

ROOSEVELT'S ELK HUNT

BEYOND THE
SCORE

Terry Raymond

B&C TROPHY OWNER

Photos Courtesy of Author

I wanted a Boone and Crockett bull. I made a number of phone calls to hunters that were return clients of Brad and Pauline Lister, owners of Coastal Inlet Adventures, even before I contacted the outfitter. My wife and I drove out to visit Brad and Pauline at their residence outside of Powell River, British Columbia. A personal meeting is so much better than just talking over the phone or corresponding back and forth by email. After our meeting I was left without any doubts, only a dream. If you ever have the opportunity to meet with the outfitter in person, do it.

On October 9, I gathered with other hunters at the Lister's residence. Hunting season with a rifle for Roosevelt's elk commenced the next day. We drove to a private

dock, loaded up the landing craft boat, and headed out. It was a two-hour boat ride to our base camp.

Basecamp was located within the Jervis Inlet. It was a nice old ex-commercial fishing boat known as a Seiner. It was anchored alongside the dock where loggers would come each morning by boat to work. This would be home for me; my guide Klaus; another guide Frank (Klaus's brother); and from Seattle, Frank's hunter Preston Moon and his cameraman Lee; as well as Eric, the camp cook. Garry, who owned the Seiner, also visited on occasion. Another one of the guided hunters was successful very early and spent one night on the Seiner before departing home. His guide Jay remained with us on the boat and helped out where needed.

It rained everyday

except the day of our arrival. The temperature was pleasantly warm between 10–12 degrees Celsius each day. Each morning after a wonderful hot breakfast, Klaus and I traveled 30 minutes by landing craft across the Jervis Inlet where we docked at the mouth of the Brittain River.

Day one was spent getting set up at the base camp and touring around by boat to see some of the spectacular scenery and impressive volume and variety of wildlife.

We traveled by quad as far as we could go before the road became impassable. A river had washed out the bridge so crossing by any vehicle was impossible. For the most part the roads and trails were overgrown with salmonberry bushes and deadfall. The outfitter had done some maintenance to allow access for his guides and their hunters.

We hunted from the trail and also off in the timber; travel was easy-going at times and at others it was just plain ugly. Rockslides created areas where alder trees and salmonberry bushes re-established, and the river and many creeks carved their

way through the valley. Most of the riverbed was overgrown with huge alder trees, as well as tall salmonberry and raspberry bushes. In other areas only moss and ferns covered the forest floor. Green moss grows on everything where the sun cannot get through. There were huge trees covered with moss from the bottom up as high as you could see. In the middle of the day it seemed like dusk.

Roosevelt's elk are huge animals. Their bodies are bigger than American elk. They are very similar in appearance and antler except the Roosevelt's have a tendency to have more points after the G4 point, or as they are called, crown points. The bulls love to rub their antlers on the alder and cedar trees. The alder trees produce a very dark orange and red antler color. We saw huge trees that were rubbed as high as eight feet. Locating elk was not easy since the rut was coming to an end. Normally you would bugle to an elk and receive a response. The exact opposite applies to Roosevelt's elk.

Klaus is a seasoned elk hunter but this was his first time guiding for Roosevelt's elk. As we traveled up the Brittain River we would look for areas that had visual pockets.



For me, pictures are the greatest memory from a hunt. I typically like to set up the picture scene by cleaning up all blood, placing the animal in a more elevated position that also allows for great background pictures. This elk was like a big horse. It was raining, we were wet not only on the outside but also on the inside due to the sweat under all that rain gear. We were way behind schedule and did not get back to basecamp until well after dark. So, unfortunately I did not get the pictures I wanted. - Terry Raymond

Roosevelt's elk, like Timothy R. Carpenter's pictured here, have unique crown points, that set it apart from an American elk. Carpenter's elk scores 398-1/8 points and was awarded first place at the 28th Big Game Awards in 2013.



