

Estimating Hunting Tourism Potential in Vorovo Hunting Ground

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to assess Vorovo as a hunting tourism destination. It examines key factors, including attractiveness, accessibility, hunting facilities, and services, using a quantitative scoring system. Additionally, a qualitative analysis was performed to examine natural conditions, game management, and business objectives that shape Vorovo's tourist value. By evaluating Vorovo's potential, this paper contributes to the broader field of hunting tourism and emphasizes the need for quality conscious approaches in the post pandemic era.

Keywords: hunting tourism, Vorovo hunting ground, tourism destination

Introduction

Hunting tourism, as a selective branch in travel industry, offers hunters an opportunity to explore the nature and partake in challenging activities. Among these destinations, the Vorovo hunting ground, located in a setting of National Park of Fruška Gora Mountain in Serbia, stands as an opportunity. Its geographic position, rich wildlife diversity, and accessibility make it a promising hunting tourism destination. However, Vorovo's full potential has remained untapped.

Tourism Destination Planning: Review

Within the context of tourism, a tourist destination refers to a place marketed by various stakeholders of tourism; as a result, the term marketing places appears (Kotler et al. 2010), meaning that a product of tourism may also be a place. Factors out of which tourist destination consists of have been analyzed by numerous authors. Some authors used the term Destination Mix to better describe a tourism destination (Mill & Morrison, 2012). According to these authors, destination is made out of four elements – attraction, facilities, infrastructure, transportation and hospitality. However, according to Cooper et al. (1993), four key elements which define tourist destination are: access, amenities, attraction and ancillary. Tourist destination can be defined as a combination of various elements which give different experiences with the same objective – satisfying tourist experience and needs (Mill & Morrison, 2012).

The hunting ground is a very particular kind of tourist destination. It is not only a place of tourism activities, but also a fundamental spatial area in which wild game can exist (Matejević & Marković, 2023).

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The hunting ground is a type of tourist destination that is a part of nature where hunting tourists engage in activities, most notably hunting tourism. Hunting tourism destination can be defined by three key factors which are as follows:

1. Attractiveness – Types and number of game species are an important factor of attractiveness for hunting grounds. However, suitable hunting grounds with their recreational and aesthetic strength are also a significant part of the appeal of hunting grounds. The necessary hunting amenities, such as low and high stands, observation posts, hunting trails, weapon testing areas, and other man made facilities in the hunting ground, add to the attractiveness of the destination. Besides these elements, human resources are also a valuable asset to the hunting ground as professionals are assigned the task of managing the hunting ground in a way that increases its quality and visibility on the market (Prentović, 2006).

2. Facilities and services – Facilities for accommodation and other services pose an important element for a hunting ground destination. These consist of comfortable hunting lodges, facilities for hunting dogs, facilities for recreation, and entertainment activities (Martín-Delgado et al, 2020; Matejević et al., 2022; Ponjiger et al, 2015; Prentović, 2006). Hunting necessitates outdoor terrain, so transportation is an essential component. Therefore, facilities include the means of getting tourist hunters from lodging to hunting grounds where hunting takes place. Off road vehicles, carriages, sleds, boats, speedboats, and other outdoor appropriate vehicles are among means of transport which are used by hunting tourists. Souvenir shops, hunting gear, and other necessities for visitors, hunters, and the members of their families who frequently stay with them at the hunting ground are needed within the receptive facilities in the hunting ground.

3. Accessibility - Another crucial component of a hunting tourist destination is accessibility. Because there are two types of potential tourists (foreign and domestic), it is possible to view accessibility in terms of both external and internal tourist emitting areas. The accessibility for foreign tourists should be determined by factoring in the distance to major traffic corridors, airports, or waterways. The condition of the roads leading from the main corridors, airports, or ports to the specified location should also be considered. When it comes to domestic areas, these are primary large cities and their near surroundings. The accessibility of hunting grounds is evaluated by considering the length and condition of the roads leading from a specific center (region) to a potential destination (Matejević & Marković, 2023).

