

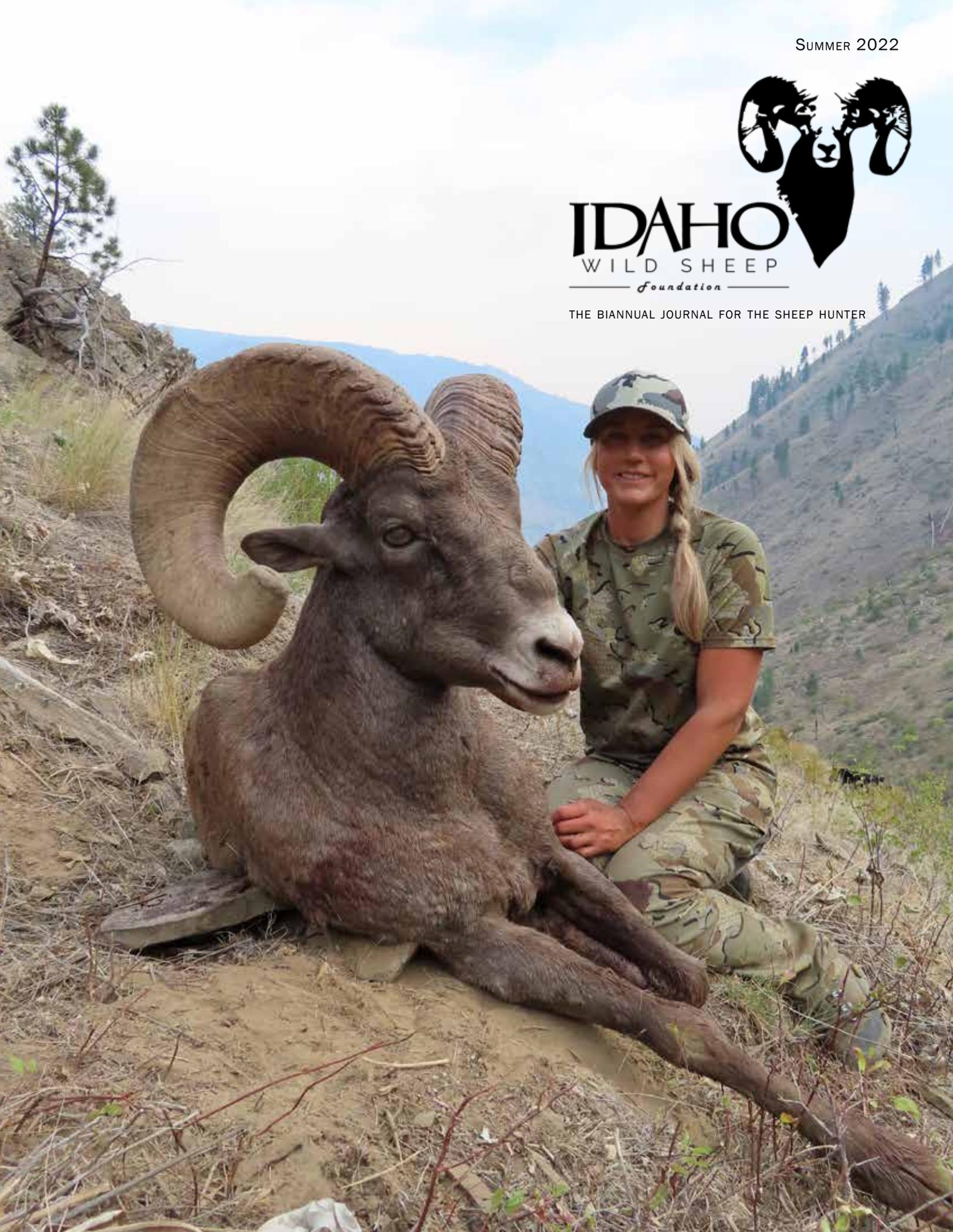
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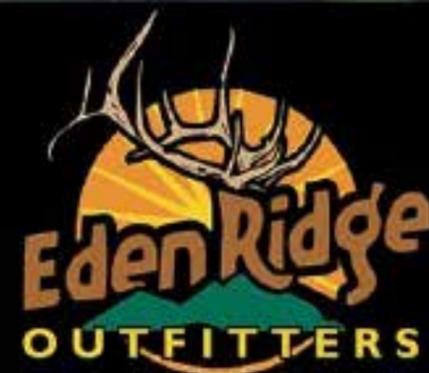
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Contributing photos, articles, stories and research pertaining to wild sheep or the interests of members of the Idaho WSF are always welcome.

Contributed material will be published at the committees discretion.

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MISSION

The mission of Idaho Wild Sheep is to enhance wild sheep populations in Idaho, and with partners in adjacent states, for public enjoyment, education, and fair chase hunting; to promote professional wild-life management, and protect sportsmen's rights.

HISTORY

The Idaho Wild Sheep was founded in 1982 by two dozen concerned sportsmen who wanted to "put more bighorns on Idaho's mountains." From that core group, many of which are still very active on our board and committees, we have grown to a thriving organization with over 700 committed members.

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

"Far and away, the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard, at work worth doing."
-Theodore Roosevelt

Your Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation is working hard at work worth doing. Many of you have volunteered your time in the field, bought radio collars, paid for Movi testing, chartered helicopters, and jet boats, all to help Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) with Movi health surveillance (Capture-and-Test) of bighorn sheep. This will lead to Capture-and-Remove procedures that manage the disease.

Idaho is one of the leaders in wild sheep research and management. This has been achieved through partnerships with Wild Sheep Foundation and its chapters, state wildlife agencies, universities, and other conservation groups. The Tri-State Initiative has led to the Hells Canyon herd presently being Movi free. That herd is now growing and expanding its range. IDFG is expanding the Capture-and-Test to other areas and the Idaho WSF, National WSF and the Midwest WSF are an integral part of this effort having all contributed funding. Last November three Idaho WSF volunteers assisted with road-based Capture-and-Test along the Salmon River near Shoup, and another 12 volunteers worked from jet boats upstream of Riggins. In March 13 volunteers worked at the sheep processing site of a helicopter-based Capture-and-Test operation.

There's more work coming. In May, the IDFG Commission approved the 2022-27 bighorn sheep Management Plan. Earlier Idaho WSF submitted comments and suggestions on this plan and attended the commission meeting. From this Management plan will be developed herd-specific action plans. These are the real working plans for activities on the ground. Idaho WSF is working on supporting these action plans with on-the-ground volunteers, funding, and other backing. We are pursuing partnerships and grants with WSF chapters, conservation groups and outdoor businesses to improve funding. The Midwest Chapter WSF has already guaranteed two more years of contributions.

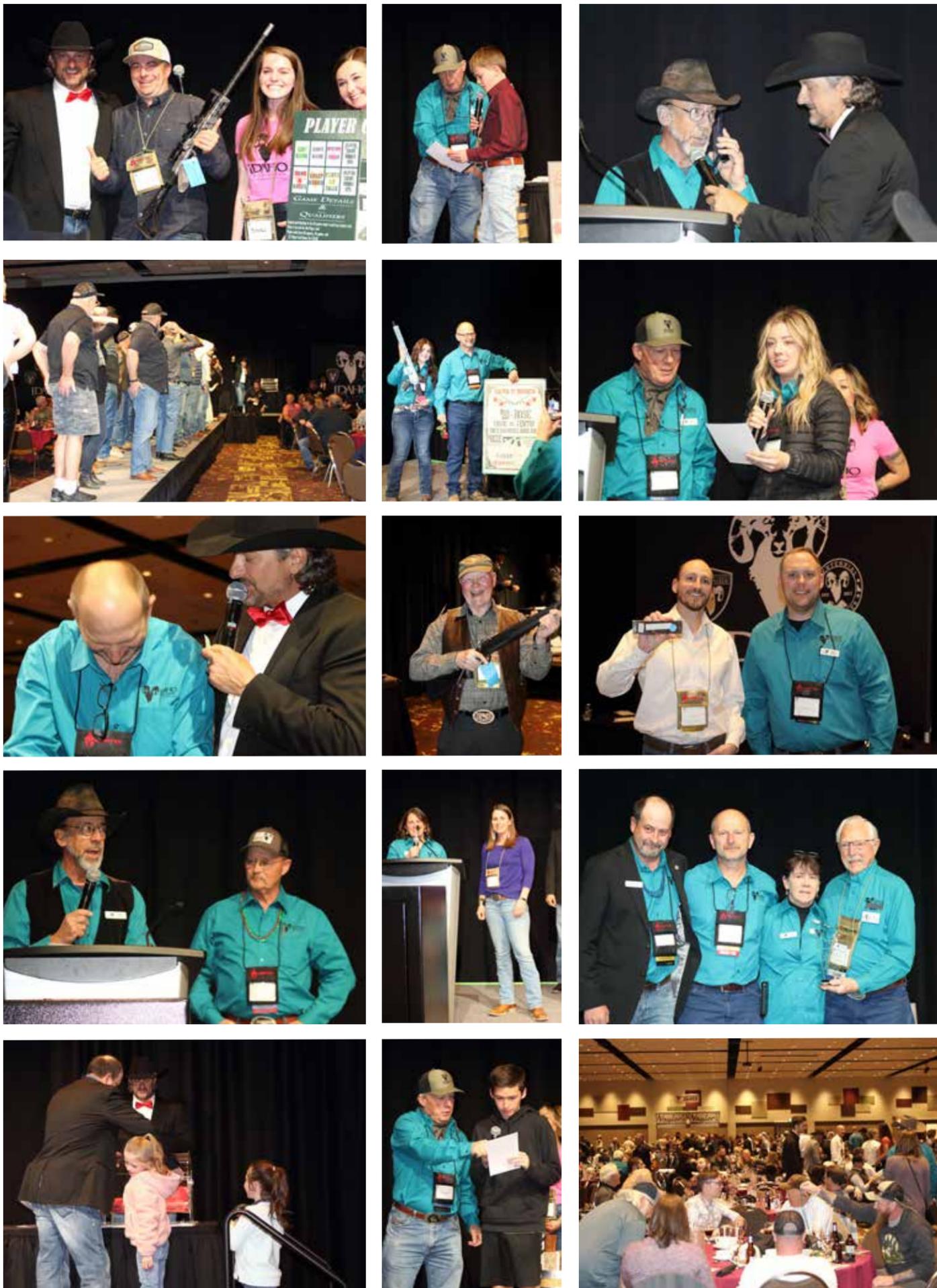
The challenges faced by different bighorn herds in Idaho are as diverse as the state itself. Herds may face Movi outbreaks, domestic sheep interactions, predation, or a lack of genetic diversity. Some areas, like Hells Canyon, populations are up. Other areas, like the Bruneau/Jarbridge populations are substantially down, which forced the closure of that bighorn hunt this year. The herd-specific action plans will be different around the state. Likewise, our role and involvement will differ too.

The Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation's strength is in the passion its members have for wild sheep. It is that passion that will keep us working hard, at work worth doing.

Bill London
President
Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation



President Bill London (left) and volunteer/member Scott Sorenson (right)



37th Annual Banquet & Fundraiser



The 2022 Idaho wild Sheep foundation banquet/fundraiser was April 9th.

What a fun night it was, a sold out crowd of 770 sheep enthusiasts met for great entertainment and camaraderie. They were joined by even more folks on Facebook live and Online Auctions. This family event had something for everyone. Youth activities and a youth quiz – with awards. A special Woman’s raffle and survey. The raffle winner received a Kryptek outfit, while the survey identified what skill clinics women would like ID WSF to provide. Veterans and First Responders (Law Enforcement, fire fighters, EMTs, etc.) had their own raffle for a backcountry flight and lunch into the Frank Church wilderness with Arnolds’ Aviation. Games were abundant. All had great prizes; rifles and hunts and a mystery cooler filled with everything your hunter heart desires.

Four lucky people won wild sheep hunts. Raffles were drawn for both a Stone Sheep hunt with Kinaskin Lake Outfitters, and a Desert Sheep hunt with HR Big Game Outfitters and Fishing Tours. A LLC Murgab Company Marco Polo hunt was auctioned off too. Lastly the Life/Centennial members had a drawing for a Dall sheep hunt with Alaska Outfitters Unlimited. This drawing was fun and tragic at the same time. All Life and Centennial members names are in the raffle drum, but the winner must be in the room during the drawing. Each time a name was drawn everyone was disappointed it

wasn’t theirs - until it became apparent that the “winner” was not in the room. Cruel cheering would erupt, and everyone’s hopes would rise as the next name was drawn. Joyous for the final winner, a Shakespearean tragedy for those drawn but not in attendance.

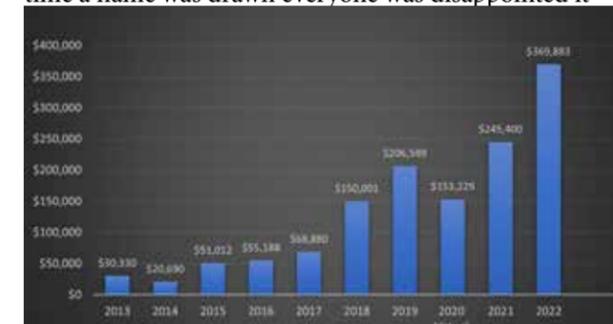
The Team Bighorn video was debuted showing ID WSF volunteers assisting Idaho Fish & Game with bighorn capture and test operations on the Salmon River. This video was produced by Silverline Films and shows the complexities and partnerships of bighorn sheep disease management in Idaho. To view the Team Bighorn video, go to <https://www.idahowildsheep.org>

The ID WSF Outstanding Achievement Award went to the dynamic duo of Tracy and Mark Rowley for their long-term tireless devotion and support. Tracy is our administrator and the also the creative director of this journal. Her husband Mark is a centennial member who is always volunteering whether its’ on the Salmon River capturing sheep or selling T-Shirts at the Reno Sheep show.

At the end of the festivities \$787,690 raised, with a net income of \$369,883 for wild sheep management! This absolutely smashed last year’s record of \$490,429 and \$243,470 respectively. This success is all due to the generosity of our membership, sponsors, and donors.

Planning has begun for the 2023 Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation banquet/fundraiser. Watch your email or follow us on Facebook and Instagram for the announcement. Only a fool would miss it.

Thank you.
Bill London
Idaho WSF President



Photo's by Bruce Mincher



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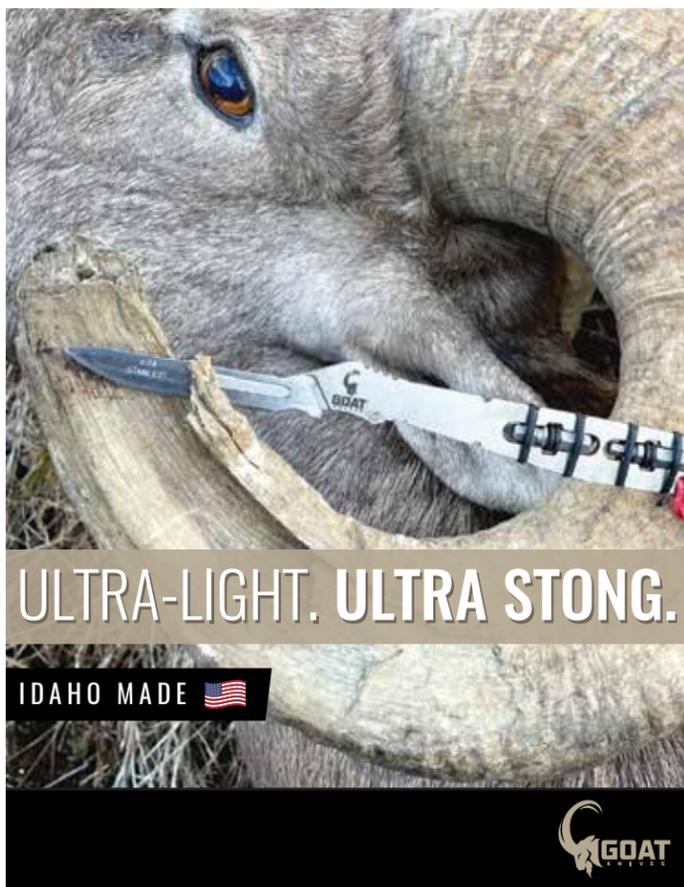
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WHAT ARE THE ODDS?

BY KC RAMSEY

Most hunting stories start out talking about winning the lottery type odds we all face trying to draw a coveted sheep tag. And rightly so, the popularity of big game hunts in general has become an unlikely dream for most hunters. This hunt was no exception, and the odds were very unfavorable for the hundreds of applicants that applied. After applying for ten years, my number was pulled. This hunt had some very special meaning and memories for me, and I wanted to do everything in my power to justify it. I had been lucky the last ten years scouting and helping guide some other hunters that had beaten the odds and looked to fulfill a dream they had also been chasing. In those years I had made some great friends and seen some life changing moments happen. Those times are priceless and just make you want it even more.

2020 found me out there looking again in early July trying to turn up a ram for a lucky hunter that had booked a hunt with us at War Eagle Outfitters. This would be a hunt that if successful would complete a grand slam. Weeks of scouting paid off and a hunter was able to walk away with a giant California ram completing something very few will ever experience. During that year of scouting, we had turned up three rams that would be a trophy in any state. After seeing one of them taken off the hill I could only hope 2021 would be my year.

I lost a great friend that year, one that had spent every minute with me out there. Ken Jafek was a

hunting legend that had been guiding people for almost 50 years. Call it fate but somehow, I talked the sheep gods into letting me draw. July came quickly and once again I was out looking in the country where we had left the big rams the year before. That morning I had located a small group of rams with great potential but not the one I was looking for. Later that morning we had moved down the canyon to glass an area that ram had been the year before. Not long into it a great friend of mine (Toad) got my attention and said he had seen something move through his spotting scope. He quickly explained the location and we both started picking the hillside apart. It was at that moment the moral of this story began. At the same time, we both noticed something in our scopes that was a dream come true and a sheep hunter's worst nightmare. In the same field of view, I could see a giant ram sleeping, totally oblivious to its surroundings, and a tom mountain lion tucked in the rocks and ready to end this ram's ten-year career. At that point I didn't know how to express my thoughts. At 1400 yards away all I could do is sit back and hope this 10-year-old ram could escape one of nature's top sheep killers. After about ten minutes of watching this standoff, the lion could not find the right angle in the steep rocky terrain and simply moved off to try another day. We finished out the day talking about what we had just experienced trying to be optimistic knowing we had found our number one ram but also knowing the danger he would have to overcome with this lion in his domain. Having hounds and spending over





twenty years chasing this predator I knew the chances of him getting killed with other younger rams around was low but definitely a possibility. Lions don't pick what they want to kill based on age and size. I mean really a ten-year-old ram with only a month until my hunt opening what are the odds right!? I had taken some great pictures and video of the two bigger rams on August 20th and at that time determined the ram I wanted, both rams were phenomenal, but I felt one was just an inch or two bigger. The only way to tell them apart was that one ram had a very distinct white dot right between his eyes. An old scar from his days of fighting.

Finally, the weekend before the opener was here and a game plan had been set. We would show up Thursday night and watch him until the opener on Monday. Friday morning, we were up early and making the long hike out to the area we had watched him and his buddies for two years. I had no doubt he would be there. As the sun was rising over the desert the shapes of rams started to appear. With all the time and effort prior to this hunt it was shaping up just like I expected. We all started talking about the rams, looking at each one and trying to find the ram with the white dot. The area we had to glass from and see the rams from was over a mile away and at times made it hard to identify him. Not long into it I quickly noticed he, and another up-and-coming ram were missing. A little weird, but not something that hadn't happened before.

This was huge country, and nothing was stopping them from wandering off for a day or two.

We spent all day Friday and Saturday splitting up getting different angles trying to locate him. By Sunday I knew something was up. He was the dominant leader of this group and just not like him to be gone this long. The other rams seemed spooked, never bedding in the same spot as earlier in the summer. They were jumpy and always on the move, bedding then for no reason getting up and traveling in the heat of the day sometimes a mile or so. They seemed lost and unsure of what to do. Sunday morning the decision was made to spread out and go deeper into the area and try to locate the lost rams. Later that afternoon I got a message on the inReach that had some news, the ram had been found but not the way we had hoped. Trying to be excited but knowing something was wrong we packed up, headed back to camp confused and full of questions. These hunts have so much emotion and pressure already so getting this message only added to the story. We got to camp first but not long after headlights appeared and in minutes, I would find out the answers I had been nervously waiting to hear. They pulled in and right away their faces told the story. Both of them never said anything and just walked to the back of the truck and opened the tailgate. We all gathered around and sitting there was the remains of the big ram with the white dot between his eyes. While glassing that morning

Toad and Jason noticed some birds flying around in the bottom of a canyon. Having a bad gut feeling they knew it had to be one of the two missing rams. Nature deals with some cruel and unfair situations, and this was one of them. That lion had stayed the course of survival and killed the ram I had set my hopes on just days before my hunt was set to open. He was everything we knew; he was a ten-year-old giant ram. The timing of this was something you just can't make up; he had escaped this situation more times than we will ever know and finally got caught. What are the odds right??

The damage had been done and all I could do was focus on the other ram that was still there. And luckily for me he was no slouch and still a ram of a lifetime. The next couple of days we spent watching him and waiting for the right opportunity to make a move. On day three he finally was in a place that allowed us a chance. Toad agreed to stay behind and keep an eye on him while Triston, Jim, and I drove the two hours' drive around to a place we could access him from. We left the truck at 10 am and got in position around 1:30 pm. At that time the rams were just over a rise and out of sight to us. The wind was wrong and getting closer was too risky and not an option.

We stayed ready knowing anytime they would feed up to us and hopefully allow a shot. Less than an hour went by when that happened, one at a time the rams appeared single file feeding quickly, racing each other to each clump of green grass. The ram I was after had since established dominance and was in the lead. Jim was on the spotting scope; I had my scope dialed and just needed him to clear for a clean shot. He finally separated and allowed me a 480-yard broadside shot. The sound of the rifle went off, the rams lifted their heads and took off running like I had just shot straight up in the air. I scrambled to get another round chambered, dumbfounded he did not just drop. The rams headed back to the safety of the





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cliffs with the big ram leading the way. It all happened so fast and at the time we couldn't tell if I had hit him or completely blew a golden opportunity.

Unsure, we grabbed our gear and frantically headed for the rim where we had last seen them drop over. Getting to the edge I knew something wasn't right. He had taken the band of ram into a dead end 100 foot plus cliffs with no escape route. This big ram knew better than that and if not injured would have easily maneuvered down the canyon and escaped me. After ten minutes of hearing rocks rolling and seeing rams run right past me trying to escape, I spotted the big ram 100 yards straight below me looking up. With nowhere to go but straight off a giant ledge to the canyon below. I could see a small blood spot on his shoulder easily identifying him as the ram I was after I had to make a quick decision to finish him off knowing when I pulled the trigger, he was going to take a horrible fall. I didn't have any choice so that's what I did. It would have been quite a scene from the opposite side of the canyon seeing a ram leap off the ledge and coming to a complete stop at the bottom of a canyon not meant for humans to be in. It was within an hour of darkness, and we had our hands full

just trying to find a somewhat safe route to get to him. Within an hour we had picked our way through the ledges and rocks slides and reached him. He was a beautiful 9 ½ year old ram that I was more than happy with. It was a long and grueling night hiking out, but one I would not want any other way.

