

Yukon Stone Newsletter - 2009 Season (pg. 1)

Another Season has come and gone in the Pelly Mountains and everyone made it home safe and sound. 2009 was filled with fun times, good hunting and some of the best weather we've ever had.

It started out in July with the annual shoeing of our hunting pony's, gearing up and the long drive to the land of the midnight sun. The last week of July was terribly hot as far as the Yukon goes. Temperatures above 90 Degrees for the last week of July made for long trail rides and extreme forest fires. I had a tough time navigating the smoke and I was a little apprehensive about visibility for finding Rams on the first hunt. Thankfully our experienced crew knew just where to look and everyone was back to their camps with great rams by the end of the first week. I guided Richard Dahm and with Glenda and Dicks help we found an old broomed ram on opening morning. He was right at the edge of a cliff so we decided to wait until the next day. Five days later we finally waited him out and he moved to the lower section of the cliffs. A great ram, 13 years old and broomed heavy at 37 inches. By the time I arrived back at our base camp everyone had their Rams and enjoyed the great weather fishing and relaxing for the rest of the hunt. Dave guided Jim Hens to an amazing 38 inch archery ram on opening day. On the second day of their hunt Dustin Roe and Mark Gutsmeil assisted Tom Hoffman in joining the archery success with a heavy 38inch ram! Sam Garrote and Jamie found another great 38 incher after a few tough days hiking in the heat.

Unfortunately Dave Clarke was kicked by a horse on the first hunt so I guided Gil Winters on the second hunt so Dave could heal up. We headed to an area that I had never hunted for sheep but really wanted to explore. It paid off! We found a great ram on the first day and after a long wait he fed below us and Gil sent an arrow flying. Could it be this easy?



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No! Not this time, the arrow went just over the Rams back and that was the last time we saw him! After a few hard days of hiking we found another group with 4 Great Rams in it. They were in an impossible place to stalk so we patiently waited and the next day another band of four rams popped out on another ridge. We decided to make a play on them since the first group hadn't moved. Gil tried to get in with his bow but when the Rams spotted him he decided not to press his luck and used my rifle to finish the hunt. The ram was better than I guessed and at a heavy 38 inches scored into the 160's! We left the other four rams for next year and headed back to camp.

Glenda set off on the second with John Moser. They had a long hunt but found a Great 39 inch ram and made it back to camp with more fresh sheep meat! The second hunt was our worst weather and after switching from camera man to hunter Mark Gutsmeil and Jamie had their work cut out for them. They hunted hard and Mark was rewarded with one of the best Rams we've taken. At over 40 inches and heavy Marks ram was one of the best ones of the season scoring in at over 165 Points.

The third hunt started out quickly with Jamie and Kirby Eden's bringing home a great Ram on the first day. Kirby didn't stop there. By the end of the hunt he had bagged a great stone sheep, Yukon moose and a Grizzly!

Glenda and Aubrey Petzold hunted the west side and after a week found a band of 11 rams. Three of the Rams were shooters but they were living in a basin that gave no opportunity to get close enough for a shot. After sitting on the rams for over a week, they headed back to resupply. Aubrey was able to stay and hunt longer and it's a good thing he did. When they got back to the rams they had moved to a better area for a stalk. Glenda spotted 4 new Rams across the valley the same day and after a closer look the new rams were even better. They went after the best Ram in the group and came back with dark nine year old ram scoring over 170 points! With heavy bases and over 40 inches on both horns Aubrey went home with the best ram of the season.



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This was Glenda's first year guiding sheep solo and she happily collected the rest of the crews bet money on the best Ram. Maybe next year Jamie won't be quite so cheeky!

Dave and Gary Dumdie came up empty handed at the end of the hunt and unfortunately Gary was our only unsuccessful hunter in the 2009 season.

The last hunt found Bo Morgan and Marty Barber in camp with Dave and Jamie. Bo and Dave spent a week spike camping in some areas we hadn't seen yet this season. When I picked them up 8 days later, Bo had a great twelve year old, 38 inch ram.

With the help of Colin, Jamie and Marty finished off the hunt with a moose, Grizzly and heavy 38inch ram. This was Jamie's second hunt in a row collecting 3 animal and I think he was ready for the more relaxed pace of moose season.

Fred Eichler arrived on the 20th of September and Logan Hodson guided Fred to a great Grizzly, and Caribou. Fred missed a big black Wolf as well. I'm not sure why but I guess we'll all find out on the video!

Brent Neiger and John Braun arrived in camp for the first hunt with a long ride ahead of them. It is a two day ride to the area they were hunting but I assured them that it would be worth the ride as it was one of our best areas and we hadn't hunted it for two years. They were certainly believers when I landed in camp a few days later and they had a wolf and two of the best moose of the season. Brent's bull was an incredible 68 inches wide scoring in at over 245 points! Brent's old bull was the best moose we've ever taken. It will find a place high in the all time records.

Ty, Cait and Glen trailed fresh horses into moose camp and met up with Glenda and Sam Mahood. Greg May, Tom Trask, his two sons, Mark, Mic and friend Matt Donnelly arrived to a new camp on Solitary creek. I built this camp two years ago in July but we didn't get a chance to hunt Moose there until this fall.



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I saw some great bulls in the summer and hoped to have good luck in the fall. It started out slow because the Moose weren't calling. By the middle of the hunt things had livened up and they had 3 great bulls back in camp. Grey May started out the archery Moose with a nice 55 inch bull.

The last hunters arrived on the 29th of September. Scott Hunsicker and David Bowers hunted in Solitary. Todd Dievert and Jason Clemett hunted back to the east with Dave and Jamie. Everyone bagged Moose early in the hunt. Todd also went home with a nice Grizzly and David missed a nice bull Caribou. The snow came in the middle of the hunt so as soon as everyone had their moose we packed up and headed for town.

Jamie, Logan and I along with six horses stayed to chase sheep for a few days after the liner and crew headed south. We were all wondering what the heck we were doing when we left trail head at 21 below! We hoped it would warm up but not a chance. The first morning in camp was 30 below zero. We went out anyway and I was sure glad we did. I found a great 12 year old ram high in the snow and after 12 cold hours I had my first Ram back in camp. After years of guiding Stone Sheep I was thrilled go get my own. As you can imagine we promptly got the hell out of there. The creeks had frozen completely over in some spots but with some chainsaw work and a lot of ice chopping we got the horses back to the trailer safe and sound. We headed south with another season behind us and a lot of great memories fresh in our minds.

I've been at home for a month now and the whole time I'm writing this I find my mind switch between the season behind me and the excitement of next year already creeping into my mind. Thanks to all out clients who hunted so hard and helped us to such success this year. I hope to see you all at some of the shows this winter so we can catch up. Special thanks to the hard working crew. I'm sure all our clients would agree that they are what really make the hunts such a great time.

Happy Holidays and all the best in the New Year!

Mac Watson & Crew

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