

Rowland Ward's Records of Big Game 30th Edition

Edited by **Ludo Wurf bain**

THE NEW 30TH Edition (Africa) of *Rowland Ward's Records of Big Game* (hereinafter referred to as *RW30*) is currently available from Halseton & Co, Johannesburg (Jane Halse, previous publisher of *RW*, remains the local source). The *RW* company is now situated in California with Ludo Wurf bain of Safari Press at the helm.

The institution that is *RW* goes back 128 years; this regularly updated, monumental work is well known to *Magnum* readers so I won't detail its distinguished history or its importance to zoology, wildlife management, conservation and the sport of hunting.

RW30 is the first edition published in America after the recent change of ownership. The new editors accessed early *RW* archives containing documents, records, measurements and photos dating back to when the company was still based in London, and this material has been incorporated into *RW30*. Another excellent addition is some 100 full colour maps showing present day species distribution. The minimum qualifying measurements for a dozen or so species have changed. Several new world records appear. A welcome addition is a solid line separating every five entries.

Some changed measuring and ranking systems now apply, and a different layout is used. In an effort to discourage overt competition among hunters, *RW* has never used numbering to indicate rank. This principle still holds. In the past, *RW* has always ranked antelope according to the longest horn, indicated in the first (left-most) column on the page, whether the left or right horn. If available, the length of the shorter horn appeared in the second column. The next two columns showed the circumference of the horn bases, and the fifth column the tip-to-tip measurements. With the vast majority

of entries, the length of the shorter horn was not recorded. The data in columns 2 to 5 played no role in ranking the entry; this was for scientific interest.

In *RW30*, ranking is still based on the longer horn, but the new (post-2014 *RW29*) entries, denoted by an asterisk (*) show the left thorn in the first (left-most) column and the right horn in the second column, irrespective of which is the longer measurement. The next two columns show the circumferences of the left and right horn bases respectively. Tip-to-tip measurements have been dropped. However, earlier (pre-*RW30*) entries remain as before, i.e. the longest horn appears in the first column, regardless of whether it is the left or right horn. This is because in most cases the second horn measurement went unrecorded.

The decision to continue ranking per the longest horn was taken in the interest of conservation. It is to encourage hunters to shoot animals which have one broken or deformed horn, if the other horn qualifies for *RW*. If the minimum entry requirement were based on the measurements of both horns added together (which was considered), and one horn was broken off or very short, that trophy would fail to qualify so the hunter would pass it up. Exceptions to this system will be wildebeest and buffalo, which rarely have one broken horn – ranking of these trophies will be based on both horns, i.e. the spread.

For many years now, *RW* has had two separate sections for spiral-horned antelope, as the older system measured straight up the side of the horn, while the later system followed the spiral. Many of the older trophies have been re-measured according to the later system and re-entered. *RW30* now combines these two sections, indicating



those measured straight up the side with the letters SL (straight line).

RW30 has changed the system for ranking buffalo horns; the measurement of the spread is now combined with the circumferences of both bosses. This means that MH Cabrera's long-reigning world record, registered as a cow (but which I believe was an 'ox', i.e.

a male buffalo which survived castration by a hyena or lion when still a calf or sub-adult), now ranks much lower.

Likewise the system for ranking elephant tusks: the weights of both tusks are now combined, and separate minimum entry weights have been established for pairs of tusks and single tusks. In the case of a pair of tusks, if one tusk qualifies for entry, the measurement of the second tusk will also be recorded.

Historically, rhino have been ranked by the length of the *front* horn, but because black rhino have been known to have longer rear horns, *RW30* has changed the system to rank per the longest horn. Picked-up horns remain registerable.

Textual descriptions and distribution details are given for each species. Happily, the size and number of photos have been greatly increased, several of which feature *Magnum* contributors: Paul Phelan (nyala), Graham Morrison (common reedbuck), Peter Flack (bongo), Alan Walker (mountain reedbuck), Robin Hurt (numerous) and Dieter Ochsenbein (numerous).

RW30 is a must-have for zoologists, wildlife managers, professional hunters, safari outfitters and serious trophy hunters. The hard-cover version sells for R3 100 and the soft-cover for R2 000, postage excluded and prices subject to change. Phone 076-664-9226 or 0861-777-261. Email: info@halseton.co.za. Overseas readers visit www.safaripress.com. – **Gregor Woods**