



Boone and Crockett Club
BIG GAME AWARDS

As the 28th Awards Program approaches, we prepare to publish *Boone and Crockett Club's 28th Big Game Awards Book*. While working on stories accompanying the invited trophies, we came across this great one submitted by Charles A. Larsen who tells of his 10-day Dall's sheep hunt of a lifetime. Enjoy.

- Justin Spring
Assistant Director of
Big Game Records

Find out
more about
the 28th
Awards
Big Game
Awards
Program



BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB'S 28TH BIG GAME AWARDS BOOK

ALASKAN DREAMS

BY CHARLES A. LARSEN
SARATOGA, WYOMING

A multitude of thoughts ran through my mind as the Frontier Airlines flight touched down in Fairbanks, Alaska, that late August day in 2011...all the years and dreams of this South Dakota farm kid, who, through hunting magazines purchased with hard-earned money, had carefully read and shared the adventures of other hunters. Now here I was, about to embark on a hunting story of my own. At age 58, I wondered if I had the physical and mental stamina to fulfill this dream—a 10-day Dall's sheep hunt deep in the Brooks Range of Alaska? I said a silent thank you to my wife back home who'd encouraged me to go, and who'd adjusted our budget and helped pinch pennies so I could buy the needed gear and fulfill this hunt of a lifetime.

I was accompanied on this hunt by my brother-in-law, John Anderson and two nephews, Brian and Bradley. All of us seasoned hunters and Wyoming outdoorsmen; each of us excited about this new adventure, and all completely in awe of the grandeur that is Alaska.

Two days later, we stood beside our backpacks looking up a rock-filled drainage that led to a snow-covered pass. Our outfitter Joe Miller of Alaska Statewide Guides explained that the other side of that 4,500-foot pass was where we would spend the night, and that spot was still halfway to our base camp, located in a valley 10 miles from where we stood. At that moment I did a mental check-off of my gear: What the heck do I have in my pack that I don't need? All concerns about age and physical readiness vanished; however, as I watched my brother-in-law John, who at age 65, weighs 120 pounds soaking wet, and is as tough as boot leather, shoulder his pack, grab his rifle and strike out for the pass. If he could do it, so could I—maybe. We topped out on the pass at 11:00 p.m. with my brother-in-law beating me to the top (did I mention he is 65?).

This was to be a total backpack hunt into the Brooks Range and into a valley so remote and rugged that even the steely nerved Alaska bush pilots dared not attempt to land their planes there. From our base camp located along one of the many streams that feed into the Chandalar River, the plan would be to climb into and hunt the numerous mountain drainages that fed into the valley.

It was three tired hunters that dropped their heavy packs at base camp mid-afternoon on the second day of our pack in. Base camp consisted of two-man tents for the hunters and one-man tents for the outfitter, guide and a packer. The camp was located on high ground overlooking a brush-filled stream bottom and an expanse of tundra that lay across the valley floor.

Thirty minutes after our arrival in camp, Alaska's never ending ability to offer up the unexpected vanquished anyone's thoughts of being tired when my nephew Brian spotted a blond grizzly bear feeding on blueberries in the stream bottom below. Both Brian and Bradley held bear tags, and it was decided that Brian would join guide Chase Miller (Joe's son) in an attempt to intersect the path of the feeding bear. The hunt was on, and those of us in camp had a ringside seat as it unfolded. The stalk required a river crossing and a cautious trek through thick brush, with a very nervous Brian thinking, That bear is in here somewhere! At 50 yards, the bear offered up a perfect shot, and the rest is history. Brian had a beautiful Alaskan trophy.


I am reminded that far beyond a trophy of a lifetime, I will always have the memory of this hunt. It will be added to other memories that will eventually unfold into stories to be told around the fire at future hunting camps.

The next day we split into two groups. Outfitter Joe Miller would guide my nephews Brian and Bradley down the valley to glass the many side drainages for sheep, and guide Chase Miller, (who at 21 years of age was guiding his very first Dall's sheep hunt) would take John and me into a side canyon across the valley. We arrived at a suitable (suitable does not mean flat in the Brooks Range) location to set up our spike camp about 2:30 p.m. We rolled out our bivy sacks and sleeping bags and took a break until around 4:30 p.m. Keep in mind, this is Alaska—"Land of the Midnight Sun"—and at this time of year, it remains daylight except for a brief period between 1:00 and 2:00 a.m.—lots of time to hunt.

