

TROPHY TALK

Trophy Owners Can Now Challenge B&C Deer Boundaries



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Forensic Records Keeping

When I was a kid, most of the shows on television were cowboy shows. Nowadays, you can't turn your television on without stumbling onto one of

the many cop shows that use clever forensics to solve crimes. Even if you don't watch any of these shows, somewhere you've no doubt learned that the most important and conclusive forensic evidence used to solve crimes today is DNA. If your DNA is found at a crime scene, it's considered prima-facie evidence that you were there, and you may have to do a lot of fast talking to prove your innocence.

DNA analysis is also being used more and more to solve wildlife poaching crimes and questions. So I am really pleased to say that B&C Professional Member Jim Heffelfinger, a regional game specialist with

the Arizona Game & Fish Department, has concluded, with a number of collaborators, a monumental deer DNA study that has very significant implications for B&C's records program. Jim initiated his DNA research in 1996, and Boone and Crockett Club jumped on board in 2003. To date, B&C has contributed approximately \$75,000 to deer DNA research.

More than 100 individuals, including hunters, biologists, taxidermists, B&C members and Official Measurers, P&Y members, etc. were involved in collecting samples across North America. Buck Buckner, George Bettas, and I hunted the southern tip of Baja in 2003 to collect B&C's first mule deer specimen from that area for Jim's extensive research project.

A total of 2,800 specimens were collected from across North America and analyzed. Included were mule deer, Sitka and Columbia blacktail deer, whitetail deer, Coues' whitetail deer, and Carmen Mountain whitetails. A host of other organizations that made significant contributions to Jim's

study include Arizona Game and Fish Dept., Univ. of Arizona, Purdue Univ., National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, California Deer Association, Safari Club International, Seattle Chapter of SCI, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Dallas Safari Club, Camp Fire Club of America, Pope and Young Club, Dr. Vernon D. Holleman, and others.

DNA Analysis Used by B&C

Boone and Crockett first used DNA analysis from Jim's study in 2010 during the 27th Awards Program to verify whether or not a potential World's Record non-typical Columbia blacktail deer (195-6/8 points) was correctly classified. The only information available about the trophy was from hearsay and an Oregon metal tag affixed to the back of the plaque that was first used around 1901. When all was said and done, DNA analysis proved that this trophy was a pure mule deer.

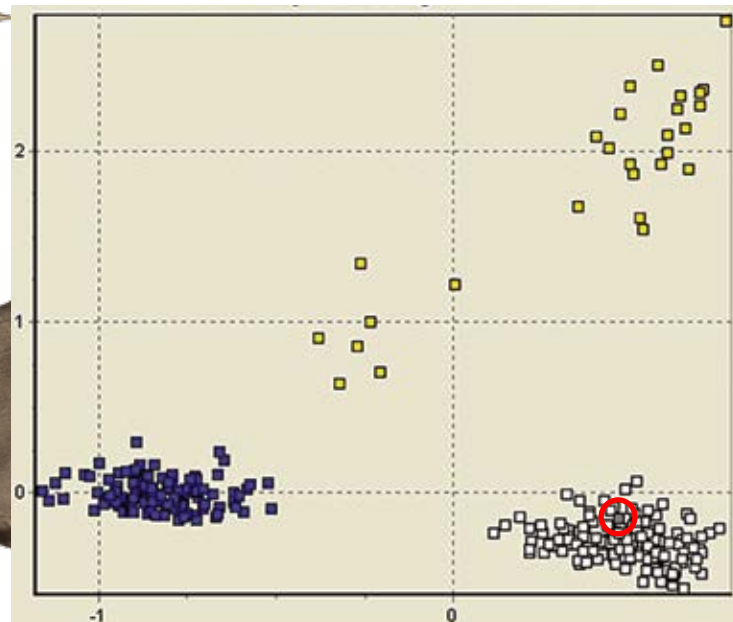
DNA analysis was again used by the 28th Awards Program Judges Panel to verify that all 10 typical and non-typical Columbia blacktail deer and 2 Coues' whitetail deer invited were properly categorized.

