

FRONT SIGHT



Mid-Michigan Chapter Safari Club International

January - March 2020, Issue 49



*Photo by Dan Catlin
Packing into Stone Sheep Camp In British Columbia*



JOHAN PIETERSE SAFARIS



**SOUTH AFRICA
ZIMBABWE
MOZAMBIQUE**



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In This Issue - Jan - Mar 2020

- 2 Chapter Officers and Board Members
- 3 President's Message
- 3 Editor's Message
- 3 Meeting Schedule
- 4 Book Review – *by Josh Christensen*
No Summit Out of Sight –
by Jordan Romero with Linda LeBlanc
- 5 Big Buck Night
- 6 - 7 41st Hunters Convention
- 8 Liberty Hunt – *by Mary Harter*
- 9 Sharing Some Good Cookin' –
Venison Heart – *from Mary Harter*
- 9 SCI Application for Membership
- 10 - 12 Stone Sheep Hunting in Bristish Columbia –
by Dan Catlin
- 13 Majestic Mountain Outfitters
- 14 - 15 Blue Bag Blessings –
by Tracy Jurries
- 16 - 17 Hunting Arctic Hogs –
by Mary Harter
- 18 - 20 Veteran's Hunt –
by Josh Christensen
- 21 Mid Michigan Chapter Golf Outing
- 22 - 25 TJ's Youth Hunt –
by Josh Christensen
- 25 Looking Ahead
- 18 - 24 Advertisers



Members of Mid-Michigan SCI or Isabella County Sportsman's Club may use the shooting range located at 2872 W. Millbrook Road just east of Winn Road. The lock combination is 3855 and changes yearly on February 15th. Please carry membership identification on you when you visit the range.



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Chairmen are listed first

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- Sportsman Against Hunger - Mike Strope
- Pathfinder Hunts - Brandon Jurries
- Youth - Disabled Veterans - Blue Bags, etc.

The **Front Sight** is the official publication of the Mid-Michigan Chapter of Safari Club International, keeping club members informed about local club activities, and encouraging and defining good sportsmanship. The **Front Sight** Magazine is published quarterly: January, April, July and October. Distribution 400+.

Check our own www.midmichigansci.org website for copies of the **Front Sight**, listing of events, and fundraiser auction items.

Please support our sponsors! Call or write them for catalogs and information on their products and services. Make sure you tell them you saw their information in **The Front Sight**.

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Sid Smith	1983 - 1985	Jerel Konwinski	1997 - 1999	Kevin Unger	2011 - 2014
Dr. E.H. Kowaleski	1985 - 1986	Doug Heeter	1999 - 2001	Joe Mulders	2014 - 2017
Robert Doerr	1986 - 1988	David Petrella	2001 - 2002	Kevin Unger	2018 - 2019

Deer Hunting season will be mostly in the rearview mirror as you read this Front Sight. Some will have had a great season, other not so much. Please share your stories with us and help all to remember what makes Deer Hunting such a great family and friends' tradition in Michigan.

Hopefully, some of that that deer hunting success can be used to support the ongoing Chapter Sportsmen Against Hunger program. It is not too late to participate. Our Pathfinder program supported veterans' hunts at the Tails-A-Waggin' and Crooked Foot facilities. Over 450 veterans participated in these events spread over five days. A disable youth hunt is planned as well. The annual Trap Shoot at Isabella County Sportsman Club was held in September. Next year we are planning to hold the event in May to coincide with the High School Trap Season. Please continue to take Blue Bags on your hunting or pleasant travels. Please ask if you have questions.

We are looking forward to Big Buck Night on Friday January 25th at the Mount Pleasant Comfort Inn. Let's see those deer and enjoy a fun evening. The 41st Annual Convention at Soaring Eagle in February on Friday the 28th and Saturday the 29th will be a great event. Lots of fun and plenty of outfitters and vendors to visit. Please let us know if you have any topics you would like covered the Chapter Member Meetings scheduled for Monday April 6th and Monday May 4th in 2020.

I would like to high light a couple of items from the August SCI Board of Directors meeting. SCI has embarked on a refresh of its electronic media. A new director with a background of success at other organizations has conducted some studies and an implementation plan is underway. This will affect all the web and social media for SCI for the better. Another major area of emphasis is membership retention. Committees and working groups are in operation. Multiple Chapter Board members are participating, and reports will be forth coming.

The 2020 SCI Convention will be in Reno on February 5th to 8th. Outfitters and Vendors from all over the world will be showing their wares and sharing their knowledge. Program events, seminars, and auctions along with nightly entertainment round out the activities. It is a very worthwhile trip!

Wishing you and yours a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Get in some hunting and work in some fishing as your schedule allows. We are looking forward to another good year in the Chapter.

Jon Zieman
President
(989) 430-2985 • jjzieman@tds.net



Editor's Message

Hope everyone had successful hunts this past year. Please share your experiences by writing about them. Someone might plan a hunt just because they enjoyed your story.

We are looking forward to the SCI Convention held in Reno this year from February 5 – 8. It is the ultimate sportsmen's market. If you have never attended, you will be overwhelmed. Wednesday night's performance is the Beach Boys, "12 Sides of Summer", Thursday is "Night of the Hunter", Friday features REO Speedwagon, and Saturday's Keynote speaker is Donald Trump, Jr. Kimberly Guifoyle will speak at the Saturday luncheon. There are many seminars you can attend including Questions and Answers with Jim Shockey and Craig Boddington talking about "Your First African Safari."

And, of course, we are looking forward to our own convention held at the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort on February 28 and 29. Always an exciting time catching up with friends and outfitters we haven't seen for a while. Hope to see you all there!

Keep Hunting, Keep Writing,

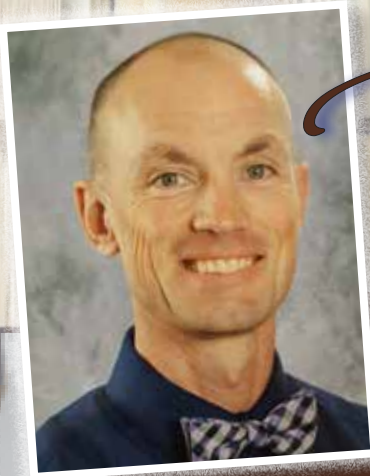
Mary Harter
Editor

SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter Meeting Schedule

* SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Date	Meeting Type	Time	Location
Jan. 13	Board Meeting	5:00 pm	Cheers
Jan. 25	Big Buck Night	4:00 pm Reg. / 5:00 pm Start	Comfort Inn
Jan. 27	Board Meeting	5:00 pm	Soaring Eagle
Feb. 10	Board Meeting	5:00 pm	Cheers
Feb. 5-8	National Convention		Reno
Feb. 28-29	Mid-Michigan Convention		Soaring Eagle
Mar. 9	Board Meeting	5:00 pm	Cheers
Apr. 6	Board/Membership	6:00 pm	Comfort Inn
May 4	Board/Membership	6:00 pm	Comfort Inn
May 16	Trap Shoot	12 noon-Reg./ 3:00 pm Final Round Starts	Isabella Co. Sportsman's Club
June 15	Board-Election	3:30 pm Nominating Committee/ 5:00 pm Board	Cheers
July 13	Board-Budget	2:00 pm Skeet / 5:00 pm Mtg/ BBQ Afterwards	Harters
Aug. 3	Board Meeting	5:00 pm	Cheers
Aug. 11	Golf Outing	7:30 am Reg./9:00 am Tee Off	Pines Golf Course - Lake Isabella
Sept. 14	Board Meeting	5:00 pm	Cheers
Sept. 24-28	Veterans Hunts	7:00 am	Tails-A-Waggin'
Oct. 5	Board Meeting	5:00 pm	Cheers
Oct. 24	Veterans Hunts	8:00 am	Crooked Foot
Dec. 7	Board Meeting	5:00 pm	Cheers

All board meetings are open to our membership. Reservations required.
Please call and leave a message at 989-560-1061 or email Suzette Howard at suzettejhoward@yahoo.com



