

# BEATING the ODDS

**Chad A. Meropoulos poses by the fifth-largest bighorn sheep ever recorded. The giant ram was taken near Sphinx Creek, Alberta, and scores 206 points.**



The restoration of the bighorn sheep has been one of conservation's finest moments. The grandeur of the species coupled with the beauty of their habitat has inspired many a hunter. While few get to hunt them, all sportsmen through the purchase of licenses and taxed merchandise have

collectively contributed to this great success. An integral part of this management success has been the huge dollar values for individual tags. This has

## **206 – Bighorn Sheep** **Chad A. Meropoulos** **Sphinx Creek, Alberta 2007**

focused a spotlight not only on specific areas, but on specific magnificent rams.

In 2007 Chad A. Meropoulos, along with his sweat equity and individual commitment became yet another beneficiary of this conservation success. Meropoulos harvested an Alberta bighorn sheep with a final score of 206 points that ranks as the fifth-largest bighorn ever taken—taken in a general tag area on an unguided hunt!

Meropoulos's Alberta sheep hunting is a family tradition spanning three generations. Few families in the history of hunting have focused their energy and attention on game as logistically and geographically difficult to hunt as the bighorn sheep. Meropoulos's grandfather, Lyle, and father, Shane, had fostered the tradition of weeks spent afield, deep in the vertical environs of the mountain sheep. Meropoulos himself had participated in

this yearly event since the 1980s. Many successful hunts and the lessons learned elevated Meropoulos to the status of seasoned sheep hunter as the 2007 season began.

Meropoulos and his father were twelve days deep into the season when they relocated their camp requiring the use of an extensive packstring. Five days of additional observation saw Meropoulos and his father glassing a large band of sheep consisting of ewes, lambs, and small rams. They separated to cover additional ground. Meropoulos returned later to view this group of 40-plus animals again, and he saw what appeared to be an extra sheep of distinguished proportions.

Meropoulos closed the distance on horseback, then continued the stalk on foot. Meropoulos closed the final yards on his chest, finally drawing within range of his .25-06. The gun roared, then the ram walked slowly out of sight. The ram died about 50 yards away.

Though the trophy was close as the crow flies, Meropoulos ultimately had to hike a great distance to reach it. As Meropoulos admired the downed animal, crude measurements left him in disbelief: 45+ inches of horn length on the short side!

The next morning Meropoulos and his father embarked on the retrieval of the fifth-largest bighorn ram ever recorded. The great trophy was accepted into B&C's 27th Big Game Award's Program on February 15, 2008. This trophy will undoubtedly receive an invitation to the 27th Award's Program Judge's Panel to be held in Reno in the spring of 2010. As such, the final score is subject to verification. ■

## 126 – Typical Coues' Whitetail

**Frank Lawrence ■ Sonora, Mexico 2006**

Very few husbands are fortunate to have wives so attuned to their needs as to purchase a Sonoran Coues' deer hunt as a surprise gift. Frank Lawrence is one of those fortunate husbands, and once he learned of his wife's thoughtfulness, he diligently learned all he could about the gray ghost of the desert.

Soon after his arrival in Mexico, Lawrence learned that quality Coues' habitat can be steep. Undulating hills covered with acorn-producing scrub oaks constituted the finest of habitats.

On the first morning, Lawrence spotted a buck and began a stalk. An unfriendly wind and additional hunting pressure blew the fine trophy out of the area. Later that day, the size of the buck called Lawrence back, and after considerable glassing, Lawrence and his companions located the same buck again.

A well-planned approach brought Lawrence to within 75 yards of the buck for an easy shot, and the typical buck later scored 126 points. It is one of the largest typical Coues' whitetails from Mexico and the largest currently accepted in B&C's 27th Awards Program. ■



**Frank Lawrence with his typical Coues' whitetail. This trophy buck from Sonora, Mexico, scores 126 points.**

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