These opportunities do not come along very often, if ever, for most people, so I never take them for granted. I was able to check in my ram and keep the other ram the lion had killed. These are two incredible rams in any state and bittersweet seeing them both together. It sounds great and I can't complain, but the lion problem out there is real. He has killed two rams in a month and will continue to kill. The Fish and Game is aware of the problem and hopefully can help. I got to fulfill my dream and want to see other hunters have the same opportunity I did. When it's all said and done and even though the pictures are with me holding a ram in one of the most picturesque places Idaho has to offer. The reason these pictures exist are the great friends I have willing to set aside time in their busy lives and make this happen. You all know who you are, and I can't thank you enough. But really, what are the odds!!!!





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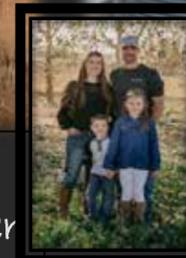



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LOWER SALMON RIVER BIGHORN SHEEP FALL 2021 CAPTURES

Kevin Hurley, WSF Vice-President for Conservation
Idaho WSF Life Member, Nampa

In October 2021, when Idaho WSF President Bill London “put out a call for volunteers” to assist Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG) with darting, radio-collaring, and sampling bighorn sheep on the Lower Salmon River above Riggins, a number of Idaho WSF members answered that call. Including me. After ~45 years as a wildlife biologist specializing in mountain sheep and mountain goat conservation and management, I jumped at the chance to get in the field with IDFG personnel and Idaho WSF volunteers. In mid-November, I drove to Riggins, planning to spend two nights and at least one day on the river with Sr Wildlife Research Biologist Frances Cassirer, Wildlife Staff Bio Hollie Miyasaki, and a dedicated crew, with hopes of finding, darting, collaring, and sampling bighorns in the Lower Salmon Population Management Unit (PMU).

With jetboats from River Adventures and Backcountry River Guides, our crew split up, each covering a stretch of the Lower Salmon. We saw a number of bighorn sheep that day, but they just wouldn’t let the two-legged predators approach close enough to get a dart into one of them. Late in the afternoon of Friday November 19th, we came upon a very sick mature ram, head down, muzzle in the dirt, saliva and other goo dripping out of his nostrils and mouth. Having seen that ram the day before in basically

the same spot ~20 yards above the river, Frances, Hollie, and others determined the best course of action was to dart it, to enable a close physical examination, and collect some critical samples for diagnostic lab analysis.

Once the immobilization agent BAM (a cocktail of mixed drugs) kicked in, this sick and emaciated ram awkwardly laid down in the rocks along the river’s edge, and the field crew moved in to collect samples. It didn’t take long to assess just how sick this ram was, so a difficult decision was made to euthanize this ram, on site. Having been a wildlife manager for Wyoming Game & Fish Department for nearly 30 years, I can tell you how gut-wrenching of a decision it is for a wild sheep manager to put down one of the critters they pour so much of their professional and personal energy into conserving.

Long story short, once this ram was euthanized, we returned to the boat launch. Further conversation ensued about whether or not to do a field necropsy on the spot, hang the ram in a shady spot until the following day, then necropsy it, there were a gamut of options. Knowing that Frances, Hollie, the IDFG crew and Idaho WSF volunteers planned to be back on the river the next day (Saturday) to continue their capture operations, I offered to deliver the dead ram to the Washington Animal Disease Diag-

nostic Lab (WADDL) on the Washington State University campus in Pullman, so that fresh samples and a proper necropsy could be completed on this important carcass.

In Riggins; I grabbed my gear and clothes from my hotel room while others loaded the ram in my pickup, and I headed toward Pullman, WA. Frances reached out to her WADDL colleagues to advise my ETA to the loading dock, and we kept in touch via text messages as I drove toward Grangeville. Of all things to complicate the trip, there was a good old-fashioned whiteout snowstorm as I climbed White Bird Pass. Finally, by the time I reached Lapwai, the snow turned to rain, and the roads became passable. What normally would have been a 2.5-hour drive stretched into a 4+ hour drive. And, of all coincidences, the WSU Cougars were playing a rare Friday night home football game, so Pullman was not only jammed with fans and vehicles, but the fog was as thick as I’ve seen in a long time.

I met up with a WADDL scientist after 10:00 PM, we off-loaded the ram. In vain, I tried to find a hotel room for the night. Did I mention Pullman was packed? Not a room to be had. So, down the Lewiston Grade, where I was able to find a room for a short night’s sleep in Clarkston, WA. All in a long day’s work! That’s one of the most impressive attributes I’ve found in WSF volunteers, in my 41-year association with FNAWS/WSF. When something needs done, wild sheep conservationists step up! It’s what we do. Repeatedly.

The WADDL Pathology Report documented that this emaciated mature ram suffered from severe, chronic bronchopneumonia with multiple bacteria found, including *Movi*, *Pasteurella multocida*, and others, and was quite septicemic. Amyloidosis of the liver, kidney, and spleen was attributed to chronic systemic inflammation and was associated with a trace element imbalance, including very high levels of copper in the liver and blood.

“Test & Remove” strategies first attempted and validated in Hells Canyon are being replicated in many bighorn sheep herds across the West, from South Dakota to British Columbia, from Nebraska to Washington, and from Wyoming to Oregon. The “scientific method” requires replicate experiments in an attempt to prove efficacy. The Tri-State Hells Canyon Initiative over the past ~27 years has been the well from which many innovative management strategies have flowed. Bad pun, but “let’s keep our foot on the gas pedal” as we continually strive to understand and manage bighorn sheep and their many challenges!



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- Thomas Hinders
- Cheryl Hudgens
- James Kranz
- Burk Mantel
- Ralph McClintock
- Roger Michener
- Ron Morris
- Tom Parker
- Tom Schiermeir
- Wayne Schwabrow
- Ed Sweet
- Andy Thacker
- Jerry Thiessen
- Fred Wood
- Barry Wood
- Jerry Young

HISTORY BOOKS



April 2010
Charter members were special guests at the 25th anniversary celebration. Burk Mantel, Ed Sweet, and Bob DiGrazia accept a plaque with all charter members' names engraved.



George Law and Gary Pals enjoying the 1996 banquet.



1992 Banquet
Wayne Schwabrow and Harold Eshelman.



Ken Jafek of Malta, Idaho shot this Grizzly in Yukon Territory, Canada, in May of 1990.



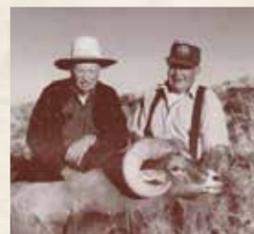
April 2010
National WSP Director of Operations, Neil Thagard (center) has provided outstanding support to Idaho WSP in these challenging times for wild sheep. Also pictured, Mike Schlegel and Lloyd Oldenburg.



1998 Newsletter
Bob and Joe DiGrazia with a 7 1/2 year old ram taken in the Big Jacks Complex of Owyhee County.



April 2010
Trish Hebdon and Linda Batie welcome guests with a smile!



1998 Newsletter
Roy Buckley and Elmer Huston



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Photo Rob Gersiner, High Mountain Archery

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-Randy Newberg, Host of Fresh Tracks

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SUMMER SOCIAL AND IDAHO BIGHORN LOTTERY TAG DRAWING JULY 29, 2022



Please plan on joining us for the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation Summer Social and Idaho Bighorn Lottery Tag drawing on **JULY 29TH, 2022**. **NEW** this year, we will have three events with individual raffles at each location. We are extremely excited to announce that **BRADFORD O'CONNOR**, son of the Legendary Jack O'Connor, will be at the Boise location to draw the Idaho State Bighorn Lottery Tag. Watch your email and Facebook for detail.

Events in
BOISE
LEWISTON
IDAHO FALLS



Bradford O'Connor, son of the Legendary Jack O'Connor, was born June 1933, in Flagstaff, Arizona. He moved with his family to Lewiston in 1948 and graduated from Lewiston High School in 1952. He served in the military as a policeman in Korea 1953-1955. Bradford graduated with a BA in English and Journalism from the University of Idaho in 1959. He worked as a cub reporter for the Los Angeles Mirror-News 1959, copy and city editor for the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin 1960-1976, and last but not least, was the outdoor reporter/columnist/editor for the Seattle Times 1967-1991. Bradford has written several articles and provided numerous photographs for several publications, including Outdoor Life, Sports Afield, Petersen's Hunting, Road & Track and dozens of Associated Press membership newspapers. His hobbies and interests include photography, travel, food and wine, shooting, hunting, fishing and bicycling. Bradford married his high-school sweetheart (Anne) in 1953. They will be celebrating their 69th wedding anniversary this year. The O'Connors have two children, John and Pamela and six grandchildren.

Jack O'Connor

HUNTING HERITAGE & EDUCATION CENTER
LEWISTON, IDAHO 83701



Jack O'Connor was the undisputed dean of outdoor writers.

For decades his feature articles in Outdoor Life Magazine brought readers a special, intimate look at the world of hunting, fishing, and the lives of people who live by the land. The series of adventures that made him a household name were his books about wildlife conservation and modern wildlife management.



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www.biglostriveroutfitters.com



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2022 IDAHO BIGHORN LOTTERY TAG

GUIDELINES

- › The 2022 Lottery Tag shall be valid for use in any open controlled bighorn hunt, **INCLUDING UNIT 11**.
- › "Tickets" are controlled hunt applications.
- › Ticket purchasers and persons named on tickets must be at least 18 years old and must be eligible to hold a hunting license in Idaho.
- › Tickets are void where the ticket/tag sale is prohibited.
- › This tag is non-transferrable.
- › This tag (and hunting license, if needed) will only be issued to an eligible applicant (the person named on the ticket drawn).
- › Drawing will be conducted July 29, 2022.
- › **ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME RULE IS WAIVED** for this tag.
- › Need not be present to win.
- › Additional rules apply.

Ticket prices

- 1 ticket for \$20
- 6 tickets for \$100
- 14 tickets for \$166.75
- 25 tickets for \$250

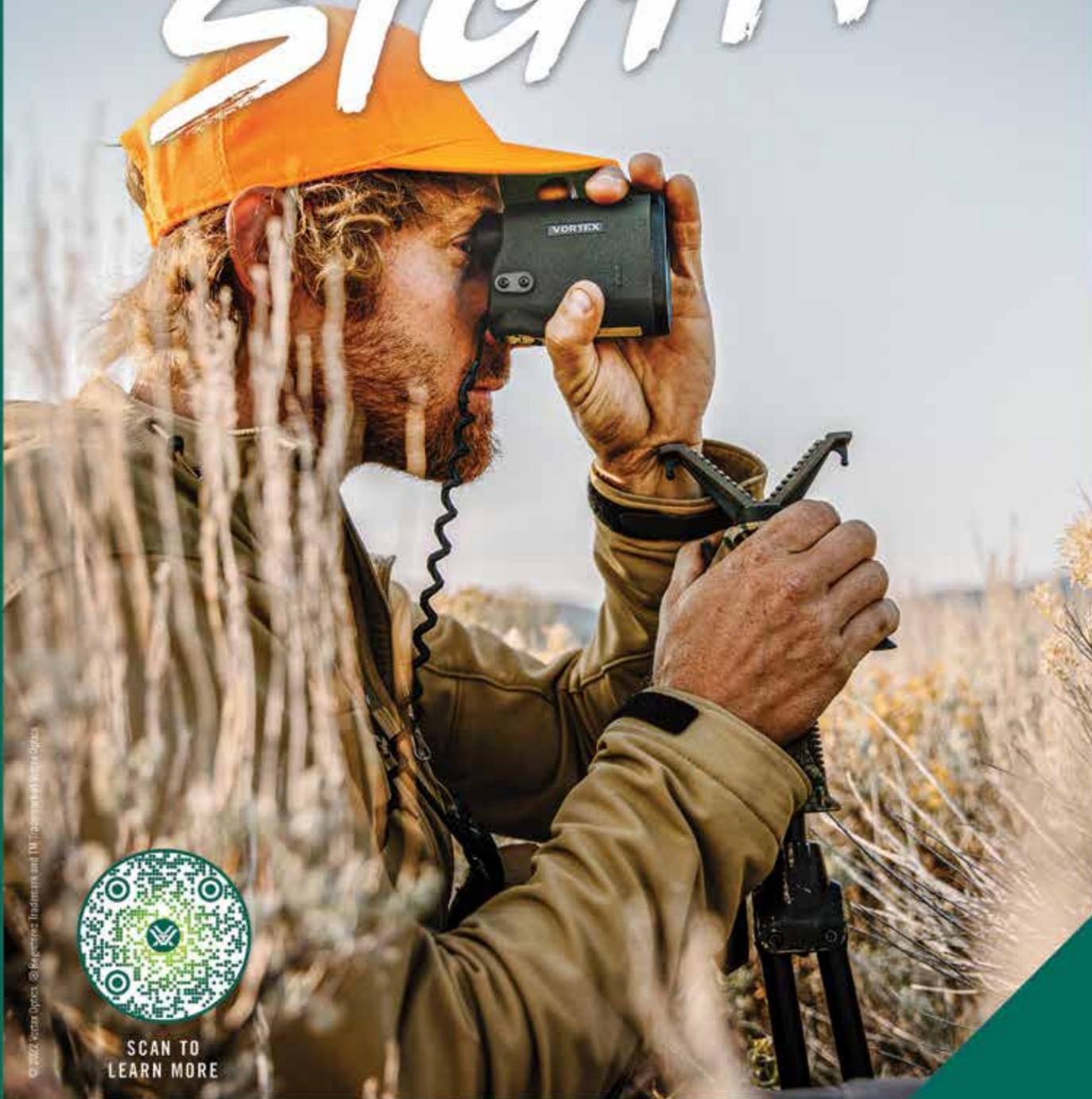
NO limit to number of tickets purchased per individual.
Deadline to purchase tickets is July 25, 2022.

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Not included: items outlined in gear list, travel to and from Haines, Alaska, lodging before and after hunt, hunting license (\$160), mountain goat tag (\$600), gratuities, and shipment of meat/trophy.

Membership drive begins July 29, 2022 and concludes February 5, 2023.
Drawing will take place on February 17th, 2023.

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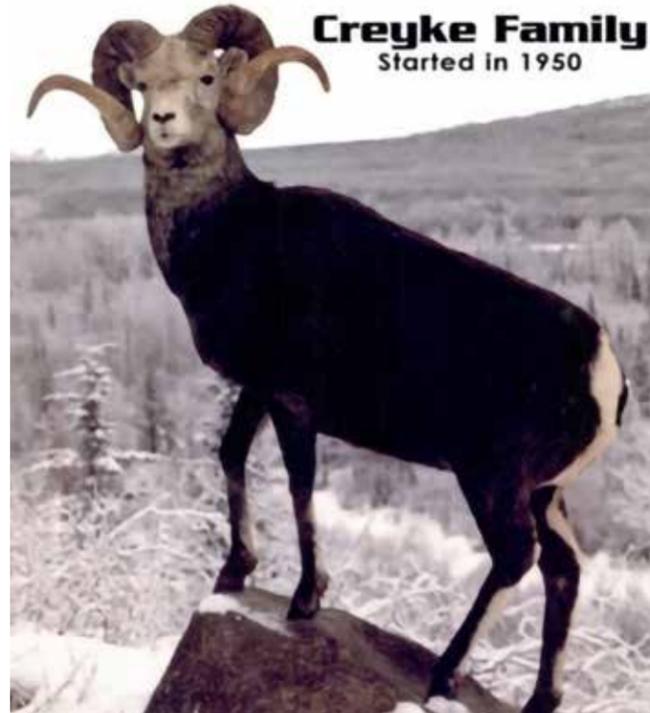


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Trophy quality 160"-175"

Bison Bull \$10,000 or Cow \$7,000

Free Range
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Slam
7 days fully outfitted (2 days travel)
Travel time 3 hours from Tucson
100% success rate

Gould's Turkey \$3,000

5 days fully outfitted (2 travel)
Travel time 2-5 hours from Tucson
98% success rate
Additional birds \$1,500

*All hunts include travel to and from Tucson, food and drinks, trophy importation

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JUST MEANT TO BE

By Nick Wood

Age: 11

Unit 37

They were shaggy, with clumps of bleached hair falling off them. Remnants of another winter survived. They stood out like sore thumbs; their shaggy white bodies stamped on the hill like the surrounding snow drifts still serving as a reminder that winter had been in full force not long ago. These were the first big horn rams my son had ever laid eyes on, 21 of them to be exact, bedded on a hillside soaking up the spring sun at 10:00 am on May 29, 2021. There were a handful of good rams in the group and several adolescent rams. The best ram of the group stood up on the hillside and squatted in the brush, giving himself a back rub in the sun; it was quite the sight to see. Just being able to watch them for a little while was enough to know that these were a special animal, and we couldn't wait to find more. This would be the first sheep scouting trip of many. My name is Dylan Wood. I am 11 years old. I live in south-east Idaho. I love hunting, it is my favorite sport. I love football and wrestling too. I have been very lucky ever since I was old enough to hunt, and have drawn some really good

tags. This tag was extra special and this is my story through the eyes of my dad.

It all started on one of those days that you won't forget. I can remember very vividly the events that took place. It was that time of year when the anticipation is high as draw results could be coming out any day. May 13, I remember exactly where I was sitting at work when I got a text from my brother stating that drawing results were out. As I was trying to access my Idaho Fish and Game account, I received an email notification from the Idaho Fish and Game and quickly opened it. It was an unsuccessful notification. Dang it, another year with no sheep tag and what seemed like a lifetime of applications. You get used to it. I jumped back into my email looking for another notification for my son's application. There was no notification. I then logged into his online Idaho Fish and Game account. Opening the results, the most recent controlled hunt applications appear, which was bighorn sheep. And right there, hunt number

Watching Dylan put his hands on that ram was a special moment for me. A magnificent animal had just been taken. I couldn't be happier, experiencing such a moment with my son.

one had been selected. Now reading those words takes you back for a minute. I had to do it again. In fact, I had to log out and log back in just to verify. It was during the second login that I received an email notification; a controlled hunt win! Congratulations Dylan Wood, you were successful in drawing the once-in-a-lifetime controlled hunt for Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep. I honestly couldn't believe it; I was so jacked I could hardly contain myself. Did my 11-year-old son really just draw a Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep tag? He did, he really did! It was then the texts started rolling in asking if I had drawn. I simply stated I had not. Then the questions turned to have you heard of anybody drawing and my response was Dylan did! When I got home from work that night Dylan had just got home from school. I pulled him aside and tried to make it sound like a serious father-son conversation, but I couldn't contain the excitement. I explained he actually drew the sheep tag that he had wanted to put in for on the very last night of the application deadline.

Back to the scouting trip. I'm not sure that it had really set in, as we sat watching these rams' bed, feed and mill around on the hillside. A friend of mine, who had drawn the tag with another friend of his in 2017, had graciously jumped in the truck with us that day. Conversations discussing Dylan's tag brought back a lot of memories for him and he was excited to go look for sheep and share anything he could to help us get some eyes on sheep. We spent the day bouncing around looking for sheep. We covered a tremendous amount of country and we're able to glass other rams as well. I had only seen this country from a distance, so to be in the heart of sheep country was jaw dropping. The views and the terrain are just incredible. It was very deceiving how big the country is and how rugged it could be. We had a ball looking for sheep, shooting squirrels and talking about the good old days and past crazy hunts. His sheep hunt in 2017 is a great story of two friends drawing this tag and basically living in the sheep country for the summer. While on this scouting trip I harvested a bear with a quick spot and stock. Yes, I got to harvest it rather than Dylan; he had already killed a really, really nice bear earlier this spring! Throughout the summer we spent every weekend possible scouting. Some trips were day trips and some were multiple day trips. I put 8,000 miles on the truck, driving back and

forth and around during the summer. Scouting was some of the best part of the hunt. There were many nights spent in a backpack tent, eating freeze dried meals. Most of the time it was just Dylan and I. On one particular trip we met up with an acquaintance, Mark who had drawn the tag a few years earlier. I reached out to him to pick his brain and he was more than helpful. He was crazy about sheep, had vast knowledge of the unit and wanted to help in any way he could. Ironically his daughter, who at the time was also eleven, had the tag the year before. It was on this trip that we glassed up the best ram that we had so far. Mark spotted him after separated that morning. When we met up, he was eager to show us the ram. The heat waves were tremendous, plus the distance made it difficult to judge the ram. However, by all accounts he was a nice ram.

From that point on I always made it an effort to find this ram during every trip. We would spend part of the day trying to find him, hoping for a better look. We were able to get pretty good pictures and video of this ram on a couple different trips. He was always with the same group of rams. One of the rams with him had a very distinct drop. He looked cool, but didn't have quiet the mass of the other ram that we now named the 'mark' ram. Throughout the summer we ground it out, hiking into basins, spending the day glassing and covering as much country as we could. We also glassed while traveling to the trail head. We had seen several rams, but nothing we felt was as good as the 'mark' ram. We had some great scouting trips in some awesome coun-



try. On one trip we jumped into a mountain lake to freshen up; it was dang cold, yet dang refreshing. Lots of good memories were made throughout the summer scouting trips. During one scouting trip a cousin and his son tagged along. The son was a few years younger than Dylan. Cuz, as we often refer to my cousin, had been in this unit in 2017, with friends I mentioned earlier. We hiked at a fast pace to get into a basin with the boys before a storm hit. Storms had been brewing all day and as we left the truck, I think we both knew we were in for a wet hike. We almost made to the summit the storm set in. It rained and hailed exceptionally hard for quite some time. Ironically most of our high dollar rain gear had been left in the pickup. After sitting under the trees, trying to stay dry for a few hours, we finally decided to bail, as everybody was soaking wet and the temperature had dropped significantly. We hiked back to the truck, soaking wet, to find all our gear soaked, despite our so-called waterproof bags. We piled in the truck to get warm and dry. We drove around to do some glassing, but fog and clouds preventing much glassing. When the clouds and fog lifted it was quite the sight, it had snowed in the higher elevations. The storm turned the trip into quite the off-road adventure, the road was exceptionally greasy. Needless to say, we put my pickup through things that you should never put a pickup through; it was exceptionally hard on equipment. In the end it made for a great trip with lots of memories; I would do it all over again.

The following day the weather was awesome. We covered lots of country and spotted up a few rams. We went in to find the 'mark' ram, as I wanted to show him to Cuz to get a second. Unfortunately, we were unable to find him. The weather had changed dramatically, it was extremely dry and hot; all the snow drifts were gone in the highest of the high country, making it hard to find sheep. We scoured the country looking for the ram, but were not able to pick him up. My hope all along had been to find multiple shooter rams to have a plan B and a plan C ram. Truthfully, I was a nervous wreck from the beginning, partly because this was the later tag of the two offerings. In my mind the odds of being able to find a ram during summer scouting and camp on that ram until opening day of the second season was going to be almost impossible, with the first tag holders getting first pick. We were always looking for a plan B and a plan C ram. No plan B rams were found that weekend, but we located some respectable rams.

