

# TERMS, TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF QUAIL HUNT (AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF TRENDS)

Majid Hussain Alias Ghalib Hussain<sup>1</sup> and Mamonah Ambreen<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

This paper deals with the research findings of an anthropological study about quail hunting and quail fighting in Taunsa Sharif. The major objective of this research was to find the traditional tools and techniques being used for different types of quail hunting by the natives. There is a strong relationship between two of the activities. Through the quail hunting a flock of birds is captured and out of this the finest quails are selected for the fight on the basis of certain culturally defined criteria. There are seven traditional types of quail hunt that are being practiced. All types of hunts vary from each other because of different reasons, i.e., season of the hunt, usage of tools and techniques. The division of labor and party formation has a vital role in both quail hunt and fight. This paper is an attempt to explain the process, practices, tool and techniques of quail hunting. Besides this indigenous perspective about the start of quail fight and hunt are discussed. The data presented in this research paper were collected in Union Council Urban Tehsil Taunsa Sharif by utilizing anthropological research tools and techniques from August 2008 to January 2009.

**Keywords:** quail hunting, fighting, recreation, lawa, flock of birds, Taunsa Sharif

## Introduction

All over the world, games and sports are considered the most important source of entertainment and recreation (Gamborg & Jensen, 2017). In every culture the residents get themselves engaged with available sources of recreation. According to the study of (O'Connor et al., 2022) the categories of games and sports can be divided in two orbits i.e., macro and micro-orbit. In macro-orbit, we can include all types of sports and games that have been and are being supervised and supported by the government and have documented rules. While in micro-

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Anthropology, Bahria University, Islamabad - Pakistan

<sup>2</sup> Department of Women and Gender Studies, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad - Pakistan

orbit, we may include all those sports and games that are traditional or local games and are being vanished due to certain reasons. The culture of Taunsa Sharif provides the recreational activities to the masses through both types of sports. In Taunsa Sharif too, people consider hunting of animals and birds, one as a recreational activity and quail hunting is the most favored hunting activity among all types of hunts. Describing the popularity of this hunt a respondent stated, “The area of Taunsa was arid. It used to be very low rainfall. The agrarian crops were not sufficient to fulfill the needs. Most of the people were dependent on government jobs and their economic condition was very poor. Due to the poverty the people had to find an alternative source of income, so through quail hunting natives started earning. The people had a lot of leisure time in their daily routine, so this activity became a good source of time pass.”

Quail chasing ranches are found all through the southern United States from Texas to South Carolina with a high focus in southern Georgia and northern Florida and may likewise offer chasing of bird, fowl, duck, deer, hog and in addition angling (Airhart et al., 2017; Clifton, 1981; Huggler, 1987; Williams, 2001). Properties can be open or private, and for the most part have a cabin, which can suit a few people for a few days. Private chasing estates keep to a select customer and are not publicized for chasing nor would they be able to be gotten to by people in general. In the southern United States, quail chasing ranches were made from old cotton estates which were acquired starting in the 1880s by rich northerners. In the case of Balinese Cockfight (Geertz, 1972) claims that a fighting cock represents masculinity, similarly in the case of Taunsa Sharif quail hunting is the first sept to screen out male quails with ability to fight. In the culture of Taunsa Sharif gambling over quail fighting is very common. Geertz mentioned such practices among Balinese Cockfight. Similar practices of gambling in quail fight discussed by (Sowls, 1960) in a study conducted in Southern Arizona.

## **LOCALE**

District Dera Ghazi Khan is the part of Punjab Province of Pakistan. It is situated between 29° - 34° and 31° - 20° north latitudes and between 69° - 53° and 70° - 54° east longitudes (GoP, 2023). It has three Tehsils; Dera Ghazi Khan, Taunsa Sharief and Tribal Areas. The locale of this research was Union Council Urban, Tehsil

Taunsa Sharief. Taunsa Sharief is situated in the northeast direction of district headquarter. It is bordered with Khayber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan provinces of Pakistan. According to (Punjab Bureau of Statistics, 2017) total population of District DG Khan was 1,643,118 and Taunsa Sharief 365,685 in 1998 that jumped to 2,872,631 and 677,785 respectively. Overall unemployment rate in 2008 was 5.6 percent among 15 years above age of population (Punjab Bureau of Statistics, 2008) that was one of the cases of popular culture of quail hunting and fighting. Although government of Pakistan keeps on putting and lifting ban on quail hunting (Reuters, 2016) but the historical patterns and trends of quail hunting and fighting has made it a popular culture.

