

MOUNTAIN GOAT HUNT-----SEPTEMBER 2009- By Jim Davis

I booked this mountain goat hunt with Darwin Cary of Scoop Lake Outfitters at the 2008 SCI Reno Convention. I am 61 years old and although I am in excellent physical condition, I was looking for a goat hunt where the terrain was not too extreme. The Scoop Lake operation is located in northern British Columbia just below the Yukon border. The hunt was booked as a 5 day hunt without horses.

Traveling with another hunter, we drove from Whitehorse to Watson Lake to catch an air charter into Scoop Lake. Conditions had been very windy during that period, so Darwin had me and the other hunter and our two guides use the main camp horses to get into a spike tent camp about 4 hours away. The horses would be brought back out to pick us up at the end of our hunt.

Scoop Lake, like most of northern BC, is an area of spectacular alpine country. From our tent camp, above scenic Moodie Creek, we did some scouting the first afternoon. We had scoped some goats on the upper portions of a large valley that was not readily accessible from our camp. The next morning we set out on foot across the flat land, walking about 2 ½ hours. We received a long meandering ridge line from the flatlands to the top of the mountain overlooking the valley of interest. It was about another 2 ½ hours of tougher hiking and climbing on a narrow path in strong winds.

After crossing over the top of the mountain, we scoped two potential Billies of interest. Our plan was to cross down through a smaller valley then up to separately pursue the two trophies in different locations. The valley was heavily vegetated and it was very windy. After descending down the steep hillside, we started back up the other side. After only ascending a few hundred yards, we saw a new, large Billy lying in a bushy gravel bed area just about 150 yards wide of where we had descended. The problem I faced was it was a fairly steep uphill shot from a steep slopeFortunately there was a downed tree where we stopped and a sufficient opening to allow me to use the upended roots as a support for my rifle. I waited until the goat stood and cleared the heavy brush. Shot was at 255 yards and I was using a 6.5 x 284 cartridge with Barnes bullets. A great first shot in the shoulder, but used a second shot in the spine to drop him. It took a fair time to get back to him----- on the steep hillside lodged in a downed tree. It was quite a chore helping the guide (Sam Black) skin him and quarter the goat in place. It was too steep in that area to readily move him.

The other hunter was a bit later also successful. We brought the hides and quarters down the same path we had used earlier. When we nearing the flats we left the meat for pickup the next day.

Although I was just out for a good, representative trophy, I was fortunate to take a very large goat for his age. Being only 6 years old, it was surprising that his initial measurements indicate he should make B&C All-Time. A great hunt with a hard working operation in beautiful country.