

A Statewide Examination of Hunting and Trophy Nonhuman Animals: Perspectives of Montana Hunters

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Abstract

The purpose of this descriptive and exploratory study was to extend our understanding of the motivations for trophy hunting. Hunting is an important recreational activity and part of the culture in Montana. Placing specific emphasis on the importance of obtaining a trophy non-human animal when hunting, the study examined the attitudes of resident hunters and nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters. The study used a qualitative approach to data collection and developed 2 surveys that contained mostly open-ended questions. Results from 1000 surveys mailed to resident elk hunters and 1000 surveys mailed to nonresident outfitter-sponsored elk hunters indicated that nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters were more likely than resident hunters to seek trophy-class animals. Respondents provided statements about the importance of obtaining trophy animals.

Keywords

attitudes, hunters, motivations, Montana, trophy hunting

Introduction

For well over a century, recreational hunting has been an activity pursued by millions of Americans (Bissell, Duda, & Young, 1998; Dizard, 2003; Stedman & Heberlein, 2001). However, hunting is increasingly viewed as an antisocial act in contemporary society (Bergman, 2005; Bronner, 2005; Goldfine & Goldfine, 2003; Harker & Bates, 2007; Heberlein, 1991; McLeod, 2007). Sport hunting has come under fire by animal rights organizations and ecofeminists (Fitzgerald, 2005; Gunn, 2001; Kalof, Fitzgerald, & Baralt, 2004; Kheel, 1996; Munro, 1997; Peterson, 2004). In recent decades we have witnessed the increasing commercialization of wildlife (Geist, 1988; Posewitz,

2004). This has led, for example, to the commonplace establishment of fee hunting and wildlife ranching in many states (Butler, Teaschner, Ballard, & McGee, 2005; Messmer, Dixon, Shields, Barras, & Schroeder, 1998; Kelley, 2001). Because of recent changes in U.S. society such as increased urbanization, limited access to private lands, and the increasing popularity of other recreational activities, the proportion of the total U.S. population that hunts is declining (Dizard, 2003; Heberlein, 1991).

Depletion of Wildlife and Development of the Conservation Movement

Early in the history of the United States, people killed large quantities of wildlife. Reisner (1991) described the situation:

In a nation of immigrants just liberated from landlessness and crowdedness and monarchy, game laws, like forestry laws and zoning laws and gun-control laws, were resisted with a singular passion. The yeoman American citizen, intoxicated by his right to bear arms, made giddy by the omnipresent wildlife he could hunt at will, could not recalibrate his values as the game ran out, could not constrain his impulse (always described as a God-given right) to hunt. (p. 271)

Because of their sheer abundance, nonhuman animals were initially seen as an infinite resource that would last forever. Prior to the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, wildlife was killed for profit. Some species, such as passenger pigeon, went extinct; others, such as the bison, were on the brink of extinction (Black, 2006; Kline, 2007; Koch, 1941; Ritvo, 2004). Given the dire situation that existed, Ritvo (2004) claimed, "Still symbolic of uncivilized nature, wild game was transformed from an obstacle into a valuable resource in need of protection" (p. 209). Describing changes that were occurring with respect to wildlife, Dunlap (1988) stated,

By the early 1900s states were limiting kills and restricting hunting techniques to those considered "sporting." They were beginning to abolish market hunting. Fees from hunting licenses were providing a continuing source of money for wildlife protection. (p. 54)

Evidence suggests that the killing of large quantities of game occurred into the early twentieth century (Mechling, 2004). Discussing hunting photographs taken early in the twentieth century, Mechling stated, "...the photos were intended to provide visual evidence of a hunting experience, in most cases of a successful hunt" (p. 62). Mechling also noted that these photos often portrayed hunters:

... with an enormous array of dead animals. ... [which] coincides with the rise of commodity capitalism, and the point of many of these photos (sometimes an expression of the boosterism for sport tourism to an area) is simply plenitude. These photos resemble period photos of department store displays and world's fair displays of goods, testimony that life is good in the United States. (p. 62)

Industrial capitalism leads to intense competition and a desire to be successful (Coleman, 1994; Eliason, 1999). Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that, at this time, the possession of large quantities of game may have been equated with success. It should be noted that other motivations also could have been associated with killing lots of game. For example, ecofeminism argues that some hunters have a need to dominate animals and nature (Kheel, 1996). In addition, the dominionistic type of sport hunter identified by Kellert (1996)

