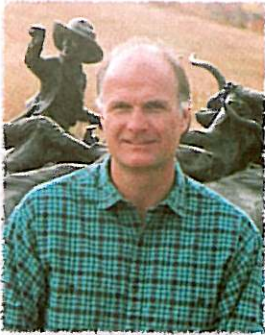


CLUB PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Counter-Conservationist?



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MANY POSITIVE ARTICLES HAVE BEEN WRITTEN OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS ON HUNTING IN TODAY'S WORLD. SOME HAVE CALLED HUNTING A HISTORIC RIGHT, OTHERS A PRESENT-DAY PRIVILEGE. SOME HAVE EXTOLLED THE VIRTUES OF THE HUNTING EXPERIENCE. HOWEVER, THE CONTINGENCY OF "ANTI-HUNTERS," MOST HAVING LITTLE UNDERSTANDING OF THE REAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE RESOURCES, WILL NEVER BE CONVINCED OF ANY VIRTUE ASSOCIATED WITH HUNTING. BUT THERE ARE THOSE WHO MAY NEVER PURSUE GAME WITH A RIFLE OR BOW WHO UNDERSTAND HUNTING'S BENEFITS AND, IN SOME CASES, NECESSITY.

Raymond Bonner, a journalist who lived in Kenya from 1988 to 1992 and author of "At the Hand of Man: Peril and Hope for the Africa's Wildlife," wrote an article that recently appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*. A non-hunter who cannot understand how anyone can "pick up a rifle and shoot" big game animals, he nevertheless argues that the ideology that opposes hunting may be "counter-conservationist."

During the research for his book, Bonner discovered that, ecologically, tourists do more damage than hunters and not just because there are more of them. He paints a graphic picture of "camera clickers" speeding over the plains in minivans

looking to surround a rhino or pride of lions. "Man as a tourist," Bonner says, "is taking the 'wild' out of wildlife in Africa."

He quotes Richard Leakey, director of the Kenya Wildlife Service, in describing the cheetah trying to stalk an impala or gazelle, it reacts by "running away or lying down, that is giving up its natural activity, until the tourists, bored by the 'inactivity,' move on." Bonner suggests the result is tourists may kill more animals than hunters. If the female predators are not able to consistently capture prey, not only is the survival rate of the young severely reduced but the mother sometimes starves as well.

The most sanguine argument, however, is revealed as Bonner describes the plight of the financially strapped African nations – "sport hunting is more profitable than tourism." Hunting does not require massive infrastructure development. Hotels, rental vans, and most of the services expected by the average tourist are unnecessary.

Also hunters outspend those on camera vacations. While a Tanzanian safari can easily cost \$50,000, even the most expensive photo safari will likely not cost over \$20,000. Most tourists can get by for as little as \$1,000 per week. When comparing the financial benefits retained by

the local inhabitants and the local, regional and national governments, the desirability of hunting increases even more.

The most interesting aspect of the article for me was Bonner's description of how in Africa, as in the United States, private land plays such a significant role. Most of the Africa's wildlife depend on private lands and benevolent landowners for survival. However, "landowners are not going to tolerate wildlife's presence without an incentive – elephants trample crops, lions eat cattle and children. Landowners who earn an average of 70 cents a hectare from tour operators for concessions can earn almost \$2 a hectare for selling hunting concessions" – strong arguments for a continent whose governments are financially exhausted and whose majority of people struggle for daily existence.

It is futile to argue the benefits of hunting with those who have closed minds or have agendas of little connection to pursuing sustainable wildlife populations. But when someone who has genuine concern takes time to study not only the pertinent facts but also the true causes and effects, even non-hunters like Bonner can understand the contribution hunting makes to the conservation of today's wildlife resources.



THE BOONE & CROCKETT CLUB

HOW THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB BEGAN

The Boone and Crockett Club was founded by Theodore Roosevelt at a time when it was one of only two organizations in America dedicated to the conservation of our nation's natural resources.

Roosevelt, who was deeply concerned over the plight of America's wildlife, hosted a dinner in December of 1887 for ten like-minded sportsmen friends.

This influential group recognized that what had happened in the

preceding decade to the vast buffalo herds and the millions of passenger pigeons could easily happen to other species unless efforts were made to control sport and market hunting and provide wildlife the ability to coexist with man.

That evening the Boone and Crockett Club was founded with the mission to promote two major goals: The conservation of critical wildlife habitat and the principle of hunting in "fair chase."



THE MISSION

It is the policy of the Boone and Crockett Club to promote the guardianship and provident management of big game and associated wildlife in North America and to maintain the highest standards of fair chase and sportsmanship in all aspects of big game hunting, in order that this resource of all the people may survive and prosper in its natural habitats. Consistent with this objective, the Club supports the use and enjoyment of our wildlife heritage to the fullest extent by this and future generations of mankind.