



Questions and Answers

Dear Friend

At this point you have either already booked a hunt with us for this fall or some date in the future, or you are seriously considering it and have had the opportunity to look at our brochure packet & web site. You have probably started forming the questions that are so important in planning any hunt. Through the years I have attempted to always answer each and every question personally. This has its obvious advantages, but I've found that you may not ask some important questions that need to be asked & answered. In fact, major points are quite often missed simply because you don't ask and I am so occupied in making sure each detail is taken care of that I don't remember to talk to you about it. Attention to detail is what makes things work well.

This year I have come to believe that it is perhaps wiser to spend the time compiling a list of common questions. Then dedicate myself to answering each of these in a complete and understandable manner, rather than trying to "wing it" every time the question comes up.

Not only have I been able to identify a fairly consistent group of questions that arise, both before and during the hunt, but I also came to realize that there is an equally large number of questions that have never been asked, but should have been. In grappling with the problem, I have also discovered that there is a set of standard questions that is applicable to all of the areas that we hunt, followed by select questions that are area specific.

A certain personal touch is lost in answering questions in this manner, and due to your experience many of these questions may not be questions at all, but there are advantages. At the very least I will save hundreds of hours of letter writing and phone calls. Thanks, I appreciate your understanding.

So... let's begin.

Q: I see that you are a little more expensive than some of the other outfitters that offer this hunt, why is that?

A: In every line of business, there is a status quo, a norm around which the majority of operators congregate. Their way of doing business is to always keep their eyes on the

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competition, trying to match them as nearly as possible in price and service. For reasons of economy, or neglect, one also will always find competitors who provide products or services that fall well below the norm.

On the other end of the scale, one hopes to find one or two operations that don't look at the competition, but rather look at the customer and concern themselves with what the customer desires. Our goal is to provide the highest level of customer satisfaction in the industry. In order to do this, we hire the most experienced and best-qualified guides available. The quantity and quality of food supplied, in all of our camps, is second to none. Indeed, it far exceeds any other camp with which we are familiar. We purchase only the finest equipment for our clients use, and it is replaced two or three times a year.

We regularly check and re-supply our camps, and in most situations relocating them at least once during the course of a normal hunt. Relocation assures that our hunters are always in the best place for the particular game which they are pursuing and provides the added benefit of seeing new country and traveling new terrain.

The bottom line is that we are committed to providing our clients with the best hunