

TROPHY TALK

Stolen Mule Deer Returned to National Collection



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BELOW: William H. Nesbitt views the National Collection of Heads and Horns in the NRA Firearms Museum.

INSET LEFT: The National Collection was assembled by William T. Hornaday and Madison Grant from 1906 to 1922 and housed in this building at the New York Zoological Society.

INSET RIGHT: The non-typical mule deer taken by Andrew Daum, which was stolen in 1974, is returned to the Boone and Crockett Club in 1999. Clockwise from the left, Bill Sawyer - Business Manager, Jack Reneau - Director of Big Game Records, and Fred King - Chairman of the Museum Committee for B&C hang the returned trophy in the Club's Headquarters.

On November 9, 1999, Fred King, Chair of the Museum Committee that oversees the Boone and Crockett Club's National Collection of Heads and Horns, delivered to the Club's Missoula office a truly spectacular non-typical mule deer head taken by Andrew Daum. This spectacular head is not an addition to the National Collection - it has been returned. It was stolen in November, 1974, along with twelve other specimens, from the National Collection when it was still owned by the New York Zoological Society and housed at the Bronx Zoo.

This exceptional head was taken in 1886 by Mr. Daum at Elk Creek, Colorado. Scoring 299-5/8 points, it is still one of the finest specimens of North American big game ever recorded by the Club. It was the first World's Record in its category when the Club adopted and copyrighted its scoring system in 1950. It was

listed as the World's Record in the 1952 and 1958 editions of the all-time records book and dropped to fifth place in the 1964 edition. It currently ranks 20th in the 11th edition of Records of North American Big Game published earlier this year.

The story of its return is quite simple. It is interesting to note, however, that it was returned on the 25th anniversary of its disappearance from the Collection. It was recovered by Harry Batschelet, Jr., who called the Club's headquarters in May 1998 to say that he believed he had acquired a mule deer stolen from the National Collection. He asked us to send photographs from our files of the stolen trophy to Tom Entinger, the owner of Trails West Taxidermy in Rawlins, Wyoming,

who has remounted the head. After a brief exchange of photographs and telephone conversations with Harry and Tom, it was determined beyond a shadow of a doubt that the head Harry possessed was indeed the stolen Daum trophy.

The Daum head will temporarily hang in a conference room at the Club's headquarters in Missoula until it can be delivered to the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, where the National Collection is currently housed. It will then retake its rightful place with the other spectacular trophies in the



Collection in time for the year 2000 tourist season.

In exchange for his efforts to acquire and return the Daum head, Mr. Batschelet was granted permission to reproduce it and sell reproductions. Anyone interested in information about the reproductions should contact Tom Entinger at Trails West Taxidermy in Rawlins, Wyoming.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL COLLECTION

The National Collection has a somewhat turbulent history. It was established by the Executive Committee of the New York Zoological Society on December 20, 1906, and ultimately displayed in a magnificent, Romanesque-style building that was specifically constructed for the Collection at the Bronx Zoo. It was created at a time in history when the future of North American game animals was probably at its bleakest. Club members, especially Madison Grant and William T. Hornaday, were the initial driving force behind its creation.

The Society's goal at that time was to create two complete collections of all the heads, horns and tusks of the world's ungulates, one to be arranged zoologically and the other geographically. It was to be called "The National Collection of Heads and Horns." Essentially, this undertaking was an attempt to preserve a complete memorial to the vanishing big game of the world before they became extinct.

William T. Hornaday provided the nucleus of the National Collection by donating his personal collection of 131 heads and horns, representing 108 species, to the Collection. Additional specimens were donated over the years until the collection numbered in the thousands.

When the museum that housed the Collection was dedicated in 1922, Hornaday noted that it "would stand for at least 200 years." In reality, it survived at the Bronx Zoo for less than 50 years. As time went on and leadership changed, the Society's interest in the National Collection waned until it was closed to the public in 1968.

