

HISTORY OF THE RECORDS BOOK

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As 33rd president of the Boone and Crockett Club, I have the distinct honor of writing this foreword to the 14th edition of *Records of North American Big Game*. I offer here a portion of the foreword, a history of the records book.

History shows that regulated hunting is the foundation of conservation in North America. Big game records books help document this history. The Club began laying the foundations for its records program in 1902. Theodore Roosevelt was appointed chairman of the Club's first records committee—a committee charged with developing a measurement and records-keeping system for male, native North American big game trophies. In 1906, the Club published *Big Game Measurements*. The stated purpose of this book was to implement a uniform standard of measurements for North American big game. Members were encouraged to record the measurements of the game they harvested and send the information to the Club's secretary. The scoring system described in this book, which is different from the one used today, was devised by Club

members Theodore Roosevelt, Caspar Whitney and Archibald Rogers.

The intentions of the Club in establishing and popularizing a big game records-keeping system were greater than arriving at a score and honoring animals and hunters. Records-keeping also promoted big game recovery, conservation, and ethical sportsmanship. The first objective was to collect biological, harvest, and location data on hunter-taken trophies. Early wildlife science held the belief that the existence of mature male specimens was an indicator of overall population and habitat health. Conversely, their absence was an indicator of unnatural pressures on a population, such as over-harvesting, disease, and degraded habitat. Since wildlife recovery was the focus of the Club's early conservation efforts and because no such biological data on big game



BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB SCORING AND BIG GAME RECORDS COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

species existed, the Club believed that this information would be beneficial to game managers in setting and evaluating policies.

Trophy records were also used to recognize those sportsmen who were participating in the conservation movement by hunting selectively for mature male animals that had already genetically contributed to a local population. Removing pressure on the young and the females in a herd was paramount to population recovery. By following new game laws and harvest restrictions aimed at recovery, sportsmen began to see the benefits of game management and conserving for tomorrow. Sportsmen began working with, not against, conservation measures. Having their trophy and their name recognized in a records book was icing on the cake.

Lastly, big game records offered proof that

sportsmen were holding themselves to high ethical standards. Sportsmen willingly accepted the concept of fair chase—rules of engagement that showed respect for game species. Only those trophies taken in fair chase were eligible to be included in the records books. Using self-restraint and good judgment became a badge of honor. It also shifted the benchmark for success from the quantity of game taken to the quality of the chase. Today, fair chase is widely accepted among sportsmen as doing the right thing even if the wrong thing is not illegal.

In 1932, Prentiss N. Gray, a longtime Club member, authored the Club's first big-game records book, *Records of North American Big Game*, published in collaboration with the National Collection of Heads and Horns. This volume was followed in 1939 by a second edition, *North*

- Theodore Roosevelt*
THEODORE ROOSEVELT 1902
- James Nathaway Kidder*
JAMES NATHAWAY KIDDER 1908-1910
- Prentiss N. Gray*
PRENTISS N. GRAY 1931-1934
- Alfred Ely*
ALFRED ELY 1934-1946
- Harold E. Anthony*
HAROLD E. ANTHONY 1947-1950
- Samuel B. Webb*
SAMUEL B. WEBB 1951-1958
- Robert S. Waters*
ROBERT S. WATERS 1959-1964
- Elmer M. Rusten*
ELMER M. RUSTEN 1965-1970
- Jack S. Parker*
JACK S. PARKER 1971-1977
- Philip L. Wright*
PHILIP L. WRIGHT 1978-1986
- Walter H. White*
WALTER H. WHITE 1987-1994
- C. Randall Byers*
C. RANDALL BYERS 1995-2002
- Eldon "Buck" Buckner*
ELDON L. "BUCK" BUCKNER 2002-2011
- Richard Chace*
RICHARD CHACE 2012-Present



American Big Game. This edition was especially notable for several fine chapters focused on measurement and big game. Grancel Fitz had a lengthy chapter on his idea of a complex system of measurements that would, as a result of the numeric score total, rank trophies naturally.

After the second World War, interest was renewed in big-game scoring and records-keeping. In 1947, the Club began annual Big Game Competitions, with winners being chosen by a Judges Panel. In 1949, Samuel B. Webb was chosen to chair a special committee for the Club to devise an equitable, objective, and consistent measurement system for North American big game. The committee worked during the year to arrive at the system adopted by the Club in 1950. Prior to publication, the system was circulated to 250 sportsmen, biologists, and other interested parties for their comments. Once adopted, the system quickly became established as the universally accepted standard for measuring native North American big game.