Book Review

by Josh Christensen

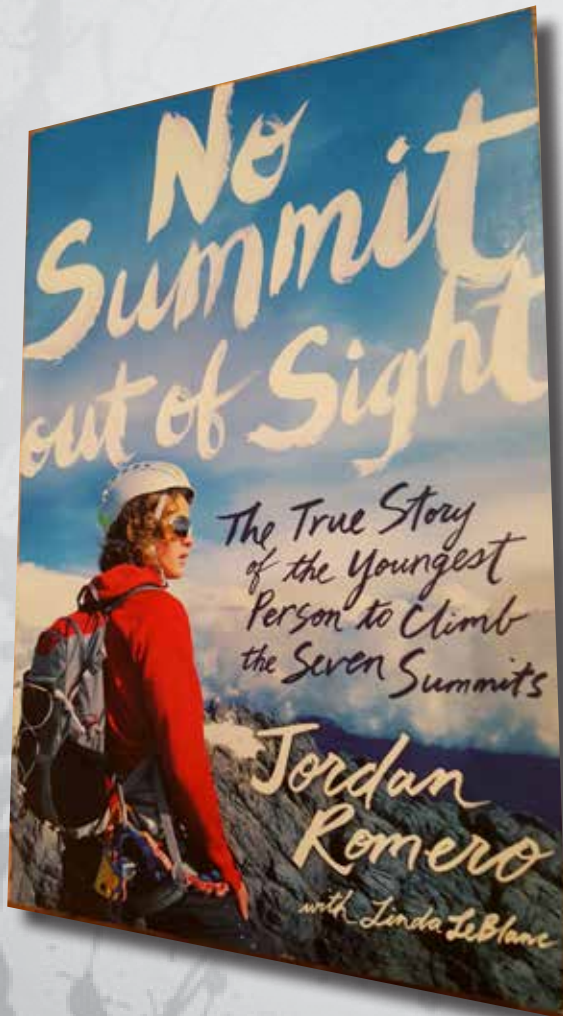
Title: NO SUMMIT
OUT OF SIGHT

Publisher: Simon & Schuster
Books for Young Readers

Author: Jordan Romero with
Linda LeBlanc

Copyright: 2014

List Price: \$7.99



Some of you may look at the cover of this book and look at the name and ask yourself why this name and person looks and sounds familiar to you. Well, from 2010 to 2012 Jordan was in the news quite regularly for being the youngest person to ever summit not only Mount Everest, but the tallest peaks of each of the seven continents.

This is the story of how a nine-year-old boy became enamored with the tallest peaks on each continent and how he convinced his family to help support him on his quest to summit each one.

I initially purchased this book for my own enjoyment, because I knew Jordan was the youngest to summit Mount Everest and I wanted to read about his experience. However, after getting the book my oldest son, Elijah, expressed interest in reading it as well so it became a family book where we would read it together each night before bed.

Through the book we were exposed to the hardships and blessings Jordan and his family encountered along his journey. Including being told by government officials in one country he was too young to climb and seeking out a judge to overrule the decision, being detained in route to another mountain, being caught in an avalanche that cost one person their life, and getting sponsors to help offset the costs of travel and training.

Throughout the book Jordan has a great message to all young people about setting goals and not giving up when times get tough. He admits several times he wanted to quit, but he explains that with the help of others he was able to achieve a goal that most would think was unachievable for such young person.



This book gets 10 out of 10 bullseyes for it's drive of making goals and working to achieve them.

MID-MICHIGAN SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS...



OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
(LIMITED SEATING)

**OUR LOCAL DNR WILL BE
PRESENT TO ANSWER
ANY CWD QUESTIONS!**

BIG BUCK NIGHT 2020

Saturday, January 25th at the Comfort Inn
2424 S. Mission • Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Call 989-560-1061 to reserve seats - Adults \$25, Kids 12 & Under \$20, Under 5 - FREE!

Get your rack professionally scored!

WHITETAIL & MULE DEER

Trophies for Members & Non-Members, Gun Drawings, Youth Hunter Awards,
And... **THE DNR WILL BE ON SITE TO DISCUSS CWD!**

Registration Starts @ 4pm with Dinner @ 7pm (must have a reservation!)

CASH BAR - FREE SODA FOR KIDS

RSVP at number above by January 10, 2020

Call the Comfort Inn @ 989-772-4000 for hotel reservations

For more info contact Mike Strobe @ 989-506-1113 (mstropecustombuilder@gmail.com)



41st Annual Awards & Hunter's Convention

OUR BIGGEST EVER!
Don't Miss It!



Friday & Saturday, February 28 & 29, 2020

Soaring Eagle Casino • 6800 Soaring Eagle Blvd.
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

Now with more room in the Entertainment Hall

Outfitters from North and South America, Africa,
Europe, Asia, New Zealand and Australia

Trophy Animal Displays • Carvings
Artwork • Paintings
Big Game Hunts • Fishing Trips
Guns • Auctions



Sponsored by:
Safari Club International
MID-MICHIGAN CHAPTER



Friday, February 28, 2020

2:00 - 10:00 p.m. • \$5.00 Admission
Outfitters, Exhibitors,
Awards and Auction

Saturday, February 29, 2020

Outfitters, Exhibitors, Banquet and Auction
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. • Registration
5:00 - 6:00 p.m. • Dinner
(reservations required)
6:00 p.m. - Close Live Auction

For more information, contact Abbe Mulders: (989) 450-8744

Tentative list of live auction items:

Check our website at: www.midmichigansci.org - for updates!



- 7 Day Plains game (\$1500 towards Trophy Fees) Johan Pieterse
- 10 Day Plains game (\$2000 towards Trophy Fees) Johan Pieterse
- 18 Day Sheep Hunt, Scalp Creek Outfitters
- 2 Trophy Whitetail Hunts, Bell Wildlife Specialities
- Whitetail 160 - 170, Low's Trophy Whitetails
- Trophy Fee for a Tsessebe Bull, Numzaan Safaris
- \$500 per Hunter (2 Hunters) towards Trophy Fees, Numzaan Safaris
- 7 Day Safari Hunt for 1 Hunter and 1 Observer with \$1000 towards Trophy Fees, Thormahlen and Cochran Safaris (Namibian African Hunting)
- 7 Day Safari Hunt for 1 Hunter and 1 Observer with \$1000 towards Trophy Fees, Thormahlen and Cochran Safaris (South African Hunting)
- 5 Day Red Stag Hunt, MG Hunting, Barrio Santo
- 1 Day Dove and Pigeon Hunt, MG Hunting, Barrio Santo (Buenos Aires)
- 5 Day Whitetail Hunt - Kansas, 180 Outdoors, LLC, Matt Wonsler
- 6 Day Bow or 5 Day Gun - Whitetail Hunt, Tails of the Hunt, LLC, Aaron Volkmar
- Custom Engraved Wildlife Photo Scene, Rover Valley Laser Engraving, Jennifer Hickerson
- 10 Day Black Bear Hunt and Fishing Combo, Hepburn Lake Lodge, Arlee Thideman
- 6 Day Black Bear Hunt, Hepburn Lake Lodge, Arlee Thideman
- Black Bear Hunt, WFO Bear hunt, Garth Matyasovszky
- Moose Hunt, Cosco's Yukon Outfitting
- Red Stag Hunt, Spain, Great Spanish Hunts
- Pheasant Hunt, Crooked Foot Upland Bird and Game Hunting, Michigan
- Elk Hunt, Hell's Half Acre Outfitters, Ronnie Davis
- Rustic Furniture, Dan, Dan the Mattress Man, Midland, MI
- 5 Day Whitetail Hunt in Iowa, Windy Ridge, Nick Boley
- 3 Day Turkey Hunt in Iowa, Windy Ridge, Nick Boley
- Wildlife Trophy Art Figure, Sam Soet Art
- Fishing Charters, Reel Rumor Sports Fishing Charters, Jim Lanfrankie
- Plains Game, Safaris Unlimited, LLC
- Pheasant Hunting, Tails A Waggin' Acres, Chuck Connell
- Central Michigan Goose Hunt, Tom Deharde
- Salmon Fishing on Lake Michigan, Fish Hunt Charters, David James
- Mountain Hunting, Majestic Mountain Outfitters, Jeff Chadd
- Plains Game, Jan Oelofse Hunting Safaris, Namibia
- 7 Day, 2 Hunter 3 species Bird Hunting Expedition - Mexico,
- Balam Outfitters, Alfred Lamadrid
- Sport Fishing Expedition, Crocodile Bay Sport Fishing and Expeditions
- Mountain Goat, Leuenberger's Baldy Mountain Outfitters, B.C.
- Youth Deer, Buffalo and Spring Turkey Hunts, Roger and Sherry Froling
- Mountain Goat and Wolf Hunt, Iskut River Outfitters, B.C.
- Antelope and Archery Elk in Wyoming, Wycon Safari, Inc., Wynn Condict
- Whitetail Hunt, Marvels Whitetail Hunts, Jeff Thiesen
- Bear Hunts in Powers, Michigan, Wild Spirit Guide Service, Dan Kirschner
- Whitetail Deer and Elk, L-4 Ranch, Chris Ortwein
- Fur Coats and Vests, Cascade Furs, John Hayes
- Custom Rifle or Muzzleloader, Ultimate Firearms, Ken Johnston
- Mountain Goat, Tsiu River Lodge, Sam Fejes, Cordova, Alaska
- Red Stag, Water Buffalo, Sheep, Caza Pampa, Luis Mangararo, Argentina
- Sika Deer and Fishing, Mike Carlson, Larsen Bay/Kodiak Island, Alaska
- Elk Hunting, RB Outfitters, New Mexico
- Photo Safaris, Zula Nyla, South Africa