August went by on high speed. Things got crazy with school starting and football season. Dylan loves football, however, COVID threw a real wrench in the 2020 season. This made the 2021 football season more special. As a dad I really struggled because the sheep tag is a once in a lifetime opportunity. We got out a couple more times, sneaking out after a football game, plus a short trip one weekend. We could not find the 'mark' ram, in fact we saw very few sheep. I was starting to get nervous. I knew with everything going on we weren't going to get back up there to scout. By now I was freaking out! I still had grain to harvest, on top of my normal job schedule. This was going to throw a real wrench in scouting prior to opening day. All of the sudden it was Monday, September 13th, the final weekend to do any scouting and we missed it! The grain was harvested, thanks to a turn in the weather, plus some great friends and neighbors; it was now time to prepare for opening day. We intended on leaving Thursday night, immediately after work, to get to camp and set up. This would allow us Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday to scout for sheep and be ready for the opener on Tuesday. It was Friday afternoon before we got to our base camp. I had scheduled a full week off of work, plus another week a little later in the hunt in case we needed it. Dylan was out of school for potato harvest. He had decided to miss a football game that weekend and perhaps the following weekend, depending on how the hunting was going. The moment had finally come, we were actually going sheep hunting! Dylan had spent the entire spring and summer watching sheep hunting videos on YouTube. He spent countless time researching sheep taxidermy and already decided how he wanted a life-sized sheep to look. After getting camp set up, we set out to find the 'mark' ram that evening. We spotted elk, deer, and antelope, but didn't find any sheep. We went to bed wracking our brains on where to go in the morning, feeling urgency to find a sheep.

In the morning, after a quick protein drink, we scrambled to go find a ram. We started glassing from camp, long-distance glassing, just trying to locate sheep. After a few hours of no luck, it was time to jump in the truck and move to the next spot. We were going to glass the area the target ram had last been seen, hoping to locate him. However, I was in the mood to explore. After getting into the area, we started putting the glass to work. We weren't picking up anything, so continued to move on deeper into the area. Rounding a corner, we stopped and began to glass.

Instantly I picked up a ram. I could not have been more excited! Then Dylan began spotting rams, soon we had located four rams. They were younger, average rams, with one having a distinct look, long sweeping horns with big open curls and lots of length, but not much mass. It was then we both simultaneously saw motion, the rump of another sheep moving headed toward the four rams we were watching. He was a ram that just had that look; you knew instantly was a stud. We were both so excited we could hardly contain ourselves talking about the ram and how good he looked. When you can judge an animal by the 'wow factor' most times you are in the clear. This ram had the 'wow factor.' I began taking photos and video on my phone through the spotting scope as he meandered toward the other rams. When he joined the group the 'wow factor' was magnified even more. Zooming in on him and taking video, I noticed he was slightly broomed on the one side. I felt more and more confident that we had just found the 'mark' ram. I pulled up previous video and pictures and confirmed he is the 'mark' ram. It was simply too good to be true! Here we were on a Saturday morning, with the opener coming up on Tuesday. We had just found the target ram in a very killable spot. This ram was a stud, a ram anyone would be happy with. Given our history with him made it much more special. As we sat and talked about the ram and looked at pictures and video, the stress began to set in. Due to the location, I was paranoid these rams would either leave on their own or someone would find them before the opener. We decided to keep looking for other rams. We had to find a plan B ram; it was unlikely he would still be here three days from now. We spent the rest of the day covering country and looking for rams. We made it back to camp just before dark. As it turned out we were able to glass the 'mark' ram from camp, however, at an extreme distance. We were able to spot all four rams very near where we had seen them earlier. Hopefully, this ram would stay undiscovered for two more full days!

Mark and one of his buddies had showed up to help us scout for a couple days before the season opener. Ecstatic over the ram we had found, we went over pictures and video with them. After picking the ram apart and throwing out some rough scores, we decided he was the one. In the meantime, Mark was in the process of ruining a perfectly good ribeye steak by adding a large portobello mushroom to the mix.





We woke up bright and early, eager to put glass on the ram. I knew we couldn't just camp on him; we didn't want to bump him or give him away. We would check on him morning and evening, at a distance, while looking for plan B ram. That morning, as the sun hit the hill, all four rams were feeding in the sun. This was great, but heck, if we could see them, anyone could see them! Again, we spent the day bombing around looking for other sheep. A storm was brewing, with rain and snow predicated for the next couple days. This day proved uneventful, only a couple small rams, plus some ewes were spotted. In the evening we headed back to check on the target ram before dark. We discovered another hunter had set up camp not far from us. This just added to the stress. We decided before dark. While going in we spotted two small rams on the opposite side of the hill. They were feeding, probably a mile away from the area of the target ram. We were pretty sure these were the two smaller rams that had been hanging out with the target ram. This made me nervous, what if they had split! We decided to try glassing from camp. Sure enough, at very last light, we located three rams feeding by themselves. While watching them two rams fed over the skyline and joined them. This put five rams on the hill now, meaning the big dog still had to be there!

It was Sunday night now, we were down to one more day; one more day and we could make our move, but only if

he continued to stay put! He wasn't going to be able to stay for the opener, but hoped to be back if we needed help by the next weekend. He wished us luck and went on his way.

Monday morning, we woke up to a skiff of snow and stellar blue skies. The high country was solid white and the glassing was awesome. I love glassing and can sit behind good glass all day long. Today was one of those days with the perfect light conditions. From camp we glassed a ram standing on a ridge, almost at the top of the peak in the back of a big basin, soaking up the sun. He was far away, in the opposite direction of the other rams, but such a cool spot. The rugged peaks and cliffs were picturesque in the new snow. With the lighting so good, I was able to spot four rams feeding in the same spot we had left them the night before. It was then that we heard it; that unmistakable hum of a single engine prop plane. It took me a minute to get my bearings, but I was soon able to spot it. The plane came through a cut and began flying up the ridgeline toward the ram that was sunbathing near the peak. Sure enough, as the plane neared the ram, it began to circle, losing some elevation in an effort to get a better look. I was sick, no, no, no, they were looking for sheep! Everything was on stage to work perfectly and now this! There was no way from the air, the target ram and his group could be missed. No way. Impossible! We watched

the plane circle the lone ram and continue up the canyon. The plane flew in and out of the canyons and around the peaks, clearly looking for sheep. Tomorrow was opening day, and someone was scouting by plane. I love to fly and, for just a second, I was so jealous of such a view they no doubt had. It is legal so we couldn't be upset; we had considered doing the same thing. I couldn't take it, standing there watching this plane looking for sheep, the ones we had been watching the last few days, basically half of the summer. The plane made its last circle and was headed out of the canyon, right towards us. This was it; this was where the plane made a sudden move and circled the target ram. I told Dylan it was over; we were screwed and would, for sure, have competition in the morning. The plane went to the next peak and continued in the search for sheep. It just kept going. I stood there dumbfounded, the plane just kept going and going. How did they not see those sheep? How? How? I told Dylan it was simply meant to be. There had been to many things that could have gone the other way, but didn't. The plane incident just solidified this.

It was late morning, less than 24 hours to go, the 'mark' ram was still there! Being a pessimist, I just knew the plane would be coming back on its way home. I convinced myself it would be, but allowed the option that perhaps with the sun direction they could be looking in different areas. We jumped in the truck and headed for the other end of the unit. We still had to find a plan B ram. The day was hot and the snow was melting fast. We took advantage of it as long as we could, glassing and glassing. We did see other rams, a couple of younger rams and lots of ewes. The last few hours of the afternoon found us glassing a group of rams in a long basin. The distance was incredible, but you could tell two were great rams. They were in a tough spot, doable, but definitely not for the faint of heart. We had now found plan B!

We both arrived at the intersection at the same time. I turned on my blinker to make the turn into camp, perhaps cutting the other truck off. Then I recognized the truck, it was a great friend and Cuz. They come to meet us for the morning hunt. I flew to camp trying to get there with enough time to get eyes on the target ram. Cuz asked how the scouting had gone and where the sheep were. I handed him my phone with a picture of the 'mark' ram we had taken on Saturday morning. Wow, where is he? When I pointed in the general direction, they couldn't believe it. We started glassing, but couldn't find any of them.



Nervousness hit hard. They had to be there. Tomorrow was opening morning and we had to know where he was. We decided to get a closer look. We found four rams in the exact spot Dylan and I found them three days ago, however, big dog was not with them! We scoured the hills, nothing, he wasn't there. Was this for real? It was almost dark and we had to bail. We went to bed wondering where the ram was. I was convinced he had to be there; he was just holed up somewhere we couldn't see him. We would be there in the morning.

The night was short, honestly, I was so jacked I could hardly sleep. Ironically, I think Dylan slept great and he popped right out of bed when the alarm went off. It was show time, we piled in the truck and made our way to where we would start glassing. We were early and spent a long time waiting. It all worked out, the sheep were still there, at least some of them. He had to be there, right? I couldn't believe it, there was no competition, just us. We were so close to this actually happening it was surreal. The sun broke over the hill and we started glassing. We glassed for about 45 minutes with no luck. The rams had to be deeper, tucked in where we couldn't see them. We made our way in, constantly glassing. We soon came to the spot Dylan and I had first seen them; the four rams exactly where we knew they would be. The distinct long horned ram, with not much curl, had us pegged. He was a cool ram, a great ram really. There were lots of comments and questions; are you sure that is not him? We were sure, the big dog simply wasn't there. We continued to look, even though the rams had us pegged. I was sure they would blow out. Luckily, they just watched us watching them. We moved on to get a different angle, trying to locate the 'mark' ram. He had to be here. The rest of the group was here and seemed content. "Ram," someone said! There was the 'mark' ram in a small swale, all by himself. He picked his head up, giving us a great look; there was no question, it was him! He was about 300 yards, but here was nowhere for a shot. The lay of the land didn't allow for a good prone shot. We moved on headed, toward a slight rise, with less vegetation and a great spot to get the bipod set up. With Dylan in the prone position, I started ranging, 400 yards, slightly downhill. We dialed the turret and Dylan got set. Cuz had a camera rolling; it had all come down to these few seconds. I knew Dylan could make this shot. However, there was lots of pressure to make the shot. The ram took what seemed like forever to present a good broadside shot. Dylan stayed on him; when the ram presented a great shot, "take him" I said.



The 6.5 PRC rang out. It was a great shot; the ram was down! A huge weight lifted, it was done, over, at 8:01 AM opening morning, the 'mark' ram was down. High fives and congrats were given. We never believed it would have worked out the way it did. I sent Dylan down to look at the ram by himself, while we gathered things up. I wanted him to have some 'alone time' to let it sink in. After a few moments the rest of us made our way to the ram. He got bigger as we got closer, something I'm not accustomed; I'm more familiar with ground shrinkage. Watching Dylan put his hands on that ram was a special moment for me. A magnificent animal had just been taken. A lot of work had gone into making this happen. I couldn't be happier, experiencing such a moment with my son; the scouting trips, the mountains, glassing and the anxiety of waiting and hoping. Dylan experienced what many may never get to experience; at 11 years old. Some say it's too young. I say take the opportunities when they come, because you never know what can happen. Life happens fast.

After taking what seemed like hundreds of photos, we took care of the ram and headed back to camp. Nobody cared what the ram scored, he was a stud and we knew it. However, we couldn't resist putting a tape on him at camp. He went 176 2/8, bigger than the 170 we thought he might

go. What a great ram! Putting your hands on those bases is an awesome feeling, one you must let soak in for a while. Later on, as we were looking through scouting photos and sheep photos, I realized this is the ram we had on film, backing his butt into the brush, scratching himself, during our first scouting trip. It had now come full circle; reality was meant to be.

We would like to give a special thanks to the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for their efforts in keeping sheep on the mountain, plus the opportunities and memories it provides. Also, a special thanks to all those who helped us in many different ways, both scouting and providing information, that attributed to the success of this hunt, you know who you are. Sheep hunts are an adventure in their own way, one of the coolest animals on the planet, in some of the most magnificent, beautiful country there is. I wish I knew someone with a sheep tag every year!

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The Salmon River Flying Sheep Club

by Bruce Mincher

The improbable flying machine drowned our attempts to shout at each other and we were blasted with frigid prop wash as it lowered its captives to the landing zone. Despite warnings to keep my cap screwed on tight it was blown across the hard surface of the frozen snow, and loose bits of crust bounced off my cheeks and my nearly bald head. I rushed across the slippery surface, breaking through here and there, bearing one corner of a green stretcher with the younger guys pulling perhaps just a bit faster than was comfortable for a mature fellow like me. I wondered what the rush was. The hobbled and blindfolded sheep clearly weren't going anywhere, lying there in their bright orange slings. Their heads were upright and they were alert, although they couldn't see a thing. I was one of seven Idaho Wild Sheep volunteers on the Salmon River bighorn sheep capture in March of 2022. The enthusiasm of my young colleagues was admirable, but they were tiring me out.

This sortie had returned three rams, delivered dangling from the sky one above the other. They were remarkably calm in spite of being on the flight of their lives. They couldn't see the faraway ground through their blindfolds. A ram looks noble and dignified even when he is

blindfolded and hobbled and these ones looked for all the world like they were proud to be charter members of the Salmon River Flying Sheep Club. Pilot Jimmy Pope lowered them gently to the ground and then disconnected the cable that had held them aloft. He banked away and flew just above the water down river, before rising back to the high ridges above, and it was then mercifully quiet in the landing zone. Helicopters are loud.

Working the ground crew of a net-gunning operation for bighorn sheep is a lot like what I imagine a military operation must be. Complete with the stretcher-bearers meeting the incoming helicopter, a medical team on standby, and even warnings about FOD on the flight line; our patients were fortunately not combat wounded. This being March of 2022 the similarity to a less pleasant scenario had me saying silent prayers for those in the world's latest conflict zone, occurring at the same time on the far side of the world in Ukraine. But here on the river, these precious, living bighorn sheep were being surveyed for Movi prevalence in Idaho's Lower Panther Creek/Main Salmon wild sheep population, and they would be released alive and well, often after a workup of less than 10 minutes.

Sometimes we received only a single ewe riding under the chopper. Other times it would be three ewes, and once we even got four ewes at the same time. With that many sheep in the landing zone nobody was idle. And while we mostly sampled females it was the occasional group of rams that provided the most excitement and drew out the cameras. Senior Research Biologist Dr. Frances Cassirer asked me why we got so excited over rams when the ewes were so pretty. The ewes, after all, were the ones crucial to sustaining the population. I photographed them too, at least when my hands were free. But nobody had free hands when three or four came in at the same time. In addition to producing the next generation, Frances' work in Hells Canyon had revealed that ewes have the potential to infect their own healthy lambs with Movi, and we hoped our sampling would return results that showed these ones to be healthy. Ultrasound revealed that almost all of these ewes were pregnant. The next generation of wild Salmon River sheep was in our benevolent hands and our work was designed to ensure their success.

We would collar 62 sheep in only three days. That's remarkable. When we volunteers first heard Idaho Fish and Game Regional Wildlife Manager Dennis Newman explain how many animals were needed, we shook our heads and laughed. It seemed ludicrous to be able to catch so many in a few days; besides, our first morning had dawned with a pretty low cloud ceiling. The hilltops above the parking lot at the IDFG office were socked in and there was a light drizzle even at our elevation. I was skeptical as we stood around the parking lot sorting out the inevitable last-minute details. Still, successful people make their own luck, so our convoy headed out for Shoup on the famous Salmon River. The road leaves North Fork and follows the river to the west, past the tiny village of Shoup, past the confluence with the Middle Fork, and eventually ending at Corn Creek at the edge of the wilderness; a border we did not have the authority to cross. Road conditions progressively deteriorated as I rode down river with volunteers Scott Sorenson, Mitch McFarlane and Rick Southwell. Scott was in the driver's seat and he took it carefully. The drizzle had produced a thin layer of water on top of the packed ice and the laws of physics forbid a more friction-free surface. Below us, the roaring Salmon dove below great ice jams to resurface many yards downstream, and the whitewater transported ice bergs on a tumultuous ride. As I watched the current pillow off big boulders I wondered if the snowbank along the edge



Charter members of the Salmon River Flying Sheep Club are delivered to the landing zone on Panther Creek. They were sampled for Movi and radio collared prior to the release, unharmed.



Idaho Wild Sheep President Bill London works with Dr. Frances Cassirer and Hollie Miyasaki to sample and collar a Salmon River ram during March's sheep capture on the Salmon River.

of the road was substantial enough to keep us from sliding into the torrent. It was a relief when Scott stopped to chain up. The road was so slippery that it was difficult even to walk, but by the time we arrived at the capture site on lower Panther Creek the conditions were good for flying.

The first sortie returned three ewes. Out of their slings and onto their gurneys, each rode in an upright position to facilitate breathing, and they were sequentially delivered to an electronic scale for weighing. With masses recorded, next came transport to an adjacent tarp where Idaho Fish and Game biologists began their sheep processing. There was plenty of work for the volunteers and we had seven to 10 helpers on any given day. A multiple-animal workup is all behinds and elbows, with everyone crouched over a patient. It looks chaotic but thanks to Dennis' pre-job briefing everyone knew what they needed to do; Fish and Game staff, Idaho Wild Sheep volunteers and the flight crew worked seamlessly and efficiently. It's a fairly quiet chaos as we spoke with subdued voices to minimize the stress to our patients. Each animal was accompanied by a data card on which was documented the medical history of that individual. It included records of the time of arrival and release, blood and DNA sample IDs, body temperature, and various body condition measurements. Importantly, the card would also include collar and ear tag IDs. These sheep were no longer anonymous wild animals. They were now identifiable individuals with individual histories. They were members of the club.

Perhaps the most important samples were the nasal swabs for Movi. Surveillance for this contagious, pneumonia-causing organism was the main reason for our adventure. Staff Biologist Hollie Miyasaki and Frances explained to us that these Salmon River sheep had only just started to be studied and collared. Until now, there had been only anecdotal information available for this population. Every collar we put out was a potential treasure trove of brand-new knowledge for Idaho's sheep managers, and the more collars the more statistically significant the data. According to Hollie, "Our February aerial survey detected 544 bighorn sheep, more than we anticipated." Of course, this is good news. But unknown was the extent to which Movi was present, and the extent to which these sheep mingled with those in the adjacent Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. We weren't allowed to catch sheep there, but if Movi could be transmitted from the Shoup area into the Frank Church,



Idaho Wild Sheep volunteers Carter Swain and his daughter Hallie Swain release a ewe following her 10-minute workup. These animals were nearly all pregnant and released unharmed.



Idaho Wild Sheep member and volunteer Scott Sorenson weighs a newly delivered wild sheep ewe on Panther Creek, a tributary of the salmon. Weights and body temperature were the first metric recorded.

then the entire central Idaho metapopulation could be at risk. Hollie also explained, "These central Idaho sheep are natives. That makes them pretty unique." The techniques we were applying here on the Salmon were developed by Frances, Hollie and their colleagues during their years of experience restoring the bighorn sheep population of Hells Canyon.

With all the biological samples collected and a new collar attached, our captives were returned to a stretcher and then transported 20 or 30 yards away from the quiet commotion for release back into their silent wilderness. Once the hobbles and blindfold were removed, always the blindfold last, a sheep would launch into the air and run for the nearest, steepest hill. Typically, they would climb about 50 yards or so and then stop to glance back at us over their shoulders. Regaining their inherent dignity and composure, they would give us a look that asked, "What was that all about?" I imagined that if they could brush themselves off they would do it. Then, they turned away from us and casually continued their climb to the high ridges whence they had come.

The weather only improved as the days went by and we eventually worked four different landing sites at points above and below Shoup. Most were in the cold shade of the canyon walls, but once we were lucky to be on a dry sagebrush flat. It was a warm and pleasant place to have a sandwich during a rare break in the action, with blue

sky poking through the clouds. Bald eagles perched in the pines above the ice-jammed river below, and the incongruously loud call of a tiny canyon wren echoed out of the rock piles above. But then, all sounds were drowned out by the chopper delivering its next load. It was time to get back to work. Thanks in part to the fact that these sheep had never before been sampled we did get all the collars out. Pilot Jim told us these animals were so naïve that sometimes they just stared at him as he closed in for a shot with the net gun. Pope kept flying them in, always ready with the next batch just as we released the last of our previous delivery. He caught them as fast as we were ready. He brought them is as fast as we could process.

This operation will not soon be forgotten by our volunteers. It's not often one gets to handle live bighorn sheep; the animal all Wild Sheep members so admire. And in handling them we were contributing to their conservation. According to Idaho Wild Sheep President Bill London, "We look forward to more joint efforts with Idaho Fish and Game. It's through this type of cooperation that we can put and keep wild sheep on the mountain." And the sheep on the mountains above the Salmon River have a new club of their own to boast about. Even now their new collars are collecting the data that will ensure future generations of proud rams and pretty ewes will continue to grace Idaho's wild country, and continue to enrich the lives of future generations of Wild Sheep enthusiasts. Idaho is a magical place.



All hands are on deck as three rams are worked up simultaneously. These animals are no longer anonymous wildlife, but uniquely identifiable individuals with histories that will aid in conserving their population into the future.



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Idaho Fish and Game Biologist Frances Cassirer PhD 2022 Wild Sheep Foundation State Statesman Award

The Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation has the pleasure of announcing that Frances Cassirer PhD, Senior Wildlife Research Biologist for Idaho Department of Fish and Game, is the 2022 recipient of the Wild Sheep Foundation State Statesman Award. The Statesman Award is presented to government officials worldwide for their outstanding contributions to wild sheep conservation.

We have been working with Frances for over 25 years and have had the opportunity to work and interact with her on a broad range of bighorn sheep issues. Frances's experience, knowledge, and leadership of bighorn sheep issues has made her a leader in bighorn

sheep field research and management not only in the States of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington but across the west.

Frances has used her expertise to quietly research and manage bighorn sheep through a vast network of cooperative endeavors with a broad range of groups. She is the epitome of coordination and cooperation to gain, share, and use knowledge.

Frances has long been a leader in gaining knowledge through cooperative research with universities, state and federal wildlife and land management agencies, and the Wild Sheep foundation's Chapters

and Affiliates. She has been a leader in communicating bighorn sheep interests and field research to the multiple agencies and interests in a clear and authoritative manner. Frances shares her knowledge through professional and academic relationships, including Wild Sheep Chapters, to benefit a larger audience within the conservation community. Her sharing of knowledge allows others, like our Chapters, to then interact, inform and educate at state, local and individual levels.

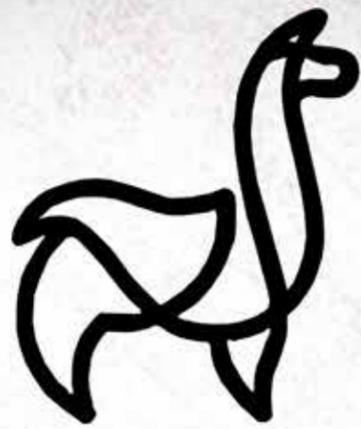
Frances then uses the knowledge to lead bighorn management efforts at levels ranging from the development and utilization of the highly promising Capture-test-remove method of controlling Movi, which is being implemented across the west, to her identification of the Ten Mile Ranch property, a vital lambing area, as a high priority for a conservation easement.

Frances is a leader among our state and regional partners and her research is cutting edge. She has the respect and admiration of our partners and is seen as an individual who is an expert in the field of bighorn sheep research and management.

These efforts are not easy, they require perseverance and 'grit'. Luckily, for bighorn sheep and for us, Frances has plenty of both. We have the greatest personnel and professional respect for Frances and are pleased she received this recognition.

