NATIONAL PARKS AUSTRIA

Nationalpark Hohe Tauern

Documentation

20 Years of Carinthian National Park Reserves: From Hunting to Wildlife Management

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Hunting and the National Park

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Hunting and the National Park

Hunters are not unconditional fans of National Parks, at least not those on their doorstep. In a survey conducted in European mountain national parks, one of my students, *Ulrich Schraml,* polled the attitude of the various interest groups. What emerged is that those who appreciate National Parks the most are always the visitors, with hunters at the other end of the scale. So why is it that there's tension in the air between hunters and National Parks? You would think it's because something is being taken away from them and, indeed, there have been instances where that was the case.

To understand this area of tension it's probably best to take a look at the origins and rise in popularity of the National Park phenomenon. The idea was born around a campfire in what is today the Yellowstone National Park. In 1871 the respected geologist *Ferdinand Hayden* ventured off with 34 men and seven wagons on a government mandate to explore a region that was then little known – at least to white people. Included as part of the convoy were the photographer *Henry Jackson* and the painter *Thomas Moran*. They rode into a territory where, according to mountain man and trapper *John Colter,* the earth was a-broil and spewed hot water; in fact, sceptics referred to it as Colter's Hell. When the trapper's stories turned out to be true, *Hayden,* as head of the expedition, sat around the aforementioned campfire with his men and discussed what to suggest to Congress as the best course of action for dealing with this exceptional piece of land. The consensus was that it should not be given up to exploitation and that, instead, it should be 'set aside for the benefit and enjoyment of the people'. And so the idea of the National Park was born. The thinking behind it was to preserve Yellowstone from the same fate as the Niagara Falls: at the time it was impossible to get close, even for a glimpse, without having to press a couple of dollars into palms readily outstretched.

Photo: Henry Jackson

Always hunting: Trapper Richard Beaver Dick Leigh with his Shoshone wife Sue and their children William, Emma and Rose in the Yellowstone territory before the park was established.

During the *Hayden* expedition, hunting was a topic only insofar as bison and deer were shot for food.

One year later, in 1872, the National Park was established and signed into law by the government. A large-format painting by *Thomas Moran* proved as inspirational as it was persuasive. It depicted the deep Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River set in a stunning display of light. Thereafter the idea went around the globe. To this day I'm still not quite sure what it is about National Parks that's so fascinating. It's not patriotism, nor can it be nationalism, i.e. an exaggerated awareness of the importance of one's own nation.

The oil painting entitled The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone *by Thomas Moran was instrumental in persuading the US Congress of the National Park idea.*

(Source: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thomas_Moran_-_Grand_Canyon_of_the_Yellowstone_-_Smithsonian.jpg)

By 1970 there was a sense of dissatisfaction about the proliferation of National Parks, so much so that the United Nations began to tighten up the National Park concept through the agency of the IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Today, the primary objective of a National Park is *to protect natural biodiversity along with its underlying ecological structure [...] and to promote education and recreation*. So the essence of the idea born around that campfire all those years ago is still there. National Parks are now subject to certification, and those that manage to clear the tough hurdle are able to join the circle of the 5,000+ internationally recognised National Parks. And that hurdle is a high one: indeed, 75% of a National Park must not be subject to any economic usage or exploitation, which brings us nicely to hunting.

At the time that National Parks were established, hunting was widespread in practically all areas, so changes had to be made to this particular type of land use. In some cases this was implemented without conflict, as for instance at the Gran Paradiso National Park in the Aosta Valley in 1923. There *Vittorio Emanuele III* from the House of Savoy had offered the royal hunting grounds, which had previously been established by his grandfather to protect the ibex population, to the Italian state for the purposes of setting up a National Park. The hunters to the royal household became park wardens.

The scenario that played out in another instance in the Italian Alps, the Stelvio National Park, was quite different. There, in 1935, the fascist government under *Benito Mussolini* established the National Park over the heads of the local population, along with a series of restrictions that included a ban on hunting. In one fell swoop the hunters in the affected areas lost their hunting opportunities, which were bound to municipal boundaries. Overnight, hunters became poachers. And to this day the Park continues to suffer from its founding history. *Horst Ebenhöfer* (born 1968) describes in his book his extensive poaching achievements in the National Park. In doing so he confirms the theory of Viennese cultural commentator and historian *Roland Girtler* that 'the poacher is a rebel who takes what he believes to be his due'.

In South Africa's famous Krüger National Park the local population was hit even harder. In 1969 the indigenous Makuleke people were simply relocated out of the Park: in the eyes of the apartheid government, their lifestyle was nothing other than poaching.
The Tatra National Park, which was set up with a single stroke of the pen by the Council of Ministers of the CSSR (Editor's note: Czechoslovak Republic) in 1949, also illustrates the extent to which a political system is reflected in its handling of the hunting issue. While there was to be no further hunting of chamois, *the nomenklatura* (Editor's note: a *de facto elite of public powers* in the Socialist countries) reserved the right for itself to hunt trophy stags. Hunting and power were closely linked in the countries of the Eastern Bloc, and democratic control was non-existent.
But there are other ways, too. The Swiss National Park, the elder statesman in this category of protected areas in Europe, was set up in 1914 across the land area of four municipalities, but only after compensation schemes had been negotiated with them. At the time the forest was not worth a great deal and the area was sparsely populated. However, a crucial aspect for the Park's acceptance was that the hunters, who were not tied down locally in the licensed hunting canton of Graubünden, were able to turn to other areas. So anyone who had previously hunted in the area of the National Park could now hunt on the other side of the valley.

Sometimes the hunting issue gives rise to some bizarre solutions. In National Parks in America, conventional hunting, i.e. licensed hunting by ordinary citizens, is forbidden in principle under a federal law. Only park rangers are authorised to use guns within the Park. And the resistance from hunters was great when the Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming was to be expanded from the mountain slopes to the valley floor, incorporating the crossing of the elk population as it migrates to its largest wintering areas (where some 5,000 stags spend the winter). In the end, Congress passed special legislation in 1950 under which hunters could be authorised to regulate the stag population, if and when such a necessity arose.

Photo: Mangelsen

Deputy park rangers for a short spell: hunters in the Grand Teton National Park in the US.

Since then, in late autumn, several hundred hunters are briefly deputised as park rangers in the Grand Teton National Park by the relevant Department. Where there's a will...

Today, National Parks are established according to principles founded on the rule of law, with a high level of citizens' participation. Only then can they be properly anchored within the population. The simplest route is when National Parks are established on national territories in which the state also owns the hunting rights. In the recently established Kalkalpen National Park the largest landowner is the Austrian Federal Forestry Office; similarly, the Bavarian Forest National Park, the Berchtesgaden National Park, and the recently established Black Forest National Park are also mainly on land owned by the State.

The Hohe Tauern National Park in Carinthia broke new ground insofar as 98% of its territory is situated on private land and, at the time it was founded, consisted of ordinary hunting reserves. In this instance, resolving the hunting issue was more difficult and more laborious by an extra dimension right from the outset in that it required a particularly thorough involvement of both the citizens and the authorities.

Photo: Schröder (2)

Students from all over the world are interested in the model of the Hohe Tauern National Park.

In the end, after several years of discussions with stakeholders, the Hohe Tauern National Park came up with a model that did not exist anywhere else. The Park itself leases hunting reserves which combine to create an extensive wildlife quiet zone in which traditional hunting is suspended. In these National Park reserves there is no recreational and/or trophy-orientated hunting. If it is necessary to control the population of a particular species of game, the Park's personnel takes charge and does so on a professional basis. Population control is maintained at low levels, with the wildlife quiet areas in the Park interlocking efficiently with ordinary hunting reserves all around. With this constellation it is unlikely for red deer and other species to become too populous and pose a threat to the forest.

To make sure nothing gets out of hand in the future, the Provincial Government appointed an advisory committee in which both the landowners and the hunting community are represented. What initially seemed like an exercise in squaring the circle became an exemplary solution to the hunting issue in a large National Park established on private land.

Traditional hunting no longer exists in most National Parks. But does that mean that guns are now silent? The Swiss National Park is exemplary in this respect: no animal there is hunted. Austria's mountain national parks also have large quiet zones, as does the Bavarian Forest National Park and the Berchtesgaden National Park. However, if we compare Germany's eleven National Parks, we see that most of them carry out a diverse 'regulation of the game stock', even over a wide area. It comprises raccoon dog, raccoon, fox, deer, red deer, chamois, and wild boar.

And what do visitors to the National Parks actually look for? *"In the past they came here for the geological phenomena,"* says *John Varley*, Head of Research at Yellowstone Park, "but guess what: today they come here for the bison and the wolves." People want to see wildlife, not just in the US, Africa or India, but also in Europe. The 'National Park effect' is conducive to that inasmuch as animals become less fearful of human presence if people appear on a regular basis without hunting the animals down. That same wish holds true for Parks that are predominantly forested and do not have large herds to offer. Here, too, visitors do not want the animals to be disturbed, i.e. to be hunted down. There's a touch of the perfect world about it, a touch of wilderness.

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Spotting wildlife, undisturbed: visitors at the Gran Sasso National Park, Italy.

Hunting in Austria – Hunting in Carinthia

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Hunting in Austria

The statutory basis for game law in Austria is the Austrian Federal Constitutional Act (Section 15 Paragraph 1 B-VG 1920). Under the provisions of the Austrian Federal Constitution, hunting is *Landessache,* i.e. a matter for the federal provinces, which is why each of Austria's nine federal provinces has its own provincial hunting law. Austria does not have a 'federal framework law' for matters pertaining to hunting. So, in Austria, hunting is based on nine provincial hunting laws and the relevant implementing orders.

Austria has what is referred to as a 'reserve system', which excludes persons other than the holders of the hunting right from hunting activities or appropriations in reserve (hunting ground). In Austria, game law is inseparably linked with the ownership of landed property. There are no exceptions to this fundamental principle. However, game law does not necessarily comprise the right to hunting. The owner of landed property only has a hunting right if he has the *Eigenjagdberechtigung,* i.e. the landowner's right to hunt on his own estate. As a rule such rights are granted if the landowner is able to show a continuous freehold property of more than 115 hectares (or more than 300 hectares in some federal provinces) in surface area. He may hunt on this owner's hunting ground himself if he holds a hunting licence; otherwise, he must lease the hunting ground or have it administered. Land that does not belong to landowners for the purposes of their own hunting is ascribed as collectively owned or municipal hunting grounds. From all the land areas that do not belong to landowners for the purposes of their own hunting, each municipality in Austria constitutes what becomes that municipality's collectively owned or municipal hunting ground. Such collectively owned or municipal hunting grounds must be leased out; in all these cases the game tenants are then the persons with the entitlement to hunt. Landowners receive financial compensation for their leased hunting rights. The person with the entitlement to hunt is the bearer of all the entitlements and obligations with regard to hunting in the relevant hunting reserve.

The aim of any gamekeeping or game protection [*Hege*] is to preserve a healthy species-rich wildlife stock while being mindful of the interests of agriculture and forestry.

Hunting and gamekeeping are to be carried out in such a way that the preservation of the forest and its effects are not put at risk. Gamekeeping and game protection is both a right and an obligation.

Anyone wishing to hunt in Austria must obtain a hunting licence. Before such a licence can be obtained for the first time, the novice hunter has to successfully pass the hunting exam. As each federal province has its own provincial hunting licence, it is advisable to sit the hunting exam in the federal province in which the hunter wishes to hunt. Obtaining an Austrian provincial hunting licence also allows the hunter to hunt in all the other federal provinces with a guest hunting licence (only Tyrol has yearly hunting licences exclusively). Obtaining a yearly hunting licence is possible without problem in all the other federal provinces once several yearly hunting licences for a particular federal province have been held.

All provincial hunting laws are based on the principle of sportsmanship. All hunting activities must comply with the generally recognised principles of sportsmanship ('code of ethics') and the principles of orderly game management. This is also the only way of ensuring that hunting does not clash with the provisions of the Federal Protection of Animals Act.

The hunting authorities of first instance are the district administration authorities, the provincial governments, and the hunters' associations. The hunting authorities of second instance are the nine regional administrative courts.

All the provincial hunting laws and their implementing orders specify the open and closed seasons for individual wildlife species. 'Wildlife' refers only to those species of animal that are named in the provincial hunting laws and the open and closed season ordinances. Some species may constitute 'game' in one federal province, but not in another, e.g. golden jackal, coypu, elk. The provincial governments and individual district administration authorities may also modify (extend or shorten) the open and closed seasons for individual districts depending on regional circumstances and requirements.

Certain wildlife species in Austria are subject to culling schedules. These species of wildlife can only be culled by official approval or decree. The approved or decreed shoots are actually to be carried out as part of the culling schedule. Culling schedules apply to all species of cloven-hoofed game (with the exception of wild boar). Grouse and marmot are also subject to a culling schedule in some federal provinces.

For each hunting ground the person with the entitlement to hunt – or his hunting protection agent (game warden) – is to keep a record of the culls. This culling list is to be submitted to the authorities once a year so the shoots that have been carried out can be verified. The shoots conducted are also verified as part of an exhibition of trophies held once a year. All trophy animals (cervine and bovine animals) are to be presented by the hunters who made the kills. The kills are assessed according to gender and age categories and compared with the culling schedules.

Game and hunting protection regulations are an important part of hunting in Austria. Novice hunters are eligible to sit their game warden exam after approximately five years. Once the applicant has passed the game warden exam (game and hunting protection exam) he or she has the possibility of becoming a hunting protection agent (game warden). These agents are appointed to a particular hunting ground and then confirmed and sworn in by the authority. They then represent the 'extended arm' of the authority in that particular hunting ground and are responsible for monitoring the observance of hunting regulations. Each reserve (hunting ground) has at least one hunting protection agent (one game warden). Game and hunting protection means keeping the game safe from hazards, threats and hardships. Nowadays, that includes feeding the game in times of need and during early vegetation periods, and shooting predatory game or animals that may be harmful to the game ('vermin', stray dogs, stray cats, carrion crows, magpies, jays). Combating poaching also comes under the heading 'game and hunting protection'. Likewise, all the measures and actions aimed at gamekeeping and/or game protection are part of game and hunting protection.

Source: Zentralstelle Österreichischer Landesjagdverbände, Jagd in Österreich, www.ljv.at/jagd_system.htm (23 November 2015).

The Carinthian Hunting Act 2000

The term 'hunt' comprises the right to care and protect, hunt and appropriate animals living in the wild. 'Wildlife management' in a National Park is not about economic or silvicultural aspects, trophies or the traditional gamekeeping and game protection; rather, it is about regulating wildlife stocks first and foremost for the protection of the cultural landscape surrounding the National Park. In this context the wildlife and its habitats are managed in conformity with natural mechanisms.

Source: Wissen Nationalpark, Jagd- und Wildtiermanagement, www.wissen-nationalpark.de/wissensbasis/jagd-und-wildtiermanagement (23 November 2015).

The Carinthian Hunting Act (Provincial Law Gazette No. 21/2000 as amended in Provincial Law Gazette No. 85/2013) applies without restriction to the whole of Carinthia, i.e. also to the reserves situated in the Hohe Tauern National Park. Game law consists of the authority, within hunting grounds, to care and protect, hunt, trap, kill and appropriate game; also, the authority to appropriate carrion, shed antlers, and the eggs of feathered game. Game law is derived from landed property; it is linked with it and cannot be established as an independent right.

In hunting grounds that belong to landowners for the purposes of their own hunting, the landowner is the person with the entitlement to hunt; in municipal hunting grounds, it is the municipality. The hunting right can be transferred to third parties through leasing, through the appointment of an authorised person, or through the appointment of a hunting administrator. Municipalities and agricultural communities must lease out their hunting right. If leasing is not possible, a hunting administrator is to be appointed so hunting can be carried out.

Orderly hunting operations are said to exist whenever the practice of hunting including gamekeeping serves to achieve and maintain a species-rich healthy wildlife stock commensurate with the size and structure of the hunting ground. Orderly hunting operations also include the proper exercise of game and hunting protection.

To constitute a landowner hunting ground, a continuous surface area of at least 115 hectares usable for hunting purposes and belonging to the same owner is required.

The municipal hunting ground is formed by continuous plots of landed property usable for hunting purposes and situated within a municipality. The hunting ground must have a minimum size of 500 hectares and none of the land must be part of a landowner hunting ground. The hunting grounds are specified by the district administration authorities for the duration of the lease period for municipal hunting. The term of the lease is ten years, with the lease year lasting from January 1 to December 31.

Hunting is suspended on the area of cemeteries, houses and farms along with their associated farmyards and gardens fully contained within fenced enclosures, public facilities, and plant facilities operated for industrial or commercial purposes. Regardless of surface area, preserve enclosures are fenced-in areas in which game is kept for the purposes of show,

rearing, the exclusive production of meat or furs/pelts as part of an agricultural holding, for research purposes, or for comparable purposes. The provincial government is to be notified whenever any such enclosures are to be erected.

The right to hunt can only be leased in its entirety. Hunting leases are subject to the requirement of written form. Approval of the district administration authorities is necessary in order for the lease to be valid. The right to hunt is to be leased only to persons

- to whom the issue of a hunting licence is not denied;
- who for at least three years previously have held without interruption a valid hunting licence issued by an Austrian federal province or a hunting licence issued by a contracting state of the European Economic Area and the European Union;
- who have reached the age of 21;
- who are not excluded from leasing the right to hunt; and
- who are Austrian nationals or nationals of a contracting state of the European Economic Area and the European Union.

Hunting without a valid Carinthian hunting licence (hunting licence, guest hunting licence) is prohibited. The hunting licence is not transferrable. Besides a valid Carinthian hunting licence a hunting certificate must also be obtained if the hunt is not accompanied by the person with the entitlement to hunt or by the latter's hunting protection agent, with the consent of the person with the entitlement to hunt.

The consent of the landowner is required if the person with the entitlement to hunt wishes to erect installations used for hunting operations (e.g. hunting cabins, raised hides, feeding places, hunting tracks, game fences, etc.). If the person with the entitlement to hunt is unable to reach a hunting ground by public path or by a path intended for general use or is able to do so only by taking a disproportionately circuitous or strenuous detour, the district administration authorities are to specify an emergency track for said use, in the absence of agreement.

Game damage is the damage caused by game to landed property within the hunting ground and to any crop products within said property that have not yet been harvested; it also includes damage to domestic animals. Hunting damage is the damage caused during hunting by persons with the entitlement to hunt, their gillies, their hunting guests and the hunting dogs of all said persons. It comprises the damage to landed property and to any crop products within said property that have not yet been harvested. Claims for compensation for damage caused by game and/or hunting are to be made known within fourteen days (or six months in the case of game damage to forests) of the injured party gaining knowledge of said damage or being able to gain knowledge of said damage with the exercise of due diligence. Said claims are to be made to the person with the entitlement to hunt or reported to the municipality. An arbitration body is set up in each municipality to deal with matters relating to game damage. If the injured party and the person with the entitlement to hunt are unable to reach agreement, the arbitration body will make a ruling. If game poses a threat to the forest, the district administration authority is to stipulate game damage prevention measures to the person with the entitlement to hunt in the hunting grounds that belong to the catchment area of the game mainly responsible for causing the damage.

If it should prove necessary within a hunting ground to reduce the numbers of cloven-hoofed game in the interest of the local agriculture and forestry, the district

administration authority has the duty – *ex officio* or at the request of the person with the entitlement to hunt, the Chamber of Agriculture, the head of the Forestry Supervisory Office at the Office of the Provincial Government, the Carinthian Hunters' Association or the municipality itself – to instruct the person with the entitlement to hunt to carry out a reduction in cloven-hoofed game limited in terms of both numbers and time period. A reduction of this nature may also be carried out during the closed season (shooting order for the protection of crops).

Insofar as natural grazing is insufficient, the person with the entitlement to hunt is to provide for adequate and regular feeding of the game during the vegetation's dormant period. The feeding of game is prohibited during the period in which natural grazing is sufficient.

Red deer may be fed with feed other than roughage but only pursuant to an official order (succulent feed order issued by the provincial government). Other cloven-hoofed game is to be fed roughage only; roe deer may also be fed with feed concentrate. Under an executive order issued by the provincial board of the Carinthian Hunters' Association, areas may be specified in which roe deer can also be fed pomace. The feeding of chamois is prohibited.

The *Bezirksjägermeister* [district master hunter] is to be notified of any intention to erect a red deer feeding station (roughage) by the person with the entitlement to hunt, complete with detailed description of the locality. The *Bezirksjägermeister* may prohibit any such installation after hearing the District Hunting Advisory Commission if said installation conflicts with the Wildlife/ Ecological Spatial Planning (WÖRP) or if unacceptable game damage associated with the feeding of game is to be expected or if any existing game damage were to be aggravated. Lure feeding (baiting) is prohibited across the board. Lure feeding for predatory game and wild boar is to be carried out only by the person with the entitlement to hunt and/or their hunting protection agents. The person with the entitlement to hunt is responsible for ensuring the game and hunting protection. Game and hunting protection is to be carried out by hunting protection agents. Hunting protection agents are comprised of professional hunters and game wardens.

The Carinthian Hunters' Association is, on the one hand, the legal body representing the interests of hunters and hunting in Carinthia. It is a statutory body under public law. The members of the Carinthian Hunters' Association are the holders of the hunting licences. On the other, the Association and its bodies (*Landesjägermeister, Bezirksjägermeister*) also constitute the authority. The Carinthian Hunters' Association is subject to the supervision of the Provincial Government of Carinthia. The bodies of the Carinthian Hunters' Association at the provincial level include the General Assembly (the Carinthian *Landesjägertag*), the Provincial Board, the Provincial Committee, the *Landesjägermeister* [provincial master hunter], the auditors, the Disciplinary Board, and the Disciplinary Counsel. The Provincial Hunting Advisory Commission is established at the Office of the Provincial Government to provide technical advice to the administrative authorities on hunting-related matters;

similarly, a District Advisory Commission is established as its counterpart for the district administration authorities. A hunting administration advisory board is to be appointed for each municipal hunting ground.

The *Landesjägermeister* is required to keep a hunting cadastre of all the landowner and municipal hunting grounds and to compile yearly hunting statistics using the data contributed by the persons with the entitlement to hunt. Carinthia also runs a digital hunting cadastre.

The Provincial Board of the Carinthian Hunters' Association is to issue, by ordinance, guidelines for the culling schedule (culling guidelines) as well as general principles to be observed in fulfilling the culling schedule. The Provincial Board of the Carinthian Hunters' Association is also to issue, by ordinance, a Wildlife/Ecological Spatial Planning (WÖRP) for the entire territory of the Province for the species of wild animal subject to the culling schedule. In doing so, it is to take account of the relationship that exists between the game and its environment to secure the game habitat on the one hand and, on the other, to lastingly prevent damage caused by game and other damage to vegetation. The *Bezirksjägermeister* [district master hunter] is to specify, by decree, the culling schedule based on the culling framework set out in the Wildlife/Ecological Spatial Planning and the culling guidelines for each hunting ground. He is to do so after hearing the District Hunting Advisory Commission and no later than May 1. Account is to be taken of the habitat of game subject to the culling schedule that may extend beyond the boundary of a hunting ground. A culling schedule is to be decreed for a period of two years.

In Salzburg, hunting is regulated by the 'Hunting Act in the Province of Salzburg' (Hunting Act 1993 – JG, Provincial Law Gazette No. 100/1993, as amended in Provincial Law Gazette No. 21/2015); in Tyrol, by the Tyrolean Hunting Act (2004, T-JagdG, Provincial Law Gazette No. 41/2004, as amended in Provincial Law Gazette No. 64/2015).
Key distinctions between the provisions of the Hunting Acts in Carinthia, Salzburg and Tyrol include:

	Carinthia	Salzburg	Tyrol
Landowner hunting ground, Minimum size	115 ha	115 ha	300 ha
Municipal hunting ground, Minimum size	500 ha	no minimum size	500 ha (collective hunting ground)
Hunting period	10 years	9 years	10 years
Hunting year	calendar year	calendar year	1.4. – 31.3.
Culling schedule	two years	one to three years	one year
Feeding	Feeding requirement for game	Feeding requirement for red deer	Feeding requirement for red deer and mouflon
Liability of the person with entitlement to hunt for damage by year-round protected wild species:			
– Landed property	yes	no	no
– Domestic animals	yes	no	no

Outlook

Both the European legislation and the judicature of the supreme courts as well as new biological and ecological findings mean there has to be a rethink in a number of areas also where hunting is concerned. It is a matter, first and foremost, of achieving that difficult balancing act between the traditional and the sustainable. *'It's about communicating hunting as sustainable and viable, as a use of wild animals that is compatible with the notions of animal protection, nature conservation and society.'*

Source: Barbara Fiala-Köck, *Jagd zwischen Tradition und Zukunft. Was nehmen wir mit?* Report on the 18th Austrian Hunters' Convention 2012, 79 – 82.

