROPHY HUNTING AND VENISON ACQUISITION
HARVESTING (FIREARMS/BOWS), FALCONRY, AND LIVE CAPTURE

NATURE RESEARCH, PARTICULARLY RELATED TO GAME SPECIES

HUNTING LAW

- HUNTING CYNOLOGY (WORKING WITH HUNTING DOGS)
- SCIENCE AND EDUCATION IN HUNTING AND NATURE CONSERVATION
- COOPERATION FOR NATURE WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
- ACTIVITIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES
- HUNTING COLLECTIBLES AND EXHIBITIONS
- HUNTING-THEMED ART
- HUNTING CUISINE AND POLISH CULINARY TRADITIONS
- PROMOTION OF HUNTING AND NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION/CONSERVATION EFFORTS
- HERITAGE PROTECTION
- HUNTING TRADITIONS AND OTHER EXPRESSIONS OF HUNTING CULTURE



1. STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS

1.1. Legal Conditionality

This Strategy has been developed in accordance with Guidelines of the XXIV Extraordinary National Delegates Assembly Resolution of 2019, which defined the strategic direction of the Polish Hunting Association. It serves as a key policy instrument outlining the goals our organization aims to achieve in the coming years and the means by which it will pursue them.

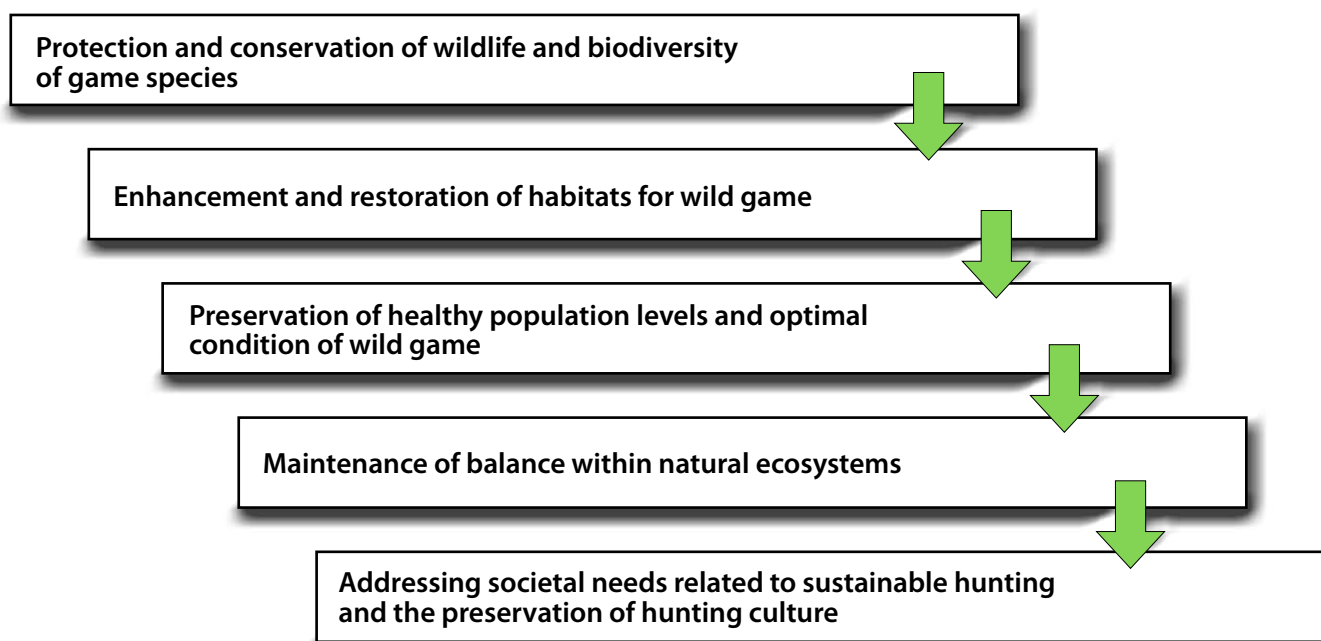
One of the Strategy's primary objectives is to uphold the foundational principles of Polish hunting, which include:

- Free-ranging game shall remain the property of the State Treasury,
- The management of hunting activities shall be carried out within designated hunting areas no smaller than 3,000 hectares,
- The Polish Hunting Association shall be maintained as the sole national organization uniting all Polish hunters and hunting clubs.

In addition to reinforcing these pillars, the Strategy emphasizes the need to:

- Increase the engagement and participation of younger generations in the Association,
- Restore internal self-governance and the democratic selection of leadership,
- Improve the management of wildlife-related disease threats, such as African Swine Fever (ASF),
- Pursue the inscription of hunting culture on UNESCO's national list of intangible cultural heritage.

The operation of the Association—across all levels—is governed not only by its Articles of Association but also by a comprehensive legal framework. The principal legislative act is the Hunting Law of October 13, 1995 (Polish Journal of Laws 2023, item 1082, hereinafter called the Hunting Law), which replaced the previous law of June 17, 1959 on game breeding, protection, and hunting.



Graph: Hierarchy of Hunting Objectives According to The Hunting Law and The Articles of Association of The Polish Hunting Association

This legal foundation establishes a coherent framework for sustainable hunting, setting forth clear guidelines for balancing the relationship between humans and nature. It redefines hunting as a practice centered on environmental responsibility, prioritizing:

- The actions aimed at nature conservation,
- The protection and preservation of biodiversity of game species,
- The improvement of living conditions and habitats for wildlife.

Notably, the 1995 law marked a paradigm shift by placing conservation goals at the forefront of hunting legislation—a move aligned with the principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted in Rio de Janeiro (1992). Although this transition was not universally embraced at the time of implementation, today it forms the foundation of modern wildlife management and is integral to all hunting activities conducted under the Association’s authority.

A number of ministerial implementing acts have been issued under the Hunting Law. As of January 1, 2024, the Minister of Climate and Environment has enacted 19 active executive regulations. In addition, two regulations each have been issued by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Minister of Finance.

The Director General of the State Forests has also issued regulations based on the Hunting Law, covering such areas as:

- The organization of training for the assessment of wildlife-related damage,
- The operation of Game Breeding Centers (OHZs), and
- The evaluation of compliance with harvesting practices conducted within OHZs managed by the State Forests.

Beyond the Hunting Law itself, several other legislative acts are critical to the functioning of hunting in Poland. Key among them are:

- The Act on Forests (1991);
- The Act on the Protection of Agricultural and Forest Land (1995);
- The Animal Protection Act (1997);
- The Act on Weapons and Ammunition (1999);
- The Environmental Protection Law (2001);
- The Act on the Protection of Animal Health and Combating Infectious Animal Diseases (2004); and
- The Nature Conservation Act (2004).

Additionally, the provisions of the Code of Administrative Procedure (1960) govern the conduct of many administrative processes, such as the assessment of hunting-related damage or the issuance of hunting permits.

All game management activities undertaken by the Polish Hunting Association must be fully aligned with:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Poland,
- Ratified international agreements,
- National legislation, and
- The State’s environmental policy.

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO HUNTING

Convention on Biological Diversity (United Nations, 1992);
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations);
Natura 2000 – including the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC) – (<i>European Union</i>);
European Green Deal and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) – (<i>European Union</i>);

EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;

New EU Forest Strategy for 2030;

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) – (*Council of Europe*);

European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity (*Council of Europe*);

CIC Principles for the Development of Wildlife Legislation – (*International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation*); and IUCN Guidelines for Sustainable Hunting – (*International Union for Conservation of Nature*).

IUCN Guidelines for Sustainable Hunting – (International Union for Conservation of Nature).

Prawo łowieckie (1995) oraz rozporządzenia wykonawcze

MAIN LAWS REGULATING HUNTING IN POLAND

Hunting Law of October 13, 1995 and related implementing regulations

Nature Conservation Act of April 16, 2004

Animal Protection Act of August 21, 1997

Act on Forests of September 28, 1991

Act on Weapons and Ammunition of May 21, 1999

Act on the Protection of Animal Health and Combating Infectious Animal Diseases of March 11, 2004

Act on the Protection of Agricultural and Forest Land of February 3, 1995

Environmental Protection Law of April 27, 2001

Code of Administrative Procedure of June 14, 1960

DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS AND PROGRAMS – EXAMPLE: WIELKOPOLSKA VOIVODESHIP

Strategy for Responsible Development (*national or regional adaptation*);

Wielkopolska Regional Development Strategy;

National Environmental Policy until 2030;

State Forest Policy (*Poland*);

Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Rural Areas, Agriculture, and Fisheries;

Development Strategy of the Greater Poland Voivodeship until 2030;

Environmental Protection Program for the Greater Poland Region 2030;

Wielkopolska Regional Operational Program; and

Provincial Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management (WFOŚiGW) – Wielkopolska,

European Union law—characterized by its dynamic evolution—exerts significant influence on Polish legislation, including regulations governing hunting. Particularly impactful are legal instruments related to the Common Agricultural Policy, forestry, and the protection/conservation of nature and the environment.

Key examples include:

- The European Green Deal, which draws heavily on the EU Biodiversity Strategy,
- The New EU Forest Strategy, and
- The Natura 2000 network, grounded in the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive.

Given this context, it is essential for the Polish Hunting Association to:

- Continuously monitor law amendments and legal developments,
- Proactively advocate for favorable regulatory amendments, and
- Engage actively in legislative and consultative processes at all levels—international, national, regional (voivodeship), county, and municipal.

Such involvement is vital to ensuring that the voice of the hunting community is heard, and that hunting remains aligned with both conservation goals and legal obligations within the evolving European framework.

1.2. Innovative Approach

Any organization seeking to meet the challenges of the modern era must commit to continuous improvement and adopt innovative, forward-thinking solutions that empower it to fulfill its mission. Such an approach begins with cultivating the right mindset and motivation, and reinforcing that mindset through training, daily practice, and a culture of adaptability. Innovation is driven by openness, transparency, and a commitment to equitable access to the benefits of the Association for all members and prospective candidates. At its core, innovation requires the recognition of emerging trends and the ability to take anticipatory action, so that hunters—fully aware of their ecological and societal value—can shape and lead the strategic direction of the Association.

Key areas where innovation can significantly enhance the realization of hunting and conservation objectives include:

Organizational Structure

The Association's structure should:

- Identify and promote highly committed members, and
- Encourage collaboration with other nature conservation organizations.

To this end, district hunting councils should be reinstated, and provincial-level cooperation platforms (i.e., provincial hunting councils) should be established to unify the efforts of districts within each voivodeship. While awaiting potential statutory reforms, inter-district agreements at the provincial level should be introduced. These agreements would define a framework for collaboration with regional administrative bodies, enabling more effective representation and cooperation at the provincial level.

Communication

The Association should leverage both internal and external communication channels—including social media, traditional media such as TV, and public engagement platforms—to:

- Raise awareness about the positive role of sustainable hunting in society and nature conservation, and
- Counteract misconceptions and harmful stereotypes to strengthen public trust in the Association's mission.

Collaboration

The Polish Hunting Association should strive to assume the role of a key initiator and coordinator of major conservation projects, capitalizing on its:

- Nationwide organizational structure,
- Extensive human capital, and Scientific and
- practical expertise.

Financing of Activities

A systemic shift is needed in the current financing model of sustainable hunting management, which has so far relied predominantly on self-funding mechanisms. The future approach should prioritize collaborative programs and joint projects with key stakeholders such as farmers, foresters, wildlife organizations, and local governments.

Additionally, it is essential to secure external funding for initiatives led by the Association. This requires ensuring that the Polish Hunting Association and individual hunting clubs are formally recognized as eligible applicants in public and EU funding schemes—particularly those supporting projects in nature conservation and environmental protection.

Processes and Methods

To improve the effectiveness of conservation efforts, the Association must adopt modern technologies and standardized practices. These include:

- Implementing digital systems for recording hunting and management activities,
- Developing tools to collect and analyze wildlife data that directly affect conservation strategies, and
- Creating checklists and standardized procedures to streamline operations and ensure accountability.

Building a Positive Image

The credibility and public perception of hunting must be grounded in systematic, transparent, and locally visible actions carried out by the hunting community. This means engaging in daily, documented efforts that deliver tangible benefits to farmers, foresters, and local communities.

Public awareness and acceptance campaigns should move beyond abstract messaging and focus on evidence-based achievements that reflect the real contributions of hunters to environmental stewardship and biodiversity protection.

1.3. Scope and Objectives of the Strategy

CHALLENGES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Following established methodologies for the development of sustainable hunting strategies, the identified challenges have been categorized into four key dimensions:

- social,
- nature-related,
- economic and
- organizational ones, with the last one being of strategic importance as well.



IMPLEMENTING ENTITY (STRATEGY EXECUTORS)

The primary entity responsible for implementing the Strategy is the Polish Hunting Association, operating across all levels of its organizational structure. However, the Strategy is also directed toward other stakeholders who actively contribute to its implementation, particularly those engaged in nature conservation and the sustainable management of natural resources. This document offers valuable strategic guidance to public administration bodies, particularly in areas related to environmental protection, where hunting plays an integral and complementary role.

TARGET AUDIENCE (STRATEGY ADDRESSEES)

The main audience for the Strategy comprises **hunters affiliated with the Polish Hunting Association**. However, due to its comprehensive scope and inclusive framework, the Strategy is equally relevant to a broader group of stakeholders, including:

- Entities involved in the protection of wildlife species and habitats;
- Organizations managing agricultural and forest areas affected by game;
- Local communities, whose support is essential for sustainable hunting; and
- International conservation organizations, in the context of knowledge exchange and collaborative initiatives.

TERRITORIAL AND TEMPORAL SCOPES

Territorially, the Strategy applies to all areas of the Republic of Poland where hunting management is legally conducted. In pursuit of its strategic goals, the Polish Hunting Association also engages in active international cooperation and knowledge exchange with counterpart organizations and institutions abroad, especially European ones. The Strategy is aligned with key European Union and national policy documents that govern sustainable development and nature conservation (see Section 1.1). Its temporal scope corresponds with these frameworks, extending through 2030, with a forward-looking perspective to 2035.

STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS AND DIRECTIONS

As outlined in Section 1.1, the Strategy is founded on several core principles:

- Game as the property of the State Treasury,
- Implementation of wildlife management in large hunting areas,
- Maintenance of the Polish Hunting Association as the sole national hunting organization,
- Emphasis on the protective, conservative and ecological role of sustainable hunting.

In reference to the key ideas and directions adopted in the Resolution of the 24th Extraordinary National Assembly of Delegates, the Strategy defines:

- The vision and mission of the Polish Hunting Association,
- Principles for cooperation with stakeholders at all organizational levels,
- Guidelines for a performance evaluation system for district management boards and hunting clubs,
- Priorities for training of candidates, members, and professional staff, incorporating current social and environmental realities.

The Strategy also outlines directions for:

- Monitoring legal developments,
- Advancing legislative initiatives, and
- Defending the Association's principle of self-governance.

ACTION PLANS

This Strategy is designed to be strategic and concise in nature. Accordingly, detailed objectives and implementation measures across various dimensions of hunting will be developed, reviewed, and updated annually by relevant expert committees of the Supreme Hunting Council, in collaboration with the Scientific Commission of the Supreme Hunting Council.

These dimensions include:

- Cynology (hunting dog management),
- Shooting and archery,
- Training and education,
- Game population management,
- Habitat protection,
- Hunting culture and heritage,

- Natural resource monitoring,
- Intersectoral cooperation,
- Public engagement and promotion, and
- Mitigation of wildlife-related agricultural and forestry damage.

Association actively engages in international cooperation, fostering dialogue and the exchange of best practices with partner institutions abroad.