The Club's scoring system utilizes careful measurements of the enduring trophy characteristics of particular species to arrive at a numerical score that provides a reliable, reproducible ranking for all trophies of a category. The system places heavy emphasis on rewarding the most common antler or horn configuration for a species, which includes symmetry between right and left antler or horn. Biologically speaking, symmetry represents healthy or poor habitat conditions where the animal lived and the presence or absence of environmental stressors.

Deducting from the final score those portions of the measured material that are non-symmetrical results in even, well-matched

trophies scoring better and placing higher in the rankings than equally-developed but mismatched trophies. For those antlered trophies with unusual amounts of abnormal antler material, non-typical categories were developed to give them recognition, as they would be unduly penalized in the typical categories. With the new system in place, the Club set about rescoring those trophies previously recognized in the 1932 and 1939 records books. The results, along with other trophies qualifying under the new system, were published in the 1952 records book, the first book that used the Club's copyrighted scoring system adopted in 1950. It was followed by later editions with this 14th edition being the most recent.

In 1984, in order to boost participation from sportsmen and to broaden the scope of the data being collected, the Club established its Awards Program and associated records book with lower minimum entry scores than the All-time book. A special 18th Awards Program records book titled *Boone and Crockett Club's 18th Big Game Awards*, was published. Its listings were limited to the 950 trophies accepted during the 18th Awards Program entry period of 1980-1982. Awards Program records books have been subsequently published every three years, the year following the close of each Triennial Awards Program. Thus, there is an All-time records book every six years and an Awards Program records book every three years. The two books differ in important ways. The All-time records book includes all trophies over current All-time minimum entry scores and the Awards Program records book includes only those trophies of the stated three-year Awards Program, as based on the

lower entry minimums applicable for many categories.

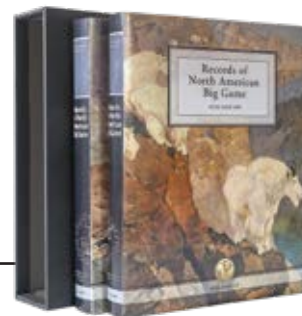
Entries accepted during two Awards Program entry periods that score at or above the stated minimums and meet other requirements will be added to the listings of the last book to comprise the next edition of the All-time records book. Of course, only trophies never before entered and/or published in a Boone and Crockett Club records book can be accepted as entries. The Club's original annual competitions that began in 1947 were changed to a triennial basis in 1968. In the early 1970s, the word "competition" was changed to "awards" to better identify the basic concept of recognizing fine trophies taken under conditions of fair chase rather than competition of such trophies. The three-year basis of trophy entry continues today. Following the close of each Awards Program entry period, the finest few trophies of each category are invited to a central location for verification by a Judges Panel. Trophies re-measured by the Judges Panel and subsequently certified by the panel for awards are eligible to receive the Boone and Crockett Club Big Game Medal and/or Certificate. Trophies receiving awards are featured with photos and their hunting stories in the Awards Program records book, (e.g., *Boone and Crockett Club's 29th Big Game Awards*) published the year following the close of an Awards Program entry period.

I will close by reaching back to the foreword of the Club's historic 1939

publication, *North American Big Game*:

If big game hunting is to survive in this country, we must have game conservation... It is a lamentable fact that we have been prodigal with our resources of big game to a point where many of our present-day species exist in very small numbers... If only our nation can be brought to a realization that conservation and game management can be practiced successfully to the glory and benefit of mankind, a great victory will have been won in the struggle to preserve one of our most priceless natural heritages. The Committee urges all who read this volume and are interested in the perpetuation of this heritage to enlist with those who are fighting this battle.

We can say that "a great victory" has been won, but the battle continues. The original vision of trophy records articulated earlier, coupled with the critical concept of fair chase, has come to fruition. Some would even say that the golden days of big game hunting are today. We pay homage here to those early visionaries who pleaded for an awakening in this country and pledge to continue their legacy. ■



***Records of North American Big Game*, 14th Edition is available in a two-volume set. Don't miss Hollingsworth's complete foreword, not to mention over 32,000 big game trophy listings. See page 42 for details about ordering a Collector's Edition Set of the new records book.**