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Chronology: From Hunting to Wildlife Management

1971 **'The Heiligenblut Agreement'**
On 21 October 1971 the then Provincial Governors of Carinthia, Salzburg and Tyrol – *Hans Sima, Hans Lechner* and *Eduard Wallnöfer* – sign the agreement between the Federal Provinces of Carinthia, Salzburg and Tyrol for the creation of the Hohe Tauern National Park (Provincial Law Gazette No. 72/1971). Protection regulations and measures are not yet specified, but to be decreed by the federal provinces in their sovereign territory.

1981 **Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia is Austria's first National Park.**
The existing nature reserves of 'Grossglockner' and 'Schober Group North' become the core zone of the National Park with the Ordinance of the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia (Provincial Law Gazette No. 81/1981). Certain areas are declared as the 'Outer Zone of the Hohe Tauern National Park' landscape protection area. The total size as a result is 19,500 hectares. The protection provisions previously valid in the nature reserves remain in place. So under Section 3 of the two nature reserve ordinances the lawful practice of hunting is permitted (Provincial Law Gazette No. 24/1967 and Provincial Law Gazette No. 48/1964 as amended in Provincial Law Gazette No. 79/1973). In October 1981 the founding of the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia is celebrated officially on the Gradenalm in Grosskirchheim.

1983 **Carinthian National Park Act**
As a framework law the Carinthian National Park Act (Act of 1 July 1983 on the Establishment of National Parks, Provincial Law Gazette No. 55/1983) represents the legal basis for the establishment of National Parks in Carinthia. A National Park is established by ordinance of the Provincial Government specifically on the basis of this legislation. The corresponding ordinances specify the outer borders and the zoning structure (core zone, outer zone, special protected areas) of each National Park, with the land plots precisely demarcated. They also describe the areas that belong to the individual National Park regions. The ordinance also stipulates the specific protection provisions for special protected areas and the outer zone. The protection provisions for the core zone are contained in both the National Park Act and the relevant National Park ordinance.

1986 **Ordinance pertaining to the Hohe Tauern National Park, Mallnitz-Malta extension, special protected areas**
On the basis of the Carinthian National Park Act the Hohe Tauern National Park is decreed by order of the Carinthian Provincial Government (Provincial Law Gazette No. 74/1986). The 'Grossglockner-Pasterze' and 'Gamsgrube' special protected areas are established. The National Park is extended to the Municipalities of Mallnitz and Malta and a total size of 37,300 hectares. In the core zone and special protected areas any intrusion in nature and/or the ecosystem is prohibited as is any impairment of the landscape, apart from a few exceptions all of which are exhaustively enumerated. In the core zone one such exception is the practice of hunting and fishing subject to the observance of the regulations pertaining to hunting and fishing laws. A controlled regulation of the game stock is possible in the 'Grossglockner-Pasterze' special protected area. A requirement to remain on pathways and trails is enforced in the 'Gamsgrube' special protected area. Derogations may be granted in order to prevent the occurrence and/or spread of diseases.

1986 **Hohe Tauern National Park remains an IUCN Category V Protected Landscape**
Following a three-day visit to the Hohe Tauern National Park the IUCN delegation continues to classify the National Park as a Category V Protected Landscape due to the unrestricted exercise of rights of use by landowners. The Hohe Tauern are found to fulfil outstandingly well the spatial and ecological requirements for a National Park, but still fall short of the internationally recognised criteria.

1986 **First release of bearded vultures in the Hohe Tauern National Park**
The Rausis Krumltal Valley in Salzburg sees the start of the successful resettlement of this eradicated characteristic species of the Hohe Tauern. Since then, 212 juvenile bearded vultures have been returned to the wild in the Alps, 59 of them in the Hohe Tauern National Park. The first attempted breeding occurs in Heiligenblut in 2001, but is unfortunately unsuccessful. The long-awaited breeding success in the Hohe Tauern finally occurs in 2010 when a juvenile bird, named *Kruml* after its valley of birth, hatches in Rauris on 8 March 2010. Across the Alps 147 juvenile vultures have since hatched in the wild.

1990 **First step towards resolving the hunting issue in the National Park: WWF leases the Lassacher Alpe hunting reserve**
The 2,300 hectare Lassacher Alpe hunting reserve in the Seebachtal Valley near Mallnitz is leased by the WWF Austria with the aim of implementing a National Park-compliant wildlife management: Seen here at the signing of the hunting lease for the next 10 years are WWF president *Gustav Harmer* and *Alwin Hofer,* chairman of the Lassach neighbourhood farming community.

1992 **Amendment to the Carinthian National Park Act**
This extensive amendment to the legislation (Provincial Law Gazette No. 53/1992) establishes the Carinthian National Park Fund with its own legal personality for the management and promotion of National Parks in Carinthia (Hohe Tauern and Nockberge). Provision is also made for a development programme for each National Park region. The requirements and protection measures needed to achieve the National Park objectives are to be represented in a National Park Plan. This legislation also provides the basis for the contractual nature conservation and the subsidies from the National Park Fund.

1993 **Wildlife biology research**
Research work conducted over many years results in the drafting of a concept for a National Park-compliant wildlife management based on the example of the WWF reserve Lassacher Alpe in the Seebachtal Valley; scientific baseline studies and accompanying wildlife biology research are also carried out in the National Park reserves of the Austrian Alpine Club.

1993 **Tauernmähder winter quiet zone**
Following the amendment to the ordinance pertaining to the Hohe Tauern National Park (Provincial Law Gazette No. 5/1993) the Tauernmähder winter quiet zone is established in the Mallnitz Tauerntal Valley with the consent of all stakeholders, specifically the hunting community, the landowners, the Alpine Club, and the authorities. In the areas of the core zone defined as a winter quiet zone, ski tours are prohibited between December 1 and April 30. The winter quiet period is signposted accordingly on the ground.

1994 **Agreement under Section 15a Federal Constitution Act between the Federal Government and the Federal Provinces of Carinthia, Salzburg and Tyrol on co-operation in matters of protection and promotion of the Hohe Tauern National Park**
By resolution of Austria's National Council [Lower House of Parliament] this agreement (Provincial Law Gazette No. 570/1994) establishes the legal basis for securing the protection and co-ordinated development of the Hohe Tauern National Park and its consistent outward representation. A key common objective is achieving international recognition for the Hohe Tauern National Park.

1995 **Leasing of hunting rights on approx. 4,800 hectares from the Alpine Club**
The Alpine Club hunting grounds in the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia (Pasterzenalpe and Surroundings 3,679 hectares; Brunnwiesen 376 hectares; and Hochalmspitze 748 hectares) are redefined with the support of the hunting authorities in the District of Spittal an der Drau. The Carinthian National Park Fund concludes hunting leases with the Austrian and the German Alpine Clubs lasting until 31 December 2000.

1996 **Leasing of the Wolfgangalpe hunting rights in the Maltatal Valley**

Franz Dietrich, landowner in the Maltatal Valley, is the first private individual to lease out his hunting rights in the Wolfgangalpe (860 hectares) in the core zone to the Carinthian National Park Fund, thereby setting a milestone towards the Park's international recognition. In doing so he demonstrates how, with the right contracts with the National Park, a partnership-based co-operation can work, making him a trailblazer for contractual nature conservation in the protected area.

1996 **Research partnerships**

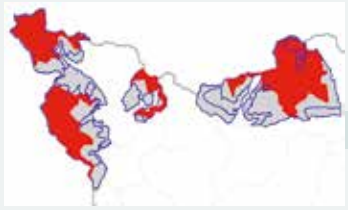
The Hohe Tauern National Park launches a partnership with the Berchtesgaden National Park and the Swiss National Park as well as the National Parks of Triglav in Slovenia and Les Ecrins in France. Joint projects such as ibex telemetry and programmes for monitoring bearded vultures, chamois and golden eagles are carried out to answer research questions relating to wildlife biology.

2000 **Agreement between the Carinthian Hunters' Association and the Carinthian National Park Fund on the implementation of wildlife management in 'National Park reserves'**

Negotiations with the Carinthian Hunters' Association on the implementation of a National Park-compliant wildlife management in hunting reserves leased by the National Park conclude with a pioneering agreement for the lease period 2001 to 2010. The agreement is signed at Schloss Mageregg, the seat of the Carinthian Hunters' Association, on 6 September 2000.

2000 **First release of bearded vultures in Carinthia**

On 25 May 2000 two bearded vultures, *Bingo* and *Georg,* are released for the first time in the Carinthian portion of the Hohe Tauern National Park, namely the Mallnitz Seebachtal Valley. A total of six other juvenile vultures are released into the wild in 2003, 2006 and 2009. In 2009 the juvenile birds are fitted with GPS transmitters for the first time to help track their location even after they have left the area of the eyrie. In 2012 two juvenile birds are released in the Grosses Fleisstal Valley.



2001 **Carinthian National Park Fund leases hunting rights on more than 21,000 hectares**

Under the Carinthian Hunting Act hunting leases can only be concluded for a period of ten years. 15 hunting grounds with a total surface area of more than 21,000 hectares are leased by the National Park for the hunting lease period 2001 to 2010 in order to achieve a National Park-compliant wildlife management, i.e. almost 75% of the core zone.

2001 **Carinthian Advisory Commission**

The Carinthian Advisory Commission is a key instrument in developing wildlife management in the National Park. Its inaugural meeting is held in Klagenfurt on 22 February 2001. The Advisory Commission advises the Carinthian National Park Fund in all matters pertaining to the implementation of a National Park-compliant wildlife management.

2001 **IUCN evaluation mission to the Carinthian portion**

Between 8 and 10 May 2001 a delegation from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) reviews the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia on site at the invitation of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. The aim was to examine whether the protected area satisfies the international criteria for IUCN Category II National Parks.

IUCN
The World Conservation Union

2001 **Evaluation report by the IUCN delegation**

On 18 May 2001 the IUCN delegation recommends international recognition for the Carinthian portion of the Hohe Tauern National Park as a Category II National Park protected area.

2001 **National Park Plan**

The National Park Plan is adopted by the Hohe Tauern National Park Committee on 4 April 2001 and by the Provincial Government of Carinthia on 22 May 2001. Its structure and defined goals are co-ordinated on a cross-province basis with those of Salzburg and Tyrol. The National Park Plan specifies the development objectives and measures for the areas of natural resource management (incl. wildlife management), tourism and recreation, science and research, environmental education and PR work for the next ten years. Development for the core zone and special protected areas is stipulated in accordance with the guidelines of IUCN Category II. That includes ensuring to the largest possible extent that natural processes are able to run their course freely on at least 75% of the territory (natural zone). The outer zone is developed in accordance with the guidelines of IUCN Category V, which entails the sustainable management of a near-natural cultural landscape shaped by traditional mountain farming aimed at preserving biodiversity and the characteristic landscape (cultural zone).

2001 **International recognition of the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia**

The IUCN classifies the Carinthian portion of the Hohe Tauern National Park as a Category II National Park. The certificate is officially presented to *Georg Wurmitzer,* member of the Provincial Government of Carinthia with responsibility for National Parks, National Park Director *Peter Rupitsch,* and Ministerial Councillor *Günther Liebel* by IUCN General Director *Achim Steiner* in Gland, Switzerland, on 23 July 2001.

2001 **Amendment to the ordinance pertaining to the establishment of the 'Hohe Tauern' National Park: rezoning, Zirknitz valleys extension**

The zoning is modified to comply with the international criteria for a Category II National Park protected area. In the Municipality of Grosskirchheim the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia is extended in the area of the Zirknitz Valleys to a total size of 39,990 hectares (Provincial Law Gazette No. 84/2001, 12.10.2001).

2001 **Golden eagle monitoring**

Launch of the cross-province project with the first mapping of golden eagle eyries in the Hohe Tauern and inclusion in the alpine-wide 'Aquilalp.net' golden eagle monitoring programme. Over the period 2003 to 2005 the population sizes and breeding success of golden eagles in the participating protected areas are ascertained using standardised methodology, mapping as many of the eyries as possible. A total of 185 eyries and 42 breeding pairs – 11 of them in the Carinthian portion – are recorded in the Hohe Tauern National Park. The breeding success rate is 0.60 juvenile birds per pair. From 2011 the eyries are once again monitored annually on the basis of the proven methodology.

2002 **Apprentice hunters: facility for training professional hunters**

The Provincial Committee of the Carinthian Hunters' Association recognises the hunting operations carried out by the Carinthian National Park Fund as a facility for training apprentices in accordance with Section 8 of the Carinthian Professional Hunter and Gamekeeper Examination Act, granting it the authority to train and instruct apprentices to become professional hunters.

2002 **Bears in the National Park**

A bear with the given name *Vida* migrates into the Schober Group from Italy via East Tyrol. Her migration patterns in the high-mountain region are tracked with the aid of a collar transmitter. In early July the direction-finding transmitter falls silent. Another, smaller bear, weighing approx. 60 kg, is located in the area of Heiligenblut and Fusch.

2003 **Excursion to the Swiss National Park**

At the initiative of the National Park Administration of Carinthia the members of the Grossglockner ibex conservancy community and the gamekeepers of the National Park visit the Swiss National Park. The excursion participants are thrilled by this exchange of experience with their Swiss colleagues and in particular by the Val Truptschun, the 'valley of the stags'.

2004 **Wildlife management and monitoring areas on parts of the Thomanbauer Alpe in Gössgraben**

In the Maltatal Valley in Gössgraben 290 hectares of the 1,730+ hectare hunting ground known as the Thomanbauer Alpe are demarcated as a wildlife management and monitoring area by the Carinthian National Park Fund. It means that landowners with the right to hunt on their own estate dispense with conducting shoots in this sub-area.

2005 **Amendment to the ordinance pertaining to the Hohe Tauern National Park: Obervellach extension**

The Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia is extended to a total of 41,950 hectares in the area of the Kaponigtal Valley. The Municipality of Obervellach becomes part of the National Park region (Provincial Law Gazette No. 39/2005).

2005 **Ibex telemetry – spatial behaviour of Alpine ibex**

Around 1,000 ibex currently live in the Hohe Tauern, divided into individual sub-populations. In the tri-province area of Carinthia, East Tyrol and Salzburg, ibex in the Grossglockner area are tagged with transmitters for the first time to provide data on their migratory patterns and the way in which the sub-populations interact. The animals are fitted with a GPS collar transmitter that forwards the data by satellite. By 2010 eleven males and one female are tagged in this way.

2006 **Leasing of the Moosboden Alpe hunting rights in the Kaponigtal Valley**

In the new National Park municipality of Obervellach the Carinthian National Park Fund leases the 727 hectare hunting reserve of Moosboden Alpe by mutual consent with the previous game tenant and the Pfaffenberg neighbourhood farming community. As a result the territory of the Carinthian National Park reserves increases to more than 22,300 hectares.

2006 **Wildlife sanctuary**

In co-operation with the Pasterzenalpe hunting community, a 21 hectare wildlife sanctuary is staked out and designated in the area of the Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe (to the north, above the Wilhelm Swarovski Observation Tower panoramic trail). Information boards warn that access is prohibited between May 1 and September 30.

2007 **Wildlife packages: spotting wildlife from hunting cabins in the National Park reserves**

Surveys on National Parks show that wild animals are a major attraction for visitors. Indeed, 80% of visitors to protected areas are keen to observe and experience wild animals. So together with the tourism department of the Carinthian National Park Fund, wildlife packages are offered for the first time, including overnight stays in hunting cabins. The unexpectedly high demand almost exceeds available capacities at the hunting cabins, and all the participants are thrilled by the sight of wild animals and the explanations provided by the National Park's professional hunters.

2007 **Amendment to the Carinthian National Park Act**

The legislation is now entitled 'Act on the Establishment of National Parks and Biosphere Parks (Carinthian National Park and Biosphere Park Act K-NBG)' (Provincial Law Gazette No. 25/2007). A separate fund is set up for each National Park in Carinthia, resulting in the financial and organisational separation of the Hohe Tauern and Nockberge National Parks. The National Park Board of Trustees is established as the body for each particular National Park Fund, alongside the National Park Committee in place since 1992. The inaugural meeting of the Hohe Tauern National Park Board of Trustees is held in Obervellach on 15 February 2008.

2007 **Apprentice hunters**

On 16 July 2007 three apprentice hunters are taken on by the Carinthian Hohe Tauern National Park Fund. This was predicated on the Carinthian Hunters' Association recognising the Carinthian National Park Fund as a 'facility' for training apprentices back in 2002. In charge of training is *Markus Lackner,* who on 27 October 2005 was conferred the aptitude to train and deploy apprentice hunters for hunting purposes by the Provincial Committee of the Carinthian Hunters' Association. In the course of a three-year apprenticeship *Jonathan Pucher* (Heiligenblut), *Daniel Rud* (Mallnitz) and *Andreas Neuschitzer* (Trebesing) will not only learn the craft of professional hunter, but also be trained as National Park Rangers, hunting supervisor and trainee forester.

2008 **Switch to lead-free ammunition in the Carinthian National Park reserves**

Besides illegal kills, lead poisoning is the most frequent cause of death among bearded vultures and golden eagles. Lead is a poisonous heavy metal that seriously impacts the central nervous system and affects the intake of food. Consequences include an inability to fly and death through starvation. Lead poisoning occurs when the residue of hunting ammunition found in the bowels of wild animals that have been shot is subsequently absorbed. Vultures and eagles act as bioindicators and highlight problems that result from the use of lead in hunting ammunition. Venison and game have been rejected more and more frequently during food inspections due to exposure to lead. The Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia is setting a good example in this area. Indeed, lead-free ammunition is used in all Carinthian National Park reserves whenever regulating shoots are carried out, if and when necessary. A whole series of neighbouring reserves are to follow suit over the next few years, guaranteeing that venison and game are lead-free.

2008 **Apprentice hunters: novice hunter exam**

The first apprentice hunters of the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia – *Andreas Neuschitzer, Jonathan Pucher* and *Daniel Rud* – receive their hunting exam certificate on 23 June 2008. On 15 September 2008 *Gerald Lesacher* from Grosskirchheim begins his training with the Carinthian National Park Fund as its fourth apprentice hunter.

2008 **Capercaillie pilot project in Mallnitz and Obervellach**

The project comprises a survey of the capercaillie population and its habitat use and a study of the link between the National Park and the area leading up to it. Overall the capercaillie population consists of around 44 to 52 individuals in the mapped areas of 2,700 hectares of forest and alpine pasture areas, which corresponds to around 1.63 to 1.92 individuals per 100 hectares. DNA analyses in 2009 show a population of 39 individuals. Habitat-improving measures are to be developed for several areas.

2008 **Extension of the agreement with the Carinthian Hunters' Association**

The agreement between the Carinthian Hunters' Association and the Carinthian Hohe Tauern National Park Fund is extended on 17 December 2008 for the hunting lease period 2011 to 2020. As a result, nothing now stands in the way of lease negotiations with the landowners of the National Park reserves for a further ten years.

2009 **Rules of fairness in the Carinthian National Park reserves**

In view of the new hunting lease period 2011 to 2020 the hunting management together with the gamekeepers have agreed to new rules of fairness, some of which are already put into practice. The implementation and feasibility of these results are to be trialed from 2010 onwards. It will be a few years before the impact of the intended measures and provisions on the wild animals is known.

2009 **Avifauna project in the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia and Salzburg**

The project focuses on surveying the populations of Galliformes, woodpeckers and owls in the Carinthian and Salzburg portions of the National Park. A combined methodology comprised of model simulations and terrain surveys is to be applied. With the survey work closely co-ordinated with the hunting community, not only were conflicts with hunting operations avoided, but the good local knowledge of the hunters and landowners allowed the surveys to be carried out efficiently and safely. Projections of the total populations are to be based on these results, with specific protection measures and a monitoring scheme to be developed by the end of 2012.

2009 **Red deer working group**

A working group comprised of hunters, foresters, the authorities and National Park staff is set up to discuss factual issues relating to red deer in Mallnitz and Obervellach. The increased hunting pressure alone due to excessively high game populations means an even greater concentration of red deer in the remaining retreat areas. Where the red deer is no longer able to evade spatially, it evades by becoming nocturnal. The possible causes and steps towards solutions to the problems of the damage caused by red deer need to be discussed at length and require motivation and, above all, time.

2010 **Apprentice hunters: professional hunter's certificates**

The presentation of the professional hunter's certificate to apprentice hunters is held at Schloss Mageregg in Klagenfurt on 18 June 2010.

2010 **50 years of ibex on the Grossglockner**

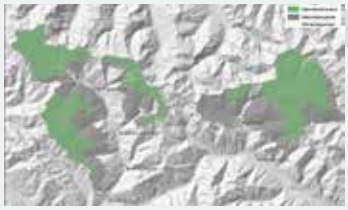
Under its chairman *Hans Pichler* the Grossglockner ibex conservancy community was able to celebrate a special anniversary. The first ibex were released into the wild in the Municipality of Heiligenblut fifty years ago, in June 1960, and successfully established themselves in their former habitats. Some 250 animals now populate the Hohe Tauern National Park in Carinthia, their majestic appearance always a delight for people to observe. The anniversary was celebrated at the community hall in the village of Heiligenblut on 13 November 2010, with lots of ibex enthusiasts from near and far.

2011 **National Parks Austria: mission statement for the management of cloven-hoofed game in Austria's National Parks**

The 'mission statement for the management of cloven-hoofed game in Austria's National Parks' was drawn up based on the objectives and visions of the Austrian National Parks Strategy in several workshops organised by representatives of the protected areas. The mission statement was adopted on 5 July 2011 by the co-ordination session of the six Austrian National Parks. The statement co-ordinates and specifies the common objectives, principles and standards for cloven-hoofed game management in Austria's National Parks. The relevant management plans regulate the implementation of the mission statement in the individual National Parks.

2011 **Policy paper on 'large predators'**

Right across Europe, bears, lynx and wolves are strictly protected species. They are protected for instance under the Berne Convention, the Washington Convention (CITES) and the Habitats Directive (Natura 2000). In the three National Park federal provinces of Carinthia, Salzburg and Tyrol these predators are listed as protected year-round in the Hunting Act – and, in Tyrol, also in the Nature Conservation Act. Who is to offer these strictly protected – but all too often unwelcome – species of wild animal a retreat or sanctuary if not a large protected area such as the Hohe Tauern National Park? For this reason the three National Park Administrations have drawn up a policy paper for the return of large predators.

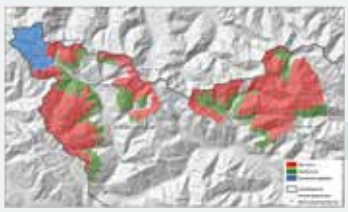


2011 **Carinthian National Park Fund leases hunting rights on more than 25,000 hectares**

For the new hunting lease period 2011 to 2020 the 15 Carinthian National Park reserves with a surface area of approx. 21,000 hectares in 2001 have become 25 reserves with a total surface area of more than 25,000 hectares. The increase was made possible on the one hand by the National Park extensions in the Zirknitztal, Kaponigtal and Fleisstal Valleys. On the other, large hunting grounds belonging to landowners were split into two National Park-compatible reserves as a result of the good co-operation with landowners already at the time that the hunting reserves were specified in accordance with the Carinthian Hunting Act. In each case the core zone reserve is leased to the Carinthian National Park Fund, with the reserve leading up to it leased to a local game tenant. Such an approach is possible only through co-operation with landowners, the authorities, the hunting community and the National Park Administration. It also means that the criteria for an IUCN Category II National Park (i.e. 75% of the core zone area decommissioned in terms of land use) are virtually met from a hunting point of view. Thanks to additional agreements as part of the 'General Settlement' (preliminary contracts), said IUCN status is secured long-term until 2030 – a vote of confidence in the National Park on the part of the landowners.