We headed out to explore the west fork of this canyon, and an hour later we found ourselves climbing into a snow-covered bowl high at the canyon's end. Taking a break, I lay down on a large flat rock to get a drink of snow melt that was on its way to the stream far below. Rising and turning to walk back to John and Chase, I spotted two rams just below the mountain peak directly behind and above us. A quick look through the binoculars told us these were definitely rams worth getting a closer look at, so we started climbing. The craggy summits of the Brooks Range are covered with rough,

jagged rock and loose talus. I had to smile when our young guide said, "Climb as fast as you can and don't step on any loose rock." Heck, it's all loose rock!

After climbing to a hidden vantage point directly across from the two rams, our guide reported that one ram was legal and the other was not. A brief argument ensued between two unselfish and veteran hunters: "He's your sheep...No he's your sheep." With critical seconds ticking away, my brother-in-law settled it. "You spotted him first. He's your sheep." Climbing up to a small rise and resting my rifle over a rock, I settled the crosshairs on the upper ram standing broadside on a small ledge, ranged at 262 yards away. A gentle squeeze of the Ruger 300 WSM's trigger sent the 180 grain Nosler Accubond on its way. Through the scope I saw the ram fold and before the sound of the shot faded from the mountaintop I heard the guide's congratulatory, "Good shot!" Our excitement quickly turned to dismay, however, as we witnessed the ram shudder and roll off the ledge, falling 20 feet to the loose talus slope below. Unfortunately, he didn't stop there. It's a sickening feeling watching your trophy of a lifetime tumble, roll, and slide down the mountain until it hangs up on a large rock hundreds of feet below.

A photograph of a man in camouflage gear kneeling on a rocky mountain slope. He is holding a Dall's sheep trophy. The background shows a vast, rugged mountain landscape with a valley and distant peaks under a clear sky.

Charles A. Larsen with his Dall's sheep, scoring 172 points. He was hunting near Chandalar River, Alaska in 2011. His story will be published in Boone and Crockett Club's 28th Big Game Awards Book.

28th Big Game Awards Sponsors

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Chuck's sheep was one of many that was scored by the Judges Panel in Reno, Nevada in April. Find about more about the volunteers and the trophies they scored in this issue's Trophy Talk column, page 46.

Climbing down, my brother-in-law reached the sheep first (have I mentioned he is 65 years old?) and his first words were, "You've shot a monster of a sheep!" Close examination of the ram showed that, except for some minor scratches, his little trip down the mountain had resulted in minimal damage to the horns and cape. We all knew the ram was big, just how big wouldn't be known until later.

After photos, the real work began. We carefully removed the cape and all edible meat. With darkness quickly approaching, we helped each other shoulder our heavy packs and began the treacherous descent off the mountain to spike camp. My 58-year-old knees certainly felt the strain as I packed the awkward and swaying load of the head, horns and cape, arriving at spike camp at a now-dark 1:30 in the morning. It was a very tired, humble and thankful hunter who crawled into his bivy sack in the wee hours of that morning and drifted off to sleep as the sun began its ascent on another great Alaskan day.

Arriving back at base camp the next day, we learned that while we were hunting my ram the evening before, my nephew Bradley, guided by our outfitter Joe Miller, had stalked and successfully taken a great ram in the drainage directly west of where my ram was taken.

