

MEASURING SUCCESS

The Boone and Crockett Club remains at the forefront of forming and shaping wild-life conservation and policy in the United States—and indeed, the world. Throughout its history, the Club has championed conservation in many forms, including the passage of key legislation, the designation of wild-lands, and the creation and continuation of robust wild-life management, research, education and outreach programs. Wilderness warriors like Theodore Roosevelt led a legendary crusade against rampant overexploitation of wildlife and wilderness areas, ultimately laying the groundwork for the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. And today, the Model—a beacon of hope in a world increasingly affected by conservation challenges and threats—continues to thrive as the Club promotes and supports the use of science to develop wildlife management and policy strategies and espouses hunting as a valuable wild-life management tool.

The copious rewards of the Club's labor and the passion of its membership are evident in many spheres of society—from the front lines of wildlife management to decision-making tables and players on Capitol Hill. Nowhere is the Club's national impact more evident than at the annual North American Big Game Awards. This year's 30th Big Game Awards was remarkable with more than 60,000 visitors viewing more than 130 trophy animals on display. I was especially proud of the Jack Steele Parker Generation Next Youth Banquet, where we were joined by 47 young hunters under the age of 16 and celebrated their

Fair-Chase hunting ethic and record-book trophy animals.

While the Club's Big Game Awards is an important celebration for many reasons, including the opportunity to bring together Club members and others within the hunter-conservationist community, its primary purpose is to demonstrate, through the display of mature male animals, the success of science-based habitat and wild-life management programs. Through the Big Game Awards and the Boone and Crockett Club Big Game Records Program, the Club has maintained a comprehensive account of big game or trophy animals harvested for more than 100 years. This account not only serves as a long-term record of baseline biological and geographic location data on big game, it also provides an indication of animal health and habitat quality. The fine specimens displayed at the Awards Program are tributes to this wonderful success of conservation and celebration of herd health and quality.

With so many animals on display and visitors in attendance at the 30th Big Game Awards, I was proud to recognize the huge milestone our Club has reached in instilling and adhering to the standards by which we measure success as Fair Chase hunters. These big game or trophy animals represent what is possible with a passionate membership, a hunting community that models ethical behavior,

and informed agency and university partners who are willing to collaborate on effective wildlife management and policy decisions for the future.

THE CLUB ENSURES THE SUSTAINABILITY OF BIG GAME POPULATIONS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS IN MANY WAYS:

Influencing high-level policy: The Boone and Crockett Club's accomplishments in wildlife conservation policy are particularly notable. For example, our long-standing relationships with individuals and programs from various spheres of the federal government—including the U.S. departments of Interior and Agriculture, and our nation's political leaders—have helped produce a Farm Bill that enhances the nationwide system of conservation easements and doubles funding for wildlife habitat improvement. The Club also helped increase funding for forest restoration and fire suppression and pass the John Dingle Conservation, Management and Recreation Act. This bill enhances hunting and shooting opportunities, and helps modernize the Equal Access to Justice Act. As we have always been active in collaborating with decision-makers at the Federal level, we continue to strategically identify potential partnerships that will support and advance legislation and other initiatives, that benefit habitat and big game at the state level.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Timothy C. Brady
PRESIDENT

Educating the next generation of wildlife professionals: Our University Programs continually attract outstanding students to work alongside the foremost wildlife faculty, where they develop the skills and experience to successfully protect and manage wildlife populations throughout the nation and the world. We have endowed chairs at three leading universities, along with one additional chair in development, four fellowship programs, 35 Boone and Crockett Fellows (plus an additional 66 Fellows who have graduated and moved onto careers in land and wildlife management and conservation policy), and a groundbreaking dual-degree program wherein students earn a bachelor's degree (Wildlife and Fisheries Science) and a master's degree (Public Policy) in five years. Moreover, as our academic expertise in traditional fields such as wildlife ecology and management continue to thrive, we are increasingly making contributions to other fields such as law, communications, political science, and public administration—all of which expand the reach and deepen the impact of the Club's efforts.