Photo by Adrian Czech



2. CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE OF THE ASSOCIATION

2.1. SWOT Analysis of the Association

The SWOT analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the Polish Hunting Association's position by identifying key factors in both the organizational context (strengths and weaknesses) and its external environment (opportunities and threats). This analysis is grounded in insights gathered through surveys, academic research, and discussions held during national hunting conferences. It is important to note that the sequence of items listed in each category does not indicate priority or relative importance.

STRENGTHS

- Well-established organizational structure with full national coverage at three levels (central, district, local)
- High levels of training and proficiency in the use of firearms among hunters
- Strong awareness of natural processes and ecological interdependencies within the hunting community
- Robust intellectual and scientific base (human resources) within the Association
- Well-developed internal communication and reporting systems
- Advanced knowledge and experience in game population management
- Established infrastructure and development potential of the Association's Research Station in Czempin, PL
- High standard of hunting culture, rooted in tradition
- Strong hunting identity and community spirit
- High-quality equipment among hunters, clubs, and districts (firearms, accessories, vehicles, hunting gear, buildings)
- Game Breeding Centers managed by the Association offer significant potential for breeding, research, training, public outreach, and bow hunting

WEAKNESSES

- Insufficient recruitment of young hunters (a high average age across the Association)
- Statistically low engagement of hunters in club and Association activities; weak cooperation between hunting clubs
- Inadequate support from district authorities for local clubs, and from the Main Board for district structures
- Inconsistent standards in basic and advanced (selective) hunter training
- Underdeveloped systems for training instructors, experts, and educators
- Lack of systematic monitoring and comprehensive bird population surveys by the Association
- Limited use of modern technologies for data collection and game population monitoring
- Underutilization of the research potential at the Association's Research Station in Czempin
- Internal divisions and conflicts within the Association, including lack of unity at central and local levels, also regarding an optimal model of hunting
- Absence of a coordinated strategy for promoting the concept and value of hunting
- Instances of unethical conduct among hunters
- Outdated educational and examination programs and materials
- Lack of a formal organizational structure at the provincial (voivodeship) level

OPPORTUNITIES

Expansion of EU programs focused on biodiversity conservation and agri-environmental initiatives (e.g., eco-schemes)

Opportunity to align and adapt to available funding schemes and formally include hunting organizations as eligible applicants

Growing public interest in healthy, sustainable food, creating potential for promoting venison

Increasing need for a systemic state-level approach to biodiversity protection for wildlife and habitats

Potential to reduce the burden on public finances by recognizing and leveraging the self-funded nature of hunting management

Rising levels of wildlife-related damage, including in urban areas, which may create demand for hunters' intervention and expertise (key role of hunters)

Possibility to enhance national resilience and public safety, including cooperation with the military, fire services, and police (e.g., in search and rescue operations)

THREATS

Politicization of hunting and erosion of the Association's self-governance

Activism by anti-hunting movements and the ideological framing of conservation policy

Escalation of eco-terrorism

Legal initiatives aiming to restrict or eliminate hunting

Uncontrolled urbanization reducing viable wildlife habitats

Legal and regulatory limitations (national and EU) shrinking hunting territories

Persistent negative stereotypes and lack of broad social acceptance of hunting

General public unawareness of sustainable hunting's role in biodiversity conservation

Absence of consistent state support for sustainable hunting as a public-interest service

Growing compensation liabilities for wildlife-related damages

Climate change impacts, including increasing water scarcity, affecting habitats and game species

2.2. Diagnosis of the Organization

The dynamic changes occurring in the broader hunting and environmental landscape demand a strategic response to ensure that the Polish Hunting Association maintains its position and continues to grow as a key stakeholder in the sustainable use of renewable natural resources.

Among the Association's greatest strengths are:

- Its nationwide reach,
- A stable and well-structured organizational model,
- A strong culture of discipline, and
- A vast pool of intellectual capital.

The true strength of the Association lies in its diverse membership, drawn from nearly every sector and stratum of society. In addition to farmers and foresters, the hunting community includes entrepreneurs, educators, scientists, civil servants, law enforcement officers, military personnel, legal professionals, and many others. The number of female hunters has now surpassed 5,000, contributing to a total membership of approximately 133,000 individuals who actively participate in the protection of Poland's native wildlife.

To provide context, compare these figures with other public institutions:

- The State Forests employ fewer than 26,000 individuals,
- The Polish Police employ about 100,000.



Polish Hunting Association

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Nevertheless, it is essential to rejuvenate the Association to ensure that new generations of hunters are equipped to continue the mission of wildlife conservation. This requires a nationwide promotional campaign to attract young candidates and introduce them to the values, traditions, and responsibilities of sustainable hunting.

Given that Poland is fully divided into existing hunting areas, and there are limited opportunities for newly established hunting clubs to lease a hunting area, the most effective path forward is to increase significantly the number of active members within existing clubs.

Consider the international context:

- In Poland, there is one hunter per 305 residents,
- In Germany, the ratio is 1:193,
- In France, it is 1:51.

NATIONAL-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

At the national level, the functioning of the Supreme Hunting Council, the Main Board, and the National Wildlife Conservation Officer must be based on mutual trust and professional cooperation. The overarching priorities should be:

- The welfare and well-being of nature,
- The development of sustainable Polish hunting, and
- The institutional development of the strength of the PZŁ.

Prolonged disputes over competencies—particularly between the Supreme Hunting Council and the National Wildlife Conservation Officer—have clearly weakened the organization. A core issue is the current practice whereby the minister of the environment appoints the National Wildlife Conservation Officer, a mechanism that may contribute to instability and undermine the Association's autonomy. Going forward, candidates for leadership roles in both the Supreme Hunting Council and the Main Board should be required to publicly affirm their commitment to cooperation and place the interests of the Association above personal or political considerations. Their actions must reflect a high degree of transparency, to rebuild and strengthen trust among all Association members and ensure greater cohesion within the Association.

As a general observation, it must be acknowledged that the problem-specific committees under the Supreme Hunting Council demonstrate insufficient levels of activity. With a few commendable exceptions, many of these committees contribute limited added value, raising questions about their overall effectiveness. To address this issue, greater emphasis must be placed on the selection of committee chairs. Priority should be given to individuals who demonstrate strong initiative, along with proven organizational competence and leadership skills.

VOIVODESHIP-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Modern hunting, as an integral part of nature conservation, requires appropriate support and cooperation at the voivodeship level. Following the administrative reform of the state and the establishment of 16 voivodeships, the current territorial structure of the Polish Hunting Association does not allow for effective collaboration with regional authorities such as the Marshal's Office, Regional Directorates for Environmental Protection, Regional Directorates of State Forests, Regional Nature Conservation Teams, Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centers, and agricultural chambers.

As part of efforts to restore self-governance within the Association, district hunting councils should be reestablished as a pilot initiative. Each council would elect one representative to serve on the provincial (voivodship) hunting council, which would function as a strategic partner to regional (voivodship) authorities and institutions.

DISTRICT LEVEL

Under current conditions, district boards and district wildlife conservation officers constitute the core management units of the Association at the regional level. Within this framework, issue-specific (problem-solving) committees attached to the district boards (ZO) should play a significant and strategic role.

These committees should support the boards by:

- Developing official policy positions,
- Creating model action plans for local hunting clubs, and
- Producing training and promotional materials tailored to the district's needs.

Each district should also maintain a list of qualified experts, who, in coordination with the district board, are authorized to publicly speak on key hunting-related topics—such as large and small game population management, hunting dog breeding (cynology), and marksmanship and shooting disciplines. These experienced hunters should provide ongoing advisory support to both national and district-level bodies of the Association. They should also be regularly appointed to represent the Association at meetings, consultations, and deliberations held by public authorities.

As previously noted, restoring district councils should be pursued as part of broader efforts to enhance regional governance and stakeholder engagement.

HUNTING CLUBS

Hunting clubs, as the primary organizational units of the Polish Hunting Association, are responsible for the management of game populations within leased hunting areas. According to the Articles of Association, clubs are also expected to initiate and implement projects in the field of environmental protection, with a particular focus on improving habitat conditions for game species. This important function requires systemic support from both district and national authorities. Clubs must be provided with the tools and institutional backing necessary to access financial assistance from national and EU funding mechanisms, particularly in the context of agri-environmental programs. To this end, legal amendments are needed to facilitate such initiatives, also on land not directly owned or leased by the clubs. Additionally, the Articles of Association include a provision enabling clubs to participate in the implementation of tasks commissioned by the minister for the environment, which could further support their involvement in public-interest environmental programs. Another critical area of club activity is the organization of theoretical and practical training for both members and prospective candidates. To ensure a consistent and high-quality training experience across the country, national authorities should develop a standardized framework that includes a training schedule, defined learning objectives, and approved instructional materials so that the training level and frequency may be unified nationwide.

A frequently voiced concern is the limited accessibility of club membership to new applicants. The unjustified rejection of applications for internships and membership contradicts the core mission of the Association—namely, to strengthen and sustain its role through membership growth and generational renewal. It appears that some club boards view their role narrowly, focusing primarily on securing hunting opportunities for current members. In this view, admitting new members is seen as a threat to existing privileges, particularly in terms of access to game.

Such a restrictive interpretation of the club's function runs counter to both the letter and spirit of the Articles of Association and applicable law. It is also a key contributor to the rising average age of the hunting community, which represents a significant threat to the long-term sustainability of the organization. Addressing this issue is essential. The future of the Polish Hunting Association depends on a vibrant, inclusive, and generationally balanced membership that embraces both conservation responsibilities and the broader cultural heritage of hunting.

2.3. Trends and Scenarios in the External Environment: Stakeholders

The successful implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Hunting in Poland 2030 is heavily influenced by the complex and evolving external environment in which hunting operates. As an integral component of Poland's nature conservation and biodiversity protection framework, hunting must adapt to and anticipate broader societal, environmental, and regulatory trends. Over the past half-century, humanity has witnessed unprecedented civilizational growth, accompanied by intensifying pressure on natural ecosystems—perhaps the most significant in Earth's history. In this context, the core principle of sustainable hunting remains the responsible fulfillment of present needs while safeguarding the rights and resources of future generations.

This vision demands:

- Organizational efficiency,
- Scientific integrity—decisions grounded in research, not ideology,
- Prudent management of natural resources, and
- Innovation and flexibility in addressing challenges and fulfilling public-interest tasks.

During the formulation of this Strategy, several critical external trends were identified as having significant implications for the future of hunting in Poland.

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The tangible effects of climate change, regardless of the degree of anthropogenic influence, necessitate a scientifically informed and adaptive approach to environmental protection and biodiversity conservation. The hunting sector must be actively engaged in climate adaptation efforts and contribute meaningfully to the sustainable restoration and protection of natural resources. Importantly, hunting organizations can help enhance the public perception of hunters through visible, community-driven environmental initiatives that demonstrate real, measurable impact. These may include:

- Planting mid-field trees and shrubs,
- Providing ecological education for children and youth,
- Upgrading the energy efficiency of buildings owned by the Association and local hunting clubs.

While such actions may appear modest on their own, their cumulative impact at the national level can significantly advance the Association's alignment with national and EU climate goals.

PARTNERSHIP FOR NATURE

The effective and sustainable use of natural resources today requires an integrated approach—one that reconciles often conflicting interests of various stakeholders with the overarching goal of conserving nature and its resources. Achieving this goal necessitates systemic cooperation between hunters (at the level of clubs, districts, and voivodships) and farmers, foresters, local communities, public authorities, and landowners, particularly those managing agricultural or forest lands as well as research institutions.

Although the opportunities for shaping environmental and nature conservation policies may appear limited for hunters—especially those without land ownership or lease rights—a great deal can still be accomplished through proactive, constructive engagement. By maintaining positive relations, offering expert input, formulating proposals, and supporting initiatives for nature protection, hunting organizations can firmly establish themselves in the public consciousness as reliable partners and highly effective managers of natural resources in a sustainable and cooperative manner.

National and district-level authorities should aim to integrate the Association into as many biodiversity-related activities as possible. The rich tradition of Polish hunting, long rooted in the principles of sustainable nature management, grants hunters not only the right but also the obligation to act as catalysts for maintaining ecological balance. This responsibility is underpinned by a deep understanding of natural processes—both theoretical and, more importantly, practical.

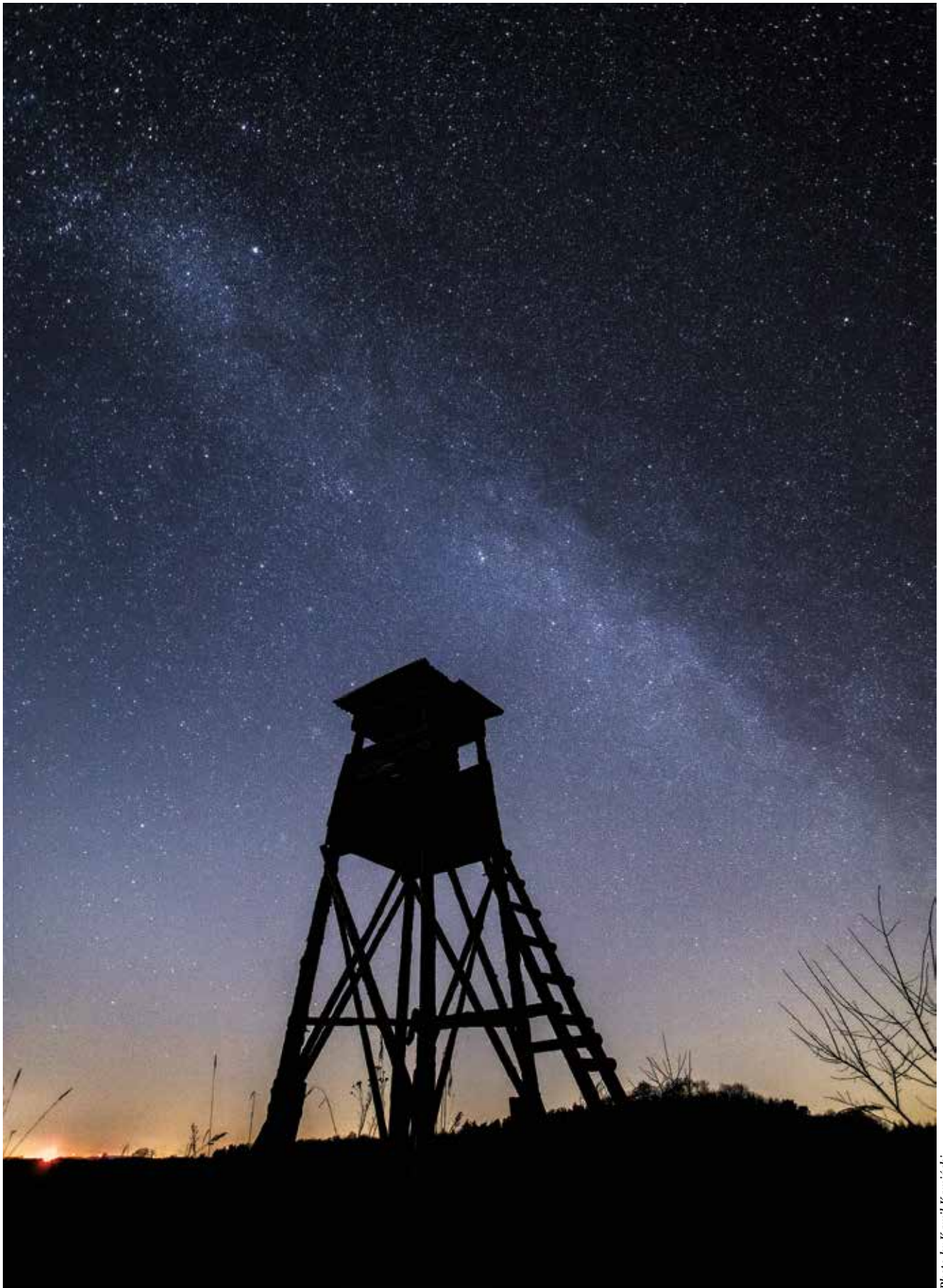


Photo by Kamil Kamiński

EXPANSION OF PROTECTED AREAS IN THE EU AND POLAND

From the perspective of the hunting community, one of the most significant emerging challenges is the implementation of the updated Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD Post-2020 Framework), originally adopted in 1992. The goals of this global framework have been further specified in the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which calls for the protection of 30% of national territory, with 10% under strict protection. It is important to underscore that the European Commission explicitly requires all Member States to make equivalent efforts in expanding area-based conservation, guided by objective ecological criteria. At the same time, the Commission acknowledges that each country's biodiversity profile—in terms of both quantity and quality—is distinct. A crucial aspect of this process is the difference between the EU's definition of "strict protection" and the one currently embedded in Poland's Nature Conservation Law. The EU framework defines strict protection as including:

- The preservation and restoration of biodiversity, and
- The promotion of natural ecological processes.

