

NEW HAMPSHIRE MOOSE

By IRENE E. DUPONT

In order to understand this story, you must understand that when I married Paul DuPont, I married a person who was an avid sportsman. A man who's father trained him and passed the hunting and fishing tradition on to his son, at a very young age. This became our family sport. We would rise early and head out to set decoys, walk through corn fields looking for pheasant, or follow the tracks of deer. I got to experience and appreciate the beauty of nature. The most wonderful experience of my whole life was this moose hunt.

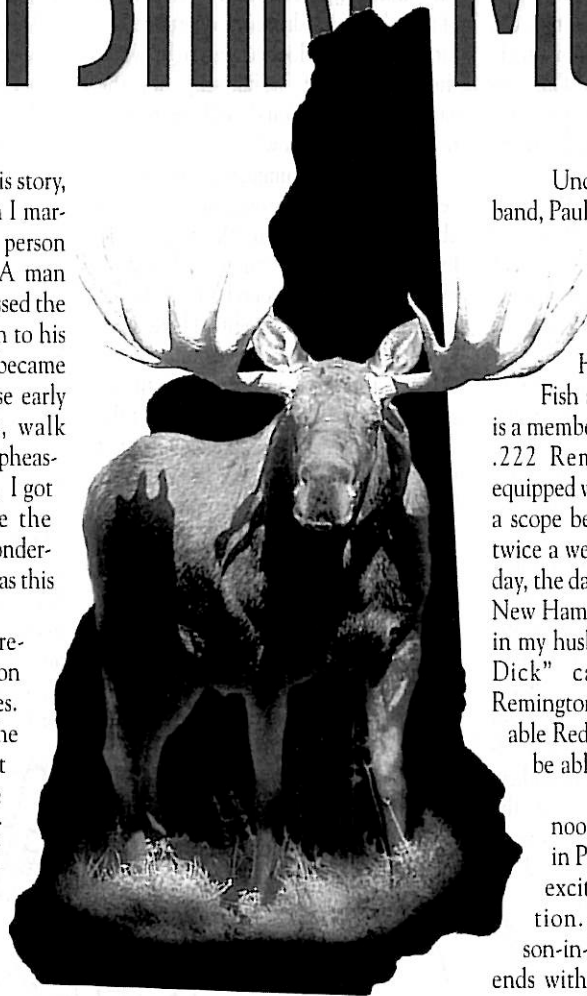
The whole experience required a great deal of preparation and understanding of the species.

Let's go back and begin the story when my husband brought home two New Hampshire moose permit applications for us to fill out. The chances of getting your application drawn, was null, zero. But it's a good donation for an excellent cause. It turned out that the whole DuPont family, a total of 10 members, sent in applications with hopes of having their names drawn.

Never another thought was given, until a friend of the family called and jokingly, asked my husband if he could be my hunting partner. I had been chosen first in the drawing of 9,000 applicants for a New Hampshire moose permit. The family was overjoyed, and my statement was, "I will do it!"

I began to read and study about the habitat of the animal. My son-in-law, Mark Otterson, is a guide. He volunteered to be my guide, and began to prepare himself for his part.

In June, we spent four weeks in Alaska, during which time we observed many, many moose. We studied their tracks, their habits and their environment. In fact during this time I also photographed anything I thought might be helpful. My husband would continu-



ally question me about the target area, the distance of the shot, etc... Upon returning from Alaska, we went to the moose workshop. It was held on July 25, 1992, at the New Hampshire Technical Institute in Concord and was presented by the Fish and Game Department. I found this workshop to be most valuable and enlightening with information about the moose program. They instructed everyone about hunting zones, rules and regulations, equipment, firearms, target areas, trailing, recovery, field dressing, quartering, transportation, cooling, skinning and much more. They also explained about the growth and development of the species and how the herd has expanded during the last few years because of good management. I ended up with eight pages of handwritten notes, to which I referred to many times later. The workshop was excellent preparation for the hunt.

Under the guidance of my husband, Paul, I began to practice shooting at life-size deer targets at our camp in Northwood. Then I graduated to the range in Bedford, New Hampshire, at the Pointers Fish and Game Club, where Paul is a member. I started practicing with a .222 Remington bolt-action rifle equipped with a scope. I had never used a scope before. We practiced at least twice a week, every week, even Thursday, the day before we left for Pittsburg, New Hampshire. I had now graduated in my husband's eyes to the "Dead-eye Dick" category, with a .30-06 Remington, equipped with a 3x9 variable Redfield scope. I had wanted to be able to make a clean shot.

We arrived Friday afternoon at Steve's Hunting Camp in Pittsburg, New Hampshire, all excited and filled with anticipation. Mark Otterson, my son-in-law, had spent several weekends with his wife, Cynthia, and my step-son, Robert, tracking, observing, and scouting Moose Zone 2 in preparation for the hunt.

