

Category Boundaries

FROM *HOW TO SCORE NORTH AMERICAN BIG GAME*

Big-game records keeping for both Boone and Crockett and the Pope and Young Club deals only with certain native North American big game animals. For such purposes, the southern boundary is defined as the south boundary of Mexico. Only cougar, jaguar, and whitetail deer of the recognized trophy categories range south of this boundary, and only the first two reach recordable size south of Mexico. The northern limit for trophies such as polar bear and walrus is the limit of the continent and associated waters held by the United States, Canada, or Greenland. Continental limits and held waters define east and west boundaries for all categories.

A number of species show geographical variation so that there are smaller varieties inhabiting some parts of the continent and larger ones elsewhere. For example, mature moose from Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Colorado, etc., of the Shiras' variety, although they may grow large and beautiful racks, are unable to compete with the monstrous moose from the Alaska-Yukon region. So it has been necessary to break up the total ranges of some of the species into various categories in order to provide proper recognition.

Both Records committees have, over the years, gradually defined the areas from which trophies may be entered and have modified these boundaries in some cases when more thorough knowledge of the distribution of the animals in question has become known. The B&C Records Committee creates new categories from time to time. In fact, the Boone and Crockett Club has created four new categories since 1986, including non-typical American elk, tule elk, and non-typical categories for both Columbia blacktail deer and Sitka blacktail deer. Other new trophy categories (e.g., wolves, Columbia whitetail deer, alligators) have been proposed, but both Committees maintain a conservative stance in reviewing such proposals. New categories are considered only when the following conditions are met:



This excerpt is featured in the Club's latest publication, *Records of North American Big Game, 15th Edition*.

Read more about the book and order your copy on page 38.

- 1) there are extensive geographical areas where the proposed animals occur;
- 2) the animals occur in good numbers;
- 3) there are suitable boundaries that can be drawn;
- 4) the game department(s) managing the proposed class are in favor of setting up such a new category;
- 5) scientific evidence supports the new category.

The following material will review the categories for which there are geographically defined boundaries. Obviously, these boundaries must be observed in the taking of a trophy in order for it to be considered for that category. As a general rule, the categories are set so there is virtually no chance of a larger category specimen (or a hybrid animal) being taken within the boundary for the smaller category. While this may exclude some deserving specimens of the smaller category that reside in the larger category's range, it is a price that must be paid to keep the smaller categories pure.

ALASKA BROWN AND GRIZZLY BEARS

The big brown bears are found on Kodiak and Afognak Islands, the Alaska Peninsula, and eastward and southeastward along the coast of Alaska. The smaller interior grizzly is found in the remaining parts of the continent. The boundary between the two was first defined as an imaginary line extending 75 miles inland from the coast of Alaska. Later this boundary was more precisely defined with the current definition as follows:

A line of separation between the larger growing coastal brown bear and the smaller interior grizzly has been developed such that west and south of this line (to and including Unimak Island) bear trophies are recorded as Alaska brown bear. North and east of this line, bear trophies are

recorded as grizzly bear. The boundary line description is as follows: Starting at Pearse Canal and following the Canadian-Alaskan boundary northwesterly to Mt. St. Elias on the 141-degree meridian; thence north along the Canadian-Alaskan boundary to Mt. Natashat; thence west-northwest along the divide of the Wrangell Range to Mt. Jarvis at the western end of the Wrangell Range; thence north along the divide of the Mentasta Range to Mentasta Pass; thence in a general westerly direction along the divide of the Alaska Range to Houston Pass; thence westerly following the 62nd parallel of latitude to the Bering Sea.

POLAR BEAR

Polar bear must be taken in either United States- or Canadian-held water and/or land mass in order to be eligible for entry in B&C/P&Y. This definition is necessary because of the wide range of polar bears in the far northern hemisphere.

The boundary separating grizzly bear (green) and Alaska brown bear (tan).



GRIZZLY BEAR TROPHY INFO

B&C SCORE
27-13/16 points

LOCATION
Lone Mt., AK

HUNTER
Picked Up

OWNER
Gordon E. Scott

DATE KILLED
1976

World's Record Bear Stories

In addition to information on bear boundaries, the *Records of North American Big Game*, 15th Edition features the stories of the current World's Record for each species. The following pages contain the thrilling stories for all bears.

Grizzly Bear

A friend and I flew to the McGrath area in Alaska in April 1974 in a Piper Super Cub and hunted grizzly bear for more than three weeks. During our scouting we encountered scores of grizzly bears. We had covered a large area and settled on a couple of locations where large boar grizzlies were present. We concentrated our efforts at these places and were able to take two large grizzlies. One of these bears is listed in the current B&C records as being taken by Curtis C. Classen, McGrath, AK, 1974, and scoring 25-2/16. The other was taken by me, but never entered in the records.

As you see, this area produces big grizzlies. I went back in the spring of 1976 to hunt black bear. While on an extended hike out in the tundra bogs, I stumbled across the bones of an animal partially frozen in the moss and overflow ice. After a closer inspection, it turned out to be a grizzly bear.

I brought out the skull and a few assorted vertebrae. The skull was smelly but I knew it was big and worth the effort. It had meat and hide still somewhat present on the back part, and some of the teeth were missing.

I cleaned it up somewhat, and judged it to be a nice mature brown bear. From that point on, I stored it in my attic for many, many years.

Almost 30 years later, I was remodeling the attic and came across the skull again and decided to score it. Much to my surprise, it was larger than I thought. After some research, I found that it was considered a grizzly for scoring purposes, according to B&C's boundary description. I had it officially measured and was amazed to learn that this was, in fact, the largest grizzly ever recorded. It was quite a find.

