

Rewilding in Romania

Hunting

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Core topics

- The legal framework applicable to hunting
- Game species and species with hunting interest
- Limitations to hunting
- Liability for damage caused by game

Key takeaways

- 1 Hunting is only legal when done in designated areas.
- 2 Hunting concessions are contracted with the manager of the hunting zone.
- 3 There are certain areas, such as protected areas, where hunting is not allowed.
- 4 It is possible to designate or create areas within hunting zones, where hunting is prohibited or restricted.
- 5 Liability for damage caused by game species is governed by special rules but responsibility essentially lies on public authorities and the manager of the hunting zone.

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1. How does hunting work in Romania?

Hunting is regulated by the Hunting Law,¹ which considers hunting both as a means to obtain food and as a manifestation of an ancient cultural practice. The Hunting Law (i) identifies the game species which may be hunted; (ii) regulates the conditions to become an authorised hunter; and (iii) regulates the areas where hunting may take place.

The hunting regime has the primary goal of administering and managing game fauna in a sustainable manner. It aims to conserve biodiversity

and maintain ecological balance while allowing the practice of hunting and associated socioeconomic activities.²

Excluded from this understanding of "hunting" are activities such as killing animals for damage mitigation or to prevent wildlife-human conflict because these are activities which are usually undertaken by contractual partners of the public authorities.³

2. What species may be hunted?

Hunting legislation refers to game species and to species of hunting interest.⁴ This distinction aims to ensure that both the practice of hunting, and the conservation of biodiversity and ecological balance are duly considered.

2.1 Game species

Game species are those species of wild animals that can be legally hunted. The list is in [Annex 1](#) of the Hunting Law. You can find a list of the most common game species in Romania [here](#).

Hunting these species is only legal during set periods of the year and within the quotas set out in the Hunting Law. These both vary between species.

There are, however, some exceptions as game species can be killed at any time of the year, in any part of Romania, where they are causing damage to crops, forestry, or domestic animals.

2.2 Species of hunting interest

The Hunting Law also refers to species of hunting interest. This category refers to species that were historically hunted but are now protected, being illegal to hunt them.

A list of these species is in [Annex 2](#) of the Hunting Law. These species are generally the same species as those protected by European legislation, such as the Habitats and Birds directives.⁵ The prohibition on hunting these species applies regardless of whether they live in, or outside of, protected natural areas.

3. Where can hunting take place?

As stated above, hunting is only legal when done in designated areas. These are called “hunting zones.” A hunting zone consists of an area of public or private land where game species roam free and can be hunted. To be considered a hunting zone, several conditions must be met:⁶

- the size of the hunting zone area must be at least 5,000ha in the plains; 7,000ha in the hills; and 10,000ha in the mountains;
- the population of game species in the hunting zone must be sufficiently large and stable;⁷
- the geographical extent of the hunting zone must be identified with defined limits (e.g. fences or certain signs may be considered);
- hunting funds must be established over time;
- all administrative units, except municipalities⁸, must be included in the hunting zone.

Hunting zones, either in public or private land, are administrated by local public authorities), who may assign the right to manage the hunting zone to a third party, under a hunting concession⁹.

3.1 Hunting concessions

A hunting concession is the contract between the administrator of the hunting zone and a manager,

under which terms the latter pays a fee to the administrator and agrees to sustainably manage the hunting zone. Hunting concessions are usually concluded for 16 years.¹⁰

Only the following entities can be authorised as a manager of hunting zones and enter a hunting concession with the administrator:

- hunting organisations¹¹;
- the manager of publicly owned state forests;
- managers of privately owned forests;
- managers of the publicly owned forests of the administrative-territorial units;
- public institutions with an objective of scientific research in the hunting field; and
- educational institutions that study hunting.

Example

Can a rewilding organisation become the manager of a hunting area?

Under Romanian law, hunting areas are assigned by the public authority responsible for hunting management to various types of managers, including hunting organisations.

However, based on the legal definition of a *hunting organisation*, a rewilding organisation would not typically qualify.

