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For Big Game Hunters

(24 Pages This Month!)

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September 2010 Volume 30 Number 9

**“SERVING THE HUNTER WHO TRAVELS”**

**DATELINE: MISSOURI**

**Discovery Hunt!  
 Trophy Whitetails  
 In The Show Me State**

*(Editor Note: If you've never considered Missouri as a place to take big whitetails, you may want to rethink that. This outfitter has invested the time and effort to create a free-range hunting opportunity there that will excite the most exacting of whitetail hunters. Editor Barbara Crown filed the report.)*

**E**very whitetail hunter sighs with desire at the mention of those big corn-fed bucks found in Iowa and Kansas. But just over the state line, a line the deer don't know exists, is Missouri, offering over-the-counter licenses and hunting during the rut. And we've discovered an operator there who has created a whitetail hunting haven and still has openings for gun and archery hunts this season.

Deer hunting is popular in Missouri, and like many places,

local hunting pressure is high. Finding a place to hunt, much less a place with big bucks, is a challenge. But partners Ray Andreu and John Donahue of R&J Outfitters are producing some dandy trophies on 6,500 acres of prime deer habitat they have locked up in the northwest



corner of the Show Me State.

R&J operates in Harrison County. The properties they hunt are not contiguous but are large parcels with the right kind of habitat. That means lots of agriculture and timber with river and creek bottoms,

rolling hills, CRP ground, corn and soybean fields and just a bit of pastureland. All of it is private property, and R&J has the exclusive hunting rights. One of the properties includes 1,400 acres along the Iowa state line. Next door to that is an 8,000-acre, no-hunting, prairie chicken preserve. Another property has 170 acres set aside for prairie chicken as well. Both of these preserves serve as sanctuaries for deer.

Andreu says he and his partner originally started hunting there six years ago, leasing 500 acres for their own personal use. At that time, Missouri implemented a harvest restriction requiring that bucks have at least four points on one side. Andreu says the biggest buck you could expect to find then was perhaps a 140-class. After the new rule took effect, he says they began seeing larger bucks each season. At that point, he and his partner convinced neighboring landowners to participate in a voluntary management program, planting food plots and refusing to harvest bucks under 130 class. The program has worked. Last year, Andreu says one of their clients killed a huge buck that gross-scored 198 B&C. The final score was 196-6/8 B&C. Another buck killed on a neighboring property by a bowhunter rough-scored an amazing 238 P&Y. And this year, Andreu expects to produce at least a couple of bucks in that range and has the photos of live deer to prove it.

These are, of course, exceptional bucks, and no one should go there expecting to take such a monster.

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But Andreu says hunters on his properties can expect to see numerous bucks in the 140- to 160-class, with a good chance of seeing something as big as a 180-class. How is he producing such quality deer in an area that can get hammered by local hunting pressure? To start with, R&J has 30 food plots planted with Biologic brand feeds, which helps to draw and hold deer in their areas. They also use trail cameras to pattern deer movements without continually disturbing them. This allows R&J to set up clients where they are likely to see a big buck that has not been harassed.

Andreu and Donahue have also learned to use the local hunting activities to their advantage. After hunting for themselves for a few years, they learned some tricks that now produce well for their clients. For example, they usually don't hunt the opening week of the archery season. That's because everyone else is out scouting, hanging stands and basically stirring up the deer. R&J's property, however, remains undisturbed and that's where all the deer seek refuge. By the sec-

ond week of the season, Andreu says, bucks they have never seen before are hiding right where his hunters are.

Another thing they do is rotate their properties. Because most of the properties are separate, R&J can easily rotate them throughout the season, leaving the resting properties completely undisturbed without so much as a hunting truck driving through them on the way to another area. This way each group experiences the same quality hunting as the "opener." In fact, Andreu says, his second week can be even better than the first because deer are pushed onto the unhunted areas.

They also use the local crop harvest to their advantage. That's in November, during the second archery season. As farmers harvest their corn and soybean crops, the deer move into the hardwoods, right where Andreu and Donahue have placed hunters in stands. Hardwoods surround all of the fields on these properties, creating perfect deer funnels.

Additionally, Andreu and Donahue are quick to tap into emerging conditions. For example, this past growing season was unusu-



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ally wet, creating sheltered spots within the fields where corn did not grow. Andreu says they planted low-growing food plots there, giving the deer open feeding in the middle of high-growing corn. Near each of these patches, R&J has set up a stand with a clear shooting lane. As soon as the shooting starts in neighboring areas, the deer will move into the cornfields for cover and use these sheltered food plots where hunters will have a clear view and shooting opportunities.

All hunting with R&J is from stands and blinds. Andreu says they have 41 different high stands placed throughout the properties and eight ground blinds. They use a variety of stands, including doubles for parent/child or husband/wife combos, leaners and lock-ons. They are also flexible in their placements, allowing hunters to change stands and even move them if they are seeing deer in another spot. “Deer patterns vary,” says Andreu. “We may have a stand placed where we’ve seen deer moving, but the hunter may see them crossing another 40 or 50 yards away. We’ll move his stand so he can be where the deer are coming through.”

Andreu says he and Donahue make a point of learning from every season, so they can improve their clients’ hunting experiences. Their first season, Andreu says it stormed and rained while hunters were in open stands. So, now they have blinds. “We want our customers to feel that they are getting value out of every penny they pay for one of our hunts,” says Andreu.

This season will be R&J’s sixth year hunting in Harrison County. They have been outfitting for three, so this is a fairly “young” outfit. But they are proving to be smart managers and savvy outfitters, and the landowners they work with know it. In fact, R&J began acquiring more leases when landowners came to them asking them to manage their properties due to the success on

their neighbors’ land. R&J is building a reputation for doing things right. They are serious enough about managing their areas for the long term that they recently purchased a house in the town of Bethany to use as a hunting lodge instead of housing hunters in a motel. The house is strategically located, only 10 to 20 minutes from any of the properties. It is also on a school bus route, which means it gets cleared when it snows, so hunters won’t get stuck in the lodge.

R&J Outfitters take about 40 hunters a year, with groups of up to 10 at a time. They do not charge trophy fees, and they restrict clients to a minimum of 130-class bucks. The regulations require four points on one side, and Andreu says just about



any buck here with at least four points on one side is going to score over 120 and often over 130.

Archery runs September 15 - November 12 and November 24 - January 15. They start hunting, however, on September 20. The rifle season is November 13-23. The November archery and rifle hunts are during the height of the rut. R&J’s first rifle hunt is currently booked out, but they have openings for November 19-23. Muzzleloader runs from December 18-22.

All hunts are for five days. Hunters should arrive a day early for the orientation, including a chance to see the area they will be hunting. R&J charges \$3,000 for their rifle and muzzleloader hunts. The September archery hunt runs \$1,700, and the November archery during

the rut is \$2,200. That includes lodging and meals, plus transportation during the hunt.

The 3,000-square-foot lodge features six bedrooms furnished with bunks and single beds. It also has four full bathrooms and a washer and dryer. Meals include breakfast and lunch at the lodge, where hunters can take a mid-day break. Dinners are provided at the lodge several nights and at a local restaurant on other nights, providing the opportunity for a night out to play some pool, darts or sit at the bar and socialize.

Hunting licenses (\$225 for a nonresident) are available at the local Walmart. The license allows hunters to take one buck, a doe and a turkey, which R&J will allow during the archery season. Hunters should expect temperatures from 40 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit in September and in November from 0 to 30 degrees. Expect snow during the muzzleloader season. Be sure to bring waterproof and windproof clothing. Hunters fly into Kansas City airport and rent a car for the 1½-hour drive to the lodge. Interested hunters can contact Andreu at 786-319-1367 or Donahue at 786-394-3536. – *Barbara Crown.*

**DATELINE: AFRICA**

**News... News... News  
Scramble In Uganda;  
Moz Ele Attack; More**

*(Editor Barbara Crown reports on the latest developments from Africa.)*

**A** letter issued by Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) Executive Director Moses Mapesa caused a bit of confusion and lots of angst among Uganda operators and hunters last month. The letter sent to all **Uganda** operators announced a temporary suspension of sporthunting “with immediate effect save for any clients who may already be in Uganda and on safari.”

*The Hunting Report* received a copy of the letter and I immediately contacted several operators working in

different regions of Uganda. They all confirmed receiving the same letter but contended that something

was not right with the announcement. One operator told me he had spoken with someone at UWA and

□ **Close Up: Rocky Mountain West**

**From Kansas Whitetails To Wilderness Elk Hunts With La Garita Outfitters**

*By Lance Stapleton*

*(Editor Note: After an eight-month hiatus, Senior Western Correspondent Lance Stapleton is back reporting about hunting opportunities in the American West. This month he tells us about some interesting opportunities for deer, antelope and elk with an operator based in Colorado, but also working in Kansas. Here's Stapleton's report.)*

■ While on a trip to Colorado recently, I met with outfitter Mike Bondurant, owner of **La Garita Outfitters** (303-704-7765, [elkhunter1983@yahoo.com](mailto:elkhunter1983@yahoo.com); [www.Lagaritaoutfitters.com](http://www.Lagaritaoutfitters.com)). Bondurant has been in the hunting industry for a number of years and this summer bought out his partners in this outfit. He now is making some interesting changes.

Although he still offers outstanding mule deer hunting, as well as 1 x 1 guided elk and antelope hunts, Bondurant recently added a new whitetail lease in Kansas that deserves your attention for 2011. His lease is in Unit 4 near the I-70 corridor, where he expects to produce bucks in the 155- to 170-inch class! Clients fly into Wichita or Salina and are picked up and taken to Lake Wilson, where there are several comfortable cabins with all the amenities. There are no more tags available in this unit for this season, but Bondurant says that even if you do not draw next year, he may be able to acquire a tag for you.

This lease had been hunted by a turkey outfitter for the last two years. Before that, bucks killed here averaged in the 160s, although a buck scoring 191 and several in the 180s were also killed. An archery hunt here for six to seven days costs \$2,500, and the five-day rifle hunt is only \$3,500. These are introductory prices, and I would expect prices to be raised for the 2012 season. By the way, there is some outstanding pheasant hunting available after you tag your buck. Bondurant will also offer turkey hunts, but you need to call for details as these plans hadn't been firmed up at this writing.

