

The Tracker



Safari Club International - Orange County Chapter

August 2011

President's Message

My term as SCI Orange County Chapter President has officially begun and I would like to start by thanking Jim Dahl and all of the Past Presidents for their hard work. I hope to continue to uphold the high standards of the position. My stance will always be "First for Hunters" with a strong emphasis on ethical long term prosperity for the Chapter. I hope you enjoyed your Independence Day Holiday and took a moment to reflect on the importance of your own independence. Being outdoors on a hunt is a great way to seize the opportunities provided by our great country. My goal as President of Orange County SCI is to effectively spread our message using local activities to increase hunting opportunity around the world.

The Youth Outdoor Safari Day was Saturday July 16th at Raahauges featuring our Mobile Sensory Safari trailer along with many volunteers from our chapter. In future issues of the Tracker we'll be discussing other great SCI programs like American Wilderness Leadership School, Sportsman Against Hunger, Hands on Wildlife (formerly Safari in a Box), and many more. Please don't hesitate to contact me, or any of the Board members if you have something you'd like to share.

Good hunting,
Jason

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Awards Banquet 2011

The Safari Club International – Orange County Chapter's Annual Awards Banquet was held at the trophy room of **Mark Dickson** in South Gate. Our Sincerest thanks to Mark and his family for opening their doors to us and providing such amazing facility for our event. SCI-OC is also thankful to all the measurers who provided their services for our members and most importantly to **Tom and Desiree Greek** for all their behind the scenes coordination and preparation.



Mark Dickson's red deer taken in May 2011 scored by Terry Pierson 640 3/8





Congratulations Jim Dahl (at Left), Chapter Member of the Year

Rattlesnake Buck

By Jorge Azpeitia. Taken in Zone D11, California on 14 October 2010.

Can my greatest buck also be my smallest buck? What I mean by small is, antler growth. See, I have shot smaller bodied deer that have had larger antlers. This mule deer had most of his energy placed in body mass. His head gear is made up of tall forks. Not a lot going on up there. Now, what I mean by the greatest is; will this deer be my most memorable?

I often associate strong memories with dramatic events in time. You know, my dad's generation remembers where they were and what they were doing when Kennedy was shot. My generation can relate with the 911 attacks in New York. I shot this buck at a time when the states weak economic condition reached the front door of my home. Now, we all reap what we sow and I cannot lay total blame on legislation for lean times. I have made my share of financial mistakes and taken unnecessary risks. But, this is what is going on now, on this hunt, as I'm pulling the trigger. A dramatic event in time.

When I pulled my tags earlier in the year, little did I know most of my time would be spent launching a new business and moving into a new home (Sometimes opportunities are hard to pass up). My hunting days would be few and far between. This particular day I had a four hour window to get my gear together and hit a local canyon near my new home. My wife Amanda was supportive and agreed to drop me off at the mouth of this canyon and leave with instructions to pick me up just before dark. On a prior hike I had noticed great habitat about two miles into this canyon. Everything a mule deer could need was here; food, water, cover, and most importantly, a remote location free of human interruption.

I was forty five minutes into my hike when I decided to sit down and have a drink of water. I had just cleared a mine field of thorny brush and climbed over three small waterfalls to get to my present location. Ah yes, Southern California hunting in October at its best. Eighty degree weather, hot and dusty foothills. You learn to love it. While I was taking a breather, I noticed an unusual shape protruding out of a bush. "That's funny, that looks like a deer's ass hanging out of that bush". I decide to take a closer look with my binoculars. "Well I'll be damned, that is a deer's rump". I had spooked a deer up from its bed and it made it half way behind a bush before it decided to freeze and stand perfectly still. Yeah, I was tempted, I mean, what a great story that would make. I could be forever known as the guy who shot the "Rump from the Stump"! I could tell this deer was watching me through the bush and would not move until it was sure I was gone. I wasn't going to shoot, I couldn't tell if it was a buck or a doe. Hmm, what to do?