According to the Hunting Law, a hunting organisation must be a Romanian legal entity established by the free association of hunters domiciled or resident in Romania. Its statutory purpose must include the sustainable management of hunting fauna and the practice of hunting. In addition, hunting organisations are required to carry out specific hunting related activities, such as issuing hunting permits through qualified personnel, managing game

populations, and maintaining facilities necessary for hunting activities.

These characteristics appear, at first glance, to be incompatible with the objectives of a rewilding organisation, particularly where the focus is on non-intervention and ecosystem restoration, rather than active game management.

However, a legal workaround may be possible. Members of a rewilding organisation who hold valid hunting licences could, in principle, incorporate a new legal entity as a

hunting organisation. To comply with the legal framework, the articles of incorporation would need to include, amongst the organisation's objectives, the practice of hunting.

Once established, this new entity could apply for the management of a hunting area and would assume all responsibilities required by law, including the establishment of quiet zones and the vetting of hunting licence candidates (see section 6 below).

In conclusion, whilst a rewilding organisation in its current form may not qualify as a manager of a hunting area, its members could establish a separate, legally compliant hunting organisation for this purpose, provided all statutory requirements are met.

If the hunting zone is set on private property, all the owners of the land included in that hunting zone may form a landowners' association. In this context, the landowners' association has the right to choose a manager for the hunting zone

established on their properties. The hunting concession will be directly assigned to the manager proposed by the landowners' association.

When the hunting concession ends (e.g. when the term of the concession expires or when the concession agreement is terminated by one of the parties for breach of legal or contractual obligations), the right to manage the hunting zone will be assigned to a different manager.

4. What permits and authorisations are required for hunting?

A hunting permit¹² together with an individual hunting authorisation or a registration in a collective hunting permit¹³ are required for each hunter. Additionally, a gun licence and an accident and civil liability insurance certificate related to the hunting activity¹⁴ are also required. To hunt on someone else's property, a hunter must be able to show their hunting authorisation on demand.¹⁵

The hunting permit is a document issued by a hunting organisation considering the existing quotas

allocated to each hunting concession. Such quotas are determined according to the size of the hunting zone area managed by the respective hunting organisation. The hunting permit may be cancelled if its holder has committed an offence under the Hunting Law.¹⁶

An individual hunting permit/registration within a collective hunting permit is a registration attesting that an individual/a group has the right to hunt in a hunting zone or in a portion of the hunting zone.

The registration document is issued by the hunting zone manager, with a term of validity ranging from 1 to 30 days, specifying the game species which can be hunted under the authorisation.¹⁷

A hunter's right to hunt will be suspended if their gun licence is suspended or if the hunting permit has been revoked. This may occur if the holder has breached the terms of the permit.¹⁸

5. Can land be removed from a hunting zone?

The act of establishing hunting zones is a duty on the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests. If land is included in a hunting zone, the landowner is generally obliged to allow authorised hunting on their land.¹⁹

This obligation will continue until it is no longer in the public interest. This could occur, for example, if in the future there were no animals to hunt in the area.

The Hunting Law does not allow an individual to request changes to the area covered by a hunting zone or the regime applicable to a particular hunting zone.

6. Is it possible to restrict hunting within a hunting zone?

Under Romanian law, two legal mechanisms can be used to restrict hunting within designated hunting zones:

- the designation of unproductive hunting areas; and
- the establishment of quiet areas.

These mechanisms may offer practitioners important tools to limit or exclude hunting in areas critical to their projects.

6.1 Unproductive hunting areas (*suprafață neproductivă cinegetică*)

The Hunting Law classifies land within hunting zones as either productive or unproductive, based on game presence.²⁰

- Productive hunting areas are frequented by game species and are therefore subject to hunting activities and management. These

include calculating game quotas, issuing hunting permits, and implementing measures such as supplementary feeding or population control.

- Unproductive hunting areas are lands within the hunting zone that are not frequented by game or support only very low game densities. These areas may be excluded from hunting activities by an administrative decision issued by the relevant central public authority.

The designation of unproductive areas does not alter the land's inclusion in the hunting zone but does mean that no active hunting or related interventions are to occur there. This distinction creates a potential route for landowners to seek the exclusion of their land from hunting practices, especially where ecological conditions support minimal game presence.



