

## **2004 Success Rates**

### **Winter lion hunts**

We had 5 hunters and harvested 4 lions in December through February. None of them made book but three of the four cats were very old. We also treed several bobcats but hunters chose not to take them or the season was already closed.

### **Fishing**

We took only one lake trip this year. We caught around 50 trout out of one of the lakes that were between 14" and 20". They were heavy, hard fighting fish and a lot of fun to catch. Big Creek was also a lot of fun this year with the average daily catch being about 30 fish per day per person. The Salmon run had fewer fish and did not last as long this year.

### **Cast and Blast**

We had 10 cast and blast hunters this year and we shot 6 bears. Three other hunters missed bears. Only one hunter did not have the opportunity to shoot at a bear. She saw a large boar but it did not come into the bait until after dark. Of the bears we took, 4 were large mature boars and two were sows without cubs. We shot a few grouse and caught some fish but bear hunting seemed to be what people wanted most.

### **Combination Hunts**

**First hunt:** We had four hunters. They shot three 5 point bulls and the fourth hunter wounded a large 6 point bull. He did not hit it very hard because we harvested the same bull on the third hunt. We also shot a bear. Everyone saw lots of elk.

**Second hunt:** We had four guided hunters and shot a four point and two five point bulls. We saw several other bulls including several 6 points but they passed them up or could not get shots. We had two drop campers and they did not get anything. One of them saw two bulls but

could not get a shot at the larger bull. Two of the hunters saw a group of 8 bucks, four of which were good but did not get any of them.

**Third hunt:** We had four guided hunters. We shot a 5 point, large 4x5 (it should have been a 6 point and was very old), and two good 6 points. Two of the hunters left early because they harvested on the first day. The other two hunters stayed and hunted deer.

**Fourth hunt:** We had three hunters and a non-hunter. They were two fathers and sons. The one father shot an old, heavy 6 point bull on the first day. His son passed up a few bulls but did not see what he was looking for. He had shot a 375 B&C bull in 2000 and a 290 B&C bull in 2002 with us. The other father only had a deer tag and he and his son only had three days to hunt. The son shot a 275 B&C bull the first day. We also had a sheep hunter and he harvested a 155 B&C ram the first day.

**Fifth hunt:** We had five hunters. One hunter harvested a 28" buck and passed up a 315 B&C bull (I told him that it would only score 290 at best and he did not want to harvest anything unless it scored 300 B&C. Oops!) We harvested this bull on the last hunt. Two other hunters saw several bulls but could not make it work. They had some very bad luck but still saw lots of game. They harvested a cow on the last day of their hunt. The other two hunters were a husband and wife. They hunted hard and probably had the least amount of opportunity of any hunters last fall. They harvested a small bear, cow elk and a 24" buck. They left happy and are coming back.

**Sixth hunt:** We had six hunters. One hunter shot a 5x6 bull and a 24" buck. The second hunter shot a very large 5 point bull. He left early and was very happy. The third hunter shot a 4 point bull and did not see any really large bulls. He also saw several bucks but passed them up. The fourth and fifth hunters came out together. One of them shot a 6 point bull and a 25" buck. The other hunter is a long time friend of mine named Tom. Tom harvested a 3 point bull and a 2 point buck. Tom is one of the toughest hunters I know because he is a quadriplegic. I hear hunters complain all the time about how hard it is to get around the mountains. They have no idea! If you are not religious, then go on a

hunt with someone who has major disabilities. The last hunter was my father. He was there mostly to play with his grandkids and help me with Tom. The group of elk (about 50 to 60 head) that Tom shot his bull out of had several bulls bugling in it. After Tom shot his bull, the others kept bugling so dad and I stalked and shot a 5 point. Dad had several opportunities to shoot bucks but chose not to.

**Seventh hunt:** We had eight hunters booked but one cancelled out at the last minute. Two of the hunters were a father and son. The father shot a 4 point bull and a 28" buck. The son shot a heavy, 24" non-typical buck and missed a 5 point bull. The other five hunters shot a 6 point bull, a 5 point bull and a 4 point bull. Another hunter missed two bulls and the last hunter did not shoot at a bull. All five shot nice deer. Four of the five were large mature bucks that were between 25" and 28" wide. The largest scored 186 B&C. The hunter who harvested a smaller 20" buck saw several bucks later in his hunt that he would have liked to have had.

**Eighth hunt:** We had nine hunters. Two hunters were brothers that have hunted with me since I first started guiding. We saw 24 bulls in three days. They missed a 280 class B&C bull and chose to go home early because of their work schedule. We made two stalks on mature bulls and messed them up. Four other hunters booked the hunt together. One hunter had to cancel out because of health reasons. He in turn let his nephew come in his place but we could not get a deer tag for him. They shot a spike bull and three nice bucks. The largest buck scored 183 B&C. Two of the four hunters went home early but were happy. Two other hunters spiked out. They shot a 5 point bull and two nice bucks. The last hunter did not see very many elk but was very impressed with the deer hunting. He and the guide saw a nice buck and put a stalk on it. The guide who has been working for me for 5 years made a mistake and had the hunter shoot the wrong buck. My guide felt bad but everyone makes mistakes. The buck he shot was a nice 24" typical. The hunter says he is coming back next year.

**Ninth hunt:** We had eight hunters and shot a 315 B&C bull and eight bucks. The weather turned warm and the elk went back in the timber but

everyone had fun anyway. I was also able to harvest a 26" heavy buck after everyone else tagged out on deer.

Overall, we had a great season and I am proud of our shooting. We missed very few animals compared to last year. The two biggest limiting factors in harvesting game are the hunters' physical ability and his shooting ability. Our deer herds continue to grow and our elk are holding stable. Our bull to cow ratios and cow to calf ratios are down but we continue to have lots of opportunity. Good luck. Trav