

**Deer Robin**  
**November 28, 2014 New Mexico**

**Psalm 138:1**  
**“I THANK YOU, Lord, with all my heart; I sing praise to you...”**

This year Robin and I drew deer tags for the same unit in southern New Mexico: an archery tag for me and a youth rifle tag for Robin. With Robin’s incredible streak of success, I can barely find the time to record her activities, but as you’ll find out soon enough, Robin is doing her best to keep her adventures “short”, which makes for briefer stories. Despite her short hunt, I have some interesting tidbits to share from scouting trips.

My hunting partner and I made a couple of scouting forays, but between Robin’s dance, swim team and hunting activities, she was unable to break free to look for deer. I wish she had been with me on one particular jaunt where I had the experience of a lifetime after intercepting a black bear that proceeded to feed on acorns a mere 5-yards from me for over 15-minutes. I snapped photos and captured video clips, so at least I was able to share the experience with Robin and Laurie. Had the event taken place during bear season, which opened just a week later, I would have been sharing more than just digital media!



Being 5-yards from this large black bear was exciting!

I also came across an angry buzz tail, but his advance warning did the trick so I left him alone, snapped photos and moved on. A rattlesnake’s early warning system sure makes the ‘ol ticker wake up, but I’ll take an advance loud rattle over the alternative of stepping on one. God’s rattle design for these fanged sliders surely saves many of us from being bitten.



Don't tread on me

I managed to cross paths with a few deer here and there, but I could not envision duplicating these seemingly random encounters during our upcoming hunts. Thankfully a friend of a friend provided me with specifics of where to look for Robin's hunt. He even offered to show us around; what a blessing!



Dandy Coues buck in velvet

Robin's actual hunt began on Thanksgiving Day; however, given her success on every prior hunt this year, we decided to forego opening day and set aside time for Thanksgiving dinner at home with Mommy, Grandma and Grandpa. It was wonderful being with family over a most delicious meal. The truck was already loaded and we hit the road with full stomachs.

We arrived at the area our new-found friend recommended and searched for an area to throw down our tent. Nighttime lows were forecast to be chilly, but the weather was supposed to be mild during the day. We quickly snuggled into our sleeping bags with my alarm set for 5:30.

I groggily opened my eyes and thought it odd that my alarm hadn't yet gone off despite the sky brightening through the tent roof. Then I glanced at my watch...7:30! Aye caramba! So much for an early start.

I shot out of my cozy bag and pulled on cold hunting clothes. Then I turned on my phone to discover a text saying our friend was in the vicinity looking for us. I

sent him directions to our Spartan camp and quickly got Robin rolling. One thing I'll say about her; when it's time to wake up, she doesn't dilly dally. It's all business and it never ceases to amaze me how fast she can get ready (with a little encouragement).

Our friend arrived just as we were ready to roll and we followed him on a short exploratory trip, where he pointed out good areas to hike and glass. He left us at the road's end, wished us well, and offered to return if we needed any help.

The morning had been so fast and furious, it was only then that we had time to wolf down breakfast and load up our packs for the day. We hiked along a little trail and glassed at every opportunity. In short order I spotted a few does. On a knob not far from them sat a couple of hunters obviously watching them. We didn't want to disturb their hunt, so meandered away and continued to glass. Just a few minutes later I spotted a buck bedded in the sun.



Dead deer walkin' (or resting)

I ranged him at just over 200-yards and could clearly see he had a forked antler on one side (necessary to be legal in New Mexico). I put my binos on the tripod and let Robin study him. She confirmed he was legal, and after a short pause asked "What do you think?" I replied that if this was my hunt I'd look for something bigger. It was, after all, only the first hour of the first morning of her hunt. But I reiterated that this was her tag and it was entirely her decision. I told her that if she wanted to try for him, I would support her wholeheartedly. She deliberated briefly and then stated "I want to try for him!"

We immediately went into attack mode and evaluated our options. I was fairly certain the deer had seen us, but he didn't act disturbed. We crept stealthily through the brush, dropping elevation as we cut the distance. We stopped at a point from which we could get no closer without losing sight of the buck. My rangefinder read 150-yards. I whispered to Robin that this was farther than her previous animals (50-yard crossbow antelope, 45-yard elk & 100-yard oryx) but her rifle was easily capable if she felt ready.

With the luxury of plenty of time and a bedded broadside animal, I sat Robin down and adjusted her shooting sticks. She studied the buck through the scope and I followed through my binos as I explained exactly where to aim. She said

she was nervous and couldn't hold the rifle steady. I helped her relax and told her that we were in no hurry; just to shoot when it felt right. Soon she said she was ready so I punched record on my camera and studied the buck. Boom! The buck lurched to his feet, spun in a circle, and tipped over. She had performed once again with a clean one shot kill and on the first morning no less!

I gave her a big hug and we headed across the ravine to her trophy. Along the way we lost sight of our landmark, so I backtracked and guided Robin on track with hand signals. She found her buck and proudly raised her fist to the sky! Upon my arrival, Robin informed me that she had carefully poked his eye to confirm he was dead, just as I had taught her.



Yes!

I hugged her again and chuckled while informing her that I had spent more time loading the truck than she had spent hunting! She is on an unprecedented roll and knows how to get the job done.

We discovered a shed antler mere feet from where her buck lay and decided that it would be the perfect pointy tool to perforate her tag.



Making it legal

We snapped trophy photos and Robin sent a text to Mommy that summed it up: "I shot a fork mule deer THANK YOU LORD!" You can imagine Laurie's shock, given that we were less than 2-hours into Robin's hunt!

We donned rubber gloves and quickly broke the deer down into boneless cuts of meat and loaded our backpacks. Robin stepped it up and carried an entire front shoulder by herself – probably 25 pounds!



Rudolph's girlfriend Clarice rode in Robin's backpack for company and as her good luck charm – I can let you know where to buy one of your own



What a team!

I knew our loop had brought us relatively close to where the truck was parked, but the short distance displayed on my GPS surprised me. Not only that, but the pack was flat, easy walking and great weather. I told Robin this was the easiest pack I could remember, and a rare event to be thankful for.



Wonderful packing conditions



Even on a short pack, a heavy load demands occasional rest breaks



Our typical minimalist campsite

The kicker was that we made it home in time to take mommy out to dinner and to “Saving Christmas” at the theater, complete with popcorn! Additionally, the extra days that Robin freed up over our Thanksgiving break allowed us to put up our Christmas tree and decorate the house for Christmas!

THANK YOU LORD!

Next up...ibex...