

Trophy hunting is unlikely to affect evolution

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In recent years, there has been growing controversy surrounding the evolutionary effects of trophy hunting in big game animals worldwide. An article published in the *Journal of Wildlife Management* explains why the removal of males possessing large horns and antlers does not inevitably cause harmful artificial selection.

James Heffelfinger, author of the article, notes that there are numerous obstacles that ameliorate, neutralize, or dilute the effects of hunter selection, making it very difficult for hunters to cause population-level changes in the sizes of horns and antlers.

"Some writers, both in popular media and the [scientific literature](#), have exaggerated the effects of [trophy hunting](#) on the [gene pool](#) far beyond what the data show," he said. "The concept of trophy hunters causing harmful evolutionary change to the very species they value has been a flawed, but irresistible, storyline for many reporters and researchers.

More information: *Journal of Wildlife Management* (2017). [DOI: 10.1002/jwmg.21337](#)

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