Black Bear

On July 1, 1975, the World's Record skull for a black bear was found along the edge of the Manti-La Sal National Forest, about seven miles east of Ephraim, Utah. Out west, black bears are occasionally seen in sub-alpine meadows, but they generally prefer the shelter of trees, where they quietly move in and out along the edges of the forest. Such was the setting where Merrill Daniels and Alma Lund contemplated their discovery. Daniels and Lund were unable to determine the cause of death but did recognize the immensity of the old carcass that was slowly decaying in the summer heat.

However, because the score exceeded the previous record by more than an inch, their incredible find was

BLACK BEAR TROPHY INFO

B&C SCORE
23-10/16 points

LOCATION
Sanpete Co., UT

HUNTER
Picked Up

OWNER
Cabela's, Inc.

DATE KILLED
1975



trophy owners, the skull was shipped to the Club's office in Washington, D.C., where it was examined by experts at the Smithsonian Institution.

After undergoing careful comparisons with type specimens, as well as other identification criteria, the final assessment was that this was indeed a bona fide black bear skull. In 1980, the trophy was awarded a Certificate of Merit in recognition of its outstanding trophy character at the 17th North American Big Game Awards Program. Pick-ups are included, in order to enhance the scientific value of the records and to complete the standard by which sportsmen can judge their best trophies. San Pete County, Utah, was also the location of the previous state record trophy taken by Rex W. Peterson accompanied by Richard Hardy in 1970, which scored 22-6/16. Bears taken in Arizona and Colorado during the 1960s have also received impressive scores.

Solid improvements in black bear management and populations across nearly all of the Lower 48 have increased the number of records-book entries steadily. While the number and locations of record-qualifying bears are on the rise, this Utah trophy still tops the list after more than 40 years.



Alaska Brown Bear

Alaska's Kodiak Island, just below Cook Inlet, supports the largest land-based carnivores in the world. The World's Record for the Alaska brown bear (*Ursus arctos middendorffi*) continues to hold with a score at 30-12/16 after being taken in late May 1952, near Karluk Lake, Kodiak Island.

This immense bear was collected by a scientific expedition headed by Melville N. Lincoln and was sponsored by a habitat group affiliated with the Los Angeles County Museum. The actual shot was made by Roy R. Lindsley, an employee of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Kodiak, who was working in cooperation with the scientists. Lindsley, who had never before shot an Alaska brown bear, had many years of experience working among these intelligent giants.

Technically, the Alaska brown bear and grizzly bear are classified as the same species, *Ursus arctos*. The Alaska brown bears that have been genetically and physically isolated on Kodiak Island have slightly varied skull proportions, claw shape, and dentition that have set them apart from browns found elsewhere in Alaska, and are therefore classified as a separate subspecies. A mature boar can weigh as much as 1,500 pounds after feeding on coho salmon during the autumn

season, and when he rises upright from the river bank to test the coastal winds, may stand well over nine feet tall.

As a seasoned observer, Lindsley knew that he would need a heavy bullet that could deliver sufficient force in order to make a clean kill and prevent the possibility of the bear charging or running away. He took down the record-sized male brown bear using the 180-grain bullet in a .30-06 rifle. Lindsley's bear skull measures 17-15/16 inches long and 12-13/16 inches wide for a final score of 30-12/16 points. It was declared a World's Record at the Club's Sixth Competition held at the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, New York, in 1954.



ALASKA BROWN BEAR TROPHY INFO

B&C SCORE
30-12/16 points

LOCATION
Kodiak Island, AK

HUNTER
Roy Lindsley

OWNER
Los Angeles Co. Museum

DATE KILLED
1952

Polar Bear

The polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) taken by Shelby Longoria of Matamoros, Mexico, continues to hold the World's Record. In the spring of 1963, Longoria headed from his home south of the border toward the far north, embarking on what would become a harrowing yet rewarding adventure. Choosing from outfitters who operated out of Cape Lisburne, Point Hope, and as far north as Point Barrow, Longoria made a decision to hunt out of Kotzebue, Alaska.

Spring in the North American Arctic can be an ideal window for hunting as warm flickers of light provide a pleasing contrast to the dark tones of winter. However, unlike the polar bears that are partially insulated by their long, shaggy coats, it is possible for a man to die from exposure within a matter of minutes if he should plunge into the cold polar seas. This was only one of many dangers that lingered as Longoria and his guides searched the windswept and wave-sculpted ice fields near the Bering Strait and Chukchi Sea for the grandest bear they could find.

Nearly a hundred miles offshore, the hunting expedition located a promising ivory-white bear wandering against a treacherous background pocketed with bulging mounds of splintered ice. Utilizing powerful hindquarters and long legs with partially webbed feet, "bears of the sea" have been spotted swimming up to 300 miles from shore and are capable of bounding completely out of the water onto an ice floe. After undertaking a contrastingly dangerous landing on the sea ice, Longoria continued to



stalk his prey through the frozen maze before eventually bagging the impressive polar bear.

Scoring 29-15/16 points, Longoria's trophy topped the former record held by Tom Bolack. It should be noted that polar bears are extremely capable hunters due to their nearly exclusive carnivorous diet. As a result of this adaptation to their environment, these bears typically have longer, narrower skulls than the Alaska brown bear.

TROPHY INFO

B&C SCORE
29-15/16 points

LOCATION
Kotzebue, AK

HUNTER
Shelby Longoria

OWNER
Shelby Longoria

DATE KILLED
1963