



THE VOICE OF EUROPEAN HUNTERS

FACE

Avenue de la Joyeuse Entrée, 1-5

B-1040 Brussels

+ 32 (0)2 416 16 12

info@face.eu

www.face.eu

12.02.2024, Brussels

Latvian Ministry of Agriculture
[Republikas laukums 2, Rīga, LV-1981](#)
Sent via email to: pasts@zm.gov.lv

Subject: Proposal to Open a Hunting Season for Common Snipe in Latvia

Dear colleagues in the Latvian Ministry of Agriculture,

On behalf of the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE)¹, I am writing to support proposals for the opening of a hunting season for the Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) in Latvia. Despite concerns raised by some, it is crucial to consider the scientific evidence before making decisions on hunting regulations.

The Common Snipe is legally hunted in multiple EU Member States, including Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, France, Greece, Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Romania, and the United Kingdom. Currently, it is hunted in a total of 27 European countries.

Assessing the sustainability of a hunting for a migratory bird, like the Common Snipe, should be done at flyway level. The population from which hunters in Latvia (as well as most European hunters) harvest is the "Europe/South & West Europe & NW Africa" population. It is a very large population, as it is estimated at 7 to 10 million individuals. According to the IUCN, the species is classified as "Least Concern" at the global scale.

Importantly, the latest assessments by the European Commission's scientific consortium (through the Task Force for the Recovery of Birds), indicate that hunting is not a significant factor impacting the population dynamics of this species. The Common Snipe has thus been classified in a category where productivity, not survival, is the main driver of its population dynamics. Therefore, opening a hunting season in Latvia is highly unlikely to pose any threat to the population. Further, under

¹ FACE represents the national hunting associations from 37 countries in Europe and the collective interest of Europe's 7 million hunters. Since 1977, FACE has been a well-respected and credible interest group recognised by the European institutions in all matters related to hunting, wildlife management, animal health and welfare, firearms and the representation of hunters' legitimate interests. We are long-standing members of IUCN and are observers to all of the major nature conventions (e.g. CITES, CBD, CMS, AEWA, Ramsar and the Bern Convention).

EU law, hunting is a legitimate activity under the Birds Directive. The requirement is that it does not jeopardise conservation, which is not the case for Common Snipe.

It is further relevant to point out that opening a hunting season in Latvia can contribute to important conservation efforts by further engaging hunters in habitat management and providing valuable data for scientific research. Hunting plays a crucial role in collecting valuable data for scientific research, including age ratios and ring recoveries. It is the major source of recoveries of ringed Common Snipe in Europe, providing essential insights into population dynamics and migration patterns.

The best available scientific information states that conservation efforts for the Common Snipe should focus on habitat conservation and restoration to ensure good productivity. Factors such as habitat loss, agricultural activities, and nest predation are identified as significant contributors to population declines. Hunters are well equipped to deal with these factors.

In conclusion, opening a hunting season for the Common Snipe in Latvia would not cause a problem for the population, which is not under threat from hunting. It would, however, contribute to engaging hunters in important conservation efforts, and provide a medium for producing better scientific evidence and data analysis for this species in Latvia.

FACE, in conjunction with its Member, the Latvian Hunters' Association, urges the ministry to consider this proposal carefully and take into account the benefits of regulated and sustainable hunting for the Common Snipe in Latvia.

I hope this letter aids in your consideration of this proposal.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,



Torbjörn Larsson
President
FACE – European Federation for Hunting and Conservation
M: +46 708 18 81 00
E: torbjorn.larsson@face.eu
www.face.eu