

NEW WORLD RECORD NON-TYPICAL ELK

MISSOULA, Mont.—Perhaps the largest elk ever produced in the wild—a Utah bull taken in 2008 by a hunter on public land—has been confirmed as a new World’s Record. The official declaration was made Friday by the Boone and Crockett Club. A special judge’s panel determined a final score of 478-5/8 B&C non-typical points, an incredible 93-plus inches above the Boone and Crockett minimum score of 385 for non-typical American elk, and more than 13 inches larger than the previous World’s Record. It is the only elk on record with a gross score approaching the 500-inch mark, at 499-3/8. Official data dates back to 1830. The giant bull has 9 points on the left antler and 14 points on the right. The larger antler has a base circumference topping 9 inches. The Boone and Crockett scoring system, long used to measure the success of wildlife conservation and management programs across North America, rewards antler size and symmetry, but also recognizes nature’s imperfections with non-typical categories for most antlered game. The bull’s final score of 478-5/8 inches includes an amazing 140



inches of abnormal points. “Along with measurements that honor the quality of the animal, Boone and Crockett Club records also honor fair-chase hunting,” said Eldon Buckner, chairman of the Club’s Records of North American Big Game committee. “Through our entry process, signed affidavits and follow-up interviews with the hunter, his guides, and state and federal officials, we were satisfied that this bull was indeed a wild, free-ranging trophy and that the tenets of fair chase were used in the harvest.” The hunter, Denny Austad of Ammon, Idaho, hunted the Monroe Mountain District in south-central Utah. Hunting with a self-designed rifle, Austad killed the bull on Sept. 30, 2008. He hunted for 13 days before connecting with the trophy, dubbed “spider bull” for its unique antler configuration. On behalf of the Boone and Crockett Club, Buckner congratulated Austad and credited his new World’s Record to the tremendous management of habitat and wildlife by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the Fish Lake National Forest. “Utah’s conservation professionals really deserve a pat on the back, as do the citizens of Utah for their support of their state’s wildlife programs,” said Buckner. Across North America, ever-improving conservation practices have translated to flourishing big game populations, with balanced age-class and mature, trophy animals. Over the past 30 years, qualifying Boone and Crockett records book entries for American elk have increased 193 percent from a total of 14 in 1977 to 41 in 2007. Across all categories of native North American big game, the overall trend is even higher with 344 qualifiers in 1977 up to 1,151 in 2007—a 234 percent increase. The previous World’s Record for non-typical American elk was 465-2/8 B&C points. That bull was found dead, frozen in Upper Arrow Lake, B.C., in 1994, and was entered into Boone and Crockett Club records by the provincial Ministry of Environment on behalf of the citizens of British Columbia. For hunter-taken non-typical American elk, the previous top bull scored 450-6/8 B&C points, taken in 1998 in Apache County, Ariz., by Alan Hamberlin. The Boone and Crockett Club also keeps records for Roosevelt’s and Tule elk. World’s Records for these categories are substantially smaller than those for American elk.