We looked up and down the mountainside on a continual basis. We walked slowly and quietly in hunting mode, hoping to get a glimpse of elk as we traveled. Klaus would cow call every so often but would never bugle. It seemed that every elk we saw was a direct result of Klaus's cow calling. On the first day of our hunt, Klaus cow called a nice 6x6 bull and a dozen cows. The bull came as close as 43 yards before deciding it was time to retreat. We observed him and his cows for about ten minutes. He looked like a B&C bull, but it was too early in the hunt to close the deal.

Day two of the hunt was uneventful as far as elk were concerned. We walked the opposite side of the river. It appeared that the elk had moved further upstream than what successful hunters had encountered in previous years. It was a great walk with amazing scenery and wildlife.

On the third day of the hunt we heard shooting across the river upstream from our location. We assumed the resident hunter docked at the base of the mountain was successful. The next day he had his elk cape, antlers, and some meat back at their landing craft. They were gearing up to go back to get the remaining meat out. Klaus talked with them briefly to learn where the carcass was located so that we would be able to prepare

for any possible bear attack. Both black and grizzly bears reside in the area. A grizzly sow and her three large cubs had their picture taken by a trail camera during late summer so we knew bears were in the area.

Klaus and I continued up the Brittain River hunting slowly, and around 1:30 p.m. Klaus found another spot to cow call. I was walking up behind Klaus when he said, "Antler, load up!" I chambered a shell and placed my shooting sticks in position. Klaus quietly said, "Small bull." I could see two bulls; I turned back around to Klaus who was looking through his binoculars,



★ Terry returned from a successful Roosevelt's elk hunt in the District of Sechelt area of British Columbia on October 17, 2014.

B&C ARCHIVES:

Records of NABG Committee
Dr. Philip L. Wright, Chairman
Theodore Roosevelt National Historic Site,
New York, NY, December 5, 1979

"The next matter had to do with the possible establishment of a new class for Roosevelt's elk. This question was fully discussed in 1976, but no action was taken because there was insufficient information on the entry scores of existing trophies because no Roosevelt's elk are known that score large enough to reach the minimum score (375) for Rocky Mountain elk."

"Scores of a series of trophies from Afognak Island, Alaska; recently taken trophies from Vancouver Island, British Columbia; a series of scores from western Washington (obtained from the Washington Game Department); and a single animal from northwestern California were distributed at the Executive Committee meeting at Sagamore Hill and photos of some of these heads were shown at that time. Additional photos from the Washington Game Department were circulated."

"Glenn St. Charles, who had been invited to this meeting by Phil Wright and who had first written to the Club in the mid-1960s urging the establishment of a Roosevelt's elk category, was asked to speak. He stated that the animal is a different species [sic. subspecies], they look different, they are darker in color, weigh about 100 lbs. more than Rocky Mountain elk but have smaller antlers that tend to be thicker at the base, some tend to have webbing near the antler tops, and there are thousands taken each year along the coast of northwest California, Oregon, Washington, and Vancouver Island."

"The matter of the class for Roosevelt's elk was taken up again and a motion to approve this class was passed. It was understood that the initial entries would include many heads taken several years ago and these would be eligible for Certificates of Merit and that regular place Awards of place and Honorable Mention would be awarded only for heads taken in the last 5 years. Wright said that he favored the establishment of this class with a minimum score of 290 points, and that perhaps for the initial five-year period the availability of regular trophy awards might be suspended. The area to be included for Roosevelt's elk is as follows: Afognak and Raspberry Islands, Alaska; Vancouver Island, British Columbia; western Washington, west of I-5, plus an area in western Skamania County (the area is occupied by the Mt. St. Helens herd); Oregon west of I-5; and, two counties in northwestern California, Del Norte, and Humboldt."

In January 1980, a new category of Roosevelt's elk was established.

In 2010 the Roosevelt's elk boundary was expanded in British Columbia to include bulls taken on the mainland from the area including all of the coastal watersheds of Butte Inlet at the north to Frazer River, Harrison River/Harrison Lake and the Lillooet River and all its tributaries to the south. (Marked in red on the map.)