## **Method**

This paper is based on firsthand information gathered through anthropological field work wherein qualitative research techniques were used. Most of the data were collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews. A sample of 30 quail hunters and fighters was selected through stratified random sampling. Researcher divided the persons involved in hunting into two strata i.e., quail hunters and quail fighters and selected the sample randomly out of these strata. In the later part of this research work three focus group discussions were conducted to cross check the data.

## **Discussion and Results**

People tend to get themselves amused as here quail hunting and fighting are their favorite activities. Although in some of the countries, taxes are applied for quail hunting (Tomeček et al., 2015) but in Taunsa Sharief the culture of tax does not prevail. The first and far most steps in the preparation of quail fight are quail hunt. There are seven different traditional types of quail hunting. One out of seven hunting techniques is flying shoot in which the birds are shot with the fire of a twelve-bore gun. The bird (birds) gets wounded and is slaughtered at once. While in rest of six types of quail hunting the bird is caught alive with the help of different types of tools. In this paper the word 'hunt' is used frequently and in the first type of hunt i.e., flying shoot it refers to slaughter the bird while in rest of six types of hunting it is used to catch the bird (birds) alive. The word dog is used for

a trained pet dogs. The pointer or lap breed of dog is engaged in quail hunting. The literature shows various types of quail hunting in different parts of the world (Ray et al., 2022; Sparano, 2016; Sternberg, 1995). The natives believe that such breed of dog takes less time to get trained and the ability of being human friendly. The word field is used in two different contexts; for agrarian fields and for the place where the net is placed for Laway da Shikar and Kit da Shikar.

Each type of hunt is practiced in different seasons and requires various tools. There is an important concept of party formation for quail hunting. The land owner sets up the hunting tools and plays an important role in this entire activity. The hunting process gives boom to the quail fight. During season, economic activity through quail hunt and fight reaches at its peak. The quail hunting and fight lasts throughout the year, but the period of August to November is called as “season”. During the season, quail hunting becomes the talk of the town. Day in day out quail fighters hold their baters in their hands and sit in the bazars. While enjoying smoke pipe they talk about their last night’s successful hunt of quail. Different types of quail hunting are Flying Shoot, Laway Da Shikar (Hunt), Kit Da Shikar, Kutu (Dog) Da Shikar, Kirky Da Shikar, Bhanjree Shikar and Sarpany Da Shikar.

A longitudinal study conducted on types of quail nests by (Sorelle, 2023) claims that vegetation types of nesting was found very common. Kirky Da Shikar, Bhanjree Shikar and Sarpany Da Shikar were practiced during breeding season that could affect the population of quail. Although the conservation of rare species not only protects its race but also helps to grow its population (Dolman et al., 2021; Jameel et al., 2022). Such practices were not observed during this study but it was observed that Government of Punjab banned quail hunting during the timeframe of this study. As the focus of this paper is to document the culture of quail hunting and presenting terms, tools and techniques so the following part of the paper shows various types of quail hunting in the culture of Taunsa Sharief.

#### ❖ **Flying Shoot**

Flying shoot is the most expensive type of quail hunting. Economically and politically well-off people practice and prefer it. This type of hunt is possible round the year during day time. In the field dog points out a quail and as quail takes a

short flight the hunter fires the quail. Right after the sound of fire the men run towards the place where the quail is expected to be fallen. The wounded quail is caught and is slaughtered at once.