Our obligation as leaders in the hunter-conservationist community is to continue to live by the vision and mission of the Club in our behavior and engagements and hope to positively inspire fellow supporters and perhaps more importantly, non-supporters.

Communicating activities and accomplishments: The official publication of the Boone and Crockett Club, *Fair Chase* magazine is one way in which the Boone and Crockett Club shares information about current events (e.g., the spread and mitigation of chronic wasting disease), continuing activities (e.g., status of University Programs), and accomplishments such as big game or trophy harvests across North America. This publication and others, like *Records of North American Big Game*, recognize Fair Chase hunters for their individual contributions to wildlife management and conservation through the ethical harvest of mature male animals, but, more importantly, often communicate information about ongoing activities and emerging threats that are likely to impact the sustainability of big game. Having a venue to openly discuss these issues with our membership and constituency will help us learn from each other and strategize new ways of ensuring that North American big game herds continue to thrive.

Following rules and regulations and upholding a strong conservation ethic: The Boone and Crockett Club recognizes the importance of wildlife law enforcement and deterring unlawful behaviors that affect wildlife resources. As their name suggests, big game or trophy animals are highly desirable and are therefore more likely than their non-big game counterparts to be subject to illegal activities such as poaching. Through its own research endeavors, the Club has found that poaching is often viewed as a victimless crime and cases are often dismissed or fines reduced to free up a backlogged legal system. In response, the Club hopes to expand our Poach and Pay Program to more

states. Under this program, baseline restitution and fines will be established for illegally-taken wildlife and, for big game and trophy animals specifically, the fine will be based on the Boone and Crockett score or some other model to ensure the punishment matches the crime.

Along with sharing support of this program, I believe the members and constituency of the Boone and Crockett Club have a specific duty to uphold Fair Chase and a strong conservation ethic as we continue to support harvest as a wildlife management tool. In today's world, where there is an established culture of re-tweeting the most controversial news bite, Instagramming the latest harvest straight from the field, or posting a politically-charged meme to Facebook, it is easy to influence others in negative ways, especially those who look up to us. Our obligation as leaders in the hunter-conservationist community is to continue to live by the vision and mission of the Club in our behavior and engagements and hope to positively inspire fellow supporters and perhaps more importantly, non-supporters.

Inspiring others, especially the youth: The Club continually attempts to motivate others, even those within the non-hunting community, to join forces in our quest to sustain big game populations and the habitat that supports them. Through our website, the Club works hard to inspire Associates and the broader hunting community to spread awareness of the Club's many pursuits. In recent years, the Club has geared some of our messaging toward young people in an effort to engage them earlier in hopes they will identify with the Club's mission and vision. We know the future of

proper habitat management and sustainability of wildlife resources is truly in their hands, and thus we must take advantage of opportunities to encourage them to be lifelong conservationists.

The Club's past and current habitat and wildlife management efforts, along with our partners, have culminated in remarkable improvements to wildlife populations throughout the United States and Canada. For instance, where pronghorn populations numbered 12,000 in 1960, they number over 1.1 million today. One hundred years ago, there were 41,000 elk but, today, over 1 million. Similarly, the current bighorn sheep population size (approximately 85,000) has grown by more than three times since 1970. And, today, the familiar white-tailed deer number over 32 million—a stunning improvement over 500,000 animals just a century ago.

As evidenced by the 30th Big Game Awards and the remarkable display of 33 different big game species, the Club and its partners have accomplished much in the last 132 years. We hope more people will recognize and be inspired by these achievements and join us as we continue to press on with our efforts to ensure the sustainability of big game in North America.

As much as we work to celebrate and acknowledge extraordinary specimens, it's important to remember that any animal taken—legally, ethically, and in fair chase—is a trophy; and that perhaps the greatest reward is not necessarily a set of horns or antlers, but the time spent in the field with family and friends sharing experiences, passing on traditions, and making memories. ■





THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB ASKS THAT YOU PLEASE THANK OUR TRAILBLAZERS WITH YOUR PATRONAGE.