... covets most the opportunities for competition, conquest, and the exercise of dominance afforded by the hunting experience. Game animals signify an object of success and achievement rather than a subject of affection, intellectual curiosity, or practical value. (p. 74)

Recognizing that something needed to be done or there would be no game to pursue in the future, the conservation movement was born when sport hunters organized, and pressed for, the creation of laws to protect wildlife (Cart, 1973; Dunlap, 1988; Herman, 2001; Miner, 2001; Ward, 1982). Examples of this include the Boone and Crockett club, an organization formed in 1887 that advocates trophy hunting and the League of American Sportsmen that followed in 1898 (Altherr, 1978; Baker, 1985; Black, 2006; Herman, 2003). The conservation movement, which is concerned with the conservation of fish and wildlife species and advocates regulated and controlled hunting, also benefited from having U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt in office from 1901-1909 (Posewitz, 2004). Roosevelt was an avid hunter who had tremendous influence on shaping the conservation movement in America.

The conservation movement that advocated hunting originated early in the twentieth century during the Progressive Era (Kline, 2007), after market hunters had decimated wildlife populations across the country. In the United States, "... fish and wildlife have been ruled the people's resource, to be held and managed by the states as a public trust for the common good" (Posewitz, 2004, p. 19). The U.S. conservation movement has been a major success, and individuals from all social classes have been able to pursue and harvest wildlife (Brower, 2005; Geist, 1988; Posewitz, 1994; Posewitz, 1999).

Motivations for Participating in Hunting

People participate in hunting for different reasons (Decker & Connelly, 1989; Hammitt, McDonald, & Patterson, 1990; Hendee, 1974; Kennedy, 1974; Manfreda, Fix, Teel, Smeltzer, & Kahn, 2004; Sanyal & McLaughlin, 1993). Decker and Connelly (1989) stated, "...motivations for hunting deer are rooted in the areas of personal achievement, affiliation with friends and family, and appreciation of the outdoors" (p. 462). There are many motivations for hunting. Some people hunt for the meat while others seek trophy animals (Heberlein & Kuentzel, 2002). According to Bissell et al. (1998, p. 77), hunting to get close to nature is becoming increasingly popular; however, hunting for meat is on the decline. In a study of Idaho elk hunters, Tynon (1997) reported that "trophy hunting" was tied for seventh place (with "getting away, solitude, freedom") among 32 categories used to describe quality elk hunting experiences (p. 39).

Similarly, among the seven motivations Gigliotti (2000) examined among Black Hills deer hunters in South Dakota, nature was the most popular at 32%. These were individuals who said they hunted, "To enjoy nature, the outdoors, and the beauty of the area" (p. 38). Meat hunters represented 12% of the sample while trophy hunters comprised only 6% of the sample. Gigliotti stated,

...one might expect that nonresidents would comprise a larger percentage of trophy hunters than residents would, which was not the case. Both residents and nonresidents comprised equal proportions of trophy hunters (6%). (p. 39)

In their study of motivations among Alabama deer hunters, Grilliot and Armstrong (2005) found trophy hunting to be less important to hunters than experiencing nature, excitement, or social reasons for hunting. In their study of South Dakota muzzleloader hunters, Boulanger, Hubbard, Jenks, and Gigliotti (2006, p. 692) reported that trophy hunters were the least common at 3% while nature hunters were the most common at 23%. Adams and Steen (1997) reported that trophies were not important to female hunters in Texas.

Despite these studies, evidence overwhelmingly suggests that trophy hunting of nonhuman animals is becoming increasingly popular among many hunters (Bryant, 2004; Granfield & Colomy, 2005; Kalof & Fitzgerald, 2003; Strychacz, 1993). As can be seen in the extent to which trophy specimens are stressed and valued in contemporary hunting culture, all an individual needs to do is examine some contemporary hunting magazines and televised hunting programs. Articles and shows focus almost exclusively on animals of trophy proportions; very rarely are smaller-sized big game the focus of such articles and shows. Kalof and Fitzgerald (2003) stated,

Trophy photographs in hunting magazines are thus important story-telling instruments. They stand as records of hunting prowess, strength and virility and as evidence for the audience (readers of the magazines) of the hunters' killing experiences. (p. 115)

In line with this increasing popularity, some states have moved toward the practice of quality-deer management, the goal of which is to produce large trophy deer (Peterson, 2004). Moreover, in recent decades, we have witnessed the proliferation of fee-hunting programs on private land in the United States; these programs often focus on generating trophy-class animals for paying clientele (Butler et al., 2005; Geist, 1988; Mozumder, Starbuck, Berrens, & Alexander, 2007; Sigmon, 2004). In their study of Cooperative Wildlife Management Units in Utah, Messmer et al. (1998, p. 328) reported that hunters who paid to access these lands had a greater interest in trophy hunts than did draw hunters (47% vs. 20%, respectively).