LIBERTY HUNT 2019

by Mary Harter

This was a very special hunt as our youngest grandson, Kyler, is sixteen and this will be his last early hunt and our last. He was excited to hear that we had a big buck on camera on one field and had seen an eight-point buck on another field. He was driving up to hunt with us!!

Saturday morning, Don took him to our closest field to hunt and saw fifteen deer with only one buck, a spike, and 30 geese. The fields contained clover, wheat, rye, rape, and turnips. Don will have to make plans to hunt here for geese.

Back to the house for breakfast, a little Biology studying, lunch, a card game, and finally it is time to go out with me. After checking the wind, we decided to hunt on a field facing south located about 10 miles from our house. The field had clover, wheat, and turnips planted in it.

When we arrived at about 3:15, deer were already out in the field. There were a lot of corn fields on neighboring properties, so I was glad the deer had decided to come to the open fields tonight. We parked the truck, got settled in the blind, and the deer started to return. Several does with fawns came out. The fawns ran and jumped and had a great time out in the open. Most still had their spots.

Twenty-four turkeys, hens and chicks, came out on our left side and clucked and fed right under us. I think they were enjoying grasshoppers along with the seeds and grasses as a couple of grasshoppers made their way into our blind. The turkeys fed and meandered around most of the night. Eventually they were joined by four hens who were very territorial and made a lot of clucking noises as if to say these hens and chicks were invading their area.

This front field is divided by the trail to the back of the property and most of the deer came out on our west side. The east side was too far to shoot, and the west side went out over 240 yards, so the deer had to feed closer to us for a shot. I didn't want Kyler to have to take a shot much further than 100 yards so we would be more likely to have a good recovery. I had a range finder with me to be able to check the distances for sure. Eventually seven came out on the east side and came over to the west side to feed on the clover. A couple of sand hill cranes joined our party and a few noisy crows added to the grazing.



finally when he was head on to us, we could see a tiny brow tine making him a six pointer. Where were the rest of the bucks?

Finally, at about 5:45, two nice bucks came out. Kyler saw them first and we both got quite excited. They were out over 200 yards so we had to hope they would come closer. We kept glassing them as they fed among the many does and fawns. I kept ranging them as they slowly came closer. By 6:00 they were out about 165 yards. As they were very settled, we just let them come closer and closer. We had many turkeys out in front, and they kept staring at us so we couldn't move much. The deer were very comfortable just feeding along, and the wind was hitting us in the face, so it was perfect. Now we just had to be careful that the turkeys didn't spook.

I told Kyler to get comfortable with the rifle. I kept glassing with my binoculars and ranging them. Now would have been a good time to have binos with a range finder in them but they are quite expensive. It was fun to keep checking on the distance and Kyler got relaxed and ready.

I also kept texting Don, telling him what was going on and he kept texting me back as he was at a CMU football game and telling me the score (CMU won).

The deer kept cooperating and finally I told Kyler I thought he could take the shot and he thought so also. The bucks were out about 130 yards, but I didn't want to take any chances of them spooking and running off. There were 36 deer in the field and 28 turkeys so lots of eyes to possibly ruin our hunt. Kyler had a good rest for the rifle and was a good shot. When the buck would be in a good position, a doe would be in front of him or behind him. Once a turkey was in the way. The two bucks would change position and Kyler had picked out the biggest as both were 8-pointers. We kept deciding if it was the one on the left or right. I think they were brothers as they stayed close together all the time they were feeding.

Finally, the buck was clear. I concentrated with the binos as Kyler shot. The buck kicked out his hind legs and ran in the pines. I watched where he ran. Many of the deer just stayed in the field wondering why the deer ran. The other buck just stood broadside and we easily could have taken him as well if we had another license.

We waited in the blind for a few minutes, calming down and waiting for the other deer to settle. We got down and went to look for blood. We found a little but Kyler looked up and saw his buck. I let him go to him first and check to see that he was dead. What a huge buck!! He was so excited as it was the largest he had ever taken. He had taken a 7-pointer with me a few years prior.

After he was gutted, Kyler hauled him out to the open field and I went and got the pickup. We had a sheet of plywood in the back and slid the deer on the wood and slid it into the bed of the pickup. Then we text pictures to Don and his parents, sister, and friends. What an exciting hunt!!!



Many deer kept coming out to feed. A couple of spikes joined in with the many does and fawns. We kept count and were amazed at the number. It had rained for a couple of days and this day was beautiful, so I guess they all decided to venture out for clover.

A buck joined the group and we glassed him carefully to count the points. We knew he had five and





Sharing Some Good @Cookin'!



VENISON HEART ~ Mary Harter

Many people tell me they don't even save the heart from the deer they harvest but to us it becomes a great meal. Hope this helps you enjoy the heart from your next harvest.

Lots of times, the heart might have been damaged when the deer was harvested. If so, cut away all of the bloody parts before slicing. I slice across the heart to make rings but you could do it any way you like. I also throw away the tough cartilage that might be at the top of the heart. The heart pictured has been tenderized with the gadget in the second picture. I use the gadget a lot for wild meat, even wild turkey. I have heard of some that just cut the heart down the side and fill it with dressing and bake it.

We like to fry it like a steak. First, I shake it in a plastic bag with flour, seasoned salt, and garlic powder and place it in a hot skillet with butter and olive oil. Mixing a little olive oil with your butter will help prevent the butter from burning as olive oil can take a higher temperature.

Just fry until as done as you prefer and serve with a steak knife.



Mid - Michigan Chapter Safari Club International • www.midmichigansci.org APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I hereby apply for membership _____
FIRST
MIDDLE
LAST
YOUTH BIRTH DATE

Fill out both mailing addresses as well as email. Please indicate by placing a X in the appropriate box where you would like to receive club correspondence.
If at all possible we would like to utilize your email address for this purpose. EMAIL ADDRESS

<input type="checkbox"/> HOME STREET _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ TELEPHONE _____	<input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS STREET _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ TELEPHONE _____
--	--

MEMBERSHIP DUES (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE)

18 +	1 Year	\$ 65 National Dues	\$ 25 Local Dues	= \$ 90
	3 Years	\$ 150 National Dues	\$ 75 Local Dues	= \$ 225
	Life	\$1500 National Dues	\$300 Local Dues	= \$ 1,800
	Over 60	\$1250 National Dues	\$200 Local Dues	= \$ 1,450
	Youth 21 and under (Membership)	\$25 National Dues	\$25 Local	= \$ 50

Check/Cash attached \$ _____
 Bill my credit card: VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE)

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____	EXPIRATION DATE _____	NAME ON THE CARD _____
APPLICANTS SIGNATURE _____	SPONSORS NAME _____	
DATE OF APPLICATION _____	SPONSORS ADDRESS _____	



Mid-Michigan SCI
 P.O. Box 486
 Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0486





Stone Sheep

HUNTING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

By Dan Catlin

In August of 2013 I was about to embark on a hunt that would change me forever.... Dall Sheep hunting in Alaska! It's impossible to explain how the struggles and hardships of hunting sheep can pull at your soul; but that's exactly what it does. It's like no other hunt you can physically or mentally do. Not to mention the financial commitment it takes to hunt sheep in wild places. I was HOOKED!