I made a quick survey of the land. There is a small sharp ridge separating the slope that deer was on and the curve in the canyon just above me. This little ridge also has a nice drop in its line that could give me a clear field of view of this slope from the other side. Time to make a move. I hiked a few hundred feet further up and reached a great spot from which I could continue glassing the deer I found hiding. I sat down between a small bush and rested my back on an old oak tree. I had the perfect natural blind. A quick check of the breeze with my Windicator tells me I will not be scented. No sooner did I begin to glass that I noticed three other deer rise from their beds and begin to feed on that very slope. A quick inventory results in two doe, and a small yearling. No buck in sight. I must have seen one of those doe. I was comfortable sitting there and I sat for a little while. All the time glassing. Then he pops out. At first I couldn't make out the configuration of his antlers. He had a bush behind him with branches the same thickness. I could tell he was nervous and did not want to come out into the open. A doe runs by right in front of him and he forgets about his comfort zone. He follows the doe out onto a light tan colored patch of grass. I have a perfectly silhouetted deer before me. He has forked antlers and he is a legal shooter.

I reached for my rifle next to me in a smooth, slow, purposeful manner. You would have thought I was reaching for a girl's hand on a first date. I carefully racked 160 grains of happiness into the chamber. My DuBiel rifle in 7mm Remington Magnum is wood and steel comfort. As I acquire my target in the Bausch and Lomb scope, I begin to estimate the distance. My instincts flash back to lessons learned at the shooting range. My bullet will travel this fast, fall this far, wind this much, and hit right here. This buck is mine. Yes, that's right, my buck. My gift from God, my purchase from the State of California. I prayed for this buck and I bought a tag. It's mine. I placed the cross hairs on his shoulder. A nice crisp break from the trigger catches me by surprise. I collect myself enough to see the buck in the scope, tumbling down the side of the steep slope. I'm pleased to see the deer reeling in the gift of gravity and saving me from an arduous climb a few feet with every tumble. I finally lose sight of him behind a bright green bush.

After picking myself up I begin gathering my back pack and rifle. I head over to the base of the slope and begin to hash



out a plan on how to penetrate the choked brush and get to my buck. The initial hike in had soaked up most of my energy, so I was grateful for the rush of adrenaline buck fever provides. Well it didn't last long. I was half way up the slope when I hit a wall of exhaustion. It was at this point that I ingested a cocktail of Red Bull and Power Bar, which I later found out could raise the dead. The following hour was spent weaving back and forth on this slope as I could not locate the buck. I made it back to where he was initially hit and began to look for signs of blood that I could track. Nothing. OK, back to weaving. I was beginning to dread the idea that I may have to hike out and resume my tracking the next morning. If you hunt in Southern California you learn that leaving a deer overnight is easy to find the following morning. Just look for the fat, blood soaked coyotes and you'll find your deer. I was skirting an area that had a downward sloping ravine and decided there was no way the buck could have fallen in there, so I headed in the opposite direction. As I took a few steps I apparently walked onto real estate owned by a rattle snake. This snake was small and could barely cover a Texas belt buckle, but he was pissed. What he lacked in size, he made up in a fuss only a teenage drama queen could appreciate. Maybe I'll go back in the other direction. This move caused me to take another look into the ravine and there he was. The buck was hunched over a tree trunk waiting for me.

Buzzed out of my mind with the Red Bull and Power Bar cocktail in full effect, I begin to drag the buck off the slope in the direction of the canyon bottom. Patches of dry grass and the mule deer's stiff hair helped it slide down at a comfortable pace. I kept thinking to myself the window of daylight was getting smaller and I just might make it back to the canyon mouth before dark. That was an assuring thought. At the canyon bottom I sat under the shade of an oak tree with one leg over the deer's back. I'm not sure why. Maybe subconsciously I was claiming my prize. Yeah, that's what it was. If he were a mountain peak, I would be hammering a flag into him. I ate some food I packed and drank dry one of my canteens. The work was about to begin.

I fashioned a large sling out of some climbing rope I always carry in my hunting pack. One end of the sling went around the buck's antlers and the other end strapped around my shoulders. Field dressing a deer sheds a few pounds off the buck's total weight, so I wasted no time taking care of that chore. Sling in place I begin to pull, drag, slide, and fall. Believe it or not the three little waterfalls made it a lot easier to pull that deer out of there. These sections had small ponds fore and aft. I just floated the deer across these sections until I cleared all three with buck in tow. Well, I made it within 200 feet of the canyon exit and was able to get a cell signal. I called my wife and let her know what I had just done and I could hear the rest of my family cheering on the other end of the phone. It's nice to know I have a family that understands how important these moments are to me. My wife and father in law showed up in his Ford truck and helped me load the deer into the bed. I have stained that bed with blood twice since he bought it and I'm damn proud of it! After all, that is what a Ford truck is for; work and carrying dead deer. I'm glad that little rattler turned me around. I'm glad I didn't have to leave that buck overnight. Turns out, this is the last time I will hunt deer this year, so I'm glad for next season.