Methodology

Study Area

The hunting reserve 'Vorovo,' managed and operated by the Public Enterprise 'National Park Fruška Gora,' is located in the far western part of the mountain of Fruška Gora. It is situated in close proximity to the border with the Republic of Croatia and in administrative terms, this area belongs to the municipality of Šid (Mihajlović, 2008). The hunting ground of the National Park Fruška Gora covers an area of 22,420 hectares and is consisted of both closed (Vorovo Reserve) and open sections. Main characteristic of the hunting ground is its complex and diverse fauna, which is in line with the general natural, climatic, and orographic conditions of the terrain, as well as the diverse and floristically rich vegetation. Furthermore, a significant part of the hunting ground is equipped with properly distributed water sources, which further promote the breeding of game in this area. The hunting ground is hilly in nature and, in addition to native species such as European deer, wild boar, roe deer, and hare, it also includes non native game species (mouflon and fallow deer) that are raised in the Vorovo Reserve. Hunting is organized in accordance with the Hunting Law of Republic of Serbia.

Evaluation of Hunting Tourism Potentials

Hunting tourism, in contrast to its global prevalence, does not have a standard developed methodology nor strategy for evaluating potential of hunting grounds as tourist destination. However, a recent case study presented via Huntour project (Matejević & Marković, 2023) offers method which can be used to evaluate unique factors which are of importance for this type of tourism. In this methodology, four key factors are used to analyze hunting destination and provide grading. These elements are: location, natural resources, human resources, and hunting tourism infrastructure and services of a hunting tourism destination. Following tables (1, 2, 3 and 4) offer a display on how each element is graded via this method.

Table 1. The criteria for the evaluating location characteristics

Criterion	Description*
Traffic connectivity	up to 20 km away from the highway – 5 points
	from 21 km up to 40 km away from the highway – 4 points
	from 41 km up to 60 km away from the highway – 3 points
	from 61 km up to 80 km away from the highway – 2 points
	more than 80 km away from the highway – 1 point
Distance from the airport	up to 50 km away from an airport – 3 points
	from 51 km up to 100 km away from an airport – 2 points
	more than 100 km away from an airport – 1 point
Location concerning emissive areas in the country and abroad	up to 200 km away from the nearest significant emissive areas – 4 points
	200 - 400 km away from the nearest significant emissive areas – 3 points
	400 - 600 km away from the nearest significant emissive areas – 2 points
	more than 600 km away from the nearest significant emissive areas – 1 point
Location compared to nearest attractive domestic hunting grounds	up to 50 km away from the nearest attractive domestic hunting grounds – 4 points
	50 - 100 km away from the nearest attractive domestic hunting grounds – 3 points
	100 - 200 km away from the nearest attractive domestic hunting grounds – 2 points
	more than 200 km away from the nearest attractive domestic hunting grounds – 1 point
Location compared to nearest attractive hunting grounds abroad	more than 250 km away from the nearest attractive hunting grounds abroad – 4 points
	150 - 250 km away from the nearest attractive hunting grounds abroad – 3 points
	100 - 150 km away from the nearest attractive hunting grounds abroad – 2 points
	up to 100 km away from the nearest attractive hunting grounds abroad – 1 point
Total	The maximum possible score for LOCATION is 20 points

*The distances that are proposed are optional. These are proposed for Serbia. It should be modified to suit every country (region...)

