

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Elephant in the Room

THIS IS MY LAST OPPORTUNITY to visit with you in *Fair Chase* as President of the Boone and Crockett Club. My tenure terminates at our Annual Members Meeting in December. I have certainly enjoyed the honor of sharing my views and visions on various hunting issues with such a fine group of dedicated hunters. I hope we all learned a little more about our hunting heritage and received some motivation to remain active in promoting our goals and dreams.

The National Wildlife Conservation Partners Summit was convened at the Boone and Crockett Club headquarters in the Tim Hixon Conservation Summit Center in Missoula on August 7-9 as planned. All of the invited organizations attended. It was a great meeting and we came away with a new sense of respect for and dedication to the positions of our peers and an appreciation for our common strength. A vision for unity was developed and a structure for follow-up was created. It is now up to the delegates and their organizations to build on the momentum and ensure success. I believe that the challenges were successfully met, the opportunities realized and that you will be proud to read the Summit results written by Mr. Rollin Sparrowe on page 28 of this issue.

Now that the first steps toward unifying our collective resources have taken place, it is time to move on to other hunting related issues and the one that I think needs most urgent attention is the broad subject of ethical hunting. There has been a proliferation of articles written about this in *Fair Chase* and almost every other hunting magazine on the shelf. Most express the opinion that, "I am more ethical," or "my definition of ethical hunting is purer than yours." In most cases the opinions are directed at confined or "high fence" hunting/shooting situations, but other cultural and traditional

practices are also under fire.

Have we painted ourselves into a corner by this "purist approach" to hunting? Can hunting survive if we isolate ourselves from all other forms of shall we say, "game shooting"? I am very concerned that we are falling into the anti-hunters trap of "divide and conquer". There are simply too many people participating in these other forms of outdoor activities.

The introduction to *Know Hunting* by Dr. David E. Samuel provides a good discussion of the tactics our enemies have and plan to use against us. I strongly recommend that you obtain a copy. Dr. Samuel illustrates how trapping, bear baiting, and lion hunting have been eliminated in several states simply because the broader hunting community did not appreciate the real threats involved, and as a result failed to effectively join their defense.

Throughout the world, including North America, we have people with deep-rooted traditions, shooting birds and big game in many different cultural and legal environments. For years, hunting estates in Europe have raised grouse, pheasants, stags, and boars for shooting in order to perpetuate the traditions and to raise needed income to enable these lands to remain intact. Hunting clubs in the United States have also provided pen-raised birds for members and their guests.

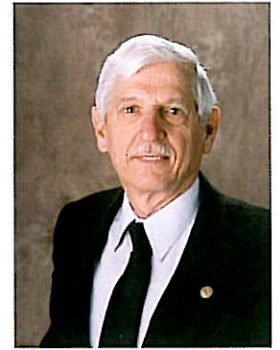
Fragmentation of private lands is one of the greatest challenges we face in trying to protect much needed habitat. Preserving economic options for maintaining intact, larger family ranches and farms is an important way to combat fragmentation. Today owners of some American game farms and exotic game ranches earn enough income from these activities to allow them to resist the temptation to subdivide their land and sell out, thus preserving open space and protecting valuable wildlife

habitat. This has precedent in Africa where hunting preserves serve to prevent poaching and provide incentives for protecting game and their habitat.

Dr. Jack Ward Thomas, Boone and Crockett Professor at the University of Montana, in an article discussing the high fence hunting, referred to "the elephant in the room" or the fact and reality that hunting within man-made confinements is here to stay. I firmly believe that we can no longer afford the luxury of ignoring these types of conservation. I think it is time for another "Summit" style meeting that invites the entire spectrum of hunting and shooting interests to sit down together and discuss the ethical problems of all forms of hunting/shooting. I would invite representatives of the purest of ethical hunting advocates, the game farmers, hound hunters, archers, the exotic ranches and their clients to sit down together and discuss the problems. Hopefully such a Summit would result in, among other things, a set of standards that would apply to all. This could provide an ethical plateau that we can all stomach, one that is defensible in our strategy against the opponents of hunting and one that will be adhered to by the majority of outdoorsmen.

I believe that some pragmatism must be explored lest we lose the battle and all hunters go the way of the dinosaurs. It is imperative that we the hunters decide what is ethical and what isn't, and that we patrol our own ranks instead of letting the antis do it for us.

So long for now. You will probably be hearing from me in future issues of *Fair Chase* as a guest writer or through an editorial. ▲ ▲ ▲



Daniel A. Pedrotti
President
Boone and Crockett Club

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DR. SAMUEL'S BOOK *KNOW HUNTING* IS LISTED IN OUR HOLIDAY CATALOG AND CAN ALSO BE ORDERED BY CALLING US TOLL-FREE AT 888/840-4868.