2011 **Carinthian National Park Fund takes over the management of the Grossglockner ibex conservancy community**

On 26 March 2011 the Grossglockner ibex conservancy community, which consists of 9 sedentary and 15 migratory game reserves with a total surface area of approx. 20,000 hectares, is reconstituted for the hunting lease period 2011 to 2020. The criteria for a sedentary game reserve are demonstrably rutting, setting and winter covers. Migratory game reserves consist of several connected reserves in which all three factors have to exist in combination. The Carinthian National Park Fund is the tenant of 80% of sedentary and 60% of migratory game reserves. For this reason the management of the conservancy community is established with its offices in the National Park Administration, with *Markus Lackner* appointed as managing director.



2011 **Amendment to the ordinance pertaining to the Hohe Tauern National Park, Fleisstal Valleys extension**

In the Municipality of Heiligenblut the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia is extended in the area of the Fleisstal Valleys to its current size of 44,008 hectares in total (Provincial Law Gazette No. 73/2011). The ordinance is amended in line with the Carinthian National Park and Biosphere Park Act.

2011 **Monitoring, species protection & research in the Carinthian National Park reserves**

The project launched in 2011 and completed in 2014 promotes monitoring, species protection and research in the Carinthian National Park reserves and implements important projects in wildlife research. The work is carried out as part of a project cofinanced by the EU (with funding from the European Union and with National Park funds from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management). Key components of the overall project include wildlife biology monitoring, the natural resource management database, the ibex exhibition, the capercaillie species protection project, and the Seebachtal Valley red deer telemetry.

2011 **NARAMA - Natural resource management database**

NARAMA is an online database in which all the wildlife biology data is stored in a central location and made available at any time for analysis. It takes a good stock of data material to identify the significance of trends and changes in nature. That's why an online database was specially developed for the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia in which all the relevant data on the National Park reserves is entered – from the rounds made of the reserves and the wildlife counts to the golden eagle monitoring and checks as part of the contractual nature conservation. The analysis of this centrally administered standardised wildlife biology data is certain to yield some interesting results in a few years' time. NARAMA is therefore a platform aimed at supporting natural resource and wildlife management in the Hohe Tauern National Park.

2011 **Capercaillie – habitat-improving measures**

Measures aimed at improving the habitat were proposed as part of the capercaillie pilot project launched in 2008. In 2011 a capercaillie habitat is created for the first time as part of the Econnect Alpine Space Project. The Gassner Alm in the Kaponigtal Valley (Obervellach) in the outer zone of the National Park is selected for this purpose. Thanks to various measures (such as opening-up the area by clearing the spruce trees, freeing-up significant larch trees and removing all branch material) the area under canopy can be reduced from 90% to around 60%, creating the ideal conditions for these Galliformes. Such habitat-improving measures for gallinaceous birds are possible only through intensive co-operation between forestry and agriculture, hunting and nature conservation.

2011 **Seebachtal Valley red deer telemetry**

This research project gets underway in the Lassacher Alpe reserve in the Seebachtal Valley with the construction of a live trap. The population of red deer has increased following the leasing of hunting rights in this reserve twenty years ago and the designation of quiet zones that went with it. The deer only use the high-alpine National Park reserve as summer cover. Telemetry is to be used to study the migratory routes and winter covers of red deer through to 2016. What is interesting here is the time at which the red deer switch from their summer cover (National Park reserve) to their winter cover (reserves outside the protected area) and the increase in forest damage caused by red deer in the winter covers. Further steps can only be planned based on this type of scientifically founded data.

2012 **Guidelines for ibex management in the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia**

At the annual general meeting of the Grossglockner ibex conservancy community on 3 March 2012 the guidelines for ibex management in the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia are unanimously adopted by the Management and the National Park. The primary objective of the Grossglockner ibex conservancy community, namely to ensure the sustainable development of a healthy ibex population in the Upper Mölltal Valley, was taken fully into account in drawing up these guidelines.

2012 **First successful hatching of bearded vultures in Carinthia for more than 130 years**

The last time bearded vultures hatched successfully in Austria was in 1880 in Carinthia's Wolayertal Valley; it is believed that the last bearded vulture was shot in the Liesertal Valley in 1906. The first breeding attempt in Austria was made in Heiligenblut in 2001, sadly without success. The now successful pair of breeding bearded vultures, i.e. the male *Hubertus 2* (released in Kals in 2004) and the female *Ambo* (released in Gastein in 2002), settled in the eastern Hohe Tauern in 2006. After two unsuccessful breeding attempts in 2010 and 2011, the egg-laying occurred on 27 January 2012. After a breeding period of just under two months, a chick hatched on March 20. And it was during an unobserved moment that *Primus* made his maiden flight on July 26. It means that, in 2012, a juvenile bearded vulture successfully became fully fledged in the wild in Carinthia for the first time since 1880.

2012 **Special exhibition: 'The Ibex, King of the Alps: Once Eradicated – Now Back Again!'**

The exhibition organised by the Zoological Museum of the University of Zurich and the Natural History Museum of the Grisons documents the history of the Alpine ibex from almost complete eradication to successful reintroduction, up to the present day. The exhibition opens at the BIOS National Park Centre in Mallnitz on 15 April 2012, complemented specifically with the results of the ibex research in the Hohe Tauern. It features an exciting and astonishing look at how ibex manage to survive the winter in their icy and barren habitat and the characteristic migratory patterns of ibex living in the National Park.

2012 **Start of intensive research on ibex in the Hohe Tauern**

The local hunting community reintroduced the ibex to the Hohe Tauern in the 1960s. The ibex is an important indicator species for the National Park and as such it has been genetically studied in recent years. GPS transmitters were used to study the spatial behaviour of a number of animals. Currently there are around 1,200 ibex living in the Hohe Tauern National Park. The first results now provide the basis for further research. Over the next few years thorough monitoring of this wild species is to provide more important data. Data analyses of weight and horn measurements among others as well as the animals' migratory patterns are to provide an indication of population trends. The data obtained will be compared with the weather conditions in each particular year to study the link between outside influences and the development of the ibex. The local hunting community is an important partner in this project. Its involvement during frequent rounds of the reserves for extensive observations of the ibex is needed to ensure the compilation of indicative long-term data series.

2012 **National Parks Austria: LEGZU Project**

The three-year LEGZU project (a German acronym derived from the words for 'Guidelines, Principles & Co-operation') consists of several work packages on the topics of overall management, natural resource management, protection of biodiversity, knowledge management, National Park region, education/ communication, and marketing. The persons in charge of these subject areas at the individual National Parks discussed the topics in four work groups and a total of eight work packages, drawing up guidelines and recommendations as a result. LEGZU has shown that, for a number of topics, better progress was achieved through a concerted approach on the part of the Austrian National Parks than through the individual initiatives of each Park.

2013 **Leasing of the Samer Alpe SOUTH hunting rights in the Maltatal Valley**

The Sameralpe reserve in the Municipality of Malta is split into two areas. From 1 January 2013 the Samer Alpe SOUTH (180 hectares) will be the 26th reserve to be leased by the Carinthian National Park Fund.

2013 **Chamois – Heiligenblut Model Region research project**

Due to the ongoing discussions about chamois particularly in the National Park Region in the Upper Mölltal Valley, the Hunters' Advisory Commission of the Carinthian National Park Fund decided to launch a chamois research project. The chamois is not just the heraldic animal of the Carinthian Hunters' Association, but also the principal species of wild animal to the found in the Hohe Tauern National Park. The 'Chamois – Heiligenblut Model Region' research project has therefore been launched to document and analyse trends in the chamois population in the National Park Municipality of Heiligenblut, with retroactive effect from 2001 to 2016. The Carinthian Hunters' Association and the hunting community in the Heiligenblut Reserve in particular will be assisting the research project with chamois counts, surveys of chamois stocks, and telemetry tagging.

2014 **Year of the Capercaillie**

2014 is declared the 'Year of the Capercaillie' by the Carinthian Hunters' Association. The National Park Administration of Carinthia contributes to the initiative with a whole raft of measures aimed at improving the habitat of this timid woodland bird. A ten hectare area of woodland is to be made 'capercaillie-compatible' mainly in the forested area of the cadastral municipalities of Lassach and Pfaffenberg, with the consent of a number of forest owners and in close co-operation with local forestry authorities and scientists. On 23 May 2014 a seminar entitled 'Capercaillie – High-maintenance wildlife' is organised by the National Park Administration at the Mallnitz National Park Centre with the education platform of the Carinthian Hunters' Association. During the field trip to the Kaponig/Lassach project area more than 100 participants have an opportunity to see for themselves how the project is being implemented and get practical tips and advice from the experts.

2014 **National Parks Austria: EMINA project**

In 2014 all the Austrian National Parks take part in an external evaluation as part of the EMINA Project, an acronym for **E**valuation of **M**anagement **i**n the **N**ational Parks **A**ustria. All the National Park's areas of activity are assessed, specifically biodiversity and natural resource management, PR work and education, research, organisation and the running of operations. The evaluation reports completed in 2015 on the individual Austrian National Parks describe the situation as it currently stands, comprise a SWOT analysis, and recommendations for action incl. implementation priorities for each particular National Park.

2015 **Seminar on the challenges posed by deer, Mallnitz National Park Centre**

On 8 May 2015 the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia organises a seminar on the subject of the challenges posed by red deer, to be held at the Mallnitz National Park Centre jointly with the education platform of the Carinthian Hunters' Association. The latest scientific findings on red deer are presented to more than one hundred participants. The management of red deer will continue to pose a challenge in the future, too. This particular species of wild animal is, on the one hand, extremely adaptive and highly skilled at eluding hunters; but on the other it is also known to seek out small communities and farms at night and cause damage to gardens, etc. Red deer like to take cover in enclosed forest areas particularly when disturbed up on the alpine pastures of the Hohe Tauern, which means that saplings and young trees then bear the brunt of the deer's feeding requirements. For this reason wildlife quiet areas based on the Swiss model would be ideal for red deer.

2015 **Apprentice hunters: Carinthia's first female professional hunter**

The presentation of graduation certificates to hunting protection agents was held at Schloss Mageregg on 19 June 2015. And, for the very first time, a woman is among the newly qualified professional hunters, namely National Park Ranger *Anja Suntinger.* Anja comes from Grosskirchheim and began her training in 2012. Besides practical work out in the Park's reserves the extensive three-year training programme also entails successfully completing a forestry and hunting course.

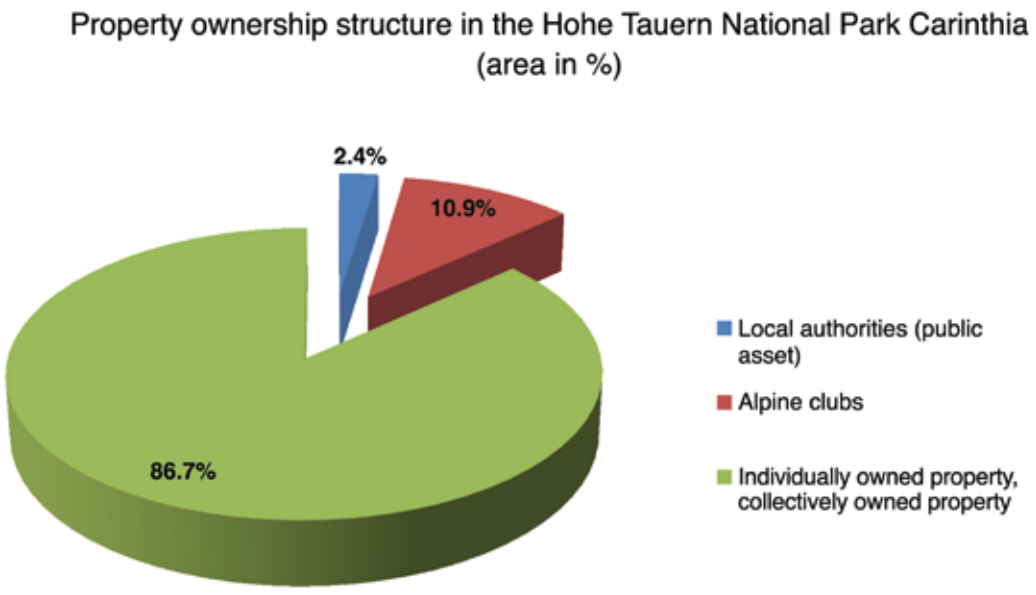
National Park Reserves in Carinthia

National Park Reserves in Carinthia

Around 98% of the Carinthian portion of the Hohe Tauern National Park is on privately owned land. For the idea of a National Park to be realised and implemented, it is necessary to involve all stakeholders in the implementation process. It is all based on continual communication between landowners, agriculture and forestry, the hunting community, and the authorities. And it only works if the administration of the protected area is established on site and its staff members are easily reached by the local resident population. So in the first instance 'wildlife management' as such is all about communicating with stakeholders; after all, the wild animals themselves instinctively do the right thing and don't need any management. In Austria, game law is derived from landed property, i.e. it is not a free-standing right. Game law comes under the jurisdiction of the individual federal provinces [*Länder*], i.e. there are nine Provincial Hunting Acts in Austria. In the Carinthian National Park and Biosphere Park Act (Provincial Law Gazette No. 55/1983 as amended) the core zone is defined with stringent protection provisions; however, there is no intervention in the proprietary rights of pastures, woods and hunting. That means that, even in the core zone, hunting is regulated in accordance with the Carinthian Hunting Act (Provincial Law Gazette No. 21/2000 as amended).

Current property ownership structure in the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia:

Local authorities (public asset)	Surface area (ha)	Surface area (%)	Explanation
Federal areas	972	2.2	Republic of Austria (Austrian State Forests) Republic of Austria (public water resources) ÖBB-Infrastruktur Aktiengesellschaft
Provincial areas	19	0.0	Public asset (bodies of water)
Municipal areas	1	0.0	Public asset
Other public areas	75	0.2	Hohe Tauern National Park Fund Carinthia, Grossglockner Hochalpenstrassen AG
Privately owned land	**Surface area (ha)**	**Surface area (%)**	**Explanation**
Alpine Clubs	4,795	10.9	Austrian Alpine Club, German Alpine Club, *Österreichischer Alpenklub*
Individually owned property, collectively owned property	38,194	86.7	Individual persons and farming communities



1986 IUCN Statement

At the invitation of the Hohe Tauern National Park a delegation of the IUCN (the International Union for Conservation of Nature) – *Hans Bibelriether, Hartmut Jungius* and *Jim Thorsell* – visited the Carinthian and Salzburg portions of the National Park from 15 to 17 September 1986. In the judgement of the IUCN delegation, the protected area could not be recognised as an IUCN Category II National Park in accordance with international guidelines due to the existing rights of use in the core zone and the outer zone of the National Park.

With regard to hunting use the statement issued on 20 November 1986 concluded:
Under the IUCN's applicable National Park criteria the current nature of hunting as practised, e.g. trophy hunting, is not compatible with National Park objectives. In the Hohe Tauern National Park, hunting is currently conducted over the entire area by both local and outside hunters in accordance with the provisions of the legislation decreed by the provincial government. This also applies to the core zone. This currently represents a major obstacle to recognising the Hohe Tauern National Park as a Category II protected area. It is acknowledged that, in the Republic of Austria as in a number of other countries, game law is a property-equivalent right. Nonetheless there has to be agreement that the current nature of hunting in the National Park has to be phased out. Despite its exceptional size by European standards the Hohe Tauern National Park no longer provides a year-round habitat for a number of species of large mammal in which stocks are able to regulate themselves in a natural way. Stock regulation can therefore be carried out for certain species of animals. In order to obtain an objective evaluation of this situation, a wildlife biology expertise needs to be drawn up that provides unambiguous answers to these questions for the individual species. Moreover, a gradual phase-out of trophy hunting should be initiated already now – e.g. with the introduction of a year-round closed season within the framework of the game law for 'winter-regulated' and rarer species as well as endangered species within the European region such as mountain hares and grouse. A second recommendation is that the Austrian State should in the short term restrict any hunting to the necessary regulation of game stocks on its landed property in the interest of implementing and developing the quality of the Hohe Tauern National Park. Another possibility is not to renew expiring hunting leases with existing tenants, but to take them over from the National Park authorities, as is the case in other National Parks. The National Park authorities could then deploy hunters with the relevant knowledge to carry out the necessary stock regulation. A first major objective has to be to phase out hunting in the core zones of the National Park and replace it with game stock regulation in order to build up near-natural population stocks and wildlife densities.'

To quote the IUCN's experts in 1986: 'The Hohe Tauern are found to fulfil outstandingly well the spatial and ecological requirements for a National Park, but not as yet the internationally recognised criteria.'

Extensive studies (mapping of mountain forests, surveys of alpine pasture use) of the areas of the protected area actually exploited were conducted in the 1990s, bearing in mind that pasture usage and forest cropping in the high-alpine area of the core zone did not pose any real problems. Only hunting was carried out everywhere since every square metre of land has to be ascribed to a hunting ground.

The concluding remarks state:
'During the visit it was strongly felt that those in charge of the Hohe Tauern were on the right path to developing the area into one of the most significant National Parks in central Europe, provided that current uses are replaced to an even greater extent than provided for in the laws and ordinances. The federal provinces must take fundamental decisions to achieve the principle of extensive freedom from use, bearing in mind that the aforementioned exceptions are possible. This applies in particular to areas that are under the public sector or non-profit operators. Until such time as the aforementioned recommendations are largely implemented (Editor's note: applies to traditional pasture usage, the use of streams and lakes, forestry exploitations, the use of hunting, the integration of cultural landscapes into the National Park, management issues) the area will have to continue to be listed as a Category V on the UN list.' For a National Park to be created in accordance with international criteria, Category II of the UN list, priority has to be given to nature conservation across the entire Park territory. It is understandable that, due to existing rights of use, immediate solutions are not possible in every regard. However, the necessary steps can be taken as part of a phased plan over several years.

So in the 1990s the Carinthian National Park Administration focused on the following key issue:

How to turn a protected area, 98% of which is established on private landed property, into a National Park in accordance with international stipulations – with the substantial involvement of landowners and those with the entitlement to use that landed property? Back in 1986 the IUCN delegation had already stressed that *'there is quite evidently a considerable difference between the uses permitted under the legislation and the actual extent of those uses on the ground'*. The National Park was therefore advised to

ascertain the surface area and intensity of the individual usages. The results allow an evaluation of whether these usages represent a heavy, moderate or low burden on the National Park area and therefore an impairment to the priority protection remit of the Park area.

Steps towards settling the hunting issue in the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia

The longest discussion of all was about the leasing of hunting rights, less so with the landowners as the lessors than with those in charge at the Carinthian Hunters' Association and the hunters on the ground. The fears of the Carinthian Hunters' Association over a general cessation of hunting in the core zone and the attempt to regulate the indigenous cloven-hoofed game without the intervention of the hunting community, preferring to let nature run its course instead, led to some heated debates between nature conservation and the hunting community.

The Carinthian Hunting Act 1978 (Provincial Law Gazette No. 76/1978) provided a legal basis among others for resolving this hunting issue, specifically Section 68 Paragraph 4: *'Hunting in nature reserves and National Parks can be regulated as a separate matter by ordinance of the Provincial Government. Account is to be taken of the principles set out in the Nature Conservation Act and in the National Park Acts.'* The consideration of National Parks set out in this paragraph was taken in 1991 (Provincial Law Gazette No. 104/1991). This statutory option was not to be applied in the National Park; a different arrangement was drawn up instead.

The cornerstone for resolving the hunting issue in the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia was laid in 1990 when the WWF leased the Lassacher Alpe hunting reserve.

And so, in the early 1990s, the Lassacher Alpe reserve covering more than 2,200 hectares in the Mallnitz Seebachtal Valley was leased by the WWF. Initially, opinions were very rigidly and stubbornly opposed to one another;

Companion

Alwin Hofer

Chairman of the Lassach Neighbourhood Farming Community, member of the Hunters' Advisory Commission of the Carinthian National Park Fund, landowner representative on the Hohe Tauern National Park Committee Carinthia

Resolving the hunting issue was crucial – one way of solving problems!

Hunting in the core zone of the Hohe Tauern National Park was a problem in achieving international recognition as a Category II National Park. And so a solution was sought. Because game law is a private law derived from ownership of landed property and is therefore granted in principle to any landowner, agreement with landowners is necessary in the first instance. Thereafter an agreement has to be concluded with the Carinthian Hunters' Association and an agreement on the implementation of a National Park-compatible hunting method. Landowners are willing to lease their hunting rights to the National Park but only within the framework of the Carinthian Hunting Act currently in force. In the hunting lease it is explicitly agreed that *'over the term of the lease, hunting operations are conducted in the form of a National Park-compatible wildlife management. On termination of the contract, the practice of hunting is effected in accordance with the provisions of the Carinthian Hunting Act'*. A crucial aspect of the agreement to lease hunting rights to the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia is that no special provisions for National Park reserves are included in the Carinthian Hunting Act.

The first step towards resolving the hunting issue in the National Park was taken in 1990 – under the watchful and critical eye of landowners and the hunting community alike – with the leasing to the WWF Austria of the Lassacher Alpe reserve in the Seebachtal Valley in the Municipality of Mallnitz. A great deal of convincing of landowners and hunters had to be done, and many misunderstandings and fears – particularly with regard to the loss of rights – had to be set aside. Over the past twenty-five years the owners of the Lassacher Alpe have had the very best of experiences with National Park-compatible wildlife management in the reserve and with the accompanying scientific advice and they will continue to pursue this particular approach.

With the right attitude – observing the relationship between 'protecting and utilising' – a balance of interests is achieved and, with it, a value added is created for society. Likewise the voluntary contractual nature conservation model is adopted by landowners and is to be continued in any case. Providing the necessary sense of proportion (understanding and a willingness for compromise) is adopted when re-drafting the contracts in the core zone of the National Park to comply with IUCN guidelines, a satisfying conclusion can be achieved.

but soon a culture of argument and discussion emerged, and understanding for the National Park grew. Since 1991, kills of cloven-hoofed game in the Seebachtal Valley had gradually declined. In 1993 the Wildbiologische Gesellschaft München e.V. under *Wolf Schröder* was commissioned to draw up a concept for National Park-compatible wildlife management. Together with Deputy *Landesjägermeister Hans Mattanovich* he was able to contribute a great deal towards de-emotionalising these hotly contested discussions. Continual monitoring (annual counts of stocks of cloven-hoofed game) was put in place to document the change in the cloven-hoofed game population in terms of space utilisation, size and composition, any potential changes in the animals' behaviour or any signs of disease.

As the largest landowner in the Carinthian portion of the National Park, the Austrian Alpine Club contributed hugely to resolving the hunting issue in mid-1995 by leasing hunting reserves covering 4,800 hectares ('Pasterzenalpe and Surroundings' 3,679 hectares; 'Brunnwiesen' 376 hectares; and, together with the German Alpine Club, 'Hochalmspitze' 748 hectares) to the Carinthian National Park Fund. In 1996 *Franz Dietrich*, landowner in the Maltatal Valley, leased his own 'Wolfgangalpe' hunting grounds to the National Park. In doing so, he too set a milestone on the road to the international recognition of the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia. The preamble of the hunting leases contains the following trailblazing vision (excerpt from the 1995 'Hochalmspitze' hunting lease):

'The award of the "Hochalmspitze" hunting ground owned by the Austrian Alpine Club and the German Alpine Club to the Carinthian National Park Fund is made in the awareness that this measure is of particular importance for the future development of the Hohe Tauern National Park and is a prerequisite for the international recognition of the first Austrian National Park by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) aimed for in the medium to long-term.
It is however of importance to the Austrian Alpine Club, the German Alpine Club and the Carinthian National Park Fund that all the steps necessary in the course of this project be carried out with the close involvement of all those directly affected, first and foremost among them the local hunting community. The contractual parties regard this exemplary project as an opportunity to gain knowledge and experience in connection with the repeatedly debated issue of hunting in the Hohe Tauern National Park and to build on that knowledge and experience to draw up proposals for the future.'

None of the fears that a reduction in culling would result in a higher outbreak of disease has been realised in the Seebachtal Valley.

