

# Petty Creek Ram

By SHELLEY GOODMAN  
B&C ASSOCIATE

A very good friend and hunting partner, Gene Starlin, gave me the dream of hunting for bighorn sheep by encouraging my husband and me to apply for our Montana bighorn sheep permits. We have always applied for cow elk permits, but we never felt we could afford to ap-

and respects the animals he seeks. He has been studying and filming sheep in the Petty Creek area for the last few years. This was to be a new experience to him too, we both had to learn patience and learn all that we could about bighorn sheep. By the end of this hunt, I not only got

a gorgeous ram but I once again had a relationship with a brother that I had let slip away from me many years ago. We spent 21 days hunting in Unit 203. But it took 2 months of studying, reading and talking to people to learn everything we possibly could about these unique animals. I knew this was a once-in-a-lifetime dream and I wanted to do the best I could.

On the morning of November 14, it all paid off. We left home early and picked up Monte. This day there were four of us: Kirk, our daughter, Kelly, Monte and myself. This was the first day of seven days I had taken off work so we planned on taking it a little easy and doing a lot of glassing, as quite a few bigger rams were beginning to show up for the breeding season. On the way up to our hunting area, Kelly shot a 3x4 whitetail buck, so we were all feeling pretty good when we continued hunting sheep that day. We were almost to a lick on the mountain that was often used by sheep, when we spotted a ram on one of the ridges to the right of us. We watched him a few minutes and decided he was pretty but not big enough. We continued on up to the lick. When we reached it, there were two nice rams there. We watched and filmed them for some time. While sitting there, more sheep joined in. Before long there were 11 rams on the lick with a number of ewes, but I had a feeling something was missing. Soon a big ram joined the other sheep. We studied him for a long time and noted that he was a dandy but he had broomed one horn off a lot shorter than the other. We decided he would pass good genes on to his offspring so we left him with the ewes.

We continued to glass. In a



SHELLEY GOODMAN, CENTER, WITH HER FAMILY, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, HUSBAND, KIRK; BROTHER, MONTE; DAUGHTER, KELLY, AND HER RECORD BOOK BIGHORN RAM WHICH SCORES 191-6/8 B&C.

ply for any other permits. Gene's encouragement gave us the chance to apply. Thank heavens he did!

On a day that most people assume to be a day of bad luck, Friday the 13th, of August, I received my permit for unit 203, Petty Creek, in the mail. That was the beginning of a very exciting season, and the beginning of a renewed relationship that had been lost for many years. Hearing about my good fortune, my brother, Monte Ishler, called and offered his assistance, which I readily accepted. Monte is what I consider to be a true outdoorsman. He not only loves to hunt but he also loves

My husband, Kirk, was very supportive through the whole season even to the point of putting our elk hunting on hold. Kirk was with us on most of our hunting trips but there were times when he just couldn't be there. On those days, Monte and I would go. We hiked those mountains until I thought I couldn't go any more, but he was there to encourage me and keep me going.

In the course of the season we observed many rams. We spent a great deal of time just looking at them. We learned to look for the size of the hole, the thickness of the

nearby gulch we saw another bunch of sheep. In my binoculars I could see one big ram. He was the one that I wanted! We hiked up the ridge across from them to a point where we could set up the spotting scope.

There were about 30 sheep on the ridge and I guessed about 12 were rams. The one I really liked was bedded down about half way up the ridge. I knew he was the one. While looking at the ram through the spotting scope, Kirk counted nine age rings.

---

He not only loves  
to hunt, but he  
also loves and  
respects the  
animals he  
seeks...

---



The guys reminded me this was the first day of my hunting vacation so I didn't have to try for this one if I didn't like him. I had already decided that I really liked this particular ram. I found a good rest and when I finally fired, I missed! He was a lot farther away than we thought! My shot was low. The ram had jumped up the hill and was looking up the ridge. I made the range adjustments I needed and fired again. The ram bolted up the hill and my husband who had been watching through the spotting scope said I'd hit the ram well. My ram was down and he was mine! We still didn't realize just how big and how beautiful he was until we reached him.

I know now that ram was meant to be mine. All the time we

had spent preparing for the hunt was a major factor. But there was more to it than just that. The weather was beautiful, the sun was shining and there wasn't any wind. My rest was in the perfect spot and at the perfect height. Everything about the hunt was absolutely perfect including my bighorn sheep.

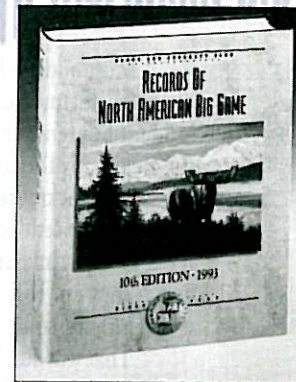
I'd like to thank a few people that were so important to this hunt. First, Wayne Lundberg who loaned me his volume of, Montana Land of the Giant Rams, by Duncan Gilchrist, ...a book I lived by. Next, the guys at Big Game Connection - Randy Nentwig, Dale Manning, and John Ottman with all their hints and encouragement. Dale told me not to let anyone pressure me. He said to find the one that I really liked and I'd know him when I saw him and boy, was that true. I think those words were about the most truthful I heard. And of course, Gene Starlin for making this possible.

I'd also like to thank my family. First, Monte for putting up with me and my short legs. Kirk for always being there for me and for being so excited for me. My daughter, Kelly, for being my right arm and hunting partner for the past few years. Also our other two children, Kirk and Kasey, who didn't get upset with me for all the time I spent away from them during this past hunting season. And for all the pride they show in me for what I have accomplished.

But most of all I'd like to thank a nameless bighorn sheep for giving me back a part of my life that could have been lost forever. For letting me spend priceless time with someone I'd forgotten to say I love you to, my youngest brother, Monte Ishler. Thank you for being there!

# Available Now!

## RECORDS OF NORTH AMERICAN BIG GAME



As a Boone and Crockett Associate, you will receive a 20% discount off the cost of the newest edition of *Records of North American Big Game*. This is the largest and most comprehensive edition of the famous Boone and Crockett Club records book ever.

The 10th edition contains over 12,700 big game listings in 35 categories. There are 84 new top ten trophies alone. Each big game category features photos of the World's Records, as well as other top ranking trophies. Also enjoy seven full-color paintings of Alaska-Yukon moose, cougar, muskox, Dall's Sheep, mule deer, desert sheep and pronghorn by artist, Guy Coheleach.

To place your order for the *Records of North American Big Game*, 10th edition, call the Boone and Crockett Club Headquarters at (406) 542-1888.