

REGULATIONS ON SEALS IN GREENLAND

The Greenland Government manages hunting by species, by regions and by a dual permit system, regulated by two ministerial orders allowing for both full time and leisure time hunting. Tourists can acquire a short-term permit for trophy hunting or fishing.

Permits for full time hunters are based on a number of criteria. The applicant must be a permanent resident of Greenland, having lived here for a minimum of two years over the last decade, and must establish that hunting is a primary source of income. At least 50 % of the applicant's income must be based on hunting and small-scale fishing. The licences are issued by the Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture. Permits for leisure time hunting are also issued by the ministry, but only two criteria apply; the applicant must be a resident of Greenland and must be at least 12 years of age. No test or training is needed for any of the permits, but permits must be renewed each year.

In Greenland, the law on hunting from 1999 and the law on protection of nature and wildlife from 2003 constitute the overall frame regarding wildlife regulation. From December 1st 2010 a national executive order regarding the protection of seals and regulation of sealing came into force. Furthermore, hunting of seals is regulated in the wildlife sanctuary in Melville Bay and the national park in Northeast Greenland. In most municipalities, seal hunting is restricted by area, season or method through bylaws. For instance, in several fjords it is prohibited to use snowmobile and even motor boats in order to protect seals and traditional hunting methods. Yet, in most municipalities, seals can be hunted year round by all Greenlandic citizens, provided they have a hunting permit.

The Government of Greenland has from 1 December 2010 completely protected the harbour seal and grey seal until biological advice indicates that it is again safe to hunt any of these species. For the other seal species found in Greenlandic waters, there are no quotas set on them but permits are used to control the harvest. As a hunter, you are bound each year to submit your catch report to the Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture. This makes it possible to monitor and evaluate the catch levels of the four different species of seals, both at local and national levels.

A draft guideline on Import and export of seal products in Greenland to The European Market giving guidance to the exporters is ready for final approval by the Ministry.