

Barbary Sheep
February 19, 2018 New Mexico

Matthew 7:13-14 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and easy is the path that leads to destruction, and many go that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the way is difficult, and few are those who find it.”

A year ago I was feeling puny from a nagging infection in my hand that had been undiagnosed for nearly a year prior to that. This year I was back in the saddle, feeling much better and back in training. Last year due to our crazy schedules Jason and I weren't able to hunt sheep together, but this year we were a team. Weather at the beginning of season was uncharacteristically mild, with almost no wind, making our initial sortie most enjoyable. Good health, good company and good weather makes any hunting trip pretty hard to beat.

We had pored over maps to identify potential areas throughout the past year and were eager to see if our efforts and dreaming would pay off.

In typical fashion we shouldered our backpacks and began hiking early in the morning with enough gear and fuel to sustain us the entire day. The breakfast burritos I packed hit the spot when we began glassing at our first vantage shortly after daybreak.

We turned up a few deer and some neat fossils, but no sheep by midmorning when we crossed paths with another hunter. We briefly compared notes and he told us he was heading back to his truck, which was apparently parked somewhere in the vicinity of ours. We chuckled after he left because we had only just begun our crazy 11-mile loop that at best would put us back to the truck well after dark: the other guy would do a 2-mile jaunt and call it good. Most folks take the easy way and hope to find game, but we've found that embracing the longer and more difficult route is more likely to yield success.



The cycle of the moon didn't light our nighttime hikes until well after sunset, but we still took advantage of its aid on more than one occasion!



A few miles later we were rewarded with our first sheep sighting: some ewes and smaller rams. Our freezers were bursting so the sheep were too small to be tempting, but it's satisfying to spot our quarry before they see us, and we watched until they fed out of sight.

A few years ago I convinced Jason that the added stability provided by a tripod more than made up for its additional weight, so we sat side by side panning our Vortex glass back and forth, up and down, in our relentless search for sheep.



Stable binoculars make a world of difference when glassing

We continued our rhythmic pattern: hike, sit and glass until we had completely picked apart the view, and repeat. We spotted a few more sheep, but no big rams.

Perhaps an hour before sunset we spied a few ewes close by and two larger groups on distant ridges. The nearby sheep were about 300-400 yards away and we watched them round the head of a small canyon and begin to ascend the far side.

KABOOM! Jason and I were jolted to attention. Someone had shot at the close sheep. The ewes quickly vanished as we scanned to identify the hunter's location. We eventually spotted 2 guys on the ridge above us. To their credit, they hiked to where the sheep had been, presumably to verify whether they had hit anything, although from our vantage it appeared unlikely. I won't dictate acceptable shot distances to anyone, but it seemed like these guys were reaching out too far. Regardless, their activities put a damper on the evening and we didn't see any more sheep.

By the end of daylight we were over 4 miles from the truck as the crow flies, so it was time for headlamps and a forced march. At camp we were too tired to do more than wolf down a quick snack and hit the sack. Morning would come early.

We awoke somewhat stiff and sore, but donned our backpacks and headed off on another grueling loop. We decided to stay in the general vicinity but veered slightly to hit different areas in hopes of locating some bigger rams. By midmorning we had found a few mule deer does, but no sheep. Jason announced "I got something". I trained my binoculars in the direction he was looking, but the animal didn't look like a sheep or a deer. Finally we agreed it had to be a cow elk! What she was doing in the middle of barren sheep country is anyone's guess. I studied it for quite some time wondering why it didn't move, as a suspicion began to form in my mind. It appeared that one of its rear legs was caught in the strands of a barbed wire fence. Our hearts went out to it and we charted a course to assess the state of affairs.



Unlikely animal in Barbary sheep country

As we approached it was obvious the situation was bad; the yearling cow had snagged its leg when jumping over the fence. The droppings on the ground were old and dried, the ground was torn up from its hooves, and it was apparent it had been there for several days. The wire had cut to the bone around its entire leg just above the hoof. The poor thing appeared weak, but when I approached it bared its teeth and would have bitten me if I weren't safely on the opposite side of the fence. At least it still had some spunk, which we hoped would be enough to keep it alive despite being destined for only 3 legs.



This young cow still had some spunk left and we hoped that gumption would sustain her.