On 15 July 2002 the first Chairman of the Austrian Alpine Club Peter Grauss and the member of the Provincial Government of Carinthia with responsibility for National Parks Georg Wurmitzer signed the partnership agreement between the Austrian Alpine Club and the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia.

The partnership was of lasting significance also from a hunting point of view inasmuch as a hunting lease term of thirty years was agreed for the hunting grounds of the Austrian Alpine Club located in the Carinthian portion of the National Park.

Companiom
Peter Hasslacher

As head of the specialist department for spatial planning-nature conservation between 1980 and 2013 the author worked for many official bodies of the Hohe Tauern National Park as representative of the ÖAV umbrella association (Editor's note: ÖAV, Austrian Alpine Club). Now retired, he dedicates his time to the protection of the Alps and the sustainable development of the Alps in his capacity as honorary chairman of CIPRA Austria.

In the 'ÖAV policy statement for nature conservation and environmental planning' adopted in Bad Hofgastein in 1978, relatively little is said about the issue of 'hunting'. Nonetheless, the old chestnuts such as 'woods and pastures' and 'the public right of way in mountain regions' assume their rightful place. The establishment of National Parks appears in a section on landscape and nature reserves as well as nature parks. At the time the question of Category II IUCN recognition of National Parks was not a topic for the ÖAV. The keen interest of the part of the largest landowner in terms of surface area in the Carinthian and Tyrol portions of the Hohe Tauern National Park was solely on its implementation, which was prominently represented with the opposition of the energy industry and tourism as well as sceptical farming landowners and municipalities. In such a situation it would have been fatal to invite the opposition of the famously emotional hunting lobby into an smouldering conflict by raising the issue of hunting in the National Park.

In Carinthia, the ÖAV had for many years entrusted its hunting lease areas around Pasterze, Brunnwiesen and Guttal to the Heiligenblut conservancy community. The ÖAV first included the now unavoidable topic of international recognition in its deliberations at the Albert Wirth-Symposium Gamsgrube jointly organised in Heiligenblut with the Hohe Tauern National Park Commission on 26 to 28 September 1986. *Dr. Wolfgang E. Burhenne,* an expert at the IUCN's Environmental Law Centre in Bonn, was invited to give a lecture and subsequently assisted the ÖAV with help and advice in this matter.

While the ÖAV was still busy working on implementing the Tyrol portion of the National Park, securing the area from large-scale engineering ambitions, and purchasing land areas at the Hochalmkees and the Krimml waterfalls, the WWF, experts such as Prof. *Wolf Schröder* of the Wildbiologische Gesellschaft München e.V. and the hunting expert and National Park staff member *Klaus Eisank* focused on how hunting and the National Park could be implemented in the Hohe Tauern based on the example of the Seebachtal Valley while taking account of the international criteria for National Parks. A key factor for the favourable shaping of public opinion – at least from the ÖAV's point of view – was a meeting with Prof. *Schröder* in Mallnitz on Sunday, 12 June 1994, of all days, the day of the referendum on Austria's accession to the European Community. The 'liaison officer' of long standing with the ÖAV on the hunting issue was *Klaus Eisank,* who with his expertise, his ruthless charm and his credibility, succeeded in building bridges to the ÖAV in this matter. So a personal 'thank-you' to him is certainly apposite at this point. In 1996 the Carinthian National Park Fund launched a contractual nature conservation model to replace the rights of use in the core zone of the National Park and leased the hunting rights in the ÖAV's reserves (Editor's note: 1995).

In the International Year of the Mountains 2002 the co-operation between the Carinthian National Park Fund and the ÖAV that had been in place since the beginning of the efforts aimed at establishing the National Park was officially formalised. In the presence of the then member of the Carinthian Provincial Government with responsibility for National Parks, *Landesrat Georg Wurmitzer,* it was agreed among other things to co-operate over a period of thirty years on contractual nature conservation and hunting leases for the further development and securing of the National Park. By the time of the re-drafting of the partnership agreement ten years later, the incumbent *Landesrat* no longer felt it was necessary to be present in person at the signing ceremony held in Klagenfurt. It had almost become routine.

The Federal Province of Carinthia and the Hohe Tauern National Park Administration of Carinthia did some outstanding pioneering work in drawing up criteria for National Park-compliant hunting in the Hohe Tauern and its implementation. It smoothed the way towards international recognition. Great things were achieved in the shade of the Seebachtal Valley to secure a place in the sun among the glittering array of recognised National Parks.

The solution: agreement with the Carinthian Hunters' Association

The discussion process with the Carinthian Hunters' Association that had lasted nearly ten years was finally put down in writing in a trailblazing agreement between the Carinthian Hunters' Association and the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia. The set of agreements regulates the National Park-compatible wildlife management in the Carinthian National Park reserves; it formulates its objectives along with the measures necessary for its implementation and stipulates the reserve management as well as the establishment of an Advisory Commission as a consultative and regulatory body.

Even though the Carinthian Hunting Act is valid to its full extent in the National Park reserves, it has proved possible with the Carinthian Hunters' Association to replace traditional hunting with a National Park-compliant form of wildlife management. This was the milestone in the National Park's history which, in 2001, brought the long sought-after international recognition for Carinthia's protected area.

Excerpts from the specific contents of the agreement are listed below.

National Park-compatible wildlife management

Traditional hunting is to be replaced on at least 75% of the area of the core zone by National Park-compatible wildlife management. The implementation of this National Park-compatible wildlife management in what is referred to as the National Park reserves – i.e. the reserves leased by the Carinthian National Park Fund or parts of reserves (where the National Park Fund is a joint tenant or member of hunting associations) – is carried out in close co-operation with the Carinthian Hunters' Association on the basis of the Carinthian Hunting Act in its full scope.

National Park reserves – objectives:

- To ensure a near-natural development that is as unconstrained as possible and to allow a natural succession and natural processes
- To ensure wildlife species dynamics that are as natural as possible in order to build up near-natural populations and wildlife densities
- To restrict regulating interventions in species of cloven-hoofed game
- To preserve and support the stock of indigenous, reintroduced species of wild animal (e.g. ibex, bearded vulture)

Companion
Georg Wurmitzer

Member of the Provincial Government of Carinthia with responsibility for National Parks 1999-2004

Game law is derived from landed property, and so I was fully aware of the justified concerns of landowners regarding any sovereign measures. So for me it was important to strike a balance between the interests of landowners and those of the National Park, two parties who have not always been positive in their attitude towards each other. The best way was and is the leasing of hunting rights by the National Park as it means that every ten years there has to be a renegotiation and reciprocal rights are preserved. For me that's a vibrant contractual relationship, not a sclerotic one. What was also essential to me was achieving the international recognition of the National Park and therefore strengthening the National Park status of the Hohe Tauern in Carinthia as well as securing co-financing by the federal government.

On 6 September 2000 the chairman of the Carinthian National Park Fund Landesrat Georg Wurmitzer and Landesjägermeister *Ferdinand Gorton signed the agreement between the Carinthian National Park Fund and the Carinthian Hunters' Association on the implementation of wildlife management in the 'National Park reserves' for the hunting lease period 2001 to 2010.*

Wildlife management – measures:

- To carry out regulating interventions on species of cloven-hoofed game exclusively in the event of their necessity in terms of game biology and for animal welfare reasons, with such interventions carried out by professional hunters commissioned by the National Park Fund;
- To provide year-round protection for all other wildlife species (except in the event of epidemics or for animal welfare reasons)
- To continue existing ibex regulation in co-operation with the Grossglockner und Fragant ibex conservancy communities
- To continue with and provide ongoing support for the reintroduction of the bearded vulture
- To set up game biology monitoring, taking adjoining reserves into account where necessary
- To enable visitors to the National Park to experience wildlife through selected guided tours in the 'National Park reserves'

The local hunting community is to be involved in the implementation of these measures.

Advisory Commission

An Advisory Commission comprised of a total of eight members (the chairman of the Carinthian National Park Fund, two representatives of the Carinthian Hunters' Association, one representative in each case of the local hunting community, the Provincial Hunting Authority, the Provincial Forestry Directorate, a wildlife biologist and the Director of the National Park Administration) is appointed to advise the Carinthian National Park Fund on all measures to be carried out in the National Park reserves. The Advisory Commission has the following remit:

- Controlling function
- To stipulate potential measures in the case of unforeseeable events (e.g. wildlife epidemics)
- To advise on the culling schedules to be drawn up by the National Park Administration
- To advise on co-operation with the neighbouring reserves
- To give recommendations for research projects
- To inform on the 'National Park reserves' for hunters and the general public

The Advisory Commission is the consultative and regulatory body of the Carinthian National Park Fund for Carinthia's National Park reserves.

Reserve management

The hunting management in the 'National Park reserves' is the responsibility of a specially qualified representative of the National Park Administration in accordance with the Carinthian Hunting Act. Measures aimed at reserve management are to be deliberated in the Commission. Local hunters are to be involved with the necessary regulatory measures (shoots and game protection). Shoots are not awarded against remuneration. Trophies are to be handed over to the National Park Administration where they are to be used and stored for scientific purposes and as demonstration objects. The duty of submission under Section 60 KJG [Carinthian Hunting Act] is unaffected. Provision is to be made in the medium term for the deployment of professional hunters trained to the requirements of the National Park Administration. During the initial phase, hunting protection is to be provided by part-time hunting protection agents. At the same time the Carinthian National Park Fund is seeking recognition by the Carinthian Hunters' Association as a facility for training apprentices (in accordance with Section 8 of the Carinthian Professional Hunter and Gamekeeper Examination Act).

The hunting supervisors of the Carinthian National Park Fund in 2001 (from left to right): Georg Wallner, Markus Lackner, Dietmar Streitmaier, Andreas Seiser, Hubert Saupper, Herbert Lagger, Robert Trattnig and Walter Pucher.

Given the good experiences and excellent co-operation between the contractual partners over the hunting lease period 2001 to 2010 the agreement between the National Park and the Carinthian Hunters' Association has been extended also for the hunting lease period 2011 to 2020. As the National Park is incorporated into the structures of the Carinthian Hunters' Association and the National Park reserves are also subject to the stringent Carinthian Hunting Act, a harmonious working relationship between all stakeholders has emerged over the years.

National Park reserves

Under the provisions of the Carinthian Hunting Act every square metre of land area has to be ascribed to a hunting area. So every square metre in the core zone of the National Park is located in a hunting area, all of which are specified by the authorities every ten years at the request of the landowners. National Park reserves are landowner hunting grounds which the Carinthian National Park Fund has leased from the landowners for the duration of the lease. As the Hunting Act specifies a term of ten years for the lease, a lease contract can only be concluded for that period of time, after which it has to be renegotiated for the next lease period.

Why does the National Park have its 'own' reserves?

In order to guarantee the long-term implementation of the National Park-compatible wildlife management in accordance with IUCN guidelines, it was necessary from Carinthia's point of view for the Park to lease its 'own' reserves. The advantages are as follows:

- The Carinthian National Park Fund is an autonomous entity with the entitlement to hunt, which in turn provides the following opportunities:
  - > The National Park is integrated into the hunting law structures of the Carinthian Hunters' Association.
  - > The discretionary scope provided for in the Hunting Act can be better utilised (e.g. shortening of the shoot times, interval hunting, long-term quiet zones without hunting).
  - > Hunting interventions on red deer and chamois reduced to selected areas within the protected area
- Game law is derived from landed property, i.e. hunting leases are concluded directly with landowners.
- Changes to traditional hunting through National Park-compatible wildlife management
- Appropriate monitoring of success rates
- Implementation and completion of wildlife biology research projects
- Selected visitor programme

Companion
Hans Mattanovich

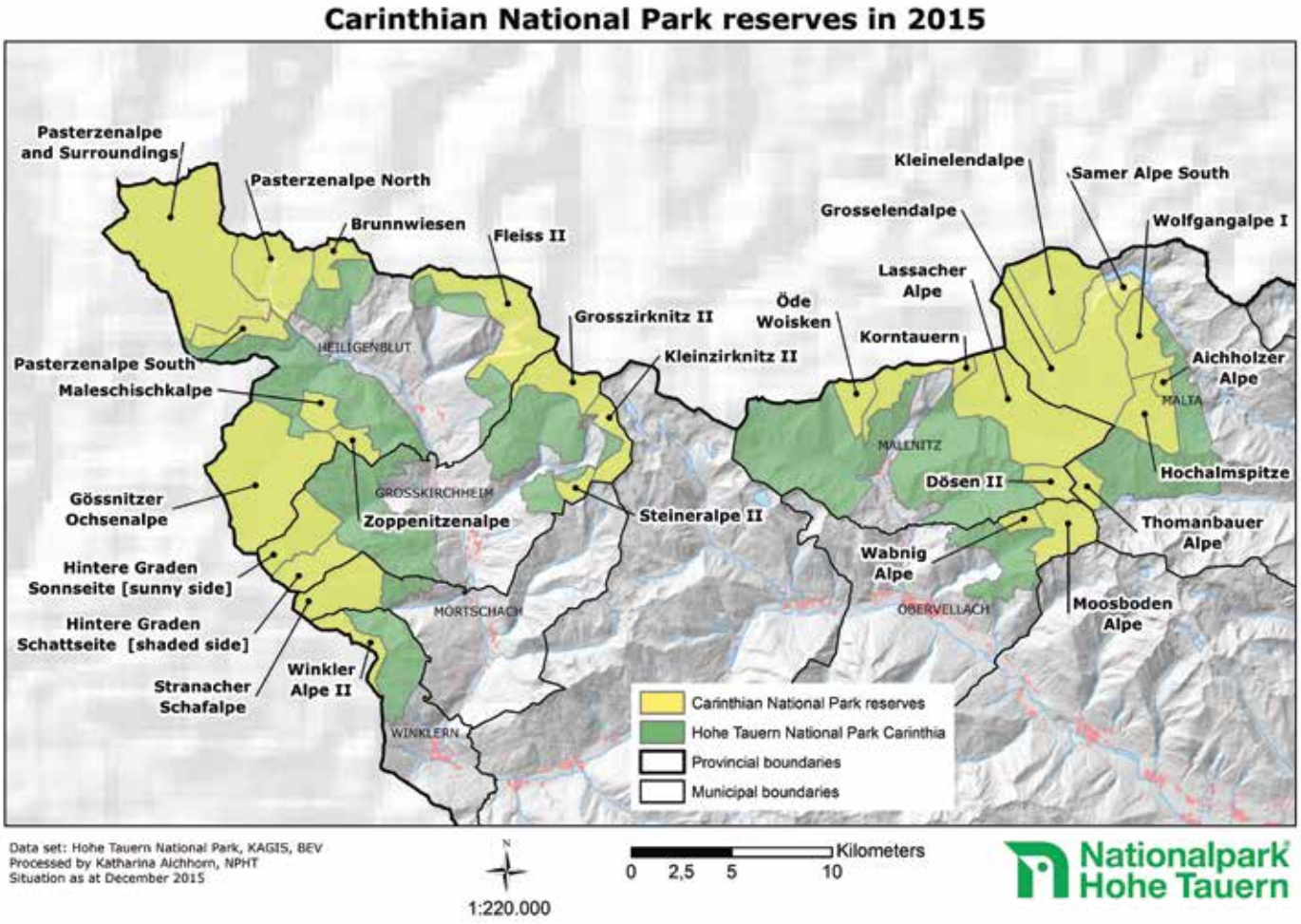
The Carinthian Hunters' Association and the Hohe Tauern National Park

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary I was asked by the Administration of the Hohe Tauern National Park to write a short piece on the relationship with the Carinthian Hunters' Association. As Deputy *Landesjägermeister* for Carinthia and official representative in this field, I have been involved in all the work relating to hunting law since around 1990. In my active service I worked as a forester for a large forestry operation and was therefore critical in my attitude towards ownership issues and game management.

When the WWF began to look into transferring the existing National Park into a Park with recognised IUCN status, very serious differences emerged. Indeed, the WWF showed that it was completely ignorant of the legal position and the requirements of the farming landowners, and it acted accordingly. It failed to take account of the fact that around 95% of the area planned for the Park was in private and mostly farming ownership and, for the most part, actively managed as alpine pastures. Since game law is derived from landed property and cannot be separated as an autonomous legal entity, it is easy to see that a viable agreement can be reached on a voluntary basis with the legally entitled persons.

The WWF's attempts to relocate the resident hunters to another valley and to suspend hunting in the National Park caused a great deal of unrest among the population and would ultimately have led to a failure of the Park's recognition. On the other hand, the Carinthian Hunters' Association – as a statutory body under public law and the body representing hunters' interests – also realised that an agreement based on wildlife ecology was the best way of working together.

Thereafter, by setting up the National Park Academy (Editor's note: in 1996), the new management of the National Park



succeeded in raising the level of the debate from polemical to academic. It was in this context that I was offered the opportunity to give a lecture in which I was able to showcase the existing legal basis and, at the same time, offer the goodwill of the hunting community to co-operate on the basis of wildlife ecology. The Provincial Government of Carinthia agreed to the suggestion to have hunting grounds at high elevations leased by the National Park and subsequently provided the necessary funding. As a result, nothing now stood in the way of the Park's recognition by the IUCN. It was a matter of forming the right working group that would enable the practicalities of normal hunting life also in the National Park based on these prerequisites. I believe that this has largely been achieved to this very day.

And so a National Park Hunting Committee (Editor's note: Hunters' Advisory Commission) was established comprised of members from the National Park, the Carinthian Hunters' Association, landowners, and the Provincial Government. Its tasks include convening once a year to discuss all outstanding issues and, above all, clarify the culling schedules to be decreed by the *Bezirksjägermeister*. It goes without saying that the special requirements of the National Park have to be taken into account. The smooth running of that committee is the guarantee that the National Park is recognised by the general public and by landowners and hunters in particular. Given the vast majority of farming land ownership within the National Park, this solution is indeed a mainstay. It also includes the National Park's participation in all events organised by the hunting community such as trophy exhibitions and general assemblies. The old 'cult of trophies' has long been banished to hunting history and replaced by views and approaches shaped by the notion of wildlife ecology; and that's the basis of good co-operation. The designation 'National Park' alone shows that it is a matter of concern and importance for the general population and therefore plenty of scope has to be given to local hunting.

So it is my hope that this co-operation will continue for a very long time to come – and I sign off with our traditional greeting: *Waidmannsheil*!

The Carinthian National Park reserves in 2015:

As things stand in 2015, 93% of the surface area of the National Park reserves are within the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia and 3% outside it. The surface area of the National Park reserves within the National Park are split as follows: 79% in the core zone; 15% in the Grossglockner-Pasterze and Gamsgrube special protected areas; and 6% in the outer zone. In total, approx. 70% of the core zone and special protected areas are demarcated as National Park reserves. So the IUCN objective of decommissioning 75% of the core zone area in terms of hunting use has almost been achieved. If we include in the calculation the 1,500 hectares of National Park reserves in the outer zone, we achieve a figure of 74%.

26 National Park reserves and 2 wildlife management and monitoring areas

TOTAL SURFACE AREA 25,088 hectares

Aichholzeralpe: *Approx. 26% of the Aichholzeralpe hunting reserve is identified as a National Park wildlife management and monitoring area.*

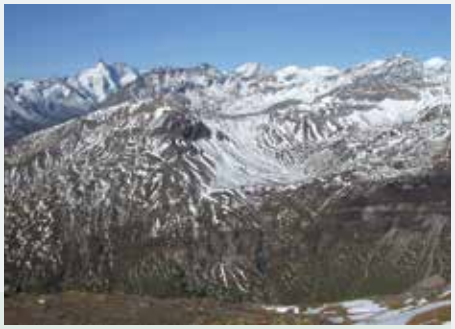
Brunnwiesen: *View towards the Brunnwiesen National Park reserve in the Guttal Valley, with the Wasserradkopf and the Racherin.*

Municipality/Hunting area	Surface area (ha)	Since the year
GROSSKIRCHHEIM		
Grosszirknitz II	641	2011
Hintere Graden Schattseite	603	2001
Hintere Graden Sonnseite	733	2001
Kleinzirknitz II	477	2011
Steineralpe II	195	2011
	2,649	
HEILIGENBLUT		
Brunnwiesen	393	1995
Fleiss II	1,494	2011
Gössnitzer Ochsenalpe	2,765	2001
Maleschischkalpe	301	2011
Pasterzenalpe and Surroundings	3,691	1995
Pasterzenalpe North	1,136	2011
Pasterzenalpe South	441	2011
Zoppenitzenalpe	258	2001
	10,479	
MALLNITZ		
Dösen II	359	2001
Korntauern	600	2001
Lassacher Alpe	2,255	2001
Öde Woisken (2001: Tauerntal I)	356	2001
	3,570	

Municipality/Hunting area	Surface area (ha)	Since the year
MALTA		
Aichholzeralpe (approx. 26% as wildlife management and monitoring area)	113	2001
Grosselendalpe	2,771	2001
Hochalmspitze	747	1995
Kleinelendalpe	1,351	2001
Sameralpe South (2001 Sameralpe as wildlife management and monitoring area)	180	2013
Thomanbaueralpe (approx. 17 % as wildlife management and monitoring area)	290	2004
Wolfgangalpe I	738	1996
	6,190	
MÖRTSCHACH		
Stranacher Schafalpe	**924**	2001
OBERVELLACH		
Moosboden Alpe	728	2006
Wabnigalpe	190	2011
	918	
WINKLERN		
Winkler Alpe II	**358**	2001

Dösen II: *The Dösen II National Park reserve in the Dösental Valley, with the Dösner lake, the Arthur-von-Schmid-Haus and the Dösener rock glacier.*

Fleiss II: *View of the Grosses Fleisstal Valley with the Fleiss II National Park reserve and the Hocharn in the background.*



Fleiss II: *View from the Fleiss II National Park reserve towards the Grossglockner.*

Gössnitzer Ochsenalpe:
Left: View of the Gössnitztal Valley with the Gössnitzer Ochsenalpe National Park reserve in the background. / Right: The Gössnitzer Ochsenalpe National Park reserve.

Grosselendalpe: *View from the Grosselendalpe National Park reserve in the Grosselendtal Valley towards the Kölnbrein dam.*

Grosszirknitz II: *Left: View from the Schober Group to the Zirknitz with the Eckkopf in the centre and the Grosszirknitz II and Kleinzirknitz II background. / Right: Out and about in the Grosszirknitz II National Park reserve.*

Hintere Graden Schattseite *and* ***Hintere Graden Sonnseite:***
Left: View from the Hintere Graden Sonnseite [sunny side] and Hintere Graden Schattseite [shaded side] National Park reserves looking out of the valley towards the Gradental and Mölltal Valleys. / Right: View from the Hintere Graden Sonnseite National Park reserve towards the Keeskopf.

Hochalmspitze:
The Hochalmspitze National Park reserve with the Hochalmkees and the 3360 m Hochalmspitze.

Kleinelendalpe: *View directly from the Kleinelendalpe National Park reserve into the Kleinelendtal Valley.*

Kleinzirknitz II: *View from the Kleinzirknitz II National Park reserve looking out of the valley, with the Schober Group in the background.*

Korntauern: *View directly from the Korntauern National Park reserve towards the Hannoverhaus and Mallnitz.*

Lassacher Alpe: *View from the Lassacher Alpe National Park reserve out of the valley into the Seebachtal Valley, with the Stappitzer lake in the background.*

Maleschischkalpe: *View into the Gössnitztal Valley towards the Maleschischkalpe National Park reserve.*

Moosboden Alpe: *View into the Moosboden Alpe National Park reserve in the Kaponigtal Valley, with the Tristenspitze in the background.*

Öde Woisken: *Out and about in the Öde Woisken National Park reserve.*

Pasterzenalpe North: *View directly towards the Nassfeld in the foreground and the Spielmann in the background.*

Pasterzenalpe South: *View directly towards the Nassfeld in the foreground and the Spielmann in the background.*

Pasterzenalpe and Surroundings: *View directly towards the Pasterzenalpe and Surroundings National Park reserve, with the Grossglockner, Johannisberg and Pasterze.*

Sameralpe South: *View towards the Sameralpe Süd National Park reserve with the Kölnbrein dam in the foreground.*

Steineralpe II: *View from the Grosssee lake in the Kleinzirknitz II National Park reserve towards the Steineralpe II National Park reserve in the Zirknitz.*

Stranacher Schafalpe: *The Stranacher Schafalpe National Park reserve with the Wangenitzsee lake.*

Thomanbaueralpe: *View directly from the Hochalmspitze down to the Gösskar dam and the Thomanbaueralpe hunting reserve behind it. Here the National Park runs around 17% of the reserve as a wildlife management and monitoring area.*

Wabnigalpe: *The Wabnigalpe National Park reserve in the Kaponigtal Valley.*

Winkler Alpe II: *Out and about in the Winkler Alpe II National Park reserve in Winklern.*

Wolfgangalpe I: *View of the Wolfgangalpe National Park reserve in the background and, in front of it, the retaining wall of the Kölnbrein dam.*

Zoppenitzenalpe: *View of the Schober Group towards the Zoppenitzenalpe National Park reserve.*

Companion

Georg Wallner, a.k.a. Tausch

What's your connection with the topic?

