



2005-06 Hunt Update



Taking two great Dall rams side by side is not par for the course in this business, but for those of you who follow our storyline you will recall the double we had on two 39" rams harvested by Jim Renkema and Blake Olson during the opening week of the 2004 sheep season. We really didn't expect to see anything like that again anytime soon, but by 10:30 A.M. opening morning of the 2005 season we had another double on two great rams. Shan Ogden and Wayne Brown (both from Utah) connected (with the assistance of assistant guide Rod Petty) on 38" and 39" rams, once again side by side. We got the guys into the valley early as usual, and this gave them adequate time to get into a great location before the opening day, and this gave us a great start to another fine sheep season.

Hunter Andy Ribbens and assistant guide Derek Harbula were accompanied by apprentice Lyle Becker in quest of a ram, and Andy would connect on a heavy horned 36" ram on day 3 of his hunt, but only after a hair raising trip across glaciers riddled with crevasses and rock slides that caused him to question his sanity. Andy will certainly never forget the price in intestinal fortitude that it took to get into position on his ram, and none of us will forget the difficulty of that great short-cut route that we tried to take into the valley where his ram was eventually harvested.



38" & 39" Chugach Rams!

Our only other hunter for the early season would eventually get a fleeting glimpse of an old broomed ram they had been searching for...

(Continued on page 2)

Record Book Brown Bear At Last?

It has taken us a while to settle our minds when it comes to brown bear hunting areas, due in part to growth of the business and the ability to expand we have not been so willing to accept just any area. Things have become a little more settled after this spring. We had already made the decision to pursue the Peninsula again after a hiatus during the last fall season, but the purchase of some real estate and a boat earlier this year made the move possible well in advance of our October 2007 goal (the next fall hunt).

Due in large part to the cooperation of our client, Dr. Franklin Wong...

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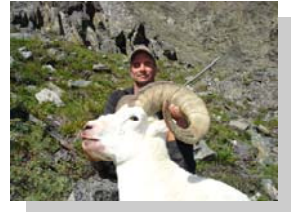
Special points of interest:

- Double again on Chugach rams
- Record Book Brown Bear
- New Brown bear area details

Double Trouble II continued from page 1

...for several days, but no shots would be fired and Mark Boulanger will be back with us again.

Due to the fact that we made some special accommodations for a father and son team to hunt sheep last fall we found ourselves back in the mountains for a late season sheep and once again things were educational and we came close to going 3 for 3 on this last slot of the season. Len Anderson and his son Dennis would hunt hard for several days before Len connected on a beautiful 36" ram. For Len's own account of the story you can find the article at <http://www.alaskahunts.net/alaska/2005dall-sheep-anderson.htm>, unfortunately for Dennis his opportunity was lost after a missed shot on another fine ram, but he connected later that same day on a black bear and plans to return for another chance at a ram in the near future.



Andy Ribbens with his early season 36" Chugach ram. Andy was guided by Derek Harbula and accompanied by apprentice Lyle Becker!

One more hunter would connect with a ram during this week, although the gentleman was supposed to be hunting for goat. It wasn't an accident, but intentional on the hunters part, and he did have a tag that allowed it, but this is another story altogether that we really don't care to remember. The ram was a small 33" and it unfortunately dropped our average down to 37.5" over the past three years, but we can't complain too much about this. It's just one of those things that you occasionally encounter in the outfitting business. When it was all said and done we went 5 of 7 on the season with one missed ram.



Len Anderson with his Chugach ram and son Dennis.

"When it was all said and done we went 5 of 7 on the season with one missed ram..."

Sheep season for 2006 is fully booked with seven hunters and we are expecting a tremendous time in the field. It looks like we really have a group of hardcore guys ready to hunt this summer and with the populations that we have seen over the past several years we can only expect good results.

We are now accepting bookings for 2007 and they are starting to fill up already so individuals interested in going after the heavy horned rams of the Chugach Mountains should not wait until the last minute before making a decision to book. Honestly guys, I get hunters e-mailing me in April and May wanting to hunt sheep in August and it just isn't likely to happen with any decent sheep outfit out there in this day and age. **We are typically booked well in advance for the next year's time slots so keep this in mind when you are planning your dream hunts.**

...who had already booked for a spring hunt in GMU 16B, and Cy Rossi and Don Vandresar's willingness to pursue the hunt on short notice we were able to pursue brown bear in the land of the giants this spring.

