

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please send your letters to us at Boone and Crockett Club, Old Milwaukee Depot, 250 Station Drive, Missoula, MT 59801. We welcome a lively exchange of ideas and suggestions. Associates are encouraged to send their hunting and trophy room stories along with photographs. If you have questions, please call the editors at 406.542-1888. We try to publish as many letters as possible. Letters are published as written but may be edited for brevity.

WE HAVE RECEIVED MANY LETTERS IN RESPONSE TO THE LETTER BY MR. CLARENCE TRAMBLES THAT WAS PUBLISHED IN THE FALL '94 ISSUE OF FAIR CHASE. NEARLY ALL OF THE LETTERS ARE IN SUPPORT OF THE USE OF HOUNDS FOR THE PURSUIT OF BEAR AND/OR COUGAR. THESE LETTERS HAVE BEEN THOUGHTFULLY WRITTEN AND POINT OUT THE MANY POSITIVE ASPECTS RELATING TO THE USE OF HOUNDS IN THE PURSUIT OF BEAR AND COUGAR. BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ISSUE AMONG HUNTERS WE HAVE CHOSEN TO TREAT THE SUBJECT IN OUR POINT/COUNTERPOINT ARTICLE IN THIS ISSUE (SEE PAGE 18). THE USE OF HOUNDS HAS BEEN A HUNTING TRADITION FOR CENTURIES AND IS CLEARLY AN ETHICAL AND SPORTING WAY OF TAKING CERTAIN BIG GAME SPECIES. THE FOLLOWING LETTERS POINT OUT MANY OF THE POSITIVE ASPECTS RELATED TO THE USE OF HOUNDS.

LET'S QUIT ARGUING

I recently read the letter, "No Bait or Hounds" in your last newsletter, and I don't believe a real hunter could have written the letter. If we go the route suggested by the letter writer, then elk taken while hunting horseback or even packed out by horse or mule would have to be considered not taken according to the rules of fair chase. This also raises the question of whitetail deer hunting--the stands set over timed feeders don't exactly seem like fair chase, either. Lets wake up and see that our real problems are not with other hunters, but with anti-hunters.

While I am on my soap box, why shouldn't houndsman be able to use electronic tracking equipment on hounds which he has invested thousands of dollars in? Most people believe in protecting their investments. Why shouldn't this be true for the houndsman (or woman)? We are actually falling into the clutches of the anti's as we debate "this is" or "this isn't" fair chase.

If you don't like what some other hunter does, then don't do what they do. I don't agree with some forms of hunting, but I will not pick a fight with them. I will leave them alone. I will hunt legally and according to my ethics. You hunt legally and according to you ethics. And instead of arguing over who is wrong or right, we better watch

each others backs and learn to fight alongside each other. Because if we don't it's just a matter of time before the anti's divide and conquer us all

Sincerely,
Sam Ray

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Boone and Crockett Club's fair chase policy recognizes the value of the use of radio telemetry for the location of hounds so as they are not lost. It specifically prohibits the use of radio telemetry to guide the hunter to the site of a treed cougar or bear.

HOPE TO CONTINUE

I found your members' comments concerning using hounds to take mountain lion very interesting and provocative. I'd like to make a couple of points:

1. By using hounds we can enjoy our sport without a kill, yet still reach a goal when the lion is treed.

2. Hound people can thoroughly scrutinize an animal before harvesting it, this minimizes the chances of killing females with kittens.

3. Enhance our sport by sharing our time in the field with fine hounds.

4. I see infighting as leading to the end of our sport, therefore eventually all big game hunting.

5. Those really interested in the lion couldn't keep satisfied by following a set of tracks without a tracking hound...only to see a fleeting blur of fur.

For well over 20 years I've remained dedicated to our lion and its well-being. Hope to continue.

Sincerely,
Robert R. Weisner

P.S. Your current rule regarding no use of radio telemetry is great.

DRAWING THE LINE

In view of the apparent controversy over the use of dogs to hunt mountain lions and bears, it will be interesting to me to see the response of readers to the muskox story in the Winter '95 issue. I have never hunted muskox, so my view of the ethics involved will hinge upon the answers to questions which remain after I read Boddington's article. Do the hunters shut off the snow mobile engine immediately upon sighting the quarry (which Boddington said, "stand out from miles away") and begin a stalk on foot, or do they drive

a little closer? Do they in fact pursue the animals until they form their defensive circle and wait to be sized up and shot if they will make the Book? Is this at all different than chasing after elk on a snowmobile, which is illegal in most, if not all, states? Is bringing the muskox to bay with a sled dog team different than treeing a mountain lion? Is treeing a lion different than relying upon the instinct of a quail to set tightly for a pointer? Hunting with dogs is certainly a tradition far older than the use of snow machines.

A large part of my reaction to the dog issue is emotional; simply looking out the window at my Blueticks in their kennel reunites me with my grandfather and other men of an earlier generation who shaped my childhood. I would personally have no interest in shooting a lion out of a tree if my own dogs were not a part of the chase. If you were to delist professionally guided trophies it would remove my own Dall's sheep, along with many of the others. My contributions to that hunt were the ability to follow the guide many miles into the Chugach Mountains, and to make an eighty yard shot from the prone at a bedded sheep (Guy George knows his business). I am sure you list trophies where the hunter contributed less. Perhaps the solution is to credit both hunter and dog pack owner on lions, and both hunter and guide on professionally guided trophies. Anything you can do to minimize the use of vehicles in actual pursuit of game, including musk ox, will be a plus for the future of hunting.

Sincerely,
Larry C. Munn

EDITOR'S NOTE: As more and more advanced technology becomes available and is applied to sport hunting it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a fair chase policy which covers every possible unsportsmanlike way of taking a big game animal. The Boone and Crockett Club's Fair Chase Statement covers the use of motor vehicles (snowmobiles) for herding, pursuing, or shooting game. The point where the hunter draws the line on when he or she gets off the machine and begins the stalk on foot is an ethical decision every hunter must make at one time or another. These ethics are dictated by that hunter's conscience.

B&C CLUB MEMBERSHIP

I'm writing out of curiosity concerning the different types of members within the Boone and Crockett Club. I've noticed under the names of authors in *Fair Chase* there is often a line describing their relationships to the Club. These include Associate, Professional Member, and Regular Member, and there may be others. Can you briefly explain all of the different types of members in the Club and the criteria by which they're differentiated? Thanks for helping quench my curiosity.

Sincerely,
Michael F. Burger

EDITOR'S NOTE: When the Boone and Crockett club was founded in 1887 its constitution provided that the "Club should not consist of more than one hundred regular members, and of such associate and honorary members as may be elected by the Executive Committee." This small membership and the organizational values which fostered its quiet, behind-the-scenes approach to supporting wildlife conservation issues became the "trademark" of the Boone and Crockett Club. The types of membership in the Club remained essentially the same until 1986. At that time the term "professional member" was developed. The term professional member seemed to more appropriately describe the wildlife professionals who participated side by side with the regular members in doing the work of the Club. The term honorary life member is a term used to refer to regular members for their distinguished service to the Club. The term emeritus member is used to refer to both regular and professional members who have served the Club for many years and who have chosen to go to a less active status.

The Associates program was begun in 1986 in order to involve more persons who were interested in the Club and were interested in furthering the work of the Club. Placing a big game animal in the Awards program is not a criteria for any of the categories of membership in the Club.