

CLOSER

THE HUNTING MAGAZINE FROM
SWAROVSKI OPTIK

HUNTING
DOGS

"COME BACK
SAFE!"

OUR
VISION

LIVING IN THE MOMENT,
WORKING ON
THE FUTURE

CHALLENGE

ALA
SKA

DALL SHEEP HUNT

4.50 EUROS



SWAROVSKI
OPTIK





“LOVE IS THE ACTIVE CONCERN FOR THE LIFE AND THE GROWTH OF THAT WHICH WE LOVE.”

— Erich Fromm



Dear readers,

Sustainable hunting as part of conservation in Africa (page 78); repopulating parts of the Rhine with salmon (page 70); the return of Capercaillie to Poland's primeval forests (page 48) – the stories in this magazine inspire us to open our eyes and hearts to nature in all its facets and encourage us to take greater care of our planet.

As hunters, we demonstrate our love of nature every time we set out on an expedition. We are consciously and intensely aware of our surroundings and experience unforgettable moments.

We make responsible decisions to ensure the game population is in harmony with nature. We carefully remove certain animals in order to maintain this balance. Wild animals enjoy the freedom of their natural habitats until the last second of their lives, when they are hunted with a precise shot in a stress-free manner. Then we appreciate the fruits of our labor by turning it into delicious food for our table.

At SWAROVSKI OPTIK, we view hunting as a responsible activity that requires human contact with nature and in which every living creature is treated with appreciation and respect.

As hunters, we are captivated by the beauty of the flora and fauna we encounter. I invite you to do something to encourage others to share this fascination every day. As more people discover the wonders of nature, they will be inspired and motivated to preserve our planet. Because every single one of us can play our part. Once the spark ignites, more and more people will see the world through fresh eyes and find ways to express their love of nature and all its creatures.

Carina Schiestl-Swarovski

CARINA SCHIESTL-SWAROVSKI
Chairwoman of the Executive Board
SWAROVSKI OPTIK
FOR THE LOVE OF NATURE.



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**WILD RIVERS:
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THE GRIZZLY BEAR
(*URSUS ARCTOS HORRIBILIS*)

is one of the world's largest bears. Native to both the USA and Canada, it is particularly impressive when it is catching salmon during their migration to their spawning area.

PHOTO: INGO ARNDT, TAKEN IN
LAKE CLARK NATIONAL PARK, ALASKA





THE GOLDEN EAGLE
(*AQUILA CHRYSAETOS*)

is a mighty hunter: powerful, fast, artful, and agile. It glides majestically through the sky for hours on end before swooping on its prey with lightning speed.

PHOTO: JO STERNSEN,
TAKEN IN DALEN, SWEDEN



THE PUMA
(PUMA CONCOLOR)

is a loner, but it is capable of catching prey of all sizes by stalking them. It brings down larger animals by jumping on their back and breaking their neck with its powerful jaws.

PHOTO: INGO ARNDT,
TAKEN IN TORRES DEL PAINE, CHILE





THE EASTERN WOLF
(*CANIS LUPUS LYCAON*)

mainly hunts in packs, where adult animals follow a leader or pair of leaders. Pack members have a specific role when hunting in order to ensure the prey is taken down as swiftly as possible.

PHOTO: JOE WILSON,
TAKEN NEAR MONTEBELLO, QUEBEC, CANADA



WILD CHALLENGE HUNT SHEEP

WHAT DRIVES SOMEONE TO EMBARK ON A DANGEROUS WILD SHEEP HUNT IN ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST REMOTE PLACES? LANCE KRONBERGER DESCRIBES THE BEAUTY AND CHALLENGES OF HUNTING IN ALASKA.



attended my first Foundation for North American Wild Sheep convention as a 23-year-old wide-eyed hunting guide. I had just finished my first year in hunting camp as an elk and mule deer hunting guide and was eager to see what the hunting industry was all about. Although this was a sheep hunting convention there were lots of other exhibitors there, and to be quite honest, I didn't understand what the big deal was about hunting sheep.

25 years later, the allure of hunting mountain sheep has taken me to places around the world and impacted my career, my family, and my lifestyle.

Wild sheep inhabit some of the most remote places in the world. They must survive tough winter conditions along with having keen senses to elude the many predators who target them. Mountain sheep hunting is the Major League of hunting anywhere in the world. Why is that? Is it the remote country they live in and the physical challenge of accessing the mountains? Is it the majestic appearance of a band of rams? Perhaps it's the full force head butting during their hierarchy battles, or maybe the mass and length of their curly horns? The correct answer has to be all of the above!



Hunting sheep requires a special skill set of a hunter, and an even greater skill set as a guide. The challenges not only will test the most physically fit, but will also test one's mental toughness. The steep slopes and rocky terrain don't care who you are or how much money you have. The weather can be unpredictable and unforgiving, and the mountain sheep that we pursue have incredible natural instincts. Their eyesight is equivalent to 8x binoculars, they can detect movement at long distances, their nose can scent anything out of the ordinary, and they are always on the lookout. Rams run in bands (groups), making the approach even more difficult as there are always multiple sets of eyes. If they even start to sense danger, in the blink of an eye they ascend a few hundred meters to no-man's land, or change zip codes to never be seen again. Overcoming these factors is why success is so sweet. It doesn't happen to everyone, nor does it happen every day.

As a young man, I knew I wanted to guide in the big leagues, and sheep needed to be one of the animals I specialized in. So, I learned everything I could about sheep and sheep hunting and joined in on any sheep hunt that was available. I would basically work for free just so I could go on a sheep hunt. I continued to go to the North American Wild Sheep Convention and begged outfitters to allow me the opportunity to guide for them. I didn't care what I had to do or where it was. I just wanted to get as much experience as possible. It was about this time I realized I had caught a consuming disease, "Sheep Fever."

Before long, I was guiding for sheep in Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Montana, Mexico, and Alaska. My sheep hunting style was that of a hard charger and it became obvious that my skill set was best suited for the rugged mountains of Alaska. I wanted to go where some of the biggest Dall sheep lived and hunt them in some of the toughest terrain that God ever created.

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elcome to the Chugach Mountains, rugged, glacier filled, and alder choked. A gorgeous stretch of coastal mountains, inhabited by some of the largest Dall sheep in North America.

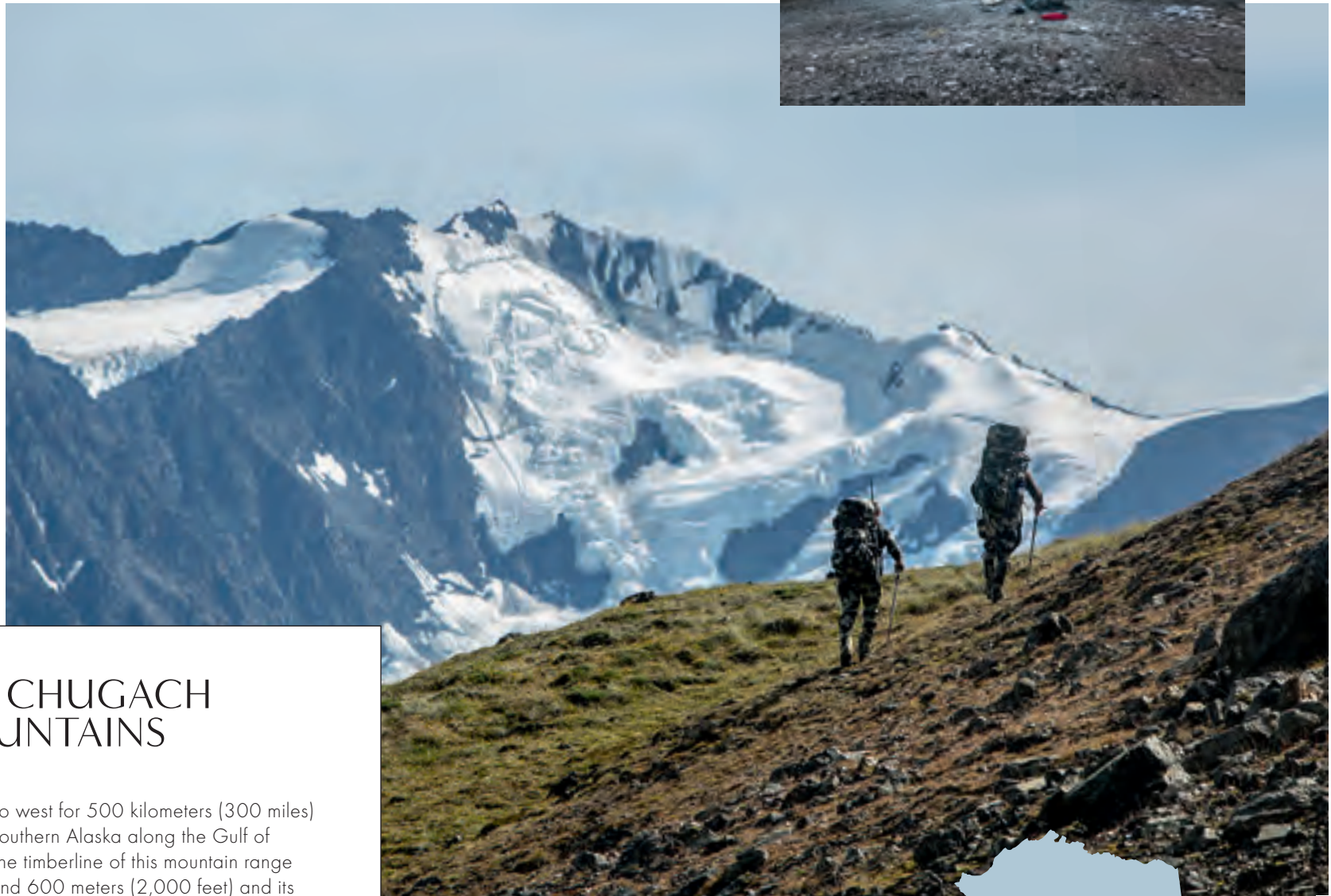
In 2003, I founded a guide service in Alaska. One year later, I married my wife Nikki and we moved to Alaska full time. Our business specializes in extreme backpack-style Dall sheep hunts.

The Chugach Mountains provide the perfect habitat for my style of hunting. The intense difficulty of these hunts also provides a place for us to carve out a niche in the highly competitive guiding industry. Alaska's coastal Chugach Mountains can be very demanding in terms of the weather, logistics, and physical requirements. However, the mental challenges of pushing day after day, and hunt after hunt challenged and developed my guiding skills.

Those skills were put to the test when my wife decided she wanted to see what all the sheep hunting stories were all about. She had seen first-hand the bonds that had been made between people on these hunts, and she liked the idea of a challenging sheep hunt. She had no idea of the physical and mental difficulties that were going to be thrown her way.

