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## THE DANISH GAME BAG RECORD AND ITS ROLE IN WILD-LIFE MANAGEMENT

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### ABSTRACT

The Danish Game Bag Record, i.e. the national hunting statistics database, was initiated in 1941. It is a compilation of annual, mandatory reports on bagged game (shot or trapped) from all hunting license holders. Today, this database holds one of the longest and most complete time series of bagged game in the world. In the hunting season 2014/15 there was 178,000 hunting license holders in Denmark so the annual data increment is considerable.

Of course, the last 75 years has seen big changes in technology and communication, which is reflected in the methods of collecting the hunting statistics but the basic principle of every hunter reporting his/hers personal game bag every year still applies. From 1941 onwards annual reports were delivered on paper forms, and since year 2000 it has been possible to report electronically via the internet as well. In 2014 paper forms were abandoned completely. At the same time a special "blocking mechanism" was introduced making it impossible for hunters to renew their hunting license if they do not report their game bag for the previous season. This was considered necessary as – although reporting is mandatory – about every third hunter neglected the bag report, but there were no sanctions. Connecting the game bag report to renewal of the hunting license lead to a sharp increase in the reporting rate, i.e. from ca. 60 % to ca. 90 %. The feature of hunting statistics most often used in wildlife management is its ability to reflect changes in population size – at least for some game species – mainly on a nationwide scale, but for some of the more abundant species also on a regional scale. A few examples will be shown to illustrate this.

Finally, a few suggestions for improvement of the bag record will be given, e.g. implementation of a facility for registration of map coordinates of bagged game and inclusion of e-mail addresses in the hunter data base, facilitating future on-line questionnaire surveys.



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