Landowner, game warden in the National Park reserves since 1995, member of the Hunters' Advisory Commission

What do you think of the approach so far?

Pros:

- *The discussions between the hunting community and the National Park have always been between equals.*
- *Projects (chamois, ibex, marmot, capercaillie ...) have provided NEW KNOWLEDGE*
- *Good PR work in the form of events, wildlife watching, further training courses, etc.*

Cons:

- *A further trend towards a ZERO SHOOTING policy would have to be seen as a weakness (diseases, research, large carnivores, cultural landscape).*

What lessons can be learnt from the approach so far?

- *Wildlife management – hunting = two opportunities – one objective!*
- *Accept the distinction between National Park and zoo*
- *Every landscape (region) has grown through climate and management – including the fauna and flora. Intrusions are problematic!*

What are the next steps?

- *Work out the ecological links between natural resource and the species of wildlife that occur there – compatibility in numbers and mutually! Implement project findings?*
- *Adaptation and further development of the approach so far*
- *Sensible approach to the topic of large carnivores (WOLF) – even sheep pave the way for wild animals, hence the corresponding diversity of species!*

National Park gamekeepers*

Under the agreement reached with the Carinthian Hunters' Association the training and employment of full-time hunting protection agents was specified as a medium-term objective. A training concept was therefore drawn up by the National Park Administration and co-ordinated with the Carinthian Hunters' Association, which back in 2002 recognised by decree the National Park reserves as a facility for training apprentices. The training concept for National Park gamekeepers provides for the following outline conditions (trainee hunter):

- Training contract
- Three-year apprenticeship at a facility for training apprentices (National Park)
- Hunting exam (two years of hunting licence required, which can be obtained at age 15)
- Hunting diary incl. scientific papers
- A forestry course lasting at least ten weeks
- Two specialist hunting courses lasting a maximum of twelve weeks
- Fisheries course and fisheries supervision
- Training as a National Park Ranger
- Computer course (ECDL)
- First Aid course
- Political education (administration school)
- Professional hunter's exam

So far, five apprentices have been trained as professional hunters: *Gerald Lesacher, Andreas Neuschitzer, Jonathan Pucher, Daniel Rud and Anja Suntinger.*

Gamekeepers of the Carinthian National Park reserves

You would think being a 'gamekeeper' in the Carinthian National Park reserves must be a great job. After all, you're out in the open every day, rarely in the office; every day out spotting chamois, ibex and bearded vultures, only occasionally entering figures in a database; every day new experiences and impressions in the realm of wild animals, and only now and again a guided tour with visitors. But there's a lot more to it than that. Indeed, the four male and one female professional hunters not only look after 25,000 hectares of National Park reserves, they are also fully trained National Park Rangers; they teach in schools (National Park partner schools and right across Carinthia as part of the Waterschool and the Climate School); they take visitors out on guided tours as part of National Park programmes; they create project weeks; and they provide support with research projects. They are also sought-after experts for lectures at seminars and field trips, and they also assume certain functions within the Carinthian Hunters' Association.

Gamekeepers are an essential link between agriculture and forestry, the hunting community and the National Park Administration, and as such they make an invaluable contribution to the acceptance of the National Park among the local population.

* National Park gamekeepers are National Park Rangers that have completed their training as professional hunters.

Klaus Eisank and his wildlife management team

Erwin Haslacher

'What's important to me is that we also play our part in the mission statement for the management of cloven-hoofed game in Austria's National Parks. That means allowing natural developments and avoiding human intrusion.'

Gerald Lesacher

'When the apprentice's position for professional hunter was advertised in the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia in 2008, I knew immediately that was the job I wanted to do as I'd always been interested in nature and hunting ever since I was a child. Even today I'm as impressed as I always was by the opportunity to observe wildlife and to work on all sorts of research projects, collating and presenting new findings on animal species, their way of life and their habitat. When it comes to hunting you never stop learning – and that's what so great about my job.'

Anja Suntinger

'As diverse as the beauty and particularities of each valley in the National Park reserves actually are, working in a natural environment never ceases to fascinate me, and that's precisely the environment I find myself working in. No two days are ever the same. It's always thrilling when, in the spring, you get to see a well balanced, healthy game population once again during your rounds and your counts. And that's at a time when more and more wild animals find themselves in a tight spot. That's why it's so important to create space and time for the game to develop and adapt freely. The constant monitoring schemes carried out by the National Park prove we're on the right track.'

Markus Lackner

'I believe that the leasing and management of hunting reserves by the National Park is an opportunity to gain new findings on wild animals in wildlife management and to communicate those findings to the general public through our public relations work. I also believe that natural processes ought to be possible particularly in National Park reserves. During our continual rounds I enjoy not just the huge diversity of wild animals we encounter, but also the opportunity to spot animal species that had previously been wiped out and have now resettled here, such as the ibex or the bearded vulture. But besides my varied activities as a gamekeeper, what's important to me in my capacity as managing director of the Grossglockner ibex conservancy community is a healthy ibex population in the Hohe Tauern National Park.'

Walter Pucher

'I've been working as a ranger and gamekeeper for the Carinthian National Park Fund since 2000. It's a job I love doing, a job that thrills me and fills me with enthusiasm. As gamekeeper in the Mallnitz National Park reserves, which are over 3,500 hectares in size, I'm in charge of managing some very demanding, but also very beautiful reserves. I'm also delighted that, as a result of the Park's international recognition in 2001, we have been able to create quiet areas for the wild animals to withdraw to. Unfortunately those quiet areas only apply in summer. During the harsh winter months when the wildlife needs its peace and quiet, they are disturbed continually (Monday to Sunday) by winter tourism (ice climbers, freeriding skiers, etc.). We need to put an end to those disturbances in the quiet areas of our National Park reserves as quickly as possible, through education, signs and possibly barriers. It's not about hunting; it's exclusively about the wildlife.'

Snow-shoe hiking combined with wildlife spotting in the Grosses Fleisstal Valley.

National Park-compatible wildlife management in practice

For the duration of the hunting lease period 2011 to 2020 the Carinthian National Park Fund is the tenant of 26 National Park reserves covering more than 25,000 hectares. But what does National Park-compatible wildlife management actually mean in practice?

- Reserve management:
  At present four male gamekeepers and one female gamekeeper (highly qualified professional hunters) are available year-round to carry out the tasks of National Park-compatible wildlife management and, in particular, reserve management.

- Monitoring:
  Continual observations and counts are carried out in the National Park reserves, along with evaluations of current game populations. The bearded vulture and golden eagle monitoring schemes are also supported through regular reports.

- Infrastructure:
  Continual monitoring and maintenance of the infrastructure (reserve facilities, stalking paths, etc.) are an important element in the National Park reserves.

- Wildlife observations:
  A survey shows that 80% of visitors to the National Park are keen to see its wildlife. The National Park, for its part, offers a comprehensive programme. Alongside the wildlife observations as part of the summer and winter programmes there are also special wildlife packages with overnight stays in mountain huts. That way visitors to the National Park are able to experience the wildlife close-up.

- Communication:
  One particularly important task in practice is communicating with the landowners, the hunting community, the NGOs and the authorities. The National Park continually informs hunters and landowners at various events such as trophy exhibitions about current activities in wildlife management. The gamekeepers of the National Park are also key contacts when it comes to wildlife management.

- Basic and advanced training:
  Continual education and advanced training in wildlife management is essential for all the staff.

Grossglockner ibex conservancy community

The Grossglockner ibex conservancy community was constituted for the duration of the hunting lease period 2011 to 2020 with the primary objective of ensuring the sustainable development of a healthy ibex population in the ibex reserves of the Upper Mölltal Valley. The ibex reserves cover an area of around 22,600 hectares (9 sedentary and 18 migratory game reserves). Sedentary game reserves are all the reserves in which the main population factors such as winter, setting and rutting covers demonstrably exist. Migratory game reserves consist of several connected reserves in which all three of these population factors demonstrably exist in combination. Since the Carinthian National Park Fund has leased more than 80% of the sedentary game reserves and more than 60% of the migratory game reserves in the ibex conservancy community, the management offices of the Grossglockner ibex conservancy community were set up at the National Park Administration as its contact and co-ordination office.

According to the results of the counts the ibex population in the areas covered by the Grossglockner ibex conservancy community is constant or even slightly on the rise (result of the 2015 count: around 300 ibex). Limited habitat capacities, especially in winter covers, and the risk posed by the incidence of disease (scabies, foot-rot, chamois blindness, etc.), make it necessary to use hunting measures to regulate the population. Well intentioned attempts to dispense with any regulatory interventions whatsoever during the initial years of the resettlement subsequently resulted in the emergence of the aforementioned diseases. The need for ibex population regulation has also been corroborated by a wildlife biology expertise (Gressmann & Deutz, 2008).

Two ibex gamekeepers, the managing director and the ibex delegates in separate member reserves are out and about all year round in the ibex reserves to ensure the practical implementation of ibex management, focusing first and foremost on the continual monitoring and development of the ibex population. Together with the continual observations the annual cross-province counts represent an important foundation for ibex management. The Grossglockner ibex conservancy community is also actively involved in research projects.

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Companion
Hans Pichler

What's your connection with the topic?

Chairman of the Grossglockner ibex conservancy community, member of the Hunters' Advisory Commission of the Carinthian National Park Fund, reserve neighbour, hunting reserve deputy director in Heiligenblut

What do you think of the approach so far?

The approach adopted so far is seen positively because:

- *first-rate hunting management and wildlife management are provided by qualified personnel,*
- *scientific monitoring is provided in many difficult situations (diseases, ongoing discussions about red deer, chamois and ibex). As a result the National Park has become a competent partner for the adjoining hunting grounds,*
- *there is a sense of comradely co-operation with the local hunting community,*
- *the leasing of the core covers has help to secure the long-term existence of the ibex population,*
- *information and good presentation resources on the domestic species of wildlife are provided not just for those with hunting experience but more importantly for ordinary people who are not familiar with the subject matter, especially young people.*

The hunting-based co-operation with the Carinthian Hunters' Association has to be seen as positive not only for hunting, but also for the National Park.

Through the leasing of the National Park hunting reserves the value added for the National Park is secured inasmuch as there are no capital-intensive tenants without any links to the objectives of the National Park engaging in hunting.

What are the next steps?

The National Park should go on leasing the core hunting areas as a cohesive entity. An equivalent management of the hunting reserves and close co-operation with the Carinthian Hunters' Association should continue to be secured at the very least.




National Park gamekeepers at work

Regulating shoots: ten 'rules of fairness' in National Park reserves

The regulating interventions are for red deer and chamois exclusively and are carried out by National Park gamekeepers, possibly also with the involvement of local hunters. Organ samples are taken from every kill and the venison is marketed in the region at 'market prices'. The trophies remain with the Carinthian National Park Fund. The following rules apply in National Park reserves:

1. Large areas are left to the wildlife as quiet areas without pressure from hunting:
   Cloven-hoofed game (red deer, roe deer and chamois) are no longer hunted on at least 75% of the Carinthian National Park reserves; any regulating interventions that are necessary are carried out outside these quiet areas.

2. Hunting season from 15 August to 30 November:
   Given the elevation of the National Park reserves, interventions in December when snow conditions can be severe are irresponsible towards the wildlife. During the sparse vegetation period the animals need peace and quiet. Any movement (i.e. flight) requires a considerable expenditure of energy, usually with fatal outcomes in winter.

3. Morning is the time for hunting;
   evening the time for browsing for food:
   In future, any hunting in the reserves leased by the Carinthian National Park Fund will be done in the morning only. However, this measure is possible only if there is professional personnel to hand; indeed, due to the switch to summer time amateur hunters are only able to go on morning stalks at the weekends. For the wildlife, any disturbance as they move to their cover is far less problematic than during the switch from cover to grazing grounds. A full stomach is more forgiving than an empty one.

4. No shooting into the herd:
   Wild animals are quick learners and soon notice the loss of a 'conspecific'. So taking out one animal from a herd community is a traumatic event for all the others, one which instinctively leads to even greater caution within the herd. And if the animals associate the loss with a hunter because he or she fails to remain under cover long enough, they become aware of the deadly threat posed by human beings. Herd experiences of this nature are not passed on when animals are shot in isolation.

5. Wait at least an extra half an hour:
   As mentioned above, the wild animals should not be able to make a discernible connection between a kill and the hunter, which is why lying in wait after a kill is the overriding principle. Most of the time the animals that have survived remain in safe cover after they have fled and keep a close watch on events for a long time afterwards. If the time between the negative experience of a kill and the hunter's appearance is too short, the animals will instinctively make the link.

6. Use of lead-free ammunition:
   To the individual chamois, it makes no difference what kind of ammunition puts an end to its life. However, game and venison are an excellent, healthy and good source of food that should not be riddled with lead fragments. Lead is poisonous and can cause symptoms of poisoning in human beings, too. However, the stomach of a diurnal or nocturnal bird of prey is far more sensitive than the human digestive organ, and it can fail catastrophically as the result of even the tiniest amounts of lead, causing the bird's premature death.


Britta, Cindy, Rex and Aska: loyal companions on reserve management duties in the National Park reserves.

7. Leading hunting dogs:
   A trained hunting dog or hound is essential to hunting. Hounds assist hunters not just in retrieving wounded game, but also in spotting animals and finding shed antlers and carrion. Descended from wolves, hunting dogs are easily calculable as a natural enemy for wild animals.

8. Max. ranges of 200 m:
   Even though today's hunting weapons when equipped with telescopic sights allow shots over distances of up to 500 m and more, any hit at such a distance is usually more a matter of luck. Wind, air pressure and the fact of firing a shot steeply uphill or downhill have a huge influence on the ballistics of any projectile, particularly at high altitude. Wild animal should always be given a chance and hunters the opportunity to improve their stalking skills, rather than reducing the escape distance through shots fired from a long distance.

9. Regular practice with hunting weapons at the shooting range:
   Carrying a weapon is a privilege of the hunter; but its safe handling and careful use are also the hunter's foremost duty. It's a matter of regular practice and regular checks. Shooting is also a matter of practice, and with every new box of cartridges the first shot must be fired at the shooting range, not at the wild animal.

10. Enough time for reserve, game and hunting:
    Although the hunting legislation stipulates regular, ongoing and sufficient supervision by hunting protection agents, time is a very precious commodity nowadays, one that needs to be carefully managed. Only personnel employed on a full-time basis are able to guarantee these regulations. National Park gamekeepers are out and about in their reserves all year round.

Companion
Erich Mayrhofer

Director & Managing Director Kalkalpen National Park, Chairman of the National Parks Austria Association

Building on the objectives and visions of the 2010 Austrian National Park Strategy the Austrian National Parks have drawn up a mission statement for the management of cloven-hoofed game in Austria's National Parks. The general principles include:

- *Allow natural development across the vast majority of the protected area*
- *Avoid or scale back intrusions into natural processes*
- *Species protection to preserve genetic diversity*
- *Protect the natural habitat of wild animals*
- *Provide education and the experience of wild animals*

Naturally, when it came to developing Austria's National Parks, implementing these objectives one to one was not a simple matter. Regional customs, practices, requirements and the natural surroundings had to be taken into account and co-ordinated with the hunting community. Nonetheless, and thanks to the good co-operation with hunting officials and the hunters themselves, it has been possible to secure natural living conditions in an entirely natural lifecycle for all species of wildlife in the National Parks. Many measures for tying animals down to individual reserves have been eliminated. A free choice of location, seasonal migrations, and the experience of indigenous wildlife for visitors have all been achieved.

But the main criterion are large connected wildlife quiet areas free of any intrusion, focused ideally on the nature zone of a National Park. The necessary management and regulatory measures as part of cloven-hoofed game management are implemented outside the wildlife quiet areas and are limited to whatever scope is absolutely necessary. Interval regulation with long periods of quiet and concentrated hunting periods have brought calm. Infrastructure has been reduced to the absolute minimum required, with shooting activities carried out by qualified and trained personnel and by partners working with the National Park.

The winter season and other natural regulatory mechanisms are regarded as nature's own regulatory agents and are taken into account in the management of cloven-hoofed game. In this context the return of large predators has to be seen as a natural regulatory agent. Cross-reserve co-operation with neighbouring reserves over a large area is just as necessary as information and continual dialogue between the various interest groups. Great successes in species protection have been achieved with brown trout, bearded vultures, marmots and ibex, all of which are the expression of the good interplay between nature conservation, species protection and the hunting community. And for that, all those involved deserve the warmest of thanks.

Together with the hunting community the Hohe Tauern National Park will continue to succeed in developing natural living conditions for large wild animals and their migratory patterns within an undisturbed landscape. This will in turn serve to strengthen the game population and its diversity and, above all, improve its protection against disease.

Wildlife, Species Protection, Research and Monitoring

Wildlife, Species Protection, Research and Monitoring

All National Parks worldwide have a research focus and, at the Hohe Tauern National Park, studying the entire area of unspoilt nature and conducting an analysis of the actual conditions have been absolutely essential since the late 1980s. Serious National Park planning was predicated on knowledge of the natural resource itself, complete with the flora and fauna within the protected area. Mapping was therefore commissioned for the large habitats of alpine pastures and forests. In 1986 work began on reintroducing the bearded vulture into the Alps and carrying out a cultural landscape survey which, following Austria's accession to the EU, was incorporated into the Austrian Agri-environmental Programme (ÖPUL).

Wildlife research in Carinthia began in 1993. A case of event-driven applied research designed to allay the fears of the hunting community prompted by the WWF Austria leasing a reserve within the protected area. Indeed, the reduction in chamois culling figures triggered a landslide of hypotheses on how chamois stocks might develop in future, from potential diseases to an increase in stock figures and the associated damage caused by game through suspending the hunting culture as a whole. The WWF as game tenant therefore initiated a chamois monitoring scheme with two annual counting dates. The chamois population was counted at considerable effort in late spring and in autumn to obtain realistic statements on stock trends. Over the years assumptions were either confirmed or refuted by the statistical data.

Wildlife counts in the Lassacher Alpe WWF reserve in the 1990s

It was only thanks to this initial monitoring scheme that the Carinthian National Park Fund was able to lease other reserves within the protected area. Indeed, serious figures make for serious discussions which even opponents are likely to accept. Many research projects over the past years have been prompted time and again by unanswered questions from the ranks of the hunting community and then implemented by the National Park.

Following the leasing in 2001 of a total of 15 reserves (and a number of stalking districts) covering more than 21,000 hectares, the monitoring programme was expanded in Carinthia's National Park reserves. In addition to chamois, all other species of cloven-hoofed game are now recorded as a matter of course, along with large predator species such as the bearded vulture and golden eagle. The counts are carried out annually by the gamekeepers around the same time and entered in a specially developed database. These data series collated over many years now allow specific statements to be made about population trends among chamois, deer, ibex and roe deer, and they are set to continue in the next few years.

Chamois counts conducted in each National Park reserve once a year provide the basis for documenting population trends.

Long-term monitoring can only be implemented if the National Park is also the entity with the entitlement to hunt. Similarly, interesting research projects can be carried out within the National Park reserve with a lot less effort and with the help of the National Park's own staff and the consent of the authorities granting approval. That is why, in the Hohe Tauern National Park, the leasing of hunting rights is the only path and the only objective. Otherwise, the consent of third parties always has to be sought. After all, no game tenant enjoys having his reserve continually disturbed by outsiders or by National Park staff.

The best place to spot ibex is directly from the Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe via the Grossglockner High Alpine Road.

Ibex

The Alpine ibex reintroduced around 1960 is emblematic of the Hohe Tauern National Park. In the late 18th century this ibex species was almost entirely eradicated, purely for superstitious reasons; today, it is gradually re-conquering its alpine habitat thanks to man's active support. From an initial small population in the present-day Gran Paradiso National Park successful reintroductions have been made in the Alpine countries of Switzerland, France, Italy, Slovenia and Austria. The population across the Alps has now grown to more than 40,000, with 1,200 ibex counted in recent years in the Hohe Tauern National Park alone. The ease with which the ibex, which are not particularly shy by nature, can be observed in the wild is a nature experience *par excellence* and one that never ceases to impress visitors to the National Park.

In Carinthia this species is looked after by two ibex conservancy communities: the Grossglockner community in the Upper Mölltal Valley and the Fragant community in the Middle Mölltal Valley. These National Park reserves are now ibex core areas, which is why the Carinthian National Park Fund as the entity with the entitlement to hunt is a member of the Grossglockner conservancy community and provides its managing director, namely National Park Ranger *Markus Lackner.*

Back in 2005 a telemetry project was launched with the ibex conservancy communities in Carinthia, East Tyrol and Salzburg to study ibex migratory patterns and document the way in which the colonies around the Grossglockner interact. A total of eleven males and one female were fitted with GPS transmitters that not only provided some interesting position data but also recorded activities. The transmitter data obtained was combined after evaluation with habitat and climate data and also with exposure and slope gradient data.
In summary it was confirmed that there is an exchange within the colonies by younger bucks. Migrations take place exclusively along ridges and passes, avoiding the valleys. Ibexes are diurnal animals with two activity peaks in the early morning and in the evening in summer and only one in winter. Their preferred habitats include rock faces with sparse vegetation that provide safety; the covers are always on south-eastern to south-western slopes exposed to the sun, with gradients of more than 35°. Equally interesting was a comparison with ibex populations in the Swiss National Park, which do not undertake migrations as extensive as those of ibex in the Hohe Tauern; also, they appear to become active one hour later in each case. Why this should be so is not yet known; possible hypotheses include different feed qualities, disturbance due to tourism or hunting, and grazing animals in the summer months that do not exist in Graubünden.

This ibex is being fitted with a GPS collar transmitter that continually transmits position data and stores activity data.

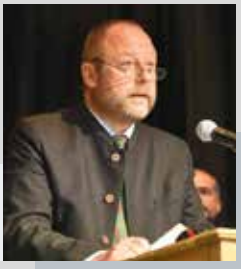
Work is currently underway on the genetics of the ibex population in the Hohe Tauern. Animals will continue to be tagged and observed, and, above all, the horns of the ibex will be measured as secondary sexual characteristics. Indeed, every centimetre of horn growth is an enormous biological achievement, one that says a great deal about the health and fitness of the individual. *'How will ibex cope with global warming?'* and *'What impact do grazing animals have on the habitat of wild animals?' Interesting questions to which there are no answers as yet.*

As impressive as the research findings are, what was and is still far more important is maintaining a dialogue with the members of the conservancy communities, the hunting association on site, and getting to know the reserve neighbours, who are also involved with the ibex. That's why a cross-province ibex day is organised each year and a joint ibex count is carried out each spring. This exchange of communication is certain to be a feature of the next decades.

As part of the current cross-province ibex research project, trophy horns are measured and the data on annual growth spurts, horn length, span, etc., recorded. This provides a means of determining the age and year of birth. The analyses of annual growth provide an indication of weather conditions (e.g. duration of the winter) and of factors relating to population dynamics such as game density or suitable habitats.

Companion
Flurin Filli

Head of Operations and Monitoring, Swiss National Park



20 years of co-operation between the Hohe Tauern National Park and the Swiss National Park

It is now almost twenty years since the Hohe Tauern National Park and the Swiss National Park first began sharing and exchanging knowledge. Over that period there has been extensive co-operation, one which also involved conducting joint projects.

