



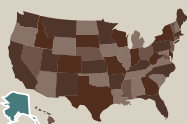
# HUNTING FOOL<sup>®</sup>

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Archery | Opportunity Hunts  
Member Stories



# ALASKAN *Adventure*



HUNTER: CHRIS LENAUER  
SPECIES: DALL SHEEP  
LOCATION: ALASKA

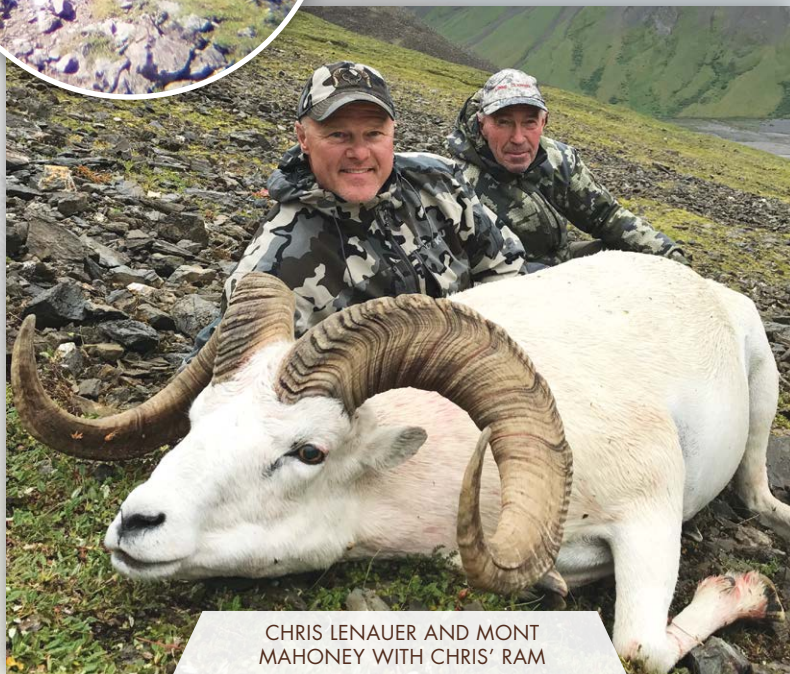
**I** grew up reading Jack O'Connor articles in *Outdoor Life* about his sheep hunts, never thinking I would ever be able to do the same hunts. At birth, my left leg was removed due to a birth defect and I was in and out of Shriners Hospital until age 12, having 13 operations during this time. As a young man, my dad and brothers hunted, and by age 15, I began bowhunting and my love for hunting grew. Also at around 15 years old, I began lifting weights and have lifted ever since.

After graduating from high school in central Missouri, I attended college in Rochester, New York at the Rochester Institute of Technology from 1984 to 1988. While at RIT, I harvested two archery bucks on two properties I had gained permission to hunt. During my last year of college, I married my high school sweetheart, Robin, and she moved to New York.

My first job out of college was just outside of Cleveland, Ohio. I moved a year later to the Bay Area in California, working as a Sales Representative for a large printing company. While there, I harvested a black bear with my bow in northern California near Burney Falls. Two year later, a sales position for the same company became available back in Missouri. Finally back home, my hunting got much more serious. I had the opportunity to harvest three black bears, three bull elk with a bow and two more with a rifle, a Yukon bull moose, and dozens of whitetail with a bow and a rifle.

A few years ago, I began looking into a Dall sheep hunt. I contacted several outfitters and watched many YouTube Dall sheep hunt videos. Once I told several outfitters that I had a prosthetic leg, they didn't seem interested in taking me on. Watching several hunts on YouTube posted by Austin Atkinson of Huntin' Fool lead me to Mont Mahoney of Alaska Dall Sheep Guides. Mont is a retired Alaskan Airlines pilot and owner/operator of Alaska Dall Sheep Guides. After speaking with him





CHRIS LENAUER AND MONT MAHONEY WITH CHRIS' RAM



DAVID OTT AND AUSTIN ATKINSON WITH DAVID'S RAM

on several occasions, I had a good feeling that he was the outfitter I wanted to hunt with. I spoke with my good friend and longtime hunting partner, David Ott, and we made plans to hunt the 2017 Alaska Dall sheep season.

Six months prior to the hunt, I began to break from my traditional workouts and started incorporating more CrossFit routines to increase my endurance levels. Eight weeks prior, I started hiking three miles several times a week with my KUIU 5200 Icon pack with 30 lbs. of sandbags.