Fast forward to 2019 and I only need a Stone Sheep from British Columbia to complete my GRAND Slam or FNAWS (Four North American Sheep). This accomplishment in hunting is one of the most difficult and coveted achievements. Only around 2000 hunters have ever done this and I'm fortunate enough to be mentioned in the same sentence as those other over achievers. All that being said... if you are reading this wondering why I'm calling it two different things, GRAND SLAM and FNAWS, that's because business and money often times get in the middle of what we should all be concerned about. That is conservation and sustainability of the sheep we all love to pursue. I'm not thrusting myself in this debate; but being a member of both organizations, Grand Slam Club OVIS and Wild Sheep Foundation, I want to give both of them credit for helping maintain the natural resource of wild sheep hunting. I would love to see both organizations lay down their swords and come back as "one" for the future of hunting and the sheep themselves.

Enough politics and on to the "Quest for Four"! I booked my Stone Sheep hunt in 2015 with Stone Mountain Safaris located in Toad River, British Columbia. After speaking with Leif Olsen and explaining my situation and goals, Leif agreed to let me spend four years paying for my sheep hunt. I broke this news to my wife Charlotte, by telling her I just purchased a new RAM; however it's not the kind of RAM we can drive around town and haul our trailers. It's a Stone Sheep Ram! She laughed but was 100% supportive as she went through this entire dream/quest I've been on.

The Hunt: July 28th, 2019 I hopped on a plane with cameraman Tanner Phillips in tow! We've done this before when Tanner followed me into a forest fire... literally, to collect my Rocky Mountain Big Horn in Alberta, 2017. Our hopes were high as we traveled to BC a few days before season to scout for sheep prior to opening day. After spending a night in the main lodge at Stone Mountain Safaris we headed to the trailhead with horses loaded and ready to pack us in. My guide, Kirk O'Donnell, was already in camp which was about a five-hour ride into the wilderness. That afternoon we safely arrived in camp and spent the remainder of day one getting acquainted and formulating a plan. On day two we started to implement that plan by riding as far up the mountain as possible to be dropped off for the impending hike to the mountain range peaks.

At the end of our horse trail we dismounted and unloaded our packs from the horses that so graciously gave us a lift half way up the mountain. While we started hiking up the mountain our wrangler "Big Jake" & his assistant Madison, led the string of horses back down the mountains to base camp. From our drop off point Kirk, Tanner and I took three days of food/water and our tents/gear upon our backs as we ascended to the summit. To say this was a tough climb for me was an understatement. I've climbed lots of sheep mountains over the last seven years but never have I hauled a spike camp to the tops. What a rush and sense of accomplishment! We found a little pocket of flat ground just short of the summit where we pitched tents and hunkered down out of the "thunder sleet" that was raining down on us. At this point we were committed and there was no turning back... part of the accomplishment of sheep hunting is overcoming your feelings of being cold, wet, and miserable.

After setting up camp, Kirk wanted to crest the summit to look off the other side. From our side we saw about eight ewes and lambs and three young rams fairly low on the mountain. I told Kirk I'd sit this one out as I saved my energy for tomorrow which was August 1st, opening day of sheep season. Tanner and I held up at camp taking in the views as the clouds would sock us in without visibility and then blow past opening up the mountain tops for some incredible scenery and photo opportunities. After a couple hours Kirk returned to camp with a big smile on his face. It was apparent to me that he had found some of what we were looking for... 37 RAMS to be exact! Let's just say there wasn't much sleeping for me that night. Kirk explained in over ten

years of guiding sheep in North America he's never seen a band of rams this big before. Kirk is a KIWI guide from New Zealand with lots of sheep hunting experience, both in Alaska hunting Dall Sheep, and now in BC hunting Stone Sheep. I'm certain Kirk is part mountain goat with long lanky muscular legs that could out run a sheep in these mountains not to mention killing me during the initial climb! Kirk was excited too, knowing we had so many rams to look at on opening day.

4:30am and it's breaking day. All of us were rustling around in our tents when Kirk unzipped his tent, stepped out and shouted "S*** there are resident hunters up here on the skyline! We have to go now"!!! So within 15 minutes we were dressed, with sleeping bags, bed rolls and tents in our packs climbing to the summit. As we made our way up, Kirk saw the other two hunters going the opposite direction we needed to go... which was where he saw the big band of rams last night. We hustled to the look out where we could see a "field of dreams"! There were now 40 rams visible in a grassy bowl about 1100 yards below us. Kirk spent much of his time looking for the resident hunters trying to formulate a plan of how we get on these rams with the thermals going down and us being above the sheep. During the next hour Kirk and I agreed that there are likely at least two legal rams in the group we would want to shoot. Kirk is very familiar with the rams in this area and there was one particular sheep he had passed last year with a very wide flair and the sheep carried his mass down towards his tips. Additionally, both sides of this sheep were broom'd off about 4". These two factors alone made the ram very recognizable to Kirk and I was "all in" on whatever ram Kirk was



able to get me on. From there we made the two-hour, torturous decent down to a plateau that we knew would put us within shooting range directly above the group of sheep.

Finally! We had made it to the plateau and the sheep were within 320 yards of our vantage point. As we dropped our packs to crawl out for a look, THE RAM was directly below us and lying down with a clear view and shot opportunity. At this point

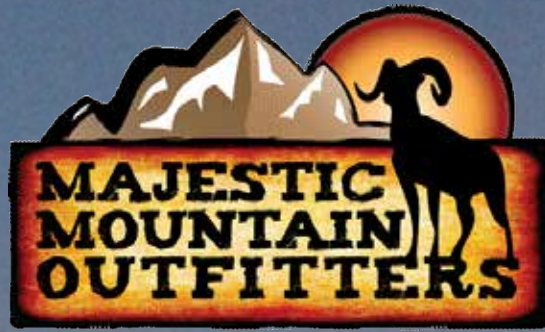
Kirk made 100% sure it was the right sheep and we began to get me in a solid shooting position for when the ram stood up. During this process of me getting prone, Kirk wanted to go back and get his back pack to use along with my bipods for a stable platform to shoot from. There was no signs of the other hunters and we felt like we had LOTS of time to make a good solid rest which would result in a great shot opportunity. As Kirk turned to get his pack, Tanner looked down and saw the resident hunters sneaking up a knoll below us and off to our right. This changed everything! Kirk tells me I need to shoot now! Mostly because we didn't want the sheep to spook, and it was completely safe to shoot in the direction the sheep was bedded in relation to the resident hunters. At that point, I made a snap shot as steady as I could from 320 yards. The ram was hit hard and jumped up running about 30 yards and then ultimately laid down again. Kirk directed me to shoot him again, but in the chaos and excitement I missed! The ram was obviously going to expire as he shook his head and I could see blood coming from his mouth. However, he did manage to stand again and turn broadside. Finally, I had a standing broadside shot and was able to make a perfectly placed shoulder shot. My sheep was DOWN for good! Or was he my sheep yet????

I've not experienced anything like this since I was a young man hunting state land in Northern Michigan. I shot my first eight-point buck and saw another hunter heading toward my down deer and I was in fear of him tagging my buck before I could get there. Now I'm 2000 miles from home in the middle of nowhere on a mountain experiencing the same feelings of someone taking my sheep. Except this time the cost of the hunt and effort to get where we were to collect a sheep was substantially more! After my first shot I remember hearing four or five shots from the resident hunters as the sheep started scattering from my initial shot. I had my ram in the scope the entire time they were shooting and never saw them shoot my sheep; but my mind kept



playing tricks on me that they were also shooting at my sheep. In the end, once we all peeled off the mountain and met up, I was the only one that shot my Ram and the resident hunters only collected one other ram from the group of 40 rams in that bowl. They were genuinely happy for me as I was for them. The reality of the situation is that the unseasonably cool weather and lack of bugs bothering the sheep, grouped up all the rams way lower than normal in a green grassy mountain bowl. That's hunting! Those residence have just as much right to pursue those sheep as I do paying a guide to help me pursue those sheep. It ends up being a statement of conservation. We all value these sheep and it's our dollars and love of them that protects them from poaching and over predation. It was a WIN for the sheep and the hunters. Even though many don't see it that way because two rams died in that valley; they died so the other 38 rams can live and be protected by hunters' dollars.

