

Land Tenure, Fowling Rights, and Sharing of the Catch in Faroese Fowling

Arne Nørrevang

Introduction

The present paper is based upon material which was collected during an investigation of methods and tradition in fowling on the Faroe Islands. Some material was collected specially for the purpose. The material consists of printed sources, unprinted documents in the Føroya Landsskjalasavn in Tórshavn, and a number of tape-recorded interviews with fowlers.

As the investigation proceeded it became ever more evident that great differences exist in land tenure, fowling rights and sharing of the catch, even within such a geographically small area as the Faroes. Therefore the material will be presented by means of selected, representative examples, while generalizations will be drawn from a study of the total of conditions known to the author.

Catching methods on the Faroese fowling cliffs

Geologically there are great differences between the various types of fowling cliffs found in the Faroes. These differences are reflected in the distribution of both the species and their numbers. Also, widely different catching methods and methods of access were put to use by the fowlers.

On the highest, sheer cliff walls facing the sea breeds the guillemot which used to be one of the most important birds in fowling. These fowlings cliffs — at least their uppermost

parts — were approached from the upper edge. Sometimes the fowler was lowered down the cliff tied to a rope that might have been 120 fathoms long. The adult guillemots were caught by a long-handled net (*at fygla*) and the eggs were collected (*at ræna*). After the catch as many as 20 men, or more, were needed to haul the fowler and his catch up to safe ground again. Often the cliffs were so high that a minor team — 10 or 12 men — were lowered halfway down onto a wide ledge, whence they were able to fowl the lower parts of the cliff. In some cases the cliff was climbed from below, masts and poles being used in a joint effort. These parties of 4—12 men were usually brought in by boat.

At the foot of the cliffs young guillemots often sat on skerries and flat cliffs, and were caught with nets from a boat rowed along the cliffs (*taka hellufugl*). The birds that bred in the lowest parts of the cliffs could be taken when they launched themselves from their ledge, heading for the sea (*omanfleyg*).

The most important species for fowling at present is the puffin, and probably it has always been so. It breeds on grassy slopes above the sheer cliffs or scattered about precipitous headlands. Also, on top of free-standing cliffs — stacks — there may be called *lundaland*.

Puffins are caught in their nesting holes which they dig into the turf (*dráttur*) and often the egg is taken, too. The most important catching method, however, is the so-called *fleyging*. The birds are caught in mid flight by means of long-handled nets, swung up from behind the passing bird.

In many places the *lundaland* was of comparatively easy access, and one man might fowl alone. In more inaccessible places two fowlers often worked together, while in difficult places as many as four to six men would take part in a fowling party, carrying smaller ropes, poles etc.

Ownership

It is a general principle that while the sea is free to anyone,

a piece of land always belongs to one or more owners. Quarrels about rights therefore often concentrate on the borderline between the sea and the land. Thus, the owner of a fowling cliff may claim that the birds swimming and diving on the sea below the cliffs actually belong to him, because they breed and raise their young on his property. This principle seems to lie behind the earliest protection act, which can be seen in a document, read at the *várting* in 1741:

»Before the court appeared the respected Johannes Simon-
sen, delegated by the men of Sörvágur, and had the fowling
under the cliffs of Sörvágur preserved. These are common,
and no non-resident shall lay his fowling net upon land to
catch big fowl or shoot on land where the fowl is sitting or
on the sea when it is close to the land where it shall ascend.
Neither shall he be allowed to walk on their land for big
fowl or for shag, unless he be so allowed by the men of Sör-
vágur.«

This point of view has been upheld in modern legislation as it is prohibited to shoot within a distance of three nautical miles from a protected fowling cliff (and all fowling cliffs are protected).

The cited document elucidates a first principle of land tenure, as it is evident that Sörvágur, i. e. the men of Sörvágur, own their fowling cliffs. The expression »lay fowling net on land to catch big fowl« refers to the fowling method called »taka hellufugl« (see above) and »big fowl« refers to the guillemot. Thus, ownership of fowling cliffs is clearly demarcated between neighbour villages, and a score of registered documents ban non-residents.

Ownership of fowling and the concomitant fowling rights in relation to individuals vary widely through the Faroes, and as can be documented, they have changed with time. The changes can be seen explicitly from documents in the archives, and implicitly from a study of other sources, e. g. census lists, taxation protocols etc.

