

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Future of Wildlife Management



William A. Demmer
PRESIDENT
Boone and Crockett Club

It seems like only yesterday that I was installed as the 31st president of the Boone and Crockett Club at our 2012 annual meeting in New York City. It has been an honor for me to serve

the Club and work to promote its mission and vision. I have particularly enjoyed preparing these past eight president's columns for our award-winning *Fair Chase* magazine, which was launched in 1994 during Steve Adams' term as Club president. With Steve's support, Professional Member George Bettas developed the format for the magazine as he designed it along with Julie Tripp to become the Club's mechanism to promote conservation, scientific game and habitat management and hunting ethics. The magazine replaced the Associates Newsletter and was circulated to Club Members, Associates, and Official Measurers. Terrific articles have been presented over the years describing legendary hunts and inspiring many of us to dream and plan to replicate such adventure.

There has been much debate over the past several years as to the proper balance of *Fair Chase* content to include for our readers' edification and enjoyment. Recent readership polls indicate that we are doing it just about right. Exciting and educational hunting stories mixed with articles focusing on hunting ethics, conservation and conservation policy provide both the Club's Membership and Associates with information to spread the gospel of the 21st century hunter-conservationist.

I have enjoyed introducing *Fair Chase* readers to important topics that are impacting the hunter-conservation world. Our Boone and Crockett Professional Members have then taken these topics and written about the science behind the challenges and then talked about the conservation policy the Club is working to affect. For all hunter-conservationists, it is important to understand the issues surrounding challenges like wildlife diseases, predator management, land fragmentation, hunting and land ethics—and truly grasp the fact that the hunter and

fisherman pay for the lion's share of conservation management. The Boone and Crockett Club is most appreciative of the support we receive from our Associates, whether it comes from *Fair Chase* subscriptions, becoming a Lifetime Associate or providing support to our Club Foundation. Do know that your financial support assists us in carrying out our mission that will provide hunting and shared-use access for future generations.

The focus for this, my last, *Fair Chase* article is "The Future of Wildlife Management." Before I discuss the future challenges

For all hunter-conservationists, it is important to understand the issues surrounding challenges like wildlife diseases, predator management, land fragmentation, hunting and land ethics—and truly grasp the fact that the hunter and fisherman pay for the lion's share of conservation management.

of wildlife management, I want to reflect on the evolution of wildlife conservation since the founding of our Boone and Crockett Club. Before the Boone and Crockett Club, the term conservation was little known and little used anywhere in the world. Theodore Roosevelt and his friend George Bird Grinnell recognized that our wildlife resources and their habitat were in danger of disappearing from the landscape. The Boone and Crockett Club was formed to address the issues surrounding the potential collapse of these natural resources. The promotion of conservation became their battle cry. Our Boone and Crockett Professor at Michigan State University, Dr. William Porter, touts conservation in the same league of great social movements such as monotheism from the ancient Egyptians and modern democracy with advent of the Magna Carta. The Magna Carta was actually cited in a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1842 protecting public access to New Jersey oyster beds; with that ruling

evolved the codified concept that in the U.S., wildlife and fish belong to all the people and the stewardship of that fauna is entrusted to the individual states. This public trust doctrine is at the heart of our North American Model of Wildlife Management.

When Theodore Roosevelt became president, he made conservation a key national focus. Roosevelt's bully pulpit and George Bird Grinnell's magazine, *Forest and Stream*, provided the conservation movement the voice it required to motivate the public and Congress to action. Most early conservation efforts centered on expanding and preserving habitat and creating more public lands. The nation's first forester, Gifford Pinchot, also a Boone and Crockett Member, managed the nation's forests with a utilitarian attitude, "Manage for the long term, and manage for the greatest good for the greatest number." Theodore Roosevelt and the Boone and Crockett Club were laying the groundwork for the evolution of professional wildlife management.

While president, Roosevelt pressed hard for wildlife and habitat protection, but also believed in protecting land for public use. Legislation passed during this time, much of it the brainchild of Roosevelt, Grinnell, and the Club, set the table for much of the institutions for conservation we have today. Before he left the office of president he set aside over 230 million acres of public land that included 51 federal bird reservations, 5 national parks, 18 national monuments, the first 4 national game preserves, and the first 21 reclamation projects.

During the 1930s and 1940s, wildlife protection, land preservation and research began to merge into an evolving science known as wildlife management as did the birth of a funding model to pay for this management. Ding Darling, Club Member and head of the Bureau of Biological Survey was instrumental in creating the American Wildlife Institute, now named the Wildlife Management Institute, as a small, independent scientific and educational organization that would apply professional management to wildlife resource issues. The Club helped lay the conceptual ground work, provided the legislative channels, and rallied broad public and political support to pass the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act to help begin to pay for

conservation and management programs. The leader of this national effort to become more sophisticated in our capacity to influence the health of our wildlife populations was Aldo Leopold. After having made an intensive study of wildlife populations in the Midwest and then becoming the first professor of game management at the University of Wisconsin, he published a book titled *Game Management*, the first book dealing with the subject in North America which led to Leopold, also a Boone and Crockett Member, being affectionately known as the father of wildlife management and wrote extensively on the subject of land ethics. Many of his thoughts are captured in his seminal book, *A Sand County Almanac*.