THE CHUGACH MOUNTAINS

run east to west for 500 kilometers (300 miles) through southern Alaska along the Gulf of Alaska. The timberline of this mountain range is at around 600 meters (2,000 feet) and its vegetation zones range from forest to alpine tundra mainly populated by hemlock, paper birch, sitka, and white spruce. Along with the Dall sheep described in the article, the Chugach Mountains are home to mountain goats and Ptarmigans, Golden Eagles, moose, red foxes, Canadian lynxes and brown and black bears. This impressive mountain range contains Chugach State Park and Chugach National Forest, two stunningly beautiful protected areas that can be easily reached from Anchorage, the state capital. The Chugach Mountains are also famous for providing the perfect photographic backdrop for the city.



It began with an hour's bush flight into some of the most remote terrain in Alaska. Once the hum of the bush plane faded away into the distance, it was time for us to embark on our mission. We started with an all-day hike into sheep country, then another full day of mountain climbing, patience, persistence, overcoming the sheep's keen senses, and then when the time was right, making a one-shot kill. Smiles were larger than life, but the adventure and work were far from over.

A grizzly tried to get an easy meal during the photo session, and then an all-night pack-out back to the tent as the sun came up. All of this with a dead ram on our backs in grizzly country. An eight-hour nap was followed by another 20-kilometer (12-mile) hike back to the airstrip while packing a sheep, camp, and all our hunting equipment. There was very little talking as we were both just powering through the pain. Once at the airstrip my wife removed her boots to realize that she had torn all the skin off both her heels. Now she had her own story! My wife experienced a tremendous feeling of accomplishment, followed by physical pain, and relief that it was all over. There was also a sense of satisfaction of providing for her family with a pack full of sheep meat!

A few years have passed and now my wife only needs one more of the four North American sheep to complete her Grand Slam. A feat fewer than one hundred women have ever accomplished. With all of these sheep hunting stories circulating around our home, business, and friends, it is only fitting that my 14-year-old son is desperate to harvest his first sheep. He has gone on two different sheep hunts of his own, both unsuccessful. The disappointment of coming home empty handed can crush some hunters, but the hunter who understands the difficulty of the mission also has the burning desire to feel the thrill of success. This is how Sheep Fever starts.



"THE ATX 115 IS AWESOME. A TOTAL GAME-CHANGER. AT LOW LIGHT THE ATX 115 CAPTURES ENOUGH LIGHT SO THAT 70X MAGNIFICATION HAS UNBELIEVABLE CLARITY. AT 30X MAGNIFICATION THE FIELD OF VIEW IS LARGE ENOUGH THAT YOU CAN USE THE SCOPE TO GLASS FROM DISTANCES AT WHICH YOU MAY OTHERWISE MISS SOMETHING WITH YOUR BINOCULARS."

THE ATX 115

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAIL

See more, identify more, observe more – the 115-mm objective module allows you to see things that others don't.

MAXIMIZE YOUR DAY

The results are particularly spectacular at dawn and dusk. Discover nature's many amazing facets in their true colors, even in low light.

TOTAL FLEXIBILITY

The 115-mm objective module is compatible with the unique, modular ATX/STX/BTX spotting scope system. Simply change the eyepiece module at any time to suit the situation you are in.



FREELANCE OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

As part of his successful hunting business, **Lance Kronberger** shares his knowledge and enthusiasm with hunters as he guides them on challenging expeditions in the mountains.

www.freelanceoutdooradventures.com



W

ith over a hundred guided sheep hunts under my belt, I have experienced a lot of heartache and excitement, thrill and disappointment, boredom and exhaustion, along with success and failure.

Guiding sheep hunters is the ultimate example of teamwork. Guide and hunter have to work together to navigate all the obstacles to achieve the desired outcome. The best guides have the ability to get the most out of their hunter. Each guide has different motivational strategies to keep their hunter in the game and get them up the mountain. They recognize which strategies work with each hunter. When guiding women or young people I find that cheerleading works best to motivate them to get up the mountain. Whereas some older old-school hunters are much more motivated with giving it to them straight without any fluff.

Whatever the method, the best way for a guide to get the most out of their hunter is to develop a bond where the hunter will go the extra mile just to not let you down. Many times, I hear later from hunter's wives or their buddy who asked the question, "How did you continue to hunt day after day, mile after mile, in horrible weather, with freeze-dried food, and sleeping in a tiny tent, walking miles upon miles in the same stinky clothes, just for a chance at a sheep?" The response surprises them when they hear, "I just didn't want to let my guide down!"

This kind of hunting experience can form life-long friendships. Relationships like these have inspired some hunters to come on dozens of different adventures with me and our operation. Bonds where hunters take me to other parts of the world on their sheep hunts just because they know I will get the most out of them, and share in the misery, the excitement, and the success.

Bonds are forged in the mountains. It's not always about the obstacles you are trying to overcome, but who you are overcoming the obstacles with! 🐾



SUCCESSFUL

PHYSICALLY FIT, MENTALLY STRONG

HUNTING

As a hunter, it's impossible to prepare for everything you might encounter, but experience and training help us to assess different situations and handle the things that can't be controlled. One thing we can control is how we prepare ourselves physically to go hunting. The advantages of physical fitness are well researched and widely known. This involves leading a healthy lifestyle and keeping fit. This is particularly beneficial when hunting over mountainous terrain, and it helps prevent injury. Perhaps the simplest form of preparation is to make sure you have the right hunting equipment – including firearms and optics. Many of us are less keen to work on our physical fitness, but some of the most sought-after animals live in areas that can only be reached on foot. CLOSER asked six hunters how they get fit for their adventures.



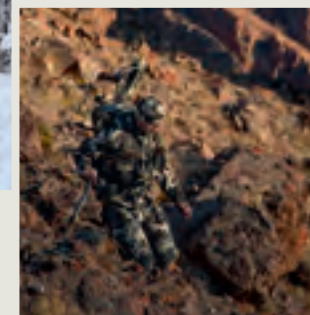
Berit

📷 fjellgeit_

When hunting my favorite animal, the reindeer, my black Norwegian Elkhound Rocky is always by my side. In the mountains, reindeer are nomadic creatures that are hard to spot and disappear just as fast, like ghosts. The fact that you have to work so hard to see them is what I love most about reindeer hunting. In preparation for the hunt, Rocky and I use our Alpine garden as a play-ground. Sunsets, climbing on boulders and cliffs, exploring new places – this is when I feel a sense of peace combined with an adrenaline rush. I do endurance training but save my joints by avoiding running on asphalt. Instead, I run on terrain that is similar to that of the hunting ground. I like to train light, so I take the absolute minimum with me. I also cross-country ski and practice a Norwegian shooting discipline called *jaktfelt*.



I enter competitions for fun in both these disciplines. My training goal? I'd like to go back to Canada one day and join a mountain goat hunt. The last time I was there we were stopped by extreme weather conditions. It snowed heavily during the hunt, so we had to stay in the tent for three days before coming back down. We can't control the weather – but that's fine too!



Pedro

📷 pedroampueroca

Hunting is a way of life, so you have to do something every day – not just one-off training for an upcoming hunt. I have hunted all over the world, in all kinds of terrain – from incredibly rugged mountains in Asia to the flat grasslands of Africa. The local mountains near my home in Spain are ideal for hiking and trail running. I concentrate on long-distance endurance training including lots of ascents and descents. My favorite trick is to carry a backpack full of water bottles to the summit and then empty them – this guarantees a gentle, knee-friendly descent. It's crucial to have lower body and torso strength for balance and coping with rough terrain, so I concentrate on these areas in the gym. My dream hunting destination is the Himalayas in Nepal. The usual challenges of hunting in the mountains increase exponentially with the higher altitude, which could be over 5,000 meters (16,000 feet).

Nikki

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The rolling hills and canyons near my New York home help me maintain my cardiovascular fitness all year round. But it's important to train specifically for upcoming hunting expeditions. For example, hiking uphill carrying additional weight, like a backpack, helps you to prepare for mountain hunting. In winter, I work with my family making maple syrup and this manual labor helps me to keep fit. Otherwise, my training program consists of high-intensity interval training, simple strength training, and fun exercises like barbell squats and deadlifting. I would love to really push myself physically by going hunting in Alaska or Patagonia – I would need to train even harder for that.

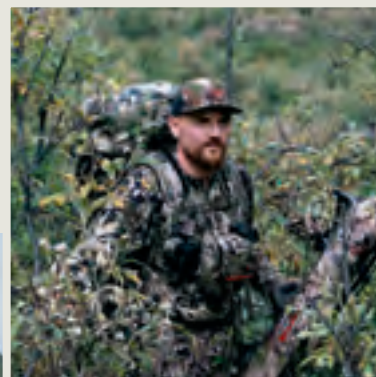




Philipp

@ westwoodhunter

I hunt mainly in my family's hunting ground in Germany. Unfortunately, this doesn't require much physical training. However, my girlfriend and I love traveling, and we have to be in good shape for that. I'm a team athlete, so I have a good foundation of physical fitness and mental toughness. One trick of mine is to always keep a bag of corn in the car, for two reasons. First, the wild pigs in our hunting ground like to snack on it, and second, I can use it to weigh down my hunting backpack when I'm hiking up a local hill on my way home from work in the evening. This is how I get fit for mountain hunting expeditions, because I'm not really used to steep terrain and carrying heavy packs. This exercise may not be exactly the same as what you get when hunting in mountainous terrain, but it still trains my shoulders, legs, and feet. I need to do this training if I am to achieve my dream of hunting the Alpine ibex.



Savanna

@ sheepgirlsav

I grew up near the Rocky Mountains in Canada and have spent most of my life in the mountains. When I was 12 years old, my father introduced me to bighorn sheep hunting, and I have been addicted to it ever since. As my passion for mountain hunting has grown over the years, so has my personal fitness level. My work as a chiropractor strengthens my upper body and torso. I'm familiar with a variety of exercises for the lower limbs and teach them in the gym, but for me as a hunter I find it more effective to train outdoors. Hiking, walking the dog, and just spending time in my hunting boots on rough terrain – this is enough to build mobility in my feet and ankles and prevent injuries. When I train indoors, I concentrate on functional exercises involving the gluteal muscles. This large muscle group is essential for pelvic stability, climbing, and the legs in general. Despite my love of the mountains, my name reflects my dream hunt: Cape buffalo.



Stefaan

@ stefaan_rotthier

Hunting is a family tradition and I'm proud to pass it on to my five-year-old twins. I also grew up with hunting – my father took me hunting in Belgium and around the world. We became obsessed with mountain hunting and the search for ibex took us to incredible places like Spain and Mongolia. My hunting style has evolved over the years, and today I love bow hunting. When preparing to go on a Dall sheep hunt in Alaska, I lost some weight with the help of a nutritionist. I worked on my legs and general fitness by running three to four times a week, gradually increasing the length of the run, my speed, and the weight of my backpack. Apart from running, my wife and I also followed a TV fitness program, which gave us fast results. I realized how much the training had paid off when I strapped a ram to my backpack. I couldn't have done this without the training. My next target is a mountain goat hunt on Kodiak Island.



FIT TO HUNT?

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR YOUR TIPS!
JUST TAG
SWAROVSKIOPTIK_HUNTING
IN YOUR POST.