From a biological perspective, studies have found that selective harvesting of trophy animals may have negative effects on wildlife populations (Coltman et al., 2003; Milner, Nilsen, & Andreassen, 2007). Often, the animals who are selectively removed from wildlife populations are large, mature males who are in their prime. Milner et al. (2007) contend,

... that when selective harvesting perturbs the sex or age structure in such a way that the mating system is disrupted, the fecundity and survival of certain sectors of the population and the offspring sex ratio may all be affected. (p. 43)

From an economic standpoint, however, trophy hunting—because it may also be a beneficial tool for conservation efforts—can generate high revenues in developing areas (Baker, 1997; Humavindu & Barnes, 2003; Lindsey, Alexander, Frank, Mathieson, & Romanach, 2006; MacDonald, 2005; Milner et al.). This can lead to concern for the land and habitat because there is an economic incentive to preserve both land and habitat and protect them from development and degradation. MacDonald (2005) stated,

International trophy hunting, however, is on the increase, and this is reflected in a 71 per cent increase in the importation of foreign game killed by US trophy hunters since 1990. (p. 266)

Individuals may use nonhuman animals to enhance their social standing in society (Berry, 2008). Berry stated,

... nonhuman animals—particularly those conferring social distinction (exotic breeds, expensive racehorses, animals known for violence) are used as consumer products to enhance human status. (p. 77)

The demand for trophy animals has to do with their scarcity. Trophy-animal heads are a status symbol, and are an example of positional goods (Bell, 2004).

Citing the work of Hirsch (1977), Bell stated,

... people often want something precisely *because* it is in short supply. ... scarce goods create an opportunity for conferring status and prestige upon those who gain access to or possession of them ... Hirsch calls such difficult-to-attain things "positional goods," goods whose desirability is predicated at least in part on short supplies, limited access, higher prices, and consequent social honor or position. (p. 37)

Discussing rarity and the value of trophy animals, Courchamp et al. (2006) stated,

... hunting trophy prices are correlated with rarity. ... the rarer the trophy, the more valuable and expensive it is. (p. 0003)

Coleman's (1994) industrial capitalism theory posits that industrial capitalism has created a "culture of competition" (p. 196). Competition results in a desire to be successful in everything that a person does. In the hunting culture, a large set of antlers is a symbol of success (Eliason, 1999).

In addition, socialization theory is used as an analytic tool (Floyd, Bankston, & Burgesion, 1986; Stedman & Heberlein, 2001). This theory suggests that individuals learn about culture and norms through the socialization process. Stedman and Heberlein contend,

... the overwhelming evidence indicates that participation in modern recreational hunting is a learned, socialized behavior. (p. 604)

Family members as well as close friends provide much of this socialization; however, with respect to hunting, the media also plays an important role. Hunting is a popular recreational activity in Montana. It is considered a part of the state's cultural heritage. Brownell (1987) stated,

Montana is one of the few states where wildlife issues and considerations are still a serious public concern. (p. 57)

Swenson (1983) stated,

Statewide surveys in 1977 revealed that over 55% of men and 20% of women are hunters. (p. 300)

In addition to resident hunters, thousands of nonresident hunters converge on the state each fall for the opportunity to pursue a variety of big game species, especially deer and elk. Moreover, the hunting seasons in Montana are among the longest, not only in the West but also in the nation as a whole. The natural resources of Montana are important economically; they account for most of the visitor spending by nonresident tourists (Wilton & Nickerson, 2006).

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the attitudes of resident as well as nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters regarding the importance placed on harvesting trophy-sized animals. Given that nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters spend large sums of money for hunting licenses and the services of outfitters, it was believed that they would place greater importance on obtaining trophy specimens than would Montana resident hunters.