Importantly, human activity is not entirely excluded under EU rules. Certain types of non-disruptive intervention are permitted, such as:

- Scientific research,
- Disaster prevention (e.g., wildfire control),
- Management of invasive alien species, among others.

The successful implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy should take place with the active participation of hunting organizations. The Polish Hunting Association possesses the necessary organizational capacity, local reach, and scientific expertise to contribute at both national and regional levels, as well as to support the Main Board and the Supreme Hunting Council in shaping appropriate legislation. It is also critical to recognize that these conservation efforts will directly affect not only hunters, but also foresters and farmers, who are natural allies in the pursuit of sustainable land management.

Given the EU origins of these regulatory changes, the Association should intensify its collaboration with hunting organizations across Europe. To that end, the Association's leadership should initiate the creation of a joint working group on biodiversity strategy in partnership with:

- The State Forests,
- Agricultural associations, and
- Other relevant environmental stakeholders

This working group should prioritize the development of coherent and pragmatic guidelines for designating protected areas—balancing compliance with EU conservation objectives and the protection of the rights and livelihoods of hunters, foresters, and farmers. Thus, hunters should participate in the process of expanding protection into new areas. In a broader context, the group should also advocate for the protection of traditional rural practices, including:

- Hunting,
- Family farming,
- Pastoralism,
- Equestrian traditions, and
- Inland fisheries.

Furthermore, the Association must take an active role in consultations related to the establishment of higher forms of environmental protection (e.g., national parks), particularly when proposed by national or regional authorities. All such initiatives must be grounded in comprehensive assessments of their ecological, social, and economic implications.

ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The increasing public awareness of civic and environmental rights is leading to growing expectations toward institutions that shape the natural environment, including hunting organizations, the State Forests, and the agribusiness sector. In response, legislation continues to expand participatory mechanisms that enable

citizens to voice their opinions on matters such as forest management plans and zoning plans. In this evolving context, hunters, hunting clubs, and district-level bodies of the Polish Hunting Association must adopt a more proactive and structured approach to engagement with public administration. This includes:

- Ongoing collaboration with relevant authorities,
- Planned and consistent participation in consultations and meetings, and
- Providing formal, evidence-based positions on issues impacting sustainable hunting and wildlife management.

A special coordinating role in this process should be assigned to the issue-specific (problem) committees at the district level. These committees should operate based on annual work plans, with a clear mandate and a formal requirement to report on all activities and outcomes. This structure will ensure greater accountability, visibility, and policy alignment with the evolving expectations of both the public and administrative bodies.

PRESERVING THE RIGHTS OF HUNTERS

A critical factor influencing the modern system of nature conservation—and by extension, hunting—is the rise of ideologies that promote animal rights in ways often disconnected from natural science, particularly in the context of wild animals. The increasing humanization of wildlife, supported by the growth of animal studies (a field rooted in the humanities and social sciences), encourages the interpretation of animal behavior and needs through human concepts such as morality and ethical rights, rather than through ecological and biological principles. While efforts to improve animal welfare are unquestionably important and widely supported, there is a growing trend toward maximizing passive protection for free-ranging species—an approach that, if applied uncritically, may lead to serious ecological imbalances. Unregulated population increases among certain species can destabilize ecosystems, especially in landscapes already heavily modified by human activity.



Photo by Łukasz Placzynski

MEGATRENDS AFFECTING HUNTING AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Intensifying effects of climate change, including shifts in the range and behavior of animal populations

Increased competition for limited natural resources

Growing human pressure on ecosystems

Rising societal expectations placed on natural resource managers

Escalating conflicts among stakeholders using or managing natural resources

TRENDS IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURE CONSERVATION

Degradation of habitats and soils, including organic matter depletion, erosion, desertification, and pollution

Shifting conservation paradigms driven by technological innovation and new scientific methodologies

Increasing efforts to restrict hunting, often influenced by environmental movements grounded in ideologies disconnected from ecological science

The development of stricter legislation governing the use of natural resources

Ongoing biodiversity loss at the ecosystem, species, and genetic levels

Accelerated urbanization and uncontrolled development in ecologically valuable areas

Structural transformations in rural areas

An urgent need to enhance water retention in the landscape

Land-use changes necessitated by climate adaptation strategies

Expansion of national and EU-designated protected areas

Transformative shifts in forestry—from timber production to a focus on climate protection and biodiversity conservation

Increased pressure to intensify agriculture

Proliferation of large-scale monoculture farming, affecting landscape diversity and habitat quality

SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRENDS

Growing demand for land for infrastructure, housing, industrial, service, and recreational development

Social innovation influencing new patterns of production, consumption, and human-environment interactions

Ownership changes and consolidation of agricultural land

Expansion of participatory legislation, promoting local community involvement in environmental governance

Humanization of animals and the rise of animal studies, which frame animals through the lens of the humanities and social sciences—often challenging the role of natural science and promoting the idea of moral equivalence between animals and humans

Contrary to popular belief, modern ecosystems no longer self-regulate animal populations effectively due to widespread anthropogenic changes. The carrying capacity of natural environments is finite, and resources cannot expand indefinitely—a fact long modeled in ecological science, such as in the Verhulst population model. In this context, sustainable wildlife management becomes not only necessary but essential. For some adaptable species, close proximity to human settlements creates unprecedented opportunities for population growth. However, such unchecked expansion often comes at the expense of more vulnerable species, potentially driving them toward local extinction.

STAKEHOLDERS	ASSOCIATION'S ACTIVITIES
State Treasury	Establish a permanent working group in collaboration with the Minister responsible for the environment. This group will coordinate the Association's efforts to promote active nature conservation and efficient resource management, while ensuring these activities align with the interests of the State Treasury.
International hunting and environment conservation organizations and advisory bodies	<p>Ensure structured and sustained participation in international organizations and advisory bodies focused on hunting and conservation. Key activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for the inclusion of hunters as members or observers in relevant international forums. • Supporting initiatives that promote hunting interests in dialogue with EU institutions. • Strengthening cooperation with European hunting and conservation organizations to align efforts and share best practices.
Local and Regional Governments as well Non-Integrated Administration	<p>Initiate efforts to establish advisory bodies within the executive branches of voivodship self-governments (such as councils) tasked with providing guidance and support for activities related to sustainable hunting practices.</p> <p>Ensure the active participation of the Polish Hunting Association representatives in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing key local and regional policy documents concerning nature conservation, biodiversity, agricultural and forestry management. • Collaborating with local authorities to develop effective strategies for managing game populations in urbanized areas. • Encouraging members of hunting circles—supported by district boards—to regularly attend and contribute to meetings of municipal councils and their committees, particularly those addressing agricultural and environmental conservation matters. • Working toward the institutionalized inclusion of the Association's representatives in the Regional Conservation Councils, ensuring consistent and informed input on conservation policy.
Foresters	<p>Strengthen collaboration with the State Forests to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate efforts aimed at reducing damage to forest crops; • Develop mechanisms for ongoing cooperation and knowledge exchange with hunting management personnel in forest districts; • Collaborate on the designation of wildlife sanctuaries and the establishment of nature conservation areas (e.g., ecological sites); • Engage in joint research initiatives (e.g., within Game Breeding Centers); • Conduct shared educational and promotional activities to support sustainable forest and wildlife management. <p>Note: The State Forests Enterprise manages 77% of all forests in Poland (7.1 million hectares), which represent about 23% of the country's land area.</p>

Farmers	<p>Foster collaboration with agricultural organizations (such as Regional Agricultural Advisory Centers and chambers of agriculture) and village communities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigate crop damage caused by game species, • Initiate joint agri-environmental initiatives (e.g., mid-field shelterbelts, catch crops, crop rotation), • Engage in coordinated monitoring efforts and • Active participation in legislative processes.
National parks	<p>Collaborate to protect the park from game-related damage through the strict coordination of hunting management in hunting areas adjacent to the park, particularly within designated park buffer zones.</p>
Local communities	<p>Enhance public understanding of the vital role hunting management plays in supporting the sustainable development of wildlife populations. Key activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness about the risks posed by wild animals on roadways and assisting with appropriate road signage; • Conducting environmental education and awareness campaigns; • Providing support during emergencies and natural disasters; • Organizing blood donation drives and other community service initiatives.
Universities and scientists	<p>Engage in joint scientific research projects and foster cooperation with wildlife biologists to enhance understanding of game species. Key initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting data on wild animal populations using tools such as iMammalia-type applications; • Participating in scientific conferences; • Promoting the role of sustainable hunting within broader conservation systems through presentations and expert engagement.
The Parliament and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland	<p>Actively engage in the legislative process by initiating legal amendments that support sustainable hunting and active conservation. Key actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building coalitions of stakeholders to advocate for and implement proposed changes; • Maintaining ongoing collaboration with relevant departments within ministries and parliamentary committees.
Educational institutions	<p>Initiate and deliver educational programs for children and youth focused on nature conservation and ecology. Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing workshops for teachers to enhance environmental education skills; • Developing supporting materials for classroom use, such as handouts, lesson plans, and activity guidelines.
Nature lovers and Nature-related Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	<p>Cooperation in conducting research into wild animal populations and data collection; collaboration with NGOs in organizing scientific conferences; and education of NGO members in the fields of active nature conservation and ecology, including through volunteer programs.</p>
Media	<p>Develop and disseminate materials that highlight the values and traditions of Polish hunting. Key initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly updating the Polish Hunting Association's website to ensure clear, consistent communication of the mission and role of sustainable hunting in Poland; • Establishing a network of trained experts authorized to represent the Association and its regional branches (including at the provincial level); • Organizing study visits and workshops for journalists at the Polish Hunting Association's Research Station in Czempin and within Game Breeding Centers; • Conducting a comprehensive analysis of the media landscape—including print and digital platforms—and providing educational and substantive support to journalists from the most influential outlets; • Promoting the nutritional and cultural benefits of game-based diets as part of broader public outreach.

Police, national and voluntary fire services, veterinary inspection, military.	Cooperation in the development of effective methods for preventing accidents involving animals; collaboration with veterinary services to safeguard the welfare of wild animals and prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases; support in search and rescue operations; active participation in strengthening and maintaining the state's security and resilience systems; and the protection of the population from various threats.
Hunting services, hunting tourism, agritourism, hotels, weapons and equipment manufacturers, and automotive companies	Coordination of activities related to hunting at the district, commune, and municipal levels. Initiation of promotional campaigns for hunting in partnership with businesses serving hunters (partnership marketing). Development of model informational materials highlighting the traditions and mission of Polish hunting, with a strong emphasis on nature conservation as the guiding principle of responsible hunting practices.
Insurers (The Polish Social Insurance Institution (ZUS), insurance societies)	Cooperation in the exchange of data and experiences related to the consequences of accidents involving animals. Utilization of insurers' promotional channels to raise awareness about road safety and promote responsible hunting practices.

In this light, the role of hunters becomes both unique and indispensable. Their responsibilities in population regulation and game selection—through methods such as culling, trapping, and selective breeding—contribute directly to:

- Maintaining ecological balance,
- Protecting biodiversity, and
- Safeguarding the long-term sustainability of natural systems.

The Association must remain committed to defending the rights of hunters, which are increasingly being challenged by proposed legislative amendments at both the national and European Union levels. A key affirmation of these rights can be found in the 1979 Bern Convention, which serves as the foundation for the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity—a document also ratified by Poland. The Charter sets out a comprehensive set of principles and guidelines designed to ensure that hunting and hunting tourism in Europe are practiced sustainably, with the dual aim of:

- Preventing negative impacts on biodiversity, and
- Contributing to the conservation of species and their habitats, while also responding to the needs of society.

The Charter defines sustainable hunting as the use of game species and their habitats in a manner and at an intensity that does not result in long-term declines in biodiversity. This international framework reinforces the legitimacy of hunting as a responsible and regulated activity that aligns with broader environmental and societal goals.

Therefore, one may distinguish the following megatrends and trends affecting nature:

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

A central tenet of the Strategy is the active engagement of a broad range of stakeholders in the development of the hunting sector. Effectively leveraging the capabilities and resources of these actors in pursuit of strategic objectives requires a thorough preliminary analysis.

Stakeholders are diverse in their interests, capacities, and roles. This analysis aims to identify the potential contributions of each group and to align specific tasks and responsibilities accordingly. By understanding the distinct characteristics and motivations of each stakeholder, we can establish targeted, cooperative actions that support the successful implementation of the Strategy.



Photo by Szczepan Klejbut

Game species (thousands)	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Moose <i>Alces alces</i> (protected)	2,1	3,9	8,4	18,6	30,6	42,7
Red deer <i>Cervus elaphus</i>	117	141	180,2	214,4	276	240,9
Fallow deer <i>Dama dama</i>	9,1	13	23,3	28,3	29,3	26,8
Roe deer <i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	597	692	822	870,6	885,5	815,5
Wild boar <i>Sus scrofa</i>	118	174	249,9	264,8	75,2	54,9
Fox <i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	145	201	198,3	202,4	192,7	236
Hare <i>Lepus europaeus</i>	551	475	558,7	709,6	814,5	909,1
Pheasant <i>Phasianus ssp.</i>	264	333	462,9	521,4	525,8	522,9
Partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>	346	347	388,4	283,8	262,3	248,1

Selected game populations as of 10th March of the given year

Game species (thousands)	2000/01	2005/06	2010/11	2015/16	2020/21	2024/25
Red deer <i>Cervus elaphus</i>	41	41	54	89,3	102,8	92,5
Fallow deer <i>Dama dama</i>	1,7	3,3	6,4	9,6	10	7,9
Roe deer <i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	158	147	157	203,4	202,7	174
Wild boar <i>Sus scrofa</i>	93	138	226	342,1	249,1	160,4
Fox <i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	96	175	142	159,5	167	200,3
Hare <i>Lepus europaeus</i>	65	30	18	15,2	0,4	10,7
Pheasant <i>Phasianus ssp.</i>	95	102	147	128,5	88,7	63,2
Partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>	23	18	3,1	2,7	1,4	0,3

Selected game species harvest as of the given hunting season (1st April – 31 March)

2.4. Mission and Vision of the Association

Mission

As heirs to centuries of hunting tradition and ethos, we—Polish hunters—embrace our responsibility to society and future generations. We safeguard native wildlife and preserve biodiversity, actively supporting sustainable agriculture, forestry, and the well-being of local communities.

Vision

To be Poland's leading organization in active nature conservation, shaping the sustainable use of natural resources and promoting harmony between people and the environment.

People are the most vital element in determining the strength of the Association. While advanced technology and modern equipment—supported by sound organization and a well-designed operational strategy—are essential, they reach their full potential only in the hands of well-prepared, trained, and motivated personnel.

The unique nature of hunting, which ventures into the wilderness to protect and respect it in all its majesty, demands special attention to the selection, support, and continuous development of professional personnel. Every member of the Association is expected to uphold a set of shared values that unite the hunting community and inspire collective efforts for the good of nature.