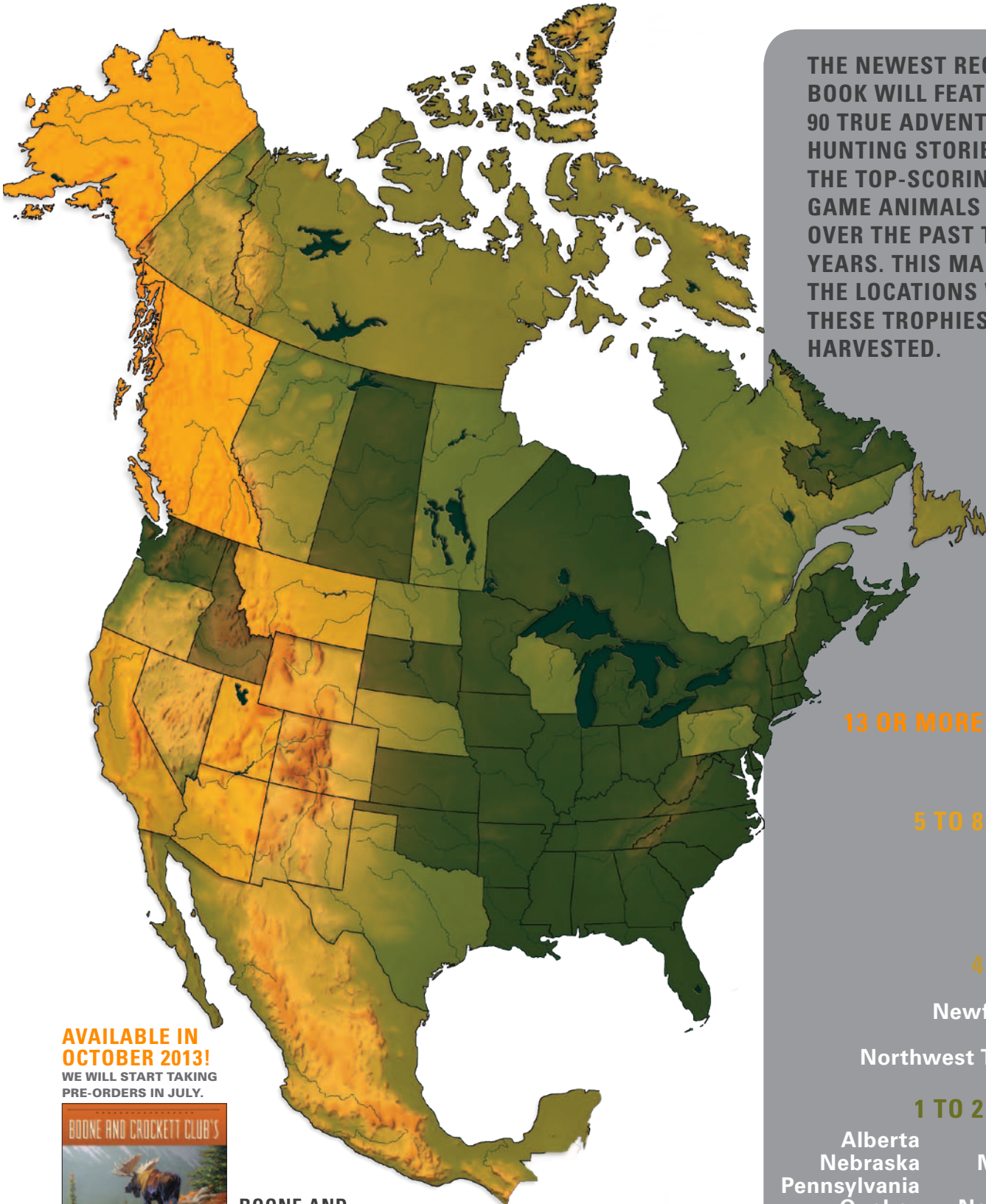
Wow, a bear and two great Dall's rams taken by the third day of a 10-day hunt! What are the odds of that happening? Maybe our luck had been too good, as John and Brian hunted hard during the remaining days of the hunt. They saw rams but, as anyone who hunts knows, sometimes the moon and the stars just don't line up like you'd like them to, and they came away unsuccessful.

Much too soon it was time to leave, and after a two-day pack out and drive back to Fairbanks, the Alaska Game and Fish Department determined that my craggy old ram, with teeth worn down to nothing, was 13 years old, and he had been nearing the end of his life.

Back home in Wyoming I anxiously waited for the required pre-scoring drying period to end. Finally, word arrived from an excited Joe Miller. So how big was he? With a girth of 14 inches around each base, the right horn length measuring 40 5/8 inches and the left horn 41 7/8 inches, my ram had officially scored a whopping 172 points, qualifying him for consideration in the Boone and Crockett records book.