Methods

This study took a mostly qualitative approach to data collection. Two surveys were developed: one for Montana resident hunters; the other, for nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters. These surveys asked identical questions about the importance of harvesting trophy animals. In addition, nonresident surveys contained questions about the experience of hunting with an outfitter. So that respondents' perspectives could be obtained in their own words, the majority of questions in the surveys were open-ended (Fowler, 1993). Both surveys contained an open-ended question that asked, "How important is it for you to harvest a *trophy* animal when hunting." A qualitative inquiry of this sort is important when the purpose of the research was "... to capture and understand the perspective of individuals without predetermining their perspective through prior selection of questionnaire categories" (Tynon, 1997, p. 34).

There was also a question in both surveys that asked respondents to indicate on a 10-point scale how important it was to obtain a trophy animal when hunting. Respondents were asked to do the following:

Please circle the number on the scale that best represents the importance to you of harvesting a *trophy* animal, where '1' represents Not Important and '10' represents Extremely Important.

Randomly selected names and addresses of resident elk hunters as well as nonresident outfitter-sponsored elk hunters were obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Resident surveys were mailed to 1000 randomly selected Montana resident hunters who purchased an elk license in 2004.

Nonresident surveys were mailed to 1000 randomly selected nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters who obtained either deer/elk combination licenses or elk combination licenses in 2004. Elk hunting licenses are unlimited for resident hunters. Montana limits the number of nonresident elk hunters each year to about 17,500.

Each year in Montana, there is a general drawing for approximately 12,000 nonresident deer/elk combination licenses. In addition, approximately 5,500 deer/elk combination licenses or elk combination licenses are set aside for clients of outfitters. This means that nonresidents who hire the services of an outfitter can circumvent the general drawing for nonresident licenses and purchase a guaranteed license that costs a few hundred dollars more. Surveys were mailed in March 2005. A total of 255 resident hunters responded for a response rate of 26%. A total of 281 nonresident hunters responded for a response rate of 28%. No checks for nonresponse bias were performed.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Resident and Nonresident Hunters

	Resident Hunters (Mean)		Nonresident Hunters (Mean)	
Years Hunting Experience	35.1 years		38.1 years	
Age	48.5 years		50.5 years	
	Resident Hunters		Nonresident Hunters	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Sex				
Male	227	90.8	275	100
Female	23	9.2	0	0
Education				
Some High School	8	3.2	9	3.3
High School Graduate	57	23.0	55	20.1
Some College	87	35.1	68	24.9
BS/BA Degree	53	21.4	67	24.5
Graduate Work	15	6.0	20	7.3
Graduate Degree	28	11.3	54	19.8

Table 1. (*cont.*)

	Resident Hunters (Mean)		Nonresident Hunters (Mean)	
Years Hunting Experience	35.1 years		38.1 years	
Age	48.5 years		50.5 years	
	Resident Hunters		Nonresident Hunters	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Marital Status				
Married	201	80.4	230	83.9
Single (never married)	27	10.8	18	6.0
Separated	1	0.4	0	0
Divorced	14	5.6	20	7.3
Widowed	7	2.8	6	2.2
Income				
\$14,999 or less	15	6.4	0	0
\$15,000-\$24,999	27	11.5	0	0
\$25,000-\$34,999	25	10.6	5	1.9
\$35,000-\$49,999	52	22.1	19	7.4
\$50,000-\$74,999	57	24.3	40	15.6
\$75,000 or more	59	25.1	257	75.1
Race/Ethnicity				
White	241	98.8	272	98.9
Black	0	0	0	0
Hispanic	1	0.4	1	0.4
Native American	1	0.4	1	0.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0	1	0.4
Other	1	0.4	0	0

Table 1 contains demographic characteristics of resident hunters and nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters. Montana resident hunters had an average age of 49 years and an average of 35 years of hunting experience. Nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters were 51 years old on average and had an average

of 38 years hunting experience. In terms of sex, 91% of resident hunters were male, and 9% were female. All (100%) of the nonresident hunters were male.

Resident and nonresident hunters were generally similar in terms of marital status (80% of residents and 84% of nonresidents were married) and race/ethnicity (99% of residents and 99% of nonresidents were White). In terms of education, nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters had greater levels of educational attainment than did resident hunters. More than half (52%) of the nonresident hunters had at least a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree, while a little more than a third (39%) of Montana resident hunters had at least a B.S. degree. The largest differences were found with respect to income. Of nonresident hunters, 75% had total household incomes of \$75,000 or more, while only 25% of resident hunters had equivalent incomes.