Finally, the time had arrived. A week prior to the hunt, my wife of 30 years and I spent six days on the Kenai Peninsula touring Seward, Homer, and Girdwood. On August 7<sup>th</sup>, my wife flew home and David Ott arrived in Anchorage. After three flights, we were unloading our gear from Mont's Super Cub into a tent. After quick introductions to the other hunters and guides, we watched a grizzly wandering around on the mountain across from camp. For the next day and a half, we sat at camp, glassing sheep with

***"...Mitch Atkinson told David and me to load our packs with everything for three days because we were going for a hike. At the time, I did not know that this was a test to see if I was capable of navigating the steep, rocky terrain."***

spotting scopes. Then, Mitch Atkinson told David and me to load our packs with everything for three days because we were going for a hike. At the time, I did not know that this was a test to see if I was capable of navigating the steep, rocky terrain.





The next evening, the day prior to the opener of sheep season, we loaded our packs with everything we would need at spike camp for three to four days. We took off late that evening, hiking three miles, trying to close the distance for the morning hunt. When we arrived at spike camp at around 10:30 p.m., Mont and Austin Allred, our meat packer, set up a Hilleberg tent and the three of us climbed into our sleeping bags for a short, very windy night.

At 4:50 a.m., we arose, ate a quick Mountain House breakfast, and started up the mountain. After hiking with loaded packs for two hours, Mont spotted two rams that he felt had potential for a closer look. At this point, we dropped into a shale ravine and began the arduous climb one step at a time, trying to keep my footing assisted with my Black Diamond trekking poles to steady myself. We closed the distance close enough two times to know they were both legal rams. Back into the shale ravine, I got my second wind with the knowledge that it was now or never to push hard to gain elevation and get above the rams.

After 30 minutes, we found ourselves 250 yards from not two rams, but four rams. Mont instructed me to get my breath and dry fire my rifle on the largest ram. While doing so, Austin set up his Vortex spotting scope with his Phone Skope to video the hunt. The rams saw movement from Austin and things started to happen fast. After a long climb and the excitement, I rushed my first shot and had a clean miss. Now all four rams were moving up the mountain in a very tight group. With directions from Mont, the largest ram broke away from the other three and exposed his vitals at around 280 yards. I squeezed off a shot, and it hit him just behind the ribs, angling forward into his chest. I chambered a third round into my 28 Nosler, and Mont yelled to put him down. The third shot connected at the base of his neck and sent him tumbling 40 yards down the rocky mountain.

We quickly erupted into whoops and hollers. After a few minutes of celebration, we arrived at my ram. We were in sheer awe of his size and the beauty of the surrounding mountains. Mont asked for a prayer to give thanks to our Creator and Savior for this opportunity. We then had a photo shoot that would make Sports Illustrated proud. Now the real work began with caping and quartering the ram and









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*“After a few minutes of celebration, we arrived at my ram. We were in sheer awe of his size and the beauty of the surrounding mountains. Mont asked for a prayer to give thanks to our Creator and Savior for this opportunity.”*

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removing every scrap of meat, leaving only the guts and spine behind. We arrived back at the main camp late that evening and climbed right into our sleeping bags for a quick night's sleep.

Only after pulling tape on my ram did I realize how fortunate I was to harvest Mont's largest ram that he had personally guided a client to. My ram was 13 years old with 13 2/8" bases. The left horn length was 39", the right horn length was 39 5/8", and he had a 26 1/8" tip-to-tip spread.

David Ott connected on an 11-year-old ram while being guided by Austin and Mitch Atkinson on day three of the hunt.

I am truly grateful to Mont Mahoney for taking me on as a client, knowing it would not be his typical hunt and one I

could not have done without his help. I am also grateful that there are places so remote and difficult to reach that they stay basically untouched by mankind. **EF**





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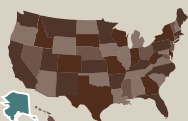


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How To Articles  
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# MY SHEEP BUG



HUNTER: PETE REEL  
SPECIES: DALL SHEEP  
LOCATION: ALASKA

**I caught my sheep bug in 2010 while I was helping a good friend of mine, Andy Locke, fill his California bighorn sheep tag in Oregon. I am convinced that all it takes to catch the sheep bug is to place your hands on those massive horns. It's almost like a spell is cast upon you.**

Since then, I had applied in multiple states every year, trying to get lucky on a draw tag. I also attended many outdoorsmen shows, such as SCI and the Reno Sheep Show, where I always threw my name in the hat for some sort of sheep hunt draw/raffle as well as some magazine hunt giveaways. Many times, these raffles have better odds of winning a sheep hunt than drawing a sheep tag in a particular state. I had talked to quite a few outfitters at some of these shows and was trying to decide on a Dall sheep hunt in Alaska or NWT, but I just had a hard time writing a check for the amount that some of these hunts go for.

I rarely keep track of when these drawings take place, so I was totally caught off guard when I got a call from Huntin' Fool in March of 2016, saying, "Pete, I'm about to make your day." I thought it was just another salesman calling. When he told me he was Austin Atkinson of Huntin' Fool and that my name had just been drawn for a Dall sheep hunt in Alaska in the Winter Membership Drive, I couldn't believe what I was hearing! I was finally going to have a sheep tag with my name on it. I would be hunting with Mont Mahoney of Alaska Dall Sheep Guides in the western Alaska Range. All I had to do was fly to McGrath but also wait almost 18 months for the hunt as it was for August 2017.

