

Hunting the elusive Aoudad

One of Texas' most sought-after game animals is the Aoudad ram.

This sheep is one of six subspecies of Barbary sheep in North Africa.

Today, there are more of these animals in the United States and probably more in Texas than in their native Africa. These sand-colored sheep are really a species of Caprid, which is described as goat-antelope.

These animals weigh from about 90 to 300 pounds. A large, mature ram may even weigh more than 300 pounds.

Their color will darken with age. The ram has long, shaggy hair on the neck and down the front of the chest and front legs.

These sheep have the vision of antelope and the agility of the goat, making them very elusive in the rough, rocky hills where a hunt will take place. In Texas, they will be found in the mountains of far West Texas, as well as the Palo Duro Canyon in the Panhandle.

The introduction of these animals

Gun Talk with Harold Harton



has been in New Mexico and California, Hawaii and Mexico, as well as several other areas in small groups in the USA, but always in rough and rocky terrain.

Recently, my son Hal and his friend Daniel took a four-day hunt in the Palo Duro Canyon where they both were able to take a trophy ram.

Hal had a new rifle he was anxious to try on game. It is a custom-built .243 Winchester on a Remington 700 action with a Brux barrel, one in eight-inch twist to accommodate the 105-grain Berger VLD bullet, a Manners stock and Night Force 2.5 to 10X scope.

After spotting his ram about a mile away, he stalked to within 330 yards, where he shot the ram quartering away. The bullet entered the left side, broke a rib, went through the lungs and then stopped under the hide on the far side.

Hal recommends the services of Caprock Outfitters where he had a great hunt that included a nice lodge on the property. He says the price doesn't break the bank.

Harold Harton is a veteran outdoorsman and photographer, and a longtime contributor to the Lampasas Dispatch Record.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAROLD HARTON

Hal Harton harvested this Aoudad ram in the Palo Duro Canyon, with a custom-built rifle.