

KNOWLEDGE BASE

The European Connection



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The paintings of Lascaux Cave in southwestern France remind us that big game hunting in Europe is far older than history itself. We may never know the motivations of the paleolithic artists who

created these remarkable images of wild horses, stags, cattle, bison, and other animals. Some anthropologists interpret the drawings as accounts of past hunts, whereas others suggest they may have been part of rituals to improve future hunting success.

European hunting changed during the high middle ages (11th, 12th, and 13th centuries) from a food-gathering activity for all to a pastime reserved for aristocrats. The earliest game laws made wildlife the property of nobility and outlawed poaching by the common people. In much of Europe today, hunting is managed in a more traditional and exclusive fashion compared to North America, where the democracy of hunting is foundational to our system of game management. Markets for game, eliminated in North America a century ago, remain an important aspect of wildlife management in Europe.

While differing in some respects, Europe and North America share the principle that wildlife management policies and practices should be informed by science. As in North America, Europe's wildlife professionals conduct research on wildlife populations and habitats and work hard to apply that knowledge in management. They associate through the International Union of Game Biologists (IUGB), a nonprofit established in Germany in 1954. The IUGB's aims are to "promote the advancement of knowledge in game biology and skill in the field of wild animals, improving the management of wild animal populations and

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wildlife habitat conservation, and contributing to the comradeship amongst its members." Like The Wildlife Society based in North America, the IUGB provides a network for wildlife professionals and practitioners mainly in Europe, but other regions as well, to share knowledge that advances wildlife management and habitat conservation and to foster a sense of community within the profession.

In August I was privileged to be the opening plenary speaker at the 31st Congress of the IUGB held in Brussels, Belgium. My presentation highlighted key contemporary issues in North America, including wolf and ungulate management, feral and invasive species, and emerging wildlife diseases. Boone and Crockett Professor Paul Krausman spoke on "Effects of Harvest, Culture, and Climate on Size of Horn-like Structures in Trophy Ungulates," a study that used the B&C Records of North American Big Game as its primary data source.

The Congress theme was "Diversity in Wildlife Management: Objectives and Tools." It brought together more than 300 participants from 34 countries and four continents. Information was shared in six keynote speeches, 84 oral papers, and 118

poster presentations that featured research findings, management practices, and techniques from around the world. In Europe and other parts of the world, wildlife management is performed by a wide variety of professionals and practitioners. This was reflected in the diversity of people who attended, including biologists, foresters, veterinarians, game managers, sociologists, rural economists, hunters, and others. The IUGB Congress is held every two years; this was the fourth I attended since 1985, and each one has expanded and enriched my perspectives on the practice and profession of wildlife management. The IUGB is coming to North America for its next Congress, scheduled to occur in Puebla, Mexico in 2015.

The knowledge base for the conservation community in Europe and beyond has been enhanced by a new monograph *Conservation and Hunting in North America*. It was published as the June 2013 issue of *The International Journal of Environmental Studies* (Vol. 70, No. 3), a journal based in the United Kingdom. This collection of scholarly papers on the relationships between conservation and hunting offers a comprehensive look at the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. Boone and Crockett members are prominent among the authors. They include Paul Krausman, Vernon Bleich, James Heffelfinger, Valerius Geist, and James Posewitz; Shane Mahoney is both an author and the guest editor for the volume.

It's great to see this wealth of information about our highly successful conservation system being extended to readers in the environmental studies disciplines. And it's coming from Britain, where negative attitudes about hunting have long obscured the vital relationships between hunting and wildlife conservation. ■

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The Monograph on Hunting and Conservation in North America is available at www.tandfonline.com/toc/genv20/70/3. Alternatively, you may email Shane Mahoney shanemahoney@gov.nl.ca, Jackie Weir jackieweir@gov.nl.ca, or manuscript authors for copies of the individual manuscripts.