The tricky part was to figure out how to release tension on the wires without any tools. We finally untwisted some of the fence post tie wires and used rocks as levers to pry the wires apart enough to free the cow. She initially stumbled and was shaky on her feet; understandable after standing for days on end, but soon hobbled off. I prayed that she'd have the stamina to heal up and make it. We had done all we could and only time would tell if someday we'd see a 3-legged elk in the area. If nothing else she'd be able to curl up and die in peace rather than stand tortured in the sun.

It boggles me when uninformed people believe hunters to be "cruel". It's this fallen world that's cruel, and animals (people too!) rarely die peacefully in their sleep. A quick perusal of television shows reveals prey animals are typically brought down by a ravenous pack of coyotes or worse. Everybody and everything is going to die someday. A well-placed bullet or arrow brings swift death; getting chewed on by predators or baking in the sun and dying of thirst can drag on for hours or days.

We resumed our hunt with spirits were somewhat dampened by the extensive damage to the cow's leg. At midafternoon we spotted a couple of sheep at the top of a ridge opposite us. They appeared to be ewes or smaller rams and despite studying them carefully, we couldn't convince ourselves to go after them.



Sheep on an opposite ridge

Later that day we glassed a horse and mule hitched in the shade of some trees with two riders nearby. One was dressed in cowboy attire and must have been a guide or wrangler. The other was dressed in camouflage and using a spotting scope to study something out of our view. Eventually they returned to their mounts and began riding along the ridge they were on, which would meet up with our ridge.

They disappeared and then reappeared on a finger below us. Suddenly they halted and the hunter jumped off his mount and began studying something in the canyon below us and out of sight. A half dozen sheep blew out of the valley and raced up the far slope. The two remounted and continued riding along the skyline, repeating the process and blowing out another dozen sheep from the next small canyon. Although using horses seemed like a great way to cover ground, their antics made a mess of the area. By the time the riders disappeared onto private land they had spooked no less than 40 sheep that we could account for. None of the sheep were big, but the foolish actions of the riders dampened our enthusiasm for the area. Once again sunset arrived and we were over 4 miles from the truck, so out came the headlamps for another nighttime trek.

Back at camp we reviewed maps and made a plan to look over some new areas the next day. We ended up burning most of the morning in a failed attempt to find roads that might take us within striking distance of our intended area, so we shifted gears and headed to another likely spot.

We parked the truck, grabbed our gear and began hiking. Almost immediately something caught my eye and a handful of sheep popped into view on the first ridge! In years of sheep hunting this was the closest to a road we'd ever found any. We studied the sheep as they bounced back and forth across the rocky ridgeline and eventually decided that at least one, perhaps two, were rams that deserved a closer look.

We dropped into an arroyo and circled out of sight, intending to gain some elevation; however, by the time we started climbing the sheep had dropped onto our side of the ridge and were bedded in some shade. We could only see one "shooter" but our odds were looking good. We made it to within 300 yards of the group before running out of cover. We had a perfect position in the shade of a large tree and the wind drifted from the sheep down the canyon to us so it would be impossible for them to see or smell us. We discussed cutting the distance by backing out and approaching from a different angle, but ultimately decided to sit tight to see what the sheep would do when they rose from their beds.

Waiting proved to be a good decision when a couple sheep appeared lower on the slope opposite us and began feeding downhill. I ticked off the distance as they approached: 250

yards, 200 yards. Depending on their route they would at least get within 150 yards and perhaps as close as 90 yards. Jason and I studied them as they grazed and picked out the two biggest rams. I could tell they weren't huge, but their proximity to a drivable road and potential for a short pack cemented our decision. Coupled with the chance of double success we decided to take them if we could.



Regal animals



I snapped some photos as the rams approached our position



"My" ram just shortly before we decided to shoot

When the sheep got to 150-yards some angled away and it appeared they wouldn't get any closer. We both had solid rests and prepared to shoot when both target rams were broadside and not moving. I volunteered to count down so we could shoot simultaneously, but for some reason I felt nervous. I tracked "my" ram while keeping tabs on Jason's. It seemed every time one stopped broadside, the other remained in motion or turned away, and then they'd switch. Finally both were clear of yuccas and brush and it was time to count: 1, 2, 3 "baboom". Jason immediately apologized for pulling the trigger a hair before I had. I was on "my" sheep when I pulled the trigger, but I didn't feel good about the shot.