Source: Matejević & Marković, 2023

Table 2. The criteria for the evaluating natural resources

Criterion (game species –optional)	Description
Red deer	optimal population density (2-3 individuals on 100 ha) – 4 points
	overpopulation (more than 3 individuals on 100 ha) – 3 points
	medium population density (1-2 individuals on 100 ha) – 2 points
	small population density (up to 1 individual on 100 ha) – 1 point
Wild boar	optimal population density (2-3 individuals on 100 ha) – 4 points
	overpopulation (more than 3 individuals on 100 ha) – 3 points
	medium population density (1-2 individuals on 100 ha) – 2 points
	small population density (up to 1 individual on 100 ha) – 1 point
Roe deer	optimal population density (6-10 individuals on 100 ha) – 4 points
	overpopulation (more than 10 individuals on 100 ha) – 3 points
	medium population density (2-6 individuals on 100 ha) – 2 points
	small population density (up to 2 individuals on 100 ha) – 1 point
Number of species available in hunting tourism offer	more than four game species – 5 points
	four game species – 4 points
	three game species – 3 points
	two game species – 2 points
	one game species – 1 point
Total	The maximum possible score for NATURAL RESOURCES is 45 points

Source: Matejević & Marković, 2023

Table 3. The criteria for evaluating human resources

Criterion	Description
Managers and hunting guides	tertiary education (faculty) – 3 points
	secondary education (high school) – 2 points
	primary education – 1 point
Knowledge of foreign languages	knowledge of more than one foreign language – 2 points
	knowledge of one foreign language – 1 point
	without knowledge of foreign languages – 0 point
Internet presence	the existence of a website that is updated periodically or regularly – 2 points
	the existence of a website that is rarely updated – 1 point
	lack of official website – 0 point
Social media presence	active social media presence – 1 point
	no social media presence – 0 point
Exhibiting at hunting fairs and trophy exhibits	exhibiting at more than one foreign hunting fair – 3 points
	exhibiting at more than one domestic hunting fair – 2 points
	exhibiting at one domestic or foreign hunting fair annually – 1 point
	not exhibiting at fairs and exhibits – 0 point

Printed publications	making brochures with offers in more than one foreign language – 3 points
	making brochures with offers in one foreign language – 2 points
	making brochures with offers in the native language – 1 point
	no printed publications – 0 point
Pricelist – Prices of game compared to domestic hunting grounds	lower price compared to other hunting grounds by more than 10% – 3 points
	lower price compared to other hunting grounds by 5-10% – 2 points
	lower price compared to other hunting grounds up to 5% – 1 point
	higher/same price compared to other hunting grounds – 0 point
Pricelist – Prices of game compared to hunting grounds abroad	lower price compared to other hunting grounds by more than 10% – 3 points
	lower price compared to other hunting grounds by 5-10% – 2 points
	lower price compared to other hunting grounds up to 5% – 1 point
	higher/same price compared to other hunting grounds – 0 point
Total	The maximum possible score for HUMAN RESOURCES is 20 points

Source: Matejević & Marković, 2023

Table 4. The criteria for evaluating hunting tourism infrastructure and services

Criterion	Description
Facilities for accommodation and meals for tourists	hunting villa first (highest) category – 6 points
	hunting villa second category – 5 points
	hunting villa third category – 4 points
	hunting villa fourth (lowest) category – 3 points
	hunting lodge – 2 points
	hunting cottage – 1 point
Location of accommodation	the facility is located inside the hunting ground – 2 points
	the facility is located outside the hunting ground – 1 point
The appropriate number of hunting stands	the appropriate number of stands – 2 points
	insufficient number of stands – 1 point
Polygon for small game hunting	existence of polygon for small game hunting – 1 point
Polygon for wild boar hunting	existence of polygon for wild boar hunting – 1 point
Renting horse carriage	possibility for renting a horse carriage in the hunting ground – 1 point
Renting hunting weapons	possibility for renting hunting weapons in the hunting ground – 1 point
Renting hunting dogs	possibility for renting hunting dogs in hunting ground – 1 point
Total	The maximum score for HUNTING TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES is 15 points

Source: Matejević & Marković, 2023

Upon calculating total points for the hunting ground, destination can be categorized as follows:

- less than 40 % (up to 40 points): out of the category
- from 40% to 50% (40 – 49,99 points): local tourist significance
- from 51% to 65% (51 – 65 points): regional tourist significance
- from 66% to 80% (66 – 80 points): national tourist significance
- from 81% to 100% (81-100 points): international tourist significance

(Matejević & Marković, 2023)

Results

According to the methodology and criteria presented in previous chapter, an analysis was conducted. Results for each elements are presented in following subchapters.