The final approach to see my ram was one of uncontrollable and very unscripted emotions. Not many times in my life have I been a "cry baby"; but the tears flowed uncontrollably down my face, like water down the high mountain stream adjacent to where my sheep lay. The feelings of remorse were there as they always are when I take the life of such a majestic and beautiful animal. However, the feelings of happiness, accomplishment and love of hunting were also present. The event signifies so many things in life and I can't explain them all as they are so complicated. I've said it before but it's so true.... sheep hunting is spiritual! Thank you to my wife Charlotte, my Team at The Wildlife Gallery and Uncle Brad for allowing me to represent our "Brand" all over the world! Also, thanks to my Dad for giving me purpose, direction and goals to achieve while you secure a place in Heaven for all of us to join you...



We are so **THANKFUL** for our friends and members of the Mid-Michigan SCI Chapter that participated in yet another successful hunting season in 2019.

*Jeff, Cyndi, Josh,
Sarah, Caleb, Alyssa,
Bryan & Ben*



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Blue Bag Blessings



By: Tracy Jurries

Have you ever seen a child get excited about school supplies? I know on my most recent “Back to School” shopping trip with my daughter the highlight was new clothes, not pencils and paper. Few kids in America get excited by school supplies; but I have seen over 100 children smiling and singing over such things!

SCI has a humanitarian aid program known as “The Bell Family Blue Bags” that allows hunters across the U.S to take a large duffel bag full of school supplies to the country they will be hunting in. SCI can provide the supplies or hunters can fill the bags themselves if they wish and if the hunter flies Delta they will transport the bag free of charge. The hunter notifies their professional hunter that they will be bringing a Blue Bag and the hunter will make arrangements with a local school in need for the hunter to bring the bag to the children.

I first found out about the program when my husband joined SCI and took his first Blue Bag to Mozambique, Africa in 2018. When the chance came for me to accompany him to Africa recently, I was looking forward to doing the Blue Bag visit the most.

The day arrived for us to deliver the Blue Bags; as we drove through the town I was captivated by the scene that passed in front of my eyes. There was a group of men sitting on over-turned buckets under a shade tree on the sidewalk talking. There was a neighborhood that resembled a poor inner-city neighborhood in the U.S with crumbling houses but those looked like a wealthy neighborhood compared to the pallet and scrap metal houses on some blocks. I saw a woman doing her wash in a basin outside of a house that was built with scrap wood, her yard, just a bare dry patch of ground surrounded by other shanty looking houses. The school that we pulled

up to was surrounded by a high metal fence on all sides. A few uneven cement steps up led us through a narrow metal gate and a cheery courtyard with a play yard to our right. The uneven and cracked walkway to the school was something that would make a safety inspector cringe and block it off with caution tape. We stepped into the small dark entrance of the school with a small office with a window to our left, a hallway leading back outside in front of us with a dark narrow hallway to our right. I was struck by the large bags of grits, rice and jugs of juice and old that just laid in the hallway next to the office. Our professional hunter spoke with a gentleman who I assumed to be the principal and he led us down an outdoor covered walkway along the building, I noted a sign on the girl's bathroom that said "this door is locked for safety, please see the office". We walked through a large courtyard where some children were being served plates of grits, then between 2 buildings with litter covering the ground and past 2 large swing set frames with no swings to a larger courtyard. The man directed us to wait here and he disappeared into a building. Soon a flood of small children dressed in uniforms started pouring out of the building. They were directed to stand in classroom groups by their teachers and the children became very quiet as the Principal introduced us and spoke to them in Afrikaans. Then something happened; over 100 children started singing "If you're happy and you know it", tears started to roll down my cheeks. My Heart was filled as they sang "Jesus loves Me"! Those smiles and beautiful voices is something that I will cherish forever!



After we handed out candy to the children and dispersed the school supplies to the classrooms we found our way back to our trucks and loaded up. My friend Lucinda told me about something that had really impacted her. She said that as she was handing out candy she came to a little girl and asked her if she had received some candy. The little girl nodded that she had but then told Lucinda that a girl next to her had not. Lucinda said, "that little girl may not have a lot, but she was still honest and wanted to make sure that another person received their candy." Lucinda and I both agreed that we could do something like this EVERY DAY!



I would encourage anyone who is planning a hunting trip to another country to contact your local SCI chapter and take a Blue Bag with you, you will bring blessings and in turn, be blessed!





Hunting Arctic Hogs

by Mary Harter

We attended the Michigan Chapter fundraiser and Don purchased an Arctic Hog hunt for four at the Hidden Horns Game Ranch, owned by Brent Fisk. We had hunted his property which is located near Howard City several times.

We tried to get four from our family together in the spring to hunt but with two graduating from high school, one in college going to summer school, sports, and all of the different work schedules, it was impossible, so we decided to try again in the fall. Well, fall came and now we had three in college and many different schedules so we decided to hunt on two different dates.

On September 27, our grandson, Cole, a Freshman at CMU joined us for the hunt. He spent the night before with us and away we went on a Friday morning, a day he didn't have any classes. We met Brent at his ranch and after observing what we could see from his parking lot, off we went.

Brent had just separated his fallow deer fawns from their mothers and the fawns were happily enjoying grain right by the fence where we parked. The mothers were just outside

the far end of the pen, blatting for their babies who were paying no attention to them. Brent has gotten many fallow deer because they do not get the CWD which is affecting many in the deer family. Brent also has whitetail deer, rocky mountain elk, buffalo, sika deer, sheep and rams.

We passed through Brent's gate and walked through the main field where we saw goats and several huge rams. After a short walk, we saw the hogs he had intended for us to shoot. He was surprised we saw them so soon. When we had hunted here previously with Cole for buffalo, it took us about an hour and a half to finally locate them.

Well, here we were and set up to shoot. The hogs were mingling around some downed trees and we just had to wait for a clear shot. I shot first, hitting him just below the ear so as not to damage any meat, and down he went. Mine was pink and black and about 200 pounds as we wanted hogs that would be good to eat. Cole followed Brent a few yards and set up to shoot. Again, one shot just under the ear and down his all black hog went.

Brent went to get the tractor for the hogs and we took a walk through his 60 acres of hunting property. Brent gave Cole a BB gun to use in case the goats got too





friendly but they stayed clear of us. We saw a lot of game as we strolled through the trails. There were a few large boars and a sow with six babies. We stayed clear of her. Such a beautiful time of year to be in a Michigan woods.

On October 17, Kyler had no school and Ann didn't work that day so they met us at home and off we went to Hidden Horns for an afternoon hunt. Kyler had shot an elk with them previously so knew a little about the property. When we arrived, we were greeted again by the fallow deer fawns, just as cute as before. A huge black yak and a reddish Scottish highlander were out in the main field. The goats and sheep didn't greet us this time.

Again, just a short walk from the gate and there they were. These hogs were pink with a little black and larger than the ones Cole and I had shot but still young enough to be delicious. Ann set up to shoot but the hogs moved around and got behind some trees and then were too close to each other to shoot. Finally, with repositioning several times, BANG, down it went. A DRT, dead right there.

Now Kyler's turn. He moved into the woods and near a huge black boar. We didn't want to disturb the boar and have him confront us. Thankfully, he just laid there and didn't move. After several setups, Kyler shot at a little dot just below the ear and hit it perfectly. Down it went. Again, we went for a walk especially because Kyler wanted to see the huge whitetails Brent said were inside. We walked around the perimeter and then cut through the middle. We saw two beautiful white scimitar horned oryx and many other elk cows and calves. We saw the black sow and she seemed too interested in us so we walked faster to

get out of her area. We saw one of the huge whitetails and several fallow deer.

As you can see from the pictures, the colors in the woods were beautiful.

We drove to Chris Manthei's butcher shop to pick up the first two hogs and Ann took Cole's meat home to him. We later picked up the last two hogs and have been enjoying sausage, pork chops, pork steak, bacon, and ham and will for most of the winter. That is a lot of meat even split between three families.

What a great way to fill the freezer or if you want to have a pig roast for a special occasion, just give Brent a call at (616) 984-5346 or his cell at (66) 799-0689. He has a variety of species so just call and ask. He also has specials on elk calves which are delicious meat.