❖ **Laway Da Shikar (Hunt)**

Laway Da Shikar is the most traditional and hoariest type of quail hunting. This hunt is done from August to October from sunset to sunrise. For this purpose, the hunter has to make a long and hard effort. Among quail hunters' word "Lawa" is used for those quails that are trained for four to six months. Lawa is comprised of 15 – 25 quails in which there are Dogla quails up to ten in numbers. According to the natives Dogla quail is a naturally cross-breed and has the distinctive features to produce the voice of both male and female quails. Indigenous knowledge of quail fighters, hunters and the trainers help them to find such type of breed out of a flock. Dogla quails are kept in separate cages in complete darkness and are fed a scheduled diet. During training the trainer himself produces a vocal voice of quails so that Lawa may chatter in competition. All of the cages are covered with Guthlee or Theli that is a round shaped stitch cover made of cloth and having a size equal to the area and height of the cage of quail. The purpose to train such quails is to betray the free quails. The trainer defines the time when a flock of Lawa is prepared. The preparation of Lawa starts four to six months before the hunting season.

In the field (piece of barren land) a net is erected with the support of bamboos in a shape of "L". Length of the net varies according to the land available for hunting. Normally it is 50-60 meters in the east-west direction and 15-20 meters in the north-south direction. The height of this net is approximately 6-8 feet. The top of the net is tied with a lash and on the bottom, stones are placed to keep it straight and fix. Once the net is fixed, it remains in the field till the end of the season. Among indigenous there are two sides of net; the inner and the outer. The side where Lawa is placed is considered the inner side of the net. The head hunter arranges the position of his fellow hunters as two of them stay outside while four remains inside the net. Some of hunt comes from outside of the net as well. The hunters silently sit on their position cover their area to take off the trapped quails from the net.

In the evening the hunter gives diet to Lawa and sets the location of the cages of Lawa in the field at a distance from each other. Usually, millet is given in diet to Lawa while for the fighting quails the diet pattern is absolutely diverse. Right at the time of the hunt, he takes the cover off from the cages. According to the respondent the fresh air and the start of darkness delights Lawa and hence they start producing their voice in the competition. Dogla quail produces the voice of female quail. The free quails come in the field by the attraction of their pal's voice.

❖ **Kit Da Shikar**

The word kit is used for the audio player that is used in the field to hunt. The techniques for Laway Da Shikar and Kit da Shikar are almost the same with a difference in the application of tools. Due to the advent of modern technology the voice of quails is being recorded on audio cassettes, and these are available in the market with different Wara . There are certain benefits of this type of hunt. The hunter simply puts the cassette in the audio player and gets better results relatively. The application of this technique is helpful in another way as well because the voice through the audio player covers a vast area and through this the hunter extends the length of net up to 120 meters in east-west and 60 meters in the north - south direction. They are sure to hunt more quails as compared to Kit da Shikar type of game.

**Table 1: Difference between two types of Quail Hunt**

Sr.	Lawa	Kit
1	Prepared every year	Can be used for many years
2	Time and money consuming	Less expensive and time securing
3	Uncontrolled	Controlled
4	Difficult for carriage	Easy in carriage
5	Old and primitive tool of hunt	Modern tool of hunt

Source: Field Data

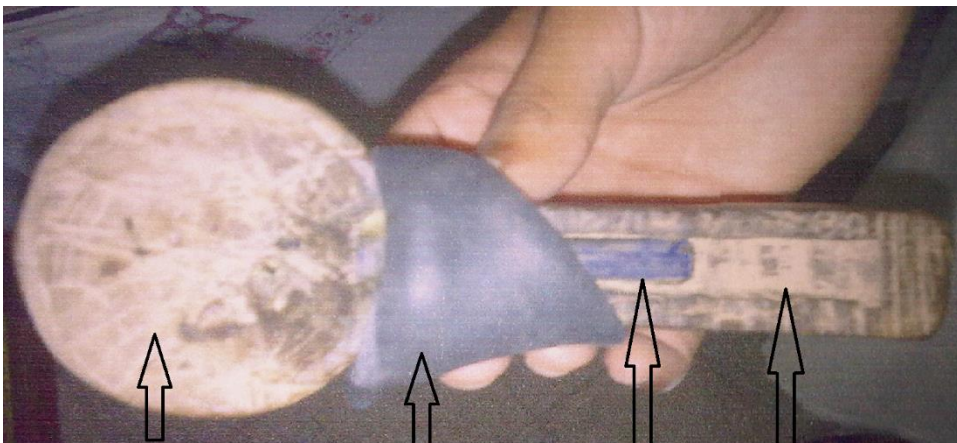
The above table shows the difference between the use of Lawa and the kit for quail hunt. Lawa is not in control of hunter for producing voice. On the other hand, the use is of kit for the hunt is a form of controlled mechanism for the hunter. There are many other differences besides mentioned above.