Allocation of ownership

A Faroese village (*bygd*) consists of a number of houses standing on *almenningur*, i. e. land which is free and common property. Around the houses lies the *bøur*, or infield, demarcated from the *hagi*, or outfield, by a stone fence. A few villages have one undivided *hagi*, while in most villages it is divided into a number of *hagapartur*, outfield parts (from 2 to 12). The *bøur*, however, may be divided into as many as 92 units (e. g. the village of Hvalba on Suðuroy) called *mørk* (pl. *merkur*). In contemporary villages most of the *merkur* are subdivided into minor lots which may be extremely small. Each lot owns part of a *hagapartur*. The lot is cultivated by its owner, while the *hagapartur* is tended by all owners in common.

Furthermore, the *bøur* share gives access to *lutir og lunnindir* which, in the Faroes, comprises seaweed, driftwood, seals, fowling, inaccessible pastures in the fowling cliffs etc. In this paper only fowling will be considered.

In 1873, an official taxation of land tenure in the Faroes was published. The »*Taxationsprotokol*« (1873) furnishes the main background for the present discussion, as it provides the first complete registration of fowling rights. In some places the taxation commission judged fowling to be of so little economical importance that it was not registered, even though it existed. In other cases there are obvious faults and flaws, but the overall picture is that widely different forms of ownership existed in the years 1868—71.

In some villages fowling was a right shared by all »owners« of the village (e. g. in Tjørnuvík, Saksun and Hestur). In Fugloy the taxation committee reckoned fowling as belonging to all of the *old bøur*, while a document from 1851 says, »Each man shall own the puffin under his *hagi*«.

Common ownership and exploitation

In Skúvoy, up to 1839, fowling was divided into three parts. This division seems strange, as the *hagi* was divided into two

parts, while, in the *bour*, the corresponding lots were scattered without any obvious pattern. The division into three fowling parts may have been strictly alluding to the common practice of *fygling* being practised on the same places every third year. In 1839 the *sýslumaður* (district sheriff) sent a letter to the *amtmaður* (provincial governor) arguing for amalgamation of fowling rights:

»On my last tour, in the month of April, I proposed to the inhabitants of Skúvoy the amalgamation of the fowling cliffs as I am convinced that such a measure would, in several ways, be useful and, without doubt, be the best means to promote fowling. . . . Some of the fowling cliffs have not been used for a number of years. . . .« His points were elaborated by the *amtmaður*, in his report to the exchequer:

»Hitherto these fowling cliffs have been divided as the *hagapartar* (see above) and several of them have for a long time remained in disuse, because fowling can be performed only at certain times of the year and by certain experienced men. However, when everybody wished to fowl their cliffs at the same time and to employ the same fowlers, most often the result will be an opportunity missed, and no catch at all. . . .«

As long as *fygling* was performed in Skúvoy there were reminiscences of the old divisions, the fowling being practised by the whole village, in three different parts in succession. However, fowling from a boat whether *hellufuglur* or *omanfleyg* was divided into halves similar to the modern division of the *hagi*.

From other villages we know that fowling rights were connected with *hagapartar* (e. g. in Sumba several documents refer to a division into thirds for fowling, while the *hagi* was divided into 9 *hagapartar*). Likewise, a document from 1768 divides puffin fowling into the so-called »tredinger«, i. e. thirds, existing in the village of Miðvágur, viz. Rygs-, Huse- and Præstetreding*. However, there was one exception, since

more inaccessible puffinries remained under joint ownership.

In Vestmanna in 1788 the fowling was divided into halves, so that this activity was run according to the same cooperational units as the tending of the sheep. While a hundred years later, in 1873, each *hagapartur* had its own share of fowling rights irrespective of cooperational sheep-tending.

Allocation to individual lots

Finally, there are villages in which fowling rights are allotted to individual lots in the *bour*. The *Taxationsprotokol* 1873 shows this to be the case in Mykines, Miðvágur (see above for conditons in 1768), Sörvágur and Sandur.

Conditions in Mykines have been studied in detail (Nørrevang 1977). Each *lundaland* is well demarcated and belongs to individual lots (which may have more than one owner) — whether small or large — in the *bour*, but each lot may partake in the ownership of several *lundaland*, and one *lundaland* may belong to several different lots.

