

A GUIDE TO MEASURING BEARS

Spring is a time for new beginnings. Bears emerge from their dens and begin to explore and look for food. Mothers take care of their young and make sure they survive. Spring bear seasons are also ramping up, which means you may get more calls to score bear skulls for entry into the records.

Not to be outdone by the bears, the records department is also in a period of new beginnings. If you had a chance to read the fall issue of *Fair Chase*, you might know that longtime director of big game records, Justin Spring, recently accepted the executive director position with Pope and Young Club. We are very happy for him with this new chapter in his and his family's life and wish him all the best. I am grateful for the time I got to work and learn from him during his tenure.

Beginning in October, the Boone and Crockett Club began the transition of moving me to the director of big game records position and Jennifer Schwab into the assistant director position. I was extremely honored to be considered and humbled to have been given this opportunity. As a young kid growing up in southcentral Pennsylvania hunting bushy tails and whitetails, I never would have thought that one day I would have the opportunity to work for the oldest conservation organization in North America and have a small part in the conservation of wildlife.

MEASURING BEARS

You might have noticed that much of this issue of *Fair Chase* is devoted to bears, which makes this a great opportunity to answer the question: How does one measure a bear skull? We have approximately 1,400 Official Measurers (OM) in North America, and their contact information is on our website. If you're a trophy owner with a skull that will meet or exceed the entry minimums, we recommend scheduling a time and location with an OM. Please understand that our OMs are volunteers. We recommend trophy owners take a dry run at scoring before contacting an OM. If the score is close to the minimum, please contact an OM near you. If you need

to brush up on skull measuring, pick up the latest edition of our Official Measurer's manual, *How to Score North American Big Game*, 5th edition, in our web store or by calling 406-542-1888.

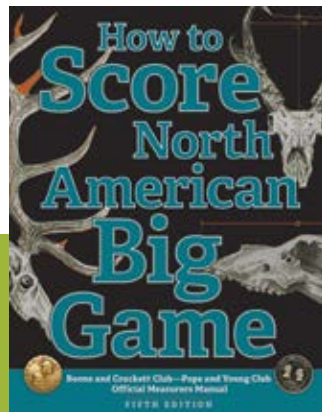
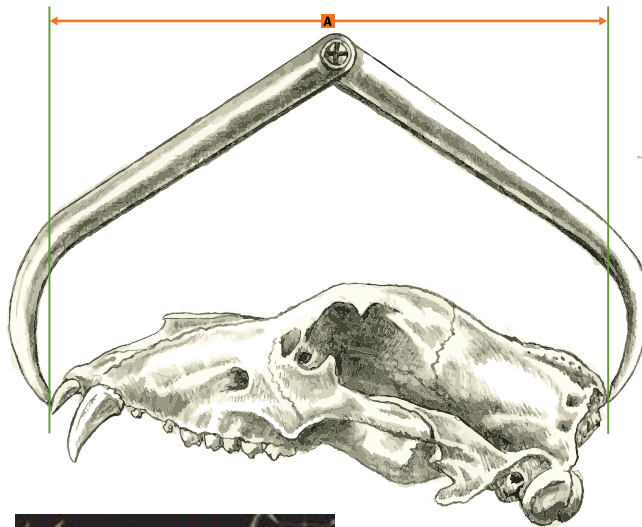
Beginning on page 45 of *How to Score North American Big Game*, 5th edition Chapter 4, "Bears and Cats," outlines the scoring process for skulls. A requirement to remember, mentioned later in this column, is that the skull must be completely clean to obtain an accurate measurement.

The tool used most commonly to

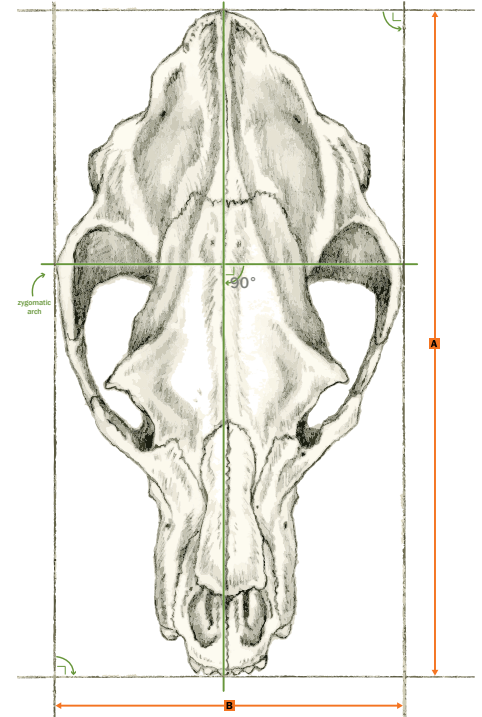
TROPHY TALK



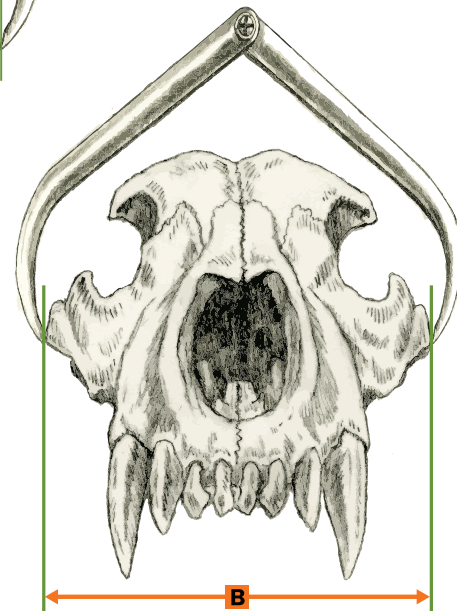
Kyle M. Lehr
B&C PROFESSIONAL MEMBER
DIRECTOR OF BIG GAME RECORDS



Learn more about *How to Score North American Big Game*, 5th edition on page 39.



