



“SERVING THE HUNTER WHO TRAVELS”

“Hunting provides the principal incentive and revenue for conservation. Hence it is a force for conservation.”

Special To The Hunting Report World Conservation Force Bulletin

by John J. Jackson, III

Understanding Trophy Hunting: A Powerful Conservation Tool

By Randall L. Eaton, Ph.D.

(Special Advisor to Conservation Force; Communication Director of Conservation Force; Producer, “The Sacred Hunt”)

(John J. Jackson, III Note: You have to work harder for trophies. That adds to the hunting experience. It takes more time afield, more knowledge, more focus, more intensity and more skill. It is more of a hunt. It is that simple. Trophy hunting also adds unequalled conservation value to the game hunted. In many instances, the trophy value of game gives game its highest conservation value and is the greatest incentive behind its survival. In the past decade hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent internationally on elephants, rhinos, leopards, lions, polar bears, argali and dozens of other trophy animals by hunters. It is called “tourist hunting.” Elephant hunting, for example, is a trophy hunt that is rated to be one of the greatest of all hunts. Elephant hunting is responsible for 68 percent of all revenue in the CAMPFIRE Program in Zimbabwe. In Botswana, elephant hunting constitutes 56 percent of the revenue of the country’s entire safari hunting industry. The same is true here at home with our bear, elk, moose, cougar, sheep and deer. It is a value added to both the hunt and the hunted. It is time to regard trophy hunting more favorably. We can’t let the anti-hunters spin about trophy hunting go unchallenged. We have asked Dr. Randall Eaton to help explain this force for conservation.

Where does trophy hunting originate? Why do we do it?

A trophy is any part of an animal that communicates a hunter’s achievement. A tail feather advertises to others that a hunter killed a mallard drake or a cock pheasant. Antlers on the wall tell us that a hunter has killed a deer. Typical trophy values include size, rarity or elusiveness and ferocity. Species that are difficult to kill symbolize power precisely because power is required to kill them. Usually, larger antlers or horns correlate with larger size of the animal, which is why a six-

point rack carries more status than a



four-point. An albino deer may carry

more trophy value than a normal deer of the same size because they are less common and harder to find, thus greater hunting skill is required to take them.

A trophy from an animal that is extremely difficult to hunt, such as mountain sheep or goats, may not be very large or rare, but still they demonstrate a hunter’s prowess, fitness, determination and perseverance. Traditionally, the highest-ranking trophies are from animals that are dangerous, such as Cape buffalo, grizzly bear, rhino or big cats.

Trophy hunting is ancient. Evi-

dence from European caves indicates that Neanderthal hunters collected the skulls and leg bones of bears as trophies which they stored in the oldest known stone chests. The fossilized footprints of a 16-year-old Cro-Magnon boy in one cave suggest that he was initiated into manhood after killing his first deer. Behind where the boy stood etched in the wall is a deer. In front of the boy are the fossilized footprints where four men encircled him. Teenage Cro-Magnon males were buried with the single canine tooth of a deer around their necks. To this day in Germany and Switzerland, young hunters collect and wear the same tooth from their first deer, often throughout their lives. It appears that some trophy hunting traditions haven't changed much in 30,000 years!

In fact, our lives are measured by trophies of all sorts, from the hides and heads of game animals to diplomas,

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graduation rings and expensive cars, all of which symbolize and advertise an achievement worthy of a certain degree of social esteem. Trophyism - the love of trophies - is fundamental to understanding human nature, and how, indeed, we gained dominion of the planet.

In contemporary hunting societies and during humanity's vast hunting existence, the hunting success of males has been crucial to survival. The amount of flesh food sets the standard of living for hunting societies just as it does for modern societies descended from hunters. In general, the more wild animal flesh people could eat the better off they were in terms of health, survival and reproductive success, which is why hunting evolved as the most successful lifestyle around the globe until a few thousand years ago.

Many are the claims that contem-

porary human carnivory has gone out of control, but much recent research strongly suggests that the diseases of civilization - cardiovascular disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity - are not caused by over-consumption of meat or saturated fats but to carbohydrate foods, the grains, cereals and breads on which civilization rests.

Because the ability of males to kill large animals directly influences the survival of themselves, their mates and children, it is not surprising that among hunting societies women evaluate the suitability of males according to their trophies. Any male who has killed a trophy animal stands to gain in competition for mates if his hunting prowess relative to other males is verifiable. Now you know why males take possession of part of the prey to advertise its kind or communicate its size. Manhood and candidacy for marriage are earned by demonstration of minimal hunting ability. The groom usually gives his prospective in-laws a present in the form of meat he has obtained by his own hunting.

