

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

B&C On-line Community Launched in November



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President
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This article will be my last as president of the Boone and Crockett Club. I want to thank all of our Associates for their support of the Boone and Crockett Club during the past two years of my watch.

We have done considerable planning on our Associates Program, and you will see the benefits of these labors over the next couple of years. Most important will be our effort to enhance communications with our Associates, in addition to *Fair Chase* magazine. One item of great benefit to our Associates is the

Associates On-Line Community.

After years of planning, the new Community is exclusively for Associates, Members, and Official Measurers of the Boone and Crockett Club.

What will you find when you visit this secure section of the Club's website?

- Hundreds of field photos - you'll be able to search by categories, locations, years, or by a hunter's name.
- Hunting Reports from several western states, including state records, trophy hot spots, license information, links, important phone numbers, and more.
- Individual Scoring Database where you can keep track of the trophies you score on-line.
- Archives of past *Fair Chase* articles.

In order to access this area of the Club's website, go to www.boone-crockett.org and click the LOGIN button in

the upper right hand corner of the window. Go to the First Time Users interface, and enter the information that is requested. You can find your Customer I.D. on your Associates card or on the mailing sheet that came with this magazine. If for some reason you have misplaced or cannot find your Customer I.D., please contact the Boone and Crockett Club's headquarters by e-mail at bcclub@boone-crockett.org.

I want to personally thank Boone and Crockett staff for their outstanding work in conceiving and building this website.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

In other matters, the need continues for unstinting vigilance on wildlife health issues. This is of critical importance to all of us in the Boone and Crockett Club. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and other wildlife diseases constantly expand their territory. Minnesota is the tenth state to have discovered CWD in the cervid herd.

Consequently, I felt it was of critical importance that the Boone and Crockett Club take a strong position on the captive cervid trade. Val Geist, Professional Member of the Boone and Crockett Club attended the Midwest Deer and Turkey group meeting in Conception, MO, August 19th and 20th of 2002. Following are excerpts from Val's notes:

Terry Daughtery, a warden with Missouri Department of Conservation, offered some insights on the captive cervid trade. Much was based on the testimony of a former deer hauler who has turned state's evidence. He had hauled numerous loads of illegal deer and elk that were shipped to many states by Michigan brokers. Untested deer bring premium prices on shooting preserves because they can be "laundered" for entry into Boone and Crockett. Deer from game farms cannot be entered in the Boone and Crockett Records Program. Most of the deer he moved were caught in the wild from Ontario. Twenty-nine were shipped into Wisconsin without testing. Major destination states were Texas, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Mississippi. Deer were brought into the U.S. at a friendly border crossing in Montana. The driv-



er carried two sets of papers, one for the authorities and one for the ranch owner. Untested loads are hauled at night to minimize stress on the animal, and less intensive inspections at the border. Ontario deer farmers baited wild deer into pens. Veterinarians supplied false health certificates for wild deer, Daughtery noted. Five thousand prosecutable violations were documented, many from discrepancies between age of the deer and age on the tags. The illegal market is dependent on veterinarians supplying false papers for a cut of the profit. The illegal shipments will continue until there is no market for trophy deer on shooting preserves. Brokers prefer deer from Canada, because of good exchange rates and lax border enforcement. It is estimated that 25,000 deer/month are being moved throughout the US.

The figure for gate hunts at \$40,000 to \$50,000 seems extremely high, although nothing would surprise me. I have heard of gate-hunts in the \$20,000 range. The charge that "untested deer bring premium prices on shooting preserves because they can be laundered for entry into Boone and Crockett" is indeed a major issue.

The movement of "25,000 deer per month" is extraordinary. We are attempting to confirm this figure and also to determine the number of "untested" deer that cross the border. Many states ban the importation and exportation of cervids due to CWD and other wildlife health concerns. If 25,000 deer are crossing the border each month, they will undoubtedly spread CWD into every state that receives these shipments. The deer found at the White Sands Missile Range in southern New Mexico is somewhat suspicious, since no CWD-infected animals have been found in other parts of New Mexico. Is it possible the deer was in one of these shipments, and the driver dumped it out when it appeared to be sick? If so, perhaps the entire shipment was infected. One has to wonder about the destination of the shipment.

The following states have reported that CWD testing will begin this fall: Indiana, 3,000 samples; Illinois, 3,000 samples; Kansas, 11,200 samples; Michigan, 2,000 samples; Minnesota, 5,000 samples; Missouri, 6,000 samples;

Nebraska, 100 samples; North Dakota will sample two areas; Ohio, 300 samples; South Dakota, 500-600 samples; and Tennessee, 1,000 samples. Most states adjacent to states with confirmed CWD will sample heavily along state borders.

Paul Webster, past President, has called repeatedly for DNA testing of animals submitted for entry in the record books. If the number of untested cervids crossing the border is anywhere near the reported figure, I feel it is reasonable for the Big Game Records Committee to again visit the issue of DNA testing. The Boone and Crockett Club definitely does not want to be a party to the untested cervid trade due to the demand for gate hunts that might make the "book." You will hear more of this issue in the future.

In collaboration with the chair of the Club's Position Papers Committee, I have sent letters to the Department of Agriculture in charge of border inspections and the Governors and Directors at the State Fish and Game Departments in border states, and as well, states receiving cervid shipments, urging them to tighten controls to prevent haulers from utilizing unprotected border crossings, as well as better review of documentation to protect against falsified papers and illegal shipments. It's more than a little chilling, with the specter of terrorism, to think that shipments of deer can make it across borders undetected.

Millions of dollars are currently being spent on the eradication of CWD by states with endemic herds. It seems ludicrous to me, that at the same time, we have porous borders that allow illegal shipments of cervids into the United States that could spread animal diseases to states that are currently unaffected. You will hear more on this issue in the future.

Again, thanks for your support and loyalty to the Boone and Crockett Club. I look forward to working with you in the future. My two years as president have been two of the most rewarding of my life. I have made numerous new friends in the hunting and conservation community. We are indeed a "band of brothers and sisters." ■