I was very excited about the hunt and had a lot of time to prepare, but I just had to put it out of my mind for a while. Being an avid hunter for over 40 years, I already had most of the gear that I needed for a backpack hunt in the Alaska outback, but this special hunt deserved a new, special rifle. I contacted my friend, Sterling Becklin of ERA3, who put together a long-range shooter in 6.5 Creedmoor with a folding stock that fit in a backpack perfectly for me.





Time went by quickly, and before I knew it, I was heading to Alaska to hunt Dall sheep. Five plane rides and two days later, I was sitting in base camp having dinner with four other hunters, their guides, our trusted pilot, Mont, and the camp cook. What an awesome group of guys all telling stories about past hunts and enjoying each other's company out in the Alaska wilderness. My guide would be Brian Rhead. I could tell by his demeanor and his gear that he was a seasoned guide and was serious about his job.

The next day, Mont flew us into our spike camp area in his Super Cub a day and a half before the opener. After hiking to our spike camp, we climbed a few hills to spot for sheep. We set up our spotting scopes, and it didn't take long before we were seeing white dots on the green mountains. We decided to move closer to get a better look, and when we did, we spotted over 30 sheep spread out over the mountain before us, and at least 15 were rams. The light was fading, and we decided to come back in the morning and really look them over.

After some Mountain House and a good night's sleep, we were back on the mountain only to find that the sheep had moved closer to us. Now they were about 1,500 yards away with nothing but open area between us. Out of the 15 rams we saw, only 3 we could guess were legal. A legal ram must be 8 years old, have a full curl on at least one side, or be broomed on both horns. Even with good optics, it took a lot of studying with the wind howling to tell that two of the rams were legal, but one stood out. He was a beautiful ram with evenly flared out horns.

It was an awesome day watching a hillside full of beautiful white sheep grazing on the mountain across from us. We even watched a wolverine as he made his way down from a glacier, no doubt looking for something to eat as he lumbered his way down the edge of the river that was coming out of a beautiful blue glacier to the east. That's when we heard a plane land and takeoff from the landing strip we had landed on the day before. Soon, we could see two other hunters hiking our way. This was not good! Nobody wants to compete with other hunters for the same animals. Brian thought the same thing and hiked down the



mountain to let them know that we already had this mountain covered. They graciously turned around to hunt a different mountain. We put the rams to bed and formulated a plan to hike to a hill below the sheep in the morning before light and hopefully be within range when dawn broke.

It was a sleepless night as all I could think about was that beautiful ram and hoping our plan would come together in the morning. The wind howled all night, and there was a definite change in the weather. We woke up early and carefully made our way up the riverbed at the bottom of the mountain in the dark and climbed the hill to where we thought the sheep would be above us. As dawn slowly began to break, we could see the sheep above us, and after a while, we spotted the ram with the flared out horns. I love it when a plan comes together! He was at 460 yards and walking into a slight ditch out of our sight. After waiting about 15 minutes, he appeared at 420 yards, broadside and staring right at us. He was at about a 45-degree angle uphill to me, and I had a hard time getting him in the scope. I thought I had adjusted for the angle and squeezed the trigger, but I shot over him. The second shot went high as well, but I calmed down on the third shot and anchored him.

We hiked up to the ram, and it was an emotional moment when I finally put my hands on his horns and had to take a moment to thank the Man in charge. By now, the rain was blowing sideways on the mountain. We were told by our pilot that we would either have to wait out the weather for a couple of days to be picked

up or we could hike back to base camp. We would have to hike uphill through a scree field a couple miles across and through a saddle and then it was all downhill from there to base camp. Easy. We decided it would be better to hike out to base camp and eat great food than to endure a few more days in a wet tent eating Mountain House and waiting out the storm.

About halfway across the scree field, I think we both regretted that decision because with our packs weighing well over 100 lbs. each and two steps forward and sliding one step back, it was almost all day getting through that saddle. We pitched our tents a few hundred yards on the other side of the saddle, got into some dry clothes, and passed out until the next morning. That was definitely the toughest pack out I've made in all my years of hunting.

We made it back to base camp around noon the next day, and when the camp cook asked me if I was hungry, I said, "Sure, keep it coming." I ate eight eggs, half a pound of bacon, and six pieces of toast, and I was still hungry from that hike out, but I was too embarrassed to ask for more. What a great adventure!

I want to thank Huntin' Fool for putting together their Membership Drives with such great quality hunts. It was everything I could have hoped for in winning a hunt like this. I would also like to thank my wife for putting up with my hunting addiction for 35+ years. Like I always say, you can't win unless your name is in the hat! **EF**