VETERAN'S HUNT

by Josh Christensen



We had just entered the field at Tails-A-Waggin pheasant preserve in Marion on a cool day in September for our veteran pheasant hunt. We had fair weather now, but the forecast called for heavy rain later in the day. Duck, our guide, had us in a row preparing to walk the field from east to west with his dog Gertie. This was my first experience pheasant hunting and only my third time hunting upland birds, but I was beginning to think I could get used to these hunts.

There were four veterans on this hunt and Duck numbered us off one through four, because he said it would be easier, and he wasn't good with names. I was number one and would be walking the northern edge of the field, with number four in the middle of the field and numbers two and three between us. Duck told us we would cover the north end of the field on the way down and the south end on the way back. We also had a photographer, Bob, accompany us to take pictures for the Tails-A-Waggin website. This was the third day of four for the veteran hunt and Bob told me I would have good luck on the edge of the field.

We were only two minutes into our hunt when Gertie pointed not fifteen yards ahead of me. Duck said "Number one will be our shooter and number two you will back him up." We used this method throughout our hunt in the field with every guy rotating as either the shooter or back up shooter so we would have equal shooting opportunities.

Duck and I advanced towards the area his dog, a German shorthair, was pointing. As we did this, shooter number two flanked our advance in case he had to shoot. The dog was pointing in my direction and I assumed the bird was closer to me than the dog, so while I was stomping around ten yards in front of the dog Duck advanced from the dog's rear.

With a massive explosion of force the bird took flight between Duck and I with the bird setting its sights to the north, the direction the wind was coming from. I quickly whirled and took aim as the hen flew over me and instincts took over as I place the bead of my Remington 1100 12 gauge on the bird.

The story of me thinking about bird hunting starts in the summer of 2018 when my wife Sara and I took part in the American Wilderness Leadership School in Wyoming. On one of the days of our schooling we shot .22 pistols and long rifles at paper targets as well as shotguns at skeet. Many of the shotguns we used were Remington model 1100's. Sara and I found skeet shooting enjoyable and Sara was awarded the top female skeet shooter in the school. This laid the foundation for us to purchase a very well kept used 1100 the following summer for us to shoot skeet with.

Fast forward to the end of summer and we find me discussing shotguns with a friend from work, Chad, who told me he was looking for a few shooters interested in hunting





with him and his dogs for woodcock and partridge that fall because the guys he usually had go with him were unable to. One due to health issues and the other due to the fact his wife just had their first child. I told Chad I was in if he was willing to take me, and he graciously agree.

In mid-September Chad and I ventured out after work into the woods in search of birds. Our focus would mainly be woodcock on this day, but Chad was a bit leery about our chances because the temperatures rose to the upper 70's and there wasn't much of a breeze. Chad explained the cooler weather was better for his dogs because when they got too warm their panting wouldn't allow them to breathe as well, and make it more difficult to find birds. He also explained having a breeze helped the dogs because it moved the birds scent.

Chad has a Garmin GPS collar for his dogs and he also places a bell on their collar so we can hear where the dogs are. Chad only hunts one dog at a time, which I assume most bird hunters do. The GPS collar allowed us to know where the dog was at all times and close in quickly when he was on point.

When Chad and I first entered the woods he took the time to explain to me good areas a bird might hide, and what to look for if and when his dog pointed. At any rate we walked about a half mile into the woods before his dog Pick, a German shorthair, pointed on a bird. Chad wanted me to get the first shot opportunity so he sent me on a course through the thick poplar trees he thought would be best, while he flanked my route. The woodcock used its camouflage to sit tight until Chad almost stepped on it before flushing. Chad was able get two shots off and Pick did the rest by finding the small long beaked bird. I was amazed at how well the bird blended into its surroundings and how quick it was in flight!

Later that evening, Pick pointed on the edge of some pine trees and a dried out low land that was probably a swamp in the spring and

other wet times. Chad had me work my way into the low land because the vegetation was low and if the bird flew in that direction it should afford me a decent opportunity to get a shot. Chad worked the pines as I paralleled him in the low lands. Chad notified me he thought he saw the woodcock Pick was pointing on under a pine tree and to be ready as he advanced on the bird. The next thing I heard was Chad telling me the bird was coming my way. As I looked to the pines I saw a natural funnel with the trees and out of that funnel came the woodcock. He was moving at a high rate of speed in my direction but to my right about ten yards. I pulled up my shotgun and shot with the bird about fifteen to twenty yards in front of me. My shot was true as the bird folded up, but with his speed he landed directly to my right.

Although it was "only an upland bird" my heart was racing and the adrenaline was pumping! I could understand why people would want to take up bird hunting. Chad told me he would rather bird hunt than big game hunt because every time the dog points it gets his heart and adrenaline going and I was beginning to understand and agree with him.

Chad took me woodcock hunting one more time before the veteran pheasant hunt. This time he brought his younger dog Dax, an English setter. We ended up scoring on three woodcock that day, but the more memorable part of the hunt was when Dax went on point on the other side of a swampy area. Chad and I proceeded forward assuming the bird would be on the other side of the swamp when to my right about five yards came a ton of movement and quite a bit a noise. It always amazes me the number of thoughts that can go through a human mind in a half second. My mind raced with thoughts of what this could be in the tall swamp grass, when up came the biggest bird we'd ever kick up on our hunts...a hen turkey. I whirled and pointed my shotgun without thinking and then my brain finally registered it was a turkey so I place my safety back on and lowered my shotgun. That was great excitement and Chad



and I had a good laugh about the encounter.

After telling Chad I was doing a pheasant hunt at the end of September he told me I shouldn't have any problem shooting because compared to the woodcock we'd been chasing the pheasants would seem very slow. I would somewhat agree with him.

Being a member of the Mid-Michigan Chapter of SCI for the past 15 years I have become aware of the programs we do to allow veterans to have hunting opportunities. One thing I didn't know was how veterans were selected to do these hunts. This year I learned any veteran interested in doing the annual veteran hunt at Tails-A-Waggin need only sign up online at www.veteranshunt.org. Veterans can sign up for one of the four days they offer the hunt. So I signed up and am glad I did.

By the time I signed up, Friday and Saturday were already fully booked so I decided to sign up for Sunday. I arrived around 7:30 to get registered and hunt at 8:00. When I told the people at registration I had never pheasant hunted before they were sure to tell the organizers, and myself along with three other first timers to the ranch were introduced to our guide Duck and told we would be hunting the furthest north field on the property.

The excitement grew as we walked a two-track towards the field. For three of the four of us this would be the first time hunting pheasant. Once we reached the field Duck told us to load our shotguns and to be careful not to shoot a bird until it was at least above our heads because his dog could easily jump that high.

This brings us back to the beginning of the story. With a massive explosion of force the bird took flight between Duck and I with the bird setting its sights to the north, the direction the wind was coming from. I quickly whirled and took aim as the hen flew over me and instincts took over as I place the bead of my Remington 1100 12 gauge on the bird. When I pulled the trigger I knew I was behind the bird and with a quick adjustment the bird folded up and was dead before it hit the ground with my second shot. What a rush of excitement.

As we advanced down the quarter mile plus field. Gertie pointed many times and many shots were fired. About half way down the field we had an encounter with a bird from the neighboring field. We heard many shots coming from the field and saw a rooster flying into our field. As he reached our field he began to glide in our general direction. Shooter number four was closest to the rooster and Duck yelled out to shoot the bird. I was furthest from the bird with the other three veterans between myself and the bird so I had a great show as the bird flew close to each of the other three hunters.



After passing the second hunter it was easy to see the bird was hit and falling quickly. As he came down he turned toward me and I literally had to duck or I would have been struck in the head or upper body by the bird. I moved quickly and we all had a laugh about me almost getting taken out by a pheasant. One of the guys suggested I should have caught it in mid-air, which sounded like a great idea, but my mind told me to get down. Duck told me it was a good thing I didn't try to catch the bird because at that size and speed he could have done some damage.

When we reached the end of the field I swung around to the southernmost point on the field while shooter number four stayed in the middle. Just before we started heading back east Gertie pointed behind us to the west, but before anyone could advance to the dog another bird from the field to our south came flying into our field. Ironically, no shots were fired at the bird from the neighboring field and had we not be facing back towards the dog the bird would have landed in our field without us knowing. As it was, the bird flew within 30 yards of shooters number three and four and after one shot by shooter number four the bird was down. On the report of his shotgun the bird Gertie was pointing on took flight along the same path as the bird escaping the neighboring field and after shots by shooters three and four that bird was also down, laying only fifteen yards from each other.