LIVING IN THE MOMENT, WORKING ON THE FUTURE

SWAROVSKI OPTIK is all about helping people to experience special moments. Loving and caring for nature is what we do, indeed it is our raison d'être. We want our top-quality long-range optical products to sharpen people's senses and inspire them to be truly in the moment – at one with themselves, at one with nature.

The magic of the moment is at the heart of our company's philosophy, but our strategic focus is firmly on tomorrow – and the day after tomorrow. People have to understand that the decisions they make today determine what

kind of planet they pass on to their children – and only then do they take care to make the right decisions.

At SWAROVSKI OPTIK, sustainable management is a given, and we view it as an investment in the future. In other words, if you want fruit from your tree you shouldn't cut it down but instead just pick the fruit. You have to ensure the tree has the right conditions to grow, thrive, and bear fruit for many years to come.

As a company that cares about the future, sustainability is not our goal, but our way of life. Our 1,000 employees actively support us in this journey.

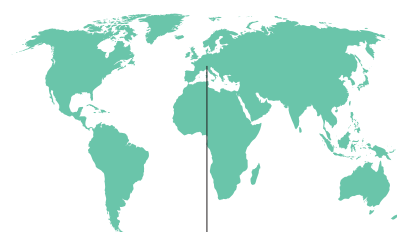
IN THIS ISSUE OF CLOSER, SWAROVSKI OPTIK EMPLOYEES INTRODUCE YOU TO SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS THAT ARE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO US FROM A SOCIAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE.

Find out more at: sustainability.swarovskioptik.com



IT IS PEOPLE WHO ARE AT THE HEART OF OUR BUSINESS

SWAROVSKI OPTIK employs more than
980 people worldwide.



Around **770*** at Absam in Tyrol.



Since 2008, 178 of our employees' children have been attending the company kindergarten.

178

"WE ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF THE 'WICHTELWALD' COMPANY KINDERGARTEN THAT WE OPENED IN 2008. IT'S HARD TO DESCRIBE HOW ENRICHING IT IS TO HAVE CHILDREN WITH US IN THE COMPANY." – THOMAS SALLER, MEMBER OF THE BOARD FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

"THE FACT THAT WE SPEND SO MUCH OF OUR LIVES AT WORK MAKES IT ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT THAT PEOPLE FEEL HAPPY TO GO TO WORK AND ARE SATISFIED WHEN THEY LEAVE. SWAROVSKI OPTIK DOES EVERYTHING IT CAN TO ACHIEVE THIS – CREATING A PLEASANT, HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT, OFFERING HEALTHY FOOD, AND SETTING UP A WIDE RANGE OF PROJECTS TO PROMOTE EMPLOYEE HEALTH. EVERYONE APPRECIATES THIS." – CLAUDIA MITTERECKER, HEAD OF SALES OPERATIONS



Every year, the company kindergarten chooses a special theme that is part of the children's life – and hence the company's life – throughout the year. The kids are also out and about in the company as Wichtel (pixies) – perhaps as energy pixies or trash pixies – and have fun telling us about what they have learned.

CORPORATE HEALTH



100% of baked goods, dairy products, and sausages come from Austria, along with the majority of meat.



100 e-bikes are available for employees to use.



Every year, some 230 hours of yoga, spine training sessions, and Tae Bo classes are held at the company.

347 **24** **100%**

347 people have completed apprenticeships with us since 1948.

In 2020, we trained 24 young people in three occupations.

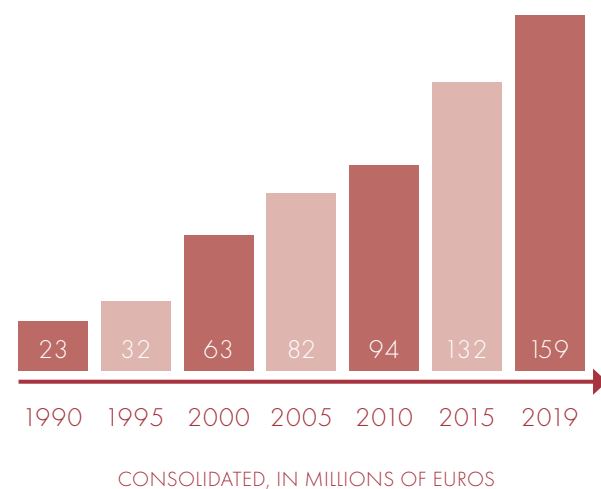
We are proud to say that every one of them is staying on at SWAROVSKI OPTIK after completing their training.



SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

SALES GROWTH

SWAROVSKI OPTIK runs its business in a sustainable manner, as is also reflected in its business performance in recent years. The growth in sales highlights the long-term success of our focus on innovation and quality, and also indicates that our strategy of concentrating on sustainable business growth is bearing fruit.



FACTS

39,000 **12,066**

The factory covers an area of 39,000 m² (420,000 ft²)

Around 12,066 m² (130,000 ft²) of this is production space.

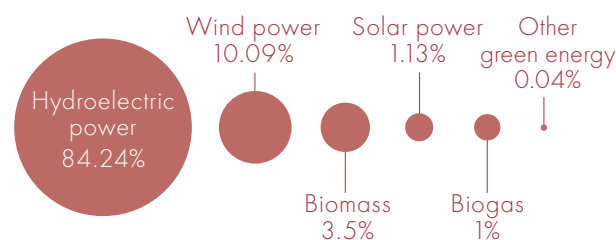
125 **9,800**

125 machines are used in production, including 90 CNC machines.

The product range consists of some 9,800 active parts (excluding spare parts).

CONSERVING RESOURCES

Carbon emissions from electrical energy are zero, as no CO₂ is emitted when generating the electricity supplied to SWAROVSKI OPTIK.

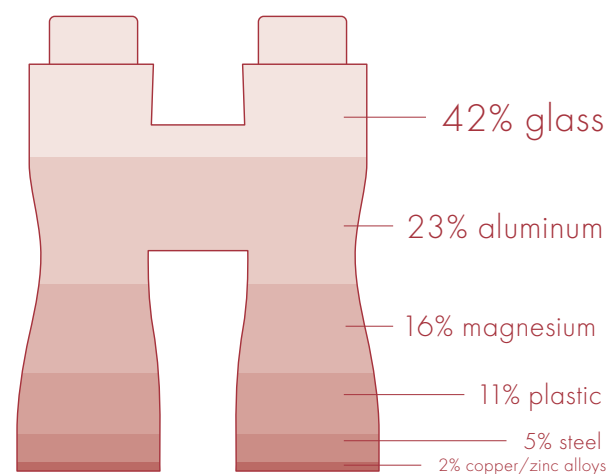


“BETWEEN 2018 AND 2020, THE COMPANY HAS INVESTED 29 MILLION EUROS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF PRODUCTION AND OFFICE BUILDINGS AND AROUND 13.3 MILLION EUROS IN NEW MACHINERY AND FACILITIES AT THE ABSAM SITE IN TYROL.”

– STEFAN SCHREINER, HEAD OF MANUFACTURING

MATERIAL COMPONENTS OF NL PURE BINOCULARS

Total weight: 850 g (30 oz)



PACKAGING AND ACCESSORIES

Since 2015, all packaging for our long-range optical products has been climate neutral. We attach great importance to using sustainable and recyclable materials that can almost all be used without plastic or additional protective film. We have also optimized the size of our packaging in order to save material and cut carbon emissions during transportation.

In September 2020, we launched the new soap & brush set for cleaning the protective housing. The new set contains a palm oil-free soap made with coconut oil, olive oil, and shea butter with no colorants or fragrances. It is biodegradable, free of preservatives, microplastics, and nanoparticles. The set is rounded off with a brush with beech wood handle.

We are also aiming to make all our binocular field bags out of 100% rPET, and we should be more than halfway to our goal by 2021. We also use natural materials such as leather.

“WHEN YOU UNPACK A SWAROVSKI OPTIK PRODUCT, IT’S AN EXCITING MOMENT. OUR PRODUCTS ARE HIGH QUALITY AND LOCALLY PRODUCED – SO OF COURSE OUR PACKAGING IS TOO.” – MICHAELA LEEB, PRODUCT MANAGER



One example of SWAROVSKI OPTIK’s principle of “constantly improving what is good” is the new packaging machine that was commissioned in November 2018. We worked with the supplier to adapt and convert the original machine so that it meets our precise requirements. A scanner identifies, weighs, measures, documents, and records the individual products to be shipped. The automatic carton-cutting machine then produces the correct transport packaging for each product on a just-in-time basis. This reduction in volume means fewer cartons, less filling material, less warehousing space, and lower transport costs.



“WE PURCHASE TECHNOLOGY AS WELL AS HVAC PRODUCTS AND THEN ADAPT THEM TO OUR COMPANY’S SPECIFIC NEEDS.” – GERHARD MOSER, HEAD OF ENERGY MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE



SEEING AND PRESERVING PRECIOUS MOMENTS

"WE ARE USING NATURAL MATERIALS SUCH AS WOOD, CLAY, FELT, SHEEP WOOL, AND HEMP IN OUR NEW BUILDING PROJECTS. BY INSTALLING LARGE WINDOWS, IT FEELS AS IF WE ARE BRINGING NATURE INTO THE WORKPLACE."
- BERNHARD ÖLZ, HEAD OF BUILDING MANAGEMENT

Our buses shuttle around 80 people to and from the plant every day, which reduces carbon emissions.