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FIGURE 1: This graphic shows the clustering of Coues' whitetails (blue) and non-Coues' whitetails (white) and the results of the analysis placing the mystery buck (gray) near the middle of the white squares. The yellow squares are mule deer with the seven yellow squares in the center are mule deer/Coues' deer hybrids.



LEFT TO RIGHT: J. Nyle Stierna's non-typical, Kevin Brett's typical, and Morgan Randall's non-typical Columbia blacktail were all tested for proper classification in the 28th Awards Program.



BOOK REVIEW

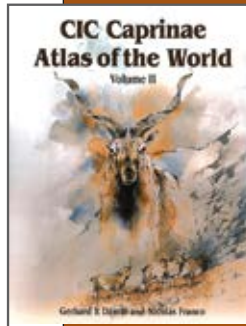
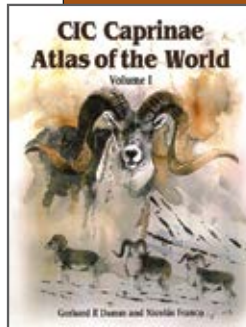
blacktail deer and 2 Coues' whitetail deer invited were properly categorized. This analysis proved that one of the non-typical blacktails was a mule deer/blacktail hybrid and that a typical Coues' deer entry was actually a mule deer/Coues' deer hybrid, which disqualified both from entry in B&C. Had either one or both of these trophies been accepted, they would have been erroneously listed as new World's Records for their respective categories.

DNA analysis has been used by the records office on two other occasions. One incident involved another potential new World's Record typical Coues' whitetail. The results of that test, which are illustrated in **Figure 1**, were resoundingly conclusive. The blue squares represent pure Coues' deer; the white squares are non-Coues' whitetail deer; the yellow boxes in the upper right-hand corner are pure mule deer; and the seven yellow boxes in the center are mule deer/Coues' deer hybrids. The trophy being tested for whether or not it was a pure Coues' deer landed right in the middle of the non-Coues' whitetail deer (gray box circled in red) proving it was just a whitetail deer.

A little over a year ago Justin Spring, the assistant director of Big Game Records, received a photo of an alleged 3x3 typical whitetail deer from a northeastern state purported to be a new state record. He told the

Acceptable Score Charts

In my last "Trophy Talk" column, I incorrectly stated that the most recent and acceptable versions of the score charts are the 2012 version. This was incorrect as the most recent versions of the score charts are those on B&C's website with a copyright date of 2011. So, if you need copies of the 2011 version, you can obtain them from B&C's headquarters by calling (406) 542-1888 or by visiting onto B&C's website at www.boone-crockett.org, click on the Big Game Records heading and drop down to Scoring Your Trophy.



CIC CAPRINAE ATLAS OF THE WORLD, VOL. I AND II

Gerhard R. Damm and Nicolas Franco, Authors

The International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), headquartered in Budapest, Hungary, and Rowland Ward Publications of Johannesburg, South Africa, have recently released a monumental two-volume set on the wild sheep populations of the world titled *CIC Caprinae Atlas of the World*. This detailed and meticulously researched two-volume atlas is a reference tool that outlines the population distribution ranges of wild Caprinae phenotypes in the northern hemisphere, as well as the work of professionals in the field that meticulously details their physical appearance, life history, conservation status, and sustainable uses. Included are more than 1,000 color photographs of wild Caprinae in their natural habitats, expansive charts, graphs, and 130 detailed color distribution maps that are complimented by a comprehensive reference list of close to 600 geographical names. The cost for a copy of the standard edition of *CIC Caprinae Atlas of the World*, Vol. I & 2, is \$350 U.S., plus shipping. The collector's edition, which is limited to 185 copies, is available for \$1,330 U.S., plus shipping, while supplies last. The collector's edition is individually numbered and signed by the authors and adorned with many other fine appointments. You can meet the authors

and purchase copies of this two-volume hardcover set of books at the 2015 Wild Sheep Foundation Convention in Reno, Nevada, January 8-10, 2015, at the Reno Sparks Convention Center. Or, you can order copies of *CIC Caprinae Atlas of the World*, Vol. I & 2, by contacting Safari Press at www.safaripress.com or calling (714) 894-9080. For more information and details on this monumental publication, you can email CIC headquarters office@cic-wildlife.org or Gerhard Damm at Gerhard@muskwa.co.za.



