

# Looking Back



BOONE AND CROCKETT  
CLUB  
GAME PRESERVATION  
COMMITTEE



THIS LETTER TO DR. LEWIS R. MORRIS, CHAIRMAN ON FINANCES OF THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB IS DATED JANUARY 15, 1912. IT WAS FIRST PRINTED IN THE GAME PRESERVATION COMMITTEE'S REPORT OF THAT SAME YEAR. THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WHICH APPEARED ON THE TITLE PAGE OF THAT REPORT EXTENDS THE GRIM OUTLOOK THAT MANY OF THE MEMBERS EXPERIENCED DURING THAT PERIOD OF THE CLUB'S HISTORY.

*"The preservation of some of the species of North American large Mammals is no longer a question of providing for the next generation of sportsmen.*

*The inevitable spread of civilization will render that impossible.*

*We shall do well if we can locate the existing remnants in safe places and avert their impending extermination."*



Dear Sir,

The big game of North America, as you so well know, is disappearing with startling rapidity.

Of the countless herds of buffalo which fifty years ago roamed our western country only a few remain, scattered in refuges and public parks.

The beautiful prong-horned "antelope," found only in North America, unique member of its zoological family and until lately so characteristic of our western plains, is all but exterminated.

The splendid wapiti once found in abundance from the eastern seaboard to the Pacific, has vanished except for the herds in the Yellowstone Park, and here and there a few scattered bands.

The mountain sheep and certain western deer are becoming scarce, and almost without exception every species of big game in the United States is rapidly diminishing.

None who love the wilderness and its creatures can face these facts without dismay. Of course natural conditions must disappear before a growing community, but there is no reason why we should not set aside and conserve for future generations forest reserves and wildlife sanctuaries as oases in the desert of advancing civilization. For many years the Boone and Crockett Club has urged the establishment of game refuges on the public lands included in the forest reserves, and the strong and growing public sentiment in favor of conservation measures makes the present time very favorable to inaugurate a vigorous campaign for a comprehensive system of national game refuges. The plan for such a system must be broad, economical and reasonable. It must be drawn to provide for future requirements and so that it will, as far as possible, appeal to local public opinion.

The Biological Survey and the Forest Service are heartily in sympathy

with the wish to have such a plan formulated, and in a recent report to the Game Preservation Committee, the Chief of the Biological Survey agrees that it is desirable to make reasonable use of the national forests of the West for such game refuges.

Success in restocking areas with large game animals can hardly be expected unless part of the range chosen be fenced to prevent the newly introduced animals from straying away. They should for some years be watched and safeguarded, the fenced enclosure being used as a nursery from which, as the animals increase, they may be turned loose to stock the surrounding district.

The Forest Service may lawfully fence tracts within the public lands in the forest reserves for experimental purposes, provided there are funds in hand to pay for the cost of fencing. Although hunting is permitted in the National Forests, it is unlawful to carry firearms in such fenced parks. For permanent protection on a reasonably large scale, however, such parks should be included in game refuges established by act of Congress.

Congress has always been slow to authorize game refuges, and to appropriate the funds required for fencing, stocking and maintenance after a refuge has been established, because Congress fails to realize that there is sufficient public interest in these matters to justify the necessary appropriations. We believe, however, that if the Boone and Crockett Club would from time to time offer to pay the cost of fencing or of stocking small game refuges under government protection Congress would feel justified in establishing large refuges to include these and would appropriate the necessary funds for their future maintenance.

The cost of erecting an effective woven wire fence, in fairly rough mountain country, is about \$1,000 a mile. If your Committee will raise a fund of \$24,000, this will put the Club

in a position to offer to fence and stock an area of about six sections, or say, 3,840 acres, which would be enough to establish fenced parks of two square miles each in three national forests.

The Biological Survey and the Forest Service have already made a careful study of some of the National Forests in the Southwest, several of which appear especially suitable for such refuges, especially the region known as the Sitgreaves and Coconine National Forests, Arizona. Much detailed information on these subjects is covered in the Biological Survey's report to the Club.

We have assurances that if these refuges are established the Biological Survey will arrange for the transfer of some elk from the Yellowstone Park, and we also hope to obtain a breeding stock of buffalo from a private herd, in case it should not be possible to transfer some of the buffalo from the herd in the Yellowstone Park. The Sitgreaves and Coconine National Forests already contain a fair supply of all the other species of our big game, and these would be saved if that tract should be set aside as a game refuge.

The Boone and Crockett Club has done much valuable work for the public welfare in the field of game conservation. Its books bear testimony to its consistent stand for the principle of game refuges. The Yellowstone National Park, the Zoological Society and the Glacier National Park owe their present condition largely to the efforts of its members. The Club is composed of wilderness lovers, however, not capitalists, and since these matters are of general public interest, the Club may properly appeal for funds not only to its members but to any public spirited citizen, or body of citizens, who are interested in game conservation.

Yours very truly,  
George Gird Grinnell,  
CHAIRMAN GAME  
PRESERVATION COMMITTEE