For one hundred years a strict hunting ban has now been in place in the Swiss National Park. When it was first introduced, people were unaware of the problems that would follow. Chamois and ibex hardly ever venture out of the National Park. Initially, red deer were able to evade the traditional hunting season in September by only migrating to their winter cover after the rutting season. The consequences included regular winter deaths and damage to the forests outside the National Park. Proper management was therefore necessary; solutions had to be found, and the people affected had to be involved. Based on scientific findings the traditional September hunt was complemented by a second hunting season focusing on does in November/December. This particular solution took a long time: the hunters of the Engadin are a very traditional bunch. This hunting schedule model created a precedent. The findings provided the basis for the relevant provisions in the Swiss Federal Hunting Act. This example showed that putting an end to hunting is a challenge that requires close involvement with the inhabitants in the area surrounding the National Park. It was an issue that those in charge of the National Park in Carinthia had to deal with right from the start of the leasing of the Seebachtal Valley. By adopting a prudent and sensitive approach they were able to achieve their National Park objectives without giving rise to major fears and opposition all around.

National Parks are also designed to generate knowledge. So very soon we realised we needed comparable data and foundations for our analyses. The two National Parks subsequently carried out a joint ibex project. The comparison between the two protected areas was interesting. In the Hohe Tauern National Park the ibex wander over larger areas. The findings were also of interest for those outside the Hohe Tauern National Park in charge of hunting matters. What's more, the ibex in the Hohe Tauern National Park are affected by other human activities. The impact of sheep grazing in summer was demonstrated. Here, too, management will be called for in future. Indeed, how can the alpine pastures that are so vital to the ibex be utilised so that an adequate habitat is preserved also for the ibex?

And, last but not least, National Park visitors are able to experience wildlife in a natural setting. Thanks to the extensive programmes on offer, those with an interest in nature are able to experience wild animals in a stunning environment, either on their own or in the company of expert guides. This is important as it's the only way of encouraging attention for these animals, which in turn is the foundation of any pragmatic protection for this sensitive species.

If the Hohe Tauern National Park is to continue with its successful approach, it must be able to go on leasing hunting grounds in the core area. Likewise, hunting legislation must allow for a National Park-compliant wildlife management in the future, too.

The bearded vulture is a true sovereign of the skies and a majestic bird if ever there was one.

The juvenile bird Glocknerlady was found with acute lead poisoning in Slovenia in autumn 2012. Fortunately Glocknerlady was equipped with a GPS transmitter and could be saved, detoxified and then released again in early May 2013 after a six-month period of treatment.

Bearded vulture

Bearded vultures were returned to the wild across the Alps for the first time in 1986, in Salzburg's Raurisertal Valley. The release of young vultures – approximately one month before they fledge – was made possible by a successful breeding programme involving several zoos across Europe. They succeeded in rearing juvenile birds using bearded vultures held in captivity. Thus began one of the most successful species protection projects, and the bearded vulture is now once again indigenous to the Alps. To date 212 vultures have been released across the Alpine arc as a whole. 147 juvenile birds have already hatched in the wild. Securing the stock requires a large number of volunteer spotters, a few releases just as before, large protected areas with high stocks of wild and domestic animals, and solid PR designed to get the message across that the bearded vulture with its wing span of almost three metres is merely a scavenger and feeds almost exclusively on bones. Time and time again there have been losses due to kills, disturbances to nesting areas, collisions with aerial ropeway cables, and lead poisoning.

Bearded vulture expert Michael Knollseisen has been supervising the release of young bearded vultures into the wild in the Hohe Tauern National Park for a very long time. Here a juvenile bird is being fitted with a GPS transmitter so its location can be continually monitored.

For all their size, these 'bone crushers' are sensitive birds that react particularly to environmental contaminants. Lead is one such toxin often found in the bowels of wild animals shot with leaded ammunition, a feast to which bearded vultures are not averse. As a result of the extremely acidic gastric juices needed to digest the bones of carcasses, small lead residue is instantly absorbed by the bearded vulture's organism. The devastating effect of this environmental poison is illustrated by the long list of listless, teetering vultures that are regularly found, incapable of flight. Many of the bearded vultures found in this state could not be helped and died an agonising death. A few have been saved thanks to the detoxification treatment given at the bird sanctuary in Haringsee and could be released after months of recovery. Fortunately juvenile bearded vultures have been equipped with satellite transmitters since 2009, which meant they could be found quickly before the toxic lead had deposited in their bones.

Together with the Carinthian Hunters' Association the National Park Administration launched an information campaign on lead-free ammunition, initiated a series of lectures and seminars, helped hunters in the National Park municipalities to switch to 'lead-free', and of course set the example by no longer using lead ammunition in the National Park reserves since 2008. Lead is dangerous not just for bearded vultures, but also for all lovers of game and venison. The meat of deer, venison and chamois is marketed under the motto of *Gesundes aus freier Wildbahn* [healthy food from the wild], and these efforts must not be thwarted due to lead contamination.

Many hunters have been swayed by these arguments and now supply lead-free game and venison. But many continue to cling to their traditions and are not prepared to give up their favoured ammunition. In future, statutory measures will be necessary to ban lead ammunition in hunting, for the benefit of the bearded vultures, but also of lovers of venison and game.

Golden eagles

Similarly, the golden eagle project that was implemented between 2003 and 2005 as part of the cross-border Interreg IIIa programme with protected areas in Austria and Italy goes back to discussions about the protection of golden eagles. There were many calls in the Hohe Tauern National Park for an open season on the golden eagle, which more than one hundred years ago would have been almost entirely wiped out as a result; in fact, the golden eagle owes its survival to nothing other than stringent international protection provisions. The Aquilalp.Net project was therefore aimed at identifying and documenting populations of golden eagles in the Eastern Alps (www.alquilalp.net). Based on these results protection provisions were drawn up and a network of spotters put in place that continues to monitor golden eagle populations to this day. Known eyries are checked every year and any clutches are monitored and documented until the juvenile birds have flown the nest.

Within the Austrian Alps the Hohe Tauern represent an important core habitat for golden eagles. With its 43 or so breeding pairs the Hohe Tauern National Park provides a habitat for no less than around 15% of Austria's entire population of golden eagles.

In the Hohe Tauern National Park the habitat occupancy rate is very high, with approximately 43 breeding pairs, and the breeding success rate, at 0.5%, is in line with the norm. The golden eagle's prey consists mainly of marmots, followed by chamois kids and snow grouse. In spring in particular this bird of prey also feeds on carrion, mainly that of animals that have died by accident and have emerged as avalanche cones begins to thaw. The golden eagle kills its prey using the enormous strength of its talons, which it thrusts into its victims like daggers. The hunting ground of a golden eagle is always situated at higher elevations than its nest, which in the Hohe Tauern is located around the tree line.

Nationalpark® Hohe Tauern

The golden eagle is the heraldic animal of the Hohe Tauern National Park.

Thanks to international protection the golden eagle is currently not at risk in the Alps. Problems only arise if and when it catches a domestic animal. Sheep taken up to alpine pastures, lambs especially, are also among its prey, particularly in instances where sheep are left to graze within its hunting grounds. Conflicts with herd owners are then virtually pre-programmed. Indeed, the loss of a domestic animal due to predators – whether it's a golden eagle, a lynx or a wolf – is always far more tragic in the minds of the farming community than any similar loss due to events such as a lightning strike, avalanche or other natural catastrophe.

Perhaps attitudes will change once people find out a little more about our heraldic animal and learn that a pair of golden eagles will defend a territory some 30,000 to 40,000 hectares in size and succeed in raising only 0.5% of its young, of which many will not survive the first two to three years of their life. And once people are aware of the fragile connections between the golden eagle and its habitat, reports of the rescue of a marmot from a golden eagle's clutches might start to appear in quite a different light. Juvenile golden eagles in particular expend a tremendous amount of energy catching marmots: firstly, they do not have a territory and are chased off by the territorial pair and, secondly, marmots are outstandingly attuned to any danger from the air. A golden eagle may well not survive several failed attempts.

Except that: how many marmots are there compared with golden eagles?

Red deer

Nearly all projects in the Carinthian National Park reserves stem from discussions with stakeholders in the Hunters' Advisory Commission, at conservancy reserve meetings and with the officials of the Carinthian Hunters' Association. The red deer telemetry project also results from differences of opinion on culling figures in the *Lassacher Alpe* National Park reserve in the Municipality of Mallnitz. The aim of the project is to examine and scientifically substantiate the asserted view that red deer use the reserve as a summer habitat and are therefore not subject to hunting, even though in winter the deer settle at lower elevations outside the National Park where they have been known to cause substantial damage.

The red deer in the Seebachtal Valley remain the 'stuff' of discussions.

To this end, a live trap for catching deer was set up in the area of the Lassacher alpine huts in 2011; the first catch was made in spring 2013. An approximately three-year-old hind was successfully fitted with a GPS transmitter and, to this day, it continues to provide position data on its locations on a regular basis. In summer those locations are situated without exception within the reserve, but in winter they are 22 km further down the valley in the Reisseck municipality. Each year in mid-November, the deer leaves her summer cover in the Seebachtal Valley and passes through the Dösental, Kaponigtal and Paffenberg valleys to her winter cover in Penk, which she then only leaves again in early April to take the same route back to her summer cover. There was no change in the deer's pattern of behaviour in 2014 and 2015. So the position data map has now started to look like a genuine motorway running between the winter cover and the summer cover.

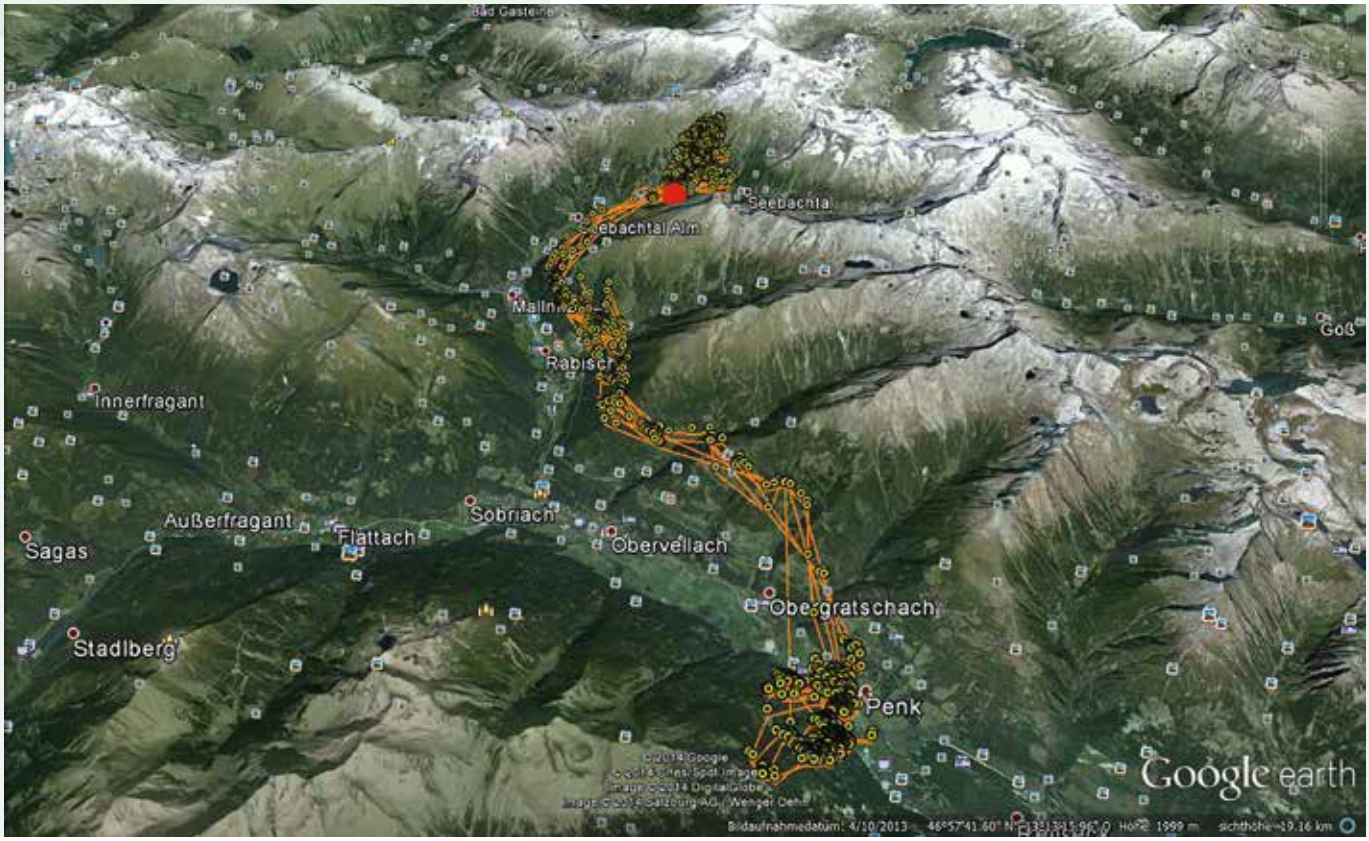
Deer with collar transmitter in the Seebachtal Valley

Given the small volume of data no conclusions about similar behaviour among the red deer population as a whole in the Seebachtal Valley can be drawn as yet. That would require tagging several red deer. But it is safe to assume that traditions are passed on from dam to fawn and that juvenile animals then adopt the same trail routes.

The example of a male fawn in a live trap illustrates just how difficult conducting research on wild animals can be. The trap is primed; salt licks and apples have been placed inside and the wildlife camera is set up. The following morning the photos show a stag calf cautiously approaching the trap, eating a few apples, and then rather cockily wandering into the trap to sample some of the other treats. That is the moment the trap should have triggered. But an inspection on site the following morning reveals an untouched trap and certainly no young stag trapped inside. Another look at the camera images shows the young stag once again, but he has not fallen into the trap. Did he spot the taut rope designed to trigger the trap mechanism on contact? Or is it a sixth sense that made him hesitate about walking right into the clutches of the trap? No-one knows, but some solution has to be found to trap more red deer and tag them with transmitters.

Wildlife management is a tough job that requires lots of patience!

Trail routes covered by the red deer from the summer cover in the Seebachtal Valley to the winter cover in Penk.



Companion

Friedrich Reimoser

University of Veterinary Medicine & University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences in Vienna, University Professor (ret'd).

I have worked on the concept of wildlife management in National Parks for several National Parks since the 1990s, along with everything that goes with it (spatial planning in terms of wildlife ecology), setting up long-term monitoring systems to record the impact of ungulates on forest vegetation and with accompanying scientific research in various projects, for instance ibex telemetry in Carinthia.

What does wildlife management actually mean? Wildlife management is more comprehensive than hunting. It concerns all users of the landscape that have an impact on wild animals and their habitat, whether consciously or (still) unconsciously. It is about preserving species-rich wildlife stocks with suitable habitats and preventing problems with wild animals, also in the surroundings of the National Park, with which the animals form an ecological entity. In Carinthia, the approach adopted in developing a National Park-compatible wildlife management is quite unique in its kind. The leasing of reserves by the National Park played a considerable role. With patience and sensitivity when dealing with people and different interests in the region, a degree of trust was established by being open and trustworthy, particularly towards landowners and the hunting community. The focus was always on gradually achieving the National Park's objectives. The adopted approach was very pragmatic and co-operative, with no emphasis on ideologies likely to create hardened fronts, i.e. without socio-political squabbling over competence and authority. This was predicated on the appointment of suitable personalities in the National Park team, people who were able to be genuine and convincing when it came to the delicate matter of 'managing wildlife'. Research projects and an international scientific exchange of ideas and experience were constantly supported by the National Park. The findings provided key elements for decision-making for the management and orientation aids in problematic cases.

The successful approach adopted in Carinthia ought to be studied more closely and scientifically as part of a thorough sociological analysis of its key success factors. With wildlife management, dealing with the people involved is usually far more difficult than dealing with the wild animals. It would also be worthwhile to work out the value added of this particular approach (in terms of economics, acceptance, renown, etc.) for the National Park, the Federal Province of Carinthia, hunting, Austria, the public at large, and science and research. The findings could be useful to other National Parks, too. We can only hope that the successes of wildlife management can be expanded further and that the right people among all the co-operation partners continue to be available. Congratulations on this anniversary – and all the very best for the future!

Avifauna

Birds of the grouse family (*Tetraonidae*) – ptarmigan, black grouse and capercaillie – are indicator species in the Hohe Tauern National Park and representative of the Alpine habitat as a whole. Given the size of the National Park, mapping individual species is a costly exercise and almost unfeasible. For this reason a special project was developed for gallinaceous birds, woodpeckers and owls. It consist of recording reference areas and a computer model that extrapolates from the reference data to the protected area as a whole, allowing suitable habitats to be represented. Their size allows conclusions to be drawn as to the number of reserves and initial statements can be made about stock sizes.

While populations of ptarmigan and black grouse in the National Park are still relatively healthy, the largest member

Ptarmigan, black woodpecker, boreal owl & Co.: Between 2010 and 2012 a population inventory of gallinaceous birds (hazel grouse, black grouse, capercaillie, ptarmigan, rock partridge), woodpeckers (grey-headed woodpecker, black woodpecker, white-backed woodpecker, three-toed woodpecker) and owls (Eurasian pygmy owl, boreal owl) was carried out in the Carinthian and Salzburg portions of the National Park.

of the grouse family, the capercaillie, is highly at risk. Higher temperatures and changes in forest management mean that its habitat is simply becoming overgrown. Sparse forests and mature timber stands with a closed undergrowth of blueberry shrubs, large anthills and good flight paths are now almost non-existent. The capercaillie therefore retreat to higher elevations, but there the extremes of weather in spring make the rearing of young chicks all the tougher.

Only forest owners can be of assistance here by making the forest a capercaillie-compatible habitat through mindful management, with the support of hunters. To this end pilot projects have been launched in the Hohe Tauern National Park to show how the capercaillie can be helped. Such projects can only be initiated by those persons with the entitlement to hunt; indeed, alongside the forest owners, the relevant authorities need to be involved together with the hunting community. As bystanders, without any entitlement whatsoever, the chances of being able to support the capercaillie are theoretical at best. It is only in the rarest of cases that project ideas are then successfully implemented.

By way of example we would mention the creation of a capercaillie habitat in Lassach in the Municipality of Obervellach. Here a total of six foresters co-operated ideally alongside the relevant forestry authorities, the game tenant, the Carinthian Hunters' Association and the contracting company. Almost sixteen hectares of capercaillie habitat were created, taking only the economic concerns of the forest owners into account together with forestry and hunting demands. The culmination of the project was the overall satisfaction of all those involved, who will now give more thought to the capercaillie in future when it comes to forest management.

The capercaillie needs sparse stands of mature timber that provide clearings but also sufficient cover, alternating with dense ground vegetation. Good availability of berry bushes is also particularly important as is an abundance of forest ants when young chicks are being reared.

Organ samples

One project that has been running to this day without exception since 2001 is the histological and pathological examination of all organs of wild animals that have been shot, a study conducted by the FIWI (Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology) at the Vienna University of Veterinary Medicine. The aim of these studies is not to legitimise a number of shoots by gamekeepers in the National Park reserves, but to conduct a health monitoring programme on wild animals in Upper Carinthia. As the FIWI report states, *'this programme has to be seen as exemplary in its kind with regard to the long-term disease monitoring of wildlife and as unique in the Eastern Alps'*; it is to be continued. What is interesting is the fact that many hunters from the Park's surroundings now report conspicuous wild animals to the National Park Administration as a matter of course and make use of the opportunity to have these animals examined. An optimum service rendered for the benefit of the wildlife.

But conducting such projects always requires professional personnel. Amateur or recreational hunters cannot be expected to carry out such tasks as they do not have the time to take organ samples. What's more, special training is required, likewise the right premises for the interim storage of the samples, which are stored in formalin or have to be frozen. Similarly, the handling of toxins and their storage is stipulated and checked annually, along with the handling of anaesthetics and their application. Besides their hunting training, professional hunters at the National Park have to deal with many other matters and are trained accordingly.

Chamois – Heiligenblut model region

Chamois are the principal species of game to be found in the Hohe Tauern National Park, which is why there is such great interest in this species of cloven-hoofed game in the Carinthian National Park reserves. Chamois are also a sought-after species in the reserves outside the protected area as they allow a number of persons with the entitlement to hunt to finance their hunting leases.

The amendment to the culling guidelines in 2007 and, in particular, the introduction of the chamois hind classification triggered a great deal of discussions among chamois hunters. Indeed, the topic did not fail to feature on the agenda of the Hunters' Advisory Commission either, which was set up to advise the Carinthian National Park reserves. The members therefore suggested a chamois research project and the Heiligenblut Reserve was picked by the National Park Administration as the area for the project.

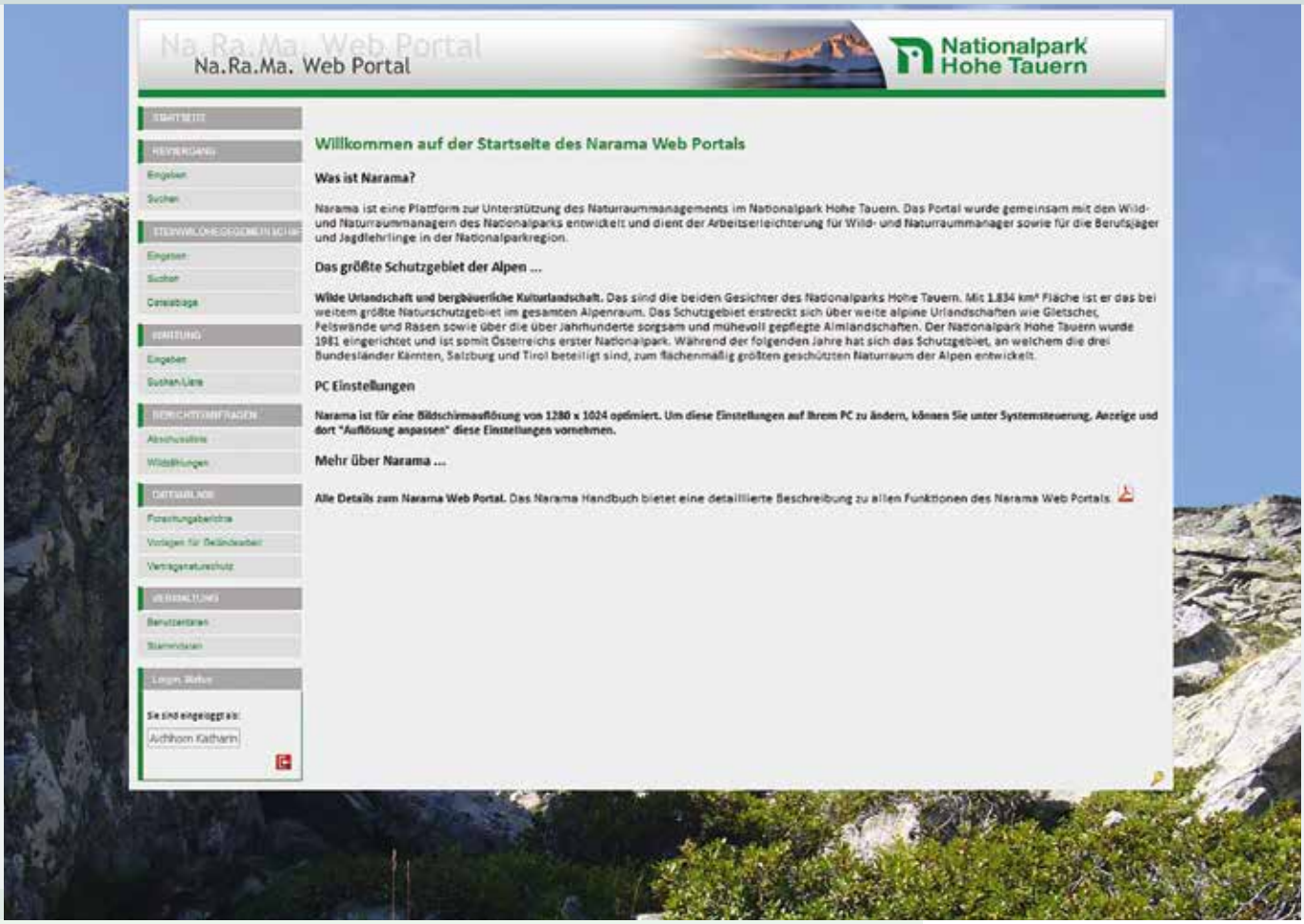
The aim of the project is the trend in the chamois stock in the model region retroactively from 2001 to 2016 and in particular a four-year monitoring programme of the chamois population including the reproduction rate, age structure and gender ratio, the evaluation of chamois shoots going back to 2001, and the spatial behaviour and habitat use through telemetry of selected animals.