The **Polish Hunting Association** has defined a core set of values that underpin our activities at every level of the organization:

- **Responsibility** – for both environmental conservation and the sustainable development of the Association
- **Commitment** – embracing challenges, striving for continuous improvement, and showing perseverance in achieving goals
- **Collaboration** – fostering cooperation among hunters and all authorized entities working to preserve natural resources
- **Integrity** – upholding ethical standards in both organizational and personal conduct
- **Selflessness** – prioritizing the well-being of nature and the Association above personal or material gain

The adherence to these values forms the foundation for evaluating the actions of individual hunters as well as the functioning of the Association's structures.



Archive of Hunting Club No. 60 „Sokół”, Kiszczkowo, Poland

3. STRATEGIC CHALLENGES, OBJECTIVES AND TASKS

3.1. Strategic Challenges and Objectives – Synthetic Overview

Sustainable development is the foundation of all actions outlined in or resulting from the Strategy. This means that the objectives of the Strategy are pursued with consideration for the aforementioned development principles, complemented by the rational use of resources, reduction of environmental pressure, adaptation to climate change, and support for the development of local communities. Below are the strategic challenges, their corresponding objectives, and the expected outcomes – both for hunting and the Association itself.

Challenges for Hunting	Strategic Objectives by 2030	Expected Outcome for Hunting and the Association
1. PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES		
Preserving biodiversity, managing populations of wild animals, and protecting their habitats	Active conservation of fauna through regulation of game and predator populations, habitat conservation, conducting research, and supporting agri-environmental initiatives – in accordance with the principles of rational ecology	Legal, social, and organizational conditions for hunting that enable the implementation of a broad and effective range of actions to preserve biodiversity of wild animals and protect their habitats
2. COOPERATION		
Significant improvement in cooperation with external stakeholders for nature conservation and support of hunting, taking into account social needs	Establishment of lasting mechanisms for initiating and maintaining cooperation and exchanging views with agricultural organizations, State Forests, national and international hunting organizations; entities involved in nature conservation, social development, and safety; schools, universities, research institutions, and public administration at various levels	The Polish Hunting Association as a leading opinion-forming organization in the areas of environmental protection, nature conservation, and biodiversity preservation; creating conditions for shaping viewpoints, initiating joint actions, supporting programs involving as many stakeholders as possible, supporting local communities, and strengthening state resilience in the field of security
3. IMAGE (THROUGH EFFECTIVE WORK FOR NATURE AND SOCIETY)		
Improvement of hunting's image in society through diligent and systematic work	Convincing the majority of society that hunting is a necessary and unique form of active nature conservation, without which rapid destabilization of ecosystem balance would occur	The Polish Hunting Association is a hunting organization perceived as the only credible entity capable, in cooperation with other stakeholders, of implementing systematic and effective active nature conservation; The Polish Hunting Association conducts continuous promotion and educational activities directed at all age groups of society, with particular focus on children and youth
4. LEADERSHIP AND MOTIVATION		
Effective management of the organization at all levels, enabling optimal use of potential and motivation of all Association members	Intensification of activities and motivation techniques for members of the Association, allowing for effective implementation of adopted objectives	The Polish Hunting Association as a model organization in the country, efficiently managed according to leadership principles, systematically and effectively accomplishing its tasks in all areas of activity, fully utilizing its potential and motivating its members

COOPERATION IN AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The achievement of all the objectives listed above requires collaboration with external entities—hence it should be approached in an interdisciplinary manner. Organized cooperation at the communal, municipal, regional, national, and international levels ensures the full potential can be leveraged for the protection and management of natural resources. The synergy effect will also significantly reduce the costs of achieving the established goals.

At the municipal, communal and poviát levels, hunting clubs should maintain ongoing cooperation with farmers and their organizations, foresters, fishermen, beekeepers, neighboring hunting clubs, municipal and communal authorities, local businesses, schools, and care institutions. Hunters should regularly participate in municipal and communal authority activities to safeguard their interests and reputation. The signed agreement with the Territorial Defense Forces Command enables mutual exchange of experiences and training that can be applied in hunting (e.g., radio communication, marksmanship training).

At the regional (voivodeship) level, the Association should cooperate with all available public administration bodies operating in the fields of environmental and nature protection, safety, and spatial planning management. Cooperation should also be expanded with bodies such as the Regional Directorates for Environmental Protection, Regional Council for Nature Protection, Regional Directorates of State Forests, etc. Equally important is collaboration with agricultural organizations (e.g., Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centers, agricultural chambers, agricultural research institutes).

At the national level, including through permanent committees at the Supreme Hunting Council, active cooperation should be maintained with national authorities and bodies operating in the fields of nature and environmental protection, safety, and crisis management. The Supreme Hunting Council and the Main Board play a special role in sustaining various forms of cooperation with international and European organizations, as well as hunting organizations in other countries. This cooperation should lead to the acquisition of top-tier knowledge that enables effective management of the Association and the achievement of strategic goals.

Through its scientific and research activities and the acquisition of unique, interdisciplinary knowledge, the Association should attain the status of a leading organization in Poland responsible for active nature protection, capable of significantly influencing the sustainable use of its resources. In this way, the Polish Hunting Association and hunters will be treated as credible stakeholders and partners by government authorities responsible for achieving nature conservation and sustainable development objectives both nationally and internationally.

Selected entities cooperating with the Polish Hunting Association at the national and international level

NATIONAL PARTNERS:

KRIR – Krajowa Rada Izby Rolniczych (National Council of Agricultural Chambers)
Lasy Państwowe – State Forests
GDOŚ – General Directorate for Environmental Protection
CDR – Centrum Doradztwa Rolniczego w Brwinowie (Agricultural Advisory Center in Brwinów)
Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska – Ministry of Climate and Environment

INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN PARTNERS:

CIC – International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation
ELO – European Landowners' Organization
IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature
AEWA – Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds
FACE – Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (Hunters of Europe)
Intergroup on Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside – European Parliament's intergroup
FNC – Fédération Nationale des Chasseurs (National Federation of Hunters, France)
DJV – Deutscher Jagdverband (German Hunting Association)
GWCT – Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust

3.2. Overarching Principles of Sustainable Hunting – The Decalogue of The Righteous Hunter

The first honorable privilege and duty of a hunter is personal involvement in the active conservation of game and the management of hunting grounds, strict adherence to legal norms and hunting ethics, and full compliance with organizational discipline. Being a hunter is a source of pride and at the same time a unique responsibility toward nature and society.

THE DECALOGUE OF THE RIGHTEOUS HUNTER
VALUES
The fundamental values for hunters are responsibility, commitment, cooperation, honesty, and selflessness.
CARE FOR NATURE
A hunter takes care of the well-being of native nature with full commitment and responsibility, ensuring its preservation for future generations.
TREATMENT OF ANIMALS
A hunter is aware that animals, as living beings, are capable of feeling pain; therefore, they always treat animals humanely, maintaining the highest ethical standards.
NATURE AS PRIORITY
A hunter prioritizes the well-being of nature, without seeking material gain or personal gratification from hunting.
LAW AND ETHICS COMPLIANCE
A hunter diligently ensures compliance with the law, safety rules, and ethics, while also caring for the preservation of hunting cultural heritage.
UNDERSTANDING OTHERS
A hunter respects the rights of those who do not wish to see hunting or animals in the ritual of counting killed animals (in Polish called pokot).
COMMUNITY SUPPORT
A hunter is sensitive to the issues faced by local communities and those engaged in forestry, agriculture, or fishing, and actively offers help in times of crisis.
COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE
A hunter willingly cooperates and shows respect to all who work for the benefit of nature and fosters an atmosphere of mutual kindness, especially in organizational life and during hunts.
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
A hunter continuously improves their knowledge of nature and skills, promotes hunting and its traditions, and safeguards the reputation of the Association.
IMAGE AND CONDUCT
A hunter takes care of their appearance and attire and behaves in a manner that inspires kindness, respect, and admiration.

3.3. GOAL 1: The Natural Dimension – Preserving Biodiversity and Protecting Habitats

CIVILIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT VS. NATURE

In the hierarchy of hunting objectives, the protection and preservation of biological diversity and the safeguarding of habitats occupy a top position. A common societal belief has developed that the best way to protect natural assets is to leave them untouched, suggesting that nature is best equipped to regulate itself. Unfortunately, due to significant human interference in the natural environment—through excessive exploitation of resources, urban and rural development, road construction, factories, shopping centers, sports and recreational facilities, tourism, and many other activities—landscapes untouched by humans have practically ceased to exist. This means that nature can no longer maintain its balance on its own, and passive conservation is no longer sufficient to yield the desired outcomes.

While civilizational development serves human needs, it increasingly impacts the natural world negatively. Hunting is a type of activity that counters this trend—through active conservation of animals (not only game species) and the restoration of their habitats.



POPULATION MANAGEMENT

From a nature conservation perspective, managing wild animal populations is a key factor in stabilizing interspecies balance. Hunters are authorized to reduce wild animal numbers through regulated sustainable hunting. Population management is a complex process rooted in ecology, law, and ethics, which ensures proper development of animal populations and mitigates conflicts caused by wildlife (e.g., exerting pressure on other species, crop damage, transmission of diseases by animals).

HUNTING AS ACTIVE NATURE CONSERVATION

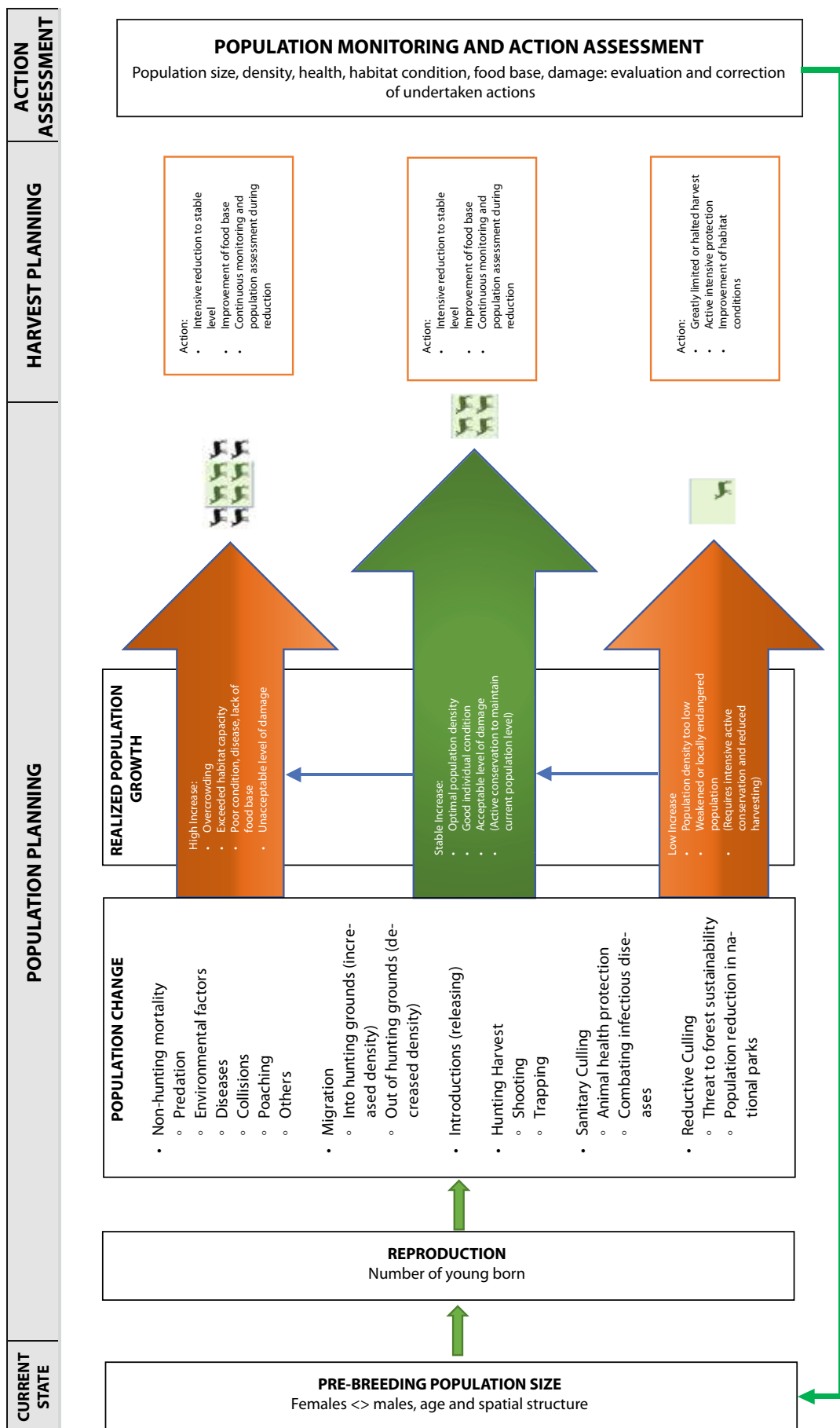
In this context, hunting plays a unique and irreplaceable role. At the intersection of nature conservation systems and forestry, agriculture, and fisheries, the Polish Hunting Association has been effectively working for over a hundred years to preserve animal diversity and shape the natural environment.

One of the most spectacular examples is the initiative by Polish hunters concerning the protection of ... species such as the European bison *Bison bonasus*, bear *Ursus arctos*, and beaver *Castor fiber*, as well as capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus* and black grouse *Lyrurus tetrix*. Additionally, the populations of hare *Lepus europaeus* and grey partridge *Perdix perdix* have been strengthened by introducing new individuals into hunting grounds.

Polish falconers — members of the Polish Hunting Association Falconers' Guild — have achieved a major success with the reintroduction of the peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus*, which had nearly vanished as a breeding species in Poland.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• predator reduction• game populations reduction• fencing of crops• buffer strips and food plots• designation of refuges• ecological corridors• breeding• construction of nesting sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• mid-field tree plantings• species monitoring• species reintroduction• raising awareness• population supplementation• scientific research• prevention of plant succession |
|--|--|

Selected Active Forms of Nature Conservation in Hunting



“Simplified scheme of game population management” prepared by Szymon Hatlas

Ongoing research clearly confirms that hunting is not a factor causing a dynamic decline in animal populations. This is due to the simple fact that game management is carried out based on principles and methods of sustainable species management, as well as annual inventories that allow for the adjustment of actions.

In the past decade, both in Poland and neighboring countries, there has been a dynamic increase in the populations of predators—both avian and large mammals (e.g. the wolf *Canis lupus*). The issue of a potential reduction in the wolf population has already been raised at the EU level. From the perspective of the Polish Hunting Association, such actions should be based on monitoring wolf numbers in individual regions and implementing regional (zonal) population management, guided by a simple principle: in areas where the population is overabundant and the resulting damage or risks to humans exceed acceptable levels, planned population reduction should be carried out.

The Association has a team of outstanding experts who should participate in an expert group tasked with managing this predator’s population. For similar reasons, population management strategies should also be considered for the beaver *Castor fiber* and the cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*.