Findings

Table 2 reveals scores on the Importance of Harvesting a Trophy Animal Scale. Montana residents had a mean score of 3.6 (SD = 2.66) on the importance of obtaining a trophy. Nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters had a mean score of 4.8 (SD = 2.51). This indicates that trophy hunting is more important to nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters than to resident hunters. A *t*-test statistic was calculated for the two means. The *t* value indicated a statistically significant difference between the two means ($t = -5.22$, $df = 523$, $p < .001$).

Table 2. Importance of Harvesting a Trophy Animal Scale

Resident Hunters (Mean = 3.6)										
	Not Important			Moderately Important				Extremely Important		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number	89	22	26	27	25	11	21	17	4	7
Percentage	35.7	8.8	10.4	10.8	10.0	4.4	8.4	6.8	1.6	2.8
Nonresident Hunters (Mean = 4.8)										
	Not Important			Moderately Important				Extremely Important		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number	37	25	32	26	40	34	37	30	6	9
Percentage	13.4	9.1	11.6	9.4	14.5	12.3	13.4	10.9	2.2	3.3

Data were categorized based on scores found in the Importance of Harvesting a Trophy Animal Scale in Table 2. Those in the Not Important category scored 1, 2, or 3 (Resident N = 137, Nonresident N = 94); those in the Moderately Important category scored 4, 5, 6, or 7 (Resident N = 84, Nonresident N = 137); and those in the Extremely Important category scored 8, 9, or 10 (Resident N = 28, Nonresident N = 45). A two (Resident, Nonresident) by three (Not Important, Moderately Important, Extremely important) chi-square analysis revealed statistically significant differences in terms of the importance of getting a trophy animal between the categories of resident and nonresident hunters ($X^2 = 23.35$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$).

Written comments about the importance of harvesting trophy animals from both resident and nonresident hunters were analyzed in an effort to shed additional light on the motivations for pursuing certain types of animals. Representative comments from resident hunters and nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters in each category are presented. To make the results more meaningful, personal characteristics of hunters were included—unless this information was not provided by the respondents. This information includes age, sex, and occupation.

Resident Hunter Comments

Not Important

The majority of resident hunters indicated that obtaining a trophy nonhuman animal was of no importance to them (55%). Many of these individuals, while not opposed to taking a trophy, professed other reasons for hunting, including the meat. For example, the following comments from a 25-year old female who worked as a CNA (certified nurse's assistant) summed it up succinctly:

Not at all—quality of meat is very important.

The comments from a 55-year old male contractor suggest that some individuals “age-out” of trophy hunting as they get older. That is, the importance of killing trophy animals declines as they age:

In my 20's it was very important and I did kill “monster” animals. I lived for weeks and sometimes months in the woods. Today “trophy” isn't such a big deal. Good meat is the key.

Some individuals are motivated by the challenge of getting a larger animal each year, but not necessarily a trophy-sized animal. A 45-year old female who worked as a teacher:

It is a personal challenge for me to try to harvest a larger buck than my last one. Does that happen every year—NO. What is a trophy? My first doe was a trophy. If I see a monster, you bet I'll take it. Does it drive my hunting? NO!

Another hunter claimed that while he didn't consider himself a trophy hunter, he did become one once when he obtained a tag to hunt in an area the state managed for trophy animals. This individual, a male employed by a conservation organization who didn't provide his age, said:

I have never been a trophy hunter. I have also not passed up a chance to take a nice bull elk or buck deer; I just have never passed them up to look for a bigger, better animal. With one exception, I did draw a tag for an area that MFWP [Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks] has reduced the bull harvesting to promote big mature bulls and when I was drawn for that area I did become a trophy hunter for filling that tag. I filled it with a very nice "trophy" bull elk. Now I do not put in for that area so that others may have the same opportunity I had and be successful at it.

Moderately Important

Resident hunters who indicated a trophy was of moderate importance (34%) seemed to be a little more selective of animals when hunting than those in the Not Important category; however, meat was also mentioned by some of these individuals as an important factor influencing why they hunt. One individual in the study, a 38-year old male truck driver, stated the following in this regard:

Trophy size is not really that important to me. . . . I hunt for economic reasons as well as for sport. Early in the season I will sometimes hold out for a trophy bull—but as the season progresses I need to kill whatever is legal to feed my family.