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and whispered, “There are two bulls.” I could see a large bull facing directly at us that had stopped behind a large tree. On either side of the tree I could see his long G-3 points. The bull moved slightly to my right. I was prepared to shoot, looking through my scope when Klaus said, “Shooter... shoot, shoot.” A tree covered his chest cavity. I had a good clear sight of his entire shoulder and settled the crosshairs

on the back of his shoulder. I don’t remember the recoil from the Finn Lite .300 Winchester Mag. I chambered another shell as he slowly moved away. The bull walked eight or nine paces before falling in a hole partially filled with water.

Our excitement boiled over. Klaus was probably more excited than I was. He was so happy for me. As we walked up to the bull, he lay bedded with his huge dark orange antlers glistening from the rain. The 180-grain Accubond bullet went through both shoulders of the bull from approximately 60 yards. Klaus and I were wonderstruck by such a magnificent animal. Pictures were taken, and we removed the cape and antlers in the constant rain. We prepared

We knew we would not get the cape and antlers out that evening. It was another 30-minute walk back to the quad. The quad was on the other side of a river, which we crossed on foot earlier in the day; but now the river’s water level was so high we had no idea where we had even crossed. Luckily we were able to cross the large dead fall on our butts back to safety.



the meat for transportation the next day and got loaded up as quickly as we could. It was just after 3:00 p.m.

Normally we would start heading back to the landing craft by 2:30 p.m., walking quickly to be safely back to basecamp before dark. This time we were further back than we’d been on previous occasions, and Klaus was carrying a soaking wet cape and antlers estimated to weigh around 150 pounds. As the rain continued to fall, the dry road bed we walked up earlier in the day became a creek, and we walked along the downhill trail in water—at times—just below our knee caps.

The nine kilometer hike back was long, slow, and difficult at times—crossing over deadfall, walking between trees that would grab the elk antlers, and stepping on river stones that you could not see under the water. At one point I was able to convince Klaus to let me try carrying the cape and antlers. He loaded me up and off I went. I immediately felt the weight on my back and legs. After a short distance I went down, crossing over a deadfall tree when I slipped on a stone below water level. I was pinned and couldn’t get up on my own so I waited for Klaus to get me back on my feet. I believe I carried the cape and antlers for 15 minutes; my legs were numb.

Klaus, a bit rested, carried on until we finally crossed over a flowing creek that we thought might be a raging river by this point. Once safely across, Klaus put the heavy load down. We knew we would not get the cape and antlers out that evening. It was another 30-minute walk back to the quad. The quad was on the other side of a river, which we crossed on foot earlier in the day. However, the river’s water level was so

high now we had no idea where we had even crossed. Luckily we were able to cross the large deadfall on our butts back to safety.

We quickly loaded up the landing craft and headed out. Klaus made radio contact with basecamp to advise that we were safely on our way. We received an immediate response from Frank and Jay; our delay back to basecamp had caused reason for concern. We could see the lights of their boat were in close proximity to us. They turned around and both boats headed slowly back to basecamp under the dark sky.

The next day we walked back in with Jay. He carried the cape and antlers on his back in one trip, and all the meat in another, and walked across the downed deadfall bridge like a cat. His day job is a “tree topper.” He’s not afraid of heights or walking across slippery wet logs. Klaus and I played it safe again and went across on our butts.

It was a great experience all around. Thanks again to Klaus Wolff, a top-notch guide. He did a fabulous job. Also, a special thanks to Eric, the camp cook. His hospitality, humor, and clean ship were more than could be expected. I had lost a bunch of weight due to a health issue just before arriving at camp. After three helpings of his fabulous food and dessert each evening, I actually put on weight and got stronger throughout the trip. The equipment, including the quad, boats, and facilities were all first-rate. Brad Lister of Coastal Inlet Adventures has put a lot of time, effort, and money toward providing their hunters, myself included, an opportunity to harvest a great trophy Roosevelt’s elk. It was a great hunt, a great bull, and an experience I will never forget. ■