Romanian hunting dog during, Mehadia, Caras Severin.
Florian Möllers / Rewilding Europe

6.2 Quiet areas (*zonă de liniște*)

The Hunting Law requires that each hunting zone must include at least one quiet area, covering at least 10% of the area of the hunting zone.²¹

Quiet areas are subject to hunting restrictions and may include complete bans or reduced activity. These zones are intended to ensure that optimal living conditions and densities are secured to the protection of the fauna. Specific limitations are determined on a case-by-case basis.

The manager of the hunting zone is responsible for the management of these areas, but decisions regarding any extensions to the quiet area must involve both the Environmental Protection National Agency (ANPM) and the manager of the hunting zone.

For rewilding areas located within a hunting zone, seeking designation as a quiet area offers a practical means of restricting hunting activity. Whilst expanding the quiet area is possible, practitioners are advised to consult with ANPM for procedural guidance.

Where a protected natural area overlaps with a hunting zone, that area must either be designated as a quiet area or as an unproductive area, and hunting must be prohibited in that part of the hunting zone.

In summary, if a rewilding area lies within a hunting zone there are two primary legal avenues to restrict hunting:

- request designation as part of the hunting zone's quiet area;
- seeking designation or expansion of a protected area to include the rewilding area. Protected status either bans hunting outright or compels the hunting manager to treat the area as a quiet area.

Where an adjacent protected natural area already exists, practitioners may request an extension of its boundaries to include the rewilded land, provided it meets the legal criteria for protection (typically, the confirmed presence of protected species). Once added, the area will be subject to the same conservation and use measures as the core protected site.

Example

Landowner A owns a property located within a legally established hunting zone but wishes to prevent hunting on their property and to discourage hunters from entering the land.

a) Can Landowner A exclude their land from the hunting zone?

Romanian hunting law does not provide a direct mechanism for individual landowners to unilaterally exclude their property from an existing hunting zone. However, if the land meets the ecological, scientific, or conservation criteria outlined under GEO 57/2007⁵, Landowner A may request that it be designated as a *protected natural area*. Once designated, hunting activities may be restricted or prohibited, depending on the

category of protection granted (e.g., national park, nature reserve, etc.) For the designation as a protected area, see *Rewilding in Romania: Obtaining and Protecting Wild Land, section 3*

b) Are there other ways to restrict hunting, such as a designation as a refuge?

If the property is not eligible to become a protected area under GEO 57/2007, two other options exist:

could propose extending the *quiet area (zonă de liniște)* within the hunting zone to cover their land. Quiet areas are required by law to provide undisturbed zones for wildlife and must be established by the hunting manager.

Whilst there is a minimum area threshold (10% of the area of the hunting zone), there is no legal maximum, so expansion is theoretically possible. If the scientific basis for conservation is strong and approved by the relevant authorities, Landowner A could propose extending the quiet area to cover the entirety of their land, or even the entire hunting zone, though this would require collaboration with the hunting manager and approval from the competent authority.

2. Classification as an unproductive hunting area: if Landowner A's land is not frequented by game or has a very low game density, they may request that it be formally classified as an unproductive area. This classification excludes the land from hunting activities, although it remains formally part of the hunting zone. The decision must be issued by the central environmental authority based on ecological data and an assessment of game presence.

Both routes provide possible legal grounds to limit or exclude hunting activities without needing to remove the land from the hunting zone entirely.

c) Can Landowner A remain within the hunting zone but refuse to engage in hunting?

Landowner A may remain the hunting manager (if they hold the required licence) or be a landowner within a hunting zone managed by another entity

and still choose not to hunt themselves. In turn, Landowner A cannot prevent hunters from engaging in hunting, as they are required to allow authorised hunting activities to be carried out on their land.

However, if Landowner A is the hunting manager, they still bear the obligation under the Hunting Law to perform wildlife census assessments and establish quotas for the species present, even if they do not intend to issue permits or organise hunting activities.

A lower reported game population will result in a lower annual quota and, therefore, fewer hunting permits will be issued for the area. However, intentionally underreporting wildlife numbers may result in penalties or legal consequences.

d) Can Landowner A stop hunters from crossing or accessing their property?