The herd quickly began trotting uphill and I tracked "my" ram. He stopped broadside at 220 yards and I carefully squeezed off another shot, but saw a puff of dust above him. Again I tracked the ram and the others as they trotted up. When they stopped at 280 yards I opted to pass on shooting again. The sheep warily continued to the skyline and disappeared over the top.

Jason felt confident with his shot, but we didn't see his ram laying on the opposite hill and none of the animals had appeared to be wounded, limping, or otherwise hit.

We hiked over and immediately located blood where Jason's had been standing. I found tracks where mine had been but no evidence of a hit. We followed the blood spatter for perhaps a dozen yards and it appeared Jason's sheep had turned uphill with the others. We were surprised that we hadn't seen it stumble or fall but we hiked up to search for blood at the places the sheep had stopped. Neither location had any sign, but I glanced downhill and lo and behold a suspicious brown patch caught my eye. My binoculars confirmed it was Jason's sheep! We hustled back down and were chagrined that it was dead as a stone just a few steps from where we had veered from our search for it. In total it had traveled less than 40-yards from where he shot it, but it had fallen in a low spot that camouflaged its position. The ram had respectable 21" horns and best of all we only had to pack it about 200-yards to a two track road we could drive on!



Good shooting and a good ram!

Although the others likely hadn't gone far, our first order of business was to butcher the ram. Rather than charge after them, I felt it more prudent to help Jason drag the ram to some shade and work as a team to ensure the meat cooled down quickly for delicious table fare. We've sliced up a bunch of wild game together so it took under an hour to get all the meat bagged. Jason took off to retrieve the truck and I sneaked over the ridge to try and relocate the sheep.

Although I initially spotted them, by the time I circled had to get the wind in my favor "my" ram and another smaller ram had disappeared and I wasn't ready to lower my standards and shoot a ewe.



Ewes, but the rams had disappeared

As twilight approached, I reluctantly retraced my steps to meet Jason. He had retrieved the truck, shuttled the meat to the two track and was rearranging the coolers and ice to further cool the meat. We discussed our options and even though Jason was willing to stay and help me the following day, he was in the process of accepting a new job and overloaded at work, so it seemed wiser to head for home and let him deal with reality. I planned to return on my own the following weekend.

After a week at the office I hit the road for another excursion. Along the way I stopped in the desert to check my rifle. Surprisingly it was off quite a bit at 100-yards. I've owned my rifle for over two decades and never had any issues with the scope, but it was obvious that something was out of alignment. Given the waning daylight and spitting rain I didn't bother sighting it back in, but instead changed gears to use Robin's rifle.

I arrived at my intended campsite without incident and quickly tucked into the back of my truck and fell asleep with visions of heavy-horned rams dancing in my head.

The next morning dawned clear and brisk, and without much ado I set off to find some sheep. My backpack was laden with food and water, and I was refreshed after recovering for a week at home.

The miles slowly fell away as I weaved across the stark desert terrain. Despite following the contours wherever I could, climbing and descending the rocky bluffs was inevitable and it was hard work. I knew the wide, easy path rarely leads to hunting success, so marched on, pausing to sweep my Vortex glass across each new vista before continuing.

I was occasionally rewarded with sheep sightings, but didn't find any rams until early afternoon, when I noticed a band of sheep feeding in some cholla cactus on a far mesa. The heat waves made them hard to judge, but a couple appeared big enough to merit a closer look. They were well over a mile away and I had to cross two canyons to reach their mesa, plus the wind had picked up substantially since the calm morning.

I'm always amazed how a mile around the track seems like nothing, but a mile in the "real world" usually involves a lot of time and effort. It took me over an hour to reach the base of the mesa on which, I hoped, the sheep still fed. One rocky climb stood before me before I would have to slow down and find the sheep before they spotted me. Partway up the steep slope the wind began to angle to betray me, so I adjusted course and detoured to ensure that my scent would pass beyond where I expected the sheep to be.

At the top of the mesa I scanned with my eyes and then binoculars, searching for tan movement between scattered brush, yucca and cholla cactus. I cleared each new view before slowly moving ahead and repeating the procedure.

After a while it was obvious the sheep had moved from where I had originally seen them, so I shifted position and expanded my search area. Soon I spotted them feeding about 400 yards from their original position and on the opposite side of the bowl from where I sat. Almost simultaneously a faint buzz came to my ear and I caught movement in the bottom of a valley – a side by side UTV was rumbling on a faint two track ranch road. Drat - what are the odds?! The sheep immediately perked up their ears and filed toward the ridgeline. The UTV bumped and banged up the faint track and I silently willed the sheep to stay invisible to those I assumed to be hunters with access through private land.

