

BEATING THE ODDS

Crossing Paths with a Giant 179-5/8 Stone's Sheep Jelindo A. Tiberti II Hook Lake, BC 2005



Classical case of Beating The Odds: Jelindo A. Tiberti overcomes natural and circumstantial obstacles to not only shoot a record Stone's sheep but also finalize his coveted grand slam.

Stone's sheep is not only one of the most coveted big-game animals to pursue in North America, but also one of the most difficult. Steep terrain, remoteness of habitat, and financial ability to obtain a tag makes Stone's sheep nothing more than a dream to most sportsmen. In addition, finding a trophy Stone's is an exceedingly rare feat; similar to mule deer, the heyday seems to have drawn to a close in the 1970s. Increased technology, information, and access have all had less than desirable effects on the ability to produce mature specimens.

When Jelindo Tiberti arrived in British Columbia in the fall of 2005, he had the same dream any sheep hunter has, that of taking a spectacular ram. More in the forefront of his mind, however, was simply to complete a coveted grand slam. Stone's sheep was the only piece of the puzzle he was missing and, needless to say, he was very excited about the upcoming adventure.

Tiberti's first surprise was in finding out his rifle hadn't made the trip at the same rate Tiberti had. Luckily, it arrived in the nick of time; otherwise, he would have been on the hunt of his life using his guide's "trusty .30-30." His second surprise was that he would be backpacking in for a ram instead of the original plan of using horses. While he had plenty of backpacking experience, it wasn't in the original plan, leaving him a bit ill-prepared in gear. The change in plans made Tiberti's legs instantly tired.

As they waited for the float plane, he packed his ten-day supply of gear into his unfitted pack frame. Soon after, they were airborne for a more desolate landscape.

They made their way to a campsite and set up for

the hunt. After camp was constructed, the bell rang and the bugs were released. It was exceptionally bad for mosquitoes, a condition made only slightly more bearable by intense amounts of bug spray.

The next morning, they were on the hunt with great excitement and expectations. A hard day of hunting yielded sightings of three bull moose, one caribou, and six Stone's sheep ewes and lambs.

On the second morning, seeking a reprieve from the constant barrage of insect attacks, they awoke and moved camp to the top of a saddle. So far, all the other animals they had seen were on the very tops of the mountains, and for good reason—to beat the bugs. Five and a half hours and a big blister later, Tiberti and his guide made it to the top of their new camp.

After a light lunch, they began to glass. In no time, Tiberti found a ram and his heart began to race. It was a beautiful ram with a dark coat, white face and socks, and terrific horns. Hunter and guide instantly departed, headed to the distant location of the ram.

After 2-1/2 hours of descending and re-ascending mountains, they were finally peeking over the edge toward where they had previously seen the ram. Tiberti's guide excitedly said, "Don't shoot the ram we saw; shoot the one on the right!"

One quick look and Tiberti knew better than to question the statement. There before him was a ram so breathtaking he lacked the words to describe it. He made the necessary shot and had, in the process, taken one of the largest Stone's sheep ever recorded by Boone and Crockett Club, and the largest recorded in the past seven years. With basal circumferences of 15 inches and horn lengths of 42-7/8 inches and 43 inches for the right and left horns, respectively, this great ram will now take his place as one of the outstanding specimens of his generation. ■

Right Place, Right Time New #3 All-time 16-2/16 Cougar Joseph Gore, Jr. Sundance Lake, AB 2005

Hunting and the outdoors have been in Joseph Gore's blood ever since he was a boy. Even now, Gore spends as much time as possible enjoying Alberta's wild country. Only now, he spends more time being out with his 13-year-old son, Zeb.

After their deer hunting trip yielded two cougar sightings and as much cougar sign as deer sign, he decided to venture back into those haunts in search of new and exciting game. He couldn't help but be intrigued by these ghosts of the forest.

