

« WE » act for biodiversity

Labelling as a tool to enhance sustainable wildlife management

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Vision and Objectives

The Wildlife Estates Label (WE) is a tool for sustainable land use and wildlife management. It operates according to agreed principles for environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable, land management.

The label aims to establish a network of exemplary estates. These will showcase simple principles of good management and conservation of wildlife estates all over Europe. They are adapted according to the different types of hunting management in the various biogeographical regions of Europe.

Example: Wallonia (Belgium)

The Walloon region's (Belgium) evaluation grid is based on the principles of the 'European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity' (Council of Europe / Bern Convention).

This Charter represents a two years collective effort of Governments, hunters and environmental organizations. It promotes principles and guidelines intended to ensure that hunting in Europe is practiced in a sustainable manner, while avoiding negative impacts on biodiversity and making a positive contribution to the conservation of species and habitats and the needs of society.

Structure : a real network

In practice

In practice, the evaluation of an estate is based on 5 elements, following a standardised methodology:

1. a brief description of the estate, by its owner or manager;
2. a detailed description of the manager's aims for his estate;
3. a description of the management measures implemented according to the 12 principles (Box 1) of the *European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity*;
4. a visit of the estate by a mandated evaluator;
5. a notation of the management practices of the estate by the same evaluator.

The application is then sent to the *International Jury*, with an accompanying note providing the evaluator's assessment. The Jury decides, twice a year, on the attribution of the 'Wildlife Estates' label. This label is given for a period of five years, renewable.

Scientific committee

7 highly qualified members, each from a different biogeographical region. This newly set up Scientific committee will evaluate the different methodologies.

Scale : a european project

History

- 2003 & 2004: first open debates in St-Hubert (BE) and Chambord (FR)
- 2005 : first annual plenary session in Estrmoz (PT)
- 2006 – 2012 : annual plenary sessions across Europe (ES, DK, NL, DE, FI, SE, etc.)

Today

More than 400.000 ha labelled across Europe, in 13 countries

Evaluation

Principle 1 (15 pts) – Favour multi-level governance that maximises benefit for biodiversity conservation and society

Principle 2 (20 pts) – Ensure that regulations are understandable and respected

Principle 3 (70 pts) – Ensure that harvest is ecologically sustainable

Principle 4 (50 pts) – Maintain wild populations of indigenous species with adaptive gene pools

Principle 5 (60 pts) – Maintain environments that support healthy and robust populations of harvestable species

Principle 6 (10 pts) – Encourage use to provide economic incentives for conservation

Principle 7 (15 pts) – Ensure that harvest is properly utilised and wastage avoided

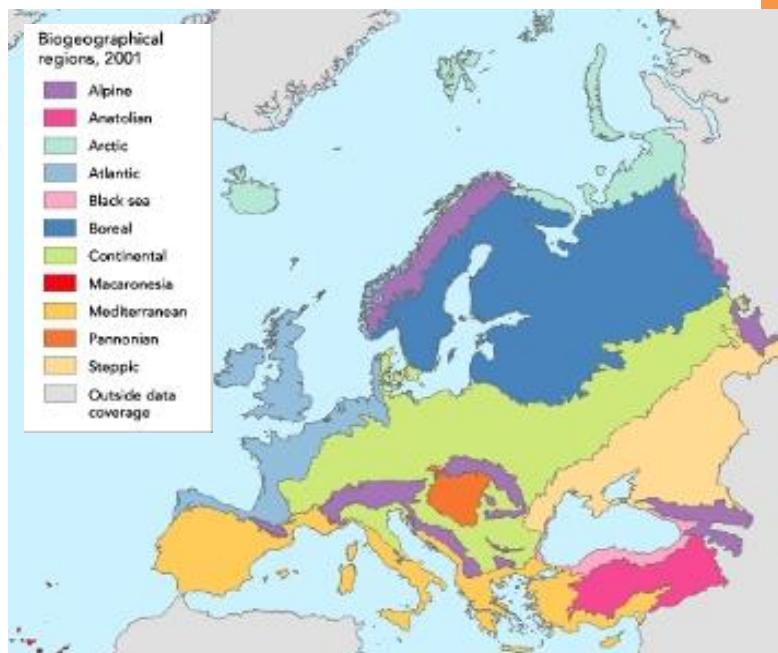
Principle 8 (15 pts) – Empower local stakeholders and hold them accountable

Principle 9 (30 pts) – Competence and responsibility are desirable among users of wild resources

Principle 10 (30 pts) – Minimise avoidable suffering by animals

Principle 11 (30 pts) – Encourage cooperation between all stakeholders in management of harvested species, associated species and their habitats

Principle 12 (15 pts) – Encourage acceptance by society of sustainable, consumptive use as a conservation tool



More information : www.wildlife-estates.eu/

Founding organisations : National Domaine of Chambord & Royals Hunts of Belgium

(1) Service Public de Wallonie, DEMNA (2) European Landowners' Organization (Secretariat of the project)