In principle, hunters cannot enter private land to hunt without a valid hunting permit and must present the permit on request. However, if the property lies within an officially designated hunting zone, and the hunters have legal authorisation, Landowner A generally cannot prevent access for the purpose of regulated hunting, unless the land is subject to additional restrictions (e.g. designated as a protected or quiet area).

Hunters must follow the rules for responsible conduct on private land, and Landowner A has the right to report any trespassing, unauthorised hunting, or misconduct to the competent hunting authority or law enforcement.

7. Who is liable for damage/harm caused by game species?

When game species cause damage and/or harm to agricultural crops, forestry or domestic animals, compensation shall be granted.²² For more information on liability for damage caused by animals, see *Rewilding in Romania: Liability for damage caused by animals*.

Liability does not lie with the private landowner but is instead assigned to public authorities or designated wildlife managers, depending on the location and circumstances of the damage.²³

Liability for damage caused by game species arises in four main scenarios:

- Injury or death as a result of the attack from a game species: the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests is responsible for paying compensation, including moral damages, to the victim or their family.²⁴
- Damage in protected natural areas not included in hunting zones or where hunting is prohibited (quiet areas and unproductive areas): the ANPM is responsible for paying compensation.²⁵
- Damage in protected areas included in hunting zones where hunting is prohibited: the ANPM is also responsible for these cases.

- Damage in hunting zones or in towns and villages: the hunting zone manager may be liable if they have failed to meet their obligations to prevent damage (see below).²⁶ If the manager has fulfilled these obligations, liability shifts to the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests.²⁷

To avoid liability, hunting zone managers should ensure that they comply with a number of legal duties, including to:

- meet the annual hunting quotas set by the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Forests²⁸;
- provide supplementary food and water to wild animals where appropriate; and
- respond to requests by agricultural landowners to remove game species from their property, on at least three occasions (although the law does not clearly define the timeframe for such requests).

Failure to meet any of these obligations may result not just in liability for damages caused by the game species, but also in liability for the damage caused to the animals the hunting zone managers manage.²⁹

However, it is important to stress that owners of agricultural/forest crops are not obliged to ensure the protection of agricultural/forest crops and to place means to remove the animals.³⁰ This means that hunting managers cannot claim that the damage were caused by the victim's own fault (e.g. leaving attractants unsecured).

In summary, as game species are managed by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests and their designated authorities or licensed managers, private practitioners are not liable for damage caused by game species unless they are acting as formal wildlife managers under a legal arrangement. However, close coordination with the relevant authorities is essential to ensure clarity on responsibilities and to avoid misunderstandings, especially where rewilding intersects with areas under hunting regulation.

Example

Landowner A has applied for their land to be designated as a "quiet area", a zone where hunting is restricted or prohibited to protect wildlife. However, during the processing period, the land remains part of a hunting zone. Due to minimal human presence, some

wild boars residing on the property escape and cause damage to neighbouring agricultural lands.

1. What are the obligations of the hunting concession for damage caused by the animals?

The manager of the hunting area is responsible for preventing damage caused by game species (see section 7). If damage occurs and the manager has not fulfilled their obligations, such as implementing measures to prevent game from causing harm, they may be liable to pay compensation.

If Landowner A is also the manager of the hunting area, these rules apply to them. If not, Landowner A is not liable but the hunting manager is.

2. Does it make a difference that a request to designate the land as a quiet area was already in progress but not yet in place at the time of events?

Whilst the application for quiet area status is under review, the land legally remains part of the

hunting zone. Therefore, the hunting manager retains responsibility for managing game species and preventing damage. The pending status does not transfer liability to Landowner A unless they are also the

designated manager of the hunting area. Because the land is still part of the hunting zone, although as a quiet area, Landowner A may still be liable for the damage if they are the game manager of the hunting area.

3. What is the liability after the quiet area designation?

Once the land is officially designated as a quiet area and excluded from the hunting zone, the responsibility for damage caused by game species shifts. In such cases, the ANPM becomes liable for damages resulting from game species, as the area is no longer under the jurisdiction of a hunting concessionaire.

Liability for damage caused by game species is dependent upon the land's designation status and the fulfilment of management obligations by the hunting managers. Landowners are not required to implement protective measures against game species, and responsibility lies with the designated managers or public authorities based on the current legal status of the land.



