

SLIDING for SHEEP

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #3 —

“Can we get closer?” Those were my words to the guide, as we looked down the mountain at the seven rams – nearly 600 yards away.

We had been working these rams for four days, but bad luck with fog, horses and terrain had been our lot. Now we were a mere 600 yards above them, on the same hillside, watching them feed along in a line from left to right. But 600 yards is twice as far as I like to shoot.

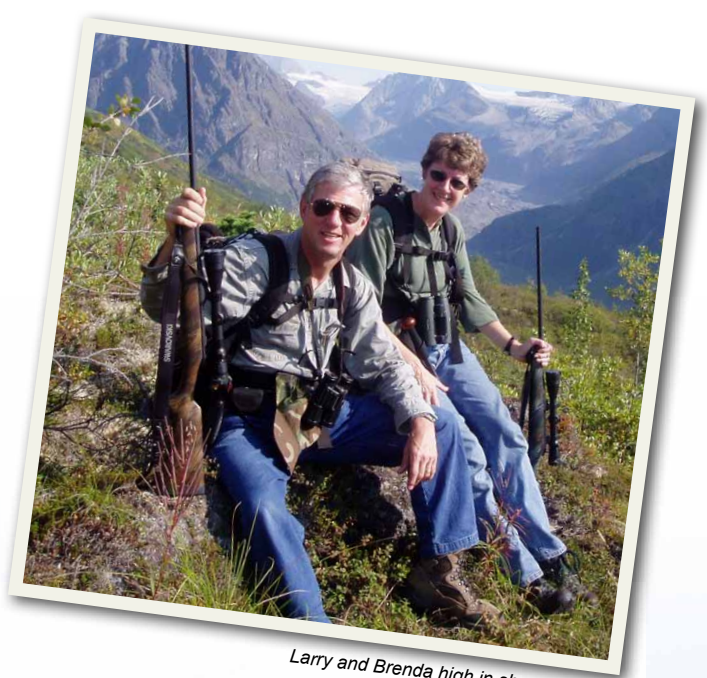
From our camp, at the bottom of the valley, the grassy hillside looked pretty smooth; but when you are actually sitting on such a hillside, things are quite different. The ground rises and falls in such a fashion that all seven rams had soon fed out of sight.

“Let's get closer!”, I said. With rifles in one hand and

backpacks in the other, down the mountain our small group went – with only our bottoms and the heels of our boots making contact with the ground – we were sliding to the sheep.

The grade was like one to one, which meant for every foot we went forward, we descended one foot, and we were going straight down, not side-hilling. In a hundred and fifty yards of 'free-sliding' we never saw the sheep, but stopped to look over a rise – still no sheep. “Let's get closer!”, and away we went again.

Certainly they must have heard us, but when we stopped again for a look, still no sheep in sight – “We go again!”



Larry and Brenda high in sheep country.

Now, our guide carefully peaks over the rise then turns and says “Brenda, your sheep is in the front and Larry yours is third from the back.” Of course when Brenda and I are hunting together, I always insist that she take the first shot. Sliding our backpacks in front of us to the top of the ridge, the sheep we had been looking at from 600 yards were now only 80 yards away.

“...600 yards is twice as far as I like to shoot.”

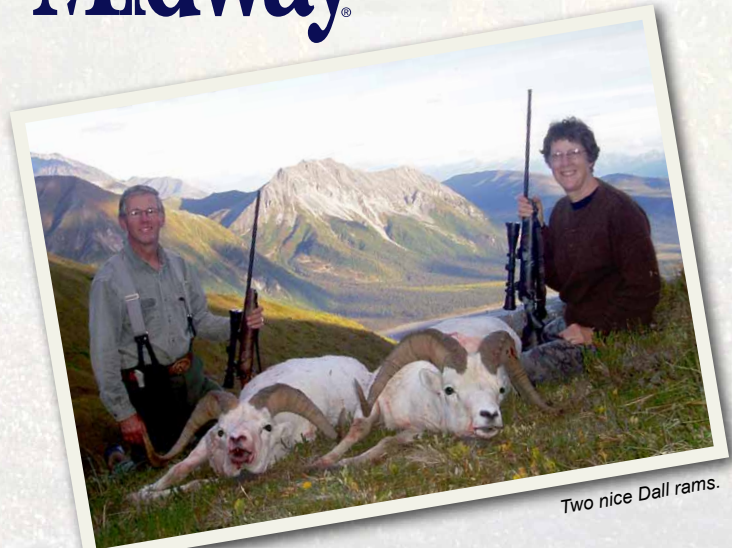
Brenda shot first and her sheep went down. The rest of the rams started trotting away and I was preparing to take the second ram on the move, but he stopped after about 50 yards, as they almost always do, and I made it 'sheep for two'.

Midway USA

Larry Potterfield
Wrangell Mountains of Alaska
August 2004



This is sheep country. Our sheep were in the area that is circled.



Two nice Dall rams.