Wildlife management has continued to evolve with greater sensitivity to ecosystems and endangered species. The federal farm bills for years have provided incentives for habitat restoration and creation. There

are still many challenges facing us. Future challenges include competition for water and land, disease, human conflicts, and evolving technology. Our authors this month, Professor Shawn Riley and Professor Gary Roloff, both with Michigan State University's Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, will discuss the future of wildlife management, those things that will affect this management, and what solutions are being discussed in a regular column in *Fair Chase*. Our first topic will be Human Population Growth and Demographics. I want to personally thank both Shawn and Gary for their contributions to our magazine. I also want to thank again the previous authors who have contributed to our science and policy column. It has been an honor for me to have been able to provide an opportunity for our Boone and Crockett Professionals to communicate their thoughts and passions to our Associates and Members. ■

William A. Demmer

The Club helped lay the conceptual ground work, provided the legislative channels, and rallied broad public and political support to pass the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act to help begin to pay for conservation and management programs.

**BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
FOUNDED IN 1887 BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

CLUB

- Club President William A. Demmer
- Secretary Tom L. Lewis
- Treasurer Marshall J. Collins, Jr.
- Executive Vice President – Administration
Timothy C. Brady
- Executive Vice President – Conservation
Morrison Stevens, Sr.
- Vice President of Administration
James F. Arnold
- Vice President of Big Game Records
Eldon L. "Buck" Buckner
- Vice President of Conservation
Stephen P. Mealey
- Vice President of Communications
Marc C. Mondavi
- Foundation President B.B. Hollingsworth, Jr.
- Class of 2014 James Cummins
- Class of 2015 CJ Buck
- Class of 2016 Ned S. Holmes

FOUNDATION

- Foundation President B.B. Hollingsworth, Jr.
- Secretary Tom L. Lewis
- Treasurer C. Martin Wood III
- Vice President James J. Shinner
- Vice President John A. Tomke
- Class of 2014 Remo R. Pizzagalli
Edward B. Rasmuson
James J. Shinner
John A. Tomke
Leonard J. Vallender
- Class of 2015 Gary W. Dietrich
B.B. Hollingsworth, Jr.
Ned S. Holmes
Tom L. Lewis
Paul M. Zelisko
- Class of 2016 John P. Evans
Steve J. Hageman
R. Terrell McCombs
Earl L. Sherron, Jr.
C. Martin Wood III



The Future of Wildlife... The Series

If sportsmen are responsible for most the wildlife programs we have today, then it stands to reason sportsmen will take care of the future.

If it were only that simple.



We Use The Word “Sustainability” A Lot, So This Is More Than A Casual Topic

As sportsmen, we care about wildlife. More accurately, sportsmen care about all wildlife. Others might criticize that we only care about what we can hunt. It might appear that way because we are most vocal and engaged with game species, but do any of us know another sportsman who doesn't appreciate seeing other critters, or isn't troubled when wildlife isn't being looked after like we are capable of, or worse, neglected, wasted, or dying needlessly?

If you're at all in doubt about this “all wildlife” statement, just follow the money poured into the system by sportsmen, and see where it goes. “Benefits all wildlife” is what you'll find. Look at the organizations to which you belong. The sign on the door might read elk, whitetail deer, turkey, or pheasants, but the benefactors of their efforts you are supporting extends deeper and broader than just these game species. The sign over the Boone and Crockett door certainly reads “All wildlife,” maybe even more so because our logo has no critter on it. If sportsmen care about all wildlife, then the future of wildlife is an important discussion to have; maybe one of the most important of our times.

Opinions vary as to the current state and future of wildlife. Many—far too many—believe that wildlife will always be with us because natural systems have always thrived on their own—a balance-of-nature philosophy we'll expose as shortsighted, if not dangerous. This same group also believes wildlife has always been there. What they're missing is the fact that we drove some wildlife on this continent to extinction and many other species to near extinction. These believers are also short on the fact that many of the wildlife species that exist today were recovered from remnant populations, which took purpose and commitment, and it was sportsmen that supplied the horsepower for both.

We could end this future of wildlife discussion right here. If sportsmen are responsible for most the wildlife programs we have today, then it stands to reason sportsmen will take care of the future.

If it were only that simple.

The majority of people do not hunt, but that doesn't mean they have given up a right to say how wildlife is used or managed. In our democracy, they have a say, a big say. This means there are more stakeholders than sportsmen with a diversity of

experience and opinion than ever before. And there are other gremlins in the machine with a host of new and developing challenges coming our way. They are gnawing at the wires that connect a complex system aimed at ensuring wildlife's future.