In all we shot eleven birds between the four of us. We all agreed it was a great time and got several pictures with our birds before going to the cleaning station and cleaning them.

This was a great experience for me and hundreds of veterans who partook in the hunt. Not only was the hunt provided to veterans free of charge, but hotdogs, hamburgers and other food was provided for us before and/or after the hunt. It was nice to sit down and talk with other veterans and enjoy the outdoors and hunting. Tails-A-Waggin was able to provide this event through financial donations from organizations like SCI as well as multiple hunters donating their time and dogs to make the hunts a success.

I encourage all veterans to consider taking advantage of this hunting opportunity in the future. You might find a new passion in bird hunting.





MID MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL

Golf Outing

AUGUST 13, 2019 • PINES GOLF COURSE



1ST PLACE TEAM

- Emil Sacco
- Chris Sacco
- Pat Swanton
- Joe Conway



2ND PLACE TEAM

- Jason Lange
- Joe Haupt
- Todd Harter
- Andy Fussman



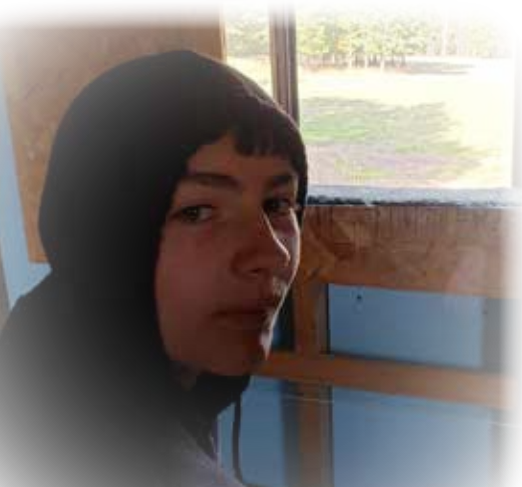
TJ'S YOUTH HUNT

"I got him!!! He's down!!!"



by Josh Christensen

When I first joined Safari Club International in 2004 all I knew of the organization was it supported hunting and was a good resource to use when looking for outfitters. As the years passed by I began to realize, through our Mid-Michigan fundraiser and our Front Sight publication, SCI was more than just a resource, it was a group of people dedicated to keeping the spirit of hunting alive both locally and internationally.



Throughout the years our chapter has supported conservation and hunting by supporting a plethora of programs including veteran hunts, helping educators gain knowledge they can bring back to their classrooms through the American Wilderness Learning School, supporting local schools skeet shooting programs and outdoor education programs, a habitat project for moose at the Lansing Zoo and disabled youth hunts for local kids.

The latter of these I was lucky enough to experience this past October with a great young man I had as a student last school year. TJ has had one arm ever since I've known him, but I hate to use the term disabled when talking about him because he hasn't let the fact he only has one arm hold him back. For TJ this has been an obstacle life has thrown at him, which he has maneuvered and doesn't let it slow him down. He still acts like any other junior high kid and enjoys activities such as playing basketball and running track for our junior high and going hunting with his grandfather.

What I am trying to say is although TJ may not have two full arms like most, he hasn't let that prohibit him for enjoying life and participating in tasks or activities that some might think he is unable to do. Another example of this was in my outdoor education class. For a good portion of this class I would take my class to the gymnasium and we would shoot Matthews Genesis bows. Some might think TJ would sit out during this activity, but instead was one of the first to step up and let some arrows fly.

So when I learned our chapter was looking for a candidate for the disabled youth hunt I gladly gave them TJ's name. From there I contacted TJ's mother Rachel to discuss the opportunity and she was onboard with giving her son such an awesome adventure. This all occurred in August and September and when a date was set up with Leon Low of Low's Trophy Whitetail Ranch, TJ and I had the date of October 13th scheduled.

TJ was beyond excited when he learned of this adventure and told many of his classmates and teachers of the hunting opportunity he would partake in. He also divulged to his mother and my wife (his current science teacher) that he was a bit nervous about hunting a big whitetail because he gets buck fever and he doesn't have a second hand to steady his rifle. So his mother and I discussed bringing TJ up to my house to shoot to help calm his nerves.

On October 12th I picked TJ and his .308 up from his house and brought him to my place to shoot. I first had him shoot my .22 at bottles filled with water to calm his nerves. We discussed the importance of breathing and trigger squeeze. We were using my Caldwell Lead Sled at first and I could tell TJ was pleased with his accuracy. He didn't miss a shot. Next, we brought out his .308, a gift he received last Christmas from his mom, and he told me he wasn't confident it was on. I told him I would sight it in and then have him shoot. After a few adjustments the rifle was hitting bullseyes. TJ got behind the rifle and used his breathing and trigger squeeze to confirm the zero.

Next, I had TJ shoot from a chair using shooting sticks to simulate shooting from a deer blind. Leon and I discussed how the hunt would go and where TJ would be shooting from. Leon has multiple Shadow Hunter blinds on his property and TJ would be shooting out a window that could be adjusted to his height so he would be very comfortable when shooting. TJ shot flawlessly from the chair as he continued to practice with the .22 while shooting plastic jugs of multiple sizes.

The afternoon of the 13th arrived and TJ and I headed north to Low's Trophy Whitetail Ranch in Falmouth. The temperatures were quite low for this time of year with the highs in the upper 30's. We arrived around two and when we met Leon and introduced ourselves Leon took TJ's hand in a handshake and said, "You ready to get a deer tonight?" TJ was quick to say he was and we were off to sit in the blind. Leon has 250 acres of prime whitetail habitat he uses for his ranch. On the way into the blind TJ spotted a nice buck that we took a minute to look at before continuing to our blind.

We would be sitting in the blind Leon called Five Corners. This was a large six foot by six foot Shadow Hunter blind. Leon had us get settled into the blind as he spread some corn on one of the two track shooting lanes. Shortly after we were settled in TJ spotted a buck, but not just any buck it was a white buck sporting





a nice rack. Leon told us there were three white bucks running around his ranch, but they weren't going to be hunted (at least not this year). This all happened shortly after three.

Over the next hour we quietly talked about the ranch, hunting, and life in general. TJ mentioned in his limited hunting he had never shot a buck before, and without skipping a beat Leon told him we would have to do something about that. TJ and I could both tell Leon enjoyed taking us out to his property and giving TJ an opportunity to harvest a buck.

Around four we had a doe come in that was very skittish and took off shortly after coming in. At five we had three does come in and eat followed by a very large buck. Every time we saw another deer the excitement could be heard in TJ's voice. He kept scanning for the right deer to come in. Unfortunately, the buck that accompanied the does was more than a management buck. He had massive heavy antlers and was about twice the body size as any of the does. Leon thought he was a five and a half year old buck.

By 5:45 the buck had chased off the does and had himself left the area. The rest of the time in the blind, up to 7:00, we were entertained by squirrels grabbing acorns and corn as well as chasing each other around. Leon thought the full moon might have had something to do with us only seeing a few bucks, and I'm sure the periodic rain showers didn't help either.

As we walked back to the truck we discussed possible days TJ and I could come back and we decided on the following Saturday, October 19th. On the drive out of the ranch I thought TJ was going to jump out of his skin or the truck. As we drove past a smaller field we saw a very nice buck that Leon said was more like what we were looking for. TJ couldn't contain himself and almost shouted, "I'd shoot that buck!" When we came to the next small field we saw another nice buck take off for cover. Then we came to a large field and my jaw dropped. There, about 150 yards away, stood eight giant bucks all

looking our way. We spent the waning hours of daylight looking through our binoculars at these bucks and saw there were even more another 50 yards behind them in the woods.

Our ride back to Gladwin was filled with discussion over how the evening went and how awesome it was to see all of those bucks. TJ also mentioned he thought it would be cool if his mom came along the next weekend, so after dropping him off I made a call to Leon who was more than willing to accommodate.