Location Hunting Tourism Potential

Through analysis of hunting ground connectivity, Vorovo was awarded 13 out of 20 points. Regarding transport connectivity, hunting ground is about an hour drive distanced from nearest highway and Belgrade airport which puts this hunting ground at a lower part of the scale when it comes to points. However, higher amount of points was awarded for proximity of concerning emissive areas in the country and abroad as well as nearest attractive domestic hunting grounds.

Natural Hunting Tourism Potential

While analyzing natural potential, meaning game population and number of game species, 31 out of 45 points were recorded. This is thanks to big game populations as well as more than 4 game species. Game species majorly contributing to the score are wild boar and fallow deer.

Human Resources as Hunting Tourism Potential

In the area concerning human resources, 13 out of 20 points were recorded. Even though professionals working in the hunting ground have appropriate education for their roles, only hunting ground manager speaks one foreign language. Internet presence exists in form of websites as well as social media accounts. There are also brochures printed out in Serbian language. Reason behind a couple of additional points in this valorisation segment are prices compared to the ones abroad and the fact that Vorovo is present at two domestic fairs.

Hunting Tourism Infrastructure

Although existing, hunting tourism infrastructure in the hunting ground was graded with 10 points out of 15. Adding the number of points was influenced by the fact that Vorovo possesses a big number of hunting stands and a villa which is located on the hunting ground. Points were also awarded for renting services regarding carriages, hunting dogs and fire arms. However, additional facilities such as polygons are missing.

Total number of points that Vorovo hunting ground was awarded is 67 which categorizes it as a hunting ground of national tourist significance.

Discussion

Both strengths and weaknesses of hunting ground Vorovo are evident when it comes to elements analyzed in this study.

Hunting ground is relatively close to the nearest airport with less than 100km distance, but it is more than 60km away from the highway. This fact may be encouraging for tourist from abroad but it can strain away domestic tourists coming from the southern parts of the country. Vorovo location's strength lies in the fact that it is near two of the biggest cities in Serbia – Novi Sad and Belgrade, as emissive areas.

Strongest group of elements when it comes to this hunting ground are natural resources. Large number of points were awarded in terms of game populations which are flourishing in Vorovo. Also, number of species such as red deer, roe deer, fallow deer, mouflon and wild boar, earned this hunting ground maximum number of points in category of game species richness.

Weakest part in valorization, for sure are human resources in this hunting ground. A couple of points were awarded for employee's education and speaking of one foreign language. However, there are no promotional activities in terms of bigger internet presence except a website and social media account. However, presences at the domestic fairs are creditable.

Conclusions

Taking into the account the fact that Vorovo hunting ground is located in an area of a national park, results received in this study are appropriate for a hunting ground. As national parks by themselves are often destinations of nature based tourism activities, hunting grounds located in it's area should hold special status when it comes to hunting tourism.

When it comes to natural geographical elements such as location and natural resources, Vorovo hunting ground has strong potential. However, when analyzing human resources and infrastructure, it is evident that Vorovo is not fully utilizing available resources to further develop hunting tourism activities. However, if grade deducted from this study should be in a lower part of the scale – author believes that there is a positive note in weaker elements of the hunting ground being the ones which are easier to improve. Certainly, it is faster to achieve internet presence or improve infrastructure than it is to recover game population funds or rely on potential improvement of transport connectivity. Looking back at previous studies of tourism in Serbia, it is easy to conclude that there is great potential which is not being used at a full scale – and Vorovo is not an exception. However, in case a willingness is shown and financial resources are found, Vorovo can become a hunting ground of international tourist significance in the future.

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