In a way, its closure was a testimonial to the conservation efforts of the sportsmen of North America. By the time it was closed, most species of big game that were "vanishing" from North America at the turn of the century were recovering because of the efforts of Club members and sportsmen everywhere. This may be one of the reasons the National Collection fell into disfavor at the New York Zoological Society. If big game numbers had continued to decline, the Society would have become the most renowned repository in North America, and possibly the world, of wildlife that became extinct during the twentieth century.

The story of the National Collection would have ended there if it hadn't been for the efforts of Club members Samuel B. Webb, Jr., Lowell E. Baier, and Wm. Harold Nesbitt. These three individuals, in particular, prevented the National Collection from going into the dustbins of the American Museum of Natural History, where it would have never been seen again.

In 1978, the surviving North American specimens, which numbered 34, were removed from the Bronx Zoo by Lowell Baier and Harold Nesbitt and delivered to the National Rifle Association's Firearms Museum in Washington, D.C., where they were temporarily

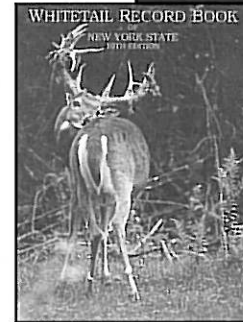
displayed. The surviving 198 specimens of big game from the other five continents of the world were transferred to Safari Club International at the same time.

Ultimately, the Boone and Crockett Club's National Collection of Heads and Horns was moved to the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming, which is visited by a quarter of a million people each year. For more information on the National Collection of Heads and Horns, please refer to the 8th and 10th editions of Records of North American Big Game, which provide a thorough history of the Collection's origins and development.

THE COLLECTION NEEDS WHITETAIL DEER

The Club is especially pleased to be the proprietor of the National Collection, which currently includes 31 of the finest specimens ever recorded by the Club. The Museum Committee is continuously working to upgrade the Collection with the addition of new top-ranking trophies.

In spite of its long history, the National Collection has not had a whitetail deer since its only specimens were stolen in 1974 with the Daum head. If you have a trophy, especially a typical or non-typical whitetail deer, you think worthy of inclusion in the National Collection, and would consider donating it, please contact Club headquarters at (406)542-1888. ▲▲▲



Whitetail Record Book of New York State, 10th Edition

The 10th edition of Whitetail Record Book of New York State contains over 4,000 trophy deer and bear entries in seven separate

categories recognized by the New York State Big Buck Club. This edition also contains over 275 photos of New York's whitetail trophies, in typical and non-typical categories, taken with firearms, archery and black powder, as well as three categories for black bear. A special full-color section highlights dozens of the finest big game specimens ever recorded from the Empire State. To order, send a check for \$15 (S&H included) to the New York State Big Buck Club, Record Book Office, 8895 Plainville Road SN, Dept. FC, Baldwinsville, NY 13027.

Michigan Big Game Records, 5th Edition

The Commemorative Bucks of Michigan, Inc. is pleased to announce the availability of the 5th edition of Michigan Big Game Records. This



book lists nearly 15,800 whitetail deer, black bear, American elk and turkeys taken in Michigan. Included is a chapter on recent additions that meet the minimum scores

for entry in Boone and Crockett Club's Awards Programs and its Records of North American Big Game. Deer are listed in rank order by method of harvest, county where harvested, antler point count and year harvested. The soft and hard cover editions are \$35 and \$50 respectively (S&H included). Copies may be ordered by calling (810)796-2925, or by sending your check or major credit card information to CBM, P.O. Box 518, Dept. FC, Dryden, MI 48428.

BOOK REVIEW NOTICE

There are many state, provincial, and private organizations publishing local records books that use the Boone and Crockett Club's copyrighted scoring system with the express written permission of the Club. Since there is no single reference source for these books, and because there are many hunters who collect them, we will review them as time and space permit. Only those books that use the Boone and Club's copyrighted scoring system and terminology will be considered for review. However, the Boone and Crockett Club cannot vouch for the accuracy of the data contained in these publications. Many of the books include trophies that were not scored by certified Boone and Crockett Club official measurers. If there is a question about the status of a trophy listed in any of these books, the Boone and Crockett Club's records books and archives are the final reference source to settle any and all discrepancies.