

Aspects of Human Dimension of Wildboar Hunting

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ABSTRACT Hunting is a recreational activity and a resource practice. Its intensity and practice depends on the society of the hunters. Hunters and poachers belonging to the rural and urban centres were interviewed. Hunting techniques and the socio-economic background of the hunters was analysed.

INTRODUCTION

Hunting is a recreational activity and a resource practice. Its intensity and practice depends on the society of the hunters. *Sus cristatus* is a food and habitat generalist and often attains a vermin status wherever it is found. Being a resource of wild game meat, it is hunted by recreational hunters and poachers. The present study attempts to explore the hunting practices and the social background of hunters and poachers to elucidate practices of hunting.

STUDY AREA

Studies were conducted in the Radhanagari, Chandoli and Koyna wildlife sanctuaries located between 16°15' to 17°46' North and 73°50' to 74° East and the adjoining areas in the Western Ghats region of south Maharashtra. The area by virtue of its location expresses a 'Deccan trap' landscape. The vegetation of the study area is sub-tropical evergreen having mixed vegetation belonging to Memocylon-Actinodaphne-Syzygium series (Gadgil and Homji, 1986). The climate of the region of monsoon type, rainfall is heavy to moderate followed by a dry spell which commences from November and lasts upto May. The temperature ranges from 17°C to 34° centigrade.

Field hunting proceeding were observed and hunters and poachers belonging to rural and urban centres were interviewed. Interviews were employed to elicit information on the following aspects.

- 1) Choice of the hunting method.
- 2) Knowledge about the firearms and ammunition.
- 3) Favourite hunting grounds etc.

According to Turpin (1980) the common traditional wild boar hunting techniques are: hound chase, stalking, cricle drive and high seat shooting (Machan in India).

THE HUNTERS

Type I: The hunters belonging to this class are mostly of the Jagirdar families of the erstwhile Kolhapur state, who had a long tradition of hunting in their families. For this class of hunters, wildboar hunting is a sport. This group employs drive to hunt.

Type II: Hunters belonging to this category are rich individuals pursuing various professions from the urban centres. This group of hunters has no tradition of hunting in their families. The hunters are novices in the art of hunting and have no hunting ethics. This class of hunters shoot the wildlife indiscriminately and the size of this category of hunters is large. This group employs jeep, spotlight and shotgun.

Type III: This group of hunters dominates the study area. It comprises the local population depending on forest resources for subsistence. For this group of hunters, hunting is a traditional resource practice. This group employs drive, stalking, and traps etc. to hunt.

DISCUSSION

The study reveals that there has been a perceptible decline in the observance of hunting ethics and wanton killing of animals has replaced the earlier traditional sport hunting, with the emergence of class II type of hunters in the region. The second category urban hunter has the resources and time for hunting but they lack the traditional ethics of hunting and have no stake in the wildlife. On the other hand, the class I type hunters pursue hunting as a sport and requires a perpetual stock of wildboar for their sporting activities. For the rural hunters the wild game meat is resource for subsistence hence their stake in the local wild life is high. Thus the novice urban hunters

with no stake in the wildlife is the premier hazard to wildlife and conservation.

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