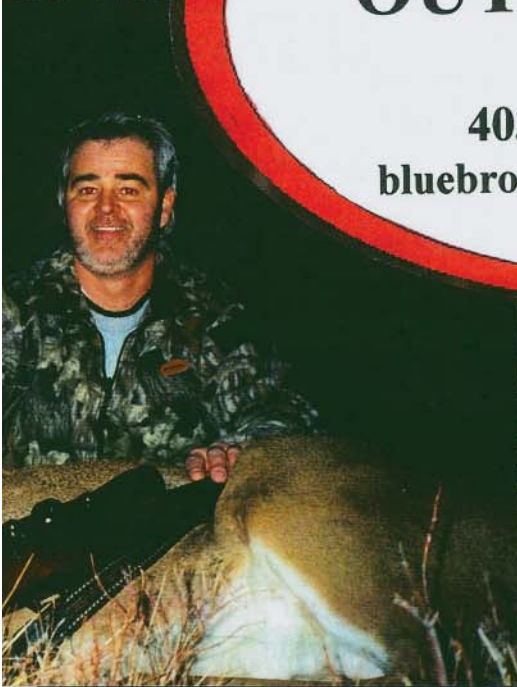




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2001 IN REVIEW by Glenn Brown

Our bear hunts went well this spring. We did not see as many bears as last year but did better at taking good-sized bears for the most part.

We started off with the Apple Boys coming in from Wisconsin who got two good bears for the three of them. This was not my strongest guiding week, seeing only two bears during the hunt, but I definitely made up for it in excellent *Hearts* strategy and card-playing ability. Tom is the only one who believes he is the Alberta 2001 Hearts champion but most of us know this is highly questionable.

Nick Brantner and Steve Smitala came next both taking excellent bears with Nick taking a Pope and Young bear with his bow on video as guide Mark Cooper called it in past a sow with two cubs. The weather was very warm and hot with forest fires starting in the near vicinity. Jan Hansen and Egil Larsen from Norway drove extra miles to get around the fire then ended up with a foot of snow on the second day of their hunt. Jan took an impressive seven foot Boone and Crocket bear with one heart shot and Egil took a beautiful wolf, also with a heart shot.

Gerry Otterbacher and his son came as the last hunters and took a black, brown, and cinnamon bear. As I stated we were not seeing as many bears but after some serious ATVing through several deep muskegs we finally found the concentrations of sign we were looking for the second last day of the season.

Well that's non-baited hunting for bears, hope to see you up in northern Alberta on one of our next bear/fishing giggle hunts.

Even though we had forest fires and mega heat and snow on our spring hunts little did we know what the rest of the year would be like. This turned into the most difficult year I have ever had as we entered into our fall elk hunts.

A week before the bow hunts were to start we were busy as normal setting up spike camps and scouting our normal area when we were informed that we should cancel all hunts as everyone was being evicted from the forestry as there was just too much fire hazard. We stopped putting up our normal camps, phoned other outfitters to find unused tags in northern zones where we could still access the elk, then ran camps and guides north to spend one or two days scouting in unfamiliar territories.

I really appreciated the hunters who trusted us to find elk for them in these areas but we did poorly. We did get a couple elk with the bow but it wasn't until we got back to our normal area. As soon as we got there we started to get decent chances on bulls. Needless to say without proper scouting and having to put in camps last minute and hire new cooks etc. our first elk hunts were not to our normal standard. We were one camp short and even though we got two 6*6s and two 5 point bulls it was a scramble. In the end, Mark Cooper guided for two rifle elk, Brad Brown guided for

one, Roy Sladkowski guided one and I guided for the two bow kills. We did see a couple real good bulls but did not take anything exceptional.

We ran our first mountain mulie hunts this year and took a couple real nice heavy antlered deer including a 183 B & C by John McKnight.

Gary Bogner, Mike Wilmet and Merle Shepherd came on the next hunt - a bow hunt for Shiras moose and elk. Merle and I got a 5*5 elk on day four and although we saw some excellent moose and even got a couple shots we were not able to harvest any of the good bulls we saw. The moose were spooky and the forest crunchy until the last day. That morning it snowed and I saw 22 moose including 4 shooters over 45 inches. It was pretty disappointing to finish up that hunt when it looked like the hunting was just getting good.

Another bow hunt for Canadian moose started as the Shiras was finishing and went down to the last day when Mark Huberty got a beauty 52 incher with his bow. Unfortunately his father was not able to get a shot.

November 1st started with our first rifle whitetail hunt. Our Californian friends were patient and held off turning down some smaller bucks but the weather remained warm and dry and the deer were not moving much during the day. The best chance came again on the very last day when my hunter and I missed about a 170 B & C.

At the same time our rifle Shiras moose hunters got skunked as we turned down many small bulls but only saw one shooter (about a 50 incher) moose. The big bulls were out of our zone in the high country where Brad and Jamie saw 10 bulls in one basin, 9 of which were 50 inch plus. The good news is that we believe we will get two tags for this zone in 2003 and will be able to hunt them in these basins during the rut with a rifle.

The weather remained warm through the 19th of November and our second hunt for M.D. and W.T. was tough. We saw numerous 170 class mulie bucks but the big boys we were looking for remained illusive. We saw one 33.5 inch wide mule deer (shot and measured by a resident later) but were unable to get a shot at him. We saw many bucks but few really big bucks. Finally the last couple days of the hunt we started to see some trophy bucks including one found by Brad and Ray which they believe would have scored around 225 unfortunately they only got within 600 yards.

In the south the weather was warm and windy. Guides Mark and Joel managed to get a couple nice mule deer and one nice white tail for their clients but again we saw a few nice big (180 class) whitetail and mulies but could not seem to complete the mission. In the north Shane and Dean got 1 W.T. and 1 M.D. for two hunters.

The final hunt of the year was perfect weather with snow, cooler temperatures, and lots of bucks. We *saw* big white tails and mulies. We *shot* at giant white tails and mulies but our luck would not break. Yes we ended up taking some nice bucks but the 11 by 11 typical whitetail seen 20 yards from Brad and Bryan is still out there. The 190 class mule deer (plural) shot at by my clients are still out there. I believe the moral of the story is that 2002 is going to be great as we saw and left more big deer in the field than any other year I can remember.