With the help of two live traps in the Gössnitztal Valley and the Fleiss locality, chamois are tagged with transmitters so scientists can study their spatial behaviour.

With only one to two counts a year, recording chamois stocks is an almost impossible task. To obtain anything near realistic figures the Heiligenblut Reserve with its total surface area of 19,000 hectares was divided into two counting areas, north and south of the Möll river. At least 34 people are needed on each date, which is why all the hunters in the reserve are required to join in. Without their voluntary help such projects could not be financed, and therefore a big 'thank you' is due to our local hunting community.

It is pleasing to note that initial results, with at present approx. 1,300 animals, confirm the earlier assumptions made about the chamois population in the Municipality of Heiligenblut. A comparison of the figures for the previous year's kid numbers with this year's yearling figures show that a kid hunt in the high-mountain range is not absolutely necessary: 300 kids in 2013 correspond to 80 yearlings in 2014.

Chamois count in the Zoppenitzen National Park Reserve in Heiligenblut.



The NARAMA online database was developed specially for the reserves of the Carinthian National Park.

NARAMA: natural resource management database

How can data, figures and observations be stored in a clearly structured way over a long period of time for retrieval at any time? That was the question that had to be resolved as part of the monitoring projects. A database had to be created that stored and located all the population counts and observations of species of cloven-hoofed game, the eyrie monitoring of golden eagles, the national monitoring of bearded vultures, the number of grazing animals, the shoot statistics and all the gamekeeper rounds conducted in the reserves. So a natural resource management database was developed and continually adapted to the needs and requirements of gamekeepers with every input they made. A terrific facility, but one that relies entirely on figures, data and facts from the National Park reserves being entered consistently and continually. Only then can statistical analyses and, over the years, specific connections be filtered out of the statistical data generated.

But the best database is of little use if it is not regularly supplied with data, and so the continual presence of professional hunters in the National Park reserves is a basic prerequisite. Complex databases only make sense if gamekeepers are out and about regularly, continually and sufficiently (as, indeed, it is stated in the Carinthian Hunting Act!) and their observation data is immediately entered. Quickly storing and saving whatever has been observed is particularly important for the authenticity of the data; indeed, precise figures are otherwise all too quickly forgotten. It is difficult enough to keep watch of an entire herd of chamois until their total number has been noted, along with differentiating between hinds, kids, yearlings and bucks. If all this data is not recorded immediately, it may all too easily be forgotten. Two hunters tell the story of how they once observed an entire chamois herd together: one counted at least 35 animals, the other well over 40. When queried for more details, it emerged that neither of the two hunters had counted the herd down to the last chamois, only up to a maximum of 20 animals – they had estimated the rest. Thank goodness that nowadays culling schedules are no longer based on the results of counts made by those with the entitlement to hunt, but on the annual shoots themselves.

As the witticism goes, *'Never believe any statistics you haven't falsified yourself!'* If the figures aren't right, even good databases cannot help obtain correct findings.

Companion

Karl Friedrich Sinner

Deputy Chairman
EUROPARC DEUTSCHLAND

From hunting to wildlife management – the merit of the Carinthian approach from an international perspective

In 2014, as part of the evaluation of the management quality of the Austrian National Parks by Europarc Deutschland, I had the opportunity as project manager to get to know the approach adopted by the Carinthian National Park Administration to natural resource management and, in particular, wildlife management – in a National Park recognised as Category II according to the IUCN's international criteria. Given my own professional activities as director of the Bavarian Forest National Park and since 2009 as representative of the German National Parks on the Board of Europarc, having evaluated Germany's National Parks and many practical examples from Europe and other continents, I was excited about the following question: How would my colleagues in Carinthia go about tackling this immensely difficult problem of addressing the issues of traditional hunting and National Park-compatible wildlife management in a National Park, 98% of which is established on private landed property?

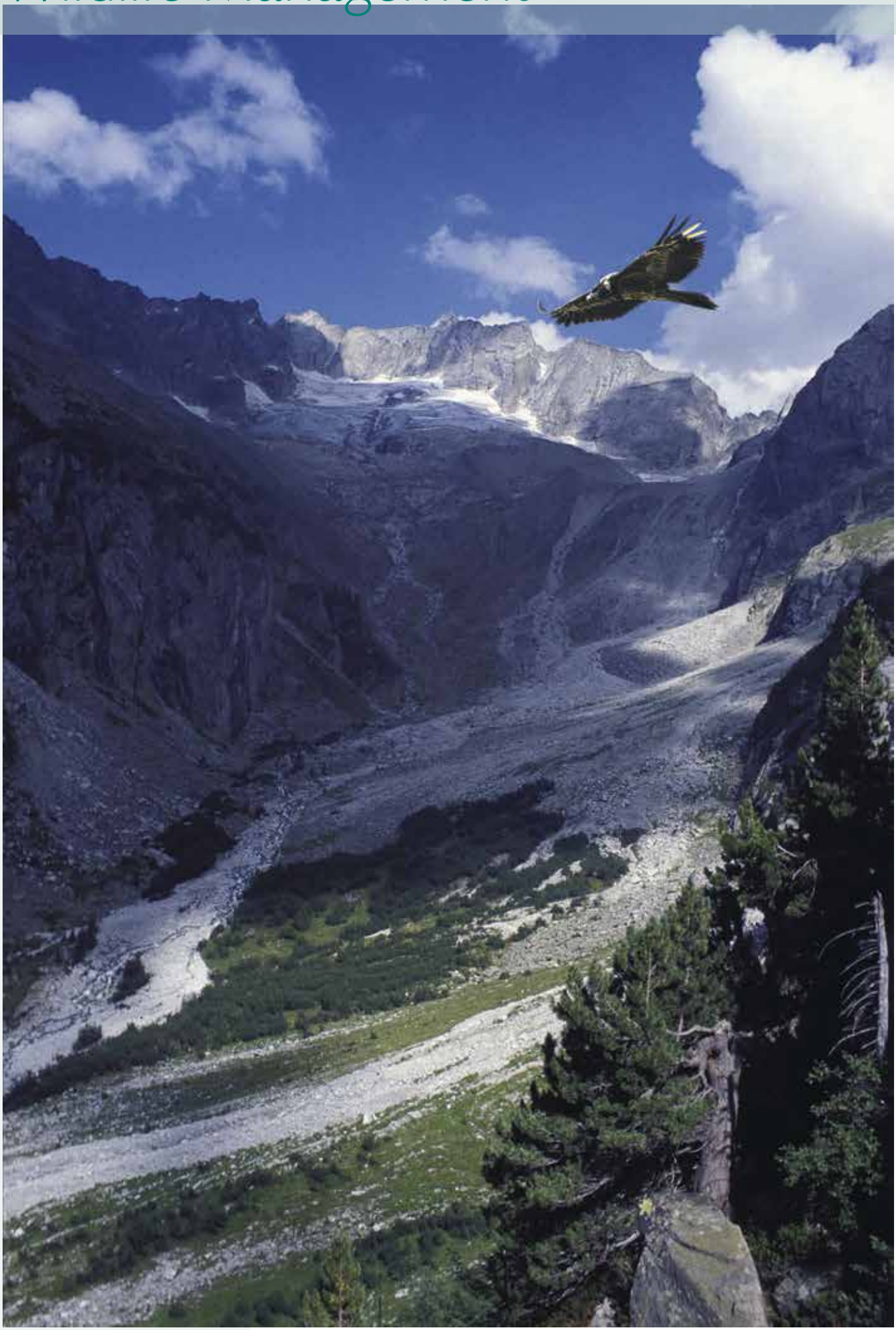
What needs to be done when a Park is not under state-controlled administration, as is the case in many other countries? When the administration does not have sovereign administrative areas of competence and all the hunting rights lie with the landowners or their game tenants? When all the legal requirements under the Hunting Act are decreed and implemented by the relevant authority? Well, Carinthia adopted the one and only approach possible, namely that of co-operating with the landowners and the hunting community.

The mind boggles just thinking about all the discussions, convincing arguments and, above all, patient listening and empathising with the concerns and worries of the landowners and hunters that must have been needed before the first contractual arrangements finally fell into place. And nothing convinces more than successful precedents! And once the first contracts had been concluded, the reliability and trustworthiness of the National Park as a contractual partner was the most convincing argument of all. From an international perspective in particular, the National Park has succeeded in gaining not just its very special natural resource but an equally valuable asset as a basis for successful nature conservancy, namely a basis of trust and co-operation with the people on site in the National Park region.
On that basis and with areas that now cover more than 25,000 hectares under the hunting jurisdiction of the National Park as set out in its contractual regulations, it has been possible to develop a wildlife management that intrudes as little as possible, comprises large quiet zones for the wildlife, thereby enabling natural biological processes in this high-alpine region with its particular flora and fauna to run their course unimpaired by humankind. And it is not just about the disruptive effect caused by hunting; it's also about the many diverse interactions between vegetation and animals, between the herbivores and their predators, between the availability of animal carcasses and a broad spectrum of scavengers, which are of such importance particularly in the insect world. What's more, the opportunity to observe in a National Park wild animals that are not hunted adds a special quality to the visitors' experience of nature in its wild state, which in turn enhances the value of the National Park for the region itself.

In these matters the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia with its model of co-operation and nature conservation, with its culture of open discussion and communication, has achieved exemplary solutions that can certainly serve as role models for other National Parks within Europe and beyond.

An even more intensive scientific supervision of this approach and its results would be desirable, not just in the nature of the National Park, but also in the associated socio-economic issues. Equally desirable is a stronger involvement of the National Park in the decisions of the hunting authorities that concern the National Park and its surroundings. This helps to ensure that the positive solutions achieved at the contractual level are not jeopardised by decisions that correspond more to the traditional understanding of hunting than that of modern wildlife management of the National Park. Then the National Park will have achieved a huge objective: landowners, National Park and the sovereign administration of the federal province co-operating successfully on behalf of nature in its wild state in their homeland in the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia.

Wildlife Management



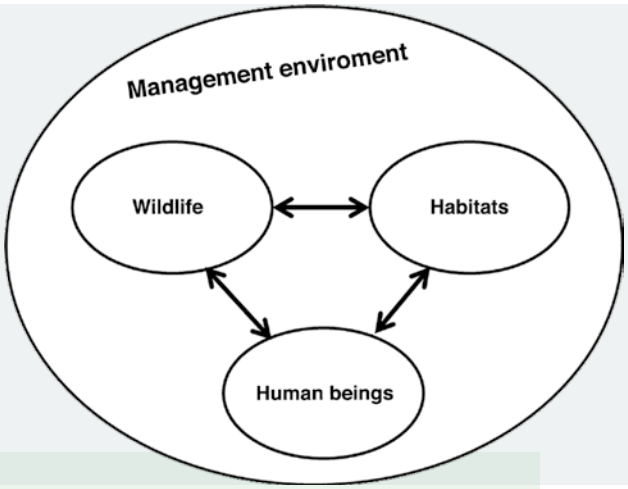
Wolf Schröder
Technical University of Munich

Wildlife Management

Everyone has an idea of what people mean when they mention the term 'architecture'; likewise with the field of medicine. But when it comes to the notion of wildlife management, people begin to struggle. And there's a good reason why. Wildlife management is a young discipline that first emerged in North America in the middle of the 20th century. What's more, it combines two fundamentally different concepts: wildlife and management. Horst Stern, a brilliant journalist and TV author, once coined the phrase *ein Wortbastard mit Sinngehalt* [a bastardised word with semantic content].

Wildlife management regulates a process in which the aims and wishes of human beings are reconciled with the particularities of wild animals and their habitats. In a confined world, that's often a tricky undertaking. The task is a complex one, too, because the things people wish for are by nature so diverse.

Today, experts view wild animals, wildlife habitats (their living space) and human beings as part of one system. This system-analytical approach serves to highlight the mutual dependency of the relationship. We talk of a wildlife management triad. That triad is embedded in a specific management environment – a socio-cultural environment.



Wildlife management triad and management environment

An example from the hunting sector illustrates the management environment. In Switzerland's licensed hunting cantons there are no reserves, no reserve owners, no game tenants and no guest hunters – all hunters have the same right. The management environment is completely different in Austria and Germany, which apply a hunting reserve system. Often a management environment may change over time. In 1976 a number of wolves escaped from a game preserve in the Bavarian Forest National Park. There was a great deal of commotion, and the police were called in to shoot the wolves (to no avail, it should be said). Today such a police operation would be unthinkable. As a species, wolves are now protected in the EU. People's attitude and the legal position have changed – and, with it, the management environment.

As far as animal species are concerned, wildlife management deals primarily with wild vertebrates: mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles. Insects – such as butterflies with special requirements and problems – occasionally play a role. So the framework is far broader in scope than the group of huntable animals.

Different disciplines have specialised according to the way of life of wild animals: inland fishing, ocean fishing and marine mammals. 'Wildlife management' in the narrower sense has now become an established term for land-living wildlife. The management triad is valid when it comes to problem-solving in all disciplines: whales live in populations; they have habitat claims; and there are interest groups with divergent objectives. For the International Whaling Commission (IWC), reconciling the protection of whales and the various utilisation claims is a genuinely tricky management undertaking.

The triad implies that the management environment and the two ecological dimensions of wildlife and habitat must first be understood. To illustrate the point, let's take a bird species: the corncrake in Styria's Ennstal Valley. This member of the *Rallidae* family migrates over long distances and the Ennstal Valley is its only breeding ground within the Alps. There the bird's conservation status is not good: it is listed in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive and is regarded as in danger of extinction.

On its accession to the EU, Austria undertook to setting up a site protection for Annex I species. Omissions in the Ennstal Valley have already garnered Austria infringement proceedings. This gives rise to an interesting management environment, right through to financing options under EU funding programmes.

The corncrake's heyday in the Ennstal Valley was the time of extensive litter meadows and hay meadows of the old order, i.e. around the first half of the 20th century. Today, the main threat is that of intensive grassland farming, with repeated mowing over long periods, as well as fertilisation. This results in excessively dense vegetation; what's more, the birds themselves are also killed directly by fast-moving mowers. So much on wildlife and habitat.

Photo: Müller

A small bird with a big impact: the corncrake protected under EU law has triggered a management process in the Ennstal Valley.

A favourable conservation status for the corncrake requires extensification in grassland farming – late mowing, no fertilisation, and dispensing with converting to corn fields. For the farmer, that entails large losses of revenue, which brings us to the third dimension in the triad, human beings. Even if there are prospects of financial compensation, farmers must first be won over to the idea of taking part in extensification programmes.

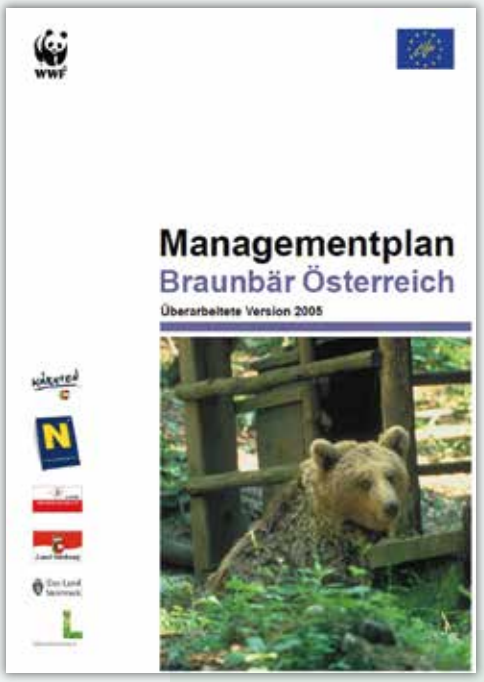
Successful people in wildlife management are always good communicators; they are skilled practitioners of the art of communicating, at techniques such as moderating – result-orientated work with groups – and conflict resolution.

A typical aspect of the tasks involved in wildlife management is people's diversity of interests. Insofar as they stake similar claims, they are grouped into 'stakeholders', a term that is now common currency. And it is a term which, originally, was coined during the Gold Rush, when gold prospectors would drive wooden stakes into the ground to mark out the territory to which they were laying their prospecting claim.

In management, stakeholders represent all the people or groups of people who have an interest in the outcome of a particular task or are affected by it in one way or another.

Some wildlife management tasks are characterised by a particularly large diversity of stakeholders – these are usually the conflict-laden 'hot potatoes'. When it drew up its wolf management plan in the German *Land* of Saxony, the Saxon State Ministry of the Environment and Agriculture involved representatives of more than fifty associations, unions citizens' initiatives, authorities and scientific institutions (Saxon State Ministry of the Environment and Agriculture 2011: Management Plan for Wolves in Saxony; www.publikationen.sachsen.de/bdb/artikel/11597).

In 1996/97 a management plan for dealing with brown bears was drawn up in Austria for the first time. The backdrop was 1994, a problematic year in which there was a strikingly high number of reports about damage caused by bears. The plan was drawn up under the overall responsibility of the Wildbiologische Gesellschaft München e.V. together with the WWF Austria, the four federal provinces affected by bears (specifically Carinthia, Styria, Lower Austria and Upper Austria) and the Federal Ministry concerned. It was important that the solutions be drawn up with other stakeholders too, such as beekeepers, alpine farmers, and tourism. Today, the plan is available in a contemporary format (www.dib.boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H03000/H83000/H83200/downloads/BMP05.pdf).



Protection and damage control are complex issues: management plans introduce structure and consensus.

There were times when the authorities would take decisions without worrying too much about other people's concerns. Those times are over. The former Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, *Jamie Rappaport Clark,* said to me recently: *'Before, we would simply restore a river to near-natural conditions. Today, when it comes to river restoration, we are the moderators in a process that involves 70 or 80 stakeholders.'*

Not every culling schedule requires wildlife management. There have to be difficult tasks involved, to which the solutions are not easily discernible. And often there are conflicts that need to be resolved. That was the case in the big game conservancy community of Sonthofen im Allgäu in Bavaria, an area of 85,000 hectares with 74 reserves. In this alpine region the forest ratio is small, the ratio of protective forest high, and vulnerable fir trees play an important role in this region characterised by high precipitation levels. Reserve owners are, for the most part, alpine grazing associations that lease their reserves to outside hunters. These reserves owe their hunting value first and foremost to red deer, which is why the stock of red deer is high. Nowhere in the Alps is alpine farming as intensive as it is here; there is TBC among cattle and red deer. What's more, this part of the Alps is amply blessed with leisure activities of all kinds, summer and winter. The hunting authorities and the bodies of the hunting community were overwhelmed.

In cases of this type an experienced individual or institution is often commissioned to draw up a management plan. The Bavarian State Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry did just that. After three years of work with those affected and those involved, the plan was ready (Schröder, W., Janko, Ch., Wotschikowsky, U. and A. König 2012: *Schalenwild und Bergwald. Ein Managementplan für den Bereich der Hochwildhegegemeinschaft Sonthofen.* www.wildbio.wzw.tum.de/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Projekte/Schalenwild/SW_Oberallgaeu/Schalenwild_und_Bergwald_TUM__2012.pdf).

One of the main proposals has been implemented, namely the appointment of a wildlife biologist to the hunting authority – on a full-time basis.
Similarly, drawing up the model for dealing with hunting in the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia was a classic wildlife management project. It was a process that lasted several years. Conflicts cannot be resolved quickly, and it takes time to build up trust and confidence. Stakeholders need to be involved in the drawing-up of solutions; otherwise they are unlikely to help carry the result. For this initial phase the commissioning aspect was important. Today, the model is in place, and the National Park reserves are also in place. It is now up to the National Park itself to keep the ship on course. Twenty years ago at the University of Munich we studied how wildlife management systems in Germany, Italy, Britain and the US tend to differ. By wildlife management system we meant the way in which a country structures its relationship with wildlife and its habitats. It emerged that, in Germany ,the system is relatively bureaucratic, with the authorities focused on preventing undesirable developments. But they lack the resources and the know-how to bring about desirable situations. Britain came out best: there the specialist bodies were well resourced, and supporting private initiatives was also part of their mandate.

In a hunting environment, wildlife management is now often used in an inflationary way. There are those who believe wildlife management is simply a new word for reducing cloven-hoofed game. So I told my students: *'Those who make use of a gun, go hunting and shoot, but that's not deer management. Those who set off with spades are not doing habitat management; at best they're improving the habitat. In the construction industry there are jobs that are best done by bricklayers; there's no need for architects in those cases.'*
Wildlife management regulates a process; it is aimed at human beings. No-one has put it better than *Mary Parker Follet,* a brilliant lady who in the last few years of the 19th century made important contributions to management theory. Talking to engineers in factories fixated on design plans and machinery she said: *'Management is the art of getting things done through people.'*

Wolf Schröder
Technical University of Munich

Photo: Perret

Brainstorming: looking for solutions in cloven-hoofed game management planning in the Oberallgäu region, with from left to right (standing): project manager Wolf Schröder and hunting reserve director Christian Hohenberger.

Resolving the hunting issue

Gerold Glantschnig
Head of the Constitutional Service at the Office of the Provincial Government of Carinthia (retired), member of the Hohe Tauern National Park Committee for Carinthia

Resolving the Hunting Issue – Key to International Recognition

International guidelines

According to the guidelines of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), National Parks are large protected areas characterised by unspoilt ecosystems that are largely protected from human intrusion. On at least 75% of the surface area of these protected areas nature has to be left to its own devices and remain free of human intrusion. These stringent constraints make it abundantly clear that the practice of hunting as it is commonly understood is not compatible with an internationally recognised National Park.

However, the Carinthian National Park Act generally exempts the practice of hunting from the prohibitions that apply to the core zones of a National Park, subject to the observance of the regulations that pertain to hunting legislation. According to these prohibitions, any intrusion in nature and/or the ecosystem in a core zone is prohibited in principle, as is any impairment of the landscape. But that does not apply to the practice of hunting. The National Park Acts of the two other provinces that share the Hohe Tauern National Park also comprise ultimately similar arrangements. Under the Salzburg National Park Act 2014 the practice of hunting is not in any way subject to that piece of local legislation. In the Tyrol National Park Act the lawful practice of hunting is again explicitly not stated as a sustained or significant degradation of nature. Indeed, any such degradation would be prohibited in a core zone under the terms of the Tyrol National Park Act.

Notwithstanding this fundamental statutory exemption of hunting in the core zone area of the Hohe Tauern National Park in all three provinces in which the National Park is situated, international recognition was achieved for the Carinthia portion in 2001 and for the Salzburg and Tyrol portions in 2006. In the following, we will take a detailed look at the fact that a particularly high obstacle had to be negotiated in order to resolve the hunting issue, indeed, that it was crucial to the issue of recognition.

Implementation in Carinthia

In Austria the right to hunt is tied to ownership of landed property, and that right prevails also on land areas incorporated into the National Park's protected area. So the person with the entitlement to hunt could therefore exercise their right of use to the land in the protected area under the province's regulations pertaining to hunting legislation in the same way as in the rest of the province's territory. In Section 68.4 the Carinthian Hunting Act would grant the Provincial Government the possibility of stipulating special hunting regulations in a National Park that would be orientated on the protection intentions in that particular territory. But so far such special regulations have not been decreed, first and foremost most probably to allay any fears expressed by local landowners that some form of 'eco-expropriation' is to be expected.

This legislation notwithstanding, Carinthia has succeeded in resolving the hunting issue in the Hohe Tauern National Park not with legal constraints, but by adopting the far more citizen-friendly approach of contractual nature conservation. The Province was able to build on the initial experience gained by the WWF as of 1991. That was the year the WWF first leased a hunting ground in the Seebachtal Valley in the Municipality of Mallnitz in order to trial a National Park-compatible wildlife management programme. Thereafter the Carinthian National Park Fund seized an opportunity that presented itself back in 1995 and leased hunting grounds that were on offer during the hunting lease period to practise a wildlife stock regulation that was compatible with IUCN stipulations. The necessary scientific basis for this particular step had already been put in place in 1993 through research into game biology. The Carinthian National Park Fund was empowered to implement this step by the provisions of the National Park Act, under which it is entrusted with the remit of safeguarding protection interests through contractual nature conservation.