Bill London, President
Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation





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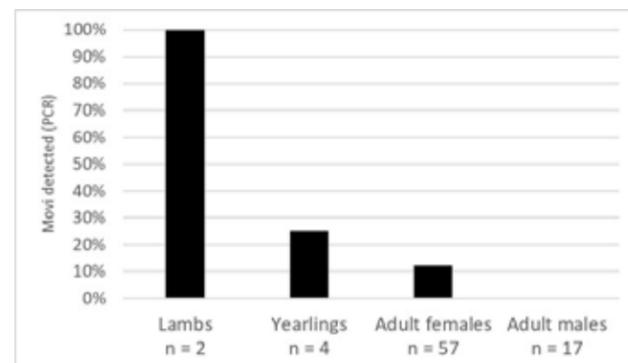
IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME, UPDATE ON SALMON RIVER BIGHORN SHEEP CAPTURES AND MONITORING: 2021 – 2022

SUMMARY - Idaho Department of Fish and Game captured 86 sheep for health surveillance and population monitoring in 2021 and 2022. Captures were conducted in Game Management Units 14, 19, 20, 21, 21A, and 28 along the Salmon River in the Lower Salmon and Lower Panther Main Salmon population management units (PMUs). Infection, widespread exposure, and respiratory disease associated with the pathogen *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (Movi) were observed. These captures provided a better understanding of the distribution and extent of infection and disease, and data gathered will contribute to efforts to improve sheep health in these populations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS - Thank you to the Wild Sheep Foundation National, Idaho Chapter, and Midwest Chapter for financial support. This was a group effort, and many people helped with capture and sampling including Nathan Borg, Stacey Dauwalter, Samuel deGrey, Sadie Grossman, Katey Huggler, Becca Lyon, Ian Montgomery, Jon Prokott, Tempe Regan, Miranda Reinson, Tom Schrempp, Sean Schroff, Shea Schuldt, Bret Stansberry, Nicole Walrath, and members of the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation. Special thanks to Kevin Hurley for a journey to Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab (WADDL) at Washington State University after hours during inclement weather. Thanks also to Mark Carson, Rich Friend, Brent Sawyer, Ethan Bishop, and Dennis Brandt for jetboat support under challenging conditions in a low water year. Helicopter capture was conducted by Leading Edge Aviation.

LOWER PANTHER MAIN SALMON - Between October 13, 2021 and March 3, 2022, 80 bighorn sheep were captured and sampled in the Lower Panther Main Salmon

PMU. A total of 57 adult females, 3 yearling females, 17 adult males, 1 yearling male, and 2 lambs were captured and sampled in (presumably) 4 ewe groups: Clear Creek, Ebenezer, Indian Creek, and Tower Kriley. Movi was detected on nasal swabs from 10 of 80 sheep (13%) and two females tested indeterminate (meaning the test was inconclusive) on two separate nasal swabs. Infection prevalence differed among sex and age classes and was highest (100%) in lambs. No Movi was detected in adult males (Figure 1). One lamb died during capture and was diagnosed with ongoing multifocal chronic bronchopneumonia with Movi detected in the lower respira-



tory tract (bronchus) at WADDL

Figure 1. Prevalence of Movi on nasal swabs collected from 4 sex and age classes of bighorn sheep in the Lower Panther Main Salmon PMU, October 2021 - March 2022.

Two strain types of Movi were identified from nasal swabs, both of which have previously been detected in this PMU and throughout central Idaho. Strain 402 was detected in all ewe groups and strain 404 was found in

Ebenezer, Indian Creek, and Tower Kriley. The 404 strain was previously found in a dead lamb in Tower Kriley diagnosed with pneumonia in 2018 (Figure 2).

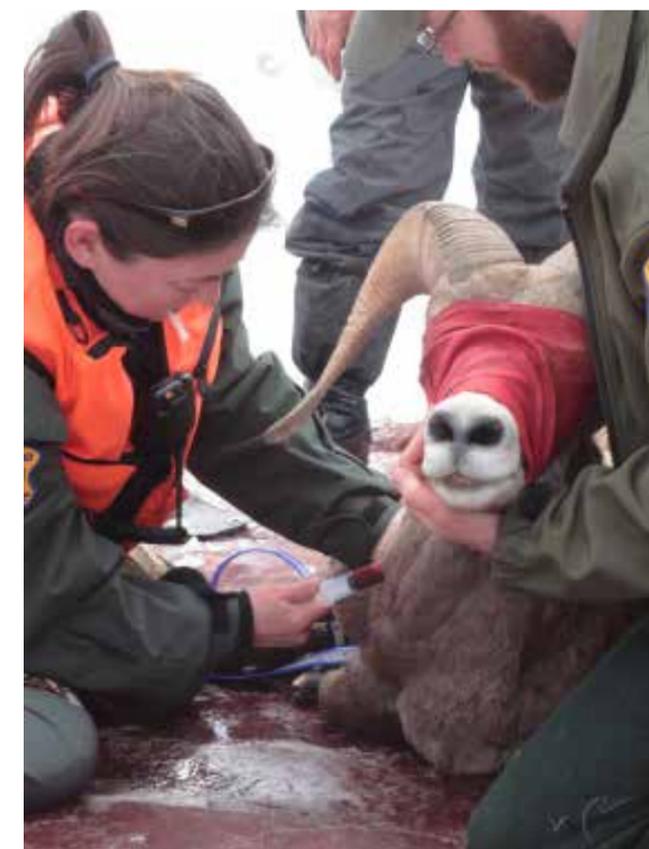


Figure 2. Phylogram of Movi multi-locus sequence types (strains) detected in 4 Lower Panther Main Salmon ewe groups (Ebenezer, Clear Creek, Indian Creek, and Tower Kriley) compared to the strain type detected in the Lower Salmon Wind River ewe group, 2021 – 2022 and in a sample from Tower Kriley in 2018. The first two digits of each sample ID label indicate the calendar year of sampling. Sequences that differ by fewer than 4 base pairs are considered to be the same strain.

Pregnancy and body condition - Ninety-two percent of females (46/50) captured in March were pregnant including all three yearlings. Ingesta-free body fat (IFBF) estimates of 42 ewes averaged 9.5% and varied widely from 1.5% to 16%. Body condition differed significantly among ewe groups, and the three ewes that were Movi positive and had IFBF measurements were in poorer body condition than those where no Movi was detected.



Measuring body condition (rump fat).



Collecting samples and radio-collaring sheep.

LOWER SALMON - Over 7 days of capture during October and November 2021 in Game Management Units 14, 19, and 20, six adult female bighorn sheep were chemically immobilized with BAM administered with a dart rifle and one adult male showing signs of weakness and emaciation was euthanized. Movi was detected on nasal swabs from 2 of 6 females captured (30%) and from the male that was euthanized.

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During 2020 and 2021 combined, Movi was detected in 4 of 21 sheep captured (19%) including 3 of 18 females (17%, Table 1) and 1 of 3 males (33%). All detections sequenced were the same strain (“402”) that has previously been detected in the Lower Salmon PMU and throughout central Idaho. Antibody to Movi was detected in 13 of 21 sheep (62%) captured, including 12 of 18 females (67%, Table 1) and 1 of 3 males (33%).

Table 1. Number (%) of female bighorn sheep that were positive for *M. ovipneumoniae* on nasal swabs, presence of serologic antibodies to *M. ovipneumoniae*, in the Lower Salmon PMU, 2020 and 2021.

Ewe Group	n	Movi PCR	Movi ELISA
Manning Bridge	1	0	1 (100%)
Wind River	3	1 (33%)	3 (100%)
Indian Creek	4	1 (25%)	2 (50%)*
Jersey Creek	10	1 (10%)	6 (60%)
ALL	18	3 (17%)	12 (67%)

MORTALITY INVESTIGATIONS - Three of 21 sheep captured in the Lower Salmon PMU have died since fall 2020. In addition to site investigations, tissues from two of the three natural mortalities were submitted to WADDL. One ewe was likely predisposed to cougar predation by debilitation and emaciation associated with extensive parasitism and one ram mortality was associated with chronic bronchopneumonia. Cause of death for one ewe is unknown due to delayed investigation and difficulties with river access. To date, 67% (2 of 3) sheep that died have tested positive for Movi.

The male euthanized in 2021 had severe, chronic bronchopneumonia associated with multiple bacteria including Movi, *Pasteurella multocida*, and others, and was septicemic. Amyloidosis of the liver, kidney,

and spleen was attributed to chronic systemic inflammation and was associated with a trace element imbalance including very high levels of copper in the liver and blood

MOVEMENTS AND POPULATION STRUCTURE

Radio-collars deployed on sheep in both the Lower Panther Main Salmon and Lower Salmon populations show that there is significant social and spatial structure within these PMU's. This structure will help to focus health testing and disease management.



Radio-collared ewe at Mackay Bar on the Lower Salmon

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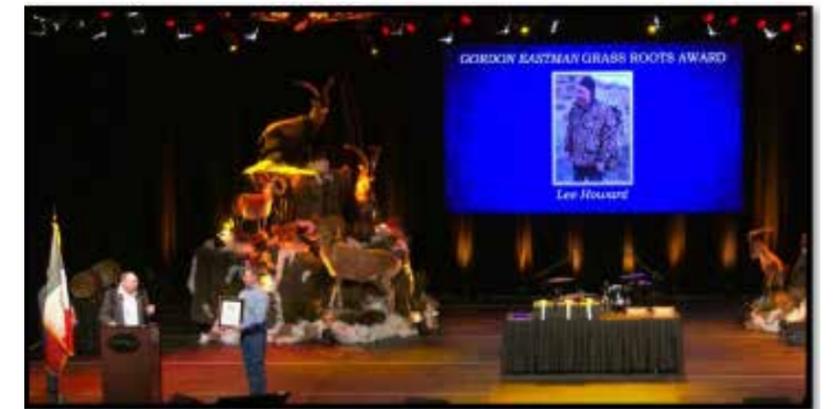
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THERE'S NO CRYING IN SHEEP HUNTING

by Kaysie Thomas

My head was pounding, sweat was burning my eyes, and my feet felt like they were stuck in mud. To top it off, I couldn't seem to suck in enough thin air to get my breathing under control. I had had enough; I was utterly exhausted. Just when I was about to voice my opinion on exactly what I thought about our last and final training hike a week before opening day of my sheep hunt, my husband Troy turned and saw my emotions and sputtered out what is now my all-time favorite hunting quote, "Get it all out now Kaysie, because There's no crying in sheep hunting!"

Packing in on foot, carrying all the food and gear needed to survive in Idaho's Frank Church Wilderness for 11 days was not going to be easy, but we had no other options as there was not a single road, airstrip, or even maintained trail in the unit. However, with all the training and preparation in the months leading up to the hunt, I felt ready. Troy and I started hiking into my unit three days prior to opening day. We planned to scout our way in, sleeping at two different locations before meeting up with our close friend Keith Suemnick who was hiking in a day behind us. Keith caught up to us the morning before opening day, and together we finished hiking the eight

miles onto a ridge that looked into the top portion of a main drainage in the unit.

During summer scouting we found a band of rams splitting their time between this drainage and another. The lead ram in that group was heavier than the others and he had horns that swooped off his head spreading wide. He was absolutely beautiful in every way that makes a ram majestic and a one of a kind. Comparing photos to previous rams killed we had no doubt he would at least score low to mid-160s. Through research I knew top end rams in my specific unit were scoring in the mid-160s. There was no doubt he would be a standout ram, but something deep and instinctual told me to hold off on pursuing this handsome, wide sweeping ram, he wasn't for me. I needed to keep searching; There was something more to be discovered if I had the patience and work ethic to make it happen.

For the next 5 days we made our way deeper, and further into the wilderness. We hiked and sometimes crawled over the highest peaks in the unit, looked into the gnarliest of drainages, and glassed bowls that revealed hidden, unnamed

lakes that were so beautiful they took your breath away. We witnessed the sure footedness of mountain goats, admired the elegance of deer and elk, felt the ground shake when a black bear charged, and heard the haunting songs of wolves howling late into the night. Still, however great our experiences were thus far, they weren't enough to outweigh my worry. We were nearly halfway through the planned 11 days, and we still hadn't turned up a single ram. I was feeling the pressure and the anxiety build higher and higher. Every time I started second guessing things, specifically passing up the wide ram seen during scouting, the guys would lift my spirits and reminded me that rams worth shooting weren't going to be easy to find; but if we kept to our plan of touring the unit, we were going to eventually turn up rams.

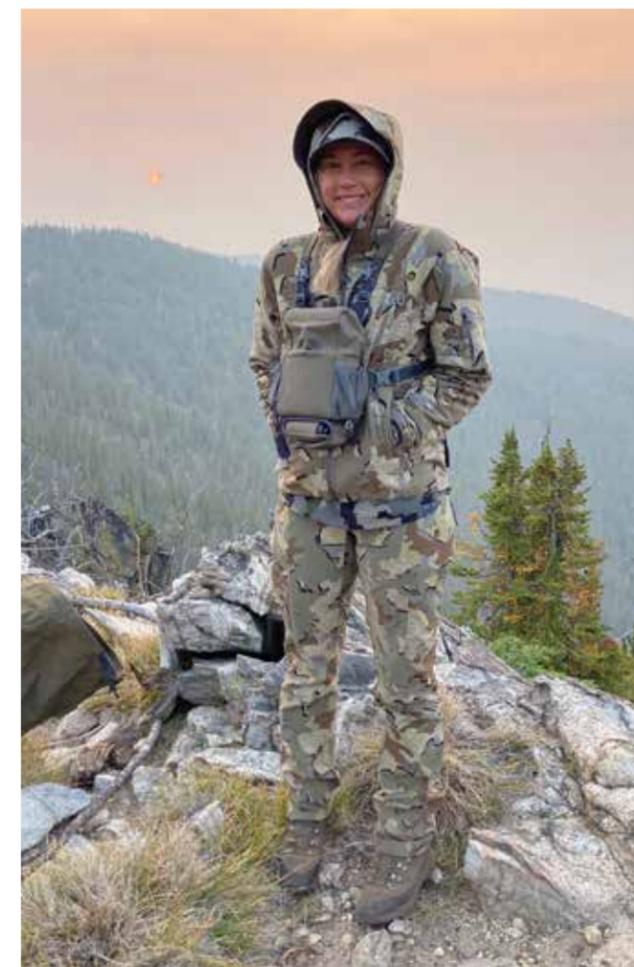
On day six, with dwindling light, we finally turned up a band of rams. The next morning, we worked our way in for a closer look. Although there were mature rams, none of them stood out and demanded the attention that I felt a once-in-a-lifetime ram should; I decided to keep searching. Later on, the evening of day seven, Troy and I were split miles away from Keith to glass different parts of the unit. At last light Troy finally spotted a herd of sheep a long way off. Eagerly, he talked me into their location, but just as I was settling my spotting scope on them something spooked the sheep and they scattered deep into a timbered drainage and out of sight.

Walking back to our camp for the night my conflicting emotions battled for supremacy. I didn't know if I should be elated that we had found more sheep or miserable because they were gone without a trace. My emotional war continued until we met back with Keith at camp. Keith had a successful evening, finding 3 rams, and one a standout! After viewing the pictures Keith had captured, hope and determination finally kicked despair's butt in my psychological war.

Preparing our freeze-dried dinners, we came up with a plan. The next morning Keith would go to where we were that evening and try to locate the herd of sheep Troy had found, while Troy and I would work our way to Keith's glassing spot in hopes of relocating the three rams he had found. Trying to sleep that night was useless, instead I pored over numerous pre-downloaded field judging articles and pictures of dream worthy rams. One of the rams Keith found seemed significantly heavier than anything we'd seen in the unit and on par in terms of mass with the rams in my saved images. As heavy as I thought this ram was, I thought he lacked length which weighed heavily on me. I personally love the look of long barely broomed horns, despite the fact that 60% of a ram's

measurement is taken from the circumference of the horn, not the length. My mind eventually shut itself down from all the "what ifs" of sheep hunting and I fell into a deep sleep.

The next morning Troy quickly found the rams that had starred in my dreams from the night before. With Troy's direction, I centered the lead ram in my spotting scope, my breath became ragged, and my heart rate increased. This ram was HEAVY; The pictures Keith had showed us didn't do him justice, especially with his overall mass. Is this HIM, am I looking at my once-and-a-lifetime Idaho ram? I honestly didn't know. With such little experience hunting sheep, accurately judging him felt like an impossible task; I wanted to be 100% sure in my decision to pursue or pass on this ram, so for the next couple hours we just sat there and watched. The lead ram was with two additional mature rams, one of which was similar in size; There were many times that it was very easy to get the two confused. After going back and forth with Troy and trying to estimate some horn measurements, I asked Troy to send Keith a satellite message to have him head our way. After Keith's arrival I told him and Troy that I





wanted to go after this ram but reserved the right to change my mind if I didn't fully like what I saw after getting a closer look.

Troy and I carefully made our way around the backside of the ridge the sheep were on, while Keith stayed behind to watch through his spotting scope. Once we hit the ridgeline, we ditched our packs and proceeded to sneak over the ridge to make our way to the rams that were hopefully still bedded mid-slope. About 30 minutes later we located the rams, but they were out of range. They were up and moving and I will never forget the pivotal moment in which the lead ram turned and looked in our direction. It was in that moment, when I saw the full magnitude of him, that I knew this was my ram; I would pursue only him.

The next few hours were a marathon of playing catch-up. So many times, I couldn't get in range of the constantly moving rams, and when I could finally get in range, we couldn't figure out which ram was which; Those two rams were just so similar. Unless they were standing still, it became impossible to keep track of the bigger ram. Trying to move as quickly as possible but also remain quiet and unseen felt impossible, but we were managing. As we were finally making ground and closing the distance, the rams took off running away from us down the drainage. "Ugh this can't be happening!" I whispered to Troy. I didn't feel like we were even remotely seen or heard by the rams, so we took a moment to figure

out what was going on. Soon it all made sense, the rams had scented a large herd of ewes making their way down an adjacent ridge.

We kept eyes on the rams, watching them mingle and greet the ewes, as we continued our way down the mountain to get back in range. We finally got within 300 yards of the rams. I frantically looked for a place to lay down in the steep-sloped rocks and prickly cactus while Troy tracked their movements and figured out which ram was which. Once I was settled, Troy described the position of my still moving ram. My heart felt like it was going to jump straight out of my chest as I attempted to center the ram in my scope; The rams would not stand still, and I almost got dizzy watching them move constantly around each other. To make things worse, every time Troy would determine which one was my target ram I would second guess Troy and we wound up questioning which was him.

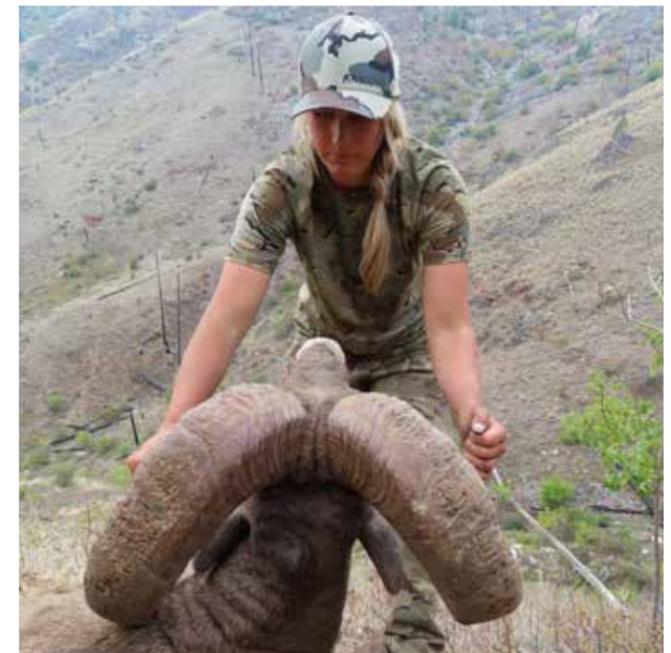
Everything was happening so quickly, and I felt frantic trying to get a good shot. Suddenly, like Houdini performing a magic act, the rams disappeared out of sight due to the steep angle of the ridge. We assumed the rams were heading straight up toward us to make their way back to their bedding area; We couldn't have been more wrong. After about an hour of searching for any sign of the rams, Troy finally found them moving up and over another spur ridge and out of the drainage. At this point it was late into the evening and there wasn't

going to be enough daylight left to catch up with them. Defeated and with my head held low, we made the 3,000ft vertical climb to our camp site.

I don't know if it was because we were emotionally drained, dehydrated, or just flat out exhausted, but for some reason as we all sat that night under the stars, the thought of trying to relocate the rams never came up, at least at first. We had three days left and the discussion revolved around where we could get water and which drainages, we should make sure we saw on the way back. As we were calculating our travel back, resolve settled in Troy and he blurted, "I don't know why we didn't think of this before, but why don't we try and find the rams tomorrow?" Now there's a plan!

Fortunately, the rams clearly loved the small drainage we had found them in the previous two days, and we had no trouble relocating them the next morning. They were feeding their way up the hillside, presumably to their bedding spot nestled under a small copse of pine trees. Since we failed a stalk on them the day before, Troy and I were able to pick a faster and easier route to the rams. Getting in range was easily attained, but due to the lay of the land each time I got a solid rest the sheep would be just out of sight. It was a frustrating experience, but I finally found a perfect spot just as the three rams were getting comfortable in their beds. With no clear shots to the vitals, I opted to not risk getting too close and decided to stay put and wait for my ram to stand. So, for the next three- or four-hours Troy and I sat there hidden away at 300 yards in some rocks with only a small bottle of water to share between the two of us. Any jitters I had were burned away by the scorching sun, and I had ample time to conjure multiple scenarios and what I would do in each situation when the rams got up. However, there was nothing that could prepare me for what actually transpired.

"They're up!" Troy exclaimed as I settled the butt of my rifle stock into my shoulder. The rams initially began feeding directly toward us, and each opportunity I had would be a frontal shot which I didn't feel comfortable taking in that situation. The next shot opportunities presented were with tree limbs obstructing the path of my bullet, so once again I held off, not feeling comfortable. "Ok Kaysie, this is it. Did you see what the other big ram did before going over the ridge? He stopped in that opening. Your ram is following and is probably going to do the same, it's your



last chance before he goes out of sight.”

I followed my ram with my sights staying centered in the crook of his armpit, ready to squeeze the trigger just as I had practiced a million times before, but he wasn't slowing down, he wasn't going to stop! I panicked as he reached the top of the ridgeline, just steps away from going out of sight, and I made a shot. I heard the whack of a bullet meeting flesh, but he didn't go down. I quickly chambered another round while repositioning to relocate him in my sights as he ran down the hill directly at us. "Calm down and take your time Kaysie, he's going to go down, but you should put another one in him." If there is one thing I cannot stand for, its less than a quick kill, so I fired two more rounds hitting him perfectly, but he still would not go down. My heart sank; I was baffled at his strong will and was about to fire another round when he finally dropped and began rolling down the steep incline. Relief washed over me and all the pent-up anxiety I had been holding in began pouring out of me in the form of tears.

Troy was absolutely ecstatic, fist pumping the air and hooting and hollering. "You did it Kaysie! I'm so proud of you!" But once I started crying it was hard to stop. Knowing what I needed to hear, Troy encouraged me to revel in my success, and to pull myself together, because remember... "There's no crying in sheep hunting" I said, finishing the sentence for him with a smile on my face.