24 company flats



32



460 m² (4,950 ft²)
of wildflower meadows

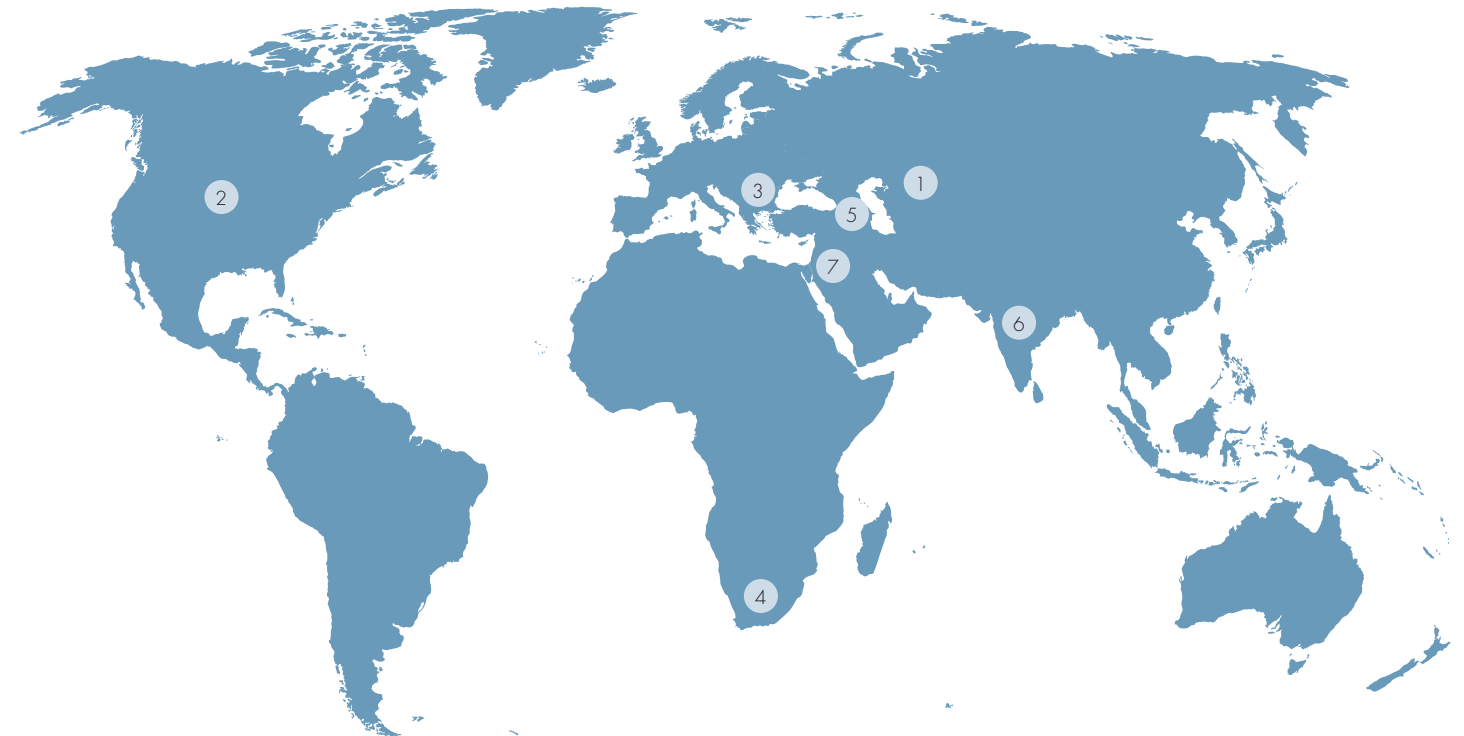


Good neighbors – responsible construction in a densely populated residential area, State Prize for Architecture 2010



NATURE CONSERVATION PROJECTS

"THE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF THE PLANET IS THE WEB THAT HOLDS OUR EXISTENCE TOGETHER. EVERY LOST SPECIES – NO MATTER HOW SMALL OR INSIGNIFICANT – WEAKENS THIS NETWORK. IT IS NOT ONLY OUR DUTY TO PRESERVE OUR NATURAL WORLD, BUT ALSO CRUCIAL FOR US AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS A SOCIETY. OUR APPROACH CONSISTS OF DIRECT AND LONG-TERM PARTICIPATION IN SELECTED PROJECTS AROUND THE WORLD." - DALE FORBES, HEAD OF STRATEGIC BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



- 1 **Sociable Lapwing Species Champion**
Middle East Asia
- 2 **Canada Warbler Species Champion**
North America, Colombia
- 3 **Dalmatian Pelican breeding site**
Bulgaria

- 4 **Community Guides**
South Africa
- 5 **Batumi Raptor Count**
Georgia
- 6 **Snow Leopards, Ladakh**
India
- 7 **Champions of the Flyway**
Israel



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FOR NEW IDEAS

Right from the get-go, SWAROVSKI OPTIK has been fascinated with a very special kind of space – outer space. Wilhelm Swarovski wanted to “be a little closer to the stars,” which inspired him to build his own, improved binoculars. His enthusiasm gave rise to a company that today, more than 70 years later, has built a global reputation. The world

has changed drastically during this time, but one thing remains unchanged: high-precision, long-range optical instruments allow us to immerse ourselves in nature. They multiply the intensity of how we experience the space around us, allowing us to cover large distances without moving an inch. Time to give space the space it deserves.



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*“SPACE HAS
A WAY OF LOOKING.
IT SEEMS LIKE IT HAS
A PRESENCE OF VISION.
WHEN YOU COME INTO IT,
IT IS THERE, IT’S BEEN
WAITING FOR YOU.”*

– James Turrell



CREATE SPACE

Where does the Earth end – and the sky begin?
This question has occupied theologians, philosophers,
and scientists over the years – and artists too.
Artist James Turrell works with light to capture this
moment between spaces in his Skyspace series – more
than 75 installations that are open to the public.





EXPLORE SPACE

In the early 17th century, Galileo Galilei was the first person to invent a telescope that could be used to observe the skies. His visionary discoveries revolutionized the way we see the world – and the stars. Endless vistas of inspiration, from Wilhelm Swarovski to science fiction, from then to now.





EXPERIENCE SPACE

SWAROVSKI OPTIK's aim is to enable people to enjoy special moments and to inspire a love of nature, the space that we live in. We believe this makes people want to play their part in protecting the planet and preserving biodiversity.
FOR THE LOVE OF NATURE.

HUNTING IN PRIMEVAL FORESTS ...IN EUROPE

AT THE HEART OF POLAND'S LARGEST AREA OF CONTIGUOUS FOREST LIES THE SMALL VILLAGE OF GŁĘBOKI BRÓD. IT IS THE CENTER OF AN EXEMPLARY CAPERCAILLIE CONSERVATION PROJECT, WHICH GIVES HOPE TO A SPECIES THAT IS IN DECLINE. CLOSER INVITES YOU TO TAKE A JOURNEY TO NORTHEASTERN POLAND, WHERE CONDITIONS ARE NOT ONLY PERFECT FOR THE CAPERCAILLIE BUT ALSO FOR HUNTERS.

PHOTO: WOJCIECH MISIUKIEWICZ

Over the last few years, Poland has become one of Europe's most popular hunting destinations, and for good reason – it is home to vast wooded areas with dense populations of the most sought-after game. Then there's the legendary Polish hospitality and the region's easy access.

The northeast of the country is particularly unspoiled, especially the area around the health resort of Augustów. This small town with around 30,000 inhabitants is situated in the triangle where Poland, Belarus, and Lithuania meet in Podlasie province. It's worth stopping off in Augustów en route to Głęboki Bród, not just because it's a picturesque little town but also to see a technical marvel, the Augustów Canal. Built in the 19th century to connect the Vistula River with the Memel region, it is now a popular destination for kayakers and water sports enthusiasts and is a candidate for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The area around Augustów is often referred to as the green lung of Poland, and hunting has a long tradition here. From the mid-16th century, Puszcza Augustowska – Augustów Primeval Forest – was the royal hunting ground where Polish rulers hunted aurochs and bison, wild boar, bears, and wolves. The forest covers 1,600 square kilometers (618 square miles), 1,140 square kilometers (440 square miles) of which is in Poland.

About 20 minutes from Augustów, in the northern part of Puszcza Augustowska, lies Głęboki Bród in the administrative district of Giby. The coat of arms of this rural community highlights the important role played by nature, depicting a speared fish against a background of forest green.

This huge area is managed by the Regional Directorate of State Forests (RDF) in Białystok. Along with the Głęboki Bród forest, it manages 18 other nearby areas that are open to hunters.



The Giby coat of arms shows a speared fish against a forest green background.



FORESTRY IN POLAND

Poland's forested area covers 9.2 million hectares (22.7 million acres), which is about 29.6% of the country's total land area. More than four fifths of Poland's forests are state-owned, and most are managed by Lasy Państwowe, a governmental organization. With about 7.1 million hectares (17.5 million acres), it is one of the largest forest holdings in the whole of the EU.





RULES FOR HUNTERS

In Poland, hunting is always one-to-one, meaning that every guest is assigned a personal hunting guide, who also looks after approaching and selecting the animal. Ultimately, however, it is the hunter who makes the decision and bears the responsibility. Hunting liability insurance is mandatory, a hunting license is required, and it is no problem to transport firearms (with an EU firearms pass) and ship trophies.

USEFUL LINKS:

POLISH STATE FORESTS
www.lasy.gov.pl/en

HUNTING IN STATE FORESTS
www.lasy.gov.pl/en/our-work/hunting

BIAŁYSTOK REGIONAL DIRECTORATE
www.bialystok.lasy.gov.pl

WIGRY NATIONAL PARK
www.wigry.org.pl

The hunting grounds in the northeast are very extensive and less developed than those in western Poland, for example. This is part of its appeal for many hunters – but it also involves more effort. It takes about 3.5 hours to drive there from Warsaw. If you are coming by air, it is worth flying into Vilnius in Lithuania, which is about 200 kilometers (125 miles) away.

If you would like to hunt in the Puszcza Augustowska area, you can book a trip with one of the many international hunting outfitters or directly contact the Regional Directorate at Białystok. Comfortable accommodation is available, along with experienced, professional hunting guides who will ensure a successful hunt.

If you are traveling to northeastern Poland, don't miss the impressive deer rut in the primeval forests, which is why the main hunting season starts in September. Apart from the rutting red deer, there are also wild boar and roe deer. Wolf and lynx roam these forests too, but they are protected species. Apart from red deer and roe deer, hunters will often spot moose, but they also have to be left alone. Other permanent residents of the forests include foxes, raccoons, raccoon dogs, and badgers. If you're very lucky, you might bag a Hazel Grouse. Close to Głęboki Bród, the forest areas of Borki and Browsk have a special attraction – herds of wild bison, also a protected species.



REINTRODUCING THE CAPERCAILLIE

TEXT: ADAM DEPKA PRĄDZINSKI, BRĄĆ ŁOWIECKA HUNTING MAGAZINE

Puszcza Augustowska is also the center of the Capercaillie Protection Program. Situated just north of the famous Białowieża National Park, it borders another protected biodiversity reserve, Wigry National Park. This center, along with the 120-square-kilometer (46-square-mile) state hunting ground, is managed by the forestry office at Głęboki Bród. Every year, more than a dozen Capercaillie and Grouse are released into the wild from here. The young birds, equipped with a telemetry transmitter, are moved from another breeding center in the south of Poland in the fall, after a short adaptation period.

At the same time, birds are reared according to the "born to be free" method on a breeding farm located in Głęboki Bród. At the beginning of the year, the adult birds are placed in aviaries in separate parts of Augustów Forest, their natural habitat. When the breeding season ends, the hens stay in the aviary, but shortly after hatching, the chicks can leave the aviary whenever they want, while still maintaining vocal contact with the Capercaillie hens. Around fall, they are weaned from their mother and never return to her. The settling areas are fenced in with torches and bright pieces of cloth to keep predators away.

The Capercaillie no longer has a large area of distribution in Poland and has been on the brink of extinction in recent decades. It is estimated that there are only 600 birds left in the whole country. There were only 40 to 50 in Augustów

Forest, but now there is a glimmer of hope. Thanks to the conservation efforts co-financed by the EU since 2013, the foresters of Głęboki Bród provided a refuge where male Capercaillie could make their unmistakable mating calls. In spring three years ago, it was heard for the first time since the late 1980s. It was audible again this year and, it is to be hoped, in the years to come. The species has been rescued from extinction and now it is a matter of nurturing the Capercaillie population. This is where hunters have a crucial role to play. One of the greatest threats to Capercaillie is predators. Hawks are their worst enemy, so efforts have been made to capture these birds and release them at least 100 kilometers (62 miles) away. However, this method is not particularly successful because the hawk often returns after only a few days. The lynx is an occasional predator that is also under strict protection. But predators such as fox, marten, or badger are hunted to increase the Capercaillie's chances of survival. In areas where Capercaillies are released again, it is legally permitted to hunt predators all year round. These are not only state-controlled hunting areas, but also areas that are leased by several hunting clubs. As there is no demand for skins, the value of hunting predators has increased again thanks to the financial support paid after each animal is shot.

