



Remington Magnum was introduced, so I wasn't invited to that long-ago Remington seminar. My mentors, Bob Milek and John Wootters, were. Both reported that it flattened elk, but was a hard kicker. Undaunted, I used it a bit in the early 1980s in the then-standard Model 700 BDL with 24-inch barrel. Yep, it sure did stone elk, and I also used it for musk ox and some other game. Back then Remington still had hope for the cartridge, with factory loads running from a fast 185-grain load to a very sound 220-grain load.

Fifteen years passed before I messed with it again. By then the only standard factory load remaining was a 200-grain load. This remains so today, but Remington has upgraded that load to feature a 200-grain Swift A-Frame bullet at a published velocity of 2,900 feet per second. Actual velocity varies

depending on your barrel length, but this is a good load with a great bullet. To date, Remington is the only major manufacturer to offer 8mm Remington Magnum factory loads, but there are a few other options out there, including a wonderfully fast Double Tap load with a 200-grain Barnes TSX.

But let's back up to the late 90s and my second love affair with the 8mm Remington Magnum. Even then the cartridge was primarily a handloader's proposition. Though impressive on paper, Remington's loads were always fairly mild as well as limited. Bullet selection in 8mm is not robust, and in most cases lighter bullets are to be avoided because they're often intended for 8mm Mauser velocities. Even so, there were and are plenty enough bullets, with good options between 200 and 220 grains from Barnes, Hornady,

Nosler, Sierra, and Swift.

My intent was a long-range elk rifle that could deliver 2,000 foot-pounds of energy at 600 yards. That isn't so easy, but if you can get the velocity out of a 220-grain 8mm bullet you can get there. Velocity was enhanced by a 28-inch Pac-Nor barrel, the rifle barreled and stocked by veteran Paso Robles gunsmith Norm Bridge. With handloads we were able to exceed 3,000 fps with a 220-grain bullet. As a bonus, we also got exceptional accuracy. Obviously at that kind of velocity there was plenty of recoil, but this was mitigated by gun weight. In addition to the extra-long barrel and walnut stock, we put a Break-O mercury recoil reducer in the butt.

The rifle was extremely shootable, but obviously heavy; over 10 pounds without scope, nearer to 12 with scope and mounts. I guess I was younger and stronger back then! It did account for several elk, but I'm happy to say that I never attempted a shot at 600 yards. (It worked just fine at closer ranges!) Because the accuracy was marvelous and I trusted the rifle, I used it quite a lot. Elsewhere in North America it accounted for an eclectic array of game from black bear to Coues' deer, and it also served some

tours overseas. I used it on at least four African safaris, where it accounted for a wide range of plains game. Most notable were probably Ethiopia and Zambia. In Ethiopia it managed a tough shot on a fine mountain nyala, and in Zambia it worked perfectly on game up to a massive Livingstone's eland.

I never took it on a North American mountain hunt, but I did take on two Asian sheep hunts, first to Turkmenistan for Trans-Caspian urial, and then on my first Marco Polo argali hunt in Tajikistan. Yep, it worked...but while the long barrel has never been an impediment in open country, I finally figured out that the rifle was too darned heavy to carry in *tough* country! Or maybe I've just gotten older, slower, and lazier.

In any case, as much as I like it and as well as it has served me, with a dearth of factory loads and scarcity of rifles, the 8mm Remington Magnum is not a cartridge I would urge you to run out and buy. But if you have one (or run across a good deal on one), don't underestimate it, especially if you're a handloader. In some ways it really is better than either a .300 or .33-caliber magnum—just as Remington intended it to be! ■

No 8mm cartridge has ever achieved lasting popularity in the U.S. Despite merit, the 8mm Remington Magnum (right) has never achieved popularity. It remains to be seen whether a newer 8mm, the .325 WSM (left) will break the spell.



I was hunting in coastal North Carolina when I harvested one of the biggest black bears I've ever taken. It was handily accounted for by the 8mm Remington with 220-grain bullets.