Scout taps Sportsmen Against Hunger for Eagle Project

By AJ Fischer

My name is AJ Fischer, and I am 15 years old. I am in 9th grade at Corona del Mar High School. I am a Life scout, and I have been in scouts for 8 years. I am an active bird hunter and some day wish to hunt big game. I play tennis with my friends and am currently running track at my school. I also participate in Youth and Government at CDM.



AJ presents his project to the SCI-OC Board.

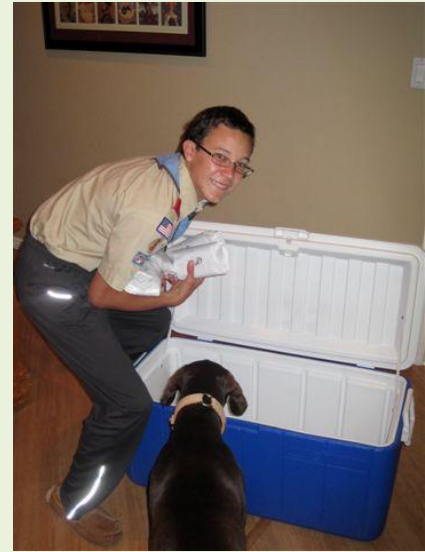
The goal for my Eagle Project is to prepare a full meal for the hungry in my community using game donated by sportsmen and food from other local businesses. Older scouts would prepare the meal, with help from volunteers and past Eagles. I chose this project because I like to hunt, and I wanted to do a project that was different from previous Eagle projects. An Eagle project is the final stage in a boy scout's journey in which a Life scout chooses a service project and leads the project to completion. An Eagle project is about leadership and doing a good deed for the community.

Safari Club International (SCI) would be contributing to my project through donations of game for the meal. Members of SCI will be donating their meat because they want to do something beneficial with their excess meat. Also, if the hunters are willing and available, I would gladly use them as volunteers on the day that the cooking takes place.

My scout troop will also be contributing to the project. The older scouts will be helping to prepare and cook the meal. The younger scouts will be helping me go to the SCI meeting to collect the food, decorate banners for the event, and possibly make desserts for the event.

The soup kitchen is a very essential part of this process. The soup kitchen is the place where all the food will be prepared and served. It will be the location for this annual event.

My Eagle project will be the first of a continuing, annual tradition. I would like to see a great turnout of volunteers and a large collection of food. I am hoping that this Eagle project makes a great impact on my community and can benefit many needy people. Thank you.



Mozambique 2011

By Walt Miller

This past March I hunted with Lloyd Yeatman of Shangani Safaris. The hunt took place in the Naivasha area of Southeast Zimbabwe adjacent to the Gonarezhou national park. I had first hunted with the Yeatmans in 1989 when they conducted hunts on their Chipimbi ranch and other areas around Chiredzi, Zimbabwe. Their ranch and other farm properties were taken from them in the 1990's by the Zimbabwean government but they have been able to survive by the "skin of their teeth."

I booked this hunt two years ago for this time of year because the Murula trees are normally full of fruit and the Elephant come out of Gonarezhou to feed on them. As March approached Lloyd was really positive because the rains had come, the trees were full of fruit, the water pans were full, and the Elephant were really active. I received an e-mail from Lloyd on or around March 17th and he told me that his first hunt had, that day, taken an Elephant with tusks of around seventy pounds (I felt like jumping on a plane the next day!!!). As I would find out later, the first hunt had six hunters' who had taken five Elephants, in fifteen days, with tusks ranging from seventy four pounds to fifty one pounds.