Danielsen (in litt.) has found that »crossing-over« between *hagapartar* is found only when one *mörk* in the *bour* takes part in two *hagapartar*.

The village of Sörvágur displays a similar pattern, but whenever two or more lots are joint owners of the same *lundaland*, their shares are given individually in fractions. Thus, two *lundaland*, viz. Geldingsskor and Lundansskor, are divided into halves, while the islet of Gáshólmur is divided into one half, one third, and one sixth.

When ownership of fowling cliffs has been allotted to smaller lots, whether *bour* or *hagi*, we find that each lot owns *lundaland* in widely separated parts of the fowling cliffs. On the other hand, this pattern of ownership has as its consequence that all four *hagapartar* on Mykines are represented as owners of individual *lundaland*. Similar conditions are found in Vestmanna (where the *hagi* is the owner) and Sörvágur (the *bour* is the owner, as in Mykines).

In several villages two patterns of ownership are repre-

sented, e. g. in Mykines and Sørvágur. In Sørvágur, one *lunda-land* called Lambaeggjar is joint property. The same applies to Lambi on Mykines, which is not mentioned in the *Taxatíonsprotokol*. However, one *lundasessur* called Eggín í Múla is rightly registered as joint property.

Thus Mykines and Sørvágur have very similar ownership patterns. It might be worth mentioning that there are close ties between these two villages, as the inhabitants of Mykines usually landed in Sørvágur, when communicating with the rest of the Faroes. In both villages birds caught *undir oynni* (i. e. along the shore from boat) are free.

On Mykines we find the only breeding place of the gannet in the Faroes. The gannet colony is joint property and the catch is shared according to land tenure.

In cases mentioned joint ownership was acknowledged by the catch being divided among the owners in proportion to each owner's share of village land. This is in sharp contrast to common ownership as found in some villages: A document from 1755 says that on the island of Fugloy the young of the shag may be taken by anyone, and right up to modern times anyone may go fowling in a certain large *urð* (talus or scree) in Skarðsvík which is owned in common by the island's two villages. On the island of Hestur no share must be laid off to the owners of the land (*landpartur*, owner's share) whenever the catch took place from a boat, be it *hellufuglur*, *omanfleyg* or even fowling of puffin in the screes at the foot of the cliffs. Although any inhabitant of the island might practise these methods of fowling, fowling by non-residents was banned.

Compensation

The Faroese landscape changes continuously, though slowly. Landslides may cause slight or major changes in the fowling cliffs — more especially so because the fowling cliffs are themselves a product of the eroding forces of sea and wind. There are numerous tales and documented accounts of landslides

ruining fowling cliffs or creating new breeding possibilities for the birds.

In the first of the preserved court records (*tingbækur*) from the Faroes we find that the inhabitants of Vágur on Suðuroy complain that their fowling cliffs have been destroyed by landslides. Accordingly, they want their land rent reduced (they rented land owned by the rich Benchestock family of Bergen). Although such geological changes are numerous, our knowledge about what happened to owners' rights is limited.

In Mykines oral tradition recalls that at one time the *lundaland* Stórirýggur ranked among the best on the island. It still exists, but the main part has been taken away by an avalanche. The owners of Stórirýggur were given part of Lambi as compensation, the latter becoming later the best of all the *lundaland* in the island. It seems that this compensation was held within the limits of the *hagapartur* inasmuch as both places are now — according to the *Taxationsprotokol* — being fowled by Heimangjógv *hagapartur*.

Still further back in time, a *lundaland* called Seggjaskor fell down creating a new, and very rich, *lundaland* called Slumban. The Seggjaskor is said to have belonged to the *hagapartur* Borgardalur, while the new Slumban fell upon land belonging to the Heimangjógv *hagapartur*.

In such cases the new *lundaland* belonged to the owners of the land upon which it fell.

I have not been able to find any written agreements regarding such compensations in Mykines. Obviously that suggests that they were agreed upon between the owners themselves, and we may assume that these agreements were brought up at the annual *grannastevna* when the *sýslumaður* visited the island.

