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## Is hunting large carnivores different from hunting ungulates? Some judgments made by Norwegian hunters

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### Abstract

The increase in large carnivore populations in a number of European countries causes numerous social conflicts and populations need to be kept at levels that are acceptable to the public. This may eventually require opening up or increasing public hunting of species like bear, wolf, wolverines and lynx as a management strategy. We surveyed a sample of 672 Norwegian hunters to examine how they judged a set of dilemmas associated with hunting carnivores versus ungulates. More than one-half of the sample would like to maintain or increase the current population sizes of the large carnivores (for wolverines: 57.5%; bears: 65.6%; wolves: 66.1%; lynx: 59.6%). A large majority of hunters (85.5%) emphasise not stressing the game over securing success in killing game, require adequate shooting skills (87.7%), linking harvest strategies to ecological principles (79.5%) rather than the level of conflict, and sustainable wildlife populations (95.1%) over optimum economic yield. Carnivore hunting is associated with a stronger preference for quotas based on science rather than local knowledge as well as paying more attention to the conflict level, compared to the judgments made for ungulate hunting. Positive attitudes toward maintaining or increasing carnivore populations are associated with a concern for animal welfare, and faith in scientific information, ecological values and sustainable wildlife populations.