### ❖ **Kuttay (Dog) Da Shikar**

The natives are of the view that after the flight of night the quails get tired and take rest in agrarian fields at day time. There they get the feed. According to them this type of hunt could be done round the year during day time. The hunters do not prefer this during the hottest months of summer i.e., from May to July. In agrarian fields dogs starts pointing out quails. The quail changes location in the land as it hears the sound of footsteps of dog. Being a Siaah Chashm it becomes frightened. When the dog approaches the ultimate location, it starts gazing at quail and stops at that location. Meanwhile the hunter covers a particular area around the location of dog with net. Here the length and width of net vary among the hunters. Two or three men rapidly help the hunter in spreading the net on the ground. Another man enters in the net and finds the quail. The quail tries to escape from the net and takes its flight. Here it is identified and caught by the hunter.

### ❖ **Kirkay Da Shikar**

This type of quail hunting is associated with a female voice of quail. The word Kirka or Kirkay is the offshoot from the word of native language “Kirrak” that is associated with female quail’s voice. In this type of hunt the hunter uses a tool Tabcha to produce the voice of female quail.



Deeper Side of the Spoon  
Usually It is Carved to  
Increase the Depth

A Piece of Rubber to Cover  
the Deeper side of the Spoon

Piece of Ballpoint  
that is Made of  
Plastic and has an

A Slightly Carved  
Side of the Spoon to  
Adjust the Ballpoint

Tabcha is made of wood. The picture above shows that it is a deformed shape of a wooden cooking spoon. The hunter carves the handle of the spoon and adjusts an outer part of ballpoint that is made of plastic and has a small bore. At the deep end of the spoon the end of ballpoint is covered under the rubber. At this end there is a small hole in it while the endpoint is closed with melted plastic. Traditionally, the remains of honey bee are used for the filling of sides of ballpoint to get it fixed in its place. Finally, the deep side of the spoon is covered with a rubber tube. When someone technically holds the Tabcha and strikes the tube with the tip of his finger the ballpoint produces the voice of female quail i.e., Kirrak.

This hunt is practiced during the month of Chaiter i.e., mid-March to mid-April in the wheat crop where quails are found large in numbers. In Taunsa Sharief the land is uneven and usually the pieces of lands are not more than one acre. The net is placed on one end of the field by touching the ground. It shapes like 'J' with the width of the field. From the opposite side of the field, two persons start dragging a rope slowly towards the net. Another person uses a Tabcha behind the net to attract quails towards female voice, while another partner stands there to take care of the net. The fifth one starts producing a vocal sound "Hoo Hoo" with frequent intervals. He moves along with the rope and other companions. Due to Tabcha the quails get the attraction towards female voice and due to rope and the voice of "Hoo Hoo" it gets frightened and runs towards the opposite end of field where the net has already been placed. The quails are caught in net and the hunters catch them from the net.

#### ❖ **Bhanjree Shikar**

This kind of hunt is done from September to November. Both Kirkay Da Shikar and Bhanjree Shikar require same tools and techniques with slight changes. This type of hunting is done in the field of millet and barley whose height is almost six to eight feet and the voice of Tabcha does not prove fruitful due to the cracking sound of ripe crop. There is also change of season as well.