Now, let's turn to Bondurant's mule deer hunts conducted in Colorado's Unit 123, less than an hour's drive south of Colorado Springs. This is one of those rare hunting opportunities. Not only are big mule deer killed here every year, but you also have a very high chance of drawing a permit because most of the area is private property. In fact, in this year's drawings, several clients drew with no preference points, and everyone with at least one point drew. Even if you do not draw, Bondurant generally has a few landowner vouchers

available. He says that clients can expect a decent chance of killing a buck scoring from 180 to 190 points, although he has produced bigger bucks for his clients.

This hunt takes place on the Chico Basin Ranch, which covers 87,000 acres and is owned by the Colorado State Land Board (not public land). It's a working cattle ranch complete with alfalfa and winter wheat fields, but the cattle are moved well in advance of the deer hunting to maintain a quality hunting experience. Bondurant's five-day rifle hunt (second season) is priced at \$5,500, while the muzzleloader six-day hunt in October is priced at \$4,750, and the seven-day archery hunts in December run \$3,500. Bondurant emphasizes that the archery hunt is a prime opportunity to hunt mule deer in the rut. He is an avid bowhunter himself and has seen some very big bucks during this season.

Clients on this hunt fly into Denver or Colorado Springs before being driven to one of two houses on the ranch, depending on the deer travel patterns. One house has all the amenities, while the other doesn't have plumbing, but both are comfortable. In each case, a full-time cook serves plenty of home-cooked food.

Bondurant also offers antelope hunts on this ranch and says there are many antelope here. The seven-day season normally starts on October 1. Bondurant says a client could expect to kill a buck scoring in the 70- to 80-point range, and perhaps bigger. Both rifle and muzzleloader are three-day hunts (should be plenty of time) priced at \$2,000, and the archery hunt is priced at \$1,500 for four days. There are plenty of waterholes on this ranch, offering perfect places to ambush a buck. Colorado's ample seasons also allow the possibility of booking a combo hunt – schedule a rifle antelope hunt for October 5-7, and then a muzzleloader mule deer hunt starting on October 9. The cost of this combo hunt is only \$6,000 and offers a real bargain for someone with a few extra days.

The name of this outfit is taken from the La Garita Wilderness Area in Central Colorado (Unit 68), where Bondurant conducts his elk hunts. Here he operates two camps that allow him to respond to elk herd movements without delays during the hunt. Bondurant's "upper" camp is accessed after a 5½-mile horseback ride along the middle fork of Saguache Creek. The "lower" camp, where he conducts the rifle hunts is only a one-mile hike from the trailhead. Both are equipped with large wall

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been cleared to continue hunting and that the suspension was only in certain areas. Another said he had a

long term contract and he would hold the government to that even if it meant going to court.

I called the UWA to find out what was happening. Mapesa, I was told, was out of the country and the

tents, cots, wood stoves and even a propane-heated shower. This is a true wilderness, high-altitude experience, along with plenty of branch-antlered bulls scoring in the 300-point range. Horses are always available, but clients should be in good physical shape to take maximum advantage of this hunt.

The early hunts in September, of course, are scheduled for bow hunters in the middle of the bugle when they normally experience 100 percent opportunity. This five-day hunt is priced at \$3,500. Muzzleloader hunts are during the second estrus period in mid-September, and last year two out of three hunters killed their bulls. However, it's the first-season rifle hunt starting on October 16 that's hot, since it has produced 100 percent hunter success the last four years. The muzzleloader and rifle hunts are both five-day hunts for \$4,000. On all hunts, extra days can be added for \$200 per day. Bondurant also offers a drop camp option for \$1,500, where he packs you and his equipment into the wilderness, or a pack-in camp, where he packs in your equipment for \$500 per person.

I have saved Bondurant's newest and perhaps most exciting lease acquisition for last because it offers a great chance to kill an outstanding free-range bull elk and to take a cow at no additional charge – something you don't often find. The Medano Zapata ranch (MZ) is located at the base of the Great Sand Dunes National Monument in Colorado's Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and I can tell you that there is no more beautiful country in North America. The lodge on this 100,000-plus-acre ranch is very comfortable, complete with hot tubs overlooking the fantastic scenery.

Bondurant told me that this ranch was hunted in 2009, the first time since records there have been kept. They produced 100 percent success on nine bulls ranging from 290 to 367 points. There are numerous pluses for this hunt, including a schedule that extends from November 1 through the end of December, as well as guaranteed tags!

This ranch is owned by the Nature Conservancy, so expect to be immersed in modern ranching life, flavored with a strong conservation ethic. This is a perfect trip for the entire family, as there is plenty to do for the non-hunter, including trail rides and numerous side trips. The non-hunter can also take part in the day-to-day ranching work, or, with some planning, enjoy interpretive nature hikes, wildlife watching and even learning about the geology and ecology of the area. Contact Bondurant for the cost of bringing a non-hunter, as the scheduled activities may affect the price.

This bull elk hunt costs \$6,000 for five days, and remember, a cow can be taken at no extra charge. Should

you only want to kill a cow, however, the cost is \$300 to \$1,000, depending on the accommodations, and the hunt is for two days. You can visit the web site for the ranch at [www.Zranch.org](http://www.Zranch.org) to see the accommodations for yourself as well as what sets this hunting opportunity apart from others.

Things are changing so rapidly for this outfitter since he took over that you can expect more exciting developments in the future. Bondurant is well connected with some outstanding organizations (such as the Nature Conservancy), which may afford some other hunting opportunities in the future. Furthermore, he is a full-time outfitter and has most of his properties under a long-term lease so that he can manage them for wildlife. He is one to keep your eye on.

*(Editor Note: If you are interested in one of the muzzleloader hunts mentioned above, be aware that Colorado's muzzleloader regulations require a .40 caliber minimum for deer and antelope and .50 caliber for elk. In-line rifles and shotgun primers are legal, but the rifle cannot be loaded from the breech during the muzzleloading season. Furthermore, only open or iron sights are allowed; however, non-electronic fiber optic and painted sights are allowed. Pelletized powder, smokeless powder and sabots are not legal.)*

□

On a completely different subject, I could not close this column without commenting on a huge victory for wild sheep and recognizing the work done by the US Forest Service, Nez Perce Tribe and the Wild Sheep Foundation. Anyone who follows wild sheep knows of the potential problems that exist when wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats are allowed to come into contact on grazing allotments. There are many recorded examples where entire herds of wild sheep have been decimated because of this contact, and many of the historical ranges in the West have limited wild sheep opportunities today because of these allotments. However, the US Forest Service recently announced that all or portions of 20 domestic sheep and goat grazing allotments on the Payette National Forest in Idaho will be closed over the next three years – protecting a whopping 94 percent of the area used by local bighorn herds.

This huge area roughly extends from the Snake River (Hells Canyon) to the east side of the South Fork of the Salmon River east of Riggins, Idaho. This is a huge area containing some truly magnificent hunting country. For those of us who have worked for decades to introduce wild sheep back into their historical ranges, this was a tremendous announcement! . . . Life is too short – go hunting! *Lance Stapleton.*

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community conservation coordinator was serving in his stead. I spoke with the coordinator, who told me that sporthunting had been sus-

pended throughout Uganda, not just in certain areas. The reason was the need for a game population census and a scientific method of determin-

ing quotas. Although the letter specifically mentioned a concern with illegal hunting and “equitable benefit sharing” from sporthunting, the coordinator insisted they just wanted a better quota-setting process. He had no idea what was being done to conduct a census or when the suspension might be lifted. I warned E-mail Extra subscribers about the situation, promising more information and encouraging them not to panic or cancel safaris until we knew more.

I very quickly learned that UWA had just gotten a new Board of Trustees. Some “internal house cleaning” and resulting tensions were at play here. According to a source who spoke directly with the new UWA Chairman of the Board, the board decided not to issue any new hunting concessions or a quota for 2011 until the question of a game census and quota setting process had been settled. “He does not want to stop hunting,” is what I was told. Word of my E-mail Extra Bulletin had apparently reached the UWA and a clarification on the suspension was to be posted on the UWA web site ([www.ugandawildlife.org](http://www.ugandawildlife.org)).

At this writing on August 19, nothing had been posted. However, clarification letters were sent to operators explaining that the temporary suspension was intended to affect only some agreements. The agreements under review and where sporthunting is temporarily suspended are: Ajai and Kafu, operated by Uganda Wildlife Safaris; Pian-Upe and Amudat in South Karamoja, operated by Karimojong Overland Safaris; and Katonga, operated by Game Trails.

If you have a safari booked into any of these concessions, don’t panic, but do contact your operator. Find out what the status of the suspension is and be flexible with your plans. If your hunt is not until 2011, you will need to find out from your operator when the UWA issues a quota for that season. If the UWA

### WESTERN STATES: IMPORTANT DEADLINES

*(Editor Note: Here are the important permit/tag developments to watch out for this month in the US West, thanks to Kate Goodin.)*

State	Telephone	Comments
<b>Arizona</b>	<b>602-942-3000; <a href="http://www.azgfd.gov">www.azgfd.gov</a></b>	Big game draw results are available online. There are more than 2,000 leftover tags, including more than 1,700 deer tags, 500 fall turkey tags, and 200 tags for the juniors-only fall javelina hunts. They are posted on the web site and will be issued first-come, first-served. The application deadline for spring turkey, javelina, buffalo and bear is tentatively set for October 12. Applications are available online but must be mailed in. General season lion and bear tags are available over the counter (OTC). Call the lion hotline (877-438-0447) to see which units have met quota.
<b>Colorado</b>	<b>303-297-1192; <a href="http://wildlife.state.co.us">http://wildlife.state.co.us</a></b>	OTC big game licenses are on sale. A list of leftover licenses from the drawing for deer, elk, pronghorn and bear is available online. OTC mountain lion and bear licenses are available online. Call 888-940-5466 to see which units have met quota.
<b>Idaho</b>	<b>208-334-3717; <a href="http://fishandgame.idaho.gov">http://fishandgame.idaho.gov</a></b>	There are still more than 12,000 nonresident whitetail deer tags and 7,500 zone elk tags left. General season permits for all big game, including mountain lion and black bear, are available OTC. Call 800-323-4334 to see which units have met quota before purchasing a tag.
<b>Kansas</b>	<b>620-672-5911; <a href="http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/Hunting">http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/Hunting</a></b>	At press time, over 1,000 leftover whitetail permits were still available and had gone on sale first-come, first-served.
<b>Montana</b>	<b>406-444-2950; <a href="http://fwp.mt.gov">http://fwp.mt.gov</a></b>	Surplus deer, elk and antelope tags have been posted online and are being sold first-come, first-served. As of August 31, black bear and mountain lion licenses must be purchased at a department office and cannot be used until five days after purchase.
<b>Nevada</b>	<b>775-688-1500; <a href="http://www.ndow.org">www.ndow.org</a></b>	Mountain lion permits subject to a quota are available over the counter. Call 800-800-1667 or visit <a href="http://www.ndow.org/hunt/seasons/fur/mtlion.shtm">http://www.ndow.org/hunt/seasons/fur/mtlion.shtm</a> to determine which units are closed.
<b>New Mexico</b>	<b>505-476-8000; <a href="http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us">www.wildlife.state.nm.us</a></b>	More than 2,700 leftover deer licenses, more than 400 leftover javelina licenses and 1,000 youth-only elk licenses went on sale August 11. Mountain lion and bear permits are available OTC.
<b>Oregon</b>	<b>503-947-6100; <a href="http://www.dfw.state.or.us">www.dfw.state.or.us</a></b>	Draw results for controlled hunts are available online. General season tags are available OTC.
<b>Utah</b>	<b>801-538-4700; <a href="http://wildlife.utah.gov">http://wildlife.utah.gov</a></b>	Archery elk permits and harvest objective cougar permits are available OTC. Call 888-668-5466 to determine which units are still open. Applications for limited-entry cougar permits are due October 13.
<b>Washington</b>	<b>360-902-2464; <a href="https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov">https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov</a></b>	General season tags are available OTC for deer, elk, bear and cougar.
<b>Wyoming</b>	<b>307-777-4600; <a href="http://gf.state.wy.us">http://gf.state.wy.us</a></b>	Leftover big game licenses are still available, first-come, first served. Check the list online. Preference points must be purchased by September 30. General bear and cougar permits are available OTC. Call 800-637-0809 to check which units have filled their quota.

