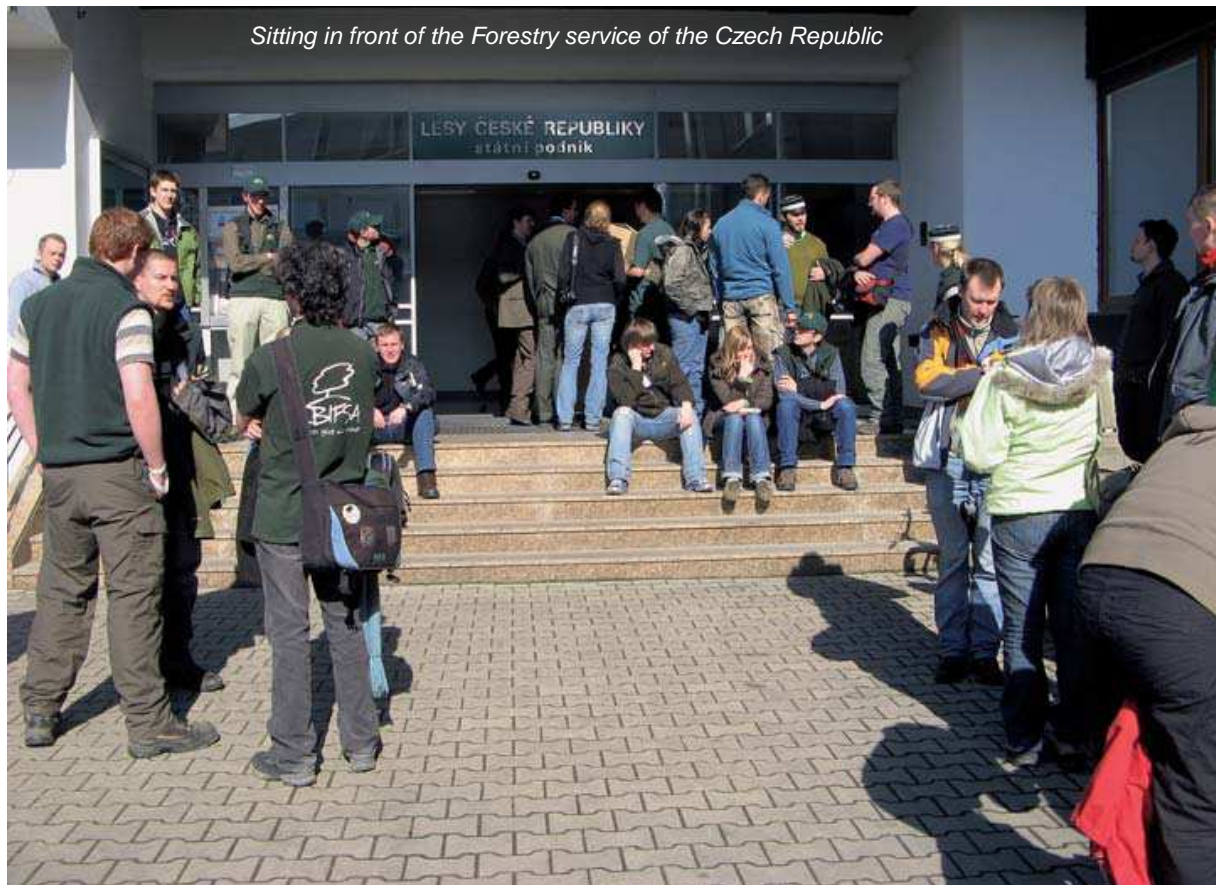


NERM 2008, Czech Republic: Just Because!

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This year's NERM was hosted by the LCs of the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno, and the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, in the beautiful country of the Czech Republic. Participants came from all corners of Europe, with delegates from Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Wales, Bulgaria and Slovakia, the well-known Northern European country of Australia, and an army of Finns.

Our first evening was spent in Brno, getting to know the Czech cuisine and Czech beer, meeting old friends, and for those of us who hadn't met, meeting new friends. After the opening ceremony, the next day was spent on the participant's presentations on the theme of the meeting, with great work being produced by all on the subject of game management in each of the countries represented.



That evening we had a well deserved visit to a wine cellar, where we initially sipped and tasted the wine, then got decidedly merrier as the wine flowed rather freely. The highlight of the NERM, like all IFSA events, was the international evening, and even if some of the participants might not remember all the details of that evening, everyone will certainly remember the Latvian's special drink, consisting of vodka with a couple of beaver scent glands bobbing around in the bottom of the bottle.

I for one have never tasted anything so vile, but I will always remember that evening for it. There were great performances from all countries, and the Finns nearly fell through the floor with their exuberant traditional dance.

Though there were sore heads after the wine cellar and the international evening, all the participants thoroughly enjoyed the day visits to the Czech countryside, its spectacular forests and game reserves, and its elegant castles and basilicas. There was even a visit to a brewery!

And there was a day of skiing on the Czech Republic's wonderful ski slopes, where some of the participants had the chance to show off their skills on the piste, and some showed off their lack of skills as well! The final evening was the closing ceremony, with more fantastic Czech beer, and prizes for some of the participants.

The organising team did sterling work on this NERM, and did a great job of showing us a little of their country, getting us supremely drunk, looking after us, and generally being good old bunch.

And so the NERM sadly came to a close, and though many good friendships were made during that week, the participants left for home. I for one take away great memories and I certainly learnt a lot about game management across Europe. Next year the NERM will be in Wales, my own country, and I just hope we can do as good a job as the organising committee for the 2008 NERM. But for now we'll all look forward to happy reunions at the 2008 IFSS in Bulgaria, and other IFSA events across the world.

And the motto of the NERM: Honza's universal reply to most questions, "Just because!"