

• Conservation and Hunting •

Rowland Ward Ltd.'s Guiding Principles

This is an essay on conservation, hunting, and record keeping and what is acceptable for inclusion in *Rowland Ward's Records of Big Game*. For exact rules on how trophies qualify in our book, see the Measuring Handbook.

There can be no doubt that the world's wilderness areas and its wild inhabitants are under unprecedented pressure from a world dominated by modern humans. Hunters play an absolutely vital and often completely misunderstood role in the preservation of habitat and species, whether they be game animals or otherwise.

As hunters, we must actively seek the best possible image for our sport, and we must always act in a manner that will further the principles of sound conservation. These include protecting habitat and promoting an understanding between the local indigenous people and the animals and fauna that live in proximity to these people. We must also encourage our fellow hunters to behave with integrity and always act in an ethical manner while hunting.

Rowland Ward stands for sound conservation practices and fair-chase hunting, especially in regards to the management of wildlife and their habitat. While fair-chase hunting may have different meanings in various regions of the world, Rowland Ward believes that sound game management and fair-chase hunting are very closely interrelated, and Rowland Ward will do its utmost to promote both equally wherever possible.

Rowland Ward understands that modern game management often means game-proof fencing so that animals will not come into conflict with humans. Hunting within game-proof fences is acceptable if it promotes the general well-being and conservation of both the habitat and the species enclosed. For enclosures to be acceptable to Rowland Ward, they must contain self-sustaining, breeding populations that can feed themselves from naturally occurring vegetation and prey without continual supplemental feeding by humans. Enclosures also must provide enough acreage and vegetation so that animals can easily hide from humans and predators alike, and they must offer a hunting scenario whereby the outcome of obtaining a certain animal is never guaranteed. Please refer to our Handbook for more details.

Non-native, introduced, or "exotic" animals are accepted if they (a) are from sufficiently large populations, (b) are from self-sustaining, breeding populations that can feed themselves from naturally occurring vegetation without supplemental feeding by humans, and (c) comply with the rules listed above.

Natural color variations of species in certain animal populations and in particular regions have been naturally occurring probably since the dawn of time. Rowland Ward, in fact, has several categories that

are, based on naturally occurring coloration-only differences, such as the Angola impala. However, Rowland Ward will not establish color-based categories for animals that are specifically bred for their color.

Rowland Ward Ltd. does not accept darted animals. While darting may in certain cases serve scientific purposes and aid in translocations, by and large it is very difficult to ascertain when this is so. It is generally considered ill-advised to dart an animal repeatedly over relatively short periods of time.

Rowland Ward will not accept animals that have been chased by mechanical vehicles from which subsequent shots were taken. While a vehicle is needed for most forms of transport in the modern world, Rowland Ward expects hunters to stalk animals on foot. The one and only exception is for those hunters who are handicapped and, thus, are physically prevented from stalking game on foot.

Rowland Ward will only accept trophies that are shot legally and in accordance with the game laws and the fair-chase, ethical practices of the country and locale where they were obtained. Rowland Ward fully accepts that hunting practices vary enormously from country to country and continent to continent. For example, using dogs to hunt predators is accepted widely in the Americas, yet it is often not legal in parts of Africa. In all cases, the local laws and practices must be adhered to in order for a trophy to be accepted for entry into *Rowland Ward's Records of Big Game*. The editors of the record book will not accept animals shot from or with the aid of a helicopter or airplane, nor will they accept animals shot with the aid of a remote control airborne device.

Rowland Ward's record book honors the animal, and as such no distinction is made based on how the animal was obtained: on a sporting license, a picked-up head, a head shot by government hunters, or an animal taken by poachers. Heads taken from poachers will only be accepted in the record book if they are entered under the auspices of a proper authority, such as a wildlife/game department and if this authority was in legal possession of the animal. Names of poachers are, for obvious reasons, never listed.

No animals that have been trapped, snared, stuck in mud, caught by natural circumstances, herded by any mechanical vehicle, drugged, or shot while swimming are accepted in *Rowland Ward's Records of Big Game*. Animals obtained with any aid of the following devices will not be accepted into the record book: night-vision equipment, any camera equipment that gives (near) immediate feedback of pictures to a human, tracking devices.

No hybrid animals will be accepted unless such animals have a natural hybridization zone in a completely free range, for instance, the Armenian mouflon and the Transcaspian urial. In such cases the editors may choose to establish a separate category for such animals, in this case the red sheep, or they may choose to enter the hybrids into the category of the larger scoring subspecies from which it was derived.