The operators of the project hope that their positive experiences with the reintroduction of the Capercaillie will set a precedent and significantly increase the chances of its survival as a species. ●



CLIMATE AND VEGETATION

The northeastern region of Podlasie is one of the coldest in Poland, although not quite as cold and rainy as Masuria. The climate means it has the shortest vegetation period in the country, lasting between 190 and 210 days. The area around Augustów is dry with marshy areas. The forests are dominated by majestic spruce, pine, oak, hornbeam, and birch, with the occasional lime tree.



THE GROUNDBREAKING
PRECISION OF THE
EL RANGE HELPS YOU
TO MAKE THE RIGHT
DECISION IN EVERY
HUNTING SITUATION.





“ HAVE FUN

AND COME
BACK SAFE!

”

ALENA STEINBACH, A HUNTER
AND DOG HANDLER FROM
GERMANY, RECOUNTS
HER EXPERIENCES OF HUNTING
WITH DOGS.

I whisper this into the ears of my four dogs as I unleash them for a hunt. My quartet are a Labrador called Fibi, a Westphalian Dachsbracke called Emma-Otto, and two Wirehaired Dachshunds, Toffie and Twix. Three of them are very typical breeds used for this kind of hunting. The odd-one-out with the double-barreled name is the Dachsbracke, a kind of dog that in the past was normally used for hunting small game like rabbits and foxes.

TRACKING

This kind of hunting involves tracking and chasing a small animal like a hare from its burrow. The dogs track it down using their noses, barking loudly. The hares usually run in a wide arc then return to their burrow, where the hunter can shoot it. This kind of hunting has largely died out because of too many roads and too few hares.

EMMA-OTTO, THE WESTPHALIAN DACHSBRACKE

Emma-Otto has become very good at tracking and chasing. When she is hunting, she prefers animals that she thinks will taste good. Wild boar are not among them. She still tracks them, but after a few hundred yards she turns back. But when she spots a herd of red deer or roe deer, she will run for miles close on their heels. As a medium-sized dog, she can follow the game over branches, through snow and across marshy ground, but she doesn't get too close. As a result, the fleeing deer can come to a halt to survey its surroundings, allowing the hunter to take a shot.

LONE WOLF

However, one of the disadvantages of this breed is that it is a loner. And long-distance tracking can be exhausting, such as when I see my dog is three or four kilometers ahead of me. I'm always worried that she will get injured on a road or at a railway crossing. Thanks to modern tracking devices, sometimes I spend more time looking at my tracker than concentrating on the hunt. This breed of dog can give its owner a heart attack from worry! Sometimes after a hunt, I have to collect Emma-Otto from a place far away. But when she's not hunting, she's a very quiet dog who is happy doing her own thing or chewing her claws. She's not bothered about food and can be quite clumsy when playing or cuddling. We don't mean it in a bad way, but sometimes we say she's a little autistic. She is basically friendly with children and other dogs, but she's quite territorial, particularly at home.



WHAT ELSE CAN BRAQUES DO?

Their calm tracking style makes this breed perfectly suited to many specialist purposes, such as:

- Flushing game on driven and group hunts
- Retrieving game after driven and group hunts
- Retrieving game after individual hide hunting



THE WIREHAISED DACHSHUNDS TWIX AND TOFFIE

Then there are the two "Ts," as they are affectionately called. Twix and Toffie are almost the same age, but they are two very different dachshunds. "We're definitely only getting ONE dachshund puppy" turned into "Oh, what difference does one more make?". So short-haired Twix (who was from a hunting line and used to living in a kennel) and the burst sofa cushion Toffie (who was not from a hunting line and used to living on a couch) moved in with us. Their backgrounds were totally different, so it would be fascinating to see how they developed in terms of their personalities and hunting abilities.

SAME BREED – DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES

Well – how can I say it nicely? Toffie isn't the brightest candle on the cake, nor the fastest runner, nor the best jumper, but she is incredibly keen, has a big heart, is always happy and has totally mastered that melting dachshund gaze with her chestnut-brown eyes. Twix, on the other hand, is clever, pretty, and incredibly obedient. The sisters at heart couldn't be more different, but they can't bear to be apart. Even now, at nearly four years of age, they love romping around together every day.





THE ACE UP MY SLEEVE – FIBI THE LABRADOR

The ace up my sleeve is Fibi, the black lightning bolt. She was born a Labrador bitch but has turned into a wirehaired dog – at least that’s what we often joke about this truly unusual retriever. Of course, she retrieves anything that falls, it’s in her genes. But she is also a good, clever scent hound who can track prey over long distances. She bays when cornering and catching boar, dispatches wounded deer and brings them to us. She also leads us toward dead animals – a true all-rounder! If Fibi could alert us to healthy animals she would be unbeatable, but unfortunately she can only come on small hunting trips with friends. But when she’s with us, she always puts her best foot forward and shows us what she can do.



SHARING WONDERFUL MOMENTS

At the end of the day, all kinds of hunting with your dog is wonderful and creates some amazing experiences. Without dogs, we wouldn’t be able to hunt as we do today. Without tracking dogs, we couldn’t hunt over large areas, regardless of how many drivers we had. We couldn’t get through the dense brambles, crawl through thickets, or scent the game. Wild boars are becoming more sedentary and often only leave their hollows when forced to do so. That’s why dogs and their handlers deserve our thanks and appreciation. It is also important to exercise discipline on driven hunts and it needs to work much better than it has done in recent years. Unfortunately, there are increasing reports about dogs being shot – this simply can’t be allowed to happen! As the owner of four wonderful, keen, totally unique dogs, you can believe me when I say no one will be as loyal to you as your dog. No one will love you as unconditionally, trust you so completely, or would die for you without hesitation. If you have a dog or dogs, you know exactly what I mean. If you don’t, try getting one and think of me when you find out for yourself. 🐾

UP CLOSE

ALENA STEINBACH:

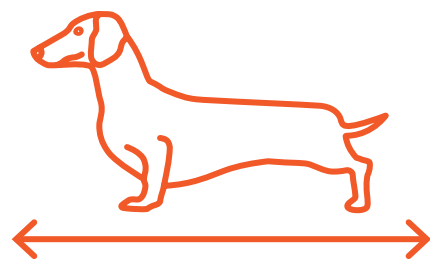
Alena Steinbach, 30, is not just a passionate hunter and dog handler, but also editor of the online hunting magazine *WIR JAGEN* as well as author of the cookbook *Wild Kochen*. She enjoys hunting with her four dogs, Labrador Fibi (6), the two Wirehaired Dachshunds Twix and Toffie (4), and the Westphalian Dachsbracke Emma-Otto (5). She equips the dogs with trackers and protective vests.

On driven hunts, she uses a .308 caliber straight-line repeater with a Z8i 1-8x24. The throw lever is particularly useful for helping her respond instantly when nearby game runs away, or vice versa. Otherwise, she prefers driven hunting rifle scopes because, for her purposes, it is better to have a low magnification in most situations, particularly on driven hunts. And with 8x magnification she can still easily kill a deer cleanly at 80 meters/87 yards. She also likes to take a small pair of binoculars (EL 10x32) with her to be able to explore her surroundings better, such as when she’s not sure whether she can see a neighbor or whether a raised hide is occupied.



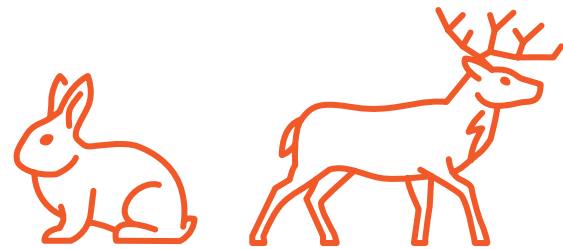
WHICH BREED IS RIGHT FOR ME?

IF YOU WANT A PURE FLUSHING DOG, CLASSIC BREEDS LIKE DEUTSCHER WACHTELHUND AND SPANIELS ARE A SAFE CHOICE. BUT SMOOTH, LONG, AND WIREHAired DACHSHUNDS ARE ALSO EXCELLENT HUNTING COMPANIONS FOR FLUSHING. ALENA STEINBACH EXPLAINS WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN MAKING YOUR DECISION.



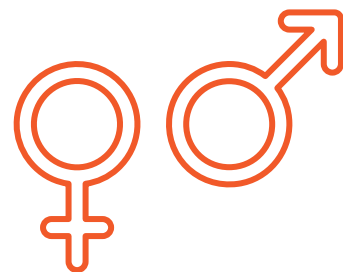
What breed can I cope with?

A pointer needs much more exercise than a dachshund.



What do I want to hunt?

Mainly small animals, hoofed game, or wild boar?



Dog or bitch?

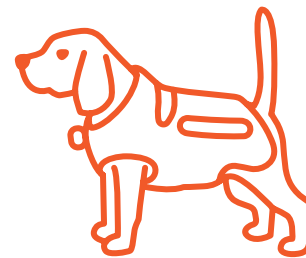
You also need to think about whether you want a dog or bitch. If you already have a male dog, it's not necessarily a good idea to get another one as this could lead to fights.



Which breed do I like in terms of its appearance, size, behavior, and my lifestyle?

Of course, you need to like the look of the dog, but I think a long-haired pointer has no place in a tiny city apartment.

Also, think about where to accommodate your future companion when you are out of town.



Unleashed or accompanied?

Apart from the classic unleashing of the dog from the stand, which I do, you can also accompany your dog. 90% of the time, I send my dogs out from the raised hide and rarely go with them. Of course, this requires training and behavior that is more related to the handler. It is a case of ensuring that the dogs don't run miles ahead but stay in a pack around the handler. Here, you more often need dogs that corner wounded boar and keep them in one place as far as they can. When you accompany your dogs, you have the big advantage of being on hand to help your dog, and you share more experiences and successes. It's up to you to decide which kind of hunting is more fun for you, or is actually feasible.



Where do I mainly hunt?

Do you prefer hunting in mountain forests or among fields and hedgerows? If you often hunt in the mountains or in the snow, a dachshund or a terrier are not ideal. If there are a lot of roads in your hunting area, I wouldn't recommend a Braque, because these breeds often range many miles ahead of you.



ALENA'S TIP:

Think carefully and don't just follow recommendations from friends or go by outward appearances; study breed information and talk to owners of breeds that interest you.