Once we got close, I was in utter awe of this ram's grandeur. He had so much mass. Holding his horns in my hands, I couldn't believe I had almost passed him up. His nose was broad, bumpy, and marred by scars and calluses. He had a gumline of missing and snagged teeth. There were chips of horn missing, and many rings of growth, marking him at 9-1/2 years in age. Everything about him indicated a long-lived, full life. Together that night, after climbing, again, over 3,000 vertical feet to get back to camp, the three of us celebrated our success. Troy always reminds me that the success of a hunt should not be measured in inches but in the memories made. But as we sat there reliving the day's events, I couldn't help but have a heart full of gratitude and pride for these men who not only helped me reach but exceed my goal of a 170 ram. His bases are over 15" and his longest side is just under 36", he is a true Idaho patriarch.

The River of No Return Wilderness is arguably the most unforgiving country in the U.S., and we had to pack out 20 miles in 2 days to make it back to the comforts of civilization. We spent a total of 11 days in the wilderness, traveling a total of 90 miles on foot, all while making a lifetime of memories.

I can't thank my family and friends enough for the support and encouragement throughout my journey, especially for my friends Ingrid and Lisa for waking up at 4:30am every morning to go hiking with me so I could get in shape. And there definitely aren't enough words to express the gratitude I have for my husband Troy and friend Keith (who endured a torn meniscus the entire hunt). They led and mentored me, helping me fulfill my dream tag. I honestly could not have done it without them, this ram is as much theirs as it is mine. I have now caught the infamous "sheep bug", and with the fire lit I plan to continue the pursuit of these magnificent animals.



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No Sons? No Problem!

By Scot & Paul Jenkins

I live for the outdoors having grown up in Eastern Idaho, the perfect playground with the mountains, deserts, lakes and rivers. Happiness has always been about hunting with my dad, brothers, and friends. I hunt with rifles, muzzleloaders, and archery gear. When not hunting I can usually be found searching for shed antlers, maintaining bait sites, riding dirt bikes or quads, scouting new country, training my bird dogs and generally preparing for the next adventure.

With adulthood came marriage, children, and ownership of a small business. I married well, my wife Jamie is a successful huntress taking an elk and a black bear and she supports of my outdoor interests. With parenthood I expected to gain a "Hunting Buddy" son as did my father, grandfather, and great grandfather before me. However, that wasn't in the cards so after my third daughter was born, I decided to simply share my outdoor passion with my girls.

The Father-daughter bond we've developed in the outdoors is a beautiful part of our lives. These shared outdoor adventures have provided them the lessons, security and confidence needed to succeed and prosper in all aspects of their lives.

Oldest daughter Cheyenne took five mule deer in consecutive years before other life interests consumed all her available free time. Next up was Makiah (Kiah) and by age 14, in addition to small game, she was able to take a fine Black Bear in Idaho followed by Antelope and Mule Deer in Wyoming. Only time will tell if youngest daughter Ambri will also share the family passion for the outdoors. At present she is mostly interested in playing with the family's Labradors and hugging the chickens, but it is likely that she too will soon take an interest in gun safety and marksmanship.

Jamie and I have many priceless memories with our daughters that can only be found in the great outdoors. No video game can raise the hairs on the back of a neck, like sitting in a tree stand while hearing and seeing the approach of a huge black bear moving toward you through a dark old-growth forest. Nothing compares to the intensity of an enraged bull elk bugling during the rut, which is a sound familiar to the girls. They've learned that finding a 10-pound brown shed six-point bull elk antler is much more rewarding than finding an Easter Egg. The girls have developed increased respect for their Labrador play buddies, after watching them dive into frigid ice encrusted water to retrieve fallen waterfowl.

May each of us afflicted with the outdoor obsession reach out to mentor anyone regardless of age, race, or gender to assist in their enjoyment of the outdoors. People and wildlife will all benefit. Good luck in your outdoor adventures and please Share-The-Fun!





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November 2021 Salmon River Sheep Capture

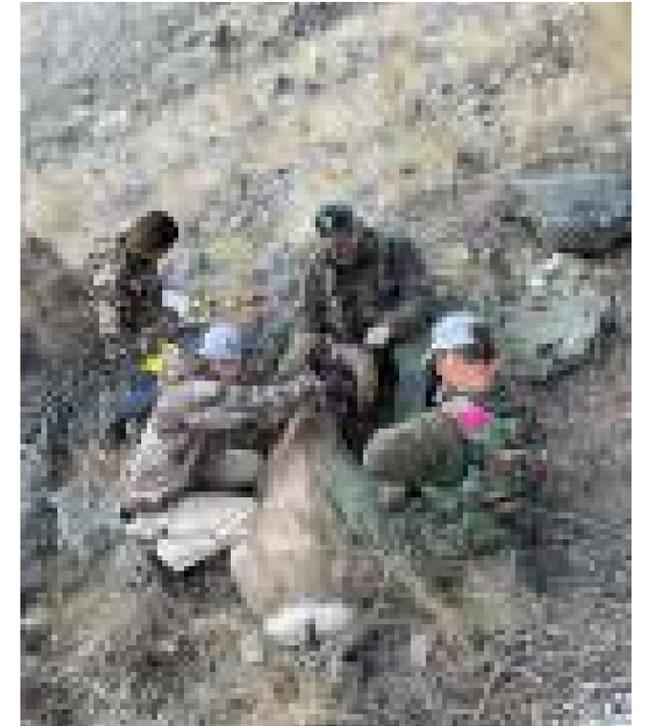
By Mitch McFarland

On November 22 & 23, 2021 I had the privilege of participating in a sheep capture event with the Idaho Department of Fish & Game on the Salmon River below North Fork, Idaho. I was joined by Lucia and Rob Bennett, Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation members. We met at the IDFG Salmon Regional Office the first day. Dennis Newman, the Regional Wildlife Manager, and Jason Houseman, a Regional Wildlife Biologist, gave us a briefing on what the purpose of the capture was, how they captured the sheep, and an overview of what to expect.

We would be capturing both male and female Bighorn Sheep and fitting them with GPS radio collars, as well as taking blood and fecal samples, nose swabs, aging them, and doing an overall health assessment. They also put an ear tag in them so they can be identified from a distance. The data is being used to monitor herd movements and the interaction among the groups of sheep along the Salmon River corridor. This data is an effort to help monitor and understand the spread of Movi among the sheep.

Dennis and Jason are very experienced in this type of work. In order to collar a sheep and gather the data, they dart the sheep, wait for it to become sedated, and then rapidly process it. This involved driving up and down the Salmon River Road between the Deadwater area and the mouth of the Middle Fork. Of course, all of our safety was foremost, but they were very selective about where they would dart a sheep. You can't do it in a steep rocky area because it takes a few minutes for the drugs to take affect and you don't want the sheep injuring itself. They also dart the sheep out of the truck, keeping the sheep calmer. So, we passed on a lot of sheep before we found one in the "right" spot. The other limiting factor is the short range of the dart gun, about 25 yards max!

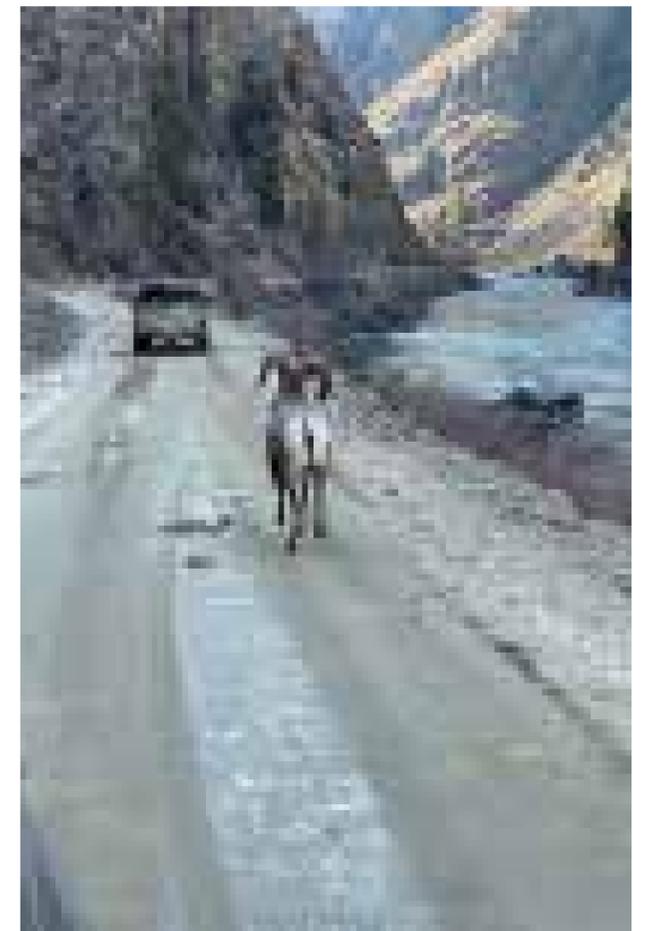
Towards the end of the first day, we finally found a group in a good location and darted a ram. He moved up the hill several hundred yards and laid down under a mahogany bush. We gave him a bit of time to let the sedation take full effect and then we quietly moved in. They immediately put a blindfold over his eyes, to



keep him calm. Rob and I helped steady the ram's head and body, keeping his head up so he could breathe easily. Dennis and Jason started gathering data and Lucia recorded their results. It only took about 10 minutes or so to process the ram, then they give him a reversal shot to clear out the sedative and we steadied him until he started to come around, then pulled off the blindfold and away he went!

The second day we had several "almosts" but they would either move into rough country or were too far away. We ended up driving up and down the river several times but were not able to capture a sheep the second day. I will say though, that driving up and down the Salmon River Road looking for sheep is a pretty tough way to spend a day!

It was an enjoyable couple of days, and I was immensely impressed by the professionalism and enthusiasm both Dennis and Jason exhibited for this capture. They were a pleasure to work with and were great about explaining things to us and answering any of our questions. It was my first experience getting to lay hands on the horns of a live ram! It was quite a thrill!



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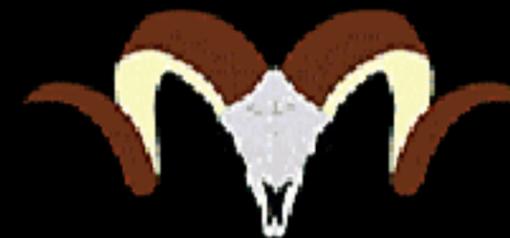
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Finding the X Ring

By Edd S. Woslum

The definition of what constitutes a long shot has in the past 40 years changed by an exponent of 10. It wasn't too terribly long ago that if a local nimrod were to kill a critter, on any continent, at anything over 200 yards it was a celebratory event and would be bragged and rebragged at the local watering hole for some time to come.

Africa is not usually known as a venue wherein the long shot takes place; however, I have been on many plains and mountain hunts in the southern part of that continent where the 300 yard shot is fairly common. I have previously written a couple of pieces that were intended to provide the plains and mountain hunter a few hints on effective gun handling and what actually constitutes acceptable field accuracy. These previous stories, including one on professional shooting schools, generally addressed what constitutes an acceptable accuracy standard, but really didn't venture into the actual "how to" of the shot. This article is in response to requests to rectify this short coming.

When ever I think of long range shooting I often refer to the contest held in Scotland where all shooting is done at the hefty distance of one mile. This area is much better known for its famous single malt whiskey than it is for this exclusive contest, but none the less a group of hardcore enthusiasts gather monthly to try their new loads and ultra long-range rifles at these preposterous distances.

We also have long range targets at our Idaho shooting facility and will occasionally conduct classes on how to improve ones skills at the longer ranges. There is indeed quite an adrenalin surge when one manages to ring the 18 inch steel gong at 700 yards, or the 24 incher at 1000. There is also another contest held here in Northern Idaho where the long range blasters get to shoot at six to eight inch orange targets that are each skillfully attached to a half stick of dynamite. When a shooter connects with these little devices it will truly get your undivided attention. These ultra distance shooting

programs can create a great deal of excitement and are wonderful tools to generate enthusiasm for local shooting clubs. One of the most notable of these shooting contests is the Soldier of Fortune 3 gun championship which for 35 years was held in the Nevada desert just outside of Las Vegas. .

About 20 years ago our state legislature here in Idaho observed the rising interest in these long range games plus the proliferation of super heavy, long range field cannons, that were designed to take game animals clear into the next county. As a result they swiftly passed legislation that renders it illegal to take to the hunting field with any firearm that weighs more than 16 pounds. I believe this was for the time an appropriate step but now 20 years later there are several one kilometer capable rifles that are available in weights a great deal less than 16 pounds. As a consequence I believe, we may in the future, see even more restrictive legislation on this subject.

My family and I own a firearms manufacturing firm and we therefore can get rather prickly when it comes to restricting gun ownership; however, I heartily support this particular legislative attempt to restrict some of the ultra-long shooting of wild animals. What is an appropriate distance that one can ethically attempt to shoot an animal? I don't know; however, the intention of this article is help you improve your shooting skills to the point that you can, without fail, successfully take a 350 yard shot in the field with your 8 pound Winchester.

My wife Leanne and I have been doing various types of bullet performance and ballistic research for about 45 years. This research plus 30 years of "practical rifle" competition have allowed us the opportunity to share this acquired knowledge by conducting various types of shooting schools at our Idaho facility. Within the practical rifle discipline, also referred to as action shooting, there are no standard or repeatable courses of fire. Every contest is different but one aspect is

constant, every course requires the shooters to rapidly move from station to station, and then to engage distant targets from various field type positions. During the course of these contests one could be required to shoot 10 inch plates arrange at 400 yards, then at very next station you may have to engage moving targets off-hand at 60 yards. This is fun stuff and we have found the experience to be of tremendous value in the hunting field.

There is nothing easy or routine about pursuing mountain dwelling ungulates on any continent. The various rock piles where these animals dwell are invariably quite tall, extremely steep, and the shots will usually test the skills of even the most accomplished marksman. The following paragraphs are excerpts from our shooting school curriculum that will hopefully raise your skill level in the field.

Group Testing

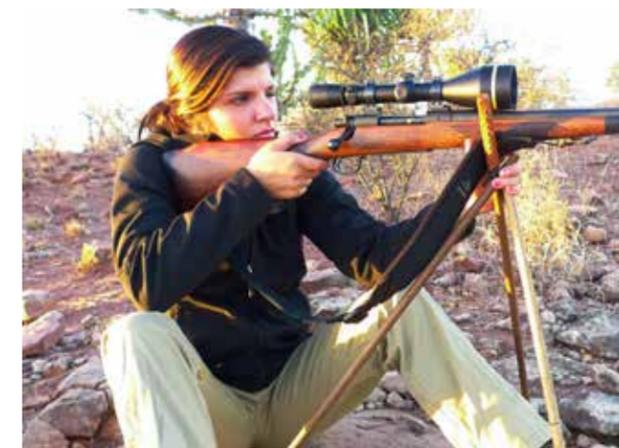
There is a big difference between an appropriate sight-in set up, and one designed to test the inherent accuracy of your rifle and ammunition. The first item of business when testing for group size is to insure you are using the proper equipment and that you have taken every precaution to guarantee absolute consistency. The first step in this regard is to insure that the rifle is in the exact same position on both the front and rear rest when each shot is fired.

To really wring the absolute tightest group out of your favorite tack driver, it is imperative that the front rest be arranged to support the rifle at a point from four to eight inches from the tip of the fore-end. This rest should be contoured to the exact same shape as the fore-end of the rifle. i.e., if the fore-end of the rifle is rounded and two and a half inches wide, the front rest should also be this same shape and snug on both sides. The rear rest should be in a V shape and must allow the rifle to slide freely fore and aft. Both of these rests should be firmly secured to your bench. The absolute most miniscule of groups are fired from rifles with wide and flat fore-ends and are being fired from flat rests that are snug on both sides. Several companies are making an inexpensive flat adapter that can be easily affixed to your hunting gun for group testing.

For a very effective home made front and rear rest, fill two cloth bags with the heaviest sand available, then arrange them in position on your bench and securely duct tape them down. Before firing, firmly pound both the fore-end and butt- stock into your makeshift rests.



Leanne demonstrates the correct sitting position. Ankles crossed, both knees anchored with elbows.



Ashlei Woslum Debolt demonstrating how to use African 3 prong shooting sticks.



One of our students from Colorado showing perfect form when using shooting sticks.

The tightest group shooters on the planet are the competitors in the various world class bench rest competitions that are held on a weekly basis around the country. These men and woman are firing extremely heavy and sophisticated firearms that are expelling light weight bullets at moderate velocities. As a result these guns are generating very little recoil. This, quite obviously, does not fit the profile of your favorite plains or mountain rifle. The average mountain gun weighs seven to eight pounds and is expelling 130 to 180 grain projectiles at high velocity. You can not be a successful group shooter if you attempt to shoot both of these types of rifles with the same technique.

The lighter recoiling rifles (at and below .243 caliber guns that weigh over eight and a half pounds) should be fired with the lower three fingers of your trigger hand putting slight pressure towards the rear of the gun via the pistol grip. The thumb should be exerting slight downward pressure while the trigger finger is free and relaxed in order to properly press the trigger. The hand that normally grips the fore-end should be on the rear rest so as to squeeze or other wise manipulate the bag for a proper shot. At the shot if the fore-end jumps instead of sliding rearward, change to the heavy recoil technique listed below.

When testing the heavier recoiling rifles, the trigger hand should be arranged similar to the above, except the lower three fingers must apply more back pressure and the thumb should have more downward pressure. The other hand should strongly grip the fore-end (don't touch the barrel) and pull downward and rearward with significant pressure. At the shot if the fore-end jumps instead of sliding, pull on more downward pressure with your fore-end hand.

Sighting-In

After shooting groups with the above listed techniques don't use the results to indicate that your rifle is properly sighted-in for field use. In the past 40 years I have seen a few rifles that would shoot the same point of impact from the previously explained bench set up as they do in field use, but they are pretty rare.

For sight-in purposes try to shoot your rifle exactly as you would in the field. For this task I usually rake all of the fancy equipment off the bench and plop down my ancient field pack for a front rest. As you won't have a rear rest in the field don't use one now. Put your hand under the fore-end, take a firm grip of the stock and apply rearward pressure. Use the same trigger technique as you did when

group shooting. Use both elbows to support the rifle. This method will not produce the tightest group but will provide the utmost repeatability in the field.

Other than sight alignment and trigger control one of the most important factors in making a good bench or field shot is follow through. Remember when that rifle is doing all of its barking, kicking and belching, the bullet is still in the barrel. Find yourself a good solid cheek weld and hold it firmly until the rifle has come back to rest. Don't try to peek at the results of your shot until everything has returned to battery. This is absolutely the most often repeated mistake that riflemen make.

Field Rests, Sticks and Bipods

If you have used the above recommended sight-in regimen, field rests of opportunity will work extremely well. Butt-packs, boulders, tree limbs, even the cross ways, prone form of your hunting partner works extremely well. This latter one may seem a bit bizarre but it is now being taught in all of the U.S. military sniper schools. Remember you sighted your gun in with your hand between it and the rest, do the exact same thing when you're gripping the side of that huge boulder while staring down at your dream critter of all time.

We teach the use of short folding sticks in all of our schools. They are very versatile and will greatly enhance your success at the longer distances. If you are going to use one of these tools, however, you must also test them during your sight in routine as they may provide a different point of impact at longer distances. It takes a bit more practice but if you can manage to keep your hand between the fore-end and the sticks, while at the same time gripping a bit of the fore-end with your index finger, the rifle won't jump out of the sticks and you will have the same point of impact as you did at sight in. This may sound complicated but isn't. (See photo)

I am not a big fan of bipods. I have seen more problems created by them than I have seen resolved by them. I must say, however, they have become very popular with a whole flock of pretty successful hunters. Here again I have to go with the tactics of the worlds foremost practical marksmen, the snipers of the U.S. Marine Corpse. Famed snipers Gunnery Sergeant Carlos Hathcock, father of the Viet Nam era sniper program, and today's Master Sniper instructor Neil Morris both opine them to be an abomination.

There is of course a difference between military tactics and big game hunting but the skill and discipline required to pull off a difficult shot is the exact same. According to the

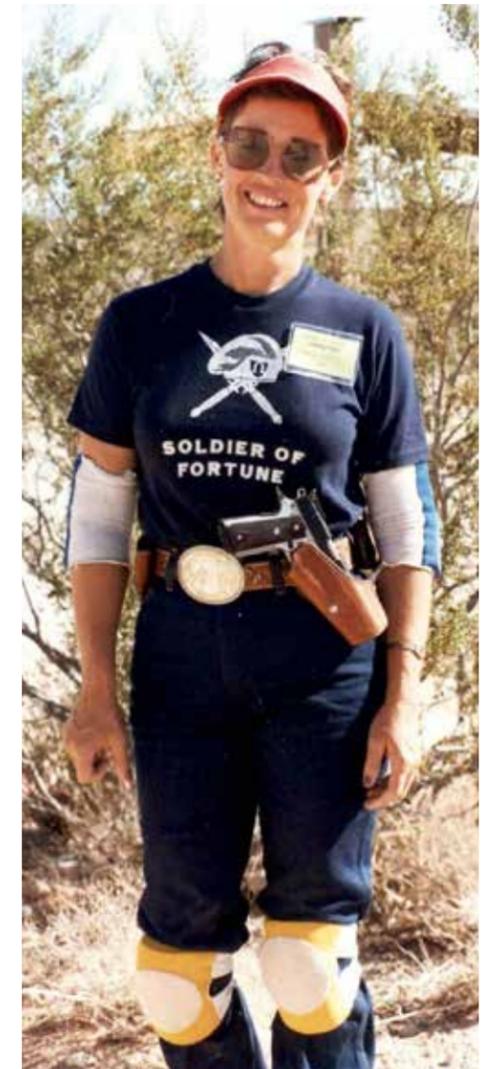
famous Gunny, "the most important attribute of any successful rifleman is their ability to adapt their body to various shooting positions while providing themselves a solid platform for an accurate shot." The fact is a sniper (also read hunter) will only rarely be able to enjoy the convenience of a bipod. The rest of the time they are bent, scrunched, hunched and stretched into various contorted positions while trying desperately to get on an uncooperative target. All too often, rather than the hunter assessing the situation for the best possible set up for a shot, he/she will instead assesses the situation for the best possible bi-pod shot. This is indeed the tail wagging the dog.

As an Idaho outfitter and guide I have seen this phenomenon on many an elk and deer hunt. On one such notable excursion, my client, who was one of my old shooting buddies from my tactical rifle competition days, and I were into our fourth day of hunting without seeing a single representative bull of the specie wapiti.. This chap was a very accomplished rifleman and I had on many occasions seen him handily engage a multitude of eight inch steel plates at 200 yards, offhand, with nary a miss. We had been side hilling a heavily timbered slope for about 30 minutes and when we cleared the last tall pine, there at 50 yards, appearing like an apparition from the mist, stood a magnificent six point bull in all of its glory. Slowly I grabbed my buddy and pushed him to the front. I then whispered shoot this guy now. Without any hesitation this experienced rifleman unfolded his bipod and immediately plopped down in the 12 inch snow drenched grass. "I can't see him," cried the sport. "Of course you can't, get your butt up off the ground and shoot this thing before he heads for Wyoming." Wonder of wonders, the bull stayed put and my client sheepishly stood up and promptly put a 165 grainer exactly where it should have gone two minutes previous.