From a document connected with that mentioned on p. 45 from Miðvágur it is seen that the *lundaland*, Ryggskor, belonging to »Rygs-treding«*, had been subject to a landslide. The other two thirds compensated for the loss by allowing the owners of Rygs-treding* to fowl in a common *urð* in excess of the joint fowling, in which all owners took part.

From Sumba on Suđuroy we have documentation that such compensation measures might appear in court. In 1773 a case was brought to court about »fugle-jevnet*« (i. e. bird-levelling), and one of the witnesses declared:

»that he had heard that bird-levelling had occurred in Sumba, as Jacob Joensen had levelled the Rogen i Skoren* and Hiemme i Halsen*, and, within the memory of the witness, Nichlas Thomasen had got a place called Rogen i Bødlhals*, and that there were still fowling places in Sumba that remained undivided.«

The persons, mentioned in the document, represent the owners of their third (see p. 33) and obviously the fowling places have gradually been allotted to the thirds out of common property. When compared with a document, signed in the following year, 1774, it is evident that the allotment was a sort of compensation as fowling places were at that time taken from one third and allotted to another.

Finally, in 1802—03, one of the owners felt that he »lost many fowl because the fowling places allotted to this share of the land were mostly situated in the large fowling cliffs which could be fowled only with many men, and which were, accordingly, seldom fowled.« The complaint resulted in a division of the Sumba fowling cliffs into halves. The case is comparable to that mentioned on p. 34 from Skúvoy.

Sharing of the catch

Although the catch may be shared in different ways, the aim is always to secure a share of the catch for the owner in proportion to his share of the fowling rights, which, in turn, depend on land tenure. However, also the fowler — the man who actually carries out the fowling — must receive a share. In two cases the fowler may keep the whole bag for himself, viz. 1) when fowling is free to all, and 2) when the fowler worked alone and was the sole proprietor of the fowling rights.

When all owners of a fowling place went fowling jointly

the catch was usually divided into shares in proportion to the land (fowling rights) owned by each individual participant. There are numerous by-laws — especially dating from former times, before 1780 — ordering that all lot-owners shall be noticed about so-called *samgonga* or joint undertaking. This is also common practice in sheep-tending in the *hagi* today and obviously in older times, part of the fowling was performed according to the same rules.

Owner's share

In all other cases the owner is ensured of *his* share of the catch by being paid the so-called *landpartur* (owner's share): part of the catch is delivered to a representative of the owners who divides it among the owners in proportion to their property. The size of the *landpartur* varies from one half to one fourth of the catch. The regulations on the island of Mykines are most informative. Here, one half is paid for birds caught in fowling places near the village. From more remote *lunda-lond* only one third is paid, and from the farthest tip of the island only one fourth must be paid as *landpartur*. In Fugloy, where *fygling* is very difficult and strenuous, only one third of the catch was paid as *landpartur*. Otherwise, the general rule seems to be that one half is paid.

Fowler's share

Upon closer examination, however, it becomes evident that focus on the *landpartur* in dividing the catch must be a secondary phenomenon, possibly evolved as a more practical system.

We may assume that originally (i. e. shortly after the *land-nám*) all fowling was carried out by the owner and his servants, and in jointly owned places all owners took equal part in the fowling. Evidently, the parcelling out of the land into unequal lots soon led to discontent among the smaller owners. The man who owned a small lot would carry the same work-load as the man who owned much more land, but his share would be small as due to his small lot.

From an evolutionary point of view we may conclude that, as a regulatory mechanism, part of the catch was allotted to the fowler before sharing according to land tenure. In that way the owner's share actually must be regarded as the negative counterpart of an original fowler's share.

When several fowlers work together the catch is shared among them after the *landpartur* has been taken, but the fowler who is lowered down onto the fowling cliff gets a larger share than the man tending the rope at the edge of the cliff. He might get two or more shares, the other men one each, or he might be paid according to his effort, by getting every tenth bird before the sharing takes place.

In Skúvoy both methods were used simultaneously, leading to the situation, in which the *fyglingarmaður* (i. e. the man who descends the cliff) might get up to seven times more birds than the »ordinary« participants. An example which is even more complicated is given in the table, p. 41.

When 10—12 fowlers were lowered halfway down onto a wide ledge in the cliffs to perform *fygling* they were paid 16 birds each, prior to the ordinary division of the catch.