Logistics were the usual nightmare for the Peninsula and the 20 ft. skiff that had been purchased for use on the Peninsula waters was certainly a large part of the nightmare. First it was supposed to be sitting on the dock in the sea side community that we were flying into, but when I had Jerry Starkey and Jesse Ryder go in early they found that the boat simply had not made it. The barge that was scheduled to deliver the boat was running a week behind schedule, so it didn't look too great at this stage. Fortunately the skiff did arrive on the 9th of May, but we were not able to reschedule our flights from Anchorage to Port Moller until the 11th, which put us behind on the hunt by a day and a half, since the hunt was to begin on the opening day of May 10th.

After our arrival in Port Moller things only grew worse, since my guides had went in early to set up a camp on the property that had been purchased, they were now stranded and could not pick us up due to the fact that the seas were simply too rough to travel in the skiff. I would spend the 11th and the 12th with my three hunters stuck in the tents behind the cannery waiting for the guys to show up with the skiff. The 13th dawned with better weather and around 10 A.M. the guys rolled in with the boat, and the decision was made to hunt in an area that was a little more accessible than the purchased properties. Two trips later and we had the whole crew on the beach and we quickly got camp set up so the guys could get into the field and begin hunting. I had every expectation that the guys would see bears, but I didn't have a clue that things would get rolling quite so quickly. I'm not sure what time it was when the first group came back into camp, but both Derek and his hunter Franklin, as well as Jerry and his hunter Don had seen numerous bears. If I remember correctly Don and Jerry saw 6 bears that evening and none of the guys left camp before 3:30 P.M. Derek had Franklin on a bear that was estimated over 9 ft., but the doctor was not able to get a shot off in time when the bear was under 300 hundred yards, and the gap only widened from there. Don and Jerry could not close the gap on any of the bears they saw that first evening, but Jesse and his hunter Silvio (Cy) Rossi rolled into camp around 2:30 A.M. with a tale to be told.

Jesse and Cy had hustled out of camp before everyone else that afternoon and I suspected that Jesse was going to push Cy to the limit very quickly, but I had no idea just what they had in mind, and they had little idea what they would encounter, since the area we were hunting was new to us, and all we had were topos to suggest where the major valleys were located. According to Jesse, we would learn that they had traveled several hard miles up and down snow covered slopes and razorback ridges in an effort to get into position on this bear they had spotted apparently around 5 P.M. The going was made much more difficult due to our having made the decision to opt out with the snowshoes this spring because they are seldom used that far west on the Peninsula because of the lack of snow at lower elevations in May. I am sure Cy and Jesse probably thought they could have been useful crossing the snow fields they encountered that evening, but the adrenaline carried them onward. After a discussion about the size of the bear (Jesse was thoroughly convinced this was a huge bear) and a scramble to avoid being winded, Jesse related that they found themselves in a decent position across the valley from the bear around 10:30 P.M. . Cy took a rested his rifle on Jesse's shoulder and proceeded to take the once in a lifetime 300 yard shot across the valley floor. The bear



