
Translated from the original in spanish

Sport hunting in Cuba on the road to sustainability

La caza deportiva en Cuba en el camino hacia su sostenibilidad

Luis Alberto Cuesta Martínez

Universidad de Pinar del Río, "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca", Facultad de Cultura Física "Nancy Uranga Romagoza". E-mail: luis.cuesta@upr.edu.cu

Hunting is an activity with strong cultural roots that has been practiced uninterruptedly since the dawn of humanity. This constitutes a form of exploitation of fauna as a renewable natural resource very widespread in the world, either as a source of food, especially traditionally, or in less developed countries, or as a leisure activity. Arroyo and others, (2013).

Nowadays, in the most developed countries, hunting is consolidated as a recreational-sports practice, with an important economic and social component. Although the sporting approach could be justified from the moment in which competitions are maintained and federations exist, in reality it is a merely recreational activity; those who practice it do it for fun and it is linked to a use regulated by specific rules, related to the hunt itself and to the conservation of nature.

The sustainability of hunting today is a concern in many parts of the world, the subject is very controversial, has led to a clear polarization against or in favor of it. Chamizo, (2004).

According to the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity, 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 biological diversity or hinder its restoration. Such use maintains the potential of biological diversity to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations, as well as the maintenance of hunting as a socially, economically and culturally accepted activity". Covisa, (2017)

In Cuba, as in the rest of the world, the origin of the hunting activity starts from the subsistence hunting carried out by the aborigines who inhabited the island, passing through the hunting for economic purposes carried out by the Spanish colonizers in the early times of their arrival, becoming one of the main leisure activities in contact with the wild environment, practiced by the social classes that dominated the country before the triumph of the revolution on January 1, 1959. In the present, it emerges as an important sports-recreational activity of deep popular tradition. Chamizo, (2004)

In the country, the independent hunting of coexistence with its different modalities is contemplated as sport and recreational activity, inserted within the National Direction of Recreation of the National Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation (INDER), as one of the programs that this one develops through its levels of province and municipality. The lovers and practitioners of this activity are grouped in the Cuban Federation of Sport Hunting (FCCD), created in 1980 by Resolution 291 of January 17 of that year, having INDER as its organ of relations, being the highest responsible for organizing this activity in the nation, the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI).

The FCCD currently has a structure made up of a national executive with four work regions, 16 provincial branches and 164 municipal branches representing all the country's provinces and municipalities, including the special municipality of Isla de la Juventud, which has a total of 40025 members.

At present this association, headed by its current executive, chaired by the master Jorge Jesús Peña Borges, has focused its efforts and work on meeting the work objectives, which are contained in the renewed statutes of this federation. These objectives are specified in article number 6 of the aforementioned statutes, which highlights the purpose of contributing actively to the protection of flora, fauna and the environment in accordance with current legislation.

The FCCD is working on the reorganisation and improvement of the operation of this entity, taking steps towards achieving continuity, durability and sustainability of this activity in the country. It focuses on promoting changes in conceptions and attitudes necessary to ensure that game management becomes a source of spiritual, economic and environmental benefits, based on proper planning and organization.

In addition, to achieve the harmonization of the hunting exploitation with the conservation of nature, contributing to the knowledge of the ecology of the species. At the same time, to apply the advances of science and technology to the territorial, legal and economic regulation of hunting, to the development of the national hunting product.

In 2018, the FCCD undertook an arduous task, specifying different actions according to the fulfilment of the planned work objectives, which reflect steps forward in its management. Among them, the following stand out:

- Development of the municipal and provincial plenary sessions of the respective branches in the country, where the associates ratified the commitment to be permanent observers of the ecosystem where they carry out their activities. These plenary sessions culminated in the national assembly, held in April, where the current situation was debated and important agreements and projections were made.
- Establishment of collaboration and exchange relations with international organisations for purposes, in coordination with the relations body (INDER), materialising the FCCD's entry into the World Council of Sport Hunting and Shooting Federations (FEDECAT).
- The First National Conference of the FCCD was held in September, with the participation of more than a hundred experts on the subject, and the presence (with a master lecture) of Doctor Carlos Cano, Secretary General of FEDECAT. Díaz Susavila, (2018).

- The FCCD was present at forums and events such as the International Cubamotricity Congress 2018, held in October at the Palacio de las Convenciones, where the Master of Science Jorge Jesús Peña (Chairman of the FCCD) and Francisco Ramírez (Chairman of the Provincial Hunting Federation of Guantánamo) presented the paper entitled: Sport Hunting in Cuba, a recreational option in defence of the environment.
- Systematization of the dissemination of the activities and general tasks of the association at all levels, through the written press, radio, television and the Internet (social networks and website).
- The Ernest Hemingway Pheasant Shooting Cup (Havana, November 2018) and the national show dog competition, by invitation, were held in Villa Clara.
- Coordination with different organizations, companies and institutions in the management of means and resources for the practice of sport hunting and the development of various activities.
- Promotion of relations with scientific entities, collaborating in research and studies related to the exercise of hunting activity in the country.
- Concretion of various projects in the different provinces, related to the management of habitats and hunting species, the breeding and preparation of different breeds of hunting dogs, the reactivation of clay pigeon shooting ranges and the task of life (Cuban response to climate change).
- Cooperation with different entities and state enterprises in the control of harmful fauna such as the mongoose and jibaro or feral cats and dogs.

In spite of the economic limitations that the country goes through and the lack of cartridges for the practice of hunting by the associates and the development of the activities and competences foreseen, today it has gained spaces in the understanding of the sectors involved in the activity with respect to its continuity as a manifestation of the national culture and tradition. Cuban sport hunters continue to be committed to this purpose and have taken up the challenge of exercising it on a sustainable basis.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Arroyo, B., Delibes-Mateos, M., Caro, J., Estrada, A., Mougeot, F., Díaz-Fernández, S., Casas, F., Viñuela, J. (2013). Effect of small game management on non-game fauna. *Ecosistemas* 22(2):27-32. Doi.: 10.7818/ECOS.2013.22-2.05.

Chamizo, R. (2004). Caza y sostenibilidad: una polémica de actualidad también en Cuba. *Revista Forestal Baracoa*. Número especial

Covisa, Justo (2017). Caza Sostenible: un modelo de caza para el s. XXI. *Revista TROFEO*.

Díaz Susavila, Tony (2018). Cazadores por la vida. JIT la actualidad del deporte cubano. Recuperado de <http://www.jit.cu/NewsDetails.aspx?idnoticia=87943>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International license
Copyright (c) 2019 Luis Alberto Cuesta Martínez