

Hunting in Finland



Hunting in Finland

Finland is about 1 200 kilometres long and 600 kilometres wide. Finland's area is 338,145 square kilometres, 69 per cent of which is made up of forests, 8 per cent of farmland, 13 per cent of other land and 10 per cent of water. While most of the country's forests are part of the coniferous forest zone, those in the southernmost part belong to the deciduous zone, and in the north to the tundra zone.

Finland features countless bodies of water, 188 000 of which are lakes. The archipelagos of the coast of Finland are beautiful, and the islands numerous. There are 81 000 islands altogether in the archipelagos of the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Bothnia.

Finland's northern location and length mean that the living conditions of game vary greatly in the different regions of the country. Only relatively few game animal species can endure the rugged landscape and severe winters. The game densities are much smaller than, for example, in Central Europe. There is great variation yearly, especially in the population densities of small game species.

The main game species are the capercaillie, black grouse, wood pigeon, hazel grouse, willow grouse, mountain hare, brown hare, moose and white-tailed deer and, among waterfowl, the mallard. Fur game include the red fox, raccoon dog, American mink, beaver and pine marten. Big game, such as bears, lynxes and wolves, require special hunting licences for game management or damage prevention.

There are more than 300 000 hunters in Finland who pay the annual game management fee (i.e. hunting card). Women make up five percent of this number. A total of six percent of the population of Finland hold a hunting card, which is more than anywhere else in Europe when compared to the size of the population.

In order to hunt in Finland each hunter must have

- a Finnish hunting card
- hunting rights or a hunting permit granted by a land owner or holder of hunting rights
- a firearms licence
- in cervine and bear hunting: a certificate of a passed shooting test
- for certain species of game, a hunting licence or an exemption

Hunting card

Everyone who wishes to hunt must pay a game management fee to the state each hunting year. The receipt for making this payment will serve as a hunting card for that particular year. The game

management fee is determined yearly in the state's budget, but for the past few years it has been 30 euros. Before a person can purchase a hunting card, he or she must pass a hunting examination. In Finland, the examination has been obligatory since 1964.

In order to obtain a Finnish hunting card, a foreign hunter must present a hunting card valid in his native country or some other certificate of his right to hunt in his own country. These documents are presented to personnel at the Game Management Association where the documents are checked and a bank deposit slip for that person will be ordered from the hunter's register, which, when paid, will serve as a hunting card. If he is unable to present reliable documents showing his right to hunt, he must pass a Finnish hunting examination. Hunting examinations are arranged by Game Management Associations and are subject to a fee. In practice it is best to let the Finnish host for the hunting party to take care of the matters involved in getting a hunting card beforehand.

The hunting card is valid for one hunting year, which begins August 1 and ends July 31 of the following calendar year. The game management fee includes hunting insurance, which covers personal damages caused by a firearm during hunting. The insurance is valid for one hunting year in Finland as well as in Nordic countries and EU countries during hunting trips that last no longer than 60 days.

Hunting rights

In Finland, hunting rights belong to the land owner, who may lease the hunting rights in his domain to another party. Private persons own 65 per cent of Finland's forest, field and freshwater areas. Privately-owned real estate generally consists of land and water from 5 to 200 hectares. Hunters have founded hunting clubs (hunting associations) and leased areas for hunting and game management. The aim is to form sufficiently large and uniform hunting areas, particularly for moose and deer hunting. Today there are over 4,000 hunting clubs in Finland who have hunting grounds ranging in size from 2 000 to 10 000 hectares. The clubs take care of arrangements related to hunting, game management and supervision in their areas.

The state owns about 25 per cent of Finland's land, mainly in eastern and northern Finland. Metsähallitus (State forest enterprise) is responsible for most of the use of hunting rights and game management on state lands.

Hunting permits

Hunting is also allowed without hunting rights based on the ownership or leasing of land. In this case, the hunter must obtain a hunting permit from the land owner or game tenant (holder of hunting rights). Land owners and hunting clubs often grant or sell hunting permits for land or water areas in their possession.