For more tips and stories visit
www.swarovskioptik.com





#WILD2TABLE

NIKOLAJ



JUEL

ROCKS COOKING,
MUSIC, AND HUNTING

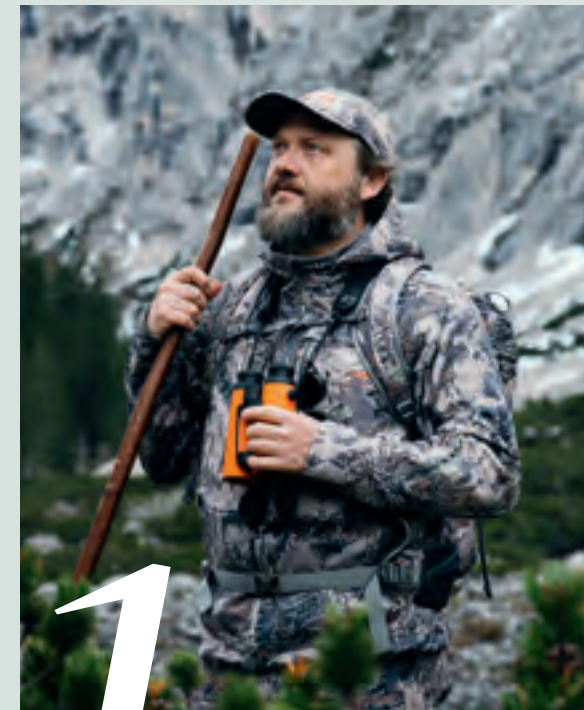
JOIN US FOR A WALK ON THE
WILD SIDE TOGETHER WITH
HUNTER, CHEF, AND MUSICIAN,
NIKOLAJ JUEL.

What do delicious food and good music have in common? According to hunter, chef, and musician, Nikolaj Juel, it is all about balance and composition. Finding the right ingredients that will complement each other is the essence of both cooking and making music. To create a masterpiece, the chef or maestro adjusts the different flavors or tunes, so they balance each other out.

CLOSER 2 THE SOURCE

To obtain the best ingredients, getting as close to the source as possible has become Nikolaj's goal. In order to harvest his own meat, he found his calling in hunting. By going outdoors to get them yourself, you can obtain the best, freshest, and healthiest food.

For Nikolaj, there are three main aspects to hunting that motivate him to get up in the middle of the night to witness the break of dawn and nature's tender awakening.



BEING A PART OF NATURE

Nikolaj loves to be outdoors to witness the first rays of sunlight creeping over the horizon, steeping the mossy air in a mystic atmosphere, making the dewdrops on the grass glisten and sparkle. That's what really matters to him: experiencing nature, feeling connected to our roots, gazing upon the sunrise, and watching animals having breakfast.



MANAGING WILDLIFE

Thanks to his close connection to the wildlife population in his hunting grounds, he easily selects the right ones to harvest. A lot of consideration goes into the way Nikolaj conducts his hunting. This way, he is helping out in a positive way and contributing to the preservation of nature.



UP CLOSE

NIKOLAJ JUEL

Nikolaj Juel is a Danish hunter, chef, and professional musician. Growing up as a boy scout, he always spent a lot of time outdoors roaming the woods and fishing. He started hunting in order to harvest the best ingredients right at the source. He loves his SWAROVSKI OPTIK equipment. On his adventures, he is accompanied by his EL Range 8x42, which has been with him through thick and thin for many years. His main rifle scope is a Z8i 2-16x50. For driven hunts, he takes a Z8i 0.75-6x20. He lives with his two sons and girlfriend in Copenhagen, but joined us for a hunt and cooking session in fall 2019.

#SEETHEUNSEEN
#FORTHELOVEOFNATURE
#WILD2TABLE

📍 walkonthewildside.dk
f [Nikolaj Juel](https://www.facebook.com/NikolajJuel)
www.walkonthewildside.dk

PROVIDING FOOD FOR YOUR FAMILY

Hunting allows Nikolaj to serve healthy, tasty food on his dinner table. Thus, his two sons, Elvis and Linus, as well as his girlfriend, Rikke, can eat in a sustainable way. He is constantly on the hunt for a good meal by using every part of the animal (such as bones for stock, liver for paté, caul fat to wrap meat, etc.). Plus, game meat is ecological and pure, causing no or minimal CO₂ emissions. 🌱

FAVORITE GAME RECIPE

CARIBBEAN CHAMOIS CURRY

By Nikolaj Juel

When we think of a classic game dish, most of us have a very specific taste memory. But for most of us it's probably not related to the rich flavors of the Caribbean. Nikolaj Juel takes us out of our comfort zone with his exotic view of game meat and shows us how experimenting is fun.

The stars of this Jamaican curry are: shoulder of chamois, exotic spices such as fenugreek seeds, ginger, mustard and fennel seeds, turmeric, coconut milk, and pineapple. Round off your culinary visit to Jamaica with a delicious coleslaw, a Caribbean spicy sauce, rice, and peas.

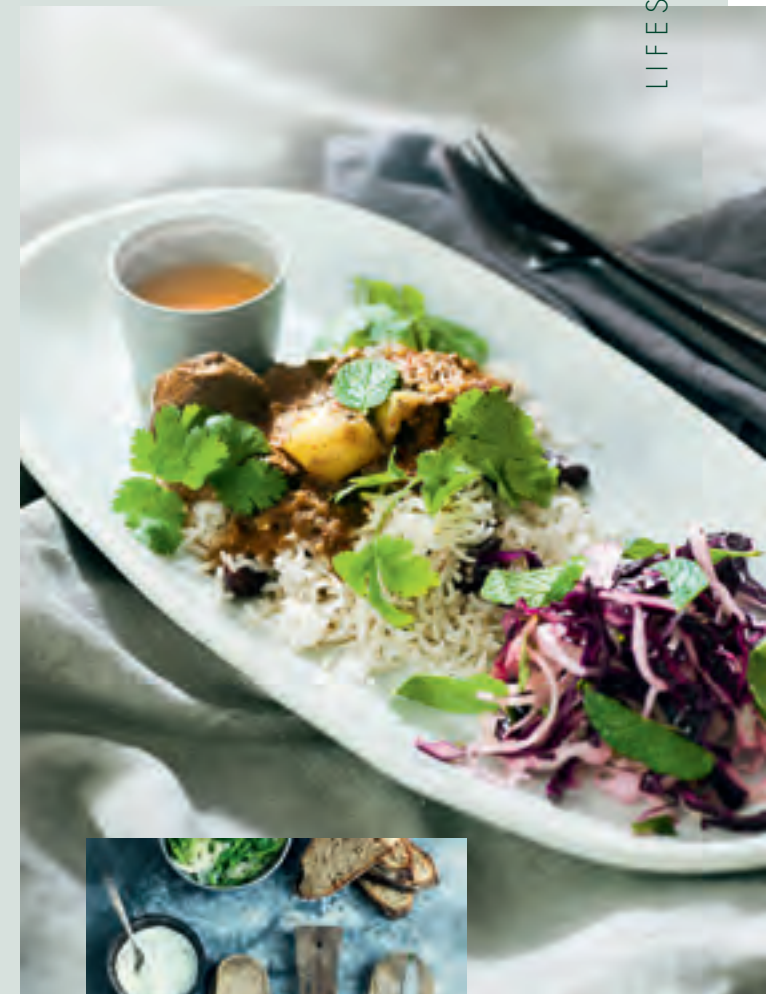
RECIPE:

http://swarovs.ki/recipe_CURRY

BOOK TIP

BRÆNDT, RØGET, HÆNGT, SPRÆNGT

Nikolaj Juel's new Danish cookbook covers a huge range of methods for bringing the wonders of nature's bounty from the wild to the table.



GRAVAD LAX

By Nikolaj Juel

Would you like more from Nikolaj Juel? Then we recommend this salmon recipe.
http://swarovs.ki/recipe_LAX

NL PURE

ONE
WITH

NATURE

IN THE HEART OF THE AUSTRIAN ALPS, IN AN AREA OF EXCEPTIONAL BEAUTY: MANY PEOPLE ENVY SWAROVSKI OPTIK FOR ITS AMAZING LOCATION. AT THE END OF THE WORKING DAY, IT'S QUITE NORMAL FOR OUR COLLEAGUES TO HEAD OUTDOORS. THIS IS WHERE WE RECHARGE OUR BATTERIES AND GET INSPIRATION FOR NEW PRODUCTS SUCH AS THE **NL PURE**.



For our diverse team of experts, the long-held desire to design a revolutionary binocular with a 70° field of view without compromising on ergonomics and handling became an irresistible challenge.

Achieving the extraordinary means forging new paths. At SWAROVSKI OPTIK, this can also mean reinventing the laws of physics.

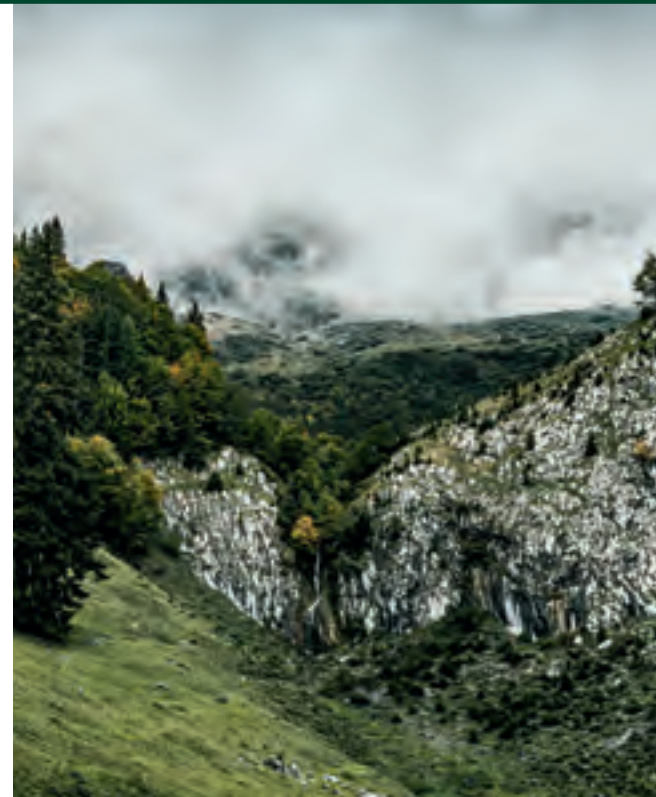
In developing the new concept, the two key questions they had to answer were: How do we combine the best optics in the perfect package? And which binocular shape is the most ergonomic, including in terms of weight?

These questions fueled the process of innovation, and the initial answers immediately brought some extraordinary ideas. However, they were accompanied by concerns that the desire for maximum optical performance would make the binoculars too big and clunky.