On the island of Hestur the fowler who was lowered down into a *lundaland* received 10 puffins and 10 eggs more than the other participants. The fowler who took puffins outside the ordinary *lundaland* (i. e. in places where the puffins' holes were more scattered) received 5 birds and 5 eggs before the share-out. With these exceptions all participants were allotted equal shares.

Lines, ropes and other equipment used in fowling often received shares equal to a man's share, or they received a certain number of birds — to compensate for wear and tear. Also, the boat used was usually reckoned as equal to one man.

Adjustment of the catch

The allocations and reallocations of fowling places effected down through the ages were intended to guarantee equalization among good and less good fowling places. However, fowling

TABLE 1. SHARING OF THE CATCH IN SKÚVOY (2000 BIRDS)

	2 actual catchers	8 men lowered down to ledge	20 all other participants	1 boat	2 long lines	5 shorter lines	land
1)	200 (100)						
2)	32 (16)	128 (16)					
3)				1094			546
4)	100 (50)	200 (25)	500 (25)	25	50	125	
each man's share	166	41	25				

- 1) each of the men actually catching (sígungarmenn) first shared one tenth of the birds caught
- 2) the 10 men (including the sígungarmenn) lowered down onto the ledge received 16 birds each
- 3) one third of the rest of the catch was paid as owner's share, two thirds were shared among all participants in the fowling expedition
- 4) the sígungarmenn each received two shares, the rest of the participants, the boat, and the five shorter lines each received one share, and the two long lines received three shares each (numbers are approximate).

possibilities vary with wind and weather so that the year's catch in a fowling place may vary considerably and unpredictably. In several villages there were regulations to meet such inequalities:

In the island of Nólsoy the *lundaland* was divided into fourths, and a village agreement from 1793 says that the usage of these four parts rotate so that those men who use one fourth in one year shall use another fourth the next year, and so on.

In Hattarvík on Fugloy the *lundaland* was divided into three parts, and *fleyging* rights rotated so that one party fowled the same third every third year. (In the other village of the island the land was divided into eighths, and certain fowling places were allocated to each eighth. There was no rotation). On the uninhabited island of Lítla Dímun which belongs to the village of Hvalba, two different equalization measures were simultaneously in use. As mentioned previously, the *fleyging* of puffin is performed from special sites called *sessir*. Hvalba is divided into thirds, and the owners of each third would spend 7 days in the island before being replaced by men from another third, etc. There was rotation as to which third would start the season on July 2nd of each year. On the other hand, the young of the fulmar are taken from their nests during a few days only in late August, and because the season is so short everybody goes together to the island, which is divided into three, almost equal parts. The men of each third fowled one third of the island and there was a yearly clockwise rotation; the men of each third would fowl the same third of the island every third year.

Thus, a temporal as well as a topographical rotation was at work equalizing fowling chances.

On Skúvoy the number of *sessir* for fowling puffins is limited. Any owner may occupy a *sessur* in the early morning and start fowling at dawn. However, activities were stopped by a sign from one of the fowlers, and the total catch was divided among the participants — after payment of one third of the catch as *landpartur* or owner's share. There was one exception

to this rule: anyone who had caught less than forty puffins might keep his catch for himself — minus the *landpartur* — but then, of course, he did not share with the other participants. This rule may be explained in a number of ways (and will be treated in detail elsewhere).

Finally, in the village of Dalur on Sandoy the yearly village meeting (*grannastevna*) agreed upon a quota for the puffin catch in the only *lundaland* belonging to the village. The total land of the village is 23 *merkur*, i. e. 368 *gyllin*, and for each *gyllin* the owner might catch $\frac{1}{368}$ of the total catch allowed. There are few *sessir* in the *lundaland* so each third of the village spends two days of the week fowling. Each man goes to the *lundaland* as long as his quota has not been filled. One man is appointed accountant, each fowler reporting to him when he leaves (so that only appropriate *sessir* are occupied) and upon return (to report the number of puffins caught). As accountant's share he was paid 1 out of 100 puffins.

