

I received the following e-mail from a hunter requesting information about hunting moose. As I often get this request I guess it is time to write a short, I hope short but informative, essay on hunting the alces alces gigas.

Quoting Jimmy de Leon <>:

> Hi Chuck,
> I read your fascinating story about the buffalo hunt. I felt envious.
> I've never shot a big beast like that. I started hunting in 1994. I've
> shot a black bear and a black tailed deer. Last year, for the first time in
>
> my hunting life, I went with a group of hunters for a moose hunt in Mc bride
>
> area. Nobody in the group have a limited entry. We hunted for the
> immature bull. We stayed in the hunting area for one week and did not see
> any immature moose. I went home empty handed. It's been my wish to bag
> a
> moose. You mentioned in your story that you are more of a moose hunter.
> Maybe, if I can request, that you give me some pointers as to where and
> how
> is the best way to hunt for the moose. I'm hoping to hear from you.
> Thank you.
> Jimmy

THE CRITTER AND MEAT CARE

Moose are huge animals weighing in from 600 to 1300 lbs.. You must figure on cutting up the critter for transport. Use saws, chain saws (filled with vegetable oil), winches, come-a-longs, and a lot of back breaking sweat and toil. Where the moose drops is where you begin. You must know how to gut, clean, the animal without contaminating the meat with the innards or urine, and how to keep the meat clean. No hair, dirt, moss, grass, rocks, or lead allowed. Garbage bags, game bags, linen laundry bags, canvas bags all work. Pepper, cheesecloth, and vinegar are a must to combat flies. Putting a pallet board into the back of a pickup truck allows air to circulate underneath the meat. Keeping the windows open in the canopy or sliding rear window while you "run" home also allows the meat to cool.

WHEN TO HUNT

The best time to hunt after years of statistical analysis of the Cache Creek Game Check reports as well as anecdotal evidence has proven that hunting during the last week of September and the first week of October is the prime time to hunt moose because they are “in the rut.”

Whether you hunt the Alaska-Yukon moose of northern BC, or the Andersoni Canadian moose of central BC, or the Shiras moose of southeastern BC you MUST hunt them during this time for the greatest chance of success. The rut is nature’s imperative for reproduction; not your connivence for the Thanksgiving holidays.

WHERE AND WHEN TO HUNT, GENERALLY

For the greatest chance of success you must (1) hunt where the moose are and (2) where other hunters aren’t. Hunt at the end of the road, and then another 200 yards. Use quads, trikes, your feet, or float plane to get you beyond the road. The attitude of if it isn’t on the road I don’t see it results in a nice drive, not a successful hunt.

Moose love water. Slowly circle the shore line at dawn and at dusk especially. Moose as all critters live in the outdoors. They don’t have watches but they need to eat in the morning to “break their fast” and they need to eat just before dark to “moose up” for the night’s rest. Herbivores have learnt that man hunts during the day and so often they feed at night especially during the full moon, but during the rut they throw caution to the wind and carouse and fight all day long. They use their scent and their antlers to attract the females, thus they need light to “show off” for the females.

WHERE AND WHEN TO HUNT, SPECIFICALLY

For the greatest success you need to hunt far up north away from man’s living centers, cities, towns, and villages. You only have a short time to hunt. You don’t live near the moose. You don’t have the luxury of “choosing” your critter. You don’t have the time to “scout out” an area. Therefore you need to hunt in Region 6 or Region 7 for the best results. There is a reason why there is not Limited Entry Hunting there. The ratio of moose to hunters is greater than in other areas.

Take a look at a topographical map of BC and find those areas that are accessible and far from any town. Find the lake near by. Camp at the lake and boat across it. Get out and walk the game trails. Learn how to call moose and bring them to the water's edge. They float when shot. Drag them to camp and you'll have an easier time of dressing them. Remember to hunt around the lake shore.

When you are in a remote area you need to have a loaded rifle. One you can shoot accurately. One you sighted in before you left. One ONLY YOU shoot. Keep it nearby at ALL TIMES. You are ALWAYS hunting. No drinking. No losing your concentration. No loud music. No loud talking. You can hear a moose splashing along the shoreline 24 hours a day but you can only hunt during daylight. Don't ruin your chances by scaring the moose off.

Hunt in areas that provide you with a shot, not dense forests or "burns." Walk next to cover. Yes moose cannot see too well but they will see movement. Herbivores eyes extend beyond the sides of their skulls. They can see BEHIND themselves. Moose can smell female phonemes 2 MILES away. They smell a cow moose in heat 2 MILES away. Their big noses and their mule like ears can smell and hear better than we can imagine. Not only can they smell and hear further than us they also can detect smaller amounts of odor and noise than we can. Do not make unnatural noises in the bush. Make sure you can take your safety off without a metal on metal scratching sound or audible "click." If you can't throw the gun away. If the ground is crunchy like popcorn just walk normally. Let the critter hear you. They'll think you belong there. Take a bone or stick and as you walk scrape it against a tree.

Well here's three pages of basic hunting lore. Hope it helps. I'll put on an advance course next time. Chuck. MOOOOOOOOSE!!!!!!