

# Horseback Hunting

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #100 —

Many of my most enjoyable hunting trips have been on horseback in the mountains of Alaska, British Columbia, Yukon and the Northwest Territories of Canada. On every hunt, it was a long trip to the jumping-off points at the end of civilization, followed by a ride on a small float plane or wheel plane into some remote mountain valley – and then the hunt.

Mountain quarry typically includes the Alaska-Yukon moose, Dall sheep, Stone sheep, Mountain caribou or Mountain goat. Of course there are two species of bears - black and grizzly. I shot a mainland grizzly one year, that came into our sheep camp, but have always thought of the big coastal brown bears as the ultimate grizzly bear trophy. Wolves are also around in some areas, but I have never got a shot at one.



12 year old Stone Sheep from British Columbia - 2011

My hunts have almost always included horses, the availability of which the hunter can take for granted, as the outfitter arranges for trucking them to the trail head, then ponying or

driving them for hours - or sometimes days - to base camp. There are always one or two horses in camp that are no fun to ride; and it's not uncommon for someone to say: "What's the 'Trophy Fee' on this critter; I'd like to shoot him/her." If you're around horses for a while in the mountains, there isn't much bad behavior you won't observe. I've seen them spook when walking by the firewood as we left camp, watched one fall in the water when crossing a creek and had one jump in the water to take a shortcut; and of



Moose hunting in the Yukon – 2014; L-R Sam Mahood (guide), myself, Matt Fleming, and Brenan Grove (guide)

course, sometimes they buck you off. Still, horses are usually the only source of transportation if you want to hunt deep in the mountains; and they add a lot of character and conversation to a hunting camp.

"...horses are usually the only source of transportation..."

Mountain hunting is a great test of your physical strength, endurance, and mental character; I've had no easy hunts in the mountains and some were really humbling. In my mind the toughest hunt is probably a cold and rainy two week combination hunt, where sheep is the primary trophy, but moose, goat, caribou and bear are also on your list. Whether you tag everything or go home empty handed, you will work your tail off and come home with a deep appreciation for horseback hunting in the mountains.



Larry Potterfield  
Atkin Camp  
Unit 15 – Yukon Stone Outfitters  
Yukon, Canada  
20 September 2014



Just finishing up at the kill site; the antlers go on last. It was four hours in 'light' rain, back to camp.