Fowling rights are automatically incident to land tenure — often accompanied by limiting regulations (e. g. a ban on solo fowling). As the social structure was changed by population growth this connection could not be maintained, and the rights were secured by a ban on fowling without permission. Usually permission was only granted provided a share of the catch was paid as *landpartur*. In some villages the rein was slackened totally, so that anyone might go fowling provided he paid *landpartur*.

Finally it must be mentioned that a whole series of special rules and agreements secured the bird population against over-exploitation, but that will be the subject of a separate paper.

Other rights

Land tenure in general involving the use of commons and sharing of the profit constitutes a complicated pattern which will demand separate treatment (see e. g. *Landbokommission*, 1911). But the tending of the sheep shows immediate parallels to fowling in the division of labour. In some villages each man

participated for a number of days corresponding to the size of his lot of the total land.

The sharing of the catch finds parallels in pilot whaling. Formerly anyone present at the kill received an equal share after damages and reimbursement for certain services had been paid. Today, in some places, those actually taking part in the kill share half of the catch, while the second half is divided among the inhabitants of the whaling districts. Evidently this change represents an adaption to modern means of transport. It is now possible for a large number of people from a large area to reach the place of killing before the actual kill has taken place (Joensen, 1976).

Also, in peat-cutting there were agreements of rotation in some villages making up for differences between good and less yielding turbaries.

Conclusion

As would be expected, ownership and fowling rights are closely related, the owner always being able to fowl on his own land. However, older rules demanded that one owner could not fowl alone on land in common ownership, unless he had the permission of all co-owners.

Ownership and rights according to topographical position. Within a single area of fowling cliffs ownership and fowling rights may vary considerably, and conditions in Miðvágur as related by Rasmussen (1949) seem representative. Puffin catching is divided between individual shares of the *bour* except for Urðin (i. e. the debris at the foot of the cliffs) which was free for anyone to fowl provided that *landpartur* was paid. Any land tenant, however small his share, could catch *hellufuglur* (i. e. birds sitting under the cliffs), while anybody, owner or not, could catch birds flying out from the cliffs (*omanfleyg*).

Ownership and rights according to fowling methods. On the other hand, ownership is also related to the methods by which

fowling takes place. Where the individual fowling place (e. g. a *landaland*) is easily accessible and can be fowled by a single fowler, the fowling places are divided according to individual shares of the *bøur*.

When a team of 4—8 men is needed, fowling places are divided between *hagapartar* (i. e. larger land units). In places where 20 or more men are needed, fowling places are usually undivided and belong to the whole village land.

* In the documents Faroese words and expressions were often translated into Danish. Such »danisms« are marked by an asterisk.

APPENDIX

The original, Danish text of some documents cited in the present paper.

Protection act — *fredlysning* — read at the *vårting* 1741:

»Nock Fremkom for Rætten Rasmus Joensen og Joen Hansen i Midvaag. Som paa egne og Medeyeris Veigne Frædlyste deris Fuglebieger, op og neder, fra Ma . . . og til Markeskiell enten til Lands eller Vands aff nogen at maatte skee for at Søge Fugl. Derefter de jligemaader for Sig Særdeelis Var Udskrift begierende under Sorenskriverens Haand og Sejl.

For Rætten fremkom Agtbahre Johannes Simonsen paa Begjæring aff Sørvaags-Mænd og lod frædlyse Fuglefangsten under Sørvaags Bjærg som u-byt er saaledis at ingen udenbyes Mand som ej boer paa Stæden skal legge Stang paa Landet at fange Stor Fugl og skyde paa Landet hvor hand sidder eller paa Søen naar Fuglen er tæt ved Land hvor hand skal op og heller at gaae op paa deris Land efter Stor Fugl Lunder eller Skarver med mindre de hafver Sørvaags-Mænds forlov dertil:

By-law for the village of Miðvágur, dated Feb. 6th 1768:

Da for en del aar siden det meste er nedstyrtet af Rygs Skoren her i Midvaag, hvorved Lodseyerne af Rygs tredingen have misted næsten alle deres Væder frælser saa tilstaar og bekientgiøre vi hermed nemlig ieg Samuel Christopher Svabonius tillige med øvrige Lodseyere af min treding som og vi Lodseyere af Huuse Treding at vi have overdraget og samtykt Lodseyerne af Rygs Tredingen den af deres nedfaldne skor og komne nye uhr beliggende næsten for den gamle uhr fri og ubehindret at bruge paa deres treding allene til alt fugle Brug saa at hvad fugl der falder være sig Skarv eller Lunde skal tilhøre samme treding allene. — men Kobben og drivtømmeret at være til fælles for hele bøydlaug et saaledes som hidtil været haver og skal denne Contract staae ved magt saalænge

til skorerne er groet igien, og kand indeholde sine forrige 16 frølser. alt dette under den Betingelse, at saa som den gamle og nye uhr ligger hver andre saa nær, bør begge Parter tilsige hver andre naar de ville søge Fugl paa det at her under ingen uskik skal indsnige sig.

Letter from the *sýslumaður* of Sandoy to the *amtmaður*, dated May 24th 1839:

»Paa min sidste Omrejse, i April Maaned, har jeg foreslaaet Indbyggerne paa Skuø at lægge deres Fuglebjerge i Fællig, da jeg er overbeviist om at dette i flere Henseender vilde være gavnligt og uden Tvivl det bedste Middel til at opbølge Fuglefangsten; denne, for Indbyggerne vistnok vigtige, Næringsvei, der nu er kommen paa faldende Fod. — Vedkommende have ogsaa fuldkommen billigt mit Forslag.

Flere af Fuglebjergene have nu i en Række af Aar lagt ubenyttede af Mangel paa behørig Liner. Det er derfor at jeg, Paa Skuøbeboernes Vegne, og efter deres Forlangende, herved underdanigst vover at anmode Deres Højvelbaarenhed om at requirere dem en $1\frac{1}{4}$ Tomme Line paa 140 Favnes Længde; jeg venter og beder underdanigst, at Deres Højvelbaarenhed godhedsfuld vil skaffe dem den paa billigst muelige Conditioner.«

Part of a letter from the *amtmaður* to the Exchequer, dated Nov. 1st 1839:

Øen Skuø under Sandø Syssel er et af de steder her i landet, hvor der endnu findes en mængde fugle, som når tilbørlig flid anvendes ved deres fangst, kunne afgive baade megen Fjeder, og et rigeligt og sundt Næringsmiddel for Indbyggerne, der på denne Ø, hvor Græsgangen er meget daarlig, i højeste grad trænge til, ikke at forsømme noget, hvormed de kunne forøge deres Indkomster. De gode Fuglebjerge ere beliggende mod vest på Øen, ere Høje, steile og meget farlige, at færdes i, saa at kun faa Personer ere dristige og dygtige til, at befare dem.

Hidtil have disse Fuglebjerge været delte mellem Indbyggerne ligesom Haugeparterne, og flere af disse have i længere Tid ikke været benyttede, fordi Fuglefangsten kun kan udføres paa en vis Tid af Aaret og, som ovenfor ærbødigt bemærket, kun af visse erfarne Mæn; men, når alle Personer til samme Tid ønske at befare deres Fuglebjerge, og dertil benytte de samme Personer, bliver Følgen som her oftest, at et gunstigt Øjeblik tabs, og aldeles ingen fangst erholder. Desuden har denne uforstandige deling sat Indbyggerne i den Nødvendighed, at anskaffe flere Sæt af de kostbare Bjerglinier, men de har desuagtet ingen god, pålidelig Line, ei heller nogen som er lang nok, for at naae til de rigeste Fangststeder.

INFORMANTS

- 1) Albert Djurhuus, Sumba (born 1912)
- 2) Gunnar Johannesen, Dalur (born 1902)
- 3) Hans David Poulsen, Hestur (born 1904)
- 4) Nicolai H. S. Poulsen, Fugloy (born 1907)¹⁾
- 5) Jens Pauli Skaalum, Hvalba (born 1913)
- 6) Jacob Thomsen, Skúvoy (born 1900)

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¹⁾ Some of the knowledge communicated by this informant has been printed by Hansen (1971). Inadvertently, this was not cited by Nørrevang (1977).

Símun Hansen hevur á fyrsta sinni prentað frágreiðingar hjá Niklóa Poulsen m. a. um bjargaferð undir Eystfelli. Av misgáum varð hetta ikki nevnt í bókini *Úr bjargasøguni*, har tær eisini vórðu nýttar.