But SWAROVSKI OPTIK is nothing if not bold. The whole team was excited about the project and believed in the product. Of course, everyone wanted to play their part in achieving the impossible. Read on to find out how nature inspires our product managers and why the NL Pure helps you immerse yourself even more deeply in the moment. #onewithnature

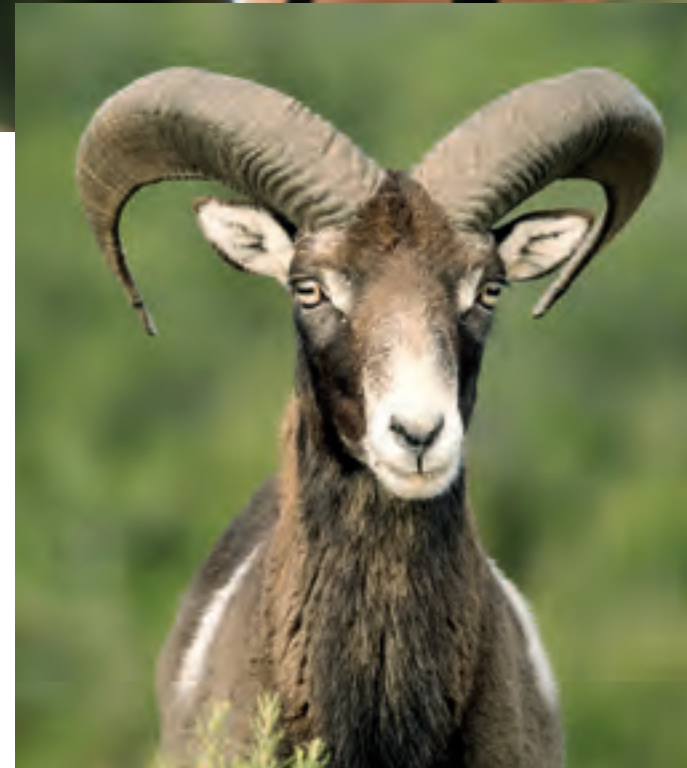


Gnadenwald, spring 2020. Tyrol stretches out below us. It's a wonderfully fresh spring day. The climb was tough at times, but with every step through the forest, we feel we are leaving our everyday cares behind. We can almost see Absam and the SWAROVSKI OPTIK headquarters from here. Most of us are hunters too, meaning that we truly understand our products and know exactly what our customers want and need.



As soon as you set eyes on the NL Pure, you know it is something quite groundbreaking. It has been designed to fit perfectly into your hand. Its revolutionary ergonomic shape guarantees relaxed viewing, even for prolonged periods.

It is possible to use them hands-free or propped up on your elbows, and at different angles to the object you are observing. In all these positions and with different pupil distances the binoculars have to fit perfectly in your hand. This was all taken into account in their design. Ergonomics play a major role in ensuring you can use them for long periods without fatigue, which is also helped by the comfortable forehead rest.



As soon as you look through the NL Pure binoculars you realize they are a technical masterpiece. The largest-ever field of view with almost indiscernible edges allows you to totally immerse yourself in your surroundings. You can switch off from what is around you and find yourself at the heart of the action. The crystal-clear optics of the NL Pure provides that added security to ensure your target is spotted accurately and fast.

GOOD HUNTING! 🏹

WILD SPACE TO LIVE RIVERS

UNSPOILED RIVERS ARE THE EPITOME OF UNTAMED NATURE. DESPITE THEIR WILDNESS – OR RATHER BECAUSE OF IT – THEY ARE FULL OF LIFE AND ESSENTIAL FOR ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES.



The Koroc River runs like a green ribbon through the Kuururjuaq National Park in Nunavik in the extreme northeast of Quebec. Vegetation can only grow in the valley created by the river itself, which stands out clearly from the barren mountains in the surrounding area. The landscape is rugged and intimidating, characterized by rock and snow, grasses and moorland. Light stands of spruce, larch, and white birch adorn the lowlands and mountain slopes. Here, survival takes toughness and endurance, and it is managed by only a few highly adapted species such as Spruce Grouse, Willow Ptarmigan, and Arctic fox. In summer, caribou also range huge distances to feed on grass, lichen, and moss.

RIVERS ARE LIFE-GIVERS

Unspoiled rivers like the Koroc are not just a habitat for animals and plants but are also vital for humans because they perform essential functions within the ecosystem. Natural, flowing waters provide us with water, food, timber, and other resources. They also regulate the climate, prevent erosion, and help with water purification. In addition, they bring social and cultural benefits, such as recreation and tourism. It is no coincidence that many of the first settlements were established along rivers. Even today, many of our modern cities are located on rivers, which are still important trading and transportation routes.

Decades of flood protection, energy generation, and promotion of shipping have resulted in the fact that the major rivers in the densely populated areas of America, Europe, and Asia have little in common with the wild rivers they once were. However, there still are real wild rivers. Most of them are in remote areas of the far north. But even further south, in places like Italy, Albania, and Montenegro, there are a few rivers and sections that have remained largely unspoiled.

CONSTANTLY CHANGING

There's an old saying: "You never jump in the same river twice." The character of a river changes drastically as it flows from source to estuary. Its flow rate, temperature, and nutrient content typically increase, while the oxygen content, flow speed, and size of the particles on the riverbed decrease. The entire ecosystem is constantly changing, something that is particularly evident after floods. Areas that were previously gravel are now water. Where trees grew is now a steep bank. Elsewhere, new banks are created, and fine sediment is deposited in the floodplains. This creates a multitude of small and micro habitats, which differ in depth, flow rate, temperature, and substrate – a mosaic of closely interwoven biotopes.

The majority of river organisms depend on this interlocked sequence of habitats. They can suffer severe population losses or even disappear if even one key habitat is missing or inaccessible. Typical river fish such as trout and salmon (*Salmonidae*) or many representatives of the carp family (*Cyprinidae*) such as barbel or nase require shallow, fast-flowing gravel areas for spawning, but as young fish, they require quieter bank areas. The adult fish colonize fast-flowing sections in open water or on the riverbed. Deep basins or accumulations of deadwood serve as winter shelters.

The remaining wild rivers have been spared from today's over-development. They continue to flow steadily through the landscape that they themselves have shaped, bringing the rain back to the sea and slowly wearing away the mountains, piece by piece. Preserving them for future generations is both a duty and labor of love because there is so much we can learn from wild rivers. Things like persistence, peace, and energy in harmony. A sense of togetherness and the realization that diversity is the foundation of a functioning ecosystem bringing it beauty and richness.





SALMO SALAR LINNAEUS, 1758

Classification: Family: Salmonidae (salmonids), Class: Actinopterygii (bony fishes)

Historical distribution: Temperate and Arctic zones in the North Atlantic: in America from Quebec (Canada) to New York (USA); in Eurasia from northern Spain to the Urals (Russia), including the North and Baltic Seas, Greenland, Iceland, and the British Isles.

Stock: Historically 10-24 million adult fish, currently max. 5-8 million adult fish

Average age: 2-6 years

Average weight: 3-5 kg (6.5-11 lbs)

Average length: 0.7-1.2 m (2.3-3.9 ft)

Diet: Mollusks, crustaceans, and fish



THE ATLANTIC SALMON

RIVERS UNTOUCHED BY HUMANS, SUCH AS THE KOROC RIVER, PROVIDE A PRISTINE ENVIRONMENT FOR AQUATIC LIFE. IT IS ALSO HOME TO A VERY SPECIAL FISH THAT IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE ENTIRE ECOSYSTEM.

The Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) is a very demanding kind of fish. It requires a variety of different habitats that are rich in oxygen and not too warm. And as it grows, it moves from fresh water to the ocean and back again. This makes these strong swimmers a reliable indicator of water quality.

HEADING HOME UPRIVER
The migration of salmon from the sea to the rivers is well known and is an essential part of the fish's lifecycle – it immediately makes us think of thousands of salmon leaping en masse. Young fish migrate from the rivers into the sea, where they reach sexual maturity and then return in their thousands to reproduce. Surprisingly, they return to spawn in the sections of water where they hatched years earlier. This behavior, known as “homing,” demonstrates their high cognitive abilities, something that is not normally associated with fish. Three senses are involved in helping salmon find their home waters: they are guided by the Earth's magnetic field and visual landmarks, but most importantly by scent. In general, all salmon species have developed a remarkably fine sense of smell, which helps them to locate prey and even escape predators. Depending on the location of their breeding grounds, the sexually mature

animals migrate in late summer or fall. This is extremely challenging and pushes the fish to their limits. Seas and rivers are not only different in terms of salinity but also their currents, water depth, and turbidity. In order to get to their original spawning grounds, they will swim distances of up to 700 kilometers (435 miles). The majority of males die from the exertion afterward, but 10-40 percent of females survive and overwinter in the river or return to the sea in the fall. Some of them will return to their home waters a year or two later to spawn.

Its high demands in terms of habitat and its dependence on both salt- and freshwater make the salmon susceptible to a variety of problems. Transverse structures such as weirs and river power plants can prevent the salmon from reaching their spawning grounds. As a result, less than 40 percent of the world's rivers sustain healthy salmon populations.

Protecting the last remaining natural salmon stocks is a major challenge. It is an urgent task, not just because of their cultural and economic value, but above all because they are essential for the entire ecosystem. For example, bears rely on the spawning grounds to build up their reserves in time for winter. Other predators also benefit from this short period of abundant food.





THE RETURN OF THE SALMON

Restoring rivers can also restore vital habitats. One of the most impressive success stories of recent years has been that of the Rhine. It was once one of Europe's most important rivers for salmon, but fish stocks were wiped out as a result of engineering works, the discharge of wastewater, and a devastating chemical accident in the 1980s. This did not go unnoticed by the general public, and it triggered a wave of solidarity among conservationists, fishermen, and citizens. Under the auspices of the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, numerous coordinated measures were taken to improve water quality, prevent floods, and preserve nature. These included ladders to help salmon go up and down weirs, facilities to protect fish from turbines, restoring habitats close to riverbanks, the creation of suitable areas for spawning, and the reconstruction of habitats for young fish.

THE FUTURE OF WILD SALMON
By the end of 2016, more than 8,000 salmon had migrated from the sea to the Rhine system. The actions taken to help the salmon also improved conditions for many of the region's other fish species. For example, it was possible to reintroduce the houting, a kind of whitefish. The Rhine is now home to 63 fish species and is almost complete again – and the salmon has also returned. It has not yet reached Switzerland, but it has been observed swimming up many tributaries. It will still be a while before the Rhine's stocks can sustain themselves without human intervention, but the results that have been achieved are encouraging. The salmon is back.

The salmon in Nunavik, Canada, know nothing of what their fellow salmon have gone through. As they have done for millennia, this year the brightly colored fish will once again swim up the Koroc River to the place where they hatched years ago. The cycle of life will begin afresh. 🐟



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

David Ramler, PhD, worked as a fish ecologist at the University of Vienna and is a freelance biologist. His latest research looks at restoration projects in the Danube.



NEW PERSPECTIVES

NAMIBIA

A REMARKABLE SUCCESS STORY: HOW THE NYAE
NYAE CONSERVANCY IS LEADING THE WAY IN NATURE
CONSERVATION AND HUNTING IN NAMIBIA.



GOOD NEWS ABOUT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IS RARE. WE MOSTLY HEAR ABOUT SPECIES VANISHING, HABITATS BEING EXPLOITED, OR HARSH LIVING CONDITIONS DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

However, there are also preservation stories that warm our hearts. Such a tale is the Nyae Nyae Conservancy's story. Thanks to the active participation of the local people (the San), game population numbers are rising, natural habitats are protected, and poaching is kept to a minimum in this conservation area, located in the northeast of Namibia. A flagship project in terms of people and

the natural world prospering together. The key to success was giving the lion's share of the power and economic profits deriving from wildlife and hunting tourism to the local communities. Thus, protecting their natural resources became relevant to the development and prosperity of the San people. It is now in their best interest to sustain wildlife for generations to come.