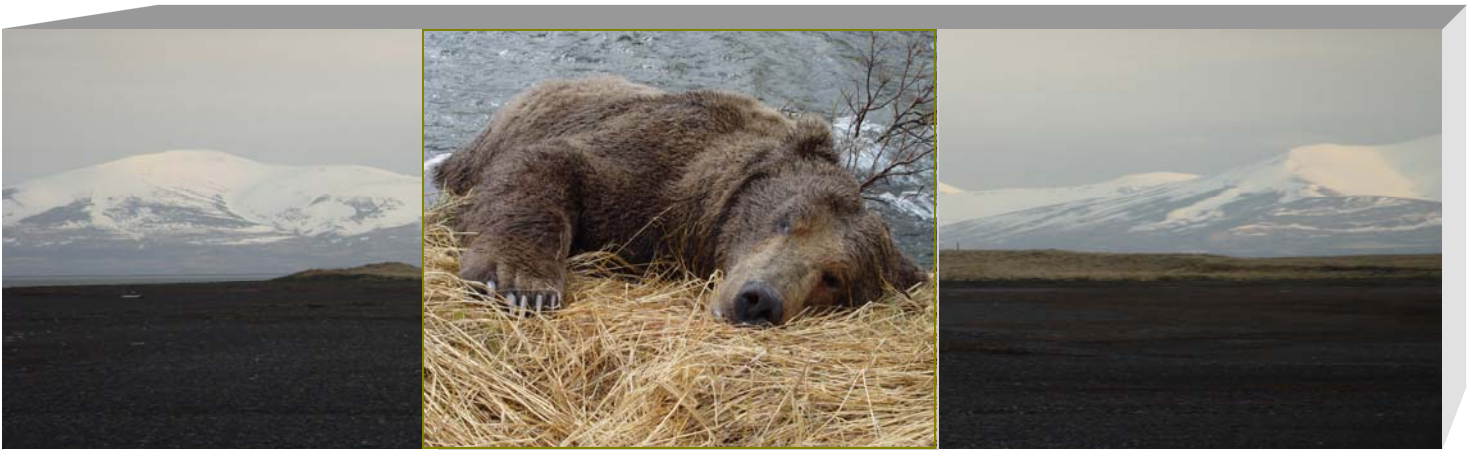
Cy Rossi with his enormous 10 ft. 10 inch Peninsula brown bear!

dropped instantly, and as is so often the case, it came back up instantly and began to go full bore down the slope! Cy took a second shot and missed, then a third and the bear rolled head-long, regained its' composure and continued into the creek bottom in the bottom of the valley.

The guys really would not realize the enormity of this old boar until they found him piled up against the creek bank, still partially submerged in the water. It quickly became obvious that the bear was very likely a genuine 10 ft. specimen. Jesse and Cy looked at the huge head and neck lying against the bank and knew that this was truly the bear of a life time. Of course they would not be able to move the bear at all, and darkness was settling into the valley, so the only real option at this point was for the guys to return back to camp, knowing that tomorrow would be a full day of skinning and packing. They didn't have a clue what really lay ahead at this stage!

So this was the story we were being told at 2:30 A.M. back in camp, and I must confess it was a welcome story after the several days of weather and logistics trouble we had just endured. At this point, the tale of a good bear on the ground was certainly cause for a sigh of relief. I decided that I would go in with the guys in the morning and help skin and get the bear back to camp.

Don and Jerry headed out early the next morning as did Derek and Franklin, while I remained in camp with Cy and Jesse while they recuperated a little. They had dropped their packs somewhere along the stalk on the big bear since Jesse had pushed Cy to the physical edge. Cy would confess to me that he had never been pushed that hard in his life.....(continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

Record Book Brown Bear At Last?

...Jesse and Cy would leave the camp that morning to go and retrieve the packs, the guys had marked the kill site with the GPS so we entered the coordinates into my GPS and I left around an hour later (about 11:30 A.M.) to meet up with them at the location of the bear. After having heard the story of how difficult it was to cover the ground between the bear and the camp, according to their midnight wanderings, I opted to travel the shoreline until I was in a position to go straight into the location of the bear, which they had told me was not that far from the salt water. I ended up traveling a couple of miles west on the beach before I found the GPS telling me that the bear was straight in 1 1/4 mile from the shoreline, so I headed up a little ravine and across the rolling terrain toward the bear's location.

The snow and rain mix traced sideways through the air as I meandered down on the crystal clear creek looking for the bear. Jesse and Cy were nowhere to be seen or heard, so I assumed that I had beaten them to the site. The GPS said I was within a few hundred feet when I saw the straw and brown colored bear lying like a fallen dinosaur in the stream. The first thing I noticed was the huge shoulders and neck since I had come in from the bear's backside. I knew it was huge, to put it simply it was the kind of bear that inspires the dreams of millions of hunters and the nightmares of the unfortunate few. I simply admired the fallen behemoth for quite awhile before I finally got the camera out and began taking photos and shooting some video.

