

BC Resident Connects with a Stone's Ram on Solo Hunt

July 27, 2017... I couldn't stand it anymore. I wasn't getting anything done at work anyway so I left a day early for my sheep hunt far into the Cassiar Mountains. Two days later I was in Muncho lake having breakfast with John and Wade a couple guys I met last year up in the mountains. They knew I was scheduled to fly out the day after them, but I was hoping to maybe catch an early flight in. Besides, it's always good to cross info and see where guys are heading. I got lucky and landed on a little lake at 6:30pm. It was a beautiful evening for a hike.



Not really knowing this route I put my head down to cover some ground before dark – always take water from the lake before you go... As I found out, the next possible water was 1.5 hrs away. Now I'm two hrs in and the weather is starting to turn – ah the mountains. Its really raining now and the sky is black and its dark. Man! I am looking for anywhere to make a camp but this canyon is too steep. 11:30pm soaked, cold and at wits end. (if you have never had a WTF am I doing here while hunting you're missing out...) Suddenly there's John's Sil tarp! Thank God! Put up my tent in record time and into my sleeping bag buy 11:45...

The next morning was glorious sun! Those guys couldn't believe I caught them. John makes good coffee! I decided to stay put for a day to dry out and give those guys some room. Maybe see you on top fellas...



Day three: John and Wade made their camp about 3km further up the creek – I moved their whisky bottle just to let them know I was around. A long day on the boots. I pushed all the way to the back end of the drainage. Eight or ten hrs with an 80lb pack. Once you settle in its not that bad. Tomorrow is opening day!

August 1: Beautiful cloudless sky! All alone. Except for the two caribou, Old Mr. Jackson and Jesse James – that younger bull was everywhere! Just going to sit and glass for a day – yup slow day... Rest up, big recon day tomorrow.

August 2: Sun! Caribou! And off we go on a 15km walk about up and over the peaks. Must take look around! Still no sheep....

August 3: Plan to sit in the pass and watch the far hillside. Up early... Run into 4 other hunters. Mark and his 11-year-old daughter. Tough kid! Spent the rest of the day glassing talking to an older fella about the area. Back

to my tent I came up with a plan to cross the far ridge and up the basin to the far peaks and get some serious elevation... rest up.

August 4: Well this is my 3rd 14-day solo sheep hunt. I stood there looking up into God's country and said to myself: "Dude you have put in some serious leg work in three years and passed up around 20 legal rams... So why don't you just go up into that basin over there and get your ram. He's up there". Two hrs later I'm peeking over the first ridge from my camp and there he is! Right



up in that basin like I said he would be! He was everything I pictured! He's still a long way off but its only 7:30am – I have time.

He's moving his girls up the grassy feeding ground higher into the rocks. He's going to be out of sight in a few minutes. I'm really going to have to move fast a long way and up a huge slope to try and flank him. Wind is perfect. If all goes well, I'll be above him and catch him on the downside before he big climbs up the big peak. Better dump a little food and water – find something to drink up there...

Two hours later I'm almost up the slope, full sweat and heart working in the zone! Better slow down, I may have to shoot soon. He should be right below me... The slope here is not what I expected. It's a long convex shape I can't see over. Frustrating... Oh wait I can smell him! Yes, there's the stink and its strong. He's close. I sat and waited for another hour, then spotted his girls moving up the far Peak. I must have missed him or pushed him out the pass on the other side. Rats...

So, I went down and checked out the feeding area and followed his tracks a bit. Put some info in the data base for the next time. Dug a little hole and had a drink...

I spent the rest of the day looking for him under every rock and bush. If I didn't spook him he still might be around. I crossed over into the next basin, grabbed some elevation and glassed some further off hills



– maybe move camp that way tomorrow. It's now 7pm and I've covered the better part of eight or nine kms up and over, still about four more to home. I decided to cross back the way I came, back to where the ram was 12 hours ago. I sat and watched that basin for 30 or 40 minutes before stepping into it. Better get moving. I moved about 30m into the basin and wham! I can smell him! Then I hear a rock tumble... There he is! With

11 of his buddies coming to sit down right under the convex slope I couldn't see over in the morning. I'm right out in the open... I'm screwed... I sat down and watched them all bed down on the rocks. Three other shooters in the group! One had some very good mass but broomed off 3-4 inches on the left. He's safe... That bunch was one of the most amazing things to see! Wow, they are just going to sit up there and watch me. Ok then....

This next bit happened in about 40 seconds:

I ranged him twice at 331m. I am well practiced out to 400m and will shoot 300m all day long. So, range is good. Geez he's beautiful up there on his perch. I'm sure he was in that same bed 12 hours earlier when I smelled him the first time. Twenty-four eyes and they are all so calm, some of them are going to sleep. Now I must figure out how I'm going to shoot up a 55% slope while sitting on flat ground. Can't risk moving now. Use your pack! Shit! The pack isn't tall enough and I can't get low enough to get the barrel up. They are going to get up and bolt any second, I'm sure of it... Sooooo the best I can come up with hold half a sit-up and free hand him. Sounds easy huh... Lay on your back, pull half a sit-up, bring the gun up steady, hold your breath and put the bullet where you need to. So I did it... Solid hit right behind the right shoulder. The recoil from the 270wsm laid me out flat. I sat up like lighting to see sheep moving all over the place! He was now 20m to the left and laboring. I shot again breaking his left shoulder. (that's twice at 331m up 55% from half a sit up! Try it!) I didn't need to shoot twice but... ;)



He tumbled about 60m down the rocks to where I took his picture – 7:45pm. I did it! He is everything I had pictured 4 years ago when I decided to do a sheep hunt – I had a vision of my first ram and I held to it! I dressed him out fast and loaded up. Long way to go yet – tired...

Now for anyone who has never packed and animal you will never fully understand how awesome darkness, slope, rocks, brush, uneven ground and two creek crossings really is! And if you have never tried to find your tent in the dark when you are exhausted, well that's pretty special too! It's 12:30 am now and there is my tent, thank God I didn't pass it a second time... I wrapped my gift in Tyvek house wrap and tied it secure, nothing is louder than that stuff if you try to unwrap it – good alarm. I crawled into bed dirty and tired. The 2:15 am cramp was an especially nice touch to top off the evening.

August 5: Peek out the tent at 6am... yup looks good. Need another hour of sleep... The day was perfect! Sun and clear blue sky. Great day to clean and cape. Mark and his band of sheep hunters spotted me from up the ridge and ran down to have a look. They were on their way out. Unsuccessful but loving every second of it. He offered me all his salt and even offered to carry anything out for me. Wow are you kidding me!? I gave him all my food. No sense it going to waste, as it turns out his daughter had eaten them out of almost everything. Win win for all of us! I bet I'm the only guy to ever sheep hunt and pack out more salt than he brought...

Two days, a creek, rocks, brush, lots of small steps, a 125lb pack and I met John and Wade at the lake.

They came running to see the ram and get the pack off my back. John had a decent ram as well! I called in our pilot and convinced him it would be a great idea to pick the three of us up that night. It was a perfect night to fly! He radioed ahead and had beers and dinner waiting for us. Best salad I've ever eaten. On beer number two he came up and presented me with the mesh food bag I had given Mark three days before. It was a little lighter... Mark left me a note congratulating me on a fine ram and thanking me for the food. On top of that he left me a nice crisp \$50 bill and said he was going to buy me dinner and a celebratory beer! Class act Mark! Thank you!