I glassed the rig and noted two men inside. They appeared to be dressed like ranchers, but I noted a rifle case strapped to the roll bar. The sheep angled toward some scattered brush and I was confident they would not be spotted. I alternated between keeping track of the sheep's escape route and the UTV's progress. Soon each disappeared in opposite directions and I quickly packed up to go after the herd, which included two decent rams. I hustled half a mile on a parallel track and then hooked to where I hoped to find them.

It took a while but I relocated the sheep on the opposite side of another canyon just over 300-yards away. One ram seemed a little larger than the rest, but I didn't feel like he was the one for me. I was content to observe as they meandered and grazed across the far slope and ultimately disappeared.



At 300 yards distant I decided these rams weren't the ones for me

The wind whipped the vegetation as I turned towards my truck, nearly 4 miles distant “as the crow flies”, although I would travel much farther than that follow a reasonable path.

As I rounded a bend in a drainage bottom I surprised a herd of mule deer feeding almost within archery range. I froze and studied them, entertained by observing them at such close range. However, one wily doe had caught me arriving on the scene and bored holes in me with her sharp eyes. I suspected it would take her a long time to lose interest and had a long way to go with sunset looming. I eased to a bush a few steps away and that was enough to make her lead the herd away with a stiff-legged walk.



Mule deer herd

I scanned the ridgeline and spotted a deer-like silhouette. My binoculars revealed it was actually a Barbary, so I scoured the area for more. At first I thought the sheep had seen me, but soon realized it was just watching the deer move away. More sheep appeared on the skyline. Several stood out as “shooters” and I immediately planned an approach that would keep me out of view. I was in a great position hidden behind the bush right next to a rocky outcrop. In seconds I was on my way up the slope with the wind in my favor.



Definitely a “shooter” or two in this band of sheep!

In less than fifteen minutes I was within 100-yards of the sheep, but the very bushes that kept me unseen blocked my clear view of them. I knew they were nearby because I hadn’t seen them leave the small basin, but I couldn’t see any of them. I dropped my backpack and crept forward. Soon I glimpsed the movement of sheep filtering between scattered junipers. I scanned for one of the bigger rams and saw one angling up the hill below me. I picked a shooting lane between yuccas and bushes, while trying to make sure the branches close to me were not blocking my shot, and waited for him to step into the clear. He took another step and I squeezed the trigger!

Instantly he jumped forward and out of view. Sheep erupted and then quickly bunched together, unsure of the noise and unaware that I was nearby. I studied them through my binoculars but none appeared injured and, additionally, all appeared to be smaller rams than the one I had fired at. After a little while one ram walked slowly uphill. I studied him intently but besides moving slowly nothing appeared out of the ordinary; he wasn’t limping

or otherwise acting odd. Some of the other sheep moved near him. My perception was this ram looked like the one that had been in my sights. He stood facing away from me still as a statue while all of the other sheep bobbed their heads and paused to stare in different directions as they nervously milled about. Regardless, I didn't have a clear shot and I couldn't be certain that my ram wasn't lying dead where I had taken my shot.

The daylight faded and soon the rams began moving down toward me as they stared in the vicinity of where the ram had been when I shot. Their actions made me think my ram might well be lying there. The larger ram remained standing uphill, and because he was acting differently, I was equally suspicious that he was the one I had shot. Several of the rams came within 20 yards but the light was getting so dim I could barely see them. Finally their nerves got the best of them and they charged to the bottom of the ravine and up the other side. The fact that one ram remained behind solidified my suspicion that it had been the one I shot at, so I turned back with the intention of shooting again only to glimpse him ghost through the brush and disappear. By then the light was so dim I couldn't justify stalking after him for a follow up shot. I retraced my path to my backpack and barely found it before it got too dark to see, which would have been a fiasco had I been unable to locate it before darkness fell. I knew better, but reminded myself to always grab my GPS and headlamp before dropping my pack for a stalk.

I debated my next move and decided to go to where the ram had stood for so long, and where he had been when I shot to see if I could find any blood. However, in the dark without the ability to identify landmarks I found it difficult to be certain I was in the exact locations and couldn't find any blood. I zigzagged in the direction the ram had departed, thinking I might see the reflection of my headlamp in his eyes if he remained nearby, but didn't see that either.