It would be hours before Jesse and Cy finally arrived, since they had dropped their packs a long way from the place where the stalk eventually ended, and after another photo session the skinning would finally begin around 8 P.M. The bear refused, even in death to be brought out of the creek, and the best result three of us could manage was to roll him on his back, yet still in the water. I knew that this would complicate things since the hide would obviously get soaked in the skinning process, but we had little choice, so sometime around 1 A.M. we managed to separate bear and hide and then we realized what a handful we really had. We stretched the hide over the humps of grass there on the bank and put the tape to it. The results were even more impressive than we had thought to begin with, as the big boar's hide would square at 10 ft. 10 inches. It was all we could do to get the hide into a 50 gallon contractor's bag and roll it a little ways from the carcass in the creek. We simply didn't have the energy to get the hide out that night, so we loaded up the skull which probably exceeded 50 pounds itself and we staggered toward camp. If I remember correctly it was around 5:30 A.M. when we came rolling in the next morning. I asked Derek (due to the fact that he is almost superhuman) to assist the guys in getting the bear hide out and I would plan on taking Franklin hunting when I had a few hours rest.

It sounded like a plan to me, but Franklin was up early and ready to go, so Derek said he would run him out and hunt that morning and then go in with the guys to help get the skin of Cy's bear out while I would hunt with Franklin that evening. I was exhausted so I mumbled something and passed back out momentarily, only to be awakened within a couple of hours. Derek had already returned and Franklin had nailed another bear! No rest for the weary I thought, but certainly I was elated at Franklin's success.



Silvio Rossi's huge brown bear was so large that 3 men could not get it out of the creek to skin it on dry land.

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Scrambling out of the tent I grabbed my pack and followed Derek and Franklin back to the kill site which was around 1/2 mile from camp. We did the photos and Jerry and I both filmed the doctor and Derek telling their story, then they left and I remained with Franklin to skin the bear.

Derek had managed to save the day for the doctor when the beautiful blonde bear disappeared around 250 yards out (before a shot could be taken) he pulled out the old standby predator call and gave a few cottontail in distress calls, and within just a few moments the bear popped out of the alders with eyes fixed on Franklin and Derek at 125 yards. This time the doctor would connect, and he would not stop connecting until the bear was down for good. The good doctor and I had a fairly easy day skinning the bear and packing it back to camp in relatively decent weather for the Peninsula.

The Peninsula hunting would come to an end with around 45-60 bears being spotted, and Don calling his hunt a few days early because of weather and scheduling concerns. Derek would manage to pack the 200 lb+ hide over 1 1/2 miles back to the beach which certainly impressed everyone, then the guys took turns lugging it as far as they could until they got back to camp. The skull on Cy's bear was obviously going to make the 28" score needed to get into Boone and Crockett's record book, and Dan Foster of Foster's Taxidermy in Palmer would roughly measure the skull a few days later at 28 14/16". It certainly is a trophy in our book. Dr. Wong's bear wasn't quite the size of Cy's bear, but it was absolutely a tremendous trophy for him, especially after the bear homed in on them for dinner!

Fall of 2005 saw us with four brown bear hunters including a 2 on 1 group and one hunter who was just in for five days, but we are happy to say that we still came away with 3 bears during the September 1st-10th hunts. We were hunting the same area we had hunted previously on the Skwentna River and we enjoyed success finding bears on the chum salmon again, and we connected readily. GMU 16 B is certain to be an area that we will enjoy hunting bears in for years to come, and we only expect things to get better within this unit. For this coming fall of 2006 we will be focusing our efforts closer to the coast in an effort to encounter more large bears, and we hope to be able to use our watercraft a little more to our advantage this fall.

Outlook for 2007:

At this time we are looking forward to more success on the spring hunts and we will likely focus on the coastal waters of Cook Inlet, but we are expecting some changes in the near future, and if we are able to get one of our guides registered this coming December, then we may expand into some additional areas for the spring of 2007, so stay tuned. The fall of 2007 is certainly going to be a hot topic, and we are going to be looking at probably six hunt slots being offered for the Alaska Peninsula. This area is extremely expensive to operate in and we will be offering these hunts at a price of \$14,000 for 10 day hunts, and this is still below our competition as far as I can tell. Logistics are in the works at this time for this October 1-10 time slot, and we hope to be able to have a little more comfortable base camp in the area by this time, although we are sure to have guys spiked out in the routine fashion (North Face expedition tents) so they can access the hotspots for salmon and the bear that love them! These hunt slots will not likely remain for long, so if you are interested you should probably give me a call well in advance. We expect to book the first slot within the week, and he doesn't know about Cy's monster yet!



