

Congratulations to WSSBC Life Member Aaron Parotta on anchoring a heavy old Desert Ram with Lancaster Expeditions in Sonora Mexico. Aaron acquired the hunt through our Wild Sheep Raffle in 2018 and we could not think of a more deserving WSSBC member and supporter to receive this opportunity. Congratulations Aaron on a magnificent ram.

Thank you to Lancaster Expeditions for supporting WSSBC by providing us with the Hunt of a Lifetime. Tickets are on sale now for our 2019 Wild Sheep Raffles at:

<https://www.wildsheepsociety.com/2019-wild-sheep-raffles/>

## CHIP

Written by WSSBC Life Member Aaron Parotta

On December 1st, at 14:00 hours, we arrived in Sonora, Mexico. My great friends, Wesley Sharpe and Brad Fiege, accompanied me to witness my Desert Ram hunt. Wesley said it was like having a friend in the Olympics and you just had to go watch not knowing if it would ever happen again. I was very happy to have them with me to share in this incredible journey and memory.

We were greeted at the airport by outfitter Clay Lancaster and Ryan Harder, of Lancaster Expeditions. We quickly loaded our gear in the truck and headed off into the desert. The scenery was amazing, abundant with every variety of Cacti and grasses. So different then any sheep hunt I had done in BC or Alberta.

After an hour and a half drive we arrived at the most beautiful ranch house. Nestled in the middle of the desert, terracotta colour and mosaic tiles made for such a fun contrast with the desert. This was to be home for the next nine days. Not the usual accommodation I am accustomed to on a sheep hunt..... I will try and get used to it!!!!



We then shot the gun I borrowed from the ranch making sure it was on target and I was comfortable with it. With a few hours of daylight left we all jumped in a high rack truck to glass for sheep until dark. It wasn't long and we spotted ewes and younger rams. It was nice to train our eyes for this different landscape. Now I was getting excited!!! At dark we headed back to the ranch for the start of the most amazing dinners. This place was definitely 5 star!!!

Morning arrived fast as we were all so tired from the flights. We ate breakfast, packed our packs and headed out in the truck for the day. The temperature was cool in the mornings, reaching highs of 24-27 degrees Celsius in the middle of the day and then cooling fast at



night. We drove to different glassing locations at the bottom of the mountains. The mountains, jagged with rock and vegetation rise up out of the flat desert. There were so many places for the sheep to hide in the heat of the day. Caves and old riverbeds were hidden amongst the vegetation. Cactus and mesquite trees taller than us that didn't look that tall until you hike thru it.

We saw lots of sheep this day. No shooters but lots of up and comers with some fantastic genetics. Their horns

were dark with an orange hue. Their mass already awe inspiring!!

On day two Clay decided to head to the North side of the mountain. We were quickly into finding sheep. Once again, lots of ewes and smaller rams. I caught a glimpse of a sheep walking at the top of the mountain just rounding a pinnacle. Clay and Ryan were quickly on it with their spotters. It was a good heavy ram. We watched it appear and disappear thru the vegetation for about an hour. It then appeared again and joined up with some more sheep which had another couple rams in the group. This group had another big ram as well. With two good rams Ryan and I decided to cut some distance. The rams were up high on a ledge. We wouldn't be able to see them if we were above them or below them. We decided just to get to 800 yards from them and wait for them to make a move. Unfortunately, they stayed in the same spot for a couple hours and then headed over the top of the mountain.



I was happy getting to do a stalk and see how the hiking on the terrain was. The rocks were unbelievably rough on the boots and don't think to grab the brush if you lose balance because it will be painful!!

Ryan and I were on our way back when Clay told us that they spotted another big ram. Off we went back up the mountain to try and see if we could see it and get in shooting range. We got just below some cliffs and skirted across to where we were told the ram was. Obtaining a high

vantage point and getting into position we waited for the ram to show himself. Sadly, the terrain kept us from seeing the ram which was probably only 250 yards away. The ram heard us and all we got to see was it go over the top of the mountain, too far for a shot and never stopping. Even though the stars didn't align I was so happy to see so many good rams. This day built my confidence that a ram in my future was going to happen.



The next morning, we were off to the South side of the mountain where all the rams seemed to have headed the day before. We spotted a good ram early that disappeared into a little valley, creek bottom. Our main focus was to try and locate him again but he most likely went and bedded in the cool valley bottom out of sight. During the day we spotted another small ram. It was a hotter day and our sightings fewer. At about two in the afternoon we spotted another ram

high on the hillside. Ryan and I, once again, left to get closer with eyes on the bottom to keep track of his direction. It wasn't long and we were half way up the mountain. Ryan and I, planning our route through the nasty cactus, proceeded to climb to a good location to put eyes on the ram. Before proceeding I glassed the creek bottom again because we could see a different angle. There was a beauty ram feeding on the side of it. We were in a terrific position and the ram didn't see us. All we had to do was drop into a different creek and climb the other side to be in shooting range. The rock was loose and crumbling down the bank. We hoped he wouldn't hear them falling. We climbed the hill and got into position. Ryan seen him right away and we ranged him at 320 yards. I sat and rested on his spotter. I had a broadside shot and decided to shoot once he cleared a big rock. I shot and he went into the creek out of sight. Not knowing if I had hit him we climbed to the top of a hill and immediately seen him trotting parallel to us. I sat again resting on the spotter, squeezed off a shot when he slowed broadside by a bush. Ryan said I saw him go down!!! We watched him in our binoculars to make sure he was staying down. I got my Desert Ram!!!!

Still in shock, pinching myself if this was real, Ryan and I approached the ram. His mass stood out instantly. I can't believe how their smaller bodies hold up that weight! We called the rest of the guys to come up and join in this unbelievable moment in time.

I remember Clay sending me pictures of a ram with a big chip on his left side. Clay told me this was the ram he wanted me to get. While in awe, admiring the ram, it had a big chip on its left side! It must have been meant to be, this was the ram for me, Chip!!!!

I couldn't be happier with Chip, Clay and Ryan's professionalism, the hospitality of the Mexican people, accommodations and incredible food. This hunt was worth

every penny. To have my friends there as well was icing on the cake!!! Special thanks to WSSBC, Clay Lancaster and Ryan Harding. Especially thanks to my wife for understanding that we all must live our dreams!!

