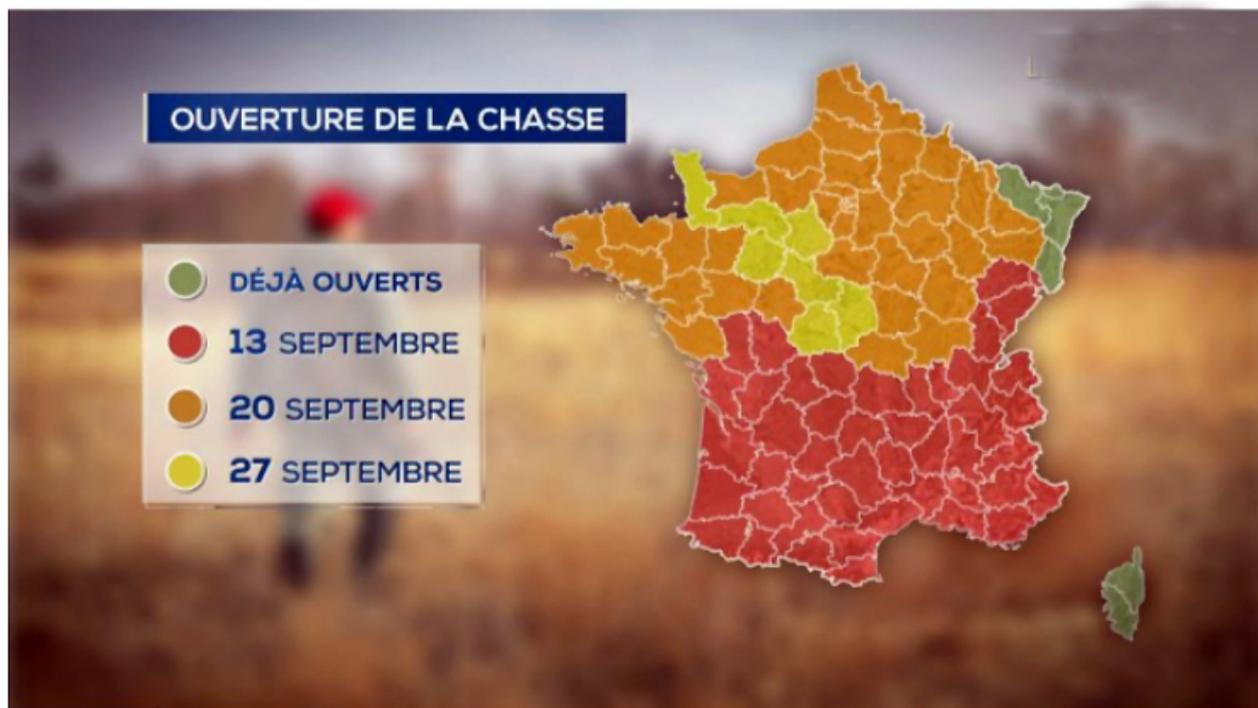


France's hunting season begins:

facts about the hunt in France

Hunting is the third most popular sport in France, with over 1 million official hunters in the country.

France's hunting season will begin this Sunday (September 13) in several departments around the country. Hunting season begins at different times in different departments in France, as can be seen in the map below.



The season will last until February, with the exact closing date different dependent on the department. You can check when the hunting season begins and ends in your area on the Fédération Nationale des Chasseurs's website here. (<https://www.chasseurdefrance.com/pratiquer/dates-de-chasse/>)

It is legal to hunt 90 different species of animal in France, although there are restrictions involved.

There are rules in place, at either national or local level, which limit the number of animals of a specific species that can be hunted in any one season. For example, red deer numbers are subject to national rules, while hares, pheasant or grey partridges are subject to local-level rules decided by the prefecture.

Hunting has a long history in France and has also sparked many debates, with supporters claiming it is traditional and detractors calling it cruel.

Here four facts about the practice.