gets around to issuing their clarification, I will send out an E-mail Extra Bulletin and post it on our web site as soon I learn of it...

Two more big elephant hit the ground in **Botswana** last month. You can see the photos in the Trophy Gallery section of our website. One of them is an amazing 95-pounder taken by Portuguese hunter Alvaro Rola. He hunted with Johan Calitz Safaris (011-34-91-4423-775; [www.johancalitzsafaris.co.za](http://www.johancalitzsafaris.co.za), booking agent Eduardo de Araoz of Cazatur (011-267-686-3282; [www.cazatur.com](http://www.cazatur.com)). The PH was Cobus Calitz, and the hunt took place in NG32, one of the Okavango Delta concessions still being hunted. Tharia Unwin of Calitz Safaris sent me the following note about the hunt:

“The hunting party was busy scouting an island when they heard an elephant snoring in dense bush. Cobus told Alvaro to remain behind while he went to see what the tusker was carrying. He returned to Alvaro saying that it was a real good tusker but that the other tusk was not visible. They waited for the big old bull to wake up and start moving so they could have a look at the other side. Fifteen minutes later, Cobus and Alvaro saw that the other tusk was broken.

“It was only the second day of the safari, but Alvaro realized the magnitude of this magnificent old elephant bull and did not hesitate. He had an expectation in mind, and this bull was it. At 10 yards, Alvaro dropped the elephant with a single brain shot from his .470 Krieghoff. The right tusk measured 48 inches in length and 20.5 inches around the lip. Its green weight was 95 pounds (43 kilos)! Amazingly, another 32 inches of ivory was hidden inside the skull of this old elephant. Even though the left tusk was broken at the tip, it still measured 21 inches in length and weighed in at 60 pounds (27 kilos).”

The second elephant was a 73 x 74 pounder killed by Jared Rann in

CT7. You’ll recall, I told you about this concession recently. It was among a number of concessions offering elephant permits at auction. The permits for CT7 were purchased by Jeff Rann Hunting Safaris ([rannsafaris@dynabyte.bw](mailto:rannsafaris@dynabyte.bw)). The area encompasses nearly 2 million acres, stretching from Hwange Game Reserve on the Zimbabwe border to CT1 and Nxai Pan Game Reserve.

This is the first elephant taken in CT7 since Botswana reopened hunting. Rann shot the jumbo while filming an episode for Federal Ammunition’s *Dangerous Game*. According to Rann, they saw more than 100 bull elephant in only three days of hunting a small portion of the concession. He expects the hunting to improve as the dry season,



May through December, progresses. Water is limited between Hwange and Nxai Pan, and CT7 has an extended hunting season through the end of November....

Another amazing trophy taken in Botswana this past month is a Livingstone eland that is sure to be the new Number 3 SCI. (See photo in our online Trophy Gallery.) The bull unofficially scores 116 3/8 SCI, two inches over the current Number 3 of 114 3/8 SCI. The lucky hunter is subscriber Gary Madden, who hunted CH12 with Mike Murray of Bottlepan Safaris ([mikemurray@eastcape.net](mailto:mikemurray@eastcape.net)). Madden was on a combo elephant and eland hunt. He says he had hunted eland in Botswana before and enjoys the demanding nature of tracking them on foot.

After a couple of days with several unsuccessful stalks, he says their tracker picked up an exceptionally large track around 9:30 am, and they finally caught up to a group of bulls at 3:30 that afternoon, covering eight miles on foot. Madden says the area was covered in thick mopane, cutting visibility to less than 40 yards. When they finally caught sight of the eland, he says one of the bulls visibly stood out from the others. The group spooked. Chaos followed, with eland running in all directions. Madden says Murray did a superb job keeping track of the big one and prevented him from shooting a smaller animal. “He is an experienced and tenacious hunter,” says Madden. The eland’s horns green-measured just shy of 46 inches...

Still in Botswana, you will recall I told you that the company Akuna Mathata, owned by Jack Andrews, had lost its lease on CH8 (also called Pandamatenga). The quota of 22 elephant and 31 assorted plains game permits was auctioned in June to a group of professional hunters. I also told you that Andrews intended to go to court over the loss of his area, and it appears he has. Andrews is suing the Paleka Community Trust, claiming that he had been granted another two-year lease when they auctioned the quota out from under him.

How does this affect safaris to CH8 scheduled for the rest of 2010? Not at all, I’m told. Mike Murray of Bottlepan Safaris and Kelly Butler of Greg Butler Safaris ([Kelly@gregbutlersafaris.com](mailto:Kelly@gregbutlersafaris.com)) are two of the operators who bought quotas for CH8. Both tell me it is business as usual for them and their clients. “Our contract is with the government for the quota allocated to CH8,” says Murray, “and it runs through the end of November. We do not foresee this affecting any clients...”

As a final note from Botswana, longtime subscribers know that lion hunting there was closed several

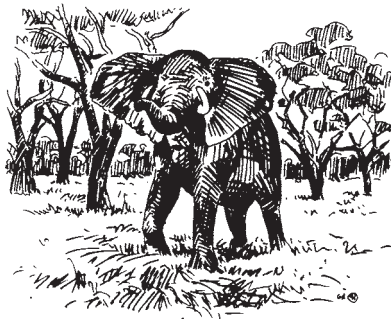
years ago, supposedly because too many were being killed under the guise of Problem Animal Control. With that in mind, I thought *Hunting Report* subscribers would enjoy this recent story from the Botswana newspaper *Ngami Times*: A Boteti farmer, fed up with lions raiding his kraal, decided to take matters into his own hands and try to capture a male lion, as shooting the animals is not permitted. He devised a lasso and managed to trap the lion, loaded it on to the back of his Land Cruiser and took it to the wildlife scouts' camp at Khumaga. Personnel to take care of the problem were not available, so he contacted a wildlife vet who was on an official trip to Okavango sub-district.

The farmer, who did not want to be identified, explained the situation, and particularly that he had a live and very angry lion roaring its head off on the back of his vehicle. “I have brought the lion to Maun but also cannot get assistance,” he told the astonished vet, who then drove to Maun to administer a tranquilizer. The animal was then released into a wildlife area. Farmers in the Boteti area have described their colleague as “a very unique man” and one who was fed up with not being able to get any help...

Continuing on the subject of “problem animals,” subscriber Robert Keim shot a 78 x 60 pound elephant in **Mozambique** as it charged his hunting party. (See photo in our online Trophy Gallery.) Keim and his wife were hunting with Kambako Safaris ([jumbo@kambakosafaris.com](mailto:jumbo@kambakosafaris.com)) in the Niassa Reserve this past July when the incident occurred. He writes, “While hunting for zebra in a remote forested area, our assistant tracker, Jumbo-Jumbo, saw a large bull elephant moving aggressively towards us from about 70 yards behind. When PH Stuart Taylor assessed the situation, he instructed us to move away but not to run. This had no effect on the elephant, which kept coming very quickly. We as-

sumed a false charge, as his ears were erect and he was not yet at a full run. Unfortunately, he soon pinned his ears back, rolled his truck under and came at a full charge, approximately 25 mph. The PH yelled, ‘Run!’ and told me to fire a warning shot in the air. My wife and the trackers took off at full speed! All of this had no effect on the elephant, which continued his charge. He was gaining on us quickly.

“The PH and I ran away backwards, as not to lose sight of the elephant. Stuart fired into the elephant’s forehead with his .458 Magnum, going for a brain shot, but to no effect! I tripped over a bush, directly into the elephant’s path and thought I was a goner for sure. As Stuart fired



again into the elephant’s head, I got up. The elephant passed Stuart and headed directly for me. At five yards, I shot into the charging elephant’s head, hitting the brain. He immediately dropped dead, almost falling on me and crushing me.”

According to Keim and safari operator Jumbo Moore, authorities of the Niassa Reserve ruled the shooting justified. Keim says he and his wife were back in the bush two days later. He got his Boehm’s zebra as well as a 38-inch Cape buffalo, 16¾-inch bushbuck and an impala. He reports seeing an abundance of elephant, waterbuck and impala but says the other plains game were more difficult to find due to very thick cover...

At the opposite end of Mozambique, subscriber Kendall Kilbourne

reports taking a Rowland Ward lion. (See photo in our online Trophy Gallery.) He hunted the Sabie Game Management Area with Sandy McDonald of McDonald Safaris ([www.mcdonaldhunt.com](http://www.mcdonaldhunt.com)), booking agent Ken Moody (800-585-4868; [www.kenmoody.com](http://www.kenmoody.com)). I first reported on this 70,000-acre area when it opened to hunting back in March 2009 (Article ID 2222). The Sabie lies on the border of Mozambique and South Africa, sharing a 40-kilometer boundary with Kruger National Park, which is fenced. The southern and northern boundaries of the Sabie are created by Lake Carrumane and the Massintoto River, which are completely open. Formerly a failed photo safari concession, the deed holders offered it up as a hunting concession and McDonald took it over. He has been curtailing poaching and working with local communities to keep people and cattle out. According to recent feedback, the efforts are paying off. Kilbourne reports the area is full of large Cape buffalo and cats. He took an old buffalo with a 14-inch boss but says his hunting partner took one just shy of 42 inches with a 15-inch boss. As for the lions, he writes, “We had numerous baits hung and had cats on almost all of them. The hunter in camp before me had three mature male lions on bait. I shot an old, nomadic male with a full, very dark mane, and when I left camp we had two other large males on bait. McDonald was my PH and went the extra mile to make sure I got my cat.”

