171618 - Is Hunting for Fun Allowed in Islam?

the question

Is hunting as a hobby or for recreational purposes permissible according to Islamic teachings? What about hunting birds during the nesting season? I've heard that it is not permissible. If that is true, then does it mean that hunting rock doves is not allowed, because they breed all year round?

Summary of answer

1. Hunting that is done for fun and recreation only, and when the hunter has killed the prey, he leaves it without making use of it at all; this is not recommended according to some of the scholars, while others rule it prohibited.
2. Hunting birds during the breeding season and nesting season or hunting birds that have small chicks is permissible and there is nothing wrong with it even though it is better not to do that.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Types of hunting

Hunting is of two types :

1. Hunting in order to make use of the prey, either for eating, selling, giving it in charity to the needy, giving it to friends and relatives, or other ways of making use of it. This type of hunting is permissible according to scholarly consensus.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Undoubtedly, hunting in order to make use of the prey is permissible. It is something that Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, has permitted in His Book, it is confirmed by the Sunnah of the Prophet (blessings and peace of

Allah be upon him), and the Muslims unanimously agreed on that." (Ash-Sharh Al-Mumti` 15/98)

1. Hunting that is done for fun and recreation only , and when the hunter has killed the prey, he leaves it without making use of it at all.

This type of hunting is disliked and not recommended according to some of the scholars, while others rule it prohibited. The evidence for it being disliked is the report narrated by `Abdullah ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever kills a sparrow inappropriately, Allah will ask him about that on the Day of Resurrection.” It was said: What is appropriate [with regard to hunting]? He (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “[What is appropriate is] that you should slaughter it and eat it, and not cut off its head and throw it aside.” (Narrated by An-Nasa’i, 4349, and Ad-Darimi, 1978)

Adh-Dhahabi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Al-Muhadhdhab (7/3614): Its Isnad (chain of narrators) is good. It was classed as authentic by Ibn Al-Mulaqqin in Al-Badr Al-Munir (9/376); and classed as sound by Ibn Kathir in Irshad Al-Faqih (1/368) and by Al-Albani in Sahih At-Targhib (1092).

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “Hunting for fun and recreation only is disliked, and if it were to be said that it is prohibited, that would be reasonable, because it is messing about and is a waste of money and time." (Ash-Sharh Al-Mumti`, 15/98)

Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “If [the hunter] does not intend to make use of [the prey], it is prohibited, because it is spreading mischief in the land by killing a soul for no purpose." (Fath Al-Bari 9/602)

In Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da’imah (22/512), it says: “With regard to killing it merely for fun and sport, that is not allowed, because of what it involves of wasting money and cruelty to animals. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade that.”

Is hunting during breeding season or nesting season prohibited in Islam?

We do not know of any Islamic text which prohibits hunting during breeding season or nesting season. Therefore hunting at these times remains permissible.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“It appears that the Shar`i ruling is that it is permissible, but it is better, during the nesting season, not to kill the bird, meaning that the hunter should not kill it unless he knows where the young are, in which case he may kill it, then go and take the young and slaughter them and make use of them.." (Nur `Ala Ad-Darb, 1/75)

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Al Ash-Shaykh (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Should we refrain from hunting some animals or some birds if they are pregnant or they have chicks, respectively?

He replied:

“I have not heard anything about that [meaning, I do not know of any evidence from the religious text to suggest that one should refrain from that], but it is more appropriate to leave the mother who has chicks, but as for it being prohibited, that is not the case." (Fatawa wa Rasa’il Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, 12/223)

The scholars regarded it as disliked to hunt mother birds which have chicks who still need her.

It says in Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da’imah: “It is not permissible to kill their mother or capture her alive, when her children are still small and need their mother’s care." (Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da’imah, 22/512)

Shaykh Ibn Jibrin (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “It is disliked to hunt birds which have small chicks, because this is harmful to their chicks. It is also disliked to take the chicks when they are small, as this causes distress to the mother, because of the compassion for them that Allah has instilled in her.

But if the hunter kills the mother and takes the chicks, then it appears that there is nothing wrong with that, because the basic principle is that it is permissible to hunt for food.”

In conclusion, hunting birds during the breeding season and nesting season, or hunting birds that have small chicks, is permissible and there is nothing wrong with it, even though it is better not to do that.

For more details, please see this category: Hunting.

And Allah knows best.