CLOSER TALKED TO STEPHAN JACOBS, PROFESSIONAL HUNTER CONTRACTED BY THE NYAE NYAE CONSERVANCY, ABOUT THE ROLE OF SUSTAINABLE HUNTING IN PRESERVING WILDLIFE AND NATURE.

WHAT ROLE DOES SUSTAINABLE HUNTING PLAY IN THE NYAE NYAE CONSERVANCY?

Sustainable hunting plays a crucial role in this area. In fact, the wildlife in our region could not exist in the way it does if it were not for sustainable hunting. It provides Nyae Nyae with more than 85 percent of its annual income, which is used for numerous projects and provides a major lifeline for the local community. The other 15 percent of revenue is generated through photographic safaris, filmmaking, and the sale of local handicrafts. Taking into consideration that sustainable hunting means employment, income, and meat for the local population, it is absolutely vital to the livelihood of Nyae Nyae.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AS A PROFESSIONAL HUNTER?

My main role is to make sure that we get enough international hunting guests to fulfill our hunting quota and provide us with the financial means necessary to run the conservancy. I am responsible for guiding guests on hunts and to make sure that the right animals are harvested. My team and I are also in charge of counteracting poaching together with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Distributing the meat among the villages is on my list of duties too. Through hunting, we provide the local population with more than 31,000 kilograms (68,000 pounds) of meat each year. And last but not least, I am of course bound by my agreement with the conservancy: I pay for my hunting contract, employ 12 staff members, and provide food and housing for them.



CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THE APPROACH TAKEN IN NYAE NYAE?
Let’s take the elephant, the iconic species of Nyae Nyae. I have done some research on how elephant numbers have developed over the years. I interviewed many elderly locals and spoke to the first operator of the area, the late Mr. Grellmann. He operated in the area for ten years in the late 1980s. From what I could gather, the first elephants resident in the area were spotted after a really dry year in the late 1970s. When the first hunting quota was issued in the mid-1980s, it was estimated that only 50 bulls lived in the area. Today, we have 1,500+ elephants prospering in the Nyae Nyae Conservancy. So, we see that elephant numbers have grown tremendously in the last few decades.

WHAT METHODS ARE USED TO HUNT GAME IN NYAE NYAE ACCORDING TO THE ESTABLISHED QUOTA?
There are rules and regulations set by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism on how and when hunting is allowed to take place. We concentrate on taking out only the oldest animals because harvesting them has no effect on the populations. Most of the hunting is done by tracking. Together with the local San trackers, we find a suitable track and follow the animal. Once we catch up with it, we decide if that animal can be harvested or not. We take a good look at age, general condition, and other criteria. For instance, we look at approximately 100 elephant bulls before we find one that is suitable.



ABOUT CONSERVANCIES

‘Conservancies’ are vast tracts of land that enable indigenous peoples to manage their homelands, culture, and wildlife resources. Namibia has been establishing these conservation areas since the country gained independence in 1990. Find a map of all registered conservancies in Namibia here: www.nacso.org.na/conservancies

ABOUT THE NYAE NYAE CONSERVANCY

Nyae Nyae, meaning “place without mountains, but rocky,” is the oldest and largest wildlife conservancy in Namibia. Located in the Bushmanland in the northeast, on the border with Botswana, the Nyae Nyae Conservancy spans an area of approximately 9,000 square kilometers (3,475 square miles) of wilderness within the Kalahari Desert. The conservancy manages all visitors, tourism activities, and hunting concessions. While the conservancy is a community-based organization, the Ju/’hoansi San elect their leaders to derive benefits for locals through the sustainable use of natural resources. Nyae Nyae is home to numerous rare game species, like wild dogs, rhinos, roan, and cheetahs. However, it is primarily known for its elephant population.



Official foundation
February 1998

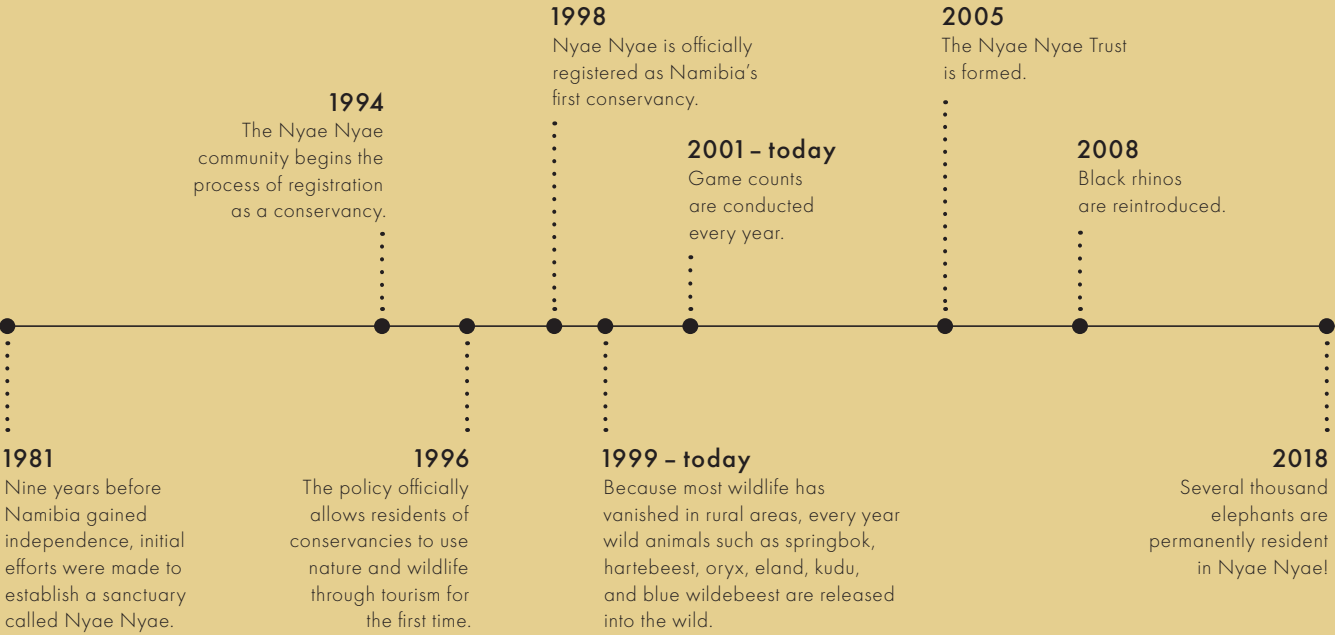
Region
Otjozondjupa, northeastern Namibia

Area
~ 9,000 km² (3,475 mi²)

Population
about 3,000 people

Hunted game (excerpt)
elephant, eland, roan antelope, kudu, blue wildebeest, oryx/gemsbok, springbok, duiker, steenbok

HISTORY OF NYAE NYAE





ABOUT THE TSUMKWE TUCSIN LODGE

The Tsumkwe Tucsins Lodge is an accommodation facility managed by the Nyae Nyae Conservancy. At the heart of this remote land, the surrounding San villages offer a fraught, yet fascinating insight into the lives of Southern Africa's longest-standing inhabitants.

UP CLOSE

STEPHAN JACOBS

Stephan Jacobs' ancestors came to Africa at least four generations ago. Growing up on a cattle ranch in Namibia not very far from the Nyae Nyae Conservancy, he always loved the bush. Although nobody in his family hunted, he started hunting at a very young age with the San workers of the farm. Nothing made him feel as alive as spending time in nature. After finishing school, he followed his brother's advice to do what he loved most. Therefore, he made his passion a profession and started training to become a professional hunter. After two years, he got his license to guide game hunts on the plains. Today, more than 20 years later, he still hunts and runs his own safari company in Namibia. In 2012, he became responsible for the Nyae Nyae Conservancy. In 2016, Stephan took over the responsibility of maintaining the area's 17 boreholes, which provide the only water supply for wild animals during the dry season. No small feat if you consider how much water each elephant needs on a daily basis. In short: Stephan is a hunter and nature conservationist.



STEPHAN JACOBS' FAVORITE GAME MEAT RECIPE

"My favorite local game meat would be roan, particularly its loin. Hang the meat for a few days then slice into 1-centimeter (half-inch) thick slices. Tenderize the meat slightly. Put the steaks in a container with olive oil, salt, pepper, and barbecue seasoning. Leave them in the container to marinate for at least six hours. Then heat up a thick steak pan on the fire and fry the steaks very swiftly. Serve them with fries and a salad. It is to die for."



ABOUT THE NNDFN

Founded in 1981, the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDFN) supports the indigenous Ju/'hoansi San people of the Nyae Nyae area in the former eastern Bushmanland (Tsumkwe East). It empowers them to improve their quality of life economically and socially through the sustainable use of natural resources. The NNDFN backs the Nyae Nyae Conservancy, among other organizations.

www.nndfn.org

ABOUT THE SAN PEOPLE

The collective term "San" encompasses the native inhabitants of Namibia and southern Africa, and - thus - the longest-standing societies in the world. Many different subgroups, e.g. Ju/'hoansi, Kwe, Hai | | om, #Khomani, etc. form the San people - each with their own culture, history, and tradition. According to research, they have been living in southern Africa for about 60,000 years. In the Nyae Nyae Conservancy, the Ju/'hoansi San people continue to live communally and maintain their traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Today, the peaceful tribes number some 38,000 individuals in Namibia. In total, the San population worldwide is estimated at 100,000 people.. www.nndfn.org



PHOTO: NNDFN.ORG



"FOR US, THE SAN COMMUNITY, OUR LIFE IS GAME, BUSH FOOD, AND ROOTS."

Leon Tsamkgao, Tsumkwe Tucsins Lodge guide

HOW DOES THE HUNTING STRATEGY IN NYAE NYAE HELP TO CONSERVE SAN CULTURE?

The San people were the first hunter-gatherers. However, this tradition is slowly disappearing because the younger generations are not interested in the traditional lifestyle anymore. By employing local trackers on our hunts, we try to keep the San culture alive. Practicing their tradition, they gain employment. In order to promote San culture, the San people have legal permission to hunt and gather in the area by traditional methods (bow and poison arrow) to provide food for themselves and their families.

IS POACHING A PROBLEM IN NYAE NYAE?

We are very fortunate that poaching is not a problem in Nyae Nyae. I would say that this is because the local people really see the benefits they gain from conservation. 🌿

SWAROVSKI OPTIK supports hunting whenever it is carried out sustainably, responsibly, legally, and in harmony with nature. The way the Nyae Nyae Conservancy manages natural resources shows that hunting can promote wildlife conservation with clear, measurable results through the sustainable use of game and nature.



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EVENTS

Current dates can be found on our website and on Facebook:
at.swarovskioptik.com/en_US/hunting/events
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