Elephant hunting in the Naivasha area is different, in that the Elephant normally come out of Gonarezhou to feed, drink, and bathe then return to the park to avoid the hunting pressure. In order to "catch" them

outside the safety of the park it takes perseverance and some luck. Lloyd heard about one local farmer, from the nearby communal farming area, who had obtained a permit to take an Elephant. His crops were being destroyed and Lloyd made arrangements to hunt on his farm. We soon found out that the Elephant would come out of the park just at last light, feed on the Murula trees and vegetation, make their way into the local farmer's fields to feed, and return to Gonarezhou early in the morning. We had Elephants in the field the first evening but with no moonlight, at that time, it was extremely difficult to see them, much less judge the size of their ivory. I had never been as shook up as I was that first night, in the dark, near very large unpredictable animals. Unfortunately, we didn't get an opportunity for a shot that night or for thirteen more days and nights. We tracked a number of Elephants but missed them before they went back into the park. We tracked and saw a bull that Lloyd estimated at seventy to eighty pounds but the other tusk had two feet broken off, spotlighted a small twenty five pound bull in the field, sat near a pan for five or six mornings and nights, and just missed on a group of about twelve bulls one evening at the farm.

Three days were taken up by Hippo hunting north of Chiredzi in an area that had not been hunted in a number of years. It was an opportunity we could not pass up. The locals wanted us to take as many as time would allow, because they were feeding on their crops at night. I was lucky enough to take five Hippos with one pretty nice bull. We left the Hippo area early on the evening of the fourteenth day and made a "mad two and one half hour dash" in the Land Cruiser back to camp and then out to the farm. When we got to the edge of the farm we glassed the field in the dark with about a half moon but could see no Elephants. We walked in very quietly to the farm village then had the Land cruiser come in with the



lights off. The trackers went out to keep their eyes on the field as Lloyd and I tried to get comfortable, it seemed like it was going to be another long night. However, not more than twenty minutes later the trackers walked back to say that there was an Elephant in the field. We grabbed our gear and headed out. The Elephant could easily be seen in the moonlight with binoculars and it looked like he had pretty good ivory. It seemed like he heard us or the "yips" of the farm dog because he started to head towards the bush at the edge of

the field. There was no time to waste so Lloyd had the trackers set up the shooting sticks and I got set with my .375, at 130 yards, just as the spotlight came on. I shot for the heart/lung area, Lloyd backed me up, and we kept shooting until the bull made it to the trees at the edge of the field. We left the farm at 11:30, had dinner at camp at 1:30, and were up at 4:30 the next morning.

We got to the farm at first light and began tracking from where we last saw the bull. Lloyd was confident that he would not go too far as he was dragging his right rear foot. About an hour later we came to an area where the bull had laid down for the night and it looked like he had just gotten up before we arrived (must have heard or winded us). We tracked for another forty minutes and as it was getting really warm we decided to have a drink of water. Lloyd mentioned that the bull was close and not more than a minute after we began walking Ammon (the head tracker) began motioning that the bull was just ahead. I walked up and there he was thirty five yards in front, broadside, behind a tree. The head was clear and Lloyd told me to shoot for the brain. Luckily, I made a good shot with the .470 and he dropped in his tracks about

one hundred yards from the park boundary. It was handshakes all around and the feeling of accomplishment was overwhelming especially taking such an animal on the last day of the hunt.

Lloyd called three days later and as he had estimated at the time the tusks weighed in at fifty five and fifty six pounds. They were not real long but were quite heavy with short nerves. He had a big body and was an old bull.



Upcoming SCI-OC Events

18 August 2011: Location – The Phoenix Club in Anaheim, CA. Time: 6:00pm

Speaker: Randy Muns of Safrique of Mozambique (www.safrique.net) and John Nash of Bolsa Gunsmithing on what he's building in his custom shop and proper cleaning techniques.

15 September 2011: Location – The Phoenix Club in Anaheim, CA. Time: 6:00pm

Speaker: Cameron Hopkins – Hunting Dangerous Game in Africa

20 October 2011: Location – The Phoenix Club in Anaheim, CA. Time: 6:00pm

Speaker: TBA

17 November 2011: Location – The Phoenix Club in Anaheim, CA. Time: 6:00pm

Speaker: American Wilderness Leadership School attendees. This is an excellent time to hear about what we are doing as a chapter to influence future generations!

December 2011: Date TBD. We will be having our annual Holiday Party at Mark Dickson's trophy room in South Gate. If you were unable to attend the Awards Banquet, don't miss out on the opportunity to see an amazing trophy room!