Wobble Management and Flinching

Unless a person is exceptionally gifted or has a specific program of prevention therapy, each and every rifleperson, no matter their skill or experience level, will on occasion flinch. Flinching, jerking or jumping the trigger has nothing to do with how tough you are. It is merely your subconscious mind communicating with your conscious that it knows what is coming, your body then tenses up in anticipation.

There are two practice techniques that will mitigate this tendency. One is to have regular dry-fire practice sessions with your rifle. These practice sessions need only last a few minutes. Merely put your double checked and verified unloaded rifle at port arms, cock the bolt, mount the gun, aim at a safe target and press the trigger. Each time you pull the trigger call the shot, high, low, left, right. Eight or ten of these "shots" twice a week will make a huge difference in your shooting skills. The other method is called "dummy loading." The dry firing practice, with proper safety precautions can be conducted any where. Dummy loading requires that you have a helper and it must be conducted on a suitable firing range.



Leanne preparing for one of the stages at Soldier of Fortune match. This is a 3 day contest and is extremely demanding.



When dummy loading, the shooter faces downrange and his or her partner, while standing behind the shooter, safely loads (or unloads) the gun. The partner then hands the rifle to the shooter. The shooter then without knowing whether the rifle is loaded or not, engages on command a 100 yard target off hand. These two exercises will condition your subconscious not to anticipate the shot. I don't know of a single master class shooter that does not employ both of these exercises on a routine basis. The old wife's tale of "don't dry fire your rifle" is pure rubbish. I have probably dry fired my 1959 Winchester model 70 over 100,000 times.

We are all aware of the frustration that we experience when the stupid cross hairs won't hold still for the shot. No matter how much you practice, this phenomenon will never completely go away but you can learn to manage it.

The following is a brief training guideline that is employed by just about every serious Distinguished Master rifleman that I know:

* After satisfying yourself that your sights are on, never ever return to the bench for practice.

* Dry fire off hand at every opportunity. This is actually much more important than live fire.

* Practice going from the standing position, with your rifle at port arms, to the position in which you intend to shoot, as rapidly as possible. If you intend to use them, this routine

should include your sticks. Hurry to get into position but don't rush the shot.

* The majority of your practice sessions, whether live or dry fire, should be from an unsupported off-hand or sitting position (with sticks is fine).

* Don't fight the wobble; this will only lead to a flinch. Relax your trigger finger, concentrate on the target. If the sight picture gets too far off the target, stop your trigger squeeze and bring the cross hairs back to the center. When shooting off hand, your sight picture will start to deteriorate after four or five seconds. If you go beyond six or seven seconds, bring the gun down take a few breaths and start over.

* Most common errors when shooting without benefit of a bench:

- failure to follow through (after the shot peeking at the target prematurely)
- failure to anchor your various body parts, i.e., butt, both elbows, knees (see photos)

Hopefully this information will help you find the X ring on a consistent basis.



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Sheep Hunting is Easy

By Mitch McFarland

Sheep hunting is generally thought of as a tough, grueling endeavor, which may not end up with a successful harvest. I've spoken with numerous sheep hunters over the years who spent 30-40 days on their sheep hunts, some were successful, others weren't. But it's not always that way. One of my first seasons guiding for Stan Potts we harvested 3 rams in 6 days, and I could see a road every time a sheep went down! I told Stan that I should probably retire after that because it wasn't likely to get any easier. Those words came back to haunt me because the next two hunts I did for Stan were a 2-day horseback ride just to get to the area we wanted to hunt.

The first hunt was with a friend and co-worker of Jerry Conley, a past director of the Idaho Fish and Game, named Dennis. Stan had spotted a couple rams from the road so on opening morning we paddled a boat across the Salmon River and started the climb. Jeff Waite was the lead guide, and I was his assistant. After a steep climb we were just below where we'd last seen the rams and Jerry and I held back while Jeff and Dennis moved on up for the final stalk. We heard the rifle shot and then another. I didn't hear any whooping or hollering so we were wondering what had happened. I started to climb up and under where they had gone when I heard rocks rolling out in front of me. It sounded like a ram rolling off the mountain, so I hustled up to find Jeff. They were looking for the ram but weren't sure where he had gone. I told them about the rolling rocks and then I went back down the mountain and into the draw where I'd heard the rocks. A couple hundred yards down the chute I found the ram dead.

Whoopie, one ram down and we were not that far above the river with the road in sight!

The next two sheep were more work! We had a man from Texas, Glen Thurman, who had purchased the auction tag that year. The other hunter's name has escaped me, but we had two tags to fill. I was working with Cal Stoddard initially on this hunt. The first day we paddled across the river and took Glen for a short walk up a drainage. I always liked to take my hunters for a short hike to see how they get around in the mountains and what challenges they may present. It was also good for me to get an idea of how long a stalk might take if we found something. Jeff was packing in a drop camp for a couple DIY sheep hunters, and he hauled in our backpacks 5-6 miles up the Stoddard Trail. Cal and I glassed the heck out of things for two days, he took the upper reaches of the drainages and I dropped down pretty low and closer to the Middle Fork and glassed. We didn't find anything so decided to head out and see what Stan wanted us to do next.

When we came across the Stoddard Pack bridge Stan was waiting for us and had located 2 rams again! Stan had an uncanny ability to spot rams. We drove down the road to the rams and watched them. They were at least 1,000 yds away and too far up the mountain for a shot. We optimistically hoped they would come down to the river for a drink, but no such luck. Both rams were nice mature rams, the one pushing full curl. We watched them until almost dark and hoped they would move down a bit by morning. They weren't in a great spot for a stalk, and I

knew from our short hike it would be a challenge to get our hunters up to them.

We were staying at Stan's place at the mouth of Colson Creek so the next morning we went back down, and the rams were in the same spot, just feeding around. By about 10:30 they started to bed down and it was obvious they weren't going to come to the river. I had spent a lot of the time trying to pick the best route up the mountain. There was a good-sized draw that came off the mountain and it looked like if we went up the right side, we could get within shooting distance to shoot across the draw. But this mountain looked like it was straight up! The hike would start in a patch of slide rock and then up the face. There was a rocky bench I was hoping we could shoot from, but it had a small ledge under it that I hoped we could climb through. As we were looking at the mountain, I could see Glen was nervous about being able to make the climb and he told me he didn't think he could make it. I told him not to worry, I'd pack his rifle and gear and we'd go slow, if he needed to stop just let me know.

Stan's son-in-law Jerry Black was helping me on this hunt and so the four of us floated across the river. Stan had cut chokecherry walking sticks about 5' long for us. So, I started up through the slide rock, it was so steep it was two steps forward and one back. I'd plant my feet and reach down with my walking stick; Glen would grab it and I'd pull him up. Then Jerry would plant his walking stick under his feet so he wouldn't lose any ground and with this method we just jacked him up the mountain! Our other hunter was able to climb pretty well, so we didn't have to help him. We slowly made it up to the ledge, it was about 3' high, and I could see Glen wasn't going to be able to make it up through it. So, we had to go back down a hundred feet or so and around under the rocks and up a chute. We finally topped out on the little ledge across from the sheep.

The rams were bedded 100 yards apart, probably about 250 yards across the draw, one in a scree slope and the bigger ram on a little bench. We very cautiously got our hunters set up. Jerry got his hunter set up with a rock for a rest, but he had his left boot on a rock that had nothing below it but air! He was comfortable though, so I got Glen kind of wedged in between a couple rocks, cleared out a little shooting lane, and gave him some time to catch his breath and calm his nerves. The other hunter was clicking his safety on and off and saying he was ready while I was getting Glen settled. When I got Glen ready, I said I'll count to three and then

you guys both shoot. So, I counted to three and Glen shot, but the other hunter hadn't heard my count, so he was a split second behind. He hit his ram hard, he ran a few feet and he finished him with a second round. I'd seen Glen's shot hit the ram pretty far back and the ram had jumped up and ran behind a big pine tree and stopped! Glen was trying to get another round jacked in when he jammed up his rifle. I reached down and grabbed a fresh round out of his ammo carrier on his belt, jerked the bolt open, and slammed in a new round. I told him "You shoot, I'll load!". The ram came out from behind the tree, and he made a good shot and put him down.

Whoopie again! And there was the road again! Now we had to get across the draw to the sheep! We were standing on a 50' cliff and so it took us quite a while to find a way down and get over to the sheep. Stan had sent over 2 more guides with packs, and they came directly up the bottom of the draw, so we made short work of the sheep and none of us had to pack a killer load. Glen wanted a life size mount, so it was great to have lots of help and a short downhill hike. Although downhill is a little of an understatement, more like straight down!

We loaded everything up and headed back to Stan's and spent the evening taking pictures and re-living the hunt. I can't really take much credit for the success of these hunts, Stan spotted the sheep, and the first hunt I was just along for the ride. I was pretty proud of being able to get the hunters up the mountain and pull off a double on rams though! That doesn't happen every day! As far as sheep hunts go, these were about as easy as it gets, and I found it interesting that they all happened together. Three rams in 6 days, short downhill packs, and the road in sight each time, doesn't get much easier than that in the Salmon River Country!





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CHARTER MEMBER HIGHLIGHT - BURK MANTEL

Burk Mantel grew up in Vermont and moved to Colorado in 1973 to be regional manager for an oil company. While in Colorado he hunted Rocky Mountain bighorn, got a ram, and got bit by the wild sheep hunting bug. In 1981 he moved to Idaho for the hunting, fishing and skiing. During the spring of 1982 he harvested a wild turkey near Council. Later Burk found out he was one of only 93 turkey hunters that year and the Idaho turkey population was estimated at 350.

A few weeks later Burk met the Idaho Fish and Game Department Director Jerry Conley. They discovered that they both enjoyed turkey hunting. During the discussion Burk suggested restarting the turkey transplanting program that had been suspended some ten years earlier. To support the IDFG efforts Burk started the Gem State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation. The program was successful, and Idaho now has 75,000 wild turkeys and 15,000 turkey hunters.

While Burk and Jerry were holding a turkey hunting seminar Jerry asked Burk to be one of the first Directors of the Citizens Against Poaching (CAP) organization. About that time Burk recognized a need for more emphasis on manag-

ing Idaho's bighorn sheep. In 1983 Burk organized a group of six more fellow wild sheep hunters to raise money for Idaho bighorn sheep projects. They were Dr. Bob DeGrazia, Harold Eshelman, Roger Michener, Rick Dredge, Ron Morris, and Wayne Schwabrow. Charter membership was opened up and after about a year there were 27 Charter Members. That small group became the founders of the Idaho Chapter of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (now Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation). Burk has since taken a Dall, a Stone, and a Fannin sheep.

After leaving the oil business in 2000 Burk started and sold small businesses until retiring in 2021. He remains active in hunting and fishing, especially enjoying chukar hunting with his bird dogs.



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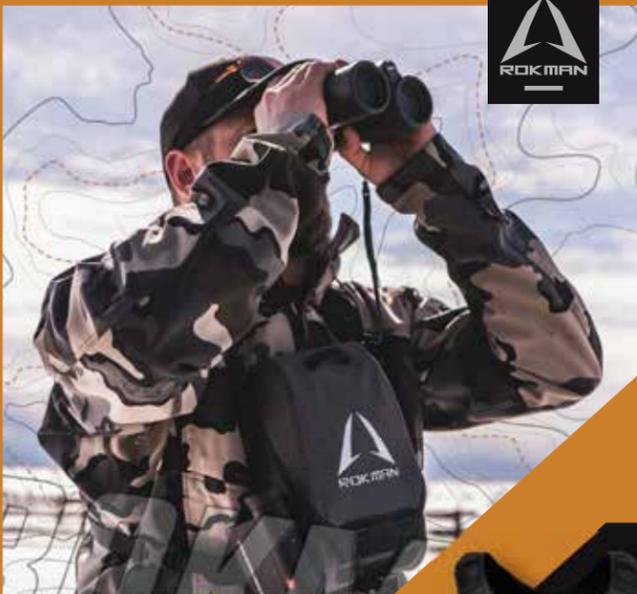
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TICK BORNE DISEASES — HUNTERS BEWARE!

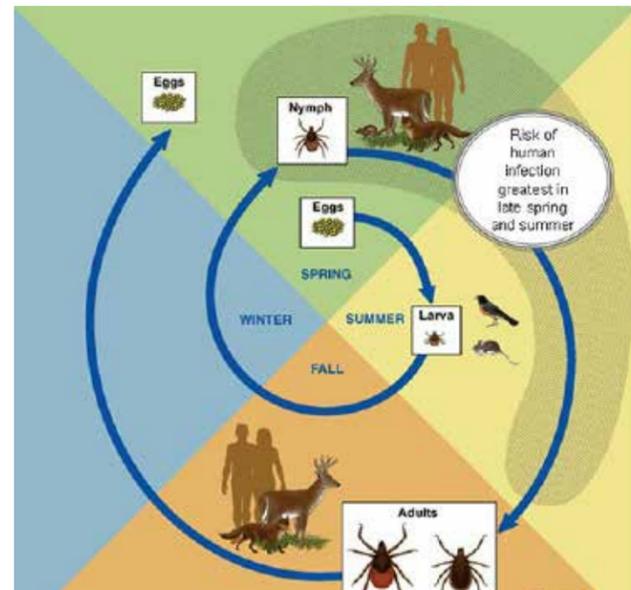
By Mike Schlegel

Spring is a welcome relief from the doldrums of winter. Outdoor activities rev-up as the days grow longer and temperatures rise. Unfortunately this phenomenon has a few negative side effects for the outdoor enthusiast. A growing issue across the country is tick borne diseases. The U.S. has 82 species of ticks some of which are responsible for transmitting ten major diseases:

- Lyme disease: a bacterial disease transmitted by the blacklegged tick primarily in the northern and upper mid-western U.S. and the western blacklegged tick in the Pacific coast region.
- Ehrlichiosis: a bacterial infection of the south-central and eastern U.S. resulting from the bite of the lone star tick.
- Anaplasmosis: a bacterial disease of the northeastern and upper mid-western U.S. and along the Pacific coast transmitted by the blacklegged tick and the western blacklegged tick.
- Babesiosis: caused by a microscopic blood parasite infecting the red blood cells; transmitted by the black-legged tick, occurring primarily in the northeast and upper mid-west states.
- Tick Paralysis: paralysis caused by salivary neurotoxin(s) produced by five tick species; reported throughout North America.
- Tick-borne Relapsing Fever: a bacterial disease transmitted by "soft" ticks; reported in 15 states, primarily western states. There is also a louse-borne form of relapsing fever.
- Tularemia: a bacterial disease, transmitted by the dog tick, the wood tick and the lone star tick; occurs throughout North America.
- Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever: a bacterial disease occurring throughout North America; transmitted in the U.S. by the American dog tick, the Rocky Mountain

- wood tick and the brown dog tick.
- Colorado Tick Fever: a viral disease of the western U.S and Canada; transmitted by the Rocky Mountain wood tick.
- Southern Tick Associated Rash (STARI): the disease agent is unknown; rash similar to that associated with Lyme disease; occurs throughout southeast and northeast U.S. and transmitted by the lone star tick.

Most tick species have a four-stage life cycle: 1) egg; 2) six-legged larva; 3) eight-legged nymph; and 4) adult. It may take up to three years to complete a life cycle, depending upon the species. Once hatched, each stage must feed on blood to survive. Mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians serve as hosts for ticks. Most ticks die because they can't find a food source. Ticks become active when the temperature reaches 45 F. The life cycle of the blacklegged tick is displayed in the following diagram.



Interestingly, ticks 'find' their host by detecting breath and body odors as well as sensing body heat and moisture. Ticks don't fly or jump. They attach themselves to vegetation with their third and fourth pair of legs while holding their first pair of legs outstretched, waiting to attach to a host.

Once on a host some ticks attach almost immediately while others migrate to preferred sites; usually areas where the skin is thinnest such as the nape of the neck, armpit, groin or the navel. At this point the tick uses its mouth parts to penetrate the skin and inserts a feeding tube until a blood supply is found. The reason you don't feel this 'bite' is due to the anesthetic compounds found in the tick's saliva. It is at this time, if the host has a blood borne disease, the tick acquires the disease agent. It is also at this time, if the tick is infected with a disease agent, the disease is transmitted to the host via the saliva. Once gorged with blood, the tick releases itself from its host and proceeds to the next stage of its life cycle, at which time the disease agent can be transmitted to a new host.

PRECAUTIONS TO AVOID TICK-BORNE DISEASES

There are ways to minimize your risk of contracting a tick-borne disease:

- Once attached to your clothing, ticks migrate, looking for a place to attach. Tucking pant legs into socks and shirts into pants helps prevent ticks from gaining access to your core body skin areas. They will, however, migrate to the head/neck region of the body. Thus, while in the woods, conduct frequent "tick checks" on your clothing and exposed skin areas. Wearing light clothing makes finding ticks easier.
- Insect repellants may also be applied to your clothing and/or exposed skin. DEET and Permethrin are the insecticides of choice, however only DEET may be applied directly to the skin.
- When you return from the field conduct a thorough body and clothing search for ticks on everyone involved on the trip, pets included. Clothing can be further 'deticked' by spin drying on high heat for 20 minutes.
- Showering and shampooing will also help remove ticks from your body if they have not already attached. Again, conduct a full body search to look for attached ticks.

TICK REMOVAL

Do not panic if you discover an attached tick on yourself, family member, friend or pet. Remember, not all ticks transmit diseases. The goal is to remove attached ticks as soon as possible. In the case of Lyme disease, research has shown the disease transmission takes 36 to 48 hours after the tick attaches. However it best to remove attached ticks as soon as possible.

Use the following procedure to remove an attached tick:

- Grasp the tick by the head where it enters the skin with fine-pointed tweezers or use a commercially available tick remover.
- Pull firmly and steady away from the skin; DO NOT twist.
- DO NOT use nail polish, petroleum jellies or heat to make the tick detach as you want to remove the tick as soon as possible rather than waiting for it to detach.
- NEVER crush the removed tick or any tick with your fingers.
- To dispose of the tick submerge it in rubbing alcohol, place it in a sealed container or flush it in a toilet.
- It may be advantageous to save the tick until the incubation period for disease has passed as tick identification may be important in diagnosing a tick-borne disease should you develop symptoms.
- Once the tick has been removed clean the attachment area, as well as your hands, with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub or soap and water.
- Monitor the attachment site up to 30 days, checking for the appearance of a rash.

A study conducted at Ohio State University concluded commercial tick removers are more efficient in removing attached tick nymphs and adults than tweezers. Amazon carries the Pro-Tick Remedy Tick Remover tool kit. This kit includes the removal tool, a 5X magnifier and a tick identification card. Cabela's carries the Tick Key tick remover. Neither tool is very expensive; each is around \$5.00.

SYMPTOMS OF TICK-BORNE DISEASES

Most of the diseases transmitted by ticks are successfully treated with antibiotics. Unfortunately, however these diseases

are difficult for doctors to diagnosis. The following are common symptoms of tick-borne diseases:

- Fever and/or chills.
- Aches and pains, i.e. headaches, muscle aches, joint pain and fatigue.
- Rash

A rash is very common and usually associated with the following diseases:

LYME DISEASE: A rash generally appears 3-30 days after the tick bite and typically before a fever. The rash is a distinct circle and initially occurs at the site of the bite (see figure 1); however a rash may develop in other areas of the body several days later.

SOUTHERN TICK-ASSOCIATED RASH ILLNESS (STARI): This rash is identical to the Lyme disease rash, with a distinct expanding “bulls eye” lesion. However, this disease has not been associated with arthritic and/or neurological symptoms.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPOTTED FEVER (RMSF): About 10% of victims do not develop a rash. In those that do the appearance, location and time of onset varies greatly. Most commonly the rash occurs 2-5 days after the onset of a fever. Initially the rash is small in size, flat, pink, not itchy and usually located on the wrist, forearms and ankles, often spreading to the body trunk. About 35% to 60% of people infected with this disease develop a red to purple spotted rash six days or longer after the onset of the symptoms.

EHRlichiosis: A rash of varying appearances normally occurs on about 30% of all people exposed and up to 60% in children. The rash most often occurs after the onset of a fever.

TULAREMIA: Most commonly a skin ulcer appears at the bite site. A swelling of lymph glands, normally those in the armpit and/or groin, accompanies the ulcer/rash.

TICK PARALYSIS

In addition to the above diseases, ticks may also cause paralysis. The paralysis is suspected to be caused by a neurotoxin(s) in the saliva of ticks. Although rare, cases have been reported throughout North America. Five tick species have been associated with tick paralysis. Children under age ten are the most common victims. As the name

implies, the symptoms include numbness of the legs as well as muscle pain. Paralysis moves from the lower to upper body. The greatest release of toxins occurs between the fifth and seventh day post attachment, hence the need for early removal of attached ticks. It is very important to make sure all mouth parts of the tick have been removed as toxins can still be released if they aren't. Paralysis is normally gone within 24 hours after the tick has been removed

It is apparent, regardless of where you live in North America, if you spend time outdoors you will be subjected to the possibility of a tick borne disease. Hopefully the information presented in this article will prevent you from becoming the victim of a tick borne disease.