*Romanian hunters hunting wild boar, Mehadia, Caras Severin.
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End Notes:

1. The main piece of legislation to consider is the Law no. 407/2006 of 9 November on hunting and the protection of the hunting zone (the "**Hunting Law**"), as amended. The most up to date version is available [here](#).
2. Hunting Law, article 1(x) and article 3.
3. Hunting Law, article 1[^]1.
4. Hunting Law, article 1(ac) and article 1(m), respectively.
5. The Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57/2007 of 20 June on the regime of protected natural areas, conservation of natural habitats, wild flora and fauna ("**GEO 57/2007**") has the goal to fully reconcile the national legislation with the terms of European Union in the field of nature protection and taking into account the provisions of Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of species of wild flora and fauna and to guarantee the conservation and sustainable use of the natural heritage, an objective of major public interest and a fundamental component of the national strategy for sustainable development. The species relevant here are those listed in Annexes 4A and 4B of GEO 57/2007.
6. Hunting Law, article 5.
7. Hunting Law, article 6(1j): this information is gathered by the manager of the hunting fund (i.e. game manager), who keeps records and publishes data on the game population.
8. A municipality is a level of administrative subdivision. In Romania, the municipality status is given to large and urbanised towns. The law refers to "localitati", a word that has no English equivalent and that means a general territorial unit (urban or rural), larger than towns but smaller than counties. However, since villages refers especially to rural territorial units, "administrative units" is deemed more suitable and comprehensive in this context.
9. Hunting Law, article 1(c): assignment to management is the action by which the administrator – the central public authority responsible for hunting and ensuring the management of game fauna – grants the right and obligation to manage the fauna of hunting interest, under the conditions set out in this law.
10. Hunting Law, article 9(1).
11. Hunting Law, article 1(t).
12. Hunting Law, article 1(u), article 27(a), and article 28.
13. Hunting Law, article 27(b).
14. Hunting Law, article 27(c) and (d).
15. Hunting Law, article 4(1).
16. Offences under Hunting Law which lead to permit cancellation are: (i) hunting with snares, greyhounds; (ii) hunting strictly protected game species without complying with the legal provisions; (iii) tracking wounded game on another game reserve belonging to another manager without the latter's consent; and (iv) hunting outside the legal hunting periods for specific species.
17. Based on the individual hunting authorisation, specimens of the following game species can be hunted: black goat, roe deer, red deer, fallow deer, marmot, wild boar, mouflon, jackal, fox, grouse and mountain grouse.
Based on the collective hunting authorisation, specimens of the following species can be hunted: muskrat, raccoon dog, common ferret, ermine, field rabbit, burrowing rabbit, marten, wild boar, weasel, jackal, wild boar, fox, woodcock, skylark, crow, southern crow, crow, coot, pheasant, grouse, moorhen, summer goose, merganser, starling teal and turtledove.
18. Such as disturbing the peace of game fauna during the breeding period, keeping wild game in captivity without authorisation, failure to inform the local authorities of the carcasses of wildlife species of interest in the hunting zone, destruction or removal of the game species' food.
19. Hunting Law, article 4(2).
20. Hunting Law, article 1(y)(z).
21. Hunting Law, article 1(af) and article 20(1)(2).
22. Hunting Law, article 13(1).
23. Hunting Law, article 13(2).

24. Hunting Law, article 13¹(1).

25. Hunting Law, article 13(2b).

26. Hunting Law, article 13(2a).

27. Hunting Law, article 13(3).

28. See Order no. 905 of April 29, 2024, on the approval of harvest quotas for the roe deer species (*Capreolus capreolus*) for the period May 1, 2024-April 30, 2025, available [here](#). Practitioners should be aware that these quotas are updated before every hunting season.

29. Hunting Law, article 14.

30. Hunting Law, article 13(4).

Contact Us

More information about rewilding and the issues addressed in this guidance note is available on [The Lifescape Project](#) and [Rewilding Europe](#) websites.

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to Rewilding Romania for sharing their practical experiences of rewilding in Romania.
Thank you also to Clifford Chance LLP for their legal support in producing this briefing note.

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