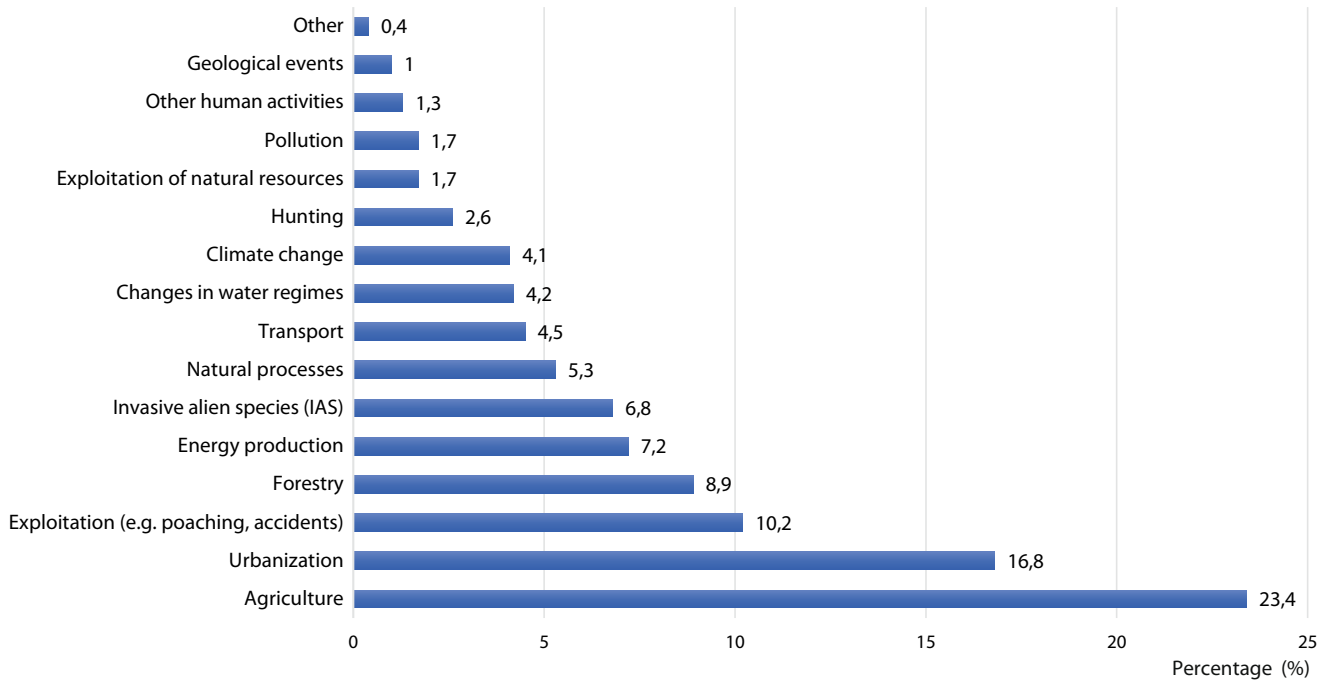
Furthermore, serious consideration should be given to lifting the protective moratorium on the moose *Alces alces*, as its population has reached historically unprecedented levels in Poland. The extent of damage to crops and the increasing number of vehicle collisions involving moose are approaching levels that are socially and economically unacceptable—at least from a local and regional perspective..

GAME BIRDS

One of the socially controversial topics is the inclusion of thirteen bird species on Poland’s list of game animals. (By comparison, in France, the list of game species includes 87 species, mostly birds—including 38 species of waterfowl (Anseriformes) alone—with four bird species under protective moratoria.)

Conservation organizations claim that hunting is responsible for the decline of many bird species, such as the eurasian coot *Fulica atra*. Such views should be rejected, as they are not supported by scientific research or by population inventories conducted by entities outside the hunting community.

According to reports compiled by EU member states, hunting has no significant impact on the IUCN conservation status of bird species, accounting for only 2.6% of all factors affecting bird populations. Far greater pressure is exerted by factors such as urbanization (including outdoor recreation) , accounting for 16.8% and invasive species, accounting for 6.8%.



Factors Negatively Affecting Bird Populations (%) Enumerated in The Bird Directive According To Reports of Eu Member States For The Years 2013–2018

GAME SPECIES IN POLAND		APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
Moose <i>Alces alces</i>	all-year protected												
Red deer <i>Cervus elaphus</i>	stags 3 year or older*					21							
	stags 2 years old*												
	hinds*										15		
	calves*												
Fallowdeer <i>Dama dama</i>	stags*												
	hinds*										15		
	calves*												
Roe deer <i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	bucks		11										
	does and kids										15		
Wild boar <i>Sus scrofa</i>													
European mouflon <i>Ovis aries musimon</i>	rams												
	ewes and lambs										15		
Red fox <i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	***												
Eurasian badger <i>Meles meles</i>	**												
Pine marten <i>Martes martes</i>	**												
Stone marten <i>Martes toina</i>	**												
European polecat <i>Mustela putorius</i>	**												
American mink <i>Mustela vison</i>													
Brown hare <i>Lepus europaeus</i>													
European rabbit <i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>													
Hazel grouse <i>Tetrastes bonasia</i>													
Pheasant <i>Phasianus</i> ssp.	cocks												
	hens (breeding centers only)												
Grey partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>							11	21					
Greylag goose <i>Anser anser</i>										21			
Bean goose <i>Anser fabalis</i>										21			
Greaterwhite-fronted goose <i>Anser albifrons</i>										21			
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>													
Common teal <i>Anas crecca</i>													
Common pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>													
Tufted duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>													
Eurasian coot <i>Fulica atra</i>													
Common wood pigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>						15							
Golden jackal <i>Canis aureus</i>	***												

■ - game hunting season (white number - day of the month showing start or end of a season)

* hunting season may differ in some Western Poland voivodships

** all-year hunting in the areas with present capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*)/black grouse (*Lyrurus tetrix*)

*** the same as for „**” or where hare, pheasant, partridge reintroductions took place (all-year hunting)

In addition to EU regulations, Poland maintains a list of invasive alien species which are subject to a different legal regime and are not considered game animals. The list includes i.a. raccoon dog *Nyctereutes procyonoides*, common raccoon *Procyon lotor*, muskrat *Ondatra zibethicus*, coypu *Myocastor coypus*, American beaver *Castor canadensis*, and Egyptian goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*.



Photo by Szymon Hartas



Photo by Szymon Hadas

Any potential changes to the list of game birds should be consulted with FACE and CIC, and must be backed by objective scientific evidence derived from ecological studies.

WHY A BAN ON BIRD HUNTING WOULD BE UNFAVORABLE FOR GAME BIRDS AND OTHER SPECIES

- 10 out of 13 game bird species are migratory species, whose Polish populations represent only a small fraction of the European population; similarly, the harvest of birds in Poland (0.2 million individuals) represents only 0.38% of the harvest in the EU (52 million individuals) – therefore, a potential hunting ban would not affect the overall population status, and their management should take place at the European level;
- Hunting pressure accounts for only 2.6% of the negative factors affecting bird populations in the EU (for comparison: agriculture accounts for 23.4%, and urbanization for 16.8%);
- Research in Poland has shown that the greatest declines in bird numbers are caused by predation during the breeding season. Therefore, hunters carry out continuous predator control and engage in many active conservation efforts (together with foresters), which significantly increase breeding success, e.g.: installation of nesting baskets, reintroduction, creation of mid-field shelters, supplementary feeding;
- Removing wetland species from the list of game animals would mean that hunters would no longer be legally obligated to protect their habitats, and thus would lose motivation for such activities. This could lead to the expansion of predator populations and regression of bird populations; game bird species are umbrella species, so conservation actions by hunters benefit other species (birds, small mammals, amphibians, insects), thus contributing to broader biodiversity. Additionally, keeping species on the game list allows for population management both through hunting and through habitat protection by hunters.

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

One of the most significant factors negatively affecting the abundance of native animal species is the biological invasion of alien species—referred to legally as Invasive Alien Species (IAS)—which have entered ecosystems as a result of human activity. In other words, the species have been displaced beyond their natural range.

The greatest ecological impact of IAS is their disruption of food webs, primarily through predation on native species, which leads to a sharp decline in their populations. In many cases, IAS also exert competitive pressure, displacing native species from their natural habitats. Additionally, invasive species often carry foreign parasites and pathogens, to which native species have no immunity. Some, like the sika deer *Cervus nippon*, can also interbreed with native species such as the red deer *Cervus elaphus*, further threatening genetic integrity. Undoubtedly, IAS contribute to the degradation of species diversity, contradicting national environmental policies and the mission of the Hunting Association.

To mitigate these ecological threats, it is essential to simplify procedures for eliminating alien species from hunting grounds. The current process, which requires reporting the presence of IAS to municipal and commune authorities, is impractical and unjustified. The fundamental ecological principle should be the unconditional removal of IAS from ecosystems. Moreover, legal ambiguities create the risk that hunters, when taking corrective action against IAS, could inadvertently violate regulations—potentially resulting in the loss of their hunting license.

Another urgent task for the Polish Hunting Association's leadership is to establish and regularly update the official list of invasive alien species, such as the American mink *Neogale vison* and simplify legal provisions regulating the elimination of IAS from environment by hunters.

MANDATORY HUNTER PARTICIPATION IN NATURE MONITORING

Nature monitoring (including by hunters) involves the regular observation and recording of selected components of the natural environment (species of animals and plants, habitats, and other important elements of nature). It is also essential to update and improve these activities. A requirement should be introduced for

detailed reporting by gamekeepers/hunters, including the mandatory use of a special application for game species monitoring (e.g. Wing Collector) to record observations and harvests.

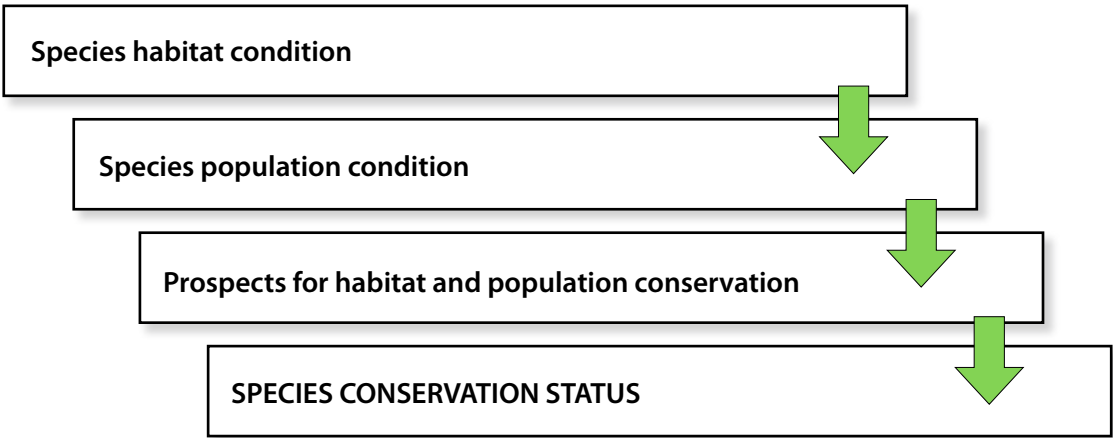
The collected data form the basis for protective measures, assessment of trends, and detection of negative changes through coordinated national and EU-level monitoring. All of this is necessary to properly evaluate the status of hunted species, as well as other species and habitats of interest, and to guide future protection efforts.

Monitoring carried out by the Environmental Protection Inspectorate should cover all types of natural habitats and species of animals and plants occurring in Poland that are listed in the annexes to the Habitats Directive. From the perspective of the needs of Polish nature protection, including hunting, the scope of monitoring should be even broader and include habitats and species from the Birds Directive annexes (e.g., invasive species).

It should be emphasized that, in accordance with Poland’s obligations under the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, there is an obligation to undertake activities such as:

- active assistance in monitoring populations of animals through research;
- regulating populations of game species (in cooperation with other stakeholders);
- habitat conservation;
- raising public awareness regarding environmental protection and conservation.

The direct goal of nature monitoring is to determine the conservation status of a species in order to take appropriate protective measures—both passive (legal) and active. A diagram of this approach is presented below:



All forms of hunting are based on the principles of sustainable development—ecologically, economically, and socio-culturally. Under these conditions, independently collected and assessed data should serve the Polish Hunting Association as a foundation for decision-making and promote the Association as a leading organization engaged in active protection of natural resources. The national research base allows for high-quality nature monitoring on a scale that other organizations cannot match.

The Association’s Research Station in Czempin has extensive experience in research activities and should play a key role in resuming comprehensive studies necessary for hunting practice. Research, based on national and local monitoring, in cooperation with other scientific institutions, should primarily cover game species and selected protected species, including birds, predation pressure (including from introduced species like raccoons *Procyon*), and the impact of alien invasive species on ecosystems. It is necessary to continue studies enabling the evaluation of the effectiveness of game management measures, especially in the area of selective game species management. The Research Station should also resume the organization of courses and training sessions for hunting instructors and educators. Direct support for these activities should be provided by the Main Board of the Association.

HABITAT PROTECTION

Observed climate changes affecting habitat condition call for a shift in the focus of active nature conservation efforts. It is recommended to move away from traditional forms of game feeding (in mild winters) Means should also be directed toward the purchase of nursery material for afforestation, nesting boxes, or brood shelters, the purchase of devices for active nature monitoring (such as camera traps (trail cameras), bird rings, thermal imagers). This will also allow for greater integration of hunters, farmers, members of other organizations, and local communities. Habitat protection, as an effort to improve the living conditions of game animals, is one of the most important tasks of game management. The beneficiaries of these activities are not only game species, which serve as umbrella species, but equally protected species.

In light of the evolution of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy and the development of agri-environmental programs (such as establishing mid-field tree plantings), the Association should become an initiator of nationwide afforestation efforts. Active measures should be taken to adapt available support programs and to enable hunting clubs to apply for funding—not only for lands they own, but also for private lands and those owned by the State Treasury or local governments. This requires cooperation with agricultural and forestry organizations to adapt legal frameworks; however, introducing these changes may significantly improve the habitat conditions for wild animals.

The Main Board should adopt an action plan for implementing agri-environmental activities by hunting clubs.

The Association should also make efforts to adjust the size of game management districts—specifically by reducing them—to align with the original assumptions behind their establishment. These districts, intended for big game management, consist of grouped hunting grounds where local populations have their natural habitats. It shall be in line with the original assumptions behind the concept of creating the districts—namely, that they should cover the year-round home ranges of local game populations, with their boundaries defined taking into account forest complexes and natural animal migration corridors. This will enable more effective protection of both habitats and wild animal populations. A supporting action for habitat protection should be the designation of ecological corridors and the prevention of uncontrolled new rural development along roads.

ASSOCIATION'S GAME BREEDING CENTERS

Game Breeding Centers are units obligated to fulfill specific statutory objectives and manage hunting grounds excluded from leasing (the Association has 51 areas and 28 Game Breeding Centers; the State Forests manage 205 hunting grounds with 141 Game Breeding Centers—in total, just under 8% of Poland's hunting ground is designated as Game Breeding Centers).

What distinguishes Game Breeding Centers from hunting clubs is that, in addition to hunting, they are legally required to carry out special statutory tasks such as model wildlife management, scientific research, restoration of declining species populations (e.g., capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*), breeding native game species for the purpose of releasing them into hunting grounds (e.g., hare *Lepus europaeus*, partridge *Perdix perdix*), and conducting training in hunting practices.

An undeniable achievement of Game Breeding Centers is their contribution to elevating hunting culture through the organization of commercial hunts with traditional settings and high organizational standards, which have become a model for hunting clubs.

Additionally, frequent contact with foreign hunters allows for the exchange of experiences, good practices, and a more conscious development of a hunting identity.

In some cases, the potential of Game Breeding Centers is not fully utilized, and the implementation of statutory objectives may be uneven. Therefore, an urgent review of all Association's Game Breeding Centers should be conducted, and based on it, a policy should be adopted to systematically implement activities aimed at fulfilling all statutory goals, expanded to include mandatory educational and promotional efforts for hunting.

Legal authorization to conduct bow hunting could represent a significant opportunity for the development of Game Breeding Centers. Bowhunting is a niche that could become a development driver for the centers by enabling professionally organized hunts for both Polish and foreign hunters. Currently, Polish bowhunters are forced to hunt abroad.

The Association’s policy should consider the local context and the individual strengths of each Game Breeding Center. In terms of research, every Game Breeding Center should develop cooperation with universities and vocational secondary schools (e.g., for supervising master’s theses, bachelor’s projects, or course papers) as well as research institutions to support the research objectives of the Association.

Direct support in defining research directions and methodologies should be provided by the Association’s Research Station, in cooperation with the Scientific Committee of the Supreme Hunting Council and District Boards.