More in depth information regarding tick borne diseases can be found at:

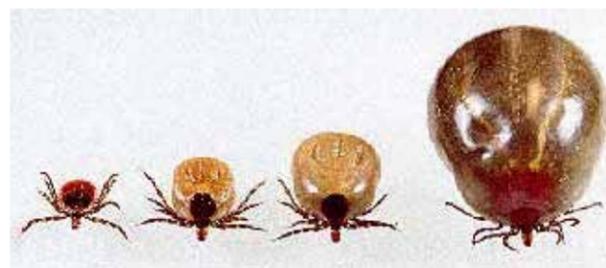
- The Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/tick/
- The American Lyme Disease Foundation: www.aldf.com
- www.tickinfo.com
- www.vdh.state.va.us/ticks



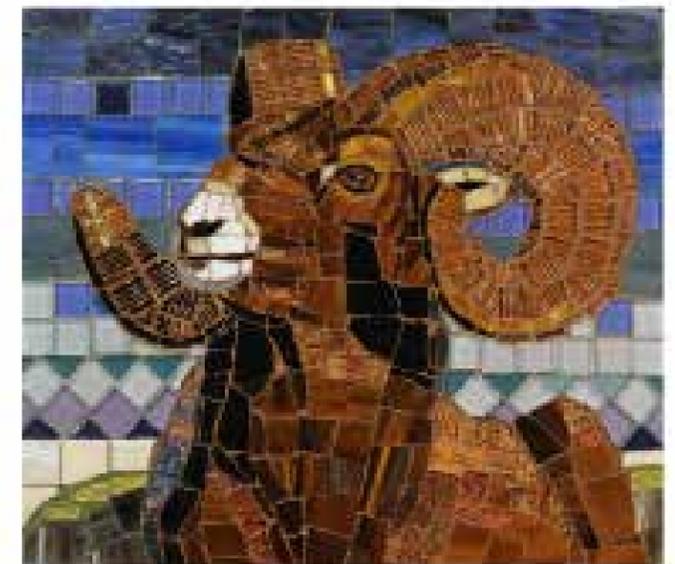
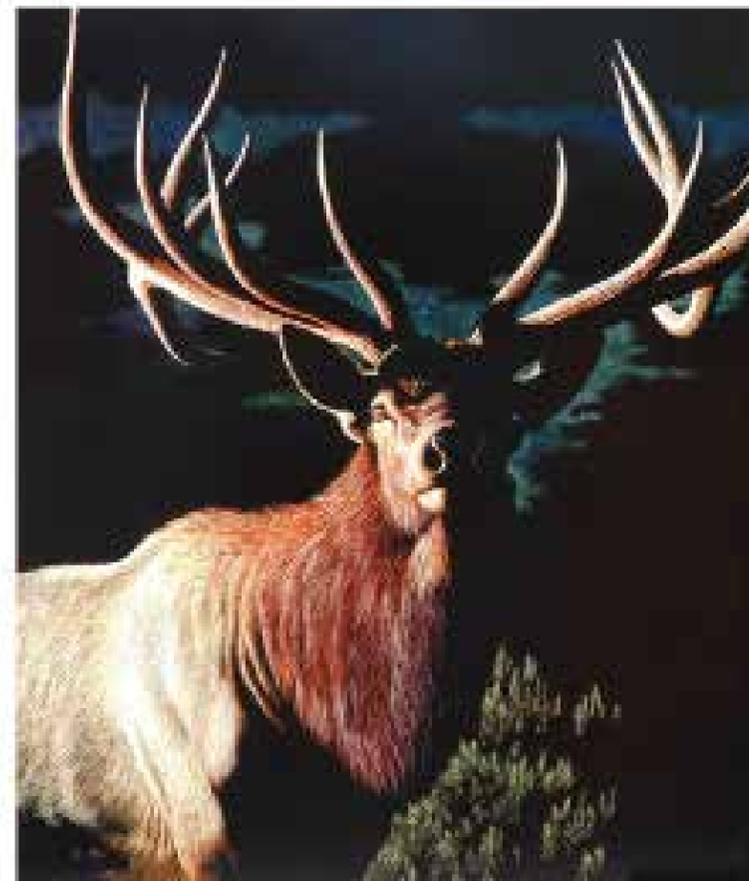
Large, red, slowly spreading rash characteristic of Lyme Disease called erythema migrans (EM) rash



Deer tickets in the larval, nymphal, and adult stages (Not actual size)



The changing face as the deer tick engorges
Left to Right: unengorged, female, 1/4 engorged, 1/2 engorged and fully engorged.



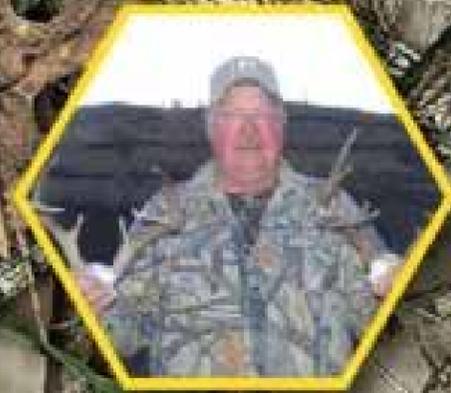
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IDAHO WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT FUND

By Don Colter, Idaho WSF Treasurer

The Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation Endowment was successfully kicked off at the annual banquet on April 9, 2022, with over \$100,000 being raised. The money will be invested with the earnings to be used for wild sheep conservation. Projects supported by the Endowment are solely for scientific, research and education efforts of the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation.

The endowment is overseen by a board of trustees that are directed by an investment policy aided by trusted financial professionals.

The Trustees are:

- Don Colter
- Scott Hayes
- Zach Higgins
- John Hinton
- Bill London

We are off to an amazing start and looking forward to building a lasting foundation for wild sheep conservation.

We encourage you all to “Be Part of the Legacy” and broaden your impact in the effort to put and keep wild sheep on the mountain for future generations.

There are 6 levels of legacy giving from as low as \$2,500 for the copper level to \$100,000 for the Mountain Monarch level.

No gift is too small, everything helps the conservation of Wild Sheep.

All gifts are tax deductible.

If you have any questions, please contact us at info@idahowildsheep.org To make contributions go to the website <https://www.idahowildsheep.org>

IDAHO WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT LEVELS AND WAYS TO GIVE

LEGACY LEVELS OF GIVING	ANNUAL DONATION	MONTHLY DONATION	10-YEAR TOTAL
Mtn. Monarch Legacy	\$10,000 x 10 years	\$833.34	\$100,000
Platinum Legacy	\$5,000 x 10 years	\$416.67	\$50,000
Gold Legacy	\$2,500 x 10 years	\$208.34	\$25,000
Silver Legacy	\$1,000 x 10 years	\$83.34	\$10,000
Bronze Legacy	\$500 x 10 years	\$41.67	\$5,000
Copper Legacy	\$250 x 10 years	\$20.84	\$2,500

WAYS TO GIVE

CASH

- Savings
- CD's
- Money Market Accounts

LIFE INSURANCE

- Existing policies
- New policies
- Beneficiary designation

PROPERTY

- Brokerage accounts
 - ie: Stocks, bonds, limited partnerships, money market accounts
- Land
- Rental property
- Home
- Deeds of trust

BEQUESTS

- Trust assets
- Titles
- Wills/designations

BUSINESS

- Ownership interest
- Cash

IRA

- At age 70.5+ (give up to 100k from IRA to a charity tax free)
- At age 59.5 (gift from IRA to charity)
- Bequest direct to Idaho WSF
- Bequest to CRT to provide personal retirement income for family members, remainder to Idaho WSF

Contact the Idaho WSF at 208-345-6171 to schedule a meeting with one of our board members to find out how to receive tax benefits for your donations.



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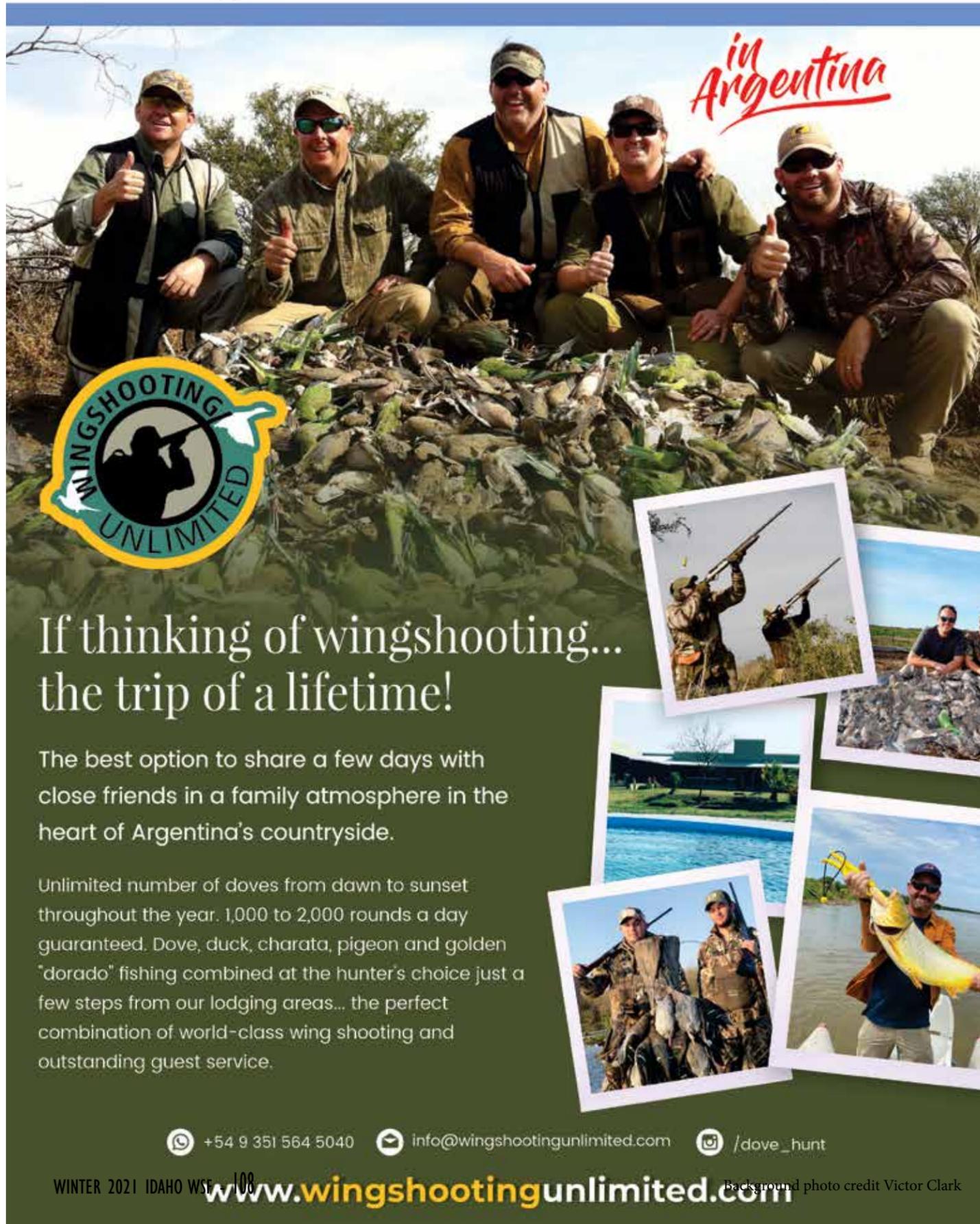
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Scotch In, Venison Out

By Geoff Hogander

Bill's email asked, "Would you like to do a backpack hunt for Coues' deer in Arizona this fall?"

My long-time hunting and fishing buddy, Bill London had been invited by Arizonan Kurt Bahti. Kurt was suggesting a December backpack hunt into the Santa Rita Mountains seeking the gray ghost of Arizona.

All three of us are retired wildlife professionals. Bill had recently retired from the Idaho Fish and Game (32 years) while Kurt was retired from the Arizona Game and Fish. The three of us had archery hunted Arizona javelina together in the past.

I'm a retired BLM wildlife biologist (28 years), 73 years old and hadn't backpacked for twelve years. I was vaguely familiar with the rugged country we'd be hunting and wasn't sure I could keep up with a couple guys fifteen years younger

than me. But then, Kurt got a new knee that summer and Bill was walking on a fused ankle. So, I said "Yes" and hoped I wouldn't be sorry or embarrassed.

We filled in the applications and sent in our money and waited. In May a large envelope arrived with my tag. Then the planning started. Kurt said he could guarantee he could get us within three hundred yards of an adult male deer. Not real promising to one who had done nothing but bow hunt for the past twenty years. Got out the old .270 and sighted it in. How long would we be gone? Somewhere between two and eleven days. Started planning meals (lots of oatmeal and granola). And Scotch. Bill had declared, "Scotch in, venison out" as the trip motto. For conditioning I started hiking with forty pounds of lead birdshot in my backpack.

We arrived two days before the season started and spent the

night with Kurt and his wife, Karen. The plan was to pack in with five days of food. If more food was needed, we would hike out to the truck and get more. At the trailhead, we stashed a beer for each of us in the creek.

The hike in was four miles mostly on the contour. Kurt had packed in some of the spike camp necessities the previous week, this saved us some weight. Still, I had more than forty-five pounds on my back and wondered how long I'd last. We arrived at the chosen campsite. It was a quarter mile off the trail on a ridge. We set up a primitive camp of two tents and a tarped cooking area. I love the freedom of public land hunts. It was two days before the season and we had about five hours before sundown so we grabbed the binoculars and started looking for deer. We didn't see many, a young buck and a couple does and that was pretty much it. I was not encouraged as we headed to camp and the first night of reconstituted food. And Scotch.

The wind blew pretty hard for most of the night which was discouraging since we figured the deer would head for the shelter of the thickest trees. The next morning we were up at five thirty and out on the hill by six. But we saw deer! A young buck, two does and a yearling so things were looking up. We spent the day glassing hillsides without seeing what we were looking for, a mature buck with at least three points per side – not including the eye guards.

Opening day was beautiful and after spending the morning glassing we saw two bucks, one of which was in the shootable class. But in the relative calm of the morning it appeared that he heard us and took off around the mountain. More glassing and about noon we crossed into another drainage then sat down for lunch. About one o'clock we spotted two bucks, a three pointer and a forked horn at about 425 yards. The three pointer was nice, but I didn't feel confident about the long shot. Kurt said he'd stay there with the spotting scope to keep an eye on them while Bill and I hiked up a ridge to close the distance. Kurt would radio us if they moved.

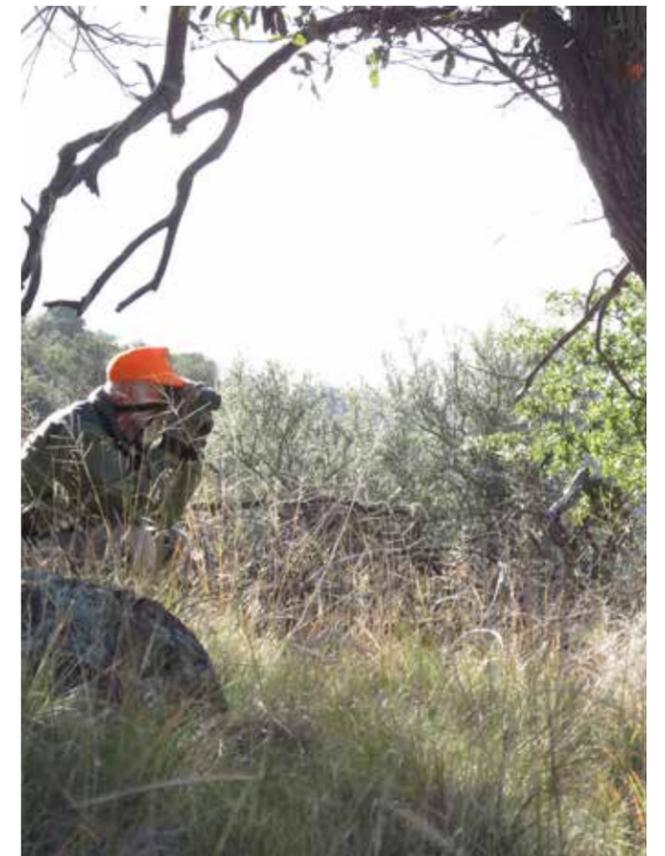
Bill and I closed the distance to about 250 yards but then the bucks headed into the trees and bedded down. I set up a comfortable shooting position with a rifle rest and waited. About an hour later the radio crackled and Kurt told us they were moving. I finally saw the three pointer as he walked

downhill. I put the crosshairs on him but he kept walking. I kept yelling in my head, "Stop!" When he did, I touched off the round. I thought I'd made a bad shot, too far back. But both Bill and Kurt said, "Good shot!" The buck crumpled with a hole through his heart and both lungs.

We hiked to the downed animal, admired him and the panoramic view of those majestic mountains. It didn't take long for us to bone out the buck and we had a couple hours until dark. Since we were in a drainage closer to the truck we hiked out and headed for the house. The beers at the truck were cold.

The next morning, we had a leisurely breakfast, cut the deer up and froze the meat. That afternoon we hunted our way back into camp. My pack was eight pounds lighter without the rifle.

More reconstituted food. And Scotch. That night we had more wind and a bit of snow. The next day's hike and searching for bucks was pretty meager. We saw a couple young bucks sparring, one really nice buck that spooked and disappeared and a couple more does.



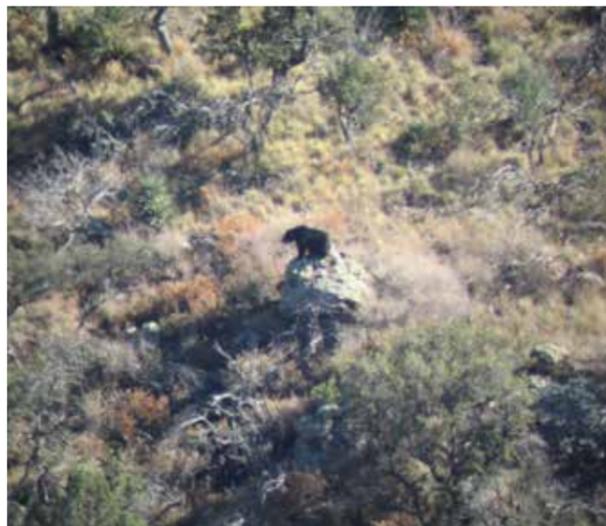
The day after that was about the same, a lot of hiking and a lot of glassing. I was pleased that I was neither “sorry nor embarrassed” hiking with the younger guys. The hiking actually got easier as the days went by.

We checked out a couple of the adjacent drainages without seeing much. We busted something out of the trees, but never saw what it was. It was late afternoon as we headed back downhill to camp when Bill spotted a bear. We knew that there were bears in the area because you could hardly walk ten yards without stepping in scat. I have never seen that much bear sign. We watched the bear head out of sight. Towards camp we thought to scan the hillside one last time before going in.

And there they were. Two beautiful mature Arizona Coues’ whitetail. Both of them were bigger than mine and one was seriously a dandy. We watched them as they bedded down in the oaks and juniper. Again, Kurt stayed back to watch for the deer while Bill and I stalked forward. On our way another bear showed up and climbed up the hill ahead of us spooking a deer. Rats! Fortunately, the bear only spooked a doe we hadn’t seen. We hoped the bucks were still on the hillside.

Bill and I set up in a spot where we could see the bucks if they came out for a little late-evening foraging. We sat there until the sun set and the light faded. As we got ready to leave the big one came out in the quickly fading light. Even though Bill was watching the buck through his rifle scope the dim light left it too hard to see well so Bill passed on the shot. I called that buck Mister Lucky.

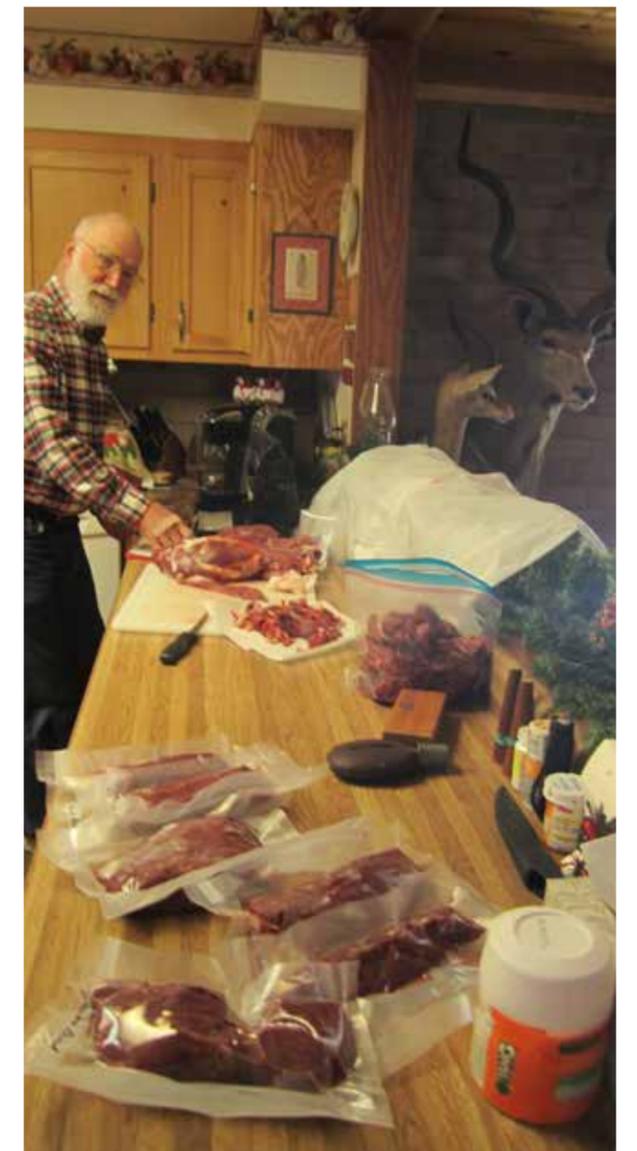
The next morning Bill and Kurt headed back to the hillside. Bill headed up the hill to a spot where he could see the trees Mister Lucky had bedded in while Kurt sat a ridge back with a spotting scope. We lost track of Bill and then Mister Lucky came out. Kurt was on the radio trying to tell Bill where the buck was, but Bill had turned the radio volume down low so it wouldn’t spook anything. A little bit too low. When Bill came back on the radio we told that the buck was near the yucca (about five of them on the hill) below the big green juniper (about fifty of them on the hill). Bill said, “I see him” and shot. Mister Lucky didn’t move. Bill says, “He went over the hill.” Could we have been looking at two different bucks?



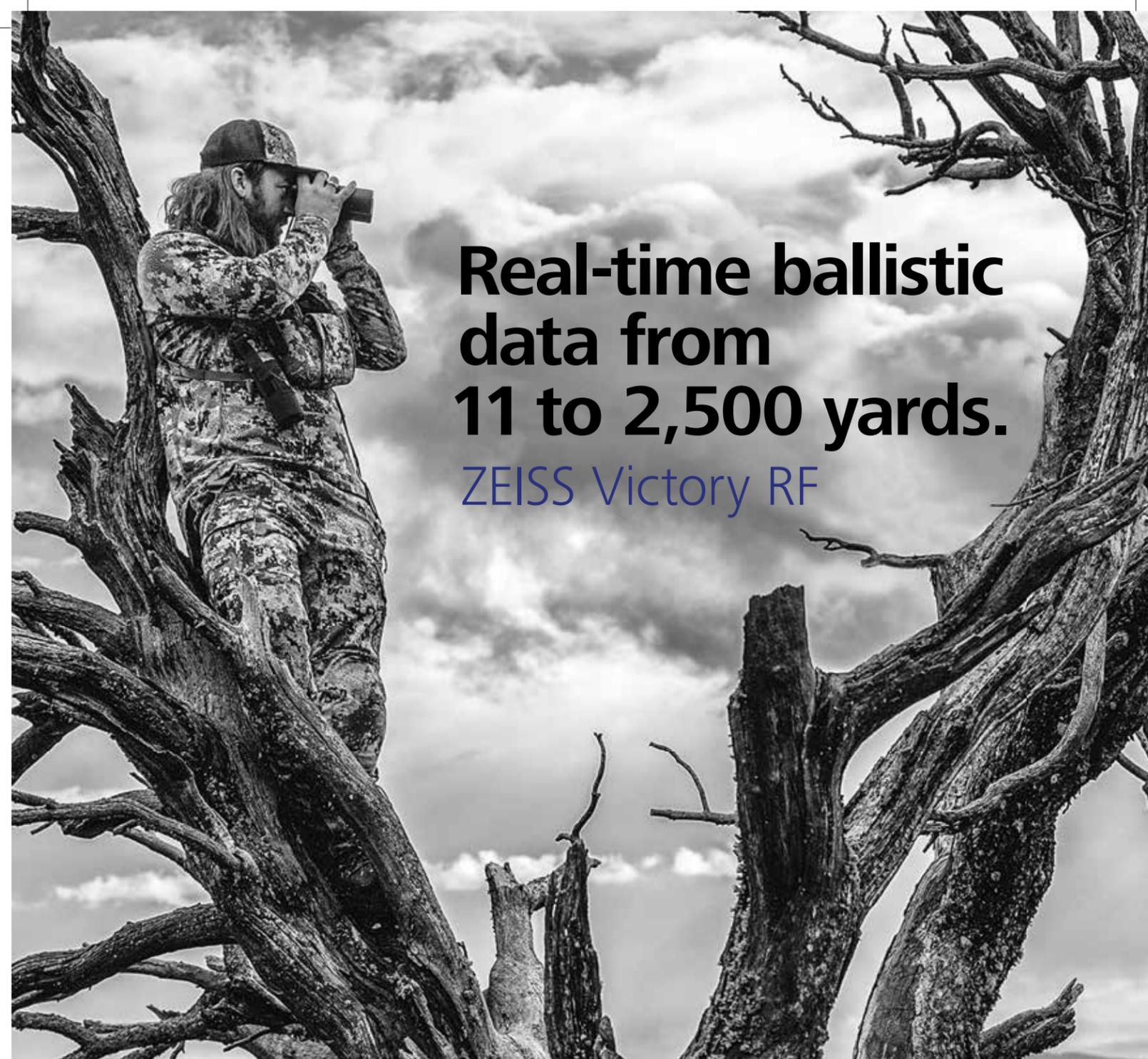
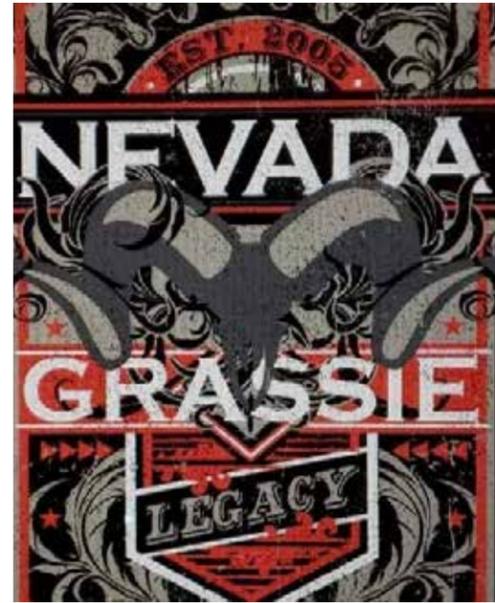
When we finally see Bill, he is a hundred yards up the mountain headed up a different ridge. It was a different buck. We hear another shot and Bill says, “He’s down for good”. We lost track of Mister Lucky as we hiked up the ridge.