The first morning back in cougar country reminded Gore of a Norman Rockwell painting, with a

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A Hunt Long Overdue 22-3/16 Black Bear William Parchomcik Sussex Co., NJ 2005

New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the union, yet the black bear population there is both healthy and expanding. Add in that the state sees thousands of bear/human conflicts annually, and it would seem that New Jersey would be a perfect spot to have a black bear hunt.

Despite all the science and common sense that would lead in that direction, New Jersey has also been a hotbed of lawsuits and animal rights debates. As such, from 1971 to 2002, New Jersey's bears were "protected" from hunting, whether or not it made biological sense.

The state's first hunt in thirty-three years was finally held in 2003. It seemed a victory for the North American model of hunting-based wildlife conservation. The tumultuous relationship continued, however, as the 2004 hunt was canceled due to yet another lawsuit.

By 2005, New Jersey's second bear hunting season in 35 years was about to take place. It would become one of the most historical on record, with a yield of trophy-class bears that will be tough to duplicate.

William Parchomcik was one of the fortunate hunters to be out in the northeastern hardwoods pursuing the big bruins. To be eligible, he had to complete a mandatory class, similar to hunter's education, wherein students learned field-dressing techniques, proper shot placement, and other selected subjects. It was a four-hour course that Parchomcik describes as time well spent.

On Thanksgiving morning, he got the only glimpse



Measuring 22-3/16, the skull of the Parchomcik's black bear "raises the bar for bear hunting in New Jersey."

of the animal he would be chasing later in December. A giant bear, just behind his house, made his heart race.

On December 12, he set out from his home in a few inches of snow. He was hunting some ground that bordered state land, and quickly found a track. Astonishingly, he had only hunted for a few seconds when he jumped the bear and heard a crash. Parchomcik set up with his 12-gauge slug gun and made a fatal shot at twenty yards as the bear jetted by him at an astounding pace.

That one tense moment had produced more than just a big bear, or grand fireside story. That single slug had taken down the largest bear ever recorded from New Jersey, and one of the largest ever from the entire northeastern United States. With an approximate live weight of 600 pounds and a skull measurement of 22-3/16, Parchomcik's great black bear now raises the bar for bear hunting in New Jersey.

As a side note, at least five records-class black bears were taken during the state's 2005 hunt, four of which have already been entered into B&C's records program. They are, coincidentally, the largest four bears recorded from New Jersey.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Wildlife management's worst case scenario (management through politics and initiative rather than biology) continues to be how New Jersey's bears are managed. Even as this article goes to press, the fate of the 2006 hunt is still up in the air, pending the outcome of the November elections, according to a frustrated official from the New Jersey Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife. ■

beautiful fresh blanket of snow making for a hypnotizing view. He and Zeb made their way up an old cut-line right-of-way, enjoying the cold, crisp, and exciting morning.

Their trek quickly changed from beautiful and serene to intense and disturbing, as Gore and his son watched a deer bolt from the brush as if it were running for its life. A few seconds later, a second deer followed; it, too, looked wild-eyed and panicked.

The source of their fear soon exposed itself. Close on the heels of the second deer was a large cougar, matching the deer stride for stride. The cougar then launched itself, pouncing on the back of the second deer and knocking it down before it regained its legs and took off again.

Instinctively, Gore shouldered his .270. Just before the cougar was about to clear the open cut line, the rifle roared, and the big cat stumbled before disappearing. He remembers hearing his son say, "You got him, Dad! You got him!"

Gore's 2005 cougar, weighing in at a reported 225-1/2 pounds, is one of the largest ever taken.

With a preliminary entry score of 16-2/16, it currently stands as the third-largest ever recorded by the Boone and Crockett Club. This ranking is pending, as it will likely appear at the 26th Awards Program Judges Panel in Ft. Worth, Texas in April 2007. ■

Joseph Gore, Jr. poses with one of the most massive cougars ever recorded by Boone and Crockett Club.