3.4. OBJECTIVE 2: Economic Dimension – Lasting Cooperation for Nature Conservation and Wildlife Population Management

Voluntary efforts to prevent and mitigate damage to agricultural and forest crops are among the core responsibilities of hunters. Thanks to the active involvement of hunters and their significant time commitment, losses in agricultural and forestry production are substantially reduced.

Additionally, the damage assessment process is carried out free of charge by members of the Polish Hunting Association, in cooperation with agricultural organizations. The Association also covers the cost of compensation payments related to wildlife damage.

POLISH HUNTING ASSOCIATION – NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

- 133 000 hunters in 2600 hunting clubs
- 9.1 million hours of voluntary work annually
- 1 billion PLN – annual value of hunters’ contribution to nature conservation
- 500 million PLN – annual value of voluntary work
- 105 million PLN – wildlife damage compensation paid by the Polish Hunting Association in 2021

In 2021 alone, the Polish Hunting Association paid out over 105 million PLN in compensation. The total annual value of hunters’ voluntary work for nature conservation—including the prevented damage to crops and compensation paid to farmers—is estimated at over 1 billion PLN.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Costs of Forest Protection Against Wildlife Damage (in Million pln)	145,1	136,1	157,2	154,5	167,7	191,5	174,8	164,1	167,3	214,7
Including:										
New crop fencing (including preventive fencing)	87,0	78,0	95,1	90,5	98,3	111,6	97,6	93,6	89,4	110,7
Dismantling of crop fences	13,1	15,9	17,4	17,6	18,9	26,4	26,0	27,2	32,8	41,4
Fence maintenance	11,3	11,1	11,6	11,7	14,7	14,9	15,6	12,6	12,4	19,1
Chemical protection (repellents)	22,6	21,2	23,6	25,1	26,4	27,6	26,6	23,3	25,1	34,5
Mechanical protection (barriers)	9,6	7,4	8,4	8,9	8,6	8,6	6,2	4,8	5,2	7,2

Costs of forest protection against wildlife damage. Source: General Directorate of State Forests



This represents a significant saving for the state budget, which can be redirected to other critical areas such as healthcare or education. Preventing agricultural damage is a tangible contribution to national food security, directly impacting the country's resilience to disruptions in food supply chains.

Hunters' efforts in preventing forest damage also help forest districts reduce their expenditures on wildlife-related damage control. In 2022 alone, these costs amounted to nearly 215 million PLN.

The significance of hunting in supporting forest protection can also be considered in the context of ensuring a greater supply of wood for the timber industry. This important sector includes a wide range of activities such as sawmills, wood-based panel production, furniture manufacturing, flooring, construction, and wooden packaging. In Poland, the timber industry directly employs 330,000 people and accounts for nearly 10% of the EU's timber exports.

DISEASE CONTROL

In recent years, a new chapter has emerged in the history of Polish hunting, marked by unprecedented efforts to combat infectious animal diseases. African Swine Fever (ASF) is a rapidly spreading viral disease that affects both domestic pigs and wild boar *Sus scrofa*. When ASF enters a herd, it causes significant production losses: infection spreads slowly but affects a large proportion of the animals, with mortality rates reaching up to 100%.

The importance of combating this disease is highlighted by the fact that in 2022, the pig population in Poland exceeded 9.6 million, and the average annual pork consumption per person is several dozen kilograms.

Given the experience gained from reducing wild boar populations as part of ASF prevention efforts, the Main Board and District Boards should run ongoing information and education campaigns focused on disease control. Continuous cooperation is also needed with veterinary services (obliged by law to combat animal disease), the Ministry of Agriculture, local authorities, farmers, and other stakeholders involved in pre-

venting and combating ASF outbreaks. This collaboration will help develop best practices for more effective disease prevention in the future.

HUNTERS AS CONSUMERS

Hunting is a significant component of the national economy. Beyond generating revenue from game meat sales, preventing damage, paying compensation, and employing workers for field operations, hunters are also consumers of a wide range of goods and services, supporting many professional sectors.

These include manufacturers of clothing, footwear, firearms, ammunition, optical equipment, vehicles, and cold storage units for carcasses. Additionally, tourism operators, agritourism farms, hotels, and restaurants can generate steady income from hunting-related activities.

The Main Board and District Boards should take steps to coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders in hunting tourism and to collaborate with suppliers of hunting-related goods and services. This includes creating platforms for cooperation, organizing joint meetings, and providing opportunities for all parties to better pursue their goals.

These stakeholders have a vested interest in the continued development of hunting in Poland, as it contributes to job creation and economic revenue.

3.5. OBJECTIVE 3: Social Dimension – A Positive Image – Serving Nature and Society

The strength of the Association does not come from ad hoc actions, but from diligent everyday work and organization.

An organization's public image is a value that cannot be precisely measured in financial terms. Growing public expectations and the increasing influence of social factors on legislation and access to financial resources mean that reputation management is a key condition for the development of any organization.

People expect the Hunting Association to be socially responsible, acting in accordance with ethical principles, ecological values, and a spirit of cooperation.

Undoubtedly, the most challenging reputational issue hunters face is the killing of animals as part of wildlife population management. The stereotype of hunters as individuals who kill innocent animals as their primary—or sole—activity easily stirs emotions in society, often leading to public disapproval. Such an emotional and reductive approach to perceiving hunting, the lack of ecological knowledge in society, and the passive attitude of hunters themselves form the basis for all attacks by organizations that form the so-called anti-hunting movement.

The Association should develop a set of factual arguments for hunters that can be used in all types of discussions and should launch a comprehensive and well-structured campaign that presents the full scope of benefits hunting provides to nature, society, and the economy.

For objective reasons, wild animals cannot be protected in the same way as domestic or farm animals. Hunters strive to protect nature by respecting ecological processes, relying on scientific research, and adhering to ethical standards.

In 2022, the Polish Hunting Association was honored with the "Symbol of Social Responsibility" award—granted to distinguished institutions performing valuable work for the benefit of all citizens and contributing to the development of Poland. Such recognition should inspire hunters to intensify their efforts. Only organized, long-term work—often unseen by the public—can bring real results in terms of fulfilling the goals set by hunters. Moreover, only such outcomes are worthy of promotion.

All attacks on hunters that may violate applicable law should be met with a firm response from hunters, using available legal means and with active support from the Association at both the national (Main Board) and regional (district boards) levels.

COOPERATION TO IMPROVE PUBLIC ACCESS TO FOREST ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (FOREST PROTECTION)

Nature provides people with a wide range of benefits, known as ecosystem services. These may include natural products and functions—such as water and air purification, oxygen production, and recreation areas—from which society benefits. In the context of hunting, forest ecosystem services are particularly significant.

These include:

- timber supply (for furniture, fuel, and construction),
- wild berry and mushroom foraging,
- game harvesting (hunting and wild meat),
- erosion reduction,
- water retention,
- carbon sequestration, and
- air purification.

On the cultural side, forest ecosystem services also encompass:

- recreation opportunities,
- biodiversity and cultural value preservation,
- nature education, and
- scientific research.

Sustainable hunting not only ensures continued access to these services, but also actively enhances ecosystem capacity—meaning more people can benefit from ecosystem outputs such as wood or recreational spaces.

Wildlife management, especially the regulation of animal populations and habitat conservation, supports forestry by reducing damage to forest crops, helping maintain high-quality forests for public benefit.

Increasing public awareness of ecosystem services can foster a better understanding of nature conservation efforts and the shared responsibility every citizen has in this area.

The Association should use its intellectual and organizational resources to actively collaborate with the State Forests in creating recreation areas, designating wildlife refuges, promoting nature education, and publicizing the conservation work of hunters.



“Forest Inhabitants” Program
Classes at Municipal Kindergarten
No. 5 in Kraśnik

PROMOTING NATURE KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The launch of educational efforts for children and youth is a highly welcomed initiative. Programs such as:

- “Forest Inhabitants” (for preschools),
- “Year-Round Nature Connection” (for primary schools), and
- “Wild Lessons – A Shared Adventure in Nature and Hunting” (for secondary schools) represent important steps toward building public awareness around hunting. These programs are especially valuable as they supplement environmental education for the younger generation, who will one day take responsibility for Poland’s natural heritage.

The Education Commission of the Supreme Hunting Council and the ecological education centers of the Association should expand these programs by developing lesson plans, class outlines, and teaching materials. Every two years, educator workshops should be held to exchange experiences, update knowledge, and produce new educational content. These tasks can be distributed among regional commissions, enabling the rapid development and publication of high-quality materials.

Local hunting clubs should use the nationally prepared resources, enrich

them with local knowledge, organize events for children and youth, and engage in community activities at the municipal and community levels. When planning to attend such events, neighboring clubs should coordinate with one another and have the ability to receive support from District Boards.

During promotional and educational events, it is recommended to include:

- nature-themed games,
- large puzzles,
- animal track identification,
- falconry and hunting dog demonstrations,
- wild game tastings and refreshments,
- archery or airgun shooting activities.

Before each event, it is essential to:

- inspect the site,
- ensure appropriate supervision and safety conditions, and
- provide training for staff and participants on safety procedures—with special attention to the safety of children and youth.

SHAPING THE IMAGE OF HUNTING AND THE ROLE OF HUNTERS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

The rise of modern communication technologies has provided easy access to social media, now the most popular form of interpersonal communication. Rapid access to information and the ability to follow events worldwide are invaluable advantages for today's generations. However, social media has also made all published content instantly public—regardless of whether it appears on a public profile or within a private group.

Images carry particular power, as a single click can transfer a photo from a smartphone directly to the Internet. Hunters are among the few groups authorized to take the lives of animals. For us, this comes with immense responsibility—not only legal or administrative, but above all ethical, shaped by centuries of tradition.

In this context, posting photos of harvested game on social media should be considered irresponsible, as it exposes the entire hunting community to public backlash and online hate, especially from users who do not understand what hunting is or why animal population control is necessary. Such posts reinforce the stereotype of hunters as animal killers, a narrative that is often confirmed and amplified by negative comments.

Unfortunately, negative posts frequently outnumber positive ones, and built-in algorithms further worsen the situation by amplifying such content exponentially, causing serious and uncontrolled damage to the public image of hunting. It must be emphasized: social media are not a hunting journal.

The national leadership of the Polish Hunting Association should take steps to prohibit or strictly limit the posting of photos showing killed game on social media and mandate the removal of previously published images. District Boards should launch awareness campaigns highlighting the importance of this issue, and encourage the publication of content showing:

- live animals,
- beautiful landscapes,
- fieldwork in hunting grounds,
- educational events,
- social gatherings,
- creatively framed hunting scenes
- or scenes from initiatives like “Darz Bór – Donate Blood” (hunting society blood donation initiative), all captured with thoughtful composition.

The Association should distribute T-shirts, sweatshirts, jackets, and caps featuring its logo and name.

PREVENTING TRAFFIC COLLISIONS INVOLVING WILDLIFE

Preventing traffic collisions with wild animals is one of the Association’s priority activities related to wildlife protection, despite the fact that—outside of exceptional circumstances—hunting ground managers or lease-holders are not held legally responsible for such incidents. Hunters and foresters, due to the extensive time they spend in the field, possess the best knowledge and experience to help develop and implement effective prevention measures.

Each year, the police record approximately 25,000–30,000 traffic collisions involving animals, including both domestic and wild species. Of these, about 160–200 are classified as serious accidents, resulting in an average of 200 injuries and a dozen or so fatalities annually.

It is estimated that official statistics capture only 10–20% of animal-related incidents, as most go unreported by drivers. The majority of severe collisions categorized as “animal strikes” involve wild boar *Sus scrofa* and deer species *Cervidae*. Particularly dangerous are collisions with red deer *Cervus elaphus* and moose *Alces alces*, due to their large body mass and the severe consequences such accidents often entail.

Year	Number of Accidents	Fatalities	Injuries	Number of Collisions
2017	196	10	230	24625
2018	182	13	215	23764
2019	214	16	250	29749
2020	188	13	204	26772
2021	166	13	178	26715
2022	173	11	198	24030
2023 (until Oct.)	166	7	192	22133

Road Incidents in The “Animal Strike” Category. Source: Road Traffic Bureau, National Police Headquarters

The Polish Hunting Association has undertaken preventive measures to reduce animal-related traffic accidents. As part of the “Foot Off the Accelerator – Animals Don’t Read Road Signs” campaign, an informational leaflet was developed explaining:

- Where such accidents most frequently occur,
- How to stay safe on the road, and
- What steps to take if a collision does happen.

These leaflets are distributed during joint Police–hunter patrols on public roads. Notably, the campaign is supported by key partners: the National Road Safety Council and the General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways.

During work on the Strategy, available studies on preventing animal–vehicle collisions were analyzed. The most valuable source in this area is the Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction Study. Report to Congress (FHWA 2008) commissioned by the U.S. Department of Transportation, where approximately 300,000 wildlife-related road collisions are officially reported each year. This comprehensive, multi-year research project tested 34 methods and techniques for preventing collisions, evaluating their effectiveness. The findings are ranked below from most to least effective:

- Maintaining appropriate wildlife population levels (implementing culling measures)
- Live trapping and relocation
- Information campaigns and education (*raising awareness about causes, consequences, and prevention*)
- Large, unconventional wildlife warning signs (*including legal updates*)

- In-vehicle alert systems (*obstacle detectors recognizing larger animals*)
- Speed-reduction traffic-calming measures (e.g., *speed bumps, traffic islands, road narrowing*)
- Wildlife fencing
- Overpasses/underpasses combined with fencing
- Scent-based animal deterrents

Given these findings, the Polish Hunting Association should expand the “Foot Off the Accelerator” program by incorporating the most effective methods and techniques for preventing collisions.

Furthermore, based on this research, it is essential to initiate and coordinate action in cooperation with:

- Police authorities,
- Road administrators,
- State Forests (LP),
- National parks, and
- Organizations focused on road safety.

The Association should initiate a project to improve collision monitoring through the use of a mobile application.

SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS & BLOOD DONATION CAMPAIGNS

The hunting community, thanks to its excellent terrain knowledge, high level of organization and discipline, as well as access to off-road vehicles and advanced equipment (such as thermal imaging, night vision, and drones), can provide valuable support to emergency services during search and rescue operations for missing persons.

These missions—due to the urgency of protecting human life and health—require high levels of efficiency and coordination. Each region should establish volunteer hunter patrols, equipped with necessary gear and an effective alert/communication system. In collaboration with local law enforcement and rescue services, these patrols should undergo appropriate training to ensure safety and operational effectiveness.

The “Darz Bór – Donate Blood” campaign is particularly praiseworthy and should be expanded to all regions and actively promoted in the media.

ASSOCIATION’S ROLE IN BUILDING AND MAINTAINING THE STRATEGIC RESILIENCE OF THE STATE

As mentioned earlier, the Association is an organization whose members represent enormous potential in supporting local communities, including in the area of maintaining the state’s resilience to threats. Excellent knowledge of local terrain, proficiency in handling firearms, and significant intellectual resources should be utilized for national defense and public education. The Association should become a key component in civil protection formations. In this regard, it should develop active forms of cooperation with local governments, emergency services, and other organizations working for the protection of the population and national resources. Specifically, the following actions should be taken:

- Establish cooperation with units of the State Fire Service and Volunteer Fire Service, as well as NGOs involved in medical rescue, to conduct training for hunters (e.g., disaster and emergency response, first aid, etc.);
- Acquire land and buildings and establish the Association’s training center with appropriate facilities for preparing personnel to support the country’s defense capabilities and civil protection;
- Organize and standardize ownership issues (including transferring ownership to the Association) related to lands on which hunting shooting ranges and other facilities useful for civil protection are located.

REACTING TO ACTIVITIES OF ANTI-HUNTING MOVEMENTS

As outlined in section 2.3, one of the significant trends affecting hunting today is the rise of so-called anti-hunting movements. These groups typically appeal to emotions, reducing the role of hunters to that of animal killers. Their arguments are often disconnected from rigorous scientific disciplines such as ecology and agriculture—fields that rely on objective, evidence-based research.