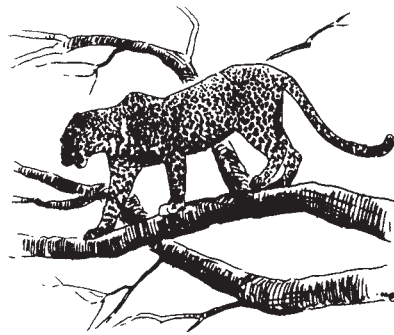
I checked in with McDonald, who tells me that his clients have done well on quality cats in the Sabie. “We are not 100 percent on lion or leopard,” he says, “as the dynamics of the populations and the movements change with the time of year. We are still learning. Each year the game gets better...”

In **Tanzania**, I told you last month that PH John Greef had been mauled by a leopard but details

about the incident were still sketchy. I was expecting an account from him that I hoped to send out in an E-mail Extra Bulletin by the time you received your August issue. It was not until press time for the current issue that I received an e-mail from US booking agent Wes Hixon with the details from Greef. He writes in part, “On July 5, 2010 Professional Hunter John Greef and his 19-year-old step-son Dusty were seriously mauled by a leopard while conducting a safari in the Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania. John, Dusty and a client were sitting in a leopard blind on the evening of July 5, when the leopard appeared on the bait. Dusty was running a video camera. The leopard presented a broadside shot, and the client fired. The leopard jumped from the tree and disappeared in the tall grass. They reviewed the video footage and confirmed the leopard was indeed hit, although, the shot appeared to be a bit far back. John and Dusty approached the bait and began to look for blood. They followed in the direction the leopard had disappeared and could not find blood. As darkness was approaching, John radioed for two other professional hunters to come assist him in tracking the wounded leopard. One of them, Albie, arrived; the other professional hunter encountered mechanical problems en route and could not make it.

“When they returned to the bait, it was well past dark. John and Albie took the lead with Dusty and the trackers behind them. Still no blood trail. The grass was well over the hunters’ heads, and visibility was very poor. The wounded leopard was indeed lying in wait for them. However, the leopard reacted in a very strange way; he allowed John and Albie to step right past him without making a move, then sprang up and over the grass straight for Dusty. The leopard’s attack came from behind John’s right side. As the leopard sprang into the air, John

swung his .470 double rifle to shoot. He instantly saw Dusty and a tracker in the beam of his flashlight, making him pull off the leopard’s front shoulder and shoot him in the mid-section of the body. His shot hit the leopard, knocking him sideways. However, the leopard managed to pull Dusty to the ground. Immediately, John sprang forward sticking the barrel of his double rifle past Dusty and into the leopard’s chest. John pulled the trigger, and his rifle clicked on a spent round. To John’s horror, he had double-fired his .470 when the leopard was in mid air - the very first time this had ever happened to John. At that point, he tackled the leopard and pulled it off of Dusty. The leopard immediately turned his attack to John, sinking



his teeth into the right side of his face, instantly crushing both John’s upper and lower jaw bones, and clawing his face and head.

“During these seconds of struggle between life and death, Albie shot the leopard and killed it. Unfortunately, one of the shots passed through the leopard, hitting Dusty in the foot; he lost two toes. The leopard died with his teeth still sunk into John’s face and a claw stuck in John’s right eye. They literally had to pry the leopard’s jaws open and remove its claw from John’s right eye in order to free him. It was a long painful night for John and Dusty. On the morning of July 6, they were flown by the safari company to Dar Es Salaam, where they received medical treatment and

were then flown to Johannesburg, South Africa, and placed in intensive care at Mill Park Hospital.

“Dusty is recovering rapidly and is hobbling around without crutches most of the time. It has been a long battle for John, having undergone several surgeries. John was allowed to leave the hospital on Monday evening August 2, for the first time since being admitted on July 6. Still, John is scheduled to undergo more surgeries. His ear is giving him a lot of problems with infection. The vision in his right eye may never be restored, yet all of us cling to the hope that a miracle can occur.

“Thanks to everyone for their thoughts, prayers, emails, phone calls and for the funds that have been donated to help offset some of the medical expenses. It has been amazing, humbling, and emotional to watch hunters from around the world rally in support.

“Efforts are underway to have John’s medical records sent to the US. We would be most appreciative if a professional in the eye surgery field would review these records and advise. At this point the doctors in South Africa have offered approximately two percent odds for vision recovery.

“I spoke with John via telephone today (August 17, 2010). He sounded much stronger and very upbeat. He says, ‘If someone feels it is in my best interest to come to the US for treatment, I’m ready to do so immediately. If not, I will be coming over in January for the SCI Convention. I assure you, with or without my right eye, I will continue to hunt in the safari industry. As soon as I can, I’m going to write a detailed account of this accident titling it, *An Eye for a Leopard...*’”

Should anyone from the medical field be interested in helping, please contact Wes Hixon at 706-657-3527 or at weshixon@weshixon.com. Get in a good safari somewhere on the Dark Continent this season – but be careful! – *Barbara Crown.*

● Briefly Noted ●

Things To Do, Places To Go, New Developments

■ Like the other northern Scandinavian countries, **Norway** is a nation of outdoor enthusiasts in general and hunters in particular. It's therefore surprising that the only story we've ever run on Norway was a very brief note in 2004 on the opening of outfitted seal hunting there. No subscribers followed up on that opportunity and filed reports, perhaps because the Marine Mammal Protection Act forbids the importation of seal skins to the US.

But we now have word that Norway is offering many other big game hunting opportunities. Frederic Hanner of Germany has filed a report on a moose hunt he took in an area called Karasjok in October of 2009. He booked his hunt through Marcel Mennink, who runs an agency called Novahunt (telephone from the US: 011-47-9092-6674; web [www.novahunt.eu](http://www.novahunt.eu)). More on them in a moment.

Hanner, who has hunted in South Africa and Austria tells us, "There were plenty of big moose present; I saw four big old bulls during my hunt. The animals were often in motion, making a safe shot difficult if you are not used to shooting at moving targets. The bull that I could have shot easily was too small for my taste, so I let it go. I came home without an animal by personal choice."

As to the hunt itself, Hanner recommends bringing "solid and waterproof footwear." He rates the overall outfit he hunted with, and the camp, food and trophy care as good, the ability of his guide as excellent, and comments that the airline he flew, Lufthansa, was "German perfection."

Hanner gives the total cost of his hunt as \$3,000 US and notes that there are no trophy fees when hunting with Novahunt.

In summary, Hanner tells us he

would recommend this hunt: "I had an awesome time with Marcel Mennink from Novahunt, who did everything to make my stay a pleasant one. The choice of not taking a risky shot was mine. My guide brought me into a lot of contact with moose, the way it should be! I have never experienced nature of such beauty as I found in Norway. Since I had so much fun on a moose hunt with Novahunt, I booked a seal hunt in late January and a capercallie hunt in late September."

In a follow-up e-mail, Mennink gives a fascinating overview of the hunting options and game available in Norway (beaver hunting anyone?). We've appended this e-mail



in its entirety to Hanner's report (Report ID 7775) in our database, instantly accessible to E-mail Extra subscribers and available to anyone for a slight fee. Call Edi Bell at 800-272-5656 to order a faxed, e-mailed or mailed copy. Or simply visit our website ([www.huntingreport.com](http://www.huntingreport.com)) to download it.

Mennink tells us he is offering hunts for moose, which can be pursued with dogs, by driving, or by calling during the rut. He notes that the Norwegian moose is considerably smaller than the North American and Russian moose with dressed weights varying from 220kg (480 pounds) up to 350kg (770 pounds).

He also has red deer (some with 14 or more points and a 'crown') which are driven, hunted from stands or called in during the roar. These are smaller than typical European red deer and may even be a separate subspecies. Also on offer are reindeer (caribou), which Mennink describes as "huge." This is his most physically challenging hunt, requiring lots of walking in rough terrain. Finally, he also offers roe deer, which are driven, called or simply taken as a target of opportunity, and capercaille, one of the world's premier "trophy" game birds, which can even be hunted in winter on skis!

As always, if you hunt Norway this season, please file a report.

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■ Occasional correspondent Gary Lewis tells us he's found a quality free-range red stag hunt in **New Zealand**, at Glen Dene Station on the South Island in Central Otago. This hunt, Lewis tells us, provides exclusive access to free-range deer on private land with no fences.

"Glen Dene is located, 21km from Wanaka and 125km from Queenstown. The 20,000-acre property runs north and south between Lake Hawea and Lake Wanaka, and has access to another 25,000 acres between the lakes. This is a working ranch with cattle and flocks of sheep in fenced paddocks in the low country near Lake Hawea. As the ground climbs away from the valley, one last fence separates the paddocks from the slopes. Between that fence and the top of the snow-capped mountain range and the lakeshore on the other side, there are no other fences and but few dirt tracks. Red and fallow deer live in the canyons. Chamois, wild goats and sheep make a living on the high slopes. The combination of peaks, ridges and washes allow the hunter to get

close, but there are few trees and little scrub.

Hunts are conducted on foot, spot-and-stalk. The guide may opt to use a vehicle till animals are spotted, but a high level of physical fitness pays off when a stag is glimpsed a quarter mile off and a 600-yard climb uphill. Shots may range from 100 to 300 yards.

The red stag hunt starts when the deer shed their velvet in February and continues into early July. The peak of the breeding season, the ‘roar,’ falls between mid-March and early April. I hunted in early July when most mature stags had separated from the hinds. On the first afternoon, we spotted seven hinds and a young spike. Early in the morning, high on the hill, we saw two mature stags. We found the one we wanted at mid-morning. During the stalk, we spotted more, both with groups of hinds. My lone stag had six points on one side and seven on the other and double drop tines, it was a great representative of a free-range red deer on private land.

Later in the day, we glassed four males feeding high above the lake. These are not genetic freaks with monster racks, but free-range animals with four, five or six points per side, animals the country can produce without breeding and nutrition programs developed in a paddock.