ABOVE: The green lines indicate the axis of a skull. Length (A) and width (B) measurements must be taken at a right angle to the other.



One method for scoring skulls is with a large pair of calipers. Determine the greatest measurement, carefully remove the calipers, and measure the distance between the two points with a ruler.

Scan the QR code to find an Official Measurer in your area.



measure the length and width of the skull is a set of calipers—also available for purchase online. When measuring the length, the upper teeth can be included in the measurement as long as a tooth is not sticking straight out; the lower jaw can never be included in a length measurement. For the width, if the zygomatic arches are unnaturally sprung and create an artificial width measurement, it is appropriate to lightly adjust the arches to their natural position.

BEAR SCORING POLICY

Within the manual are a couple of policies that relate specifically to measuring and scoring bear skulls. These are within Chapter 18, under “General Policies,” which starts on page 231.

The first policy often referenced is our clean skulls policy on page 232. This states that a skull must be completely cleaned of all adherent flesh, fat, and membrane before being measured. There is a misconception that only the areas that contact the measuring tool (calipers, boss square, levels, etc.) need to be cleaned. If the skull has been boiled or a degreaser or whitening agent was applied after cleaning, then the mandatory 60 consecutive days of drying at a habitable room temperature requirement resets.

What about beetles? Since dermestid beetles require a habitable room temperature to survive, we consider the time spent in the beetles as part of the 60 days. Remember, as previously mentioned, if any degreaser or whitening agent is applied after removal from the beetles, the drying period resets.

The second policy pertains to painted or dipped skulls. The paint or dipping must be completely removed to have the skull measured and entered. If we receive an entry where the photographs of the skull indicate the

skull has been dipped, we have to follow up to make sure this policy was adhered to.

The third policy regards a damaged trophy, whether the damage resulted from a bullet or saw blade. While damage to a trophy is not an immediate disqualification, it requires additional evaluation. If you have a damaged bear skull, please inform an Official Measurer before measuring. If possible, please wait to repair until after the trophy has been entered and accepted. We will request photographs of the break and the pieces put back into place. We are looking to see that the broken piece(s) fit seamlessly to ensure there is no question that they belong to the skull. Most often, this can be determined with photographs showing the pieces separated and held in place. On rare occasions, the skull and associated pieces may have to be shipped to our headquarters in Missoula, Montana, to determine if the broken piece(s) can be included in the measurements of the skull. All broken skulls (whether repaired or not) are handled case-by-case. A broken skull results in one of three outcomes: piece(s) included in the measurement, pieces excluded, or the skull is deemed ineligible for entry.

As with any new beginning, there are unknowns. However, I am excited and optimistic for the future and look forward to continuing the great legacy of the records program. With a solid foundation set forth by past directors (Harold Nesbitt, Jack Reneau, Justin Spring) and the records of North American big game committee, Jennifer and I are inspired to build upon that foundation. ■



Dipped skull



Uncleaned skull



Broken skull

OFFICIAL MEASURERS ON THE ROAD

The Boone and Crockett Club had a booth at the Dallas Safari Club Convention on January 10-14, 2024, and the Wild Sheep Foundation's Sheep Show on January 18-20, 2024. Official Measurers HP Giger, Bucky Ihlenfeldt, Brett Ross, and Carl Frey volunteered at the shows.



ABOVE: HP Giger scores a bison at the Dallas Safari Club convention. BELOW: Bucky Ihlenfeldt scores a Columbia blacktail deer as Kyle Lehr, B&C Director of Big Game Records (right) looks on.



Want to Become an Official Measurer?

Scan the QR code to Fill out the Official Measurer Application!



B&C SIGN-UP INCENTIVE PROGRAM LEADER BOARD

As of January 15, 2024

CONGRATS TO OUR TOP 10 PRIZE WINNERS!

1. Philip A. Herrnberger - 286
2. Stanley Zirbel - 175
3. Bucky Ihlenfeldt - 161
4. Ken Witt* - 113
5. Steven Taylor - 105
6. Dale Weddle - 90
7. Jerry E. Lunde - 58
8. John Bogucki* - 46
9. Matt Olson - 37
10. Robert Wood - 36

*deceased

SEE THE COMPLETE LISTING IN THE COMMUNITIES SECTION ON OUR WEBSITE.



EACH TIME AN OM GETS SOMEONE TO JOIN B&C WE PUT A CREDIT BY THEIR NAME!

HERE'S THE BREAKDOWN

- 3 Members - \$25 off any item in the B&C store
- 5 Members - Buck Knife
- 10 Members - B&C Boyt Sling
- 25 Members - OM Wool Vest
- 50 Members - SITKA Gear (value up to \$350)
- 75 Members - YETI Package (value up to \$500)
- 100 Members - Kimber Rifle
- 150 Members - \$800 Gift Card to Bass Pro Shops/Cabelas!
- 200 Associates - Vortex Optics Gear! (value up to \$1400)
- 300 Members - Kenetrek Boot Package (value up to \$1,500)
- 400 Members - Kimber Rifle! (value up to \$1,500)
- 500 Members - Hotel & registration plus \$500 travel stipend to the next Awards Banquet



Would you like to give an Official Measurer credit for your renewal? Let them know when it is your time to renew and they will provide their OMID number to include with your renewal so they will receive credit.