For hunting small game on state lands, Metsähallitus sells seasonal hunting permits and short-term small game permits for one to seven days. Small game permits are sold either for all small game species or for small game species excluding grouses. The small game permits are personal. The hunting permit includes a hunting quota, which is indicated as the permit's hunting score. Metsähallitus also sells moose hunting permits for hunting parties, and personal bear hunting permits. Hunting permits for state lands are sold from late spring onwards. The sale of short-term small game hunting permits occurs in two stages, in June and in August. Please verify the exact dates by visiting the Metsähallitus online service.

A foreigner intending to hunt in Finland should find out while still in his native country how and for what game he can obtain a hunting permit. This can be done conveniently through Finnish acquaintances. Hunting permit fees are decided by the holder of hunting rights. Permits usually include a game quota which must not be exceeded. The fees vary widely depending on the game animal species and the area.

Import of firearms

A foreign hunter may use his own firearms or he may also borrow a hunting weapon from his Finnish hunting host. The regulations for importing firearms vary depending on which country the foreign hunting guest is arriving from.

Importing one's own firearms and cartridges

A firearms license granted in Norway, Sweden or Denmark permits its holder to import the firearm in question and a sufficient amount of cartridges, as well as to hold them in his possession for a maximum of three months. Proof of participation in a shooting or hunting event must be presented, for example, in the form of an invitation, as a prerequisite for importing the firearm.

If the hunting guest arrives from a country belonging to the European Union, the easiest way import firearms is to obtain a European firearms passport. The holder of the document is allowed to transport and bring to Finland a firearm and cartridges for hunting that fit



category C or D of the firearms directive, and is indicated on the firearms passport. A holder of the firearms passport must also carry a written invitation or other reliable documents proving that the transportation or importation of the firearm is necessary in order to participate in a hunting event. The holder of the European firearms passport must be capable of producing the document whenever he is carrying or transporting the firearm and cartridges.

Another option is a personal import license which allows its holder to bring firearms and

cartridges to Finland. In order to obtain a personal import license, the person entering the country must present the Finnish Police a certificate given by the authorities in his own country which states that he has a license for carrying the firearm in question in his native country. A personal import license is granted for a maximum of three months. A personal import license applies to the importation of firearms and cartridges to Finland from EU countries, as well as from countries outside the EU.

A third option is to obtain a license from the Finnish police authorities for carrying the firearm that is to be imported. A person living in some other EU country who has been granted a firearms license in Finland must notify the proper authorities of the matter in the country he is living in as soon as possible.

Borrowing a firearm from a Finnish citizen

The Finnish police authority can grant a foreigner a parallel firearms license with the consent of a Finnish firearms license holder. In order to obtain a parallel firearms license, the foreign person must present a permit to carry a firearm granted by the authorities in his/her native country. In addition, he must also give a written account of his intention to carry firearms in Finland. The parallel firearm license can be obtained at Finnish police stations or, in special cases, from Finland's foreign delegations.

A Finnish person may lend a firearm to a foreigner if the latter has a document permitting him to carry a firearm in Finland. These documents include a firearms license granted in Finland, a firearms passport granted in some other EU country or a firearms license granted in Norway, Sweden or Denmark. The person lending a firearm may, however, only lend one that corresponds to, or is less powerful than, the one that the foreigner him/herself has a license for.

A person who is 18 years of age and carries a firearms license may lend his gun to another person under his supervision, if he is able to effectively survey and guide the user of the gun in a manner in which using the gun will pose no danger.

Shooting test

Every hunter intending to hunt moose and other deer animals in Finland with a rifled bullet weapon is required to pass the shooting test. Shooting tests are arranged by the various game management associations especially in the summer and in early autumn. Shooting tests are open to the public. On passing this test, the hunter is awarded a certificate, which is valid for three years from the date of the passed test.

