

## Feature

# Goats, bows and arrows

When the NGO Deer Branch was set up, it resolved to provide a problem-solving facility for NGO members. Alan Barrell, member of the NGO Deer Branch committee, answers two questions recently asked.

### QUESTION

Wild goats, sheep and boar are available to be stalked in various parts of the UK. I have an opportunity to stalk wild goats, but my game dealer maintains that he cannot take these as they are not recognised as wild animals in the UK. Can you please clarify the position with regard to these species?

### ANSWER

Since 1 January 2006, the putting of game meat into the human food chain has been covered by various EU regulations. When these regulations were adopted, much of the earlier domestic legislation was repealed.

‘Wild game’ is now defined in regulation (EC) No 853/2004 Annex 1 as:

■ *wild ungulates and lagomorphs, as well as other land mammals that are hunted for human consumption and are*

*considered to be wild under the applicable law in the member State concerned, including mammals living in enclosed territory under conditions of freedom similar to those of wild game and*

■ *wild birds that are hunted for human consumption.*

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) in its publication *The Wild Game Guide* (see box opposite for further details) gives definitions of the various categories of animals as follows:

- *Wild ungulates:* hooved animals – mainly deer in the UK, but also wild boar, sheep and goats;
- *Lagomorphs:* rabbits and hares;
- *Other land animals:* bears, etc, which are hunted in other member states;
- *Wild birds:* includes birds that have been hatched/reared under controlled conditions before being introduced into the wild.

It appears, therefore, that if the animal is truly living wild, as goats, etc, do in many parts of the UK and, at the time they are hunted it is intended that they will be used for human consumption, then they should be treated as wild game and the dealer would be able to accept them as such. I am aware that before 2006, there was an argument that all sheep, goats and boar apparently living wild were, in fact, *feral* animals and should therefore not be treated as *wild*. A visit to areas such as The Forest of Dean or the mountains of North Wales to observe boar or goats would quickly dispel any idea that these animals are now mere escapees and the FSA clearly accepts that such animals are wild and may be hunted for food.

There are a few other points to be considered if intending to stalk such animals:

- Ensure that your Firearm Certificate is endorsed to permit you to shoot your intended quarry;
- Carry out ante-mortem observations and post-mortem inspections, in accordance with your large game meat hygiene training to ensure that the animals are healthy and fit to enter the food chain;
- Ensure that each animal is eviscerated and transported correctly to minimise any risk to human health;
- Tag each carcass with a large game meat label;
- If delivering wild boar to a dealer, the head should remain on and the diaphragm should not be removed. This is so that testing for the trichinella parasite can take place. If you intend to use the animal yourself, or process it under The Hunter Exemption, ensure that you have the necessary test kit available before you shoot the animal so that you can send samples to the laboratory at Huntingdon for testing – see *The Wild Game Guide* (see box opposite for further details).

Game handling establishments should (since 2006) accept feral goats as ‘wild game’.



**QUESTION**

I have recently returned from the USA where I have been 'bow hunting' for deer. Can I use a bow for stalking deer in the UK?

**ANSWER**

The Deer Act 1991 Section 4(2) makes it an offence to use any arrow, spear or similar missile for the purposes of taking, killing or injuring any deer in England or Wales. Similar legislation exists in Scotland. The penalty is a fine of up to

£2,500 and/or three months imprisonment in respect of each deer involved. The courts could also order the forfeiture of any article used for the commission of the offence such as the bow and the vehicle used to travel to the scene or to

transport the deer. Nor, incidentally, can you use any bow or crossbow to shoot any other animal or bird. The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 made that an offence in England and Wales and there is equivalent legislation in place in Scotland.

Bow hunting is not allowed in the UK.

**MORE INFORMATION**

The Food Standards Agency's publication, *The Wild Game Guide*, can be found at [www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/wildgameguidejun09.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/wildgameguidejun09.pdf)

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