During the week I contacted Rachel to see if TJ wanted to come back up to my place Friday after school to shoot .22 to get ready for Saturday. TJ was happy to get the opportunity to continue to practice his shooting skills. I picked him up after school and once again he shot very well as he put 40 to 50 rounds down range annihilating every plastic bottle and jug I put before him. He was ready for his hunt the next day. After dropping TJ off at home I called Leon to confirm we will still be on for Saturday. During our conversation he let me know the deer were moving quite a bit more than the previous week and this time TJ should get a good opportunity.

The weather for Saturday, October 19th was in the low 50's with the sun out and a slight breeze. I arrived to pick TJ and Rachel up around 1:00 and we made our way back north to Falmouth. Before stopping at Leon's we drove the road boarding his ranch to show Rachel part of the property. Along our drive we spotted a very nice buck. When we stopped to take a look at him we saw he had two other bucks with him. We were all impressed with the deer.

Once at Leon's house we gathered our things and were off to the blind. This time we would sit in the blind where we saw all those bucks as we drove off the ranch the previous week. As we drove into the field there was already one buck feeding on the green crop in the field. As soon as the buck saw the truck he

darted into the woods.

The blind was a large wooden blind that Leon told us was the oldest on the ranch. When I asked about the name of this blind or location he told us it was known as the big field. Leon told us we should see quite a few deer from this blind, but many of them we would have to pass on because of their size.

As Rachel, TJ and I settled into the blind



Leon placed some corn 60 yards from the blind. This blind didn't have adjustable windows, but it did have adjustable chairs so I got TJ into position over the area the corn was placed. He said he felt comfortable and the crosshairs of his rifle were very steady.

The windows were smaller in this blind and where Leon and I sat we couldn't see much. We would wait for TJ to tell us when he saw a deer and then we would stand to see what was approaching. Around 3:30 we had our first deer come in. It was a very large buck, and just like the previous week the excitement could be heard in TJ's voice. Every deer that came in this night would get the same reception in the blind. TJ would say "Oh, deer! It's a buck! It's a huge, huge buck!" And every time I would look at Leon and he would be smiling at the excitement TJ relayed in his message.

The first two bucks, the first coming in around 3:30 and the second around 4:00, were too big for TJ to shoot. The second one was a two and a half year old ten point that Leon wanted a few more years to grow. After those deer left we waited until around 5:00 before seeing any deer. TJ later told me he thought we wouldn't get another opportunity because we went so long without seeing a deer. Shortly after 5:00 TJ excitedly announced the arrival of a nice buck and before Leon and I could get into position to see the buck TJ exclaimed there was another buck coming in also.

The first of the two bucks looked like a nice eight or nine point and the second was a very wide main frame ten or twelve point. Upon looking at these deer Leon notified me the first buck fit the bill and TJ could attempt to take him. Both bucks were now standing 60 yards from the blind at the corn, but only the larger of the two would offer a broadside shot. The larger buck was to our right while the shooter was to our left as we peered out the window. Ironically enough, the only buck of the four we saw while on stand that wouldn't offer a broadside shot was the one TJ was attempting to shoot. I helped set up TJ's .308 and got him on the buck and instructed him to wait for the buck to turn broadside.

We watched the two bucks feed for five to ten minutes before the shooter began to move to our right. I calmly told TJ when the buck stopped broadside he could take the shot, however when the buck stopped he was directly behind the bigger buck. This added to our suspense. As we were waiting I asked TJ if he was getting tired from holding his rifle for that amount of time. He said, "A little bit",

so I grabbed the buttstock of the rifle to allow him to rest. After another minute or two the shooter buck began to continue his walk to our right, but towards a small stand of pine trees in the middle of the field. Leon let out a grunt/bleat to stop the buck, but the sound only got the attention of the bigger buck. The shooter walked on behind the pines.



At this point Leon and I exchanged a look of this isn't good as we watched the buck feed on the greens planted in the field. We were glad the buck didn't leave into the woods, but he was still behind the pines. These pines were thinned out at the bottom and we could see through them well enough to watch where the deer was moving. As the deer was feeding in the field I noticed he was slowly moving toward an opening in the trees about the length of a deer. I asked Leon if the deer stepped into that opening if TJ could take the shot. He agreed if the deer continued along his path that would be a good opportunity for a shot.

I explained the plan to TJ and he understood what the new plan was. This shot wouldn't be much further, maybe 80 yards from the blind. I had TJ set up on the opening as the deer slowly made his way into the shooting window. I have to admit I began to shake a little bit with the excitement and adrenaline and I was glad I didn't have to shoot at that very moment, but

when I looked to TJ who said he always got buck fever he looked calm and cool.

When I looked back at the deer his nice antlers and head moved into the opening. Every few seconds the buck would take another step. When the buck was in the opening standing broadside I slipped the safety of the rifle off and told TJ to shoot the buck directly behind the shoulder after the buck took his next step. If the buck took another step it would make for a textbook shooting opportunity and allow for a quick clean kill. As the buck took what I hoped was his last step, I told TJ to take a breath, hold it, and squeeze. I used my binoculars to watch the buck for the impact of the bullet at the shot.

After ten to fifteen seconds without a shot I looked down to see what was going on. TJ told me he couldn't take the shot because he was shaking too much. I told him that was okay and to try to relax. As this was happening the buck was now behind some pine trees in the clump. I held the buttstock of the rifle and told TJ we could still get another chance at the buck if he continued on his path because it was open field on the other side of the pines. Within a few minutes the buck reappeared on the other side of the pines about 90 yards from the blind. He was continuing to feed on the crop in the field and walking at an angle that kept him broadside to us.

Once again, we got TJ set up and I instructed him to take aim on or behind the shoulder of the buck for this shot, because of the angle. When the buck stopped I let him know right behind the shoulder would be best and asked him to take a breath, hold it, and squeeze. As I watched through the binoculars I tried to concentrate on where the bullet would go. At the report of the rifle the deer, and I, jumped and as I saw the deer start to run off I saw a good amount of blood pumping out of his side. Leon and I both told TJ he shot the buck and TJ responded with an excited, "I got him!?"

I continued to watch the buck through my binoculars as he ran toward a thin stand of trees. When the buck got about sixty or seventy yards from where he was shot he stopped. I made mention of the deer stopping and TJ was able to get his rifle scope in the area the deer was just as he dropped. "He's down!!!!" TJ exclaimed and he gave me a high five followed by giving one to Leon.

We packed up our gear before going to take a look at the buck. TJ told us, even though we saw the buck go down he wanted to track the

Looking Ahead

In Our Next Issue



**BIRD HUNTING AT
MEEMO'S FARM**
by Mary Harter



**HUNTING IN
NEW ZEALAND SOUTHERN ALPS**
by Dan Catlin



**80-YEAR-OLD
HUNTER ARROWS
BUCK**
by Robert C. Mills



GRAND SLAM ~ by Tim Torpey

deer since Leon and I both said we could see blood as soon as he shot. Once, we got to the area the buck was when TJ shot him we could easily see a good blood trail. TJ took the lead and followed the blood with ease through the field. Once we hit the small stand of woods the trailing got a little more difficult, but not bad. About 30 yards from the buck TJ saw his deer and literally ran to the buck as we followed behind.

This young man was the happiest person on the planet! He was very pleased to get a hold of the antlers of his buck and get his picture taken with him. As he was getting pictures TJ said, "He is a nice eight point." To which I replied, "You better count him again." The buck turned out to be a nice three and a half year old nine point. Once we got the buck back to the skinning cooler the buck was weighed. He ended up being 170 pounds.

As we stood over TJ's buck I was sure not only to congratulate him on a great shot and an awesome deer, but also expressed how impressed I was for his maturity in not rushing his shot and not taking

the shot when he was too nervous. I told him many others wouldn't have passed on that shot and it could have resulted in a wounded deer.

TJ, his mother and I thanked Leon multiple times for allowing us such an awesome opportunity before departing back home. We relived the story many times on our ride back to Gladwin with the buck in the back of the truck. TJ also made many phone calls to relatives to proclaim his adventure and the nice buck he bagged.

I would like to thank everyone who made this hunt possible for this young man. There are the obvious people like Leon Low and the board members of our Mid-Michigan SCI Chapter, but there are hundreds and hundreds more to be thanked...all of you. Everyone who is a member of our chapter, all who are reading this article, you are the reason this hunt was made possible. The gratitude TJ showed and the joy he expressed was truly priceless, and it was all thanks to you.



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