Today the father of a girl asks, “But, honey, does he have a job?” For eons of time, her answer would have been, “He killed a buck, didn't he dad?” In other words, the only way a young man could marry was by proving himself as an able provider.

We are saying that for many thousands of years boys became men, husbands and fathers, according to their hunting success, which they demonstrated by presenting a trophy animal as proof of their hunting prowess and suitability as a mate and provider.

Collecting that first trophy is a turning point in a young man's life, from boyhood to manhood. For males, the trophy has been an essential component of their rite of passage. That is why many hunters still value their first trophy above all others, even if it is rather paltry.

Contrary to the assertions of anti-hunters, hunting bears and big cats with dogs is not a recent invention of the Euro-American male ego. Many of the native cultures of North America were hunting bear and cougar trophies

JOHN J. JACKSON, III
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“Serving The Hunter Who Travels”

using dogs when Europeans arrived. Which means that for millennia, trophy hunting has kept these species avoiding and evading humans.

Killing of predators is not only beneficial in reducing predation on humans and reducing competition for big game, it is also very difficult. For all these reasons predator trophies carry especially high status. The advance of human societies from hunters to effective competitors against large carnivores, and, finally, to warriors against other humans, has been recorded in their trophies.

The Eskimos' major competitor for seals, their most important food resource, is the polar bear. Prior to the advent of firearms, Eskimos were at best equal in rank with the awesome white bear. If a man killed one he was held in high esteem. According to Richard Nelson, one Eskimo had killed a polar bear with his knife, “This feat proved him one of the greatest of the old-time hunters.”

As weapon technology accelerated to the level of sophisticated firearms, the risks of hunting dangerous animals was lowered, shifting trophy values from what previously had been dangerous animals, indicative of the hunter's bravery and suitability as a warrior, to very rare or difficult species, indicative of leadership qualities.

The previously esteemed “Big Five” of Africa - elephant, rhino, Cape buffalo, lion and leopard - include exceptionally large or potentially dangerous species, which are not especially rare. The “Grand Slam” includes trophies of North America's rugged mountain game, valued not for rarity, size or danger, but because the successful hunter has to possess qualities desirable in a warring society. These are self-control, physical conditioning and stamina, patience, tenacity and wealth. It is no mere coincidence that disproportionate numbers of men with high status or great wealth in modern American society, business tycoons, military leaders and holders of high state office, are trophy hunters.

Contemporary life resounds of trophyism and the social esteem associated with the domination of preda-

tors. A cover of *Newsweek* depicted Jimmy Carter and his cohorts lion-like “in the lion's den,” a common phrase. Dozens of beers, some for over 600 years, are symbolized by the lion. Lowenbrau means “lion beer.” According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the most common name given to taverns for hundreds of years has been “Red Lion.” A red lion is a dead lion, and the fraternity of the red lion are those courageous men who killed lions. Automobiles named Jaguar, Cougar, Bobcat and Panthera are powered by putting a “tiger in your tank.”

But there is more to trophyism than egoism. There is a positive, spiritual side to the trophy, too. At the age of 13 I collected my first trophy, a mallard hen, which I very carefully skinned and preserved. That skin was sacred to me and it stayed there in the basement of



my parents' house, in “my” old hunting room for decades, just as it survives even now in the “basement” of my mind. Every hunter recalls his first kill vividly and can accurately recount it.

For me that mallard hen was not merely a symbol of my first big step to manhood. At the deepest level, the trophy is a personal statement about connection with life and a commitment to serve life with respect, the unspoken, common commandment of all true hunters.

In an egoic sense, trophies do rank a man socially, but they also are a record of that man's deep connections with the creatures he killed. A trophy is both an egoic statement and a spiritual symbol.

Perhaps it is no surprise that trophy hunters are at work to conserve the remaining lion population in Africa.

Outside of national parks, the lion's only real ally is the trophy hunter. The popular moral judgement against trophy hunting doesn't consider its immense conservation significance. Throughout the history of civilization, powerful men have established preserves for the purpose of perpetuating trophy game. Otherwise, many species would have been eradicated owing to their competition with humans, livestock and farmlands. The Asiatic or Biblical lion, for example, survived into the modern era solely because it was protected by Indian royalty as a valuable trophy species. Its value as a trophy animal is what brought the white rhino back from near extinction to a secure population level.