As I write this, I am reminded that far beyond a trophy of a lifetime, I will always have the memory of this hunt. It will be added to other memories that will eventually unfold into stories to be told around the fire at future hunting camps. It will also be told to my grandchildren in the hope that in them a tiny spark of adventure will ignite, and they will grow to have adventures of their own. Just like that South Dakota farm kid, who so many years ago could be found with a .22 in one hand and a cottontail rabbit in the other, daydreaming his way home, thinking of a hunting story he had read and hoping that one day he, too, would hunt...Alaska. ■

THE STORIES OF BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB'S 28TH BIG GAME AWARDS BOOK



THE NEWEST RECORDS BOOK WILL FEATURE OVER 90 TRUE ADVENTURE HUNTING STORIES ABOUT THE TOP-SCORING BIG GAME ANIMALS ENTERED OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS. THIS MAP SHOWS THE LOCATIONS WHERE THESE TROPHIES WERE HARVESTED.

13 OR MORE STORIES

Alaska
Alberta

5 TO 8 STORIES

California
Arizona
Utah
Montana

4 STORIES

Mexico
Newfoundland
Wyoming
Northwest Territories

1 TO 2 STORIES

Alberta	Manitoba
Nebraska	Minnesota
Pennsylvania	Nevada
Quebec	New Mexico
Wisconsin	North Dakota
Yukon Territory	Oregon
Colorado	Texas

AVAILABLE IN OCTOBER 2013!
WE WILL START TAKING PRE-ORDERS IN JULY.



BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB'S 28TH BIG GAME AWARDS 2010 – 2012

- Hardcover with dust jacket
 - 7 x 9 inches
 - 592 pages
 - Nearly 300 Color and B&W Photos, 47 Maps
- BR28 | \$49.95
ASSOCIATES PAY ONLY \$39.95

YOU'RE INVITED!

28TH AWARDS BENEFIT AUCTION



Boone and Crockett Club
BIG GAME AWARDS

New!

This year all of our live auction items will be available for bid online. Be a part of the auction action even if you aren't able to attend the event.

Go to:
BigGameAwards.com
Click on **Benefit Auction** to view all the items and register to bid.

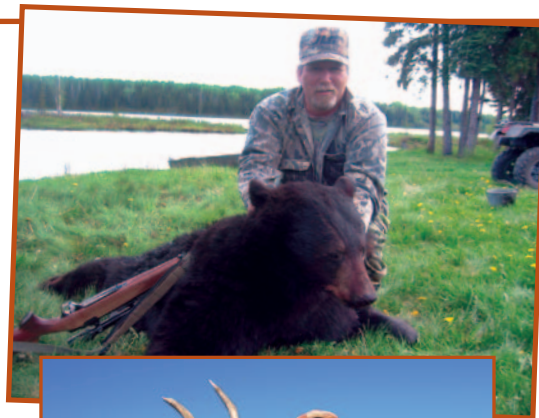


Conservation has a price.

A fund-raising Auction will be held to raise money for the Boone and Crockett Club's on-going mission-based programs including, youth education, research grants, university professorships, conservation policy, and land and hunting ethics programs.

The 28th Awards Auction will feature representatives of some of the best hunts in the best lands across North America offered by guiding operations committed to the principles of fair chase.

The auction will be held Saturday July 20th from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.



AUCTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

7-Day British Columbia Spring Black Bear Hunt 2014

7-Day British Columbia Canada Moose Hunt 2014

6-Day Red Deer River Valley, Alberta Mule Deer Hunt 2014

8-Day British Columbia Plains Bison Hunt 2014

John Bolliger Signature Series Presentation Rifle in .338 Winchester Magnum

Boone and Crockett Club-Theodore Roosevelt Commemorative 125th Anniversary Rifle, Winchester Model 1886 .45-90 Lever-Action by Turnbull Manufacturing

10-Day Yukon Mountain Caribou Hunt with Paul Deuling - World Record Holder and Sagamore Hill Award Recipient 2014

10-Day Chihuahua, Mexico Desert Bighorn Sheep Hunt 2013/2014

7-Day Sierra Madre, Chihuahua, Mexico Coues' Whitetail Deer Hunt 2014 or 2015

Framed Print "Rocky Mountain Chase" by Guy Coheleach

4-Day Alberta Prairie Mule Deer Hunt 2014

7-Day Caborca, Sonora, Mexico Mule Deer Hunt 2014

10-Day Mule Deer Hunt in Baja Sur, Mexico

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Boyt Jacket with 125th Logo

Napa Wine Company 28th Awards 3 Liter Bottle of Wine

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Limited Edition Great Rams III #1/2000

British Columbia Mountain Goat Hunt