France has the most hunters in Europe

1,246,273 people in France hold a hunting licence. It is the country's third-most popular sport, after football and fishing.

Anyone wishing to hunt in France requires a licence, either national or departmental, and must undergo a test to get one.

Licences are valid for life but must be validated every year before the beginning of hunting season.

In recent decades, the number of official hunters in France has been dropping. In 1976 there were 2,219,051 registered hunters when the population of France was around 54 million people. Today the population is around 67 million.

Despite this, France still has more hunters than any other country in Europe, according to a 2010 study by the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU. This is supported by Thierry Coste, political adviser for the Fédération nationale des chasseurs, who claimed the same in an interview with Connexion published last year.

According to the “Fédération nationale des chasseurs” The majority of hunters in France are men over 45 years old.

Only 25,000 hunters are women. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, 23-year-old French woman Johanna Clermont became a social media sensation this year for her pro-hunting views. She has 126,000 followers on Instagram and has been the subject of many media articles.

On her website she writes: “Hunting is more than just a hobby, it’s a way of living, thinking, and conceiving life. Hunting is my lifestyle.”

Landowners must apply to deny hunters the right to go on their land (there is a law which is giving the land owner to prohibit hunters not to use their land to hunt animals.

French law covering ecology and rural life - “le Code de l’environnement” - means that no one has the right to hunt on the property of others without the consent of the owner.

However, often hunting is carried out on land by default and it is up to the landowners to take action to prevent it, on the grounds of moral objection.

If you own land and wish to put in place a hunt ban, the steps to take depend on which body has jurisdiction over hunting in your area.

It is either covered by a “société de chasse”, which is a simple association (‘club’), or, in other parts of France, hunting is managed by an organisation approved by the prefecture, called an “ACCA” (association communale de chasse agréée) or AICA.

You can check with your local Mairie (council house) for more information on this.

There were 7 fatal hunting accidents in 2019

The total number of accidents last year related to hunting was 131, up from 113 the previous year. Despite the slight increase, the number of accidents each year is on a downward trend, statistics from the Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage (ONCFS) show.

Of the 131 people, 22 were not hunters or involved in a hunt.

Seven people died last year due to hunting, of which one person was not involved in hunting. This is a reduction from 2018 when 13 people died, three of whom were not involved in hunting. The number of fatal accidents last year was the lowest since the ONCFS began recording numbers in 1997.

“The vast majority of fatal accidents are still linked to a failure to comply with basic safety rules and in particular a failure to observe the 30-degree safety angle, shooting without identification or improper handling of the weapon,” the ONCFS stated in a press release.

Hunters should follow a number of safety protocols. One of which is not shooting at an angle of 30 degrees to the left or right, limiting shooting to a 120 degree arc directly in front of you.

In 68 departments of France, it is mandatory for hunters to wear a high-visibility item of clothing (either a harness, armband, hat or jacket). In the 22 other departments where hunting is practiced this is simply recommended.

Hunters are forbidden to shoot in the direction of roads, paths or public places. They also must put up signs to warn the public when they are hunting.

France last EU country to ban glue traps

French President Emmanuel Macron announced a blanket-ban on using glue traps for hunting on August 27. The practice was legal in only five departments in France: Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, Alpes-Maritimes, Bouches-du-Rhône, Var and Vaucluse. France was the only country in the European Union that still allowed this technique. Glue hunting involves coating tree branches with glue to trap birds, which are then captured and caged to attract others for the hunters.

Environmental protection group the “Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux” tweeted after the decision: “France has finally decided to respect European law and ban glue hunting, a cruel and non-selective practice that the LPO has been fighting against for years.”

Willy Schraen, president of hunting federation Fédération Nationale des Chasseurs said:

“Hunters cannot understand why this practice is being sacrificed in the name of a "green" political display, with no real basis for who really cares about biodiversity within territories, as we do on a daily basis! A whole section of French and rural culture is in the process of disappearing.”