Shawn J. Riley and Gary J. Roloff
Department of Fisheries and Wildlife,
Michigan State University

The future of wildlife and wildlife management is a huge topic, maybe one of those elephants in the room. We owe it to ourselves, and wildlife, to address this question; to make a full assessment of where we are, how we got here, and what might be over the next ridge. Taking inventory, we'll quickly find that such an assessment includes a mouthful of terms like human population growth and demographics, globalization, technological developments, urbanization and suburbanization, and socio-political movements. There are others, and they sound like pretty dry subjects that could be difficult to get our minds around. Yet, we assure you that once we start diving into these topics one at a time, the clarity and relevance to conservation should be readily apparent and a concern for anyone interested in the future of wildlife and the future of hunting. Let's tackle this elephant together, one bite at a time.

Human Population Growth and Demographics

These are widely discussed topics in both scientific literature and the conservation community. For the human population in North America, there are some pronounced demographics—characteristics of a given population—in play that will change the way conservation will be viewed and practiced. The United States' population is getting older, and the hunting population is getting even older. The largest age classes are 20-30 and 50-60 years old. This 50 to 60-year-old group represents the last of the baby boomers. Over the next 20 or so years, they also represent the loss of the greatest generation of hunter-conservationists North America has known in modern times. Baby boomers and their parents created an engine for conservation through political support for wildlife and hunting, established current funding models for conservation, and paid into them, big time.

Research in several key states indicates recruitment of young hunters and

retention of older hunters is not sufficient to offset a currently aging hunter population. Recruitment and retention are no doubt top priorities, but we need to be realistic at the same time about the magnitude of losing the baby boomer generation. Recent data show an uptick in hunter participation overall, and within those data, more women are taking up hunting. That is encouraging. The question is, even if recruitment and retention programs are wildly successful, will they be enough to replace the loss of this huge swell of boomers in light of all the other social change underway?

Fly-fishing received a gift from the 1992 movie; *A River Runs Through It*. Participation in fly-fishing went through the roof over the next five years. Manufacturers couldn't make fly rods and accessories fast enough. But, this was short-lived. Those who truly embraced the passion of fly-fishing stayed. The rest started peddling their \$700 fly rods on E-bay—evidence of how quickly public interests shift.

The baby boomer affect will have

ramifications to our sportsmen-funded, state agency conservation programs. It is predicted to have enough effect to change these programs as we know them. Consequentially, future wildlife conservation will depend on developing new funding strategies and marketing aimed at people who appreciate wildlife in myriad ways, yet who may not be hunters. These folks mostly are not anti-hunters, they just aren't hunters, or they aren't interested in hunting, yet. Conservation funding is a big part of the elephant we'll leave for the next issue of *Fair Chase*.

What about that younger generation? The 20- to 30-year-old students we see in our classes now represent a breadth of interests related to wildlife. These students are bright, tend to be passionate about wildlife, yet also tend to be non-hunters. Again, they are not anti-hunters, they're just ambivalent toward hunting. The trend is also reflected in students who intend to be wildlife professionals. What does this part of the elephant mean? Not only are the characteristics of current users of wildlife changing, so are the characteristics of future wildlife professionals.

Fact is, a majority of future wildlife professionals may have little or no direct experience with hunting. This younger generation is just as passionate about wildlife as older generations; the origin of those passions is simply different. Sustainability of wildlife conservation lies in mobilizing these new fires of passion to further wildlife conservation.

Ethnic shifts within the current North American population are likely to have long-term effects on the nature of wildlife conservation. For example, growing Hispanic, Muslim, and Asian segments share few traditions and cultural practices that include hunting as a conservation measure. This new set of stakeholders presents exciting but challenging opportunities. How can we help these new people be just as excited as we are about the wonders of wildlife and help them adapt, and adapt ourselves, to a new future?

In the next issue of *Fair Chase*, B&C Professional Member Greg Schildwachter, Ph.D., will dig into the issues we face to ensure adequate funding for our North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. ■



Hide and seek? Advantage Leica.

Leica Ultravid HD-PLUS binoculars.



NEW!



New Leica Ultravid HD-PLUS binoculars deliver more “how-did-I-ever-not-see-him-before” moments. All-new HD/HT objective lens glass and prism formulations are matched with new proprietary coatings to deliver brighter, crystal clear images, early dawn to late dusk. The benchmark performance we've engineered into every set means he can run, but he can't hide.

- up to 5% increase in light transmission
- highest contrast pulls game from cover
- perfectly balanced color
- available in 7x42, 8x42, and 10x42 models

See your Leica dealer or visit leica-sportoptics.com

Join the conversation on Facebook at [/LeicaHunting](https://www.facebook.com/LeicaHunting)