



Multipurpose wildlife: Food, recreation and biodiversity combined

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable utilization of wildlife populations is a form of multipurpose land-use that could deliver food and recreation in combination with rich biodiversity. An increased harvests of game animals for food result in more sustainable animal products. A landscape with abundant wildlife offers also possibilities for recreation, tourism and a general perception of wilderness. Finally, wildlife species such as the larger herbivores have important ecosystem functions that may even increase biological diversity. In addition, a partial shift to more wildlife-directed feed crop production such as kale, maize and sunflower on arable land may generate opportunities for managing the habitats used by wildlife and, thus, minimize damages to conventional farming and forestry.

However, large wildlife populations may also become reservoirs for diseases, for example wild boars can carry classical swine fever (CSF). Therefore it is important to develop a surveillance system for game food chain to guarantee both food quality and safety, including slaughter plants, small local enterprises and restaurants. Other questions to be considered are the interactions between wildlife and infrastructure, animal welfare issues, ethics and, most importantly, public perception of an increased game meat consumption. Thus, there is a need for a research program directed towards the potential of game for food production.

The consequences of a transition to a multipurpose land-use that focus on wildlife populations need scientific evaluation. Such a transition offers a potential for sustainable production of high quality animal proteins in combination with agriculture, forestry and biological diversity. This will make available arable land for production of cereals and vegetables directly for human consumption, thereby opening up a possibility for providing food to larger human population in year 2050, while maintaining the environment and the biological diversity.