A decisive step towards achieving the standard demanded by the IUCN for wildlife management was finally taken in September 2000. That was the year the Carinthian National

Park Fund was able to win over the lobby group representing the interests of hunters in Carinthia – i.e. the Carinthian Hunters' Association – as partners for the implementation of wildlife management in compliance with international stipulations. When one considers that, in the Carinthian Hunting Act, the Carinthian Hunters' Association is actually entrusted with the task of promoting hunting and game management in Carinthia, it has to be said that the officials concerned demonstrated a great deal of vision and a strong sense of responsibility in concluding the agreement. After all, together with the National Park Fund, they undertook to pursue the following objectives in the National Park reserves:

- To ensure a natural development that is as unconstrained as possible and to allow a natural succession;
- To ensure wildlife species dynamics that are as natural as possible in order to build up near natural populations and wildlife densities;
- To restrict regulating interventions in species of cloven-hoofed game;
- To preserve and support the population of indigenous, reintroduced wildlife species (e.g. ibex, bearded vulture).

Even if it has to be said that the practice of hunting in Carinthia is relatively strictly regulated even outside National Park reserves and by no means corresponds to the extensive freedoms associated with the notion of hunting at the international level when it comes to tracking, hunting, killing or trapping huntable wildlife. Nonetheless it is remarkable that the Carinthian Hunters' Association undertakes to help support the objectives set out for the National Park reserves. It was even explicitly agreed that the local hunters' association would be involved in carrying out and implementing the wildlife management measures listed below. The agreement explicitly specifies the following measures:

- Carrying out regulating interventions (only) in the case of species of cloven-hoofed game and even then exclusively in the event of a necessity in terms of game biology or for animal welfare reasons, such interventions to be carried out by game wardens commissioned by the National Park Fund;
- Year-round protection of all other wildlife species (except in the event of epidemics and/or for animal welfare reasons);
- Continuation of existing ibex regulation in co-operation with the Grossglockner und Fragant ibex conservancy communities;
- Establishment of a game biology monitoring scheme, taking adjoining reserves into account where necessary;
- Enabling the experience of wildlife for visitors to the National Park through selected guided tours in the National Park reserves.

It is also worthwhile pointing out that an eight-member Advisory Commission was set up to advise the Carinthian National Park Fund on all measures to be carried out in the National Park reserves. Besides the Chairman of the Carinthian National Park Fund the Commission is comprised of three representatives of the Carinthian Hunters' Association, a representative of the Provincial Hunting Authority, a representative of the Provincial Forestry Directorate, a wildlife biologist, and the Director of the National Park. The committee is responsible for monitoring and verifying the implementation of the wildlife management measures. It is also tasked with stipulating measures in the event of unforeseeable events such as wildlife epidemics; providing advice on drawing up culling schedules and co-operation with neighbouring reserves; submitting recommendations for research projects; and keeping hunters as well as the general public informed about activities in the National Park reserves.

It is worth stressing that the Carinthian National Park Fund and the Carinthian Hunters' Association have jointly committed to the management of hunting in the National Park reserves being assumed by a specially qualified representative of the National Park Administration. It was also expressly agreed that shoots would not be awarded against remuneration and that trophies were to be handed over to the National Park Administration, to be used and stored there for scientific purposes and as demonstration objects.

Importance of a resolution of the hunting issue

The assessment of the implementation steps in the Carinthian portion of the Hohe Tauern National Park aimed at securing National Park-compliant wildlife management and therefore international recognition shows the Carinthian National Park Fund and the Carinthian Hunters' Association have taken a courageous and remarkable step. A negotiated solution was reached between extreme viewpoints: dispensing with hunting entirely and allowing complete freedom of hunting. As a solution it complies with international stipulations. But it also does not fail to take account of the interests of the hunting community, thereby ensuring the preservation of a healthy, species-rich wildlife stock in the National Park. By involving the hunting community and local representatives in particular in the implementation, this form of wildlife management also avoids the whiff of the non-indigenous, of the externally imposed; as a result, it serves as a promising innovative role model for human interaction with wildlife.
The Carinthian portion of the Hohe Tauern National Park was able to achieve international recognition as early as 2001; by contrast, it took the Salzburg and Tyrol portions another five years to do so, i.e. 2006. The root cause of that chronological discrepancy is ultimately again due to the hunting issue. Indeed, the Carinthian Hunters' Association stipulates a mandatory duration for hunting lease periods of ten years, starting in each case at the

beginning of each decade. So if in Carinthia it had not been possible to resolve the hunting issue by having the Carinthian National Park Fund lease the National Park reserves at the beginning of the 2001-2010 hunting lease period, the door to international recognition would have remained firmly closed for another ten years. So Carinthia had to make every conceivable effort to comply with the international stipulations with regard to the hunting issue, too, on that key date. There can be no doubt, in all modesty, that this process subsequently helped to smooth the way towards the international recognition of the Salzburg and Tyrol portions, too. What's more, in the long term, it would have been difficult for the relevant bodies of the IUCN to justify its recognition of one part of a National Park, even if, constitutionally, it was founded on a separate legal basis due to the autonomous competence of each federal province.

In evaluating the significance of resolving the hunting issue in achieving international recognition, it should be noted that the exceptional natural potential of the protected area and its stringent protection can certainly lay claim to the lion's share of the merit in securing that distinction. Placing this gem of nature under protection is, however, the result of an almost centennial process that began with the acquisition of the Glockner region by *Albert Wirth* in 1918 and its subsequent transfer of ownership to the Alpine Club with the remit lastingly to protect the region. But in the past, exercising the right to hunt in this region, tied as it is to ownership of landed property and therefore to the principle of the autonomy of private individuals, has never been called into question for all the protection afforded. From the point of view of international nature conservation, surrendering the unhindered practice of hunting has always represented an essential protection criterion. So the fact that, ultimately, it was possible to push back private hunting interests in favour of wildlife management for the area of the National Park reserves and dispense with trophy hunting should be rated all the more highly. When one considers how much convincing was involved to achieve any such renunciation, one realises what a crucial factor the resolution of the hunting issue was in achieving international recognition. It is therefore certainly no exaggeration to say that it has played a pivotal role.

And so the resolution of the hunting issue smoothed the way towards achieving international recognition. But by the same token we should not lose sight of the fact that this solution is not established on a legal foundation. The sustained existence of this recognition is secured only through the continual updating of the agreement underpinning the solution itself between the Carinthian National Park Fund and the Carinthian Hunters' Association. Any discontinuation of this form of wildlife management in the National Park – either because an extension to the lease agreements could no longer be achieved or because core elements of the concept were no longer implemented – would invariably entail the loss of international recognition. So while resolving the hunting issue was key to achieving international recognition, any failure of this model would in turn result in the loss of that recognition. Objective, harmonious co-operation between the National Park and the Hunters' Association will have to remain a priority in the future, too.

Gerold Glantschnig
Head of the Constitutional Service at the Office of the Provincial Government of Carinthia (retired), member of the Hohe Tauern National Park Committee for Carinthia

Memories

Klaus Eisank
Natural Resource and Wildlife Management in the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia, Chief Game Warden of the Carinthian National Park Reserves

Memories

I remember very well how the 'issue of hunting' in the Hohe Tauern National Park was discussed.

It all began with the trip by an IUCN delegation in 1986. There were many things the delegation members rated positively, and the idea of a National Park in the Hohe Tauern was seen as exemplary.
Only the rights of use in the core zone by private landowners were a novelty that prevented the National Park being classified as IUCN Category II.
In Austria, hunting rights are associated with landed property and were therefore excluded from the bans in the core zone of the National Park (otherwise it would be tantamount to an expropriation of private rights associated with landed property). And it was precisely those hunting rights that were a thorn in the side of the IUCN delegation.

In the years that followed, my work was influenced by the question of how the Hohe Tauern National Park in Carinthia might achieve international recognition despite these statutory provisions (Carinthian National Park Act, Carinthian Hunting Act). Talks with representatives of the Carinthian Hunters' Association were inconclusive. Deputy *Landesjägermeister Hans Mattanovich* simply asked me whether I was aware of the National Park Act, and that was the end of the discussion.

In 1990 a situation arose where the chairman of the Lassach neighbourhood farming community was looking for a new game tenant for the 2,200 hectare-plus Lassacher Alpe reserve in the Mallnitz Seebachtal Valley. The idea of leasing the reserve for the National Park would not let go of me. And so I had countless discussions with my superiors and with political representatives – including the then *Landesrat Max Rauscher* – aimed at clarifying the prerequisites for leasing the hunting rights and obtaining the necessary funding. After examining several variants and many discussions, no solution was found in Carinthia for leasing a hunting reserve.

In desperation I turned to the WWF Austria, which was doing a great deal in the east of Austria for the National Parks of Neusiedler See–Seewinkel and Donau-Auen and was at the time more or less critical of the Hohe Tauern National Park as something of a 'farmers' park'. By arguing in favour of helping rather than criticising, I was able to persuade the management of the WWF Austria to lease the Lassacher Alpe reserve for the next ten years and thus contribute towards solving the hunting issue in the core zone in the Hohe Tauern National Park.

And so 2 December 1990 was an historic day. Many members of the Lassach neighbourhood farming community were present when their chairman *Alwin Hofer* and the WWF President *Gustav Harmer* signed the hunting lease for the Lassacher Alpe reserve in the extent of 2.265,6578 at the Alpengasthof Gutenbrunn. Everyone was happy with the lease price of ATS 400,000.- (i.e. EUR 29,069.13), and I was duly appointed Chief Game Warden by the WWF Austria. It was the first time a nature conservation organisation in Austria had itself leased hunting grounds and had been forced to engage in talks with hunters! And the same was true vice versa!

The initial discussions surrounding the hunting lease were marked by all sorts of fears, expectations and accusations. The press in particular sensed a major conflict between nature conservation and hunting. Instead of reporting objectively, they preferred to pour oil into the fire with pompous headlines such as *'Game over in the National Park!'*. As Chief Game Warden I was accused of having two hearts beating in my chest: one for a ban on hunting in the National Park, another in favour of hunting as chairman of a hunting association in the neighbouring municipality.

In the years that followed, the discussions surrounding the culling schedule were an interesting affair, held always in Klagenfurt. The Carinthian Hunters' Association consistently rejected any reduction in the chamois shoots from the original figure of 40. The WWF for its part vehemently called for the reduction. The Carinthian Hunters' Association argued that there would be an increase in the chamois stock in the reserve and that this would result in more diseases (scabies). The WWF management for its part countered that the fears voiced by the Carinthian Hunters' Association were merely assumptions that could not be underpinned by any scientific evidence. The culling figures were bartered back and forth as in a bazaar and in the end both sides met half-way. And despite differences of opinion between the negotiating parties the mood was always congenial.

To allay the fears of the Carinthian Hunters' Association, the WWF set up a chamois monitoring scheme; at the same time, the renowned expert *Wolf Schröder* was commissioned to draw up a concept for a National Park-compatible wildlife management programme jointly with the National Park Administration, the Hunters' Association and the relevant authorities. A discussion process lasting almost six years and comprising many events, seminars and field trips culminated in the leasing of further reserves by the Carinthian National Park Fund in the Park's core zone: first and foremost among them, the hitherto undefined reserves of the Austrian Alpine Club and the Wolfgangalpe in the Maltatal Valley.

The Carinthian Hunters' Association under *Landesjägermeister Ferdinand Gorton* finally agreed to the Carinthian National Park Fund leasing hunting grounds in the core zone, providing the consent of the landowners was in place and the National Park adhered to the provisions of the Carinthian Hunting Act. On 6 September 2000 a trailblazing agreement was signed between the Carinthian Hunters' Association and the Carinthian National Park Fund. It provides for the establishment of 'National Park reserves' and an Advisory Commission, sets out the objectives and measures in those reserves, and regulates the reserve management. The signatories to the document, namely *Landesjägermeister Ferdinand Gorton* and *Landesrat Georg Wurmitzer,* set new standards for a productive coexistence between nature conservation and hunting.

In 2001 the Carinthian National Park Fund set up more than 21,000 hectares of National Park reserves from Malta to Heiligenblut, thereby achieving international recognition for the Carinthian portion as an IUCN Category II National Park. This distinction was achieved exactly twenty years after the founding of the National Park in the Federal Province of Carinthia, even though 98% of the surface area of the protected area is entered as privately owned land in the Land Register.

'Managing wildlife is not difficult. The difficulty is managing the people involved in managing the wildlife.'
Aldo Leopold (1887–1948)

Klaus Eisank
Natural Resource and Wildlife Management in the Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia, Chief Game Warden of the Carinthian National Park Reserves

Carinthian Hunters' Association

Landesjägermeister Ferdinand Gorton

KÄRNTNER JÄGERSCHAFT

It was my predecessor, Dietrich Senitza, who first brought the issue to my attention in 1999. The discussion at the time was about achieving international recognition for the Hohe Tauern National Park in Carinthia. It was for the most part about terminology to be implemented jointly with the National Park. The talk was no longer of hunting, but of wildlife management; the term monitoring was introduced to replace observation or spotting; and culling schedules were reformulated as management plans. The Carinthian Hunters' Association was able to live with that and, in 2000, in my capacity as *Landesjägermeister* I was able to sign a 'groundbreaking' agreement with *Georg Wurmitzer,* who at the time was the member of the Provincial Government of Carinthia in charge of National Parks. This agreement brought the National Park international recognition without sovereign regulations for the Hunters' Association. With this arrangement I was also able to alleviate my colleagues at the conference of *Landesjägermeister* of many of their worries and concerns.

The way in which we co-operate works very well and that co-operation is well perceived by the general public. Even though not all the wishes of the National Park can be accommodated in the Carinthian Hunting Act, bright minds have succeeded in making something good come of it, for all the different interests. The advantages are with the National Park on the one hand, which has managed to resolve the hunting issue in the protected area, and with the Carinthian Hunters' Association on the other, for which it signifies a practical step in matters of nature conservation. What's more, it has been demonstrated that areas with no hunting whatsoever are able to co-exist alongside areas subject to intensive hunting.

The Hohe Tauern National Park should therefore go on leasing hunting grounds in the core zone, subject to the landowners' consent, and come to terms with the Carinthian Hunting Act, thereby acting as role model for other areas where the tried-and-tested, the good and the positive are applied without having to invent anything new.

'Never change a good system,' as they say, and I'm convinced that the Carinthian Hunters' Association and the Hohe Tauern National Park will continue in the future down the road they have travelled along together so far.

Landesjägermeister Ferdinand Gorton

Wildlife Management ... Not False Labelling!

Peter Rupitsch
Director, Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia

At the latest since the visit by the IUCN delegation in 1986 it was clear that the hunting arrangements practised in the National Park at the time – with no distinction made between hunting use there and in the rest of the province's territory – would be insufficient to ever achieve the status of an 'internationally recognised National Park' for the Hohe Tauern. Many did not want to let themselves be led astray by such an expert opinion; after all, a political pledge was in place not to touch the sensitive issue of 'hunting and National Parks'. This means that the exemption clause/arrangement for hunting anchored in the Carinthian National Park Act was not up for discussion under any circumstances. At the latest with the establishment of other National Parks in Austria (such as Neusiedler See–Seewinkel or in the Kalkalpen) – where an IUCN-compliant hunting solution was negotiated by legislative means from the outset – it has been possible to convince also the members of the Carinthian Provincial Government in charge of National Parks that action was called for. No-one wanted to run the risk of being labelled a misrepresenter! The National Park Administration of Carinthia felt it was neither sensible nor conducive to bring about a change in the IUCN criteria on this point, a stance which, one has to say, has since been confirmed, given that all forays in this direction have proved unsuccessful!

Squaring the circle?

Very often, it felt like we were trying to square the circle. In the tug of war between landowners, lobby groups and the authorities on the one hand and vague political stipulations on the other, it took not just specialist knowledge, but also a great deal of understanding of what makes people tick and skilful negotiation when handling 'hunting as a cultural asset'. It was a stroke of particular good fortune that, in *Klaus Eisank*, the National Park Administration had someone who possessed all these prerequisites in spades. It also proved possible to set up a team that managed consistently to implement in practice a gradual switch to National Park-compatible wildlife management, which after all differs from traditional hunting in a number of key aspects, and show enthusiasm for new research projects time and time again.

Knowledge gain and value added

Thanks to a unique act of solidarity between the National Park and the hunting community and with the support of the landowners, it proved possible, despite difficult outline conditions, to tackle the complex issue of 'National Parks and hunting', to develop it further, and finally to achieve an invaluable knowledge gain for all those involved. This is best exemplified at our annual meeting of the Hunters' Advisory Commission, at which debates conducted at a high level guarantee a quality exchange of experiences. Indeed, I see this gain in knowledge as one of the main purposes of our efforts, alongside the need to comply with IUCN criteria. With their purpose earmarked in this way, National Parks provide the opportunity to carry out special projects, combined with scientific research, the likes of which are not achievable outside the region. And we are certain to go on acting responsibly with this particular status and this special function in the future, too.

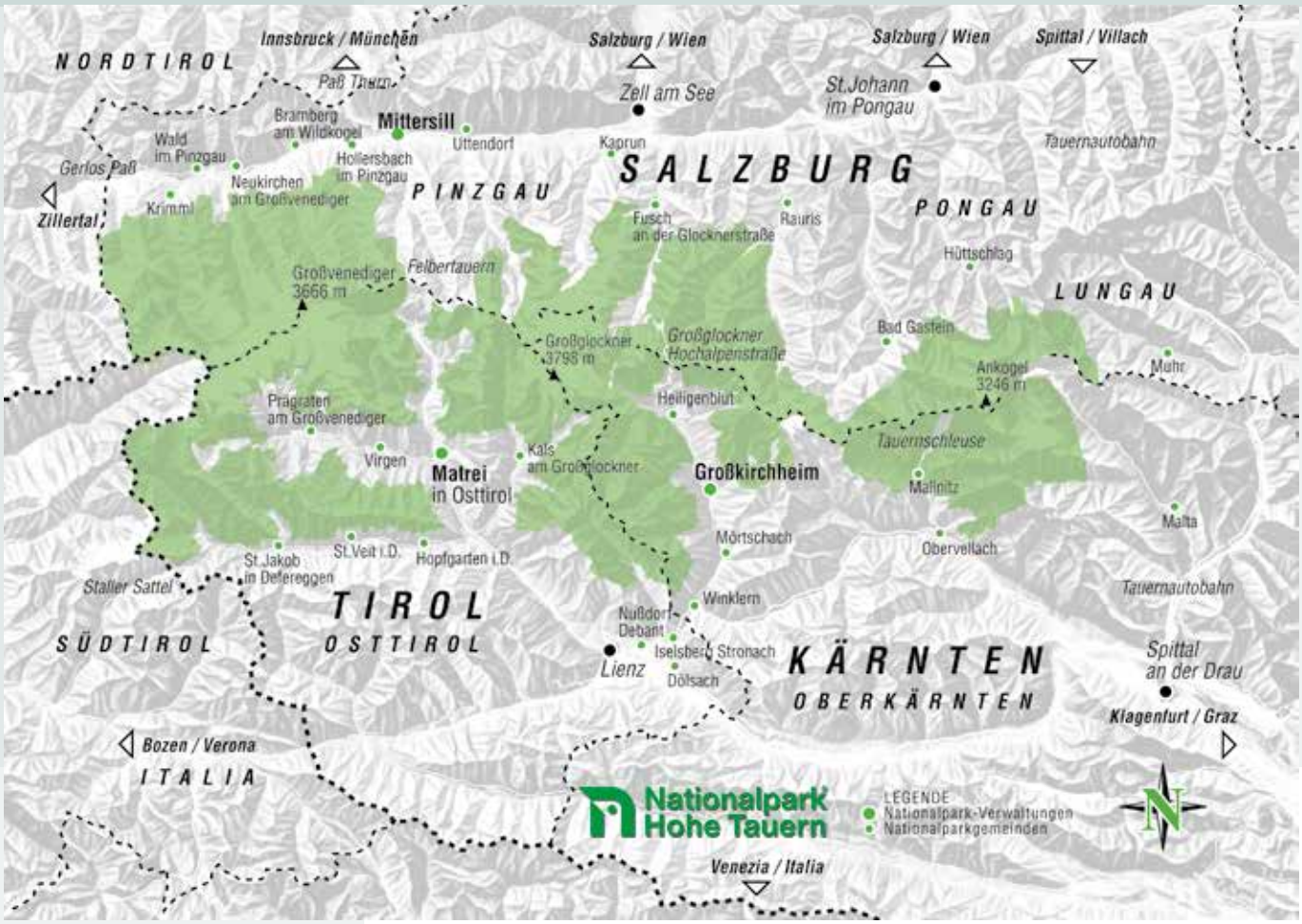
As *Friedrich Reimoser* has suggested, in all our future activities we should always highlight the value-added aspect for the public at large and for research as a whole.

New challenges

We have successfully accomplished the transition from traditional hunting to wildlife management orientated according to the objectives of the National Park. What's key, however, is what we manage to achieve in the future. This will depend essentially on the National Park's landowners. Will they be prepared over the forthcoming hunting lease periods to lease their hunting grounds in the core areas to the Carinthian National Park Fund? Even if, for most of these grounds, we have made the appropriate provisions through the relevant preliminary agreements, it is up to each landowner to take the decision anew at the start of every hunting lease period. Similarly, the Carinthian Hunters' Association will also have to engage with new issues. We know that the existing agreement is very broad-based and allows for plenty of scope. Will it be possible to fully utilise that scope, at least on a trial basis? What will the now inevitable return of large predators entail? It is the stated aim of the National Park – in fact, it has also been agreed with the Carinthian Hunters' Association – not to conduct any active reintroduction of the lynx or wolf, both of which would find the Hohe Tauern a suitable permanent habitat in principle. But what would happen if these species were to migrate there without our involvement? What's more, it should be noted that these species enjoy the same statutory protection status both within the National Park and outside it, i.e. there is no added protection within the National Park.

A multitude of challenges, then, for us to face up to in the future, challenges which we will seek to resolve together, in a concerted effort with the landowners, the Carinthian Hunters' Association, the authorities and with the help of the scientific community. After all, we have proved over the past twenty years that it can be done.

Peter Rupitsch
Director, Hohe Tauern National Park Carinthia



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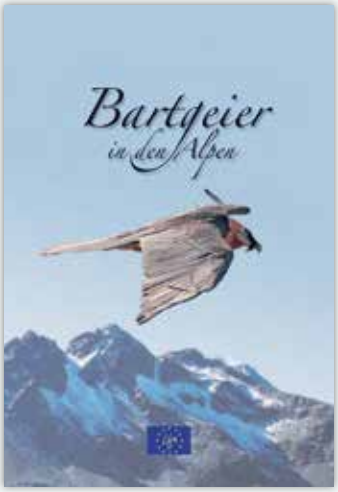

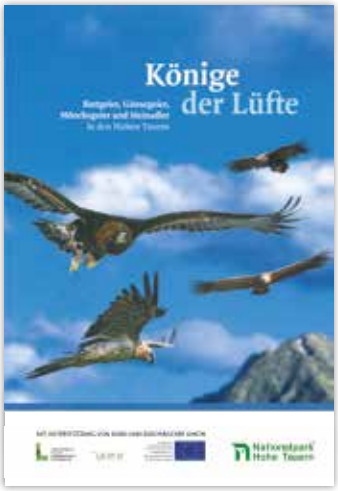

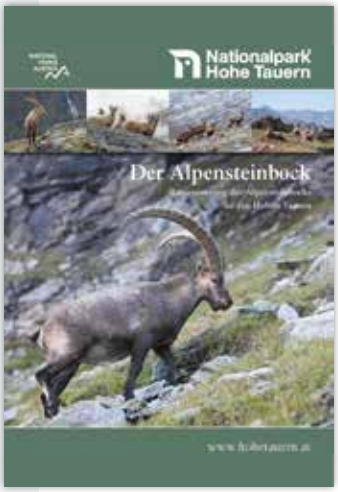

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