Hunts on Glen Dene are guided by owner Richard Burdon or one of his guides: Daniel Roister, with seven year’s experience; Duncan Stuart, seven years guiding, and Tony Barber, with 20 years of guiding in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the US.

Accommodations are in guest quarters at the Burdon residence, which offers spectacular views of the lake and the mountains. Adjoining suites each have a large bathroom, king-size bed, refrigerator and microwave. The small, exclusive, luxury Silverpine Lodge is another option, set apart from the ranch with lake and mountain views.

A hunt package for a free-range or SCI bronze medal estate red stag includes airfare from Los Angeles, accommodations for five days, meals and three days guided hunting. The cost is \$5,965 1x1 and \$5,365 2x1. To upgrade to a silver medal stag costs \$1,700. Estate blocks range in size from 500 to 1,000 acres. Hunters can bring a rifle or borrow one from the guide. Since New Zealand’s big game animals are considered pests, no license or tags are required.

Small game hunting for rabbit, English hare and possum is included. Tahr, chamois or fallow deer are an extra \$2,500. On-your-own lake fishing is complimentary. Guided fishing is available for \$575 per day. Add a quail hunt/vineyard tour for \$800 or a half-day duck/



goose hunt for \$350. Non-hunting spouses or observers are welcome for \$2,950. If the non-hunting partner samples horse trekking or jet boat, vineyard and gallery tours, the cost is \$3,950. Helicopter tours are available.

Glen Dene Station is represented by Rodney Smith of Sunspots Safaris New Zealand. Contact him by telephone at 503-351-3772 or by e-mail at [rsmith@sunspotsintl.com](mailto:rsmith@sunspotsintl.com). Visit [www.biggamehuntingNewZealand.com](http://www.biggamehuntingNewZealand.com) for more details.

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■ Global Rescue, the medical/emergency evacuation service we use and recommend at *The Hunting Report*, has been very busy this season evacuating sportsmen around the world. In at least one case

they’ve clearly saved the life of a hunter in the field.

In an Email Extra bulletin earlier this year, we reported about the hunter with a potentially fatal heart condition who was successfully evacuated from a remote camp in the Tuli Block game reserve of Botswana. A local clinic diagnosed his rapidly-worsening condition as bronchitis. When his PH called Global Rescue, they suspected congestive heart failure and immediately began the evacuation which got the hunter onto an operating table in Johannesburg in time to save his life. Global Rescue liaised with the doctors in South Africa, deployed a medical team to his bedside to oversee and coordinate his treatment and, eventually, transported him to his home in Texas. Happy ending.

In another case a hunter after bear on Russia’s Kamchatka peninsula (truly a remote area), severely injured his leg, leaving him in need of medical evacuation. Global Rescue launched a helicopter to extract the 63-year-old man from the remote camp to a hospital in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, where he was diagnosed with a badly fractured leg and torn ligaments. After the leg was immobilized, Global Rescue physicians evaluated his x-rays and approved him for travel. He was then evacuated by Global Rescue’s medical personnel to his home hospital. Global Rescue also made arrangements to have the member’s rifle accompany him on his flight home and to have his bear skin sent to his taxidermist.

A third recent rescue involved a female angler sailing near Rum Cay, Bahamas, a remote island with no medical facilities. When she experienced a sudden onset of severe abdominal pain, appendicitis was suspected. A Global Rescue critical care paramedic provided immediate medical advice over the telephone. While triaging her symptoms with in-house physicians and Johns Hopkins Medicine, Global Rescue

determined she needed immediate hospitalization and the paramedic initiated the evacuation. Shortly thereafter a medically staffed ICU jet landed at Rum Cay. The Medical staff on board started working to ease her pain and other symptoms right from the landing strip and she was quickly evacuated to the Cleveland Clinic in Ft. Lauderdale for evaluation. After stabilization, Global Rescue transported her home for continued care.

Here's the bottom line as we see it: Other “medical evacuation services” kick in when you get to the hospital. If you live, it gets you home. With Global Rescue, a comprehensive package of world-class medical care and extraction begins the moment you contact them, wherever you happen to be. For hunters

in far-flung corners of the world, that can literally mean the difference between life and death. Just ask *Hunting Report* subscriber John



Searles, whom Global Rescue evacuated from Ethiopia last year when he developed life-threatening complications from pulmonary edema while hunting mountain nyala.

Global Rescue has gotten a safari client safely out of the Mozambique bush. They've dispatched a special operations team to Africa to protect and prepare to evacuate Americans from a country experiencing political unrest. They've evacuated members from Haiti, Chile, the Republic of Georgia, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Mexico, Alaska, Argentina, Ethiopia and Thailand.

We honestly believe there's no other service like this in the world, and we are proud to work with them. In fact, we don't travel anywhere without a Global Rescue membership card in our pocket. For more information, visit our web site at [www.huntingreport.com](http://www.huntingreport.com) and click on the Global Rescue logo or go to <http://www.globalrescue.com/huntingreport/>.

### OUTFITTER CRITIQUES

## The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

*(This section of The Hunting Report is based entirely on subscriber-written Hunt Reports received in our Miami office. It is designed to provide accurate, reliable reports on what's actually happening in the field. Our policy on Hunt Reports is as follows: We mention in the newsletter all Hunt Reports as received and exert no censorship except in cases when agents or outfitters submit reports on hunts they have a financial stake in, or when we have good reason to believe there are ulterior financial or personal motives on the part of anyone submitting a report. All critical Hunt Reports are sent out to the affected agent/outfitter/PH for rebuttal comment and a reasonable amount of time is allowed for that comment. The Hunting Report does not seek to pass judgement on the validity of any conflict reported in a critical Hunt Report, but merely indicates in its pages that the conflict exists. Subscribers who think their hunting plans might be affected by the conflict are urged to write in for all the relevant correspondence. We think this prior-notification policy coupled with a neutral-comment policy is as fair a system as can be created for the airing of conflicts about hunts. It goes without saying that the existence of a conflict is not necessarily reason to avoid an agent/outfitter/guide. That determination can be made only after reading the comments provided by both parties to the conflict. We think all seasoned hunters will be able to sort out the claims and counter-claims and make better decisions about where to hunt and who to hunt with as a result of our Hunt Report Program.)*

■ We have yet another positive subscriber report on Aotearoa Safaris (011-64-789-59066; [www.aotearoasafaris.com](http://www.aotearoasafaris.com)) on **New Zealand's North Island**. Continuing subscribers will recall Kiwi-correspondent Greg Morton's reports on this free-range operation (see Article IDs 2128 and 2339). Subscriber Mike O'Malley hunted there this past March and reported that the place was everything Morton said it was (see Report 7690). Now we have a fresh report from Matt Siemens who has hunted with Aotearoa several times, most recently in May, 2010, and who tells us that this is the place to go if you want a great chance at a trophy-class

red deer while hunting with an outfit that treats you like family. “I like hunting with an operation that doesn't have its hand out for the money as soon as you get off the plane,” he says.

Siemens says their location, only four hours from Auckland International Airport, creates part of the draw. But the real attraction of this free-range property is that the deer have access to the refuge in neighboring Tongariro National Park, which helps maintain the availability of trophy-class animals.

Siemens has recommended Aotearoa Safaris to several friends, who have also come away happy. On

his most recent trip he was hunting with Dave Manson (of Manson Precision Reamers). They only had a few days to spend with Aotearoa, as they were using the rest of their time in New Zealand to do some self-guided hunting in the area. (More on that later.) Nonetheless, they both came away with two “very good, silver-class” stags. (See photo in our online Trophy Snapshots.) Siemens says the game abundance is normally awesome, but that weather made this hunt a bit more challenging this time. He says the difficulty of the shots varies depending on the thickness of the bush. The two he and Manson took were on the edge

of a clearing and headed back in. Only one was visible when Manson fired and brought his stag down at about 125 yards. The second took off at the shot, and Siemens felled it at about 200 yards.

Siemens says to be prepared for steep terrain (“not as bad as sheep and goat hunting in BC”) and the possibility of hiking three to four miles a day. He also advises dressing in layers for riding out on an ATV in the chilly morning and then hiking in the warmer afternoon. He tells us John Ham is an excellent guide, not only for his skill in bringing you to your animal, but because he’s “very enthusiastic, even though he does it all the time. By the second day, you’ll feel like you’ve known the guys here all your life.”

Now about that self-guided hunt... Siemens says he has gotten to know some people in the area and is able to hunt on private farms, just paying a daily trespass fee to hunt free-range fallow deer, pigs and goats. However, this do-it-yourself hunting is not for everyone, he warns. As a former guide himself, Siemens has the skills it takes to venture into rough country on his own. But, for the hunter willing to get to know the people and the country, he recommends it as “the best bang for your buck in New Zealand.”

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■ We’ve received another positive report on the roe deer hunting at Royal Deeside Estate in **Scotland** with International Adventures Unlimited (970-641-5369; [info@internationaladventures.us](mailto:info@internationaladventures.us)). Subscriber Scott Swasey just returned from there and says it’s more than just a great trip to take a non-hunting spouse on; it’s an unusual hunting experience you won’t come across every day. We’ve published a few reports on the place before (See Article ID 1543, Report IDs 7445 and 4883) and wanted to share this latest update with you.

Swasey tells us the hunting at Royal Deeside starts early. He and

Michael Grosse of International Adventures Unlimited were up at 4 am to meet gamekeeper Arthur Fernie at 5:00. They then drove out in a Range Rover, glassing for deer. Once they spotted a roe buck, they started walking. It was cool and the heather wet. Getting close enough to the skittish roe bucks without being seen involved some climbing and sliding through the wet heather, so Swasey cautions that rubber boots and rain pants are a good idea.

While you may use your own rifle on this hunt, Swasey says it’s easier to use the gamekeeper’s, especially if you intend to do any sightseeing after your hunting trip. “The gamekeeper carries the gun in a soft case and then takes it out and positions it for the hunter. Arthur



had a Sako in .243 with a Swarovski ballistic scope and a ‘resonator’ (we’d call it a ‘silencer,’)” says Swasey. “After setting up a couple of times and having the bucks appear too far off for a shot, we spotted one coming out of the trees and scrambled down a hill to get close enough. Without time to get properly set up, Fernie pulled the gun out of the case and said, ‘shoot off my shoulder.’ For the first time in my hunting life, I heard the ‘thump’ of the hit, and the buck went straight down. Arthur and I were busy congratulating each other when the buck popped up and started off. Arthur had the gun and took off after it. He fired one shot and missed, but the buck went down again and Arthur finished him.”

