

BAD WEATHER BULL



by Wes Payne

As I opened my mailbox one hot summer day, I pulled out an Idaho Fish and Game envelope. It was addressed to me and my heart raced as I opened it up. I found I had drawn a coveted moose tag. I was so excited. I started preparing early. I ordered some HSM 185-grain Berger bullets for my Browning .300 Ultra Mag and soon had my gun shooting dead on.

The season started off awfully slow and I was bowhunting for elk, deer and moose. I was pretty sure I would run across a good bull sooner or later. As the season progressed, I filled my elk tag and started targeting moose with more focus. I hunted almost every canyon I could hunt within my unit. I found some decent bulls, but not the one I had been looking for.

One crisp, cold morning my father and I headed up a steep, open mountain. It was a good place to hunt that we had found. Over the years it was known to be good moose country. We neared the top and hadn't seen a thing all morning. We were looking around and Dad just happened to look back where we had come from, and there was a big ol' bull moose.

I put my spotting scope on him and knew without a doubt he was a shooter. We hurried our way back down the mountain, hoping to call this bull in. It was about time for the moose to start the rut, so we worked our way in on this bull until he fed into a really thick grove. We went in after him and got within 30 yards of him and had him grunting and raking trees. I pulled my bow back and got ready to shoot when he came out of the

thick cover. Just then I felt the wind hit the back of my neck and the bull whirled and took off. My heart just sank! I looked back at my dad and he said, "That is a smart old bull. We might've saw the last of him."

Several weeks went by and we had seen a lot of moose and some nice bulls, but I just couldn't pull the trigger on any of them after seeing that big one. Idaho offers one moose tag per lifetime and I wasn't about to settle for just any moose- I wanted the big one or nothing.

One rainy day my dad, brother and I decided we would go look for a moose and just get out of the house. It was really bad weather, with rain and snow flurries in the high country. We drove up several canyons and, surprisingly, saw a good number of moose and two decent bulls.

We came home and got a bite to eat and decided we would go cut my brother a load of firewood. We loaded up and headed out. An hour later, we had the wood all loaded and went to his house and unloaded the wood and stacked it. My brother said, "Let's go for a ride." I grabbed my rifle and bow and we made our way up the canyon. The road soon came to a split and we couldn't decide which one to take. After thinking about it for awhile Dad said, "Let's go left."

As we were driving up this rough road we noticed a cow and two calf moose down in a little meadow. This was a good sign. About another mile around the corner I looked up on the edge of a grove of trees just off the road and there was a huge

Gear List

RIFLE: Browning A-Bolt, .300 Rem Ultra Mag

SCOPE: Nikon Buckmasters 3-9x50

BULLET: 185-grain HSM Berger

OPTICS: Bushnell 12x50 Buckhorn

CAMO: Cabela's Silent Weave
 Seclusion 3-D Conifer



Wes Payne's bull has an outside spread of 47 inches and the rack is an 11x12.

bull moose just standing there. I hurried and jumped out of the truck and grabbed my bow and started toward him. I got about 60 yards away and he took off into the trees. I ran back to the truck and grabbed my rifle. Starting back toward the grove, a different bull moose came running out. The grove wasn't too big so I knew he was in there for sure. Dad said, "Let's make sure he doesn't get away." He said, "Wesley and I will go on the other side of the canyon, up on the hill and set up with the rifle." He then told my brother to walk into the grove and we would see if the moose would come out. Dad and I went up on the hill and I set up my Cabela's shooting sticks and got my rifle steady.

Dad let out a moose call and it started grunting back, but it would not show itself. After about ten minutes, my brother yelled, "Here he comes"!! We looked and a cow moose came out the top of the grove out on the open hillside. A few minutes later here came the big bull. I aimed at him, shot, and he fell down. He was kinda sitting up, so I kicked another round in and shot, and then the hunt was over. I couldn't believe it! I finally killed my moose!

I ran to the moose as fast as I could and picked his head up, admiring its size and beauty. As we were talking, I kept thinking to myself, "That moose looks awfully familiar..." then it hit me. I said, "This is the same bull I had almost shot at with my bow!" The bull had traveled over four miles from where he had been. We figured he had followed the cows. It was the perfect ending to a once-in-a-lifetime hunt.

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