

A Quality Mount begins with Proper Fieldcare



Caping

The process of skinning out a trophy animal is best left to the taxidermist. Their experience skinning, especially the delicate nose, mouth, eyes, and ears is invaluable toward producing a quality mount. Damage to a hide is costly to repair. Some types of damage simply can not be "fixed" by the taxidermist.

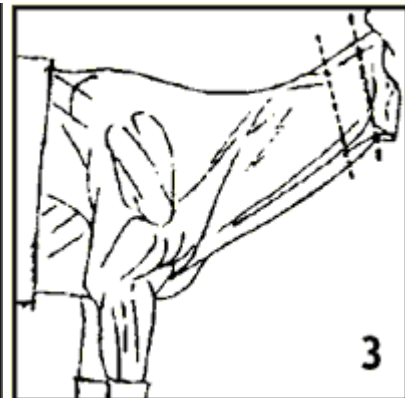
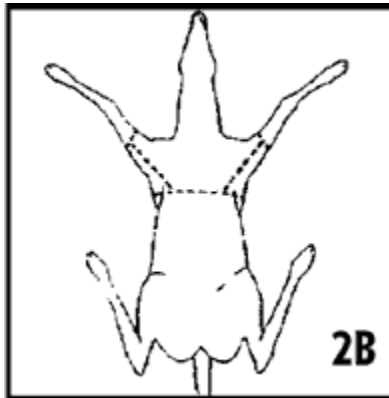
Many trophies are ruined in the first few hours after death. As soon as the animal dies, bacteria begins to attack the carcass. Warm, humid weather accelerates bacteria growth. In remote areas, or areas not near your taxidermist, a competent person may be required to cape out the hide in order to preserve it.

Every taxidermist has a preferred method of caping a hide. Contact your taxidermist prior to your hunt in order to get instructions on their caping requirements. However, the following techniques are generally acceptable.

Caping for a Shoulder Mount

1. With a sharp knife slit the hide circling the body behind the shoulder at approximately the midway point of the rib cage behind the front legs. Slit the skin around the legs just above the knees. An additional slit will be needed from the back of the leg and joining the body cut behind the legs (Figure 2A and 2B).

2. Peel the skin forward up to the ears and jaw exposing the head/neck junction. Cut into the neck approximately three inches down from this junction (Fig 3). Circle the neck cutting down to the spinal column. After this cut is complete, grasp the antler bases and twist the head off the neck. This should allow the hide to be rolled up and put in a freezer until transported to the taxidermist. These cuts should allow ample hide for the taxidermist to work with in mounting. **Note:** When field dressing a trophy to be mounted, don't cut into the brisket (chest) or neck area. If blood gets on the hide to be mounted, wash it off with water as soon as possible. Also, avoid dragging the deer.



Remember, the taxidermist can cut off excess hide, but he can't add what he doesn't have.



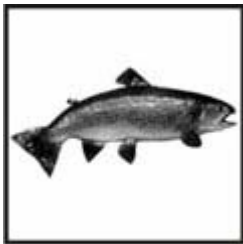
Small Mammals

Animals, wallaby-sized or smaller, should not be skinned unless by a professional. Don't gut the animal. Small mammals, especially carnivores, will spoil quickly because of their thin hide and bacteria. If you can't take the small game animal immediately to taxidermist, as soon as the carcass cools completely, put it in a plastic bag and freeze it.



Game Birds

Do not gut the bird. Rinse off any blood on the feathers with water. Take the bird immediately to your taxidermist or freeze it. Put the bird into a plastic bag for freezing being careful not to damage the feathers, including the tail. If the bird's tail feathers do not fit in the bag do not bend them. Let the tail stick out of the bag and tie the bag loosely.



Fish

Do not gut your fish. If you can not take your fish immediately to a taxidermist, wrap it in a very wet towel and put it in a plastic bag, making sure all the fins are flat against the fish's body (to prevent breakage), and freeze it. A fish frozen with this method can safely be kept in the freezer for months.

Note: A fish will lose its coloration shortly, after being caught. A good colour photograph immediately after the catch may enable the taxidermist to duplicate the natural colour tones of that particular fish.

Tips

For situations where you are hunting with no available taxidermist or freezer, ask your taxidermist about techniques to skin out the entire cape (including the head) and salting the hide. This is the only method in remote locations that can preserve your hide for later.