#### ❖ **Sarpray Da Shikar**

Bhanjree and Sarpray Da Shikar are very much similar to one another. The only difference is of season, tools and techniques. It is practiced during the month of



July and August in cotton fields. The natives consider the cotton as silver crop and during this season of hunt the crop is having flowers. The use of rope may be harmful for the crop that is why in this type of quail hunting the hunter does not use the rope. On one end of cotton field the net is placed and from the other end the hunter along with two fellows starts walking by producing vocal sound “Hoo Hoo” along with claps after short intervals. One or two hunters stay around the net. The quails start running towards the side of the net where it is captured. During Laway da Shikar and Kit da Shikar hunters keep on sitting with the net and catches quails out of net frequently. The hunter catches quails from net and first of all takes off the last two wings from both sides.

**Table 2:** The tools used for quail hunting during different seasons.

Sr.	Type of Shikar (Game)	Tools	Season & Time
1	Flying Shoot	A 12 Bore gun and a trained guide	Round the year in day time
2	Laway da Shikar	Trained quails ( <i>Lawa</i> ) and a net in “L” shape, in the field	August to October at night time
3	Kit da Shikar	A cassette player that produces the voice of quails and a net in the field in “L” shape	August to October at night time.
4	Kuty ( <i>dog</i> ) da Shikar	A trained dog and a net	Round the year in day time.
5	Kirkay da Shikar	A long rope and a net	During March in day time
6	Bhanjree Shikar	A long rope and a net	September – November at day time
7	Sarpray da Shikar	A long rope and a net	In July and August at day time

Source: Field Data

### ❖ Formation of Game Party

In quail hunting parties are not formatted on the basis of social, political, economic, religious, sectarian, caste, class, status or kinship. There is no discrimination on these bases. Everyone is free to go anywhere with anyone for the purpose of quail hunting. It depends upon the friendship among the people. This strengthens the ties amongst them. During every season of hunt invitation are sent to friends and especially to the quail fighters by those who have hunting tools. Usually, the professionals have tools and they have placed it on the land of any

land owner. Some of the landowners do have the tools as well for the purpose of recreation.

There are no hard and fast rules and criteria for party formation. There are two types of party members in the quail hunting. First are permanent members who are professional quail hunters. Second is non-permanent members, i.e., guest hunters who are always invited by permanent members or chalk out a program themselves with the coordination of permanent members. For the permanent members this is the source of livings. The professional hunters prefer their kith and kin to be part of quail hunting. Through this they save the wages of employees. The immature hunters stay at a considerable distance from the field.

The native quail hunters and fighter, consider quail as “Siaah Chashm” because it feels fright from its own shadow and takes flight from sunset to sunrise. On the basis of this reason, they have a rule not to speak or to speak in a very low voice, not to light the fire and nonverbal communication during a quail hunt.

#### ❖ **Feast and Work Plan**

In Laway da Shikar and Kit da Shikar permanent and guest hunters gather in the field. In the evening before the start of the hunt, the host presents a feast that is called ‘Sohbat’ . They exchange pleasantries and are free to have any kind of gossip and fun. Among the indigenous, to catch the quail in hand and take off its last two wings from each side is considered as expertise of a good quail hunter. While keeping in mind expertise the immature hunters are included among the direct hunters on the basis of their willingness. The head hunter remains vigilant about the strength of direct hunters. In the morning the hunters again, do humor and have breakfast and depart along with their share of the hunt.

In all types of quail hunting usually four to six hunters are involved, but in Laway and Kit da Shikar this strength may increase more than six. In Laway and kit da Shikar net is placed with the support of bamboos. There is distance of ten to fifteen meters between each bamboo. The head hunter decides the position of hunters. The location of bamboo decides the area of hunters. While in other forms of game there is need of only one expert who deals with catching the quails and taking off last two wings from each side. He is the one who sets the net and

decides the location of other hunters. Apart from six, others stay at a considerable distance from the field.