MAGNOLIA RECORDS, MISSISSIPPI'S BEST BUCKS, VOLUME 2

Rick Dillard, Author

After 10 years, the second volume of *Magnolia Records, Mississippi's Best Bucks* is here—and just in time for Christmas! Since the first book, the Magnolia Records Program, Mississippi's official scoring program for whitetail deer, has collected lots of data that show where, when, and how many of these bucks were taken. Over 200 pages containing trophy pictures of deer taken in Mississippi with a net score of 160 and above, several of which earned recognition by the Boone & Crockett Club and Pope and Young Club. Also included are charts and maps containing information that dates all the way back to

1895 when the oldest record for the program was killed. This data shows the soil regions in which these deer were taken and the land management status of each of these regions. Broken down by average gross score these charts show where the largest deer were taken and by which method. See the hunters who took these giants and read their stories. This book is on sale now and retails for \$15 plus \$5 shipping per book. If ordering more than three books, please call to get the exact shipping charge. Go to www.mswildlife.org, visit the gift shop, and place your online order today! Orders are also accepted by calling the Mississippi Wildlife Federation at (601) 605-1790. All major credit cards are accepted. Checks are accepted by mailing your order to: Mississippi Wildlife Federation, 517 Cobblestone Court, Suite 2, Madison, MS 39110. All orders must be paid in U.S. dollars.

BOOK REVIEW NOTICE

There are many state, provincial, and private organizations publishing local records books that use Boone and Crockett Club's copyrighted scoring system with permission of the Club. Since there is no single reference source for these books, and because there are many hunters who collect them, we will review them as time and space permit. Only those books that use the Boone and Crockett Club's copyrighted scoring system and terminology will be considered for review. Please note that the Boone and Crockett Club cannot vouch for the accuracy of the data contained in these books. Some of the books may include trophies that were not scored by certified Boone and Crockett Club Official Measurers. If there is a question about the status of a trophy listed in any of these books, the Boone and Crockett Club's records books/archives are the final reference source to settle any and all discrepancies.

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trophy owner that the rack looked suspiciously like a number of 3x3 mule deer racks without G-3 points that he has seen and taken over the years. The owner became incensed, but Justin insisted that the antlers had to be subjected to a DNA test before B&C would accept it. The results of DNA analysis proved Justin was right.

Challenge a Trophy's Classification

The exciting result of Jim's research is that trophy owners can now challenge the classification of their trophy. For example, if someone has taken a deer east of the mule deer/Columbia blacktail deer boundary that they believe is a pure Columbia blacktail deer, they can submit DNA material collected by a B&C approved representative for analysis. If the test proves it is a Columbia blacktail, B&C will accept it in the blacktail category even though it was taken outside the current described blacktail boundary. Trophy owners with deer of unknown origin or sketchy information may also submit their trophy for DNA analysis.

B&C may also challenge the classification of some entries. Potential Worlds' Records, those that rank in the All-time top 10 for their category, or in the top 5 invited to an Awards Program Judges Panel may be subject to DNA analysis on a case-by-case basis and at the Club's expense.

DNA Test Pricing

All testing is done at the trophy owner's expense. The cost is \$100 per sample providing the trophy owner is willing to wait until B&C accumulates 10 specimens. Otherwise the cost is \$370 for a single test.

Who can take DNA Samples

Because this is a new program for B&C, there are only a handful of individuals in North America that are currently qualified to take DNA samples. To start with, only individuals and fish and game personnel approved in advance by B&C's Records Committee Chairman are authorized to take DNA samples from trophies. To connect with a qualified person, please call Justin Spring at B&C headquarters, (406) 542-1888, ext. 204.

Taking a DNA Sample

DNA samples of mounted or unmounted trophies are collected by drilling a half-inch deep hole about 3/8ths of an inch below the burr into the side or back of the pedicel with a 3/32-inch drill bit. Care must be taken to ensure that the sample is not contaminated with hair or any other foreign substance. If the rack is unmounted, it can be turned upside down and the sampler can drill the hole through the skull plate and into the pedicel. ■

Jack Reneau



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