

KNOWLEDGE BASE

Read, Share, Enlighten



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Have you ever felt tongue-tied when somebody asks the simple question, “Why do you hunt?” If you’re like me, it happens regularly. The problem is that so many reasons could be given, and the answer so potentially

complex, that it’s difficult to know where to start. Do you emphasize the heritage values of hunting—a treasured tradition passed down from one generation to another? Or is hunting’s utility in wildlife management the most important thing to get across? Do you point out your family’s preference for wild game as a low-fat, additive-free, and delicious source of protein? Perhaps you should strive to engage the questioner in a full discussion of North America’s conservation history and the essential role of hunters in that story. Or, maybe it’s just easier to end the discussion quickly with, “for lots of reasons, the main one being I enjoy it.”

There is a problem with always choosing the quick answer, however. Every instance

is a lost opportunity to educate and enlighten people about the many roles of hunting and hunters in our personal lives, our continent’s history, and today’s conservation landscape. Some may ask the question simply because they know little to nothing about hunting and want to learn. Others may have a negative view instilled by the abundance of one-sided and anti-hunting media. But by asking the question, these folks are indicating a willingness to receive information from a source they put some stock in—information that just may open their eyes or even change their mindsets.

If you feel up to the challenge of educating the masses, or just want to strengthen your own understanding, you need to know about an excellent resource that is hot off the presses. The Wildlife Society, the wildlife profession’s scientific and educational organization, dedicated the most recent issue of its magazine, *The Wildlife Professional*, to the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. A full picture of the model, including the prominent role of hunters and hunting, is presented in articles by leaders in the wildlife field—including professional members of the Boone and Crockett Club. A special hats-off to one

B&C professional member, Dr. Selma Glasscock, who pushed this project to fruition in her role as the Editorial Board Chair for *The Wildlife Professional*.

Articles in the special issue address all aspects of hunting and the North American Model including history, comparison with the Scandinavian Model, ethics, law and policy, funding mechanisms, science milestones, education and professional development, hunter safety, and more. It is a great read, and a resource that I will return to often. Although the magazine is received by all Wildlife Society members, I obtained a stash of copies to share with other colleagues and friends who, like me, are finding it a valuable resource for telling our important story.

Anticipating demand, The Wildlife Society printed a larger-than-normal run of the special issue and has them available for \$4.00 each on the society’s web site. Just go to www.wildlife.org, click on the “Bookstore” tab, and this will take you to *The Wildlife Professional* special issue on hunting and the North American Model. The next time somebody raises the question—Why do you hunt?—you just may want to hand them a copy. ■

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