

Curing hints of game skins and trophies

I would like to submit to you a guide for curing your game skins and trophies.

Many hunters are disappointed when they receive a skin which has hairslip, and can not understand why their skin, which looked perfectly good when they delivered it for tanning, is almost unrecognisable. Hairslip (bold patches on the skin which appear often after tanning) is caused by bacteria which thrive in blood and dirt. Heat accelerates the damaging bacterial process.

So, how can we reduce the risk of bacterial damage?

1. Skin animal as soon as possible after shooting.
2. Remove excess fat and meat.
3. Wash off all the blood and dirt.
4. If possible, soak the skin for a minimum of 3 hours, or overnight, in a saturated salt solution (about 20kg salt per 100 litres of water), together with a bactericide (normal household disinfectant will also help) of about 50ml per 100 litres of water.
5. As you remove the skin from the solution, open and flatten the skin on a clean surface with the flesh side facing up and cover the skin with salt. Be liberal with the salt.

If the facility in point 4 above is not available then wash off blood and dirt with bactericide in the washing water and then salt immediately on the flesh side while the skin is wet.

It is important as a guideline, to use the equal quantity of salt to the wet weight of the skin. The skin must then lie in salt for at least 3 days, after which the skin should be dried out as soon as possible. There is nothing wrong in drying the skin in the sun. The sooner the skin is dehydrated, the better. If one does not have time to do this, the skin must be rolled for transport in the salt and dried at destination

DO NOT:

- Drag the animal or leave it in the sun after it has been shot
- Salt a skin that has already started to dehydrate. Rather soak in a strong salt solution.
- Do not leave blood, fat or flesh on the skin. (Salt does not penetrate fat)
- Do not store the skin in a plastic bag, except for transportation only.