Project Jaguar in Paraguay is a model program that illustrates the special role trophy hunting can play in conservation of wildlife and environments today. The situation of the jag-

“Its value as a trophy animal is what brought the white rhino back from near extinction.”

uar is the same as that of the lion in Africa, where, outside national parks, it has only negative values except among trophy hunters who are eager to pay handsomely to hunt it. The interest that hunters have in jaguars translates into economic support of their extensive range requirements through sustainable use. There are three conservancies, one of which totals more than 700,000 acres, in which regulated hunting of jaguar, puma and their prey base can enhance and ensure the biodiversity of Paraguay's private lands. - Dr. Randall L. Eaton, Ph.D., PO Box 280, Enterprise, OR 97828. E-mail: reaton@eoni.com.

(John J. Jackson, III Note: To support Project Jaguar, contact Conservation Force at 3900 North Causeway Blvd, Suite 1045, Metairie, LA 70002-1746. Donations are tax deductible. Additional information is available from Rocky McBride at 915-837-3134. E-mail: rmmcbride@brroksdata.net.)

Briefly Noted

• **Conservation Partners Meet In Montana:** The American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) held their third annual meeting in Big Sky, Montana, this past month. It was another successful meeting attended by representatives of more than 30 of America’s top sportsmen’s organizations. The umbrella of organizations joined together to collectively address future American wildlife conservation challenges and to maintain the sportsmen’s leadership role in our wildlife conservation system. Everything from Chronic Wasting Disease to forestry practices was the topic of discussion during the two-day meeting.

I finished my term on the Steering Committee and chaired the Nominating committee. The new chair of the AWCP is Bob Model of the Boone and Crocket Club. He replaces Ronnie Sparrowe of the Wildlife Management Institute, who has served as chairman of the AWCP for the past year.

Two new organizations were admitted as partners: Houston Safari Club and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP). The former is a very important supporting contributor to Conservation Force. The latter is a new non-profit organization located in Washington, D.C. It is a new “service” organization that supersedes the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Alliance (TRCA). TRCA focused on forest issues, while the new TRCP intends to expand the grassroots network of the original TRCA and the breadth of issues it addressed.

The Partners had an interesting dinner at Ted Turner’s ranch in Montana. Ted explained that he is an avid hunter and fisherman. He stated that he hunts approximately 70 to 80 days per year and he fishes approximately another 70 to 80 days per year, which is a fact not generally appreciated. That very morning he had shot a moose. Thousands of hunts are conducted on his lands each year. This includes 1,000 bison hunts (he calls them culls) and nearly 1,000 elk hunts when the

free public cow hunts that he permits are included.

Ted Turner also may be the largest private landowner in America. He has 1.75 million acres of land in 10 states and another 100,000 acres in Argentina. He has no cattle, domestic sheep or domestic goats. As well as an ardent



hunter, fisherman and outfitter he is a serious conservationist. Whether you care for all his projects or not, the fact remains that Ted Turner is a prime example of the hunter who cares and gives more than anyone else. His contributions exceed those of anyone else. There is no living individual who can

match his contributions to conservation. He is more responsible than anyone alive for the increase that’s occurred in the American bison population. There is not a market for all the bison he raises, so he is opening “Ted’s Montana Grills” across the country. He claims a large role is building America’s bison population from 70,000 to 300,000 in recent years.

Ted Turner is a hunter who is an unequalled force for conservation. His life also demonstrates that what you choose to do when you can afford to do anything in the world is go hunting and fishing.

• **Don’t Overreact to Chronic Wasting Disease:** Don’t be unnecessarily concerned about Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). It has never been known or shown to cause harm to humans, pets or domestic livestock. It is a deer and elk disease that has existed in Colorado for more than 35 years with little or no consequence. That area of Colorado has been hunted all this time. If you over-react to CWD, the only “wasting” will be your precious opportunity to hunt and the American conservation system. Buy a license even if you can’t find the time to hunt. The system needs you now.

License fees are the single most important part of the funding of the American conservation system. Moreover, deer and elk hunting are the most significant part of that. If you must know more about CWD, here are some good sources. USGS: National Wildlife Health Center (<http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov>); Colorado Division of Wildlife (<http://wildlife.state.co.us/CWD/index.asp>); US Department of Agriculture: Veterinary Services (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/naahps/cwd/index.html>). – John J. Jackson, III.

Conservation Force Sponsor

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International Foundation for the Conservation of Wildlife

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MEMO

To: Jim Young, Print N Mail
From: Leonardo Mocci, The Hunting Report
Re: October 2002 Issue of Conservation Force Supplement
Date: September 19, 2002

Jim,

Here's the October 2002 issue of the Conservation Force Supplement to be inserted in The Hunting Report. Don't forget to insert John Jackson's picture on page 2. Please fax "blue lines" for approval A.S.A.P.

Print run is 4,750. Ship overs to us as usual.

Please call me if you have any questions.

Leonardo

P.S. Please make sure that John Jackson gets his 25 copies.