#### ❖ **Reward and Distribution**

The wage labor is involved in Lway da Shikar and Kit da Shikar where the professional pays them between 4 – 6 thousand Pakistani rupees besides meal. Moreover, the fighting quails are their bonus. If a hunter catches a fighting quail from his area of net, then it is considered his bonus, whose price is much more than the ordinary quails. While on the other hand, occasionally the head hunter or employer gives him quails to eat.

Professionals send their part of the hunt to the market where men who deal in quails, slaughters and hand over the flesh of the quails to the customers on payment basis. The nonprofessional distributes the hunt. They do not distribute on the basis of the distribution of labor. In this case the quail fighter becomes greedy for the selection of best fighter quail out of the flock. He becomes much happy if he finds a good fighter quail. The rest of the guests get their part for the cooking purpose.

In other types of quail hunting the concept of distribution is different. They do not catch as much quails as compare to Laway da Shikar and Kit da Shikar. They prefer to slaughter the hunted quail at the end and cook for the feast. If they hunt in large number, then it is distributed among the party. As in these types of games the professionals are not involved too much so the marketing of quails is very limited.

#### ❖ **General Opinion**

Among the quail hunters and fighter of Taunsa Sharief quail is considered a religiously sacred bird. There is a local myth that quail is the bird of heaven because it was part of heavenly food. Being a bird of heaven, it should be eaten and it is the kindness of Almighty that they do quail hunting round the year, but besides excessive hunting every year it is large in numbers. The quail fighters believe that the quail fighting started during the time of Hakeem Luqman. The hunters believe that it comes from Siberia. They are of the view that in the start of August, first Konjh (Demoiselle Crane) comes and after that in the midst of August

the quail starts coming. They are not sure that where exactly it comes from but they do know that it comes from the north-west direction of Taunsa Sharief. According to them it is the bird of the jungle and it can be found round the year as it comes in a bulk in every season.

A number of quails are being hunted for centuries. The government has appointed some game wardens across the country. The protection of the wildlife is the prime job of game wardens. In Taunsa Sharief groups of people are involved in quail hunting. They have no fear of being raided by the game wardens because permanent and professional quail hunters bribe them. The game wardens are also natives and the hunters do approach them for not raiding at their field. Once in a blue moon, they raid on a field so that they may create a pressure. During this research it was told by a respondent that the sentence for quail hunting is three months imprisonment and ten thousand Pakistani rupees fine. He said that he had never heard about someone being charged in this case. Very rare the game wardens' raids at game fields of Laway da Shikar and Kit da Shikar where the net cannot be concealed at once. He takes the kit and the net in his custody and makes a deal with the party. The respondent assured with confidence that during every season the issues are almost settled in the office of The Department of Game.

Another respondent said that at present there are multiple sources available for living. The advent of the Chashma Right Bank Canal in Taunsa Sharief, agriculture has been introduced in at larger scale. Quail hunting has become a commercial activity. This should not be done like this and there must be taken some measures for the protection of wildlife. The quail is a human friendly bird. It eats the blemished worms from the agrarian fields.

## **Conclusion**

Hunger and shelter are the basic need of human being. The human beings prioritize cannibalism to fulfill the former need. With the notion of hunting there came a shift towards new activity. Further at the increase of population and decrease in the availability of prey the act of gathering started. Later on, the domestication of plants and animals started to fulfill the basic need of human beings. This kept on for centuries and the industrialization gave the new notion of revolution. The human beings started thinking apart from basic needs. The need of

hunting turned towards longing. The longing appeared in sense of recreation, fun and enjoyment. At this hour the alternate method of production to deal with the basic need of hunger work in a much better way than that of the past. On the other hand, the hunting practice has also exceeded day by day with the increase in population. In remote areas of developing countries such like Pakistan the recreational activities are not being provided to the masses. This is one of the reasons for the increase in activity of hunting. Ultimately, this hunting is resulting in disturbance of the natural balance. Through these various forms of the species are vanishing. The government of Pakistan should take serious steps to control the hunting practices for the protection of various types of species specially quails.

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