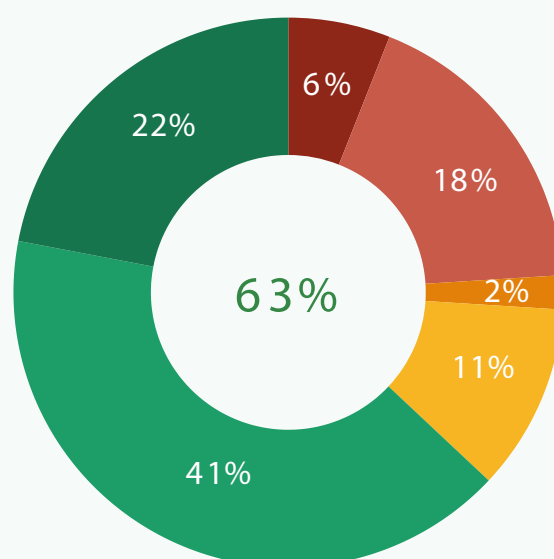
Photo by Łukasz Pilaczyński

All-Poland opinion poll by PBS, 2025

Acceptance for legal hunting

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ■ Strongly agree | ■ Strongly disagree |
| ■ Somewhat agree | ■ Somewhat disagree |
| ■ Neither agree nor disagree | ■ Don't know, difficult to say |

Do you accept hunts that are organized in accordance with the law?



Instead, these groups tend to cite authorities from the humanities (e.g., philosophy) or social sciences (e.g., sociology, psychology). With their emotionally charged messaging, they present a negative image of hunters and hunting, and their ultimate aim is often the complete abolition of hunting, pursued through incremental restrictions on hunting activities.

The Main Board and District Boards should establish permanent teams to monitor such proposals and activities. It is also essential to recognize that these movements employ a “salami tactic”—small, progressive steps toward a broader goal.

Therefore, firm and proactive countermeasures should be taken whenever attempts are made to introduce such concepts into the legal framework.

Within the Association, a system for providing professional legal protection should be developed for hunters and hunting clubs in the event of legal violations by anti-hunting activists (e.g., eco-terrorism, defamation, etc.).

To aid in the identification and understanding of this issue, a collection of key anti-hunting movement demands has been compiled. Each of these demands should be thoroughly analyzed, and consistent arguments should be developed in response. Despite opposing paradigms in the approach to nature, cooperation with such movements should still be pursued—for example, in the areas of ecological monitoring or research.

Opponents of hunting have succeeded in introducing a ban on children’s participation in hunts. The regulations introduced in Poland are not based on scientific knowledge, but rather on ideological grounds. For this reason, one of the key tasks of the Association is to restore the legal possibility for children to participate in hunting. This is evidenced by the fact that no other country has introduced such a ban, which infringes on the constitutional rights of parents to raise their children. Moreover, in many countries, hunting by children is permitted. In France, it is allowed from the age of 15; in the United States, in states such as Arizona, Maine, or Idaho, children can actively hunt from the age of 10.

MAIN DEMANDS OF ANTI-HUNTING MOVEMENTS
A total ban on hunting (main goal)
Dissolution of the Polish Hunting Association and professionalization of hunting
Reduction of the list of game species
Ban on group hunts
Temporary restrictions on hunting
Reduction of hunting area sizes by landowners and municipalities
Stricter criteria for acquiring and maintaining hunting licenses
Public review of Game Management Plans and Hunting Area Development Plans
Ban on certain types of ammunition
Ban on constructing hunting structures
Ban on commercial hunting
Ban on supplemental feeding of wildlife

3.6. OBJECTIVE 4: Organizational Dimension – Modern Leadership and Effective Task Execution

COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES IN DAILY OPERATIONS

The effective achievement of the Association's objectives depends on the proper preparation of its personnel. This is particularly crucial for those in leadership positions at all organizational levels, starting with hunting clubs.

The adoption and continuous development of modern leadership principles is no longer optional—it is a critical requirement without which an organization like the Association cannot function effectively or succeed.

The actions of the leadership should embody the following core leadership principles:

Effective Communication—Every leader must clearly communicate their vision, objectives, and expectations to their team. Equally important is the ability to listen actively and understand the needs of team members. This builds trust, which is essential for achieving shared goals.

Embracing Change—Today's organizational environments are marked by constant and rapid change in all operational areas. A true leader understands that change is inevitable and sees it not as a threat, but as an opportunity for growth and innovation.

Task Delegation—A skilled leader delegates tasks in a way that motivates effort and responsibility, while also providing opportunities for individual development. Leaders should help team members realize and use their full potential.

Motivating Collaboration—A good leader recognizes that success is a team effort. They foster an environment where ideas are freely expressed and contributions are fairly acknowledged.

Leading by Example—A leader must embody the standards and principles they expect from others. They should constantly strive to improve their knowledge and skills, and take full responsibility for their actions.

STRUCTURED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT IN RESPONSE TO SOCIAL CHANGES AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

As noted above, constant change is a defining feature of the environment in which the Association operates. This includes:

- Legal transformations,
- Shifting public expectations,
- Technological advancements, and
- Climate change.

In this context, the human factor becomes the key to achieving strategic objectives.

Drawing on best practices and experiences from local clubs, districts, and international hunting organizations, the Association should establish a simple and transparent qualification development system—targeted at both leadership (courses, post-graduate studies) and regular members (training, courses, workshops).

To achieve this on a larger scale, the program should be based on a dual model of in-person and remote training, covering a broad range of topics relevant to the Association's activities.

An essential component of this initiative is continuous training for lecturers, educators, and instructors. Recent years have seen some neglect in this area, which must now be urgently addressed to bridge existing gaps.

ELECTION OF THE ASSOCIATION'S LEADERSHIP

To restore self-governance and increase member engagement, the possibility of direct elections for the Association leadership positions should be considered—at a minimum, for the position of National Game Warden (President of the Polish Hunting Association) and district wildlife conservation officers. Implementing this change would require careful preparation, including amendments to the Statute and agreements at the ministerial level. However, initiating such reforms would likely enhance trust in the Association's leadership. From a public image standpoint, fulfilling this demand would demonstrate the Association members' commitment to greater autonomy and bring the organization in line with standards practiced by hunting associations across Europe.

SYSTEMATIC ACTIVATION OF THE MAIN BOARD, DISTRICT BOARDS AND HUNTING CLUBS

Analyses of the functioning of the Main Board, district boards, hunting clubs, and game breeding centers conducted by the Supreme Hunting Council as part of this Strategy revealed several areas in need of improvement. Generally speaking, there is a lack of project-based approaches to task execution. Such an approach treats each initiative or internal process as a separate project, which allows for:

- clear delegation of authority,
- formation of specialized teams having specific responsibilities and accountability for each part of the task.

DISTRICTS

District boards operate with limited resources, yet are responsible for a wide range of administrative, supervisory, fiscal, asset management, as well as national and local government relations tasks. Their effectiveness depends on many factors, but the most crucial are:



Poland's territory divided into 4724 hunting grounds



Photo by Szymon Hattas

- efficient work organization,
- operational flexibility,
- high substantive quality, and
- staff competence.

A potentially significant support for district boards should come from issue-specific (problem-solving) committees, which currently often show low levels of activity. Each district board should prepare a framework action plan for these committees, which should:

- meet at least twice a year (including via on-line meetings),
- and submit an annual activity report.

Each committee should also agree on specific annual objectives with the district board—for example:

- monitoring legal regulations,
- or establishing permanent cooperation with agricultural advisory centers and agricultural chambers.

The chairpersons of these committees play a key role. They should demonstrate initiative, leadership, and organizational skills. District boards should carry out annual evaluations of committee performance and, if needed, make changes to committee leadership.

HUNTING CLUBS

District Boards should develop a template for a general activity schedule for hunting clubs, tailored to local specifics. This schedule should define the core areas of the club's operations, such as:

- Wildlife management,
- Damage prevention,
- Cooperation with other clubs,
- Collaboration with local governments, farmers, foresters, and fishery stakeholders,
- Youth and children's education, and
- Promotion of hunting.

An instructional guide should also be prepared, clearly explaining how club activities contribute to achieving the goals of the Association. It should include available operational options, allowing each club to adapt its activities to its financial and human resources.

Training and workshops are critical to the success of this activation process. These should be organized regularly by District Boards and serve as platforms for sharing experiences and best practices, which must be documented with the support of issue-specific committees and systematically implemented by District Boards in the daily operations of hunting clubs.

THE ASSOCIATION AS A PUBLIC BENEFIT ORGANIZATION (PBO)

Obtaining the status of a public benefit organization should become one of the Association's top priorities. Our activities fall within a broad range of tasks that are or can be effectively carried out by the hunting community. The public tasks listed in the law and carried out by the Association include, among others:

- activities in the field of ecology and animal protection, as well as
- the protection of natural heritage;
- support for the development of local communities and societies;
- rescue and civil protection;
- assistance to victims of disasters and natural calamities;
- activities for children and youth; initiatives in the field of culture and national heritage; and
- work related to national defense.

Gaining PBO status would open up new development opportunities for the Association by significantly improving its financial standing (e.g., tax deductions, eligibility for external funding) and enhancing its public image (e.g., greater media access).

HUNTING SHOOTING SPORTS

Hunting shooting is an integral part of hunting. Its current form is the result of many years of work by instructors, competitors, and hunting activists. Polish hunting shooting has developed its own distinct character, which sets us apart from other countries. This is a legacy that should be carefully preserved.

The foremost value of our shooting tradition lies in its practicality for ethical and effective hunting. Shooting builds a hunter's strong character, teaches proper habits for safe firearm handling, and is the best path to responsible gun use in the field.

Attempts to modify individual hunting disciplines—such as changing shooting rules or adapting to other organizations—should be considered harmful to the preservation of Polish hunting shooting heritage, as the true issue in its development lies elsewhere. Polish hunting shooting is a source of pride due to its unique identity. Our Association has both the full right and responsibility to set the standards in the broader shooting community.

With this in mind, the Association should primarily aim to popularize shooting among hunters, making it one of the key pillars of its promotional strategy. Achieving this goal should be based on:

- Increasing the availability of hunting ranges (standardizing opening hours, usage fees, and other costs; improving online visibility and online booking systems; using technologies like voice-activated target throwers; enabling nighttime sighting-in of firearms; organizing youth events using airguns);
- Systematic training (urgent update of training materials, training and certifying new instructors);
- Promotion of hunting shooting through all available communication channels (but this promotion must first be based on the professional organization of shooting events that attract not only hunters, but also their families, friends, and school youth);
- Balancing commercial use of shooting ranges with accessibility for hunters;
- Designating ranges and setting standards for adapting them to parcours-style shooting.

Due to the highly varied quality of services provided by individual hunting shooting ranges, efforts to launch a new chapter in Polish hunting shooting should begin with a comprehensive review of shooting ranges, using the knowledge and experience of members of the Supreme Hunting Council Shooting Committee. This review should cover issues related to access conditions, operating hours, the state of equipment and infrastructure, parking availability, as well as accommodation and food services. The goal should be to thoroughly identify the needs of each range, assess their current condition, and recommend development actions. Given these circumstances, it should be stated that conducting range reviews should be a top priority for the Main Board and District Boards.

BOWHUNTING

Bowhunting is a legally accepted method of hunting in most EU countries. Although this form of hunting is not currently permitted in Poland, it is gaining an increasing number of supporters. In many regions, archery committees are active, whose members belong to the Polish Association for Bowhunting. Experience from other countries shows that bowhunting is often more socially acceptable than hunting with firearms,

as it requires greater physical fitness and skill in stalking game. Bowhunting is also used in other countries as an alternative method for wildlife population control in urban areas, where the use of firearms is often restricted for safety reasons.

The Association's primary activities related to bowhunting should focus on the legal regulation of hunting with a bow. It is proposed to launch an initiative in cooperation with the Ministry of Climate and Environment to develop a joint position and organize a pilot bowhunting program in a selected Game Breeding Center. The main goals of this program would include:

- Assessing the effectiveness of bowhunting under Polish hunting ground conditions;
- Developing rules and guidelines for bowhunting;
- Creating training standards for bowhunting instructors;
- Creating rules for training and obtaining bowhunting licenses.

During the development of these rules, it is essential to ensure they meet the standards of the International Bowhunter Education Program (IBEP). The results of the pilot program should be subject to final evaluation and serve as the foundation for the legal introduction of bowhunting in Poland. The pilot should draw upon the experiences and best practices established during the development of falconry license criteria.

HUNTING CYNOPHILIA (HUNTING DOG BREEDING AND TRAINING)

The hunting dog has been an integral part of Polish hunting culture for centuries, and its importance cannot be overstated. The development of cynophilia (the breeding, training, and use of dogs) requires special attention from hunters to protect this centuries-old heritage. The key tasks of Polish hunting cynophilia include:

- Defining framework conditions and establishing pragmatic cooperation with the Polish Kennel Club to support the use and development of hunting dog breeds, with particular emphasis on Polish breeds;



Photo by Marcin Chojnowski

- Promoting Polish hunting dog breeds;
- Favoring pedigree dogs as the optimal means of maintaining and developing the working traits of specific hunting dog breeds;
- Establishing a harmonious division of roles in conformation to outlook standards (the Polish Kennel Club) and performance evaluation (the Association) as criteria for breeding qualification;
- Developing a procedure for training and appointing hunting dog trial judges and hunting cynophilia instructors within the Association;
- Initiating discussions through the Polish Kennel Club regarding changes to the appointment process of hunting dog trial judges within the International Canine Federation (FCI);
- Developing cynophilia primarily through hunting dog breed clubs or working dog groups;
- Creating a framework for allowing certification of non-pedigree dogs (without pedigrees from the Polish Kennel Club or another FCI-recognized cynological organization, but of hunting dog type), along with a mechanism for excluding such dogs from breeding;
- Reinstating the ability to train hunting dog breeds according to standards adopted in other countries;
- Developing a training system for handlers of hunting dog breeds within the Association structure;
- Creating a general regulatory template for hunting dog breed clubs that supports the implementation of the above objectives;
- Considering the possibility of subsidizing the purchase of hunting dog breeds with pedigrees from the Polish Kennel Club or another FCI-recognized organization, in exchange for the handler's work with such a dog in the field;
- Monitoring and taking official positions on the issue of crossbreeding between hunting dog breeds (e.g., "coogar" dogs).

These tasks should be carried out by the Main Board and District Boards, with the support of the Cynological Committee of the Supreme Hunting Council.

3.7. Strategic Tasks

This Strategy outlines the key directions of the Association's actions to achieve its defined strategic goals. To facilitate planning, the list of strategic tasks is presented below across three main areas. Acting in consultation with the Main Board, the Supreme Hunting Council will assign specific tasks to the appropriate bodies for implementation.

The first step should be the development of action plans that incorporate these strategic tasks. Since the scale of effort and resources required will vary between tasks, this process must be carried out carefully. In line with the principles outlined in the subsection *Systemic Activation of the Main Board, District Boards and hunting clubs*, each task listed in this chapter should be assigned to a specific person responsible for its implementation. Organizational and technical support should also be secured as needed.

Given the large number of tasks, the process should begin by utilizing the expertise of the Supreme Hunting Council's issue-specific committees and the professional staff of the Main Board. Since the Association has a vast pool of high-level specialists at the regional level, responsibilities should also be delegated to regional issue committees, which should receive direct support from the District Boards. This approach will make it possible to launch a wide range of actions in a relatively short time, significantly increasing the Association's effectiveness and thereby improving its public image and strengthening its position in relation to public administration—ultimately contributing to the organization's growth.

ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION

- Prevent attempts to arbitrarily alter the list of game species without relying on credible scientific research, and develop a systemic mechanism to determine whether a species should be excluded from or (re)included on the game species list, using EU legal frameworks and international conventions.