Bill’s buck was almost the same size as mine. We were both really happy with the hunt and the results. As we packed out the buck, I was thinking how lucky I’ve been to have the opportunities I’ve had. For nearly sixty years I’ve hunted public lands in four western states and I’ve had good friends to share these adventures with.

Scotch in, venison out.



Hayden Lambson



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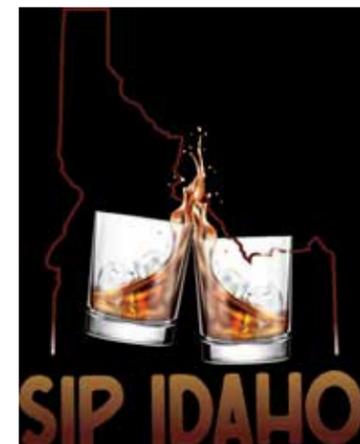
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THEM ARE FIGHTING WORDS

By: Josh Miller, Mitch McFarland, Triston Warner



There are very few topics that can start a fight amongst sheep hunters or any backpack hunter for that matter than the topic of, "Which gear is best?" Get on the Sheep Hunting Facebook group or any forum with a bunch of keyboard warriors and you will see hundreds or even thousands of opinions on which pack is best, which tent is best, which camo pattern is best, even which pair of SOCKS ARE BEST!! It's insane and quite frankly gets very stupid very quickly. I'm sure at the end of this article there will be some of you wanting to argue with the three of us that are writing this article. Between the three of us, we have been on or apart of 30 some odd sheep hunts and countless more backpack hunts. We've killed animals in blue jeans/cowboy boots and in high end apparel. We don't claim to be the best or know everything. We have just figured out what works best for each of us.

JOSH: I am preparing for a mountain goat hunt this October in northern British Columbia. This will be a guided hunt, but I typically don't rely on my outfitter/guide to provide the gear I prefer to plan on my own and once at basecamp adjust from there. My packing list for this trip is below.

IN PACK (47.6 LBS.)

Stone Glacier Sky Talus 6900
Kuiu mountain star 2p
Nemo -20 sleeping bag
Xtherm pad
Inflatable pillow
6.5 raptor w/ 3 rounds
Ammo case w/10 rounds
Outdoorsman tripod w/bino adapter
Kowa 15-45x 55mm spotter
Spotter case
Jetboil titanium
Cup and spork
Fuel
First aide supplies
Nalgene 48 oz w hose
Nalgene 32 oz
Headlamp
Headlamp (spare)
InReach
Kill kit
Steripen

Rope
Battery pack
Glassing pad
Dry bags (each)
Dry bags (each)
Puffy bottom
Puffy top
Gloves (glassing mitts)
merino 145 top
Merion 210 bottom
Peloton base bottom
Beanie
Kuiu sock 2 pair
Kenetrek heavyweight sock
Kenetrek liner sock
Exoficio underwear 3x
Gloves (glomit)
Gloves (merino)
Kryptek takur jacket
Kryptek takur pant
Toiletries
Camp shoes

Helinox camp chair
Gators
Phoneskope
Pack cover
Flask

WEARING

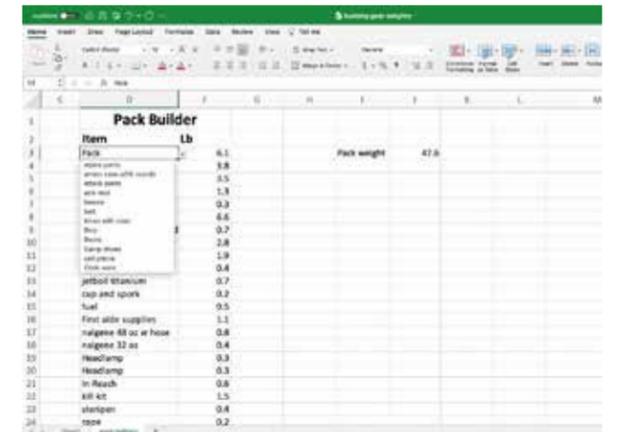
Pro Pants
145 merino top
Peloton hooded jacket
Merino sock w toe liner
Kenetrek 400 guide ultra
Belt
Cap
Bino holder
Mini flashlight
Lighter
Cellphone
Pocket knife
Couple rounds of ammo
Lens wipes
Trekking poles(in hand)

Here are a few explanations of what's in my pack. I sleep cold and with temps potentially in the single digits at night in October I am opting for a very warm bag since I hate sleeping in clothes. I stopped carrying a soft-shell jacket and haven't missed it with my layering system and use my rain gear as my outer layer. My optics consist of 10x42 Swarovski EL Range and a Kowa 55mm compact spotter with an Outdoorsman's tripod with bino adapter. I'm currently trying out the compact spotter for this mountain goat hunt to see if a lightweight spotter is the silver bullet for me. If I was sheep hunting and needed to count rings, I would opt the 65mm-85mm Swarovski or Kowa in order to count annuli and age.

I learned after my first sheep hunt that trekking poles are a critical piece of equipment for safety and for endurance. I have a very complete emergency/first aid kit. I seem to add to it every time a buddy has an accident. It currently includes a basic first aid kit with bandages and gauze and I've added suture material, quick clot, super glue, heavy-duty pain killers, small emergency bivy sack and a SAM splint. I also keep my spare buckles for my pack inside. I have a lighter and container of pyro putty/flint striker for back up. I also take along some tenacious tape to repair clothing, tents, sleeping bag and a little duct tape for hot spots or any random repairs.

My cook set up consists of titanium Jetboil, extra fuel, cup/bowl for coffee and for my baggies of oatmeal, and a long-handled spoon to keep my hands clean when eating freeze dried. I try to keep my food bags to 1.5 lbs./day. I've refined my meal kits based on what I started noticing I brought back home with me. I shoot for 125-150 calories/ounce for all my food which gives me 3000 cal. a day. I've found it's important to try to eat as similarly as you do at home while on a hunt to avoid stomach issues. This can be difficult so it's a good idea to start eating some of your backcountry food in the weeks leading up to a long trip.

I used to be a complete ounce counter with a toothbrush cut in half. Over the last few years, I've started sacrificing weight and adding back in some comfort items to make my trips more enjoyable. I think for many of us, comfort items give us the ability to endure the tough conditions and days easier and can stay longer. Some of my comfort items include a pair of thicker comfy socks and camp booties that north face makes. I also bring along a flask of big horn bourbon to only be used at the end of a successful hunt. Starting out I had a very bad habit of overpacking. I found that if I weighed all my gear and put it in a spreadsheet I could see where my weights were coming from and think twice about taking a particular item. You can see by my spreadsheet that I am very much an excel nerd when it comes to this. It has helped get my pack weights down considerably. As you can see by my screen shot that for my later season goat hunt my pack weight with gun but without food or water is right at 48 lbs. with food and water added for 9 days I'll be right at 60 lbs. starting out.



MITCH:

I based my pack on a 6-day September sheep hunt. My loaded pack came in at 56.1 lbs. with one day's food, a bladder with about 3/4 liter of water in it, and my rifle. My food generally runs 1.25 -1.5 lbs./day so add another 7 lbs. for food. That would put my total pack weight at 63.1 lbs. And knowing me, I'll throw in a couple extra items at the last minute but

CONTENTS OF PACK DUMP

1. Umbrella
2. Trekking poles
3. Rifle - 10 lbs.
4. Trekking towel
5. Pack rain cover
6. Crazy Creek Chair
7. One day meal pack
8. 3 liter water bladder
9. 2 - 1 liter bladders
10. Big Agnes Tiger Wall UL 2-person tent - 2.7 lbs.
11. Slik Pro 624CF tripod with Sirui VA-5 head - 2.7 lbs.
12. Kowa 25-60x 70mm spotting scope - 4.1 lbs.
13. 1 pair KUIU liner glove
14. Sitka boonie hat
15. Caribou game bags Carnivore II
16. Crocs
17. Miscellaneous gear bag
18. Sleeping bag/pad/pillow, down jacket and pants
19. Titanium spoon
20. Jetboil - MicroMo with sm fuel canister
21. KUIU Yukon rain pants with gators
22. KUIU Yukon rain jacket with Yukon rain gloves
23. Extra Clothes bag
24. Water filter - Katadyn Hiker Pro
25. Leica range finder
26. Outdoor Edge Razorlite EDC extra knife, extra blade
27. Headlamp - Black Diamond
28. Tarp 6'x8' - 1.1 lbs.
29. Ammo carrier with 12 rounds
30. License/tag
31. Knee brace
32. Bone saw
33. Garbage bag
34. Toilet paper
35. Vitamins/meds/Chinese herbs
36. First Aid/toiletries

MEAL PACK 1.25-1.5 LBS./EA

1. One Peak Refuel freeze dried Dinner
2. 1 homemade deer/elk/beef jerky, about 4 oz.
3. 1 homemade granola pack for breakfast
4. 2 homemade protein bars
5. 1 Mandarin orange fruit cup
6. 1 sm. candy bar
7. 1 sm. dried fruit
8. 2 tea bags
9. sm. dried milk
10. sm honey

11. Extra granola

EXTRA CLOTHING BAG 3.8 LBS.

1. KUIU Kenai Ultra vest
2. Under Armor gloves
3. KUIU heavy beanie
4. Merino wool/possum fur beanie
5. Russell Moccasin liner socks
6. KUIU Strongwool socks - mid wt
7. Wool liner gloves
8. KUIU Peloton 118 gm
9. KUIU down mittens
10. KUIU down top
11. KUIU Peloton 210 gm hooded top

MISCELLANEOUS BAG 2.1 LBS.

1. Moleskin/blister kit
2. Bug net(Optional)
3. fire starter(pitch)
4. Phone Skope
5. Vet wrap
6. field dress gloves
7. extra matches
8. Carmex lip balm
9. Inreach
10. Tripod adapter for phone
11. Clicker for phone
12. extra rope
13. sun block
14. wipes
15. lotion
16. sm. first aid kit
17. extra flashlight batteries
18. toilet paper
19. fabric repair tape
20. 2 Hot hands packs
21. Anker power bank

WHAT I WEAR

1. KUIU Talus Hybrid pant
2. Woolrich wool shirt
3. KUIU merino wool liner gloves
4. Tommy John Air boxers
5. KUIU Ultra Merino socks
6. KUIU 98gm Peloton hooded top
7. KUIU light beanie
8. Silk scarf
9. Leica 8x32 binoculars with bino carrier
10. Zamberlan boots

11. KUIU ball cap
12. Swiss Army knife
13. Lip balm
14. Fixed blade knife
15. Pair small vise grips

GEAR BREAKDOWN DETAILS

For the past several years I've been using a Kuiu 5200 with the Pro frame. I like it fine but I'm trying out an EXO this coming year after getting to know the guys at EXO and S&S Archery. I haven't joined the long-range custom rifle crowd yet. My rifle is a Winchester Model 70 30 -06 with a Leupold 3-9 VX2 scope on it. I use a Solo Hunter rifle cover and carry an ammo carrier with 12 rounds in it, although depending on pack weight and how far from the truck I am, I may take a few out.

My extra clothes consist of more layers, the down top is always in my pack, and it also doubles as foot warmer in my sleeping bag at night. The 210gm top is my outer layer generally until I put on the rain jacket. Unfortunately, I do have a glove fetish, I always take 4-5 pairs! I like the Under Armor gloves because they are warm, easy to put on and take off and loose enough I can fit a pair of liner gloves in them. I like the heavier wool liners because they are warm and are hard to beat inside those down mittens if it gets really cold! I always have an extra beanie and a wool hat in case it gets nasty, I lose one, or one gets wet. I like having a pair of liner socks and an extra pair of mid-weight socks so you can swap out socks on those long hikes and have various sock weights for temperature regulation.

I think my miscellaneous gear bag is pretty self-explanatory. My first aid kit is pretty minimal. It's got a sewing awl with thread, some compression bandages, 6 band aids, small melaleuca oil, a compression wrap, vet wrap, and some Chinese herbs for upset stomach and stopping major bleeding. Then some Aleve, a couple pain pills, and a small extra flashlight. I usually put in a few acupuncture needles to treat myself with as well.

For the remainder of my gear, there's a couple things, I know you are probably laughing at me packing an umbrella, it's ok, I read an article about a guy who used one and I laughed at him too. But then I started hunting in Nevada in late August early September when it is 100+ degrees, there aren't any trees for shade and the wind blows. A lot. Two people can tuck in under it on a ridge and glass out of the wind, sun, rain, or snow. And glassing out of the wind is huge when you are looking for sheep or bucks! And in Nevada I hiked with it up, I'm guessing it was at least 10-15 degrees cooler. On the last sheep hunt I did, we had to walk 5-6 miles the first day and it was drizzling rain. I wore my Yukon rain pants with my base layer under them to keep my legs dry from the brush, then just used my umbrella to keep my top and pack dry. We also used it for a wind block on that hunt. I also like my little trekking towel, it can be used to

16. KUIU climbing belt
17. Headlamp- Black Diamond
18. Phone
19. Lens cleaner

wash up, or if it's hot you can soak it and throw it around your neck to cool you down. It also works to block the sun on your neck. My Crazy Creek chair is another odd piece of gear, but after switching to it I can't go back to just a glassing pad. Having a back rest is essential to being comfortable for long glassing periods. I use my binoculars on top of one of my trekking poles a lot when I'm glassing, and I can kick back in my chair with no back or shoulder strain. And you can nap in it! My tripod, head, and spotter are about 6.7 lbs. That's a load, but every time I go without it, I wish I had it with me. I have a 1 lb. Nikon spotter that I use a lot, but I wouldn't take it on a sheep hunt unless I was with someone with a high power, top end scope. I've also gone the rounds with binoculars, from 10x42's, to 12x50's, to my little 8x32's with the Rick Young harness. For a backpack hunt I like my little bins, they are light and easy to glass with while you are hiking. They are top end glass and very clear.

WHAT I WEAR.

The clothes I wear can vary of course depending on the weather. My tops consist of the 98 gm Peloton top and a Woolrich wool shirt and I may add an additional outer layer if it's cold or raining. Both have a high warmth to weight ratio, dry fast, breath really well, and are light. Add a wind-proof layer over them and they have great insulating properties. My silk scarf and light beanie are always in my pocket, I don't leave home without them. I usually wear a pair of leather gloves to protect from stickers, pokes, and falls that can leave you injured. If at all possible, you want to avoid cuts and abrasions in the backcountry, most cuts become infected and can impact your hunt. I carry a pocket knife, lip balm, fixed blade knife, and a small pair of vice grips. I always carry my headlamp on me as well. I usually wear a ball cap when backpacking and switch to a boonie style hat with a brim for hunting. I've had a couple pieces of skin cancer removed and so I'm always using sun block and a brimmed hat these days.

I could shave some weight if I'd buy a lighter weight tarp and swap out my water filter system. And I could also get a lighter rifle. I could lighten my tent setup a pound or so if I didn't think it was going to rain or snow. But I've never been a total nerd about counting ounces, as evidenced by my umbrella and chair! I've done a lot of trips where I just threw in what I needed and if I could pick my pack up I was good to go. But lighter is definitely better when it comes to sheep hunting, it's always that fine line between having too much or too little. I've seen it snow pretty consistently in the Frank Church in September, some years October has milder weather, so I'm always packing enough to survive cold and snow.

TRISTON:

Here was the last time I put together a complete backpack list for a 10 Day Dall sheep hunt in 2020:

I would consider myself to have a different approach to backpack hunting. I am considered more of an over-pack vs an under-packer. There will be a lot of items and topics that people will not agree with me on, but I feel as if there are some valuables to share in what I have found.

First, there are things that must be brought. Despite the weight of the item, they are a necessity to the hunt. I will not go without them. Items that fall into this category are properly rated rain gear, tent, optics, water containers, ammunition and food.

I will always pack rain gear in my bag and more time than not I take the heaviest set I can get away with. Being wet and cold is not an option I am willing to consider. A substitution that I often make is my rain jacket for a soft shell. The soft shell is great for anything archery or still hunting but more often than not I leave it home and pack a rain proof jacket in its place.

Pack a tent that is comfortable for the condition. You will have days where the tent is where you stay all day. I prefer to pack a two man all year long.

Choosing what optic fits the hunt is more important to me than the weight. For longer trips and archery hunts I will pack a 65mm scope and 10x42 binos. If I am looking at a shorter and lighter trip in larger country where big glass is king, I will take 15's to use on my tripod. The 15's on the tripod are the most effective way for me to grid the landscape. I often this method often for deer and sheep hunting in big open country.

Food and water should be something that each person decides individually. I don't consume as much water as others, so I don't have to pack as much but too many times I have seen people on the hill without water and putting themselves at risk. I don't calorie count my food intake, I try to pack as much intake as possible while taking something that is edible and that I can consume over and over without problems. I have gone enough to know what I am comfortable with and then pack an extra bar or two each day for good measure. My favorites to pack for food and water are propel packets, Stinger honey waffles, and F-Bomb packets.

Ammunition should be self-explanatory. Prepare for the worst-case scenario.

MY MUST HAVES:

- Down Top and Bottom, I pack a set all year
- Properly rated rain gear, I pack a set all year
- Zip off base layer bottoms, probably my favorite high end piece of gear
- Big warm gloves, I hate my hands being cold and depending on the weather I can stay in the glass longer if my hands aren't cold. My NorthStar glommits were used multiple days in Alaska.
- Garmin Inreach
- Trekking Poles
- Sets of water tablets
- Tabasco for freeze dried meals

ODD BALL ITEMS;

- Super Glue, not only for medical reasons but you can use super glue to seal lips to the teeth of animals to improve your pictures
- Body Glide Outdoor, this stuff is great for all uses
- Tenacious tape, from down insulation to your rain tent this stuff works for all repairs
- Dude wipes, shower wipes and regular wipes are a step above the normal wet wipes
- Toed sock liners, these really help when you get hot spots between your toes
- Victory Flask, for when the hunt is over

CONCLUSION:

As you can see, we all approach things differently but we all agree on a few things too. Those things include the fact that animals we pursue do not care what we are wearing or what gear we have. We all agree that the new technology and new gear allow us to be more comfortable which in turn gives us the advantage of going further and staying longer which can lead us to be more successful. We all agree that you should save and buy the best you can afford that meets your needs so you can buy right the first time and avoid buying twice. And lastly and definitely the most important thing we all agree on is that what is "best" for me is very likely not what is "best" for Mitch or Triston or even you. We are all built differently, have different strengths, weaknesses, different vision, different methods of hunting, different priorities, etc. Hopefully this has been useful to you and will help you get some ideas. More importantly, if you have things you do, we'd love to hear back from you as well so we can learn something new.

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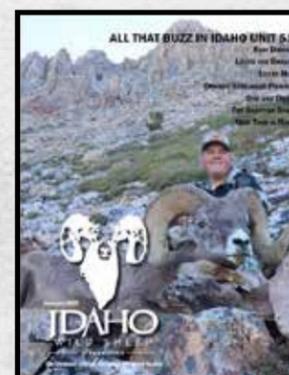
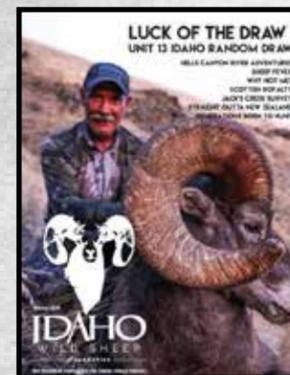
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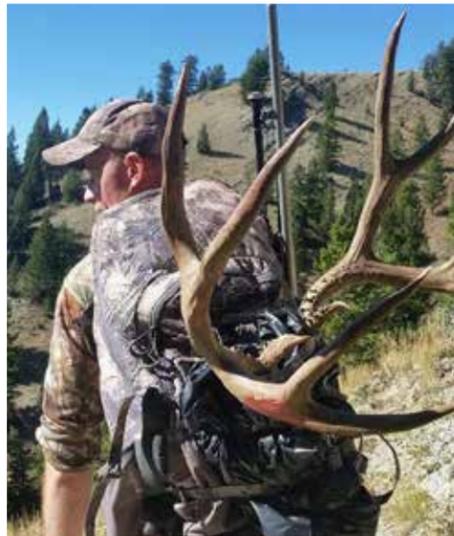
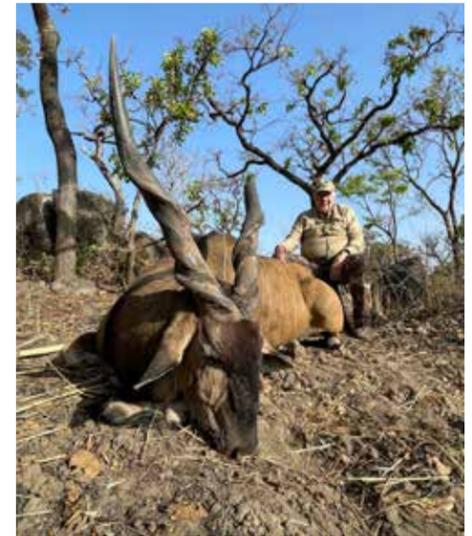
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