Reluctantly I marked the spot with my GPS and began the difficult march to my truck, with plans to return in the morning and resume my search during daylight.



Sunrise



Sunrise was beautiful!

The next morning the beautiful sunrise was a welcome reward for rising early. En route to my previous night's location I came across several fossils, and throughout the day I stumbled across (literally in many cases!) many more.



One of many neat fossils



Another

To make a long story short I found a couple of sparse drops of blood but nothing that appeared to be more than superficial. I had no idea why my shot went awry and began second-guessing my decision to use Robin's smaller caliber rifle. After the difficulty we had finding Jason's sheep, I methodically looked everywhere: if I wasn't positive I could see the area with my eyes and binoculars, I hiked directly to the spot to be sure. I hiked, glassed and otherwise thoroughly scoured a huge area radiating from where I had last seen the ram until I was certain he still lived. A fatally wounded animal simply couldn't have traveled beyond the area I searched. Half a day of searching meant a lot of climbs and descents to complete my grid pattern, but by early afternoon I called it quits. I ate some lunch and pondered my next move. The wind had picked up and was howling. Occasionally my phone briefly found service and weather alerts came through warning me of high winds in the area: 35-45, gusting to 55! It was horrible. I texted a friend to report the news and conditions, and my plans to retreat for home.

His response encouraged me: "You're tough, the sheep are still out there, go find one – besides, nobody else will be out there!" Well, maybe I could keep looking for a few more hours before heading for the truck...

Suddenly three ewes trotted into view and beelined past me at 60 yards before disappearing over a small rise. The point had been made – the sheep were indeed still out here!



Three ewes trotted past me as I sat eating lunch



Taking photos of fossils is a lot less work than carrying them!

With renewed enthusiasm I resumed my search for rams – to heck with the wind!



This fossil reminded me of a ram's horn

I spent the next couple of hours peering toward the leeward side of hills and ridges, suspecting that sheep would be holed up to avoid the gale force winds, but after miles of travel I hadn't spotted a single animal. Much of my searching took me in the direction the ram I had shot had headed so it further confirmed he wasn't wounded or dead.



Pretty cholla fruit

With a couple hours of daylight remaining I began to hope the weather (wind) would be better when I returned later in the season. I crested yet another ridge and slunk beside a scrubby bush to glass while keeping a low profile. Bingo – I spotted a herd of sheep, less than half a mile from the band of rams I had gotten into the night before! It was nearly impossible to hold my binoculars steady enough to seriously evaluate them, but I could tell it was a different group mainly consisting of ewes and/or smaller rams. However, one ram stood out as being bigger-bodied than the rest and his chaps fluttered in the wind. They were perhaps half a mile away, but approaching would mean descending the rocky canyon before me and ascending to the very top of the other side. Despite their distance

I took every precaution to use the terrain and vegetation to conceal my descent. Once at the bottom of the canyon it was easier to stay hidden and I could move more quickly.

The climb on their side of the valley was uneventful and the howling wind made it unnecessary to worry about noise as I scrambled up the rocky slope, but when I peeked to where the sheep should have been they were gone. I could see they hadn't moved downhill, which meant they had crested the ridge straight into 50-60mph winds; definitely not the route I would have expected.

I crept from bush to bush up and over the top of the ridge trying to relocate them but they had vanished. Due to the wind direction I dared not get ahead of them, so I zigzagged back and forth while moving ahead to scrutinize every inch of terrain. Soon the ridge narrowed. One side had too little vegetation to hide a herd of sheep, so I focused my attention on the other side. At first glance it didn't appear that sheep could remain out of sight there either, but I couldn't see directly below me and the opposite side of the canyon was wide open and I didn't think they had already moved that far.

I settled next to a bush and glassed below me. After a few minutes a brown stone protruding beyond a rock outcrop caught my eye and I studied it carefully. Just about the time I was convinced it was a rock it disappeared! That glimpse was all it took; I knew the sheep were less than 100-yards below and I just needed to get ready and wait. A slight move was in order to be certain the wind remained in my favor.