They then took his deer to the estate larder. “It’s what we’d call a skinning shed,” says Swasey, “although this one was first-class, with a sparkling clean floor, stainless counters and a huge walk-in freezer.” The buck scored enough to make SCI Bronze Medal. (See photo in our online Trophy Snapshots.)

While Swasey says the physical demands of the hunt are light, with only a mile or so of hill walking on his hunt, you still might find yourself belly crawling through wet heather. “The toughest part of the hunt,” says Swasey, “is lack of sleep! If you don’t get your game in the morning, the second hunt of the day takes place after dinner, and you might be out until 11 pm. Then you’re up again at 4:00.” Swasey volunteered to sleep in on the second morning, then did some sightseeing with Danielle, Grosse’s wife, who rents a small mini-bus and drives sightseers around.

Each hunter gets a chance to take a buck at Royal Deeside and another at a nearby estate. Swasey took his second deer, an SCI silver medal (see photo in our online Trophy Snapshots section), at Glenkilrie Estate, then did more sightseeing. One of the highlights for Swasey was seeing The Stag Ballroom at Mar Lodge Estates, where there are 2,435 red deer trophies on the walls and ceilings. “I saw mounts there that shattered the current SCI record,” says Swasey. He also reports seeing herds of red stags everywhere while hunting for his roe bucks.

Swasey combined his hunt with a business trip. Although he didn’t have his family along, he says, “This trip could be a great multi-generational hunt, with grandparents and parents sharing the experience with the next generation. It could also be a unique hunting experience for you while your non-hunting family enjoys touring other estates, shopping and visiting the coast.” Golfing on the Royal

family’s private golf course, horseback riding on the queen’s Highland Garron ponies, fishing and many other activities are also available. Hunters stay at what Swasey describes as a fine hotel called the Glen Lui in nearby Ballater, and share dinner with the other four to five hunters and their families.

The cost of this hunt is \$6,950, which includes all transportation, lodging and touring for the hunter. The price for non-hunters is \$2,950.

□

■ Subscriber Thomas Cunningham has good things to say about a water buffalo hunt he and his sons, Justin and Nick, enjoyed in **Australia** this past July with Hunt Australia, arranged through Dan Goodenow of Jim Shockey’s Hunting Adventures (248-613-7549; [Dgoodenow@jimshockey.com](mailto:Dgoodenow@jimshockey.com)). He writes, “This was a follow-up to a New Zealand trip with my two sons (16 and 13) and my wife. For this hunt, my wife remained at the hotel in Cairns while the boys and I flew to Gove (Nhulunbuy), a mining town on the extreme northern tip of Australia in the Northern Territory.

“We stayed overnight at the Walkabout Lodge in Gove and were picked up the following morning and driven about three hours down a lonely, red dirt road through a verdant green eucalyptus forest. The tent camp is rustic but comfortable. Our tent was brand new, with two-rooms and three cots. The camp features permanent flush toilets and two permanent showers, along with a screened dining gazebo. Meals were prepared by Meghan, the camp cook, who hails from Kansas City, Missouri, and did a great job keeping my two boys happy with hamburgers, pizza, spaghetti and other standards that they liked.

“There is a large crocodile, “Conrad,” in the lagoon next to the camp. We didn’t see Conrad, but we saw his girlfriend, a 12-foot female that occasionally patrolled the la-

goon. Temperatures were moderate - warm in the afternoon but pleasant in the evening and overnight. The place is buggy, so bring good mosquito repellent and use it. We saw no snakes. Other than the buffalo and many different kinds of birds, there isn’t a lot of other fauna to see. We got a fleeting glimpse of a wallaby one day and saw dingoes a few times. We also heard dingoes howling several nights.

“Hunting is done by driving and spotting. Most of the driving was on relatively well-maintained roads, though some of it involved ‘bush bashing’ along watercourses. There is a large floodplain where many buffalo congregate. We spotted buffalo every day and shootable buffalo most days. The guide had trucks on the opposite side of the lagoon and



at a large lake near camp. On a few occasions we took boats across the water and used the vehicles on the other side. We only walked when we had spotted an animal worth stalking.

“Stalks ranged from relatively easy - get the wind right and find a suitable rest (Justin’s buffalo) - to relatively lengthy - walk, run, crawl through the forest for an hour (Nick’s buffalo) - and in between (my buffalo, which we stalked for about 30 minutes). We were provided with an old but still serviceable BRNO in .375 H&H. The boys had practiced with my .375 before we left and shot this one well. Shooting was done by using trees as a vertical rest. Shots were not long - all three of ours were under 100 yards

- due to the thickness of the forest.

“All three trophies are very good. Because we were hunting for three buffalo over six days, we did not have the luxury of being too selective. Ours all measured 97-98 inches. My understanding is that given time, a 100-inch-plus bull is realistic.

“Our guide, Peter Harding, is very professional and worked hard for us. Trophy care was very good. We were pleased with this trip. It is a long way to go but unlike anyplace else. The hunting is not strenuous, the game is terrific, and the scenery is interesting and different. Australia is an easy country to get along in - people are friendly, and it is similar to home while still feeling exotic.”

□

■ Every once in a while a *Hunting Report* subscriber will file a report on a hunt he was unsatisfied with for one reason or another, but he’ll request that we simply enter it into our database without airing it in the newsletter. In those cases, we still ask the affected outfitter to provide his side of the story and make that part of the file for interested hunters to read. Usually, we simply list the report in our More Reports column and don’t need to mention it any further. This month we find ourselves having to bring attention to one of these reports. The report in question is Report ID 7596 and is on Ruby Range Outfitters in the **Yukon**, submitted by subscriber Leon Munyan, who was unhappy with the way the organization handled two sheep hunts for him. Munyan said he did not wish to handle his report as a controversy in the newsletter and just wanted to submit it for our database. We are only mentioning it now because subscriber Mike Rex says he felt compelled to file a counter-report about this outfitter, which changed management about a year ago.

Like Munyan, Rex hunted twice with Ruby Range Outfitters. And also like Munyan, he hunted under

the old management and under the new management, so he feels that he can speak to both situations. Rex writes, “On the first hunt I took a tremendous mountain caribou after a two-day stalk! Wonderful hunt with a great guide, Ryan Leaf. We spent the balance of the hunt chasing a huge moose around, only to have it get away at 25 yards... a hunt I shall not forget. This was a full combo hunt for caribou, moose and sheep. We did see sheep and even got within riding distance of one shooter, but we put the priority on caribou and moose, not sheep, and ran out of time.

“On the second hunt, I returned to go after that moose. By this time Kelly Weibe had become the new manager. During the entire transition mess (and it was a mess due to Ryan not passing over the paperwork), Kelly and I became good friends, struggling to put together the hunt that I had booked and paid for. This was to be another combo, moose and/or sheep, my choice. The hunt was highly successful. I took a monster 62-inch moose the first day of the hunt. It was unfortunate that I had a death in the family just prior to the hunt, and needed to leave early. That was a shame, but it is part of life.

“Now that you can see that I have some experience with Ruby Range Outfitters, please allow me to comment on Mr. Munyan’s report: Ruby Range has a huntable population of rams. A hunter who won a raffle at the Northwest Chapter of SCI for a sheep hunt with Ruby Range Outfitters went after Leon Munyan hunted and got his ram.

“Leon’s service ratings are off base and misleading. The quality of the outfit is excellent; the condition of camp is excellent. I would very much doubt there are better camps in the Yukon ... maybe, but the cabins are just excellent. The quality of the food is VERY good and I was on the last hunt when it’s usually the leftovers. The ability of all the

guides was excellent from what I could see, and the condition of the equipment was PERFECT, not to just say excellent, especially when it came time to pack out the moose!

“How many rams does a hunter need to encounter if he draws blood? Leon muffed his shot and the hunt, not Ruby Range. This entire report is very poor and ‘bends’ the issues in favor of a negative report. I am very disturbed that this report was made, as it will probably move some hunters away from this outfit. This is not good and is not fair or correct. This is a quality outfit with quality people. Just thought I should add some reality to this report.”



### Controversies

*Editor Note: Last month (see page 13) we mentioned that Michael Gardner, formerly of San Miguel Outfitters, had resurfaced in the hunting business and was working for Riata Hunting Ranches, a new name for us. We asked for subscriber and outfitter feedback on both Gardner and Riata Hunting Ranches. At press time, we received this e-mail from Matt Merritt, the founder, owner and CEO of Riata Hunting Ranches, LLC (www.riatahuntingranches.com). We are printing it in its entirety and again asking for any feedback subscribers can offer, especially those who hunt with Riata Hunting Ranches this coming season.)*

Riata Hunting Ranches, LLC is owned and operated by me. Riata serves the outdoor community as a combination of a Texas hunting outfitter, a booking agency aligning clients to premier hunting and fishing destinations in the U.S. and abroad, and a consulting agency for Texas landowners on improving

their wildlife management and exploring their oil and gas mineral interests in an eco-friendly way. I am a Certified Public Accountant, licensed in the State of Texas. Drawing upon my training, I have implemented the appropriate internal controls with respect to our client’s and outfitter’s monies to ensure all are

### More Hunt Reports...

*(Editor Note: Over the past month we have received reports on hunts in the following parts of the world. All of these reports have been added to our files and copies of them can be obtained through our Trip-Planning Service. See page 2 for details on how to place an order. E-Mail Extra subscribers can view the full text of these reports free in the password-protected section of our web site at [www.HuntingReport.com](http://www.HuntingReport.com). You too can have complete access to our entire database of reports and past articles for only \$3 a month by upgrading your subscription to E-mail Extra. Visit our web site or call us at 305-253-5301.)*

#### Africa

**Benin:** Dave Polke (western roan, savanna buffalo) with Safaris Chelet.

**Namibia:** Earl Bentz (leopard, gemsbok, kudu, springbok, zebra) with Thormahlen and Cochran.

**South Africa:** Greg S. Oliver (kudu, eland, red hartebeest, three varieties of springbok, and other plains game) with Coenraad Vermaak Safaris.

**Zambia:** W. Laird Hamberlin (roan, Kafue lechwe, East Angolian bush duiker, and others) with Nchila Wildlife Reserve; Pat McMahon (sitatunga, hartebeest, puku, bushbuck) with Hunters and Guides Africa; Henry Revelle (buffalo, hippo, puku, bushbuck) with Muchinga Adventures.

**Zimbabwe:** R. Saunders (Cape buffalo, hippo, kudu, leopard) with HHK Safaris; Mike Jines (buffalo, lioness, hippo, crocodile, and others) with Charlton McCallum Safaris.