Another resident, a 59-year old male who described himself as an engineer/builder, professed similar reasons for hunting:

Often I will look for a trophy in order to reduce the odds of shooting an animal; regarding elk, meat is the primary object.

Some of the individuals stressed that getting a trophy animal was not that important to them. However, they also noted that it was important to have trophy animals in the population who could be hunted and reported being selective when hunting trophy areas. A 49-year old self-employed male stated the following in this regard:

It's important to be able to pursue quality or trophy animals, knowing they are out there, but it's less important to harvest one. Maybe once in a while.

The following statement came from a 30-year old female who worked as a CPA (certified public accountant).

Not very important. However, when I draw a tag in a special area known for trophy animals I am more selective.

One of these hunters, a 49-year old male who worked as an RN (registered nurse), indicated he was selective in terms of what he would harvest, while at the same time not being a trophy hunter:

Not at all. I am a selective hunter. I've taken a 4 point buck the last 5 years but nothing trophy quality.

Extremely Important

A minority (11%) of resident hunters expressed the extreme importance of hunting trophy animals and indicated that their objective was to have the opportunity to pursue and harvest large game—not simply to kill any animal. Some of them mentioned that they had taken many animals in the past and their objective was to focus on larger animals so that they could have trophies of every species or get a larger animal than any they had previously gotten. Responses of these individuals alluded to elements of competitiveness, success, and collection.

The comments from two individuals indicated the importance of collecting trophy specimens. Stressing the importance of success and the competitive nature of hunting, a 46-year old male who was a vice president of sales said:

It is important to me to shoot a trophy animal, if I am going to shoot an animal.

A 42-year old male real estate broker expressed similar sentiments with respect to getting a trophy animal:

If I take an animal I always do [it] with the idea it is better than any other. Not necessarily rack size. If I am going to take an animal it will be a trophy. I am not interested in just shooting one. I very much, however, enjoy the meat. I don't buy doe tags.

One hunter, a 57-year old male who worked as a sales representative, said he had never taken a trophy bull elk so that was his primary objective:

I have taken enough animals in my lifetime that a trophy animal is my primary interest especially a bull elk as I have not taken one ever.

The comments of another hunter, a 45-year old who described himself as a professional, indicated the importance he placed on getting a trophy of every species he hunted:

It's important to me to see and maybe get the opportunity to harvest a trophy animal. This doesn't mean I must harvest trophies, however I would like to kill a trophy in all of the species I hunt once in my lifetime.

Nonresident Outfitter-sponsored Hunter Comments

Not Important

Despite paying large sums of money for hunting licenses and the services of outfitters, some of the nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters indicated that trophy animals were not important to them and that the concept of trophy was subjective. Table 2 reveals that about one-third (34%) of these hunters felt that obtaining a trophy animal was not important. One hunter, a 65-year old retired male, claimed that any animal he harvests is a trophy in his eyes:

It has never been important and in most cases I'd prefer to harvest the "smaller" of the species because the meat is usually better. However, I regard anything I am fortunate enough to harvest as a trophy.

Another individual, a 43-year old male real estate manager, believed that the concept of trophy was in the eye of the beholder:

This is not the most important part of hunting. I have "passed" on trophies when circumstances would have diminished the overall experience. I have harvested exceptional animals and not "scored" them in record books. "Trophy" is a subjective concept. My first deer at 16 years old was a trophy in my mind.

Moderately Important

The greatest proportion of nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters indicated that obtaining a trophy animal was of moderate importance (50%). Consistent with the "multiple satisfactions" approach to hunting (Decker & Connelly, 1989; Hammitt et al., 1990; Hendee, 1974; Manfredo et al., 2004), comments of some of these hunters focused on various facets of the hunting experience as being the most important elements of a hunt, not simply taking an animal. For example, a 64-year old male building contractor claimed that having the adventure and being outdoors were more important than getting a trophy animal:

It's great to get a trophy animal, some are "trophies" because of the circumstances, but it's not the most important. The adventure of a hunting trip out of state or country, the time spent outdoors, alone or with friends is the most important to me.

Similarly, a 53-year old male painter expressed a preference for other facets of the hunt:

Not very. I usually try for a "nice" animal, but how the hunt goes is more important. Besides we enjoy eating wild game—and every animal deserves trophy status. I'd like to say that some of my most difficult and satisfying hunts ended with antlerless deer!