- Simplify the procedures for the elimination of invasive alien species (IAS), e.g., by including them on the list of game species and removing the obligation for hunters to report the presence of IAS to municipalities to obtain guidance on control measures.
- Introduce large-scale monitoring of game and protected species using the latest technologies (e.g., thermal imaging monitoring, mobile applications, etc.).
- Establish a hunting research fund based on a stable financial mechanism within the Association's budget.
- Undertake intensive efforts to legalize bowhunting as a recognized form of hunting.
- Engage in activities aligned with broader climate protection efforts, such as supporting agri-environmental programs, ecological education for children and youth, and energy modernization of buildings owned by the Association and hunting clubs.
- Gradually phase out supplementary feeding of game (especially in mild winters) and redirect efforts and resources toward active conservation measures (e.g., land acquisition, maintenance of buffer zones, purchase of nursery stock for afforestation, purchase of nesting baskets and boxes, and wildlife monitoring equipment such as camera traps, bird rings, and thermal cameras).
- Initiate a process to adjust (reduce) the size of game management regions to align with the original purpose of their establishment—i.e., to encompass the year-round home ranges of local game populations.
- Support efforts to designate ecological corridors and prevent uncontrolled rural development along roads.
- Propose a framework and participate in expert groups for the population management of specific wildlife species such as wolf *Canis lupus*, moose *Alces alces*, red deer *Cervus elaphus*, beaver *Castor fiber*, and cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*.
- Conduct a review of all Association's Game Breeding Centers and, based on this, implement actions to fulfill all statutory objectives, expanded to include mandatory educational and promotional efforts in support of hunting.



Photo by Jarosław Klej

- Prepare Association's Game Breeding Centers as future centers for bowhunting activities.
- Activate the potential of Association's Game Breeding Centers for cooperation with universities and vocational schools (e.g., supervising theses, bachelor's papers, and coursework) and with research institutions to achieve the Association's scientific goals.
- Update the *Field Hunting Ground Management Manual*.
- Integrate the Association into the national bird monitoring system.
- Resume comprehensive hunting-related research at the Association's Research Station in Czempin.
- Establish close cooperation with the Polish Kennel Club.
- Develop a new system for the training, utility evaluation, and breeding assessment of hunting dogs.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSION

- Conduct a survey on public acceptance of hunting and consider establishing a national association or foundation to support the Association's activities. This organization should bring together both hunters and supporters of hunting, fostering a sense of community and expanding opportunities for nature-focused initiatives.
- Actively promote hunting in municipalities and communes through promotional and educational activities organized by hunting clubs (individually or jointly), with active support from District Boards.
- Develop a code of good practices for damage mitigation and conflict resolution.
- The Main Board and District Boards should coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders involved in hunting tourism and cooperate with suppliers of hunting-related goods. Collaboration platforms should be created, and joint meetings organized, enabling all parties to better pursue their interests.
- The Supreme Hunting Council, with support from the Scientific Committee, should prepare a report titled *"Poland Without Hunters: Economic, Environmental, and Social Consequences"*, addressing key aspects of hunting in all its dimensions.
- Take effective steps to include hunting culture on the national list of intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO).
- The Association, leveraging its intellectual and organizational resources, should actively collaborate with the State Forests in creating recreational areas, designating wildlife refuges, conducting nature education, and promoting hunter activities in nature conservation.
- Undertake comprehensive efforts to promote game meat (venison) and develop dietary programs featuring game as an alternative (e.g., for diabetics, allergy sufferers, individuals with metabolic disorders, etc.).
- The Main Board and District Boards should run continuous information and education campaigns on disease control. There should be permanent cooperation with veterinary services, the Ministry of Agriculture, municipal and commune services, farmers, and other stakeholders involved in preventing and combating epizootics (e.g., ASF).
- Develop the conditions and establish systematic cooperation between hunters (at club, district, and regional levels) and farmers, foresters, local communities, public administration, research centers, and organizations in other countries to achieve the objectives outlined in this Strategy.
- The Association's leadership should establish a joint working group with the State Forests and agricultural organizations on a Biodiversity Strategy, focusing first on identifying types and methods of land protection in compliance with EU principles and the rights of hunters, foresters, and farmers.
- Collaborate with State and Volunteer Fire Services and NGOs involved in medical rescue to provide training for hunters (e.g., disaster control and response, first aid, etc.).
- Acquire land and buildings to establish the Association's **training center** with facilities for preparing personnel for national defense and civil protection roles.
- Hunters, hunting clubs, and district-level Association bodies should maintain regular cooperation with relevant authorities, participate systematically in meetings and deliberations, and take positions on matters affecting hunting.

- Consider an initiative to introduce a mechanism for transferring lease fees for hunting districts to municipalities and communes within a dedicated fund for agri-environmental measures and habitat conservation.
- The Association should become a key element of civil protection formations. To this end, it should develop active forms of cooperation with national and local governments, services, and other organizations working for the protection of the population and national resources.
- The Association should further develop the “Foot Off the Accelerator – Animals Don’t Read Road Signs” program by applying the most effective methods and techniques for preventing wildlife-vehicle collisions. Based on relevant research findings, actions in this area should be initiated in cooperation with the police, road authorities, State Forests, national parks, and road safety organizations.
- Promote and expand the “Darz Bór – Donate Blood” program as a tool for public outreach and image-building for the Association.
- The national leadership of the Association should take action to ban or significantly limit the posting of images of hunted animals on social media by hunters.
- In every district, establish **volunteer hunter patrols** equipped with necessary tools and communication systems to assist in the search for missing persons.
- Create an **Ecological Forum** bringing together, in addition to the Association, organizations of anglers, foresters, farmers, fishers, orchardists, beekeepers, veterinarians, horse breeders and users, and other similar organizations to exchange views, coordinate actions, and develop joint positions on issues related to environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources.

ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSION

- Make comprehensive annual reports on the activities of the Association available to all hunters, both at the national and regional levels (including substantive, financial, and organizational sections).
- Conduct an audit of organizational structures to assess the effectiveness of task execution and, if necessary, optimize the structure of the Association.
- Reinstate District Hunting Councils and establish Voivodship Hunting Councils as a vital element in restoring the Association’s self-governance.
- Based on continuous monitoring and annual reviews, improve hunting practices with regard to safety, environmental, and social goals, and initiate and implement necessary changes.
- The Main Board and the Supreme Hunting Council, together with relevant committees, should urgently develop a systemic solution to the issue of limited access for young candidates to join hunting clubs. Consider introducing an obligation to accept trainees and new members (who meet formal and ethical criteria), based on several objective conditions—such as a club’s failure to fulfill its hunting plan for three consecutive years.
- Due to instances of bypassing formal procedures when submitting membership declarations, a mandatory system should be introduced whereby all declarations are submitted exclusively through District Boards, which must in turn annually report to the Main Board the number of applications received by clubs and the number approved.
- Take active steps to restore the possibility for children and youth to participate in hunts.
- Make efforts to legally establish the possibility of direct elections to the Association authorities (at a minimum, the election of the National Wildlife Conservation Officer).
- Resume the organization of courses and training for hunting lecturers and educators.
- Actively initiate efforts to legally limit cyberbullying and eco-terrorism by introducing regulations, structures, and mechanisms to protect hunters. Additionally, implement ongoing nationwide educational initiatives aimed at both adults and children, and commission the development of a manual on the legal protection of hunters and guidelines for the proper application of legal interpretation to ensure their effective protection in court proceedings.

- Organize a legal assistance system to address any attacks on hunters that may violate existing laws—supported actively by the Association at both national (Main Board) and regional (District Board) levels.
- Establish teams at the national and regional levels to secure external funding for statutory activities.
- Reflect and clearly define the hierarchy of objectives in all documents developed within the Association.
- Intervene to include hunting clubs and the Association on the list of eligible applicants (beneficiaries) for support and subsidy programs.
- Develop and launch the sale of promotional merchandise such as T-shirts, jackets, mugs, etc., to support hunter identification during statutory activities.
- Conduct an annual review and update of the Association's documentation, including action plans, while accounting for legal changes, trends, experience, and lessons learned.
- Develop a simple and transparent system for upgrading the qualifications of personnel—both for leadership (e.g., postgraduate courses) and for all members (e.g., training, courses, workshops).
- Carry out a legal analysis, amend the Statute, and undertake efforts to obtain public benefit organization (PBO) status.
- Conduct a review of shooting ranges.
- Promote hunting shooting sports and increase their accessibility.
- Initiate legislative amendments and organize a pilot bowhunting program in selected locations (Game Breeding Centers).
- Review operations and develop new rules of procedure for all organizational units within the Association.
- Continuously monitor trends that may impact hunting and the Association.
- Adopt a proactive attitude by initiating and addressing challenges instead of passively waiting for actions from other entities (e.g., Main Board, ministries, local governments, farmers, foresters, etc.). It is recommended to develop a framework schedule of mandatory actions at all organizational levels and create checklists to support effective execution across key areas. Evaluate activities based on performance standards and adherence to schedules.



Photo by Grzegorz Bobrowicz

- Develop consistent arguments for Association members to use in response to anti-hunting movements. Additionally, prepare a guide on social media etiquette (e.g., respectful communication, evidence-based arguments, avoiding provocation).
- Monitor legal amendments from local to EU levels.
- Introduce a compliance policy and utilize independent audits.
- Actively participate in legislative processes at all levels (from commune or municipal to EU).
- Initiate, support, and coordinate projects and programs in nature conservation, and serve as a credible partner to public authorities and the scientific community.
- Pay special attention to selecting chairs of expert committees—choose individuals who demonstrate initiative, organizational skills, and leadership.
- Appoint experts within the Main Board and District Boards for specific thematic areas (e.g., to prepare and review internal materials, provide media commentary, and represent the Association in various bodies).
- Assign the strategic tasks listed in this chapter to appropriate organizational units of the Association and designate individuals responsible for their implementation. If needed, form dedicated task teams.

3.8. Organizational Instruments in The Strategy Implementation System

Effective implementation of the Strategy's objectives requires the development of an appropriate organizational system, based on the existing structure and through the conclusion of agreements, contracts, and participation in various forums focused on nature conservation. In summary, the following division of responsibilities within the Strategy implementation system is proposed:



Photo by Szymon Hartas

- The Supreme Hunting Council– conceptual work, consideration of development directions, initiating actions, utilizing conclusions developed by issue-specific committees, monitoring the Strategy’s implementation by the Main Board, and cooperation at the national and international levels.
- The Main Board – operational activities in close cooperation with the Supreme Hunting Council Presidium, oversight of the Strategy’s implementation by District Boards, and cooperation at the national and international levels.
- Provincial Hunting Councils – monitoring of nature conservation policy at the provincial level and cooperation with provincial public administration authorities.
- District Boards and District Hunting Councils – coordination of activities at the district level, support, motivation, and supervision of hunting clubs in implementing strategic goals, as well as providing legal support to clubs and hunters.
- Hunting Clubs – management of game populations, training, and cooperation at the municipal level.

This Strategy should be subject to an annual implementation review at both the national and district levels. Summary findings and recommendations from the review should be presented during a meeting of the NRL. The Supreme Hunting Council should ensure the organizational framework for conducting these reviews, which will be carried out on its behalf by the Scientific Committee. A five-year review should be conducted in 2029.



Photo by Ewelina Wysogład

ANNEX 1: THE ASSOCIATION’S POSTULATES

THE ASSOCIATION’S POSTULATES SUSTAINABLE HUNTING AND NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

Modern hunting is one of the most vital components of the nature conservation system. The centuries-old tradition of Polish hunting, which has always been rooted in sustainable management of nature, grants hunters not only the right to be a catalyst for actions preserving ecological balance—but, above all, it imposes a responsibility grounded in a deep understanding of the complexity of natural processes.

This responsibility becomes even more significant in the face of advancing civilization and a declining public awareness of the laws of nature and the crucial role hunters play in protecting natural resources. Within this context, the Supreme Hunting Council presents the key postulates of the Polish Hunting Association, which are essential for preserving biodiversity, protecting habitats, ensuring safe hunting practices, and guaranteeing hunters’ constitutional rights.

1	[SELF-GOVERNANCE] Restore full self-governance of the Association.
2	[CHILDREN’S PARTICIPATION IN HUNTING] Reinstatement of the constitutional right of parents (hunters) to raise their children according to their values—including the right to involve them in hunting.
3	[ENHANCED SAFETY] Allow hunting with crossbows and bows, unrestricted use of night vision and thermal imaging, use of pneumatic and short-barrel firearms (for dispatching wounded animals, controlling predators), use of suppressors, and dog training using live animals.
4	[NATURE EDUCATION] Introduce nature education (including forestry and hunting topics) into primary and secondary school curricula. Provide media access to present the role of hunting in wildlife population management.
5	[DISEASE CONTROL] Implement effective disease control mechanisms through the relevant authorities while leaving population management to hunters.
6	[GAME SPECIES LIST] Reinstatement of the hunting of moose and add other species—especially birds that cause significant damage—to the list of game animals.
7	[POPULATION MANAGEMENT] Develop and implement strategies for managing populations of conflict-causing protected species—such as bears <i>Ursus arctos</i> , bison <i>Bison bonasus</i> , wolves <i>Canis lupus</i> , beavers <i>Castor fiber</i> , cormorants <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> , cranes <i>Grus grus</i> , wild geese <i>Anser</i> , and corvids <i>Corvidae</i> —based on scientific research and population monitoring.
8	[ELIMINATION OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES] Simplify procedures for eliminating IAS by including them on the game species list and allowing the use of traps.
9	[PREDATION BY CATS AND DOGS] Regulate and implement effective methods to limit the negative impact of domestic predators on native wildlife.
10	[SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURES] Introduce clear, standardized procedures for incidents involving wild animals (e.g., road collisions).
11	[COMPENSATION SYSTEM REFORM] Simplify the damage reporting process, expand the list of species covered by compensation, and ensure state participation in covering damage costs caused by game species in areas where hunting is not possible.
12	[SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH] Launch a research program on game species under the National Science Centre.
13	[LIMITING CYBERBULLYING AND ECOTERRORISM] Initiate legal actions to restrict cyberbullying and ecoterrorism by introducing regulations, structures, and mechanisms that protect hunters.

ANNEX 2: ACTION PLAN

(Plans will be developed in the form of concise guidelines)

Action Plan 1: Education and Promotion	Action Plan 2: Development of Hunting Dog Breeding and Training (Cynology)	Action Plan 3: Comprehensive Cooperation with Partner Organizations and Government Administration	Action Plan 4: Strengthening Knowledge and Training Levels of Association Members
Action Plan 5: Effective Wildlife Population Management	Action Plan 6: Support for Habitat Protection Efforts	Action Plan 7: Systematic Development of Hunting Culture	Action Plan 8: Development of Shooting and Archery Disciplines
	Action Plan 9: Monitoring of Mammal and Bird Species & Support for Scientific Research	Action Plan 10: Training and Minimizing the Impact of Wildlife-Related Damage	



Photo by Juliusz Ajdysinski

Strategy Development Committee

at the Polish Hunting Association (PHA)

Dr Szymon Hatłas – chairman, PHA

Prof. Dariusz J. Gwiazdowicz, PHA, Poznan University of Life Sciences

Dr Mikołaj Jakubowski, PHA

Translation from Polish

Prof. Aleksandra Matulewska, Adam Mickiewicz University Poznan

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN BASED ON THE GENERAL GUIDELINES
BY THE XXIV EXTRAORDINARY NATIONAL DELEGATES ASSEMBLY ADOPTED IN 2019

Poland's sustainable hunting strategy 2030 with 2035 prospects
Strategia zrównoważonego łowiectwa w Polsce do roku 2030 z perspektywą do roku 2035

Cover photo by Marek Olesiewicz



SUPREME HUNTING COUNCIL
POLISH HUNTING ASSOCIATION
WARSAW 2025