Cy Rossi took this huge bear with his Browning A Bolt in a .338 Remington Ultra Mag. His load is not an easy one to duplicate since he removed the 250 grain Trophy-Bonded Bearclaws out of factory Federal ammo (the bullets are not available otherwise), and loaded them with 91 grains of Reloder 22 to achieve a velocity of 3008 fps.

Certainly an impressive load, and very effective at 300 yards. I am sure that Cy's confidence in this particular load just went up a notch or two!

Cy, Tony, and Jesse with a trophy Alaska brown bear.

2005-06 Hunt Photos



Shan Ogden with his 39" x 14" Chugach ram, harvested on opening day of the 2005 sheep season. Shan harvested the ram right next to his hunting partner Wayne Brown's 38" ram.



Assistant Guide Rod Petty with Wayne Brown and Shan Ogden. This, represents the second double on big rams for our outfit. Two years in a row!



Andy Ribbens and Derek Harbula with Andy's heavy homed 36" Chugach ram. Andy was glad to be alive at this point!



Len Anderson and son Dennis with Assistant Guide Derek with Len's late season 36" ram.



2005-06 Hunt Photos



Mike Quinn and Tony with Mike's Skwentna River brown bear taken on the salmon stream September 2005 after a 1/2 mile sprint to close the gap. Footage of this kill will be included on our next DVD.



Dr. Bob McCulloch with his Skwentna River bear. Dr. Bob was guide by Assistant Guide Daniel Gunderson and accompanied by apprentice Jon Goodrich. This bear was taken the evening before Mike Quinn's.



Assistant Guide Derek, Registered Guide Tony Dingess, and Dr. Franklin Wong with his blonde and beautiful Peninsula brown bear, taken on May 15, 2006. Dr. Wong proclaims (with just a touch of accent) "Real Men Take Real Bear!"



*Dr. Wong says "...and I just kept emptying my whole cartridge, so four rounds down, Derek two rounds, and now here this!"
Franklin is now seriously hooked on big bears!*



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Custom Hunts for the Discerning Sportsman

Special Thanks to our dedicated group of guides!

Assistant Guides Derek Harbula, Daniel Gunderson,
Jerry Starkey, Rod Petty, and Jesse Ryder!

Truly without these guys, the hunts would be few and the
pains too numerous to deal with, so once again I give



Assistant Guide Jerry Starkey with a hunter's late season ram

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www.alaskahunts.net

www.brown-bear-hunts.com

www.dall-sheep-hunts.com

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2006-'07 Outlook

2006 has already started off with a fantastic spring bear season and we expect the rest of the year to be blessed as well. We have seven sheep hunters scheduled for this coming August, and we fully expect to take some great rams. We have four more brown bear hunts lined up for the Cook Inlet country and we expect to be able to make use of our watercraft down in that area this fall so we are looking forward to finding the bear once again on the salmon for the first ten days of September.

2007 is certainly going to be a year of opportunities, and we are anticipating some welcome growth in the bear operation with the property acquisitions on the Peninsula and the possibility of getting some permanent structures in place down there. We hope that assistant guide Derek Harbula will be able to get his registered license when the year end exam takes place, but we are all waiting to see what kind of curve ball the new Big Game Commercial Services Board is going to throw at us in this regard, since proposed changes could affect the whole industry in a grim fashion when it comes to getting qualified help. One way or the other we continue to grow and this means added opportunities for our hunters!

Pricing for 2007 will be as follows:

Brown Bear, \$9,000 spring or fall 16B, 8 day hunt

Fall Peninsula \$14,000, 10 day hunt

Dall Sheep, \$9,000 August, 8 day hunt

Moose, \$10,000 Talkeetna or Chugach Mtns. 8 days-charter included.

Sept. Peninsula Moose \$12,000, 8 day hunt

Please visit the website for a complete list of offerings!

Thanks again to all our hunters and guides



"If I had only brought the hot air balloon!"