At the hunting camp were two other moose permittees, Richard Lally, Sr. and his son from Alexandria, New Hampshire, and Tom and Linda Tripp, from Raymond, New Hampshire. All of us were excited about Saturday, opening day.

Saturday morning we were up at 4:00 a.m, had a good breakfast, packed the vehicle and left. The day was very cold and exceedingly windy. We began checking for tracks, glassing areas, walking slash lots. NOTHING. Finally we decided to make a sandwich, to change the routine and boost our energy. Guess what? NOTHING AGAIN! We forgot the sandwiches. We had goodies, but not lunch. So we were very sweet but hungry. We stayed until sunset, then drove back to camp disappointed, but still hopeful for tomorrow.

The other two permittees had shot their moose. We were glad for them but disappointed that we hadn't seen but one small bull calf on our way out of the zone area. The animal was too small and it was past the time we were allowed to shoot.

Up again the next day. The weather was worse than Saturday's. The temperature had dropped and we had frozen areas to scout through. Still nothing. At 1:00 p.m. we decided to return to camp for coffee and to get warm. Mark talked to Steve about the situation. They decided if the weather broke, the animals would start to move again and feed. So back out we went again. It was suggested we hunt the Magalloway Mountain area. After about half an hour Mark decided to glass a large area that we could overlook from the wood choppers road. While he was glassing the area, my husband decided to do the moose coffee can call. Then we started down the wood road and spotted a cow in a Christmas tree slash lot. We ran down the gully, and up the hill.

We heard thundering hoof beats. Then out of the woods came a large bull moose in full stride. The noise, the anticipation, then the sight of this huge animal sent our hearts pounding. He ran over to the cow and stopped. He looked around. My husband stood on a stump behind a fir tree and could see him very well. All I could see was his rack and head. It looked enormous.

They suggested that I crawl into a more open area, stand up and shoot. I declined, as I am only 5'2" and felt I could not see him adequately for a good shot. Plus the cow was in front of the bull. Then the bull moved, but

not enough to allow a clear shot. He rubbed his rack on a tree, and looked around. I still did not have a clear shot. I didn't want to spook him or the cow, but I knew I wanted him. I kept watching this moose who continued to feed and stay by the cow. The afternoon was clear and cold. I could hear a vehicle coming in our direction. I worried that this would cause the animals to get scared and run off. He began to move away from the cow. About the same time, I located a large rock to stand on. I raised the gun, took careful, deliberate aim at his boiler room, and squeezed. That was it! I got him with a shot in the lungs with a 180 grain bullet. Practice paid off. We couldn't believe the size of this moose.

Now the tough job began. Dressing the animal and making preparations to remove it from the wooded area. With the help of three Canadian hunters, who had stopped by to assist, and a gas-powered winch, the moose was hoisted into the guides truck.

Happy and excited we headed back to the village to report to the game-warden headquarters since the weighing station was closed. Then we went back to the hunting camp. We removed the heart and tenderloins and had an excellent dinner that evening.

Our family was extremely excited about my success. The family members back home couldn't wait to see the large moose.

The next morning we went to the weighing station for check-in.



We were informed that he was the largest moose taken in that area to date. The scale read 920 lbs. and the rack measured 60-3/4 inches with 21 points. I was in shock. My husband was very proud. As a big game hunter himself, he noted that this was by far the largest animal taken by any member of the family. In 1988, I had also taken the largest deer in the family. It weighed 212 lbs. and was taken in the Northwood area.

We took the moose to Lemay Meat Cutters in Goffstown, New Hampshire. We filled our freezer with 680 lbs. of meat for the family and friends to enjoy.

The sport of hunting has been a long time family affair. All the DuPont

boys are experienced hunters, as well as their wives, the two daughters and their husbands. This was a wonderful family experience and I was pleased everything went well. The advice that I want to offer any hunter, is to practice on the rifle range before you go hunting, and then hunt safely. Moose don't go down easily and sometimes present a hard target. As a permittee, you need to make the first shot count.

THE MOOSE WAS TAKEN TO THE STATE CHECK-IN STATION THE NEXT MORNING WHERE IT WEIGHED 920 POUNDS. IRENE WAS VERY PROUD TO HAVE TAKEN THE LARGEST BIG GAME ANIMAL EVER TAKEN BY A MEMBER OF HER FAMILY.

IRENE DUPONT AND HER GUIDE, MARK OTTERSON, WITH THE CANADA MOOSE SHE TOOK IN COOS COUNTY, NEW HAMPSHIRE. THE MOOSE SCORES 187-2/8 POINTS.

