

MY LIFETIME DREAM

OF GETTING A BOONE AND CROCKETT MULE DEER WAS REALLY GOING TO HAPPEN. ON SEPTEMBER 15, MY WIFE AND I, IN OUR MOTOR HOME, HEADED FOR THE PAUNSAUGUNT IN UTAH, TO JOIN UP WITH BRUCE AND CRAIG HUBBARD OF H&H HUNTING.

After arriving mid-day, setting up camp, meeting new friends and swapping stories and pictures of other hunts, we took off to scout out the trophy deer we had heard so much about. In a couple of hours we had seen 150 to 175 deer of which 75 were good bucks. After dinner, Steve Garney of H&H Hunting, showed us a video he had put together of three months of filming. There was a great, non-typical 37 point which we eventually called "Calli", and a super typical buck which would probably score 200 points. What a decision - which buck would I go after?

We were up and out early the next morning, with the help of Dave Anderson and Craig Hubbard of H&H Hunting, we scouted and spotted about 200 deer of which half were bucks. I wanted to take one of the two bucks. Dave came running up to us. He had spotted the big typical buck we had seen on the video the night before. With him was an even bigger buck! We got to his spot in time to see them heading into some oak trees to bed down. We went out again that evening, but we didn't see them.

The next morning we headed for the same spot looking for the two big typical bucks. No luck. About an hour had passed. Steve said, "There's Calli." My eyes couldn't believe what they were seeing! I didn't know whether to shoot the huge typical or Calli. Steve helped in my dilemma by offering me a tag for next year if I wanted to shoot Calli, needless to say, my decision was made. Off we went and found Calli feeding in the sage brush. Steve was filming and I was attempting a shot. I never could quite get on him and I did not want to shoot and wound him. That evening we made our way back to the canyon where we had last seen Calli. We didn't see him but about 40 yards away were two bucks, one of which would probably score 185 points, the other 195 B&C points. Trying to hold

your cool and not shoot was hard, but I had a bigger goal. We continued to glass and I counted 40 bucks, the smallest was about 22" wide and the largest was a 6X5, 35" wide. I've never seen so many incredible bucks. I walked to the other side of the ridge in time to see Calli running down the bottom. It was almost dark, so I did not shoot.

The next morning we heard two shots on the Heaton Ranch next to us. We searched high and low all day for Calli and the two typical bucks and never saw them again that day. I had it in my head that the hunters on the Heaton Ranch had shot Calli.

The next day, Steve and I went to the spot where Dave had last seen the two typical bucks. I spotted a deer and asked Steve to take a look with the spotting scope. It was the big typical that Dave had been so excited about. I figured he would score 215 B&C points. He wasn't very wide but his height was awesome. I told Steve, "Let's go, I'm taking that buck." We started our stalk and progressed to a patch of oaks. There, about 350 yards, was Calli, coming right at us. Now what do I do? Two of the greatest buck in the world, right in front of me. I'd seen a lot of typical bucks, but the non-typical is a one in a million buck. Steve assured me again I could have a tag for next year. That was all I needed. "Let's get Calli." The stalk was on. Steve was videotaping as I crawled about 150 yards, putting me at a 200 yard shot. I was using a small spruce tree for cover as there were about 30 deer right across the draw, and I had to make sure they didn't see me. I got up slowly to look for Calli. I could see his horns just coming over a little knoll. I crawled to my right giving me a slight uphill shot of 150 yards. I got to my spot and to my left, right in front of me, was "Calli" running off with 5 other bucks I had not seen. I took off after them, right into the sun light. That was a bad move. They ran into a grove of oak trees where the 215 B&C point buck was. I spotted them again and all 7 of them were looking right at me. I went down slowly and started to crawl. I had "Calli" and the big typical within 150 yards, and the sun in my face! The big typical walked into the oaks, and

Calli and a small buck stood watching me. I looked around, 20 more feet and I can shoot. I got to my spot, put the cross hairs on Calli and he walked into the oak trees. We decided to come back early that evening and wait them out. What a morning!

That afternoon it rained with thunder and lightning. Steve pick me up about 4:00 PM. We drove to the top and then set out on foot. The rain stopped and a lot of deer were out feeding. We put up our binoculars and spotted Calli and a small buck. We tried to make a stock but he took off. We figured he was heading for the oak trees. We circled around and headed for the grove of small trees and there were seven bucks laying down. The waiting game had started. After a 2 1/2 hour wait, the bucks got up and started to feed. We began, moving slowly, so slowly; glassing, looking for those big bucks. To the left I saw Calli's antlers. We crawled and got within 70 yards. I put the cross hairs on his neck and I started to shake. I kept telling myself, "Take your time." Calli turned and looked right at us. I got the cross hairs on his neck again and started to squeeze the trigger. The sound of the 7mm STW roared through the country. He's down! Calli is mine! Steve and I hugged each other and took off to claim my trophy. I was so excited I couldn't see him lying in the sage brush. Steve had to show me where he was. What a buck! Dave and Craig came running up and the party started!

Calli measured 30-3/8" wide, 20" high with 15-3/8" burr & 7-5/8" bases, 40 points and over 100 little points. He was still in the velvet and he is what is called a "cactus buck". After 64 days of drying time, Calli scored out 276-5/8 points. Since he is a cactus buck, I will not be able to enter this trophy in the Boone and Crockett record book. I will not be removing the velvet, as it is one of the things that make this buck unique. One in a million!

ONE IN A MILLION

BY H. JAMES TONKIN