I crouched next to a boulder and laid my backpack across the top of another with Robins' rifle cradled on the padding. Almost immediately the lead ewe emerged 50-yards below me and climbing! I had expected the sheep to file onto the opposite slope, anticipating a 120-150 yard shot. I was thankful for full camouflage: head, face, and gloves; sometimes the little details make all the difference. I eased myself into shooting position but the sheep were so close that I could only see 1 or 2 animals in the scope. I hadn't identified a ram but the lead ewe froze and stared at me. I dared not move my head side to side away from the scope, so alternated between staring through the scope with my right eye and watching the entire group with my left eye.

Eventually two rams came into view; one noticeably bigger than the other. The rams and ewes jostled positions, making it difficult to keep tabs on the larger ram. Additionally the group was facing me and multiple animals blocked a shot at the bigger ram. Intense, close-range action is the reason I love hunting so much, and it couldn't get better. The sheep kept approaching and then turned to follow the contour of the hill perhaps 30-yards below me. I had to slowly rotate to follow the big ram during which the same vigilant ewe kept glancing my way. No doubt the strong wind helped disguise what little movement I made because every tuft of grass and scraggly bush shook violently. The sharp-eyed ewe didn't spook.

Soon the big ram was broadside but one ewe stood between me and him and another directly beyond him. First one ewe would move and then the other, but neither cleared enough for a shot. I began to wonder if they would stay bunched together and move away without me getting a shot. What irony to be within archery range and yet not be able to shoot one with a rifle. Suddenly the closest ewe jumped several steps forward, the ram took one step, and the farther ewe didn't move - my window of opportunity! At my quick squeeze of the trigger the herd bolted forward and disappeared beyond a nearby wrinkle in the topography. I knew there was no way I could have missed, but I was nagged from the unexpected turn of events 24-hours prior. I jacked in another round and stood up only

to see the surprised group huddled together 60-yards away and staring towards me. The big ram was not with them and I froze to assess the situation. Yep, definitely no big ram in the group, which meant he had to be out of sight between where I had shot and where the group stood. I reached down slowly and retrieved my camera to snap a few photos of the group before they filed off. Even as they left I studied every single sheep through my binoculars to confirm none was the big ram.



The group shortly after I shot

I found my ram less than 10-yards from where I shot him. He was a bruiser later confirmed to be just a little shy of my biggest ram ever. Bagging a great ram in difficult conditions was rewarding, and the meat would be added to our family larder for many fine meals.



Bruiser!



View from behind



Massive, heavy horns



Great ram horns

It would have been nice to get out of the wind, but the beast was far too heavy to drag so I butchered him where he lay. I quickly shot a satellite message to my family, snapped some photos, donned my headlamp and dove into the task of skinning and deboning the beast. I wanted to save the hide for my taxidermist friend, which slows the process and adds extra weight to carry out. A year ago I killed a slightly smaller ram and struggled to pack it out due to health issues (Barbary 2017). This year I was blessed with health and getting back into shape, but it would still be a lot of work!

The wind was horrific and dust swirled into my eyes every time I carelessly shuffled my feet, but in a little over an hour I had all the meat in bags cooling rapidly on rock slabs and the head and hide bundled in another bag. I shuttled the hide and one bag of meat to a sheltered area at the top of the ridge that would remain shaded the next morning, and loaded the remaining 3 bags into my backpack. The hefty burden was not unbearable but I couldn't have carried the other bag of meat and horns, so there was no avoiding a second trip even had I not salvaged the hide.

I was buffeted by the wind despite an extra 60+ pounds weighing me down. Many times only trekking poles and fast dancing feet kept me from toppling over as I stumbled along the rock-strewn ridges, trying to preserve the elevation I had at the expense of being subjected to the strongest force of the wind. I had to lean so hard against the wind that the few times I passed behind a large bush or boulder I inadvertently stumbled sideways where the wind momentarily lessened.

The trek took hours and was painful, but taking the wide easy path is rarely rewarding. I arrived at my truck around 1am and promptly fell asleep!

The next day I retrieved the “lighter” load and discovered the second trip wasn’t much easier. The wind continued to howl and my phone chirped warnings of gusts over 60mph!



The “lighter” second load!

Regardless of the challenges, or perhaps because of them, trophies like this are special. Rugged terrain and brutal weather... I can't wait to do it again! Move away from the wide, easy path and take the narrower, more difficult route in both hunting and other life choices and you might just discover that's where true life can be found.



Treasures like this can be found when one embraces the narrow, difficult path



My trophy after some boiling and elbow grease

God Bless,
Carl