ÚRTAK

*Ognarveiðurskifti, veiðiréttindi og veiðibýti í
færoyskum fuglabjörgum.*

Rannsóknir í sambandi við fuglaveiðina hava víst, at stórir munur var millum bygdir í ognarveiðurskiftum, veiðibýti og tilfiskum.

Upprunaliga — t. e. stutt eftir landnámið — vóru ognarveiðurskiftini óivað greið, men so hvørt sum óðalsjørðin varð sundurbýtt í smáar lutir, broyttust réttindini til bjørgini, men ikki líka í øllum bygðum.

Havið er frítt, meðanjørð altíð hevur ein ella fleiri eigarar. Men hvør eigur fuglin, sum er á sjónum undir bjørgunum, har hann eigur? Hesin spurningur hevði við sær nútíðar lóggávu um friðing av fuglabjörgum og forboð fyri skjóting.

Fuglurin verður roknaður sum lutir og lunnindir, og sum oftast hoyrði hann til bøin; í støðum varð veiðin ríkin í sambandi við hagapartar (t. d. áður í Miðvági). Aðrastaðni hoyrdu bjørgini beinleiðis til hagarnar (Vestmanna). Í Mykinesi hoyrdu tey einstøku lundalandini hvørt til sín lut innangarðs, tó soleiðis at fleiri lutir innangarðs kundu eiga í sama lundalandi, og ein lutur innangarðs í fleiri lundalondum.

Sumt var frítt fyri ein og hvønn, t. d. urðalundin undir bjørgunum í Hesti, og skarvur í Fugloy. Landpartur varð ikki latin. Harafturímóti skuldi latast landpartur av fugli undan oynni í Mykinesi.

Um eitt lundaland ella ein rók fór av omanlopi, so varð javnað, so at eigararnir fingur part í øðrum plássum.

Veiðibýtið, sum tað er nú á døgum, hevur til endamáls at tryggja eigarunum ein part av veiðini, meðan tað upprunaliga óivað hevur verið, at veiðimenninir skuldu fáa part.

Í samgongu fekk ein og hvør part eftir ogn. Órættvísi kom skjótt í, og teir smærru eigararnir fýltust á, at teir fingur minni part fyri sama arbeiði. So statt er landpartur tað, sum eftir er, tá ið veiðimenn hava fingið sín part.

Parturin hjá veiðimonnum sjálvum, varð ofta býttur eftir fløktum reglum, eitt dømi er á talvuni á bls. 44.

Nú er ofta stórir munur á fonginum, eitt nú eftir sum tað viðrar í veiðitíðini. Menn royndu at tryggja javnan fong á ymsan hátt. Lítlá Dímun er gott dømi. Hvalba liggur í triðingum. Lundaveiðin í Lítlá Dímun fór fram soleiðis, at ein triðingur legði fyri, næstu viku tók annar við og so tann triði. Árið eftir byrjaði ein annar triðingur. Til nátaveiði harafturímóti varð oyggjin býtt í triggjar partar, og allir vóru í oynni í senn, hvør triðingur veiddi sín triðing. Árið eftir varð flutt við sólini, og sami triðingur veiddi so statt bert 3. hvørt ár á sama plássi.

Í Dali var samtykt á grannastevnu, hvussu nógvur lundi skuldi fleygast í Skorini tað árið. Hvør kundi so fara at fleyga so nógv, sum ogn hansara tilskilaði honum.

Samantikið kann sigast: .

Veiðirætturinn hongur beinleiðis uppi í ognarrættinum, ofta avmarkaður av viðtökum, t. d. »forboð fyrri eingöngu«. So hvørt sum samfelagsmynstrið broyttist, m. a. við tí vaksandi fólkatálinum, bar ekki til at varðveita hesa skipan, og ognarrætturinn varð nú tryggjaður við at seta forboð fyrri »gang uden forlov«. Saman við hesum loyvi varð ofta ásett, at eigarin skuldi hava ávísan part av fonginum. Sumstaðni varð givið heilt leyst. Ein og hvør hevði frítt at fara, har honum lysti, men hann skuldi lata landpart. Eisini eru serligar ásetingar, sum skulu tryggja javnbýti av fonginum og verja fuglameingið fyrri ránveiði.