#### Elsewhere

**Australia:** Dickie Hendry (water buffalo) with Australian Big Game Safaris.

**New Zealand:** Dave Powell (red stag, tahr, fallow deer, wallaby and others) with Telford Fishing and Hunting Services.

confident in my operations. In addition to the monetary segregation of duties, we encourage our clients to participate in a teleconference among Riata, the outfitter(s) and themselves to ensure all the proper information is transparent among the three parties prior to booking.

Mr. Gardner serves as a consultant for Riata Hunting Ranches and I am fortunate to have him as part of my professional team. More importantly, Mr. Gardner's clients of the past and present continue to place their faith and trust in the knowledge he has learned over his lifetime, not only about Texas hunting destinations, but other hunting and fishing destinations abroad. It is apparent through our bookings that this continued faith and trust is very

valuable to his clients and my organization. Simply stated, he knows some of the finest and most reputable outfitters, lodges, and destinations to recommend to Riata's clients.

I have personally known, and have been a hunting client of Mr. Gardner's for over 12 years. I consider his integrity impeccable and have always had very positive hunting and fishing experiences and positive business dealings with him.

The downfall of Mr. Gardner's former company was a very unfortunate situation. In the worst economy since the Great Depression, for Mr. Gardner to have found a way to personally make the outfitters and clients whole on behalf of a corporation is honorable and went

above and beyond the normal business practices of many modern day corporations. Mr. Gardner did it all on his own. As a result of ensuring the outfitters and clients were whole, I suspect he will be struggling for a long time to rebound financially. It should be noted that Mr. Gardner took the "high road" when most struggling business owners would have simply taken the easy way out and sought protection under a corporate veil.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you regarding Riata Hunting Ranches. We are dedicated to delighting our customers and outfitters. We look forward to your readership learning more about Riata Hunting Ranches' opportunities. - Matt Merritt

□ Digging Deeper...

## Special Round-Up: A Review Of Alaska Spring Bear Hunts

*(Editor Note: We've received a number of reports from subscribers who headed to Coastal Alaska this spring for bears. They run the full gamut, black bears and brownies. If you are considering a bear hunt, this collection of reports and the accompanying figures provided by the Alaska Fish & Game Department may help you narrow down what you're looking for.)*

### Southeast Alaska:

Alaska Fish & Game Department (AFGD) divides Southeast Alaska into five Game Management Units (GMUs). Black bear hunting is popular, particularly in Units 2 and 3, which produce lots of Boone & Crockett skulls. Big-bodied bears of 6½ to 7½ feet are common with occasional eight-footers killed.

From 2005 to 2009, the annual harvest for the entire Southeast Panhandle Region (GMUs 1-5) averaged 815 bears (actual range: 520-980). Precise population numbers are not available and other statistics are hard to come by, but here are some facts and figures:

Unit 2, Prince of Wales (POW) and the adjacent islands, has, ideal

black bear habitat (salmon streams, estuaries and subalpine and alpine areas), which is why this area produces larger skulls than other areas in Southeast Alaska. While the average is 19 inches, every year bears with 20- and 21-inch skulls come off POW. Recent figures show about



five percent of harvested bears have 21-inch skulls.

Black bear populations in Unit 2 are estimated at 5,400 to 10,000 bears. Density varies from 1.5 to three bears per square mile. From 2004 to 2006, hunters harvested an average of 450 bears a year; hunters killed only about 300 bears in 2008.

Nonresidents take about 87 percent of all bears in Unit 2, and the AFGD says unofficial interviews suggest a success rate over 90 percent by guided hunters. The spring season produces anywhere from 65 to 75 percent of the harvest, peaking in May, with about 51 percent of spring bears taken then.

On Kuiu Island (Unit 3), a 2002 study in the northern portion of the island placed the density at 3.4 to 3.9 black bears per square kilometer, the highest documented black bear density in North America. The average annual harvest from all of GMU 3 was 209 bears from 2005 to 2009. About 79 percent were boars, the average skull was 18.5 inches. Nonresidents account for about 80 percent of the bear harvest on Kuiu.

AFGD is becoming increasingly concerned with the apparent decline in bear populations on Kuiu, POW, and several other areas within the Southeast Panhandle Region. Expect regulatory changes from this fall's Board of Game meetings in November. We'll pass them on when

they are announced.

Most brown bear hunting in Southeast Alaska takes place in Unit 4 on the “ABC Islands” (Admiralty, Baranof and Chichagof); however, there is some brown bear hunting in Unit 1 along the mainland.

In Unit 1, most of the brown bear habitat is in the Tongass National Forest, including the Misty Fiords on the mainland at the southern end of the unit. No population data is available, but AFGD believes the population is stable. An average year sees 32 bears harvested from Unit 1, with about 40 percent coming from the Haines area of Unit 1D.

The subunit 1B has produced three to nine bears a year over a 10-year period. Over that same 10-year period, the average male skull size from Unit 1 overall was 22.3, but the average from Unit 1B for 2008 and 2009 was 23.5 inches. According to AFGD, the only outfitter/guide operating in 1B is Mark Galla of Alaska Peak and Seas (see report below) and his clients take the majority of the brown bears in this sub-unit annually.

Unit 4 is also mostly Tongass National Forest and holds an estimated 70 percent (4,155) of the region’s brownies, with a density of about 1.7 bears per square mile. It produces 69 percent of the harvest. Chichagof and adjacent islands hold about 1,550 bears; Baranof has 1,045; and Admiralty Island, 1,560. Between 2003 and 2007, hunters averaged 140 bears annually, about 80 percent boars. Skull size data isn’t available. The spring season produces up to 75 percent of the bears, and nonresidents account for more than 85 percent.

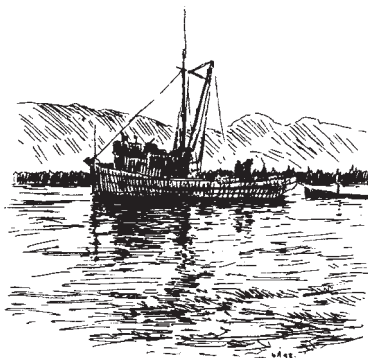
Here are reports from three subscribers who hunted black and brown bears in Southeast Alaska this past spring:

Carol and Rod Wooley hunted black bear in May with Eli Lucas of Alaska Hunting (907-772-3455). Carol, who describes herself as a new hunter with a 200-yard shot

limit, says they wanted to enjoy the natural wonders of Alaska but did not want any rigorous hiking and climbing. Keith Atcheson of Jack Atcheson & Sons (406-782-2382; [www.atcheson.com](http://www.atcheson.com)) arranged this hunt with those restrictions in mind.

Lucas hunts the mainland and islands northwest of Petersburg from the 50-foot *Emydon*, which the Wooleys say, is “not super luxurious but has all the comforts of home.” The *Emydon* carries a cook and two guides and takes up to four hunters in two cabins. Getting to the hunting requires an all-day cruise through what the Wooleys describe as “gorgeous scenery.” Hunting is done mornings and afternoons, taking a skiff to glass grass flats and beaches for bears feeding on new vegetation and winter kills.

The Wooleys hunted early in the



season (April 21-29), and report seeing only three black bears. Carol says they stalked one the first evening, but the shoreline had large craggy rocks that she could not get over fast enough. The bear simply walked away before they could reach it. The second bear required stalking through a boggy area. A shift in wind ended this stalk. They spied the third bear in an inlet, and she killed him with a 175-yard shot. The bear measures seven feet, and its skull is just shy of 19 inches. (See photo in the Trophy Snapshots section of our website.)

The Wooleys describe Lucas as an extremely capable, affable, knowledgeable and hard-working hunting guide, and a highly compe-

tent and wonderful tour guide. “He knows the area, the habitat and the animals,” says Carol. He was also good about working within her physical and hunting limitations. “It was a fabulous experience, even had I not taken a bear.”

The Wooleys were also hoping to take a wolf. According to Atcheson, Lucas has an excellent record for calling wolves in during the March mating season, with many hunters taking more than one wolf on these hunts. While the Wooleys were impressed with Lucas’ calling abilities and heard a wolf answer him, they never saw one.

The cost of this bear hunt is \$5,500, including five full days of hunting and two travel days. Wolves are an additional \$1,500. Hunters fly commercial into Petersburg where Lucas picks them up.

We have only one other report in our database on Lucas (Report ID 4549) from subscriber Joseph Vorro, who hunted in 2004 for Sitka blacktail deer. He gives Lucas an all-excellent rating and praises his knowledge and abilities.

Charles Siedlecki hunted for black and brown bears in the Wrangell area with Mark Galla of Alaska Peak and Seas (907-874-2454; [www.wedoalaska.com](http://www.wedoalaska.com)), booking agent Jack Atcheson and Sons (406-782-2382; [www.atcheson.com](http://www.atcheson.com)). Galla hunts the mainland near Wrangell for bear, wolf and mountain goat. For trophy black bear and Sitka blacktail deer, he hunts Prince of Wales Island. Galla is the only registered/permitted guide in Wrangell. His mainland area is in the Tongass National Forest where he hunts about 2,800 square miles, including the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness. He says his areas are far enough from any towns that they are not pressured by local hunters and are unfeasible for other guides to hunt.

Siedlecki hunted with a friend from May 10-19, and reports that his friend killed a nine-foot, three-inch brown bear. Siedlecki’s brown bear

is much smaller at 7½ feet, but has an unusual coat with cinnamon legs and a brown body. He also killed a black bear.

Galla bases his bear hunts from a 53-foot boat, the *Bear Necessity*. Siedlecki says he did not want to be stuck on a cramped boat and shopped before booking with Galla. While some operators may take up to eight hunters on a boat this size, Siedlecki says that Galla usually takes only two, though he may take a party of three or four. Siedlecki says the boat is comfortable, with two staterooms and private bathrooms.

Galla hunts mornings and late afternoons, using a prop-powered skiff to spot and stalk along beaches or an outboard jet in shallow streams and rivers where bears seek new vegetation in the estuaries and drainages.

Siedlecki tells us he killed his brown bear after a 1,600-yard stalk. They spent a couple of hours watching and following the bear but were unable to catch up before it ducked into thick cover. Almost at dark, the bear returned, and Siedlecki shot it at 120 yards. It ran back into the trees, but fortunately fell only 30 yards from the treeline. Siedlecki says the thick brush can complicate the hunt and that Galla usually follows up his hunters' shots to prevent having to track wounded bears in the bush. Although Siedlecki says he was not pleased with this aspect of his hunt, he understands why Galla does it.