Comments from some of the individuals did suggest a relationship between the cost of the hunt and expectations of getting a trophy animal. A 47-year old male claims manager said the following in this regard:

A bonus. Higher expectations on paid hunts.

Another individual, a 58-year old male hospital administrator, described how getting an occasional trophy was necessary to justify his hunting expenses:

Not much. However, with as much time as I have spent in preparation for and actually hunting, together with the considerable cost involved for license, gear, travel, lodging, outfitter, etc., it is hard to justify it to my wife if I didn't occasionally bring home a trophy.

Responses were diverse, however. Comments from a 36-year old male director stressed the importance of opportunity with respect to getting a trophy animal:

As long as the opportunity is there, I don't have to be successful.

A 56-year old male businessman indicated that getting a representative animal was what he considered most important:

An occasional trophy is nice, but most often looking for a good representative sample of the area.

Extremely Important

Trophy animals were extremely important to 16% of nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters. These individuals were hard-core trophy hunters who said that it was very important for them to get a trophy animal, even if meant pass-

ing up smaller animals and going home empty-handed. In addition, as with resident hunters who placed extreme importance on getting trophy animals, elements of success and competition were evident in many of these responses. The following comments from a 60-year old male business owner/farmer indicate that over time he has become more selective while hunting:

Sometimes not important. Sometimes very important-to the point that I will and have many times brought tags home and passed up game. With experience has come "higher standards" as to what constitutes a "trophy." This is true with elk and deer- However with sheep-if I ever draw a tag-any good ram would be a genuine "trophy" for me-Probable one in a lifetime.

Comments of the next three individuals drive home the importance they place on getting trophy animals. For example, a 29-year old male account manager said:

Well, I generally only shoot at what I consider a trophy. But this is by no means on a/or near record level. Basically I want to shoot something with a nice set of horns/antlers, but I will not shoot a spike/fork horn just so I can say I got an animal.

Comments from a 50-year old male who did not provide his occupation echo similar sentiments:

I work hard at that also. But [it's] not the end of the world if I don't. I will pass up a lot of inferior animals for a chance at a trophy. But I won't cry on the way home if I don't fill a tag.

A 58-year old male president said the following:

I only shoot trophy animals if I shoot at all. If I am going to shoot this question rates a 10. However, it is not important that I get one. In other words, I enjoy the hunt regardless of whether I shoot an animal on [the] hunt. However, I will only hunt where I have a chance at a trophy.

The following comments are from a 40-year old male employed as a prosecuting attorney:

When I am trophy hunting by myself I only hunt for trophy animals which means a harvest is much less frequent. I put a lot of research in my area to hunt and try to hunt where a trophy is more likely to be available.

For one individual, cost of the hunt was a factor that affected the importance of getting a trophy animal. A 59-year old retired male who previously worked in a chemical factory said:

If I go out of state to hunt it is very important when I spent money for an outfitter.

This is consistent with Dizard (2003, p. 192) who stated "...when the hunter has invested a significant amount of cash for the services of an expert, coming home empty-handed can be an unpleasant prospect."

Discussion

There was evidence that hunters considered trophy nonhuman animals to be positional goods (Bell, 2004; Hirsch, 1977). This is reflected, for example, in the comments from the resident hunter who said that he drew a tag for a trophy bull elk area and now doesn't apply "...for that area so that others may have the same opportunity I had and be successful at it." There were also elements of success and competition in responses of hunters that provided support for Coleman's industrial capitalism theory (Coleman, 1994; Eliason, 1999).

Some hunters claimed they hunted for trophy animals; others indicated that getting a trophy was not important. Overall, nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters in this study were more likely than resident hunters to indicate that obtaining a trophy animal was moderately important or extremely important. More than half of Montana's resident hunters indicated that it was not important to get a trophy animal. This could be because nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters paid a lot of money to go hunting out of state and hire an outfitter, and therefore some have higher expectations than resident hunters.