If a person has a valid certificate of having passed a corresponding shooting test in another country or if the person is able to provide documentary proof to the game association of his being entitled to hunt game animals of the corresponding size in his native country, he does not need to perform a shooting test in Finland.

Three different Shooting tests:

1. **Roe Deer Shooting Test** means the test needing to be performed when hunting roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*);
2. **Moose and Deer Shooting Test** means the test needing to be performed when hunting moose (*Alces alces*), white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), wild forest reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus fennicus*), fallow deer (*Dama dama*), and sika deer (*Cervus nippon*);
3. **Bear Shooting Test** means the test needing to be performed when hunting brown bears (*Ursus arctos*).

Required documents

Before the shooting test, shooters are required to present a valid hunting card or a prepaid hunting card for the coming hunting season to the supervisor of the shooting test and when so required also show proof of their identity. Furthermore, before performing the shooting test, the shooter must present to the supervisor of the shooting tests a valid licence to carry the weapon to be used in the shooting test.

Target pattern and completion of the shooting test

The target pattern used in the Roe Deer and Moose and Deer Shooting tests has a hit area 23 centimetres in diameter while in the Bear Shooting test the target pattern's hit area is 17 centimetres in diameter.

The test requires four shots to be fired at a non-moving target only from either a standing, sitting or kneeling position (shooter is free to choose his position) from a distance of 75 metres. The time allowed to make these four shots is 90 seconds starting from the first shot. Supports are allowed as long as the weapon is not mechanically fastened to its support. The applicants are allowed no more than five test attempts during any one shooting test.

Approval and payments

The shooting test performance is approved if all four shots of a shot series at least touch the outer edge of the target's hit area. An approved Bear Shooting Test equals the Roe Deer and Moose and Deer Shooting Tests. An approved Moose and Deer Shooting Test

equals the Roe Deer Shooting Test. The fee charged for the Shooting Test is € 20 per test session.

Hunting licence

In Finland it is possible to hunt 34 species of mammals and 26 species of birds. The hunting of some specific game – mostly large game – is more strictly regulated and requires a special hunting licence.

The Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute provides the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry with yearly estimates of the game population densities. Based on these estimates the Ministry gives a decree concerning the game permits. The Finnish Wildlife Agency grant the hunting licences an exemptions to hunters.

Import of hunting dogs

Import from EU countries Identification

Animals must have a microchip or a clearly readable tattoo for identification purposes. From July 3, 2011 onwards, microchips will be considered the only acceptable form of pet identification. Animals must have an identification marking before they are vaccinated against rabies.

Rabies vaccination

Animals must be vaccinated against rabies with an inactivated vaccine conforming to an international standard (WHO). The vaccine must contain at least one antigen unit per dose. The vaccination must take place at least 21 days before importation. Revaccination does not require the precautionary period of 21 days, provided that the vaccination has taken place before the expiry of the previous vaccination. A veterinarian shall record the rabies vaccination expiry date in the pet passport.

Echinococcosis prevention

Before importation to Finland, dogs must be given an appropriate dose of echinococcosis (anti-cestode) medication containing praziquantel or epsiprantel, which has been approved for use in the species to be treated. A veterinarian shall record the use of echinococcosis medication on the pet passport. No anti-cestode medication is required for dogs and cats, if the animals are imported directly from Norway, the United Kingdom, Ireland or Malta.

Pet passport

Animals must travel with a pet certificate (pet passport) containing the animal's identification information and a veterinarian's record of

a valid rabies vaccination and echinococcosis medication.

Import from countries outside of the EU

A veterinary border inspection must (with certain exceptions) be carried out for animals imported from outside of the EU. However, customs will inspect non-commercially transported pets as part of customs controls at authorised frontier crossing points. Foreigners must also ensure they may take their dogs back to their native country after a hunting trip. More information by e-mail: kolmasmaa@evira.fi.

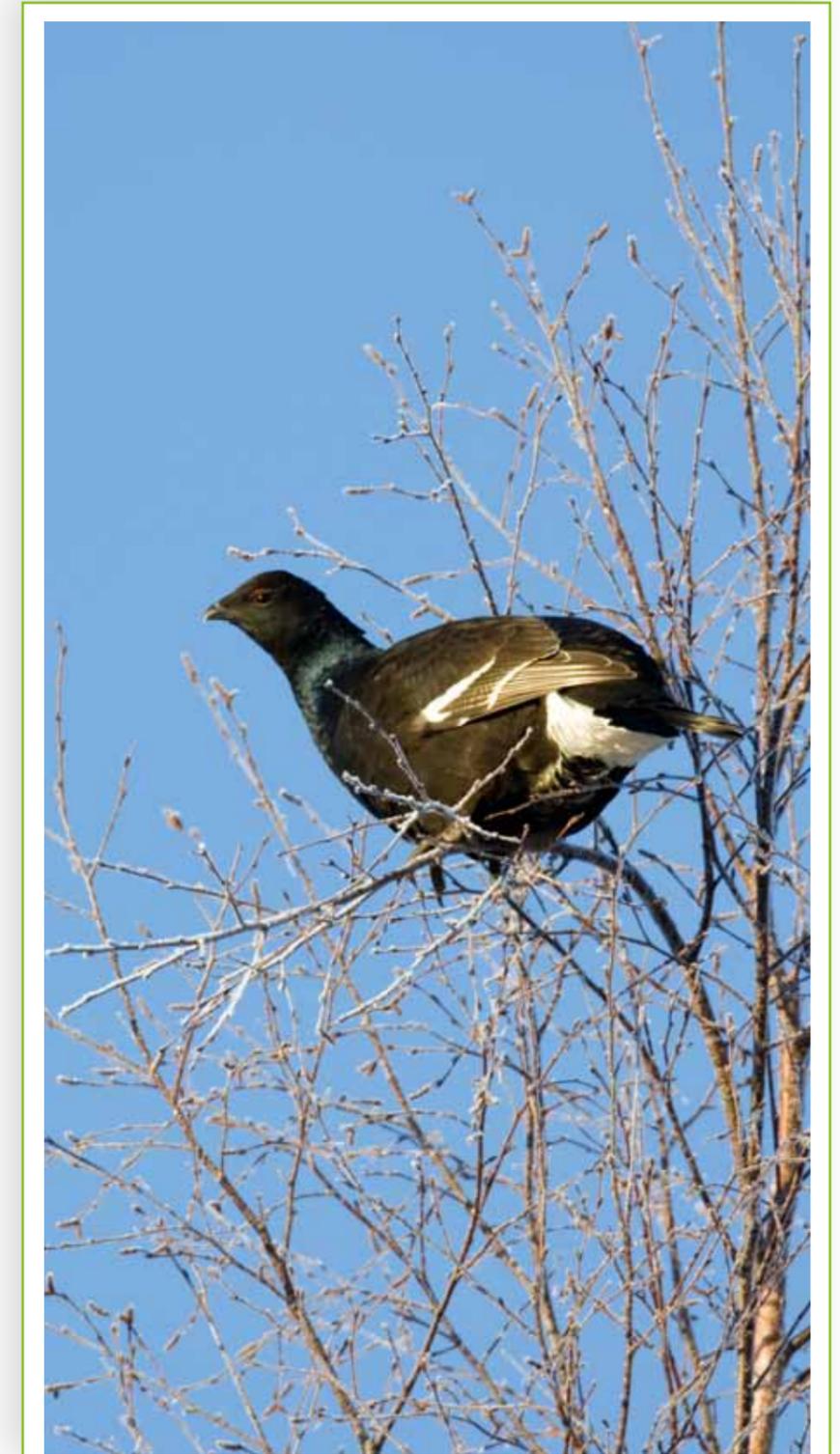
Use of the following is prohibited in hunting

- explosives;
- poisons and baits containing poisons or anaesthetics;
- electric devices causing loss of consciousness or death;
- artificial sources of light and aiming devices for night shooting which electronically enlarge or alter the picture;
- mirrors and other dazzling devices;
- birdlime and bird nets;
- automatic weapons and semiautomatic weapons with a magazine holding more than two cartridges;
- killing with gas or smoke;
- using live animals as decoys;
- pitfalls and traps concealing a firearm, spear or comparable weapon, as well as other similar trapping gear that is dangerous to human beings or domestic animals;
- killing traps that do not kill immediately;
- lead shots in waterfowl hunting
- There are also several other provisions on hunting methods and gear concerning specific game animals. A hunter should acquaint himself with these provisions before starting hunting.

Other advice

All restrictions concerning Finnish hunters also apply to foreign hunters. It is also useful to study, in advance, provisions on public rights of access, for example, on restrictions concerning camping, lighting a fire and moving on private grounds.

Temperatures in Finland often drop below freezing as early as in late autumn and there may be snow on the ground. Therefore it is advisable to take warm, weatherproof clothes, such as rubber boots and raincoats. When hunting cervine, hunters must use red or dark-orange headgear and a vest, coat or comparable garment of a similar colour.



For more information, contact:

Finnish Wildlife Agency

Fantsintie 13–14
FI-00890 HELSINKI
Tel. +358 29 431 2001
Fax +358 9 2727 8130
Internet: www.riista.fi

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

P.O. Box 30
FI-00023 GOVERNMENT
Tel. +358 29 516 001
Fax +358 9 1605 4202
Internet: www.mmm.fi

Metsähallitus

P.O. Box 94
FI-01301 VANTAA
Tel. +358 20 564 100
Fax +358 20 564 4234
Internet: www.metsa.fi

| English | Scientific | Finnish | Swedish | German |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| mallard | Anas platyrhynchos | heinäsorsa | gräsand | Stockente |
| teal | Anas crecca | tavi | kricka | Krickente |
| garganey | Anas querquedula | heinätavi | årta | Knäente |
| wigeon | Anas penelope | haapana | bläsand | Pfeifente |
| pintail | Anas acuta | jouhisorsa | stjärtand | Spießente |
| shoveler | Anas clypeata | lapasorsa | skedand | Löffelente |
| pochard | Aythya ferina | punasotka | brunand | Tafelente |
| tufted duck | Aythya fuligula | tukkasotka | vigg | Reiherente |
| goldeneye | Bucephala clangula | telkkä | knipa | Schellente |
| long-tailed duck | Clangula hyemalis | alli | alfågel | Eisente |
| red-breasted merganser | Mergus serrator | tukkakoskelo | småskrake | Mittelsäger |
| goosander | Mergus merganser | isokoskelo | storskrake | Gänseäger |
| common eider | Somateria mollissima | haahka | ejder | Eiderente |
| coot | Fulica atra | nokikana | söthöna | Blasshuhn |
| greylag goose | Anser anser | merihanhi | grågås | Graugans |
| bean goose | Anser fabalis | metsähänhi | sädgås | Satgans |
| canada goose | Branta canadensis | kanadanhanhi | kanadagås | Kanada-gans |
| woodcock | Scolopax rusticola | lehtokurppa | morkulla | Waldschnepfe |
| black grouse | Tetrao tetrix | teeri | orre | Birkwild |
| hazel grouse | Bonasa bonasia | pyy | järpe | Haselwild |
| capercaillie | Tetrao urogallus | metso | tjäder | Auerwild |
| willow grouse | Lagopus lagopus | riekko | dalripa | Schneehuhn |
| ptarmigan | Lagopus mutus | kiiruna | fjällripa | Alpenschneehuhn |
| partridge | Perdix perdix | peltopyy | rapphöna | Rebhuhn |
| pheasant | Phasianus colchicus | fasaani | fasan | Fasan |
| wood pigeon | Columba palumbus | sepelkyyhky | ringduva | Ringeltaube |
| rabbit | Lepus cuniculus | villikani | kanin | Kaninchen |
| mountain hare | Lepus timidus | metsäjänis | skogshare | Schneehase |
| brown hare | Lepus europaeus | rusakko | fälthare | Feldhase |
| red squirrel | Sciurus vulgaris | orava | ekorre | Eichhörnchen |
| European beaver | Castor fiber | euroopanmajava | europäisk bäver | europäischer Biber |
| Canadian beaver | Castor canadensis | kanadanmajava | kanadensisk bäver | kanadischer Biber |
| nutria | Myocastor coypus | rämemajava | nutria | Nutria |
| muskrat | Ondatra zibethica | piisami | bisamrätta | Bisamratte |
| red fox | Vulpes vulpes | kettu | räv | Fuchs |
| blue fox | Alopex lagopus | tarhattu naali | i farm uppfödd fjällräv | Blaufuchs |
| raccoon | Procyon lotor | pesukarhu | tvättbjörn | Waschbär |
| raccoon dog | Nyctereutes procyonoides | supikoira | mårdhund | Marderhund |
| otter | Lutra lutra | saukko | utter | Fischotter |
| American mink | Mustela vison | minkki | mink | Mink |
| polecat | Mustela putorius | hilleri | iller | Iltis |
| badger | Meles meles | mäyrä | grävling | Dachs |
| pine marten | Martes martes | näätä | mård | Marder |
| ermine | Mustela erminea | kärppä | hermelin | Hermelin |
| grey seal | Halichoerus grypus | halli | gräsäl | Kegelrobbe |
| ringed seal | Pusa hispida botnica | itämerennorppa | östersjövikare | Ringelrobbe |
| harbour seal | Phoca vitulina | kirjohylje | knubbsäl | Seehund |
| wild boar | Sus scrofa | villisika | vildsvin | Schwarzwild |
| mufflon | Ovis musimon | muffloni | mufflon | Muffelwild |
| moose | Alces alces | hirvi | älg | Elch |
| red deer | Cervus elaphus | saksanhirvi | kronhjort | Rotwild |
| white-tailed deer | Odocoileus virginianus | valkohäntäpeura | vitsvanshjort | Weisswedelwild |
| fallow deer | Dama dama | kuusi-peura | dovhjort | Damwild |
| sika deer | Cervus nippon | japaninpeura | sikahjort | Sikawild |
| wild forest reindeer | Rangifer tarandus fennicus | metsäpeura | skogsvildren | Waldren |
| roe deer | Capreolus capreolus | metsäkauris | rådjur | Rehwild |
| wolverine | Gulo gulo | ahma | järv | Vielfrass |
| lynx | Lynx lynx | ilves | lodgejur | Luchs |
| brown bear | Ursus arctos | karhu | brunbjörn | Bär |
| wolf | Canis lupus | susi | varg | Wolf |

| Game species | Administrative district | Open season | Weapon requirements |
|---|---|--|---------------------|
| Ducks*1) | Whole state | 20.8. at 12.00 –31.12. | R1, S, B |
| Seabirds*2) | Whole state | 1.9.–31.12. | R1, S, B |
| Eider, male | Whole state | 1.6.–31.12. | R1, S, B |
| Eider, female | Whole state | 20.8. at 12.00 –31.12. | R1, S, B |
| Coot | Whole state | 20.8. at 12.00 –31.12. | R1, S, B |
| Greylag goose | Whole state | 20.8. at 12.00 –31.12. | R2, S, B |
| Bean goose | Whole state | 20.8. at 12.00 –31.12. | R2, S, B |
| Canada goose | Whole state | 20.8. at 12.00 –31.12. | R2, S, B |
| Woodcock | Whole state | 20.8. at 12.00 –31.12. | R1, S, B |
| Black grouse | Whole state | 10.9.–31.10. | R2, S, B |
| Hazel grouse | Whole state | 10.9.–31.10. | R1, S, B |
| Capercaillie | Whole state | 10.9.–31.10. | R2, S, B |
| Willow grouse | In Pohjois-Savo, North Karelia, South Ostrobothnia, Central Ostrobothnia, Ostrobothnia, Central Finland, North Ostrobothnia, Kainuu and Lapland regions | 10.9.–31.10. | R1, S, B |
| | Enontekiö, Inari, Utsjoki | 10.9.–31.3. | R1, S, B |
| Ptarmigan | Enontekiö, Inari, Utsjoki | 10.9.–31.3. | R1, S, B |
| Partridge | In Ostrobothnia, South Ostrobothnia, Central Ostrobothnia, and North Ostrobothnia regions. In other regions with licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | 10.9.–31.10. | R1, S, B |
| Pheasant | Whole state | 1.9.–28.2. (29.2.) | R1, S, B |
| Wood pidgeon | Whole state | 10.8.–31.10. | R1, S, B |
| Mountain hare and brown hare | Whole state | 1.9.–28.2. (29.2.) | R2, S, B |
| Rabbit | Whole state | 1.9.–28.2. (29.2.) | R1, S, B |
| Red squirrel | Whole state | 1.12.–31.1. | R1, S, B |
| European beaver | Licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | 20.8.–30.4. | R3, S, B |
| Canadian beaver | Whole state | 20.8.–30.4. | R3, S, B |
| Muskrat | Whole state | 1.10.–19.5. | R1, S, B |
| Red fox, blue fox, raccoon dog and badger | Whole state | Whole hunting year, female with cubs is protected 1.5.–31.7. | R2, S, B |
| American mink and polecat | Whole state | Whole hunting year, female with cubs is protected 1.5.–31.7. | R1, S, B |
| Pine marten | Whole state | 1.11.–31.3. | R1, S, B |
| Ermine | Whole state | 1.11.–31.3. | R1, S, B |
| Lynx | Strictly protected species. Special licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | | R3, S |
| Otter | Strictly protected species. Special licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | | R2, S, B |
| Ringed seal | Licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | 16.4.–31.5. and 1.9.–15.10. | R3 |
| Grey seal | Licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | 16.4.–31.12. | R3 |
| Wild boar | Whole state | 1.6.–28.2. (29.2.). Female with piglets is protected. | R4 |
| Mufflon | Whole state | 1.9.–30.11. | R3 |
| Moose | Licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | Last Saturday of September –31.12. | R5 |
| | Enontekiö, Inari, Muonio, Utsjoki: Licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | 1.–20.9. and 11.10.–30.11. | |
| White-tailed deer | Licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | Last Saturday of September –31.1. | R4 |
| Wild forest reindeer | Licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | Last Saturday of September –31.1. | R4 |
| Fallow deer | Licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | Last Saturday of September –31.1. | R4 |
| Roe deer, male | Whole state | 1.9.–31.1. and 16.5.–15.6. | R3, S, B |
| Roe deer, female and calf | Whole state | 1.9.–31.1. | R3, S, B |
| Brown bear | Strictly protected species. Special licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | | R5 |
| Wolf | Strictly protected species. Special licence from Finnish Wildlife Agency | | R3 |

In addition, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry can set even tighter restrictions.

- *1) Mallard, teal, garganey, wigeon, pintail, shoveler, pochard, tufted duck and goldeneye
 *2) Long-tailed duck, red-breasted merganser and goosander

Weapon requir.

- R1 = E0 > 100 J,
 R2 = bullet weight > 2,5 g, E100 > 200 J,
 R3 = bw > 3,2 g, E100 > 800 J,
 R4 = bw > 6,4 g, E100 > 2000 J/bw > 8 g, E100 > 1700 J,
 R5 = bw > 9 g, E100 > 2700 J/bw = 10 g, E100 > 2000 J,
 S = shotgun
 B = bow, strength ≥ 180 N, (arrow with hunting tip, use of crossbow is forbidden)



Fantsintie 13-14
FI- 00890 Helsinki
Tel. +358 29 431 2001
Fax +358 9 2727 8130
www.riista.fi