Siedlecki says he saw at least 40 brown bears on his hunt, most, sows with cubs. In his marketing literature, Galla says to expect one to six bears a day. Siedlecki says the hunt is not physically demanding overall, but that moving through the mud flats is difficult. He also warns that many of the shorelines are only 100 to 200 yards wide, and you don't have much time to get on a bear.

Overall, Siedlecki recommends his experience and says Galla runs a good operation. The only drawback

to this hunt, he says, is a required overnight in Seattle and in Wrangell on both ends of the trip. However, there is cold locker storage near the baggage claim area in the Seattle airport. The cost for this 10-day 1 x 1 brown bear hunt is \$11,500. Galla charges \$2,500 to add a black bear.

We have two other reports on Galla in our database: Report ID 5624 by Fred Kitchens on a black bear hunt and Report ID 5414 by Dean Grommet on a combo black bear and brown bear hunt, both in spring 2006. Both subscribers give Galla an all-excellent rating...

Pamela and Stan Atwood each took SCI Book bears this past June with Jimmie Rosenbruch's Glacier Guides, Inc. (435-628-8193; [www.glaciersguidesinc.com](http://www.glaciersguidesinc.com)). Stan's bear



stretched 8½ feet and had a 20 13/16-inch skull, while Pamela's bear measured eight feet, 1½ inches and had a 19 7/8-inch skull. (See photos in our online Trophy Gallery.)

Based in Glacier Bay, Rosenbruch uses a 78-foot custom-built yacht, the *Alaskan Grandeur*, to hunt 12 different concessions along the coastline and on various islands for both brown and black bears, wolf, Sitka blacktails and mountain goats. The bear hunting involves taking skiffs to the shorelines or inlets where they have seen or expect to find bears and then stalking on foot along beaches or in the grass flats. Opportunities may present right away or require a stalk of several miles. The Atwoods describe the terrain as pretty flat, and not very demanding, and say

Rosenbruch will accommodate a client's physical limitations.

The Atwoods both killed their bears after long crawls through high grass. Pamela shot hers the second day of the hunt with a .454 caliber handgun; Stan took his with a .416 rifle. Pamela hunted with Rosenbruch's daughter, Alicia "Mutts" Rosenbruch-Decker. "Mutts thinks like a bear," says Pamela, "she could predict which way the bears would move." She notes that Rosenbruch-Decker was awarded SCI's North American Guide of the Year Award this past January and says she deserves it not just for her guiding abilities but also for consistently putting clients on record book bears.

The Atwoods say this was a relaxing trip, typically starting in the late morning with brunch, followed by some leisurely fishing before going out to hunt around 4 pm. They returned around midnight for a meal and bed.

They describe the boat as "luxurious," with plenty of space and comfort. They also rave about "ridiculously good" food. The Atwoods have high praise for Rosenbruch and his entire crew. "They went out of their way to make our experience as pleasant as possible," says Stan. They do not provide a cost for their hunt.

We have 47 reports in our database on hunting with Glacier Guides. Most are for black or brown bear and are very positive.

#### **Kodiak Island:**

Unit 8, Kodiak and its adjacent islands, encompasses approximately three million acres of brown bear habitat, with about 3,500 brown bears, one per 1.5 square miles. On Kodiak itself, densities range from one to 1.5 bears per square mile. Recent studies show brown bear numbers in Unit 8 not just stable, but increasing.

For the past 10 years, hunters have averaged 188 bears a year from Unit 8. While the overall success rate is about 50 percent, nonresidents

hunting with a guide are consistently more successful despite residents getting a much larger percentage of the hunting permits.

According to harvest reports, about 66 percent of the bears are taken on the spring hunt with the last third of the spring season (May 1-15) most productive in the fall. The first third of the fall season (October 25 – November 6) is most productive. However, that doesn't mean the biggest or best-furred bears are taken during those times.

Kodiak claims some of the biggest brown bears in the world. The hard data shows the average boar skull size from Unit 8 meets the SCI record book minimum (25 inches). Each year between eight and nine percent of skulls top the 28-inch B&C minimum. Trophy numbers here have actually increased in the last several years, so Kodiak is definitely a good bet for a record-book bear.

Two subscribers have recently reported on different operators in this unit:

Richard Bonander took a Boone & Crockett brown bear on Uganik Island around Terror Bay off of northern Kodiak Island. He hunted this past May with Paul Chervenak of Kodiak Outdoor Adventures (907-486-3008; [www.kodiakoutdoors.com](http://www.kodiakoutdoors.com)). Chervenak operates three concessions in Unit 8 and gets 10 spring permits and six fall permits.

Bonander says this was his third time hunting brown bear in Alaska. He hunted the Sturgeon River on Kodiak in 1984 and the Tenneke Strait off of Chichikof Island in 2006 and says he never got a chance to shoot a big mature boar. This year, Bonander says, everything came together just right.

This hunt was based from a 56-foot commercial fishing boat called the *Legasea*, offering bunks below deck that Bonander says were cozy, warm and dry. Bonander hunted with Chervenak, Ron Blondan (also the captain), and assistant guide

Lyle Enyeart. They were out at 7 am and back to the boat around 10 pm. They hunted by slowly cruising along the banks and glassing until they came to a good vantage point where they would leave the boat and climb to glass for bears on the mountainsides. The first day they saw 17 bears. “One was a big 9½-foot boar, but he was in a huge patch of alders, and there was no way to stalk him,” Bonander says. They also saw one other nine-foot boar that day, and seven more bears on the second day.

“They said that we were only seeing about a sixth as many bears as usual at this time of year,” says Bonander. Apparently the spring on Kodiak was about three or four weeks late, so many of the bears



were still denned up. The previous hunts had rain and snow everyday, during his hunt there was frost, but the weather was clear. Bonander says they also came across local hunters camped right in the middle of what Chervenak said was one of the best areas to see bears.

Bonander took his bear on the third day of his hunt after moving several times to glass different hillsides. “I saw two bears and thought they were a sow and a cub because one was so much bigger than the other,” says Bonander. “They were feeding on grass in a slide, just below the snow line. Through the spotting scope we saw one was a big sow and the other a huge boar with a perfect brown coat and long ivory claws. He was an absolutely magnificent brown bear!”

After watching the bears for about three hours, Bonander says he and his guides hopped into a skiff to cross a strait, charged up a mountain and over a couple of ridges to ambush the bear as it emerged from a stand of thick alders. Bonander's trophy measured nine feet, two inches. The skull officially scores 28¼ inches, just making the B&C minimum of 28 inches and surpassing the SCI minimum of 25. Bonander gives a cost of \$17,500 for his hunt.

Leon Munyan also took a Boone & Crockett bear on Kodiak Island this past May. He hunted around Ugak Bay on the northeastern end of the island with Brian Peterson, Master Guide and Outfitter (907-830-2802; [www.ugakbay.com](http://www.ugakbay.com)). This is a draw area, and although Peterson's web site says the chances of drawing are very high, Munyan needed three years to get a permit.

Munyan hunted from a 4,000-square-foot lodge, which he describes as a beautiful facility with huge windows overlooking the bay. He says they went out by boat every day and returned in the evenings for a hot shower and excellent meals.

Munyan says there was a lot of snow on the ground during his hunt in late April/early May and many bears were still denned up. Despite that, he passed on 15 bears. Munyan warns that the cover here is so thick, it is difficult to pick out a bear. He says a hunter must glass for many hours and be very patient.

They finally spotted a big bear and Munyan shot it at 87 yards with a .378 GNR handgun, putting five rounds in the bear's chest before it charged him. “I will never forget the look in his eyes when he stood up and locked onto me like a heat-seeking missile,” Munyan says. “The only reason I did not wet myself was because I was too afraid to do anything but shoot. When I was out of bullets, I ran, screaming, I am told. Fortunately, the bear expired before I had to drown myself!”

The bear measured 10 feet, two inches with a 28 14/16 SCI skull. Munyan expects it to rank as the new SCI Number One brown bear in the handgun category. As for Peterson, Munyan says he lived up to the rave reviews he received from other hunters. “This was a flawless operation,” he says. “Peterson is very personable and entertaining, has hunted all over the world and is a truly experienced guide.”

**Alaskan Peninsula:**

The Alaskan Peninsula is divided into five game management units. At the very end lies Unit 9D in the Cold Bay area. It holds a population of 1,600 brown bears, roughly one per 2.4 miles. Hunters take about 71 bears a year, here. Seventy-four percent are boars; the average skull is 25 inches, with several 29-inch skulls taken each year. Unfortunately, the AFGD does not have success rates for this hunt. Spring hunts are available in even-numbered years, with fall hunts in the odd-numbered years.

In May, 2010, Robert Young took a brown bear here with Dave Leonard’s Mountain Monarchs (907-283-4010; [www.mountainmonarchs.com](http://www.mountainmonarchs.com)). Young says this was his third hunt with Mountain Mon-

archs. His first was an unsuccessful fall brown bear hunt in 2007. The following year, he returned to take a Dall ram. This spring he finally connected with his bear.

He hunted in the Cathedral Valley, which is ringed by snow-covered mountain slopes and concealed bear dens. He says they glass for the bears as they emerge from their dens onto the snow fields. This spring, the area received more snow than usual, which sometimes



made it difficult to stalk. He rates the physical demands of hunting here at six on a scale of one-10. He says to expect shots from 50 to 200 yards. In two days of hunting, Young reports seeing 10 bears. Four were shooters that they could not reach. When he shot his boar, he says he had a choice between two

10-footers within range.

The fall hunts take place further south where hunters intercept bears as they move north to hibernate. By this time, he says the bears have become very wary, even nocturnal. The hunting days are shorter, and fall hunts see a lot of rain and strong winds. He says he also did the fall hunt previously but with another outfitter and saw a total of only 10 bears between his two 10-day fall hunts.

Young rates Mountain Monarchs a first-class operation, with excellent guides, good meals and equipment. “You’ll get a square deal from Leonard,” he says, “and a good chance at a big bear on the spring hunt. This is one of the best areas for it.”

We have another positive report (Report ID 6726 in our database) on Mountain Monarchs from George Leidel, who took a nine-foot 10-inch, 28 1/8-inch bear in 2008.

Alaska has far more bear hunting opportunities than the ones we’ve described here. In fact, we have 364 subscriber reports on Alaska brown and black bear hunts in our database to help you plan your next hunt. Stay tuned next month for new subscriber reports on Alaskan interior grizzly bear hunts.

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