It could also be related to the higher socioeconomic status of the nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters. Of these individuals, 75 % had household incomes of \$75,000 or more, whereas only 25% of resident hunters had similar household incomes. Perhaps these individuals are more competitive and are driven by a greater desire for success. Given their higher socioeconomic status, nonresident hunters would not need to hunt for dietary purposes but could focus on finding large animals. On the other hand, many of the Montana resident hunters mentioned the importance of getting an animal for table fare. Montana has one of the lowest per capita incomes in the United States; many hunters spoke of how they relied on harvesting big game for dietary

purposes. When examining factors associated with hunting, it is important to keep in mind that hunters have different motivations for participating in the activity (Manfredo et al., 2004). Manfredo et al. stated,

Not everyone is motivated by the same set of desires. . . . One hunter may be motivated to fulfill the challenge of bagging a trophy animal while another is in pursuit of a high-solitude experience. (p. 1148)

Most of the resident hunters (89%) and nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters (84%) indicated it was either not important or moderately important to get a trophy animal when hunting. Only 11% of resident hunters and 16% of nonresident outfitter-sponsored hunters said it was extremely important to get a trophy animal when hunting. These results are consistent with the findings of others such as Boulanger et al. (2006) and Gigliotti (2000), who reported in their studies that small percentages of hunters were trophy hunters.

Perhaps some hunters were reluctant to admit favoring trophy hunting because many members of society are opposed to hunting for trophies. Some hunters may not have wanted to admit to socially undesirable behavior. Even though “hook and bullet” magazines stress trophy animals, some hunters may have been concerned about social disapproval of their activities.

Some hunters said that it was important to take an animal who was representative of the area but not necessarily a trophy one. As one of the nonresident hunters mentioned, it is also important to note that the concept of “trophy” is subjective. What one hunter considers a trophy animal may be viewed as an average one according to someone else’s standards. Opportunity was also important to hunters. Some of the hunters mentioned that they wanted the opportunity to get a shot at trophy-class animals, even if they weren’t able to actually harvest one.

To some extent, the importance of trophy animals may be a function of stage in the lifecycle. For example, comments from the 55-year old resident hunter—who stated it was important to kill “monster” animals when he was in his 20s—indicates that it was very important for him to kill a trophy animal then. However, his priorities changed as he got older; now he focuses on the meat. This suggests that the status derived from obtaining trophy-class specimens may be strong for some younger hunters who may be concerned with impressing their peers.

In contrast, many individuals indicated they became more selective in terms of the size of animal they would take as they got older. Some of these hunters relish the challenge of finding trophy-class specimens. Again, the desire for

trophy animals may also be related to socioeconomic status. For example, it may be that those employed in blue-collar occupations stress trophy animals in their younger years, while white-collar/professional workers become more competitive with respect to hunting as they get older.

Although this paper did not specifically examine the socialization process and the means by which hunters learned about hunting behaviors and practices, it is reasonable to assume that they learned these things from associating with other actors who were involved in the hunting culture. Fueled by visual depictions of trophy animals in the media as well as by the associated testimonials of those who have successfully taken such animals, it is easy to understand how individuals could be swayed toward the practice of trophy hunting. Therefore, their attitudes about hunting are shaped from interactions with other hunters as well as by what they see and read in the media (Dizard, 2003; Uzendoski, 1978). As Eliason (1999) stated:

... prestige is accorded to individuals who take trophy animals. This type of desire for success is reinforced by hunting and fishing magazines which publish articles that are generally slanted toward the harvesting of trophy animals instead of emphasizing the overall hunting experience. Such articles seem to imply that a hunt is unsuccessful if an animal with less than trophy dimensions is harvested. Also, outfitting advertisements routinely depict successful clients with trophy animals. (p. 34)

Conclusion

A limitation of the present study was that it asked about the importance of obtaining a trophy animal when hunting. It did not specify the type of animal such as "trophy elk" or "trophy deer." It would be useful to know if there is variation in terms of species such as elk, deer, and bear. Questions could be developed for different species so that quantitative data could be obtained that would indicate trophy demand for particular species.

Research on the importance of obtaining trophy animals should be conducted in other states. Variation may exist in different geographic regions of the country and by species. It would be useful to determine if there are attitudinal differences between urban and rural hunters. Montana is a rural state with a total population of less than one million people. The culture there may be very different from that in other, more urbanized states.

Studies should be done on outfitters. Given that they are the individuals who are used by many nonresident hunters to locate animals, they would likely be an excellent source of information regarding what their clients expect in terms of trophy animals. Because they are the ones who mount animals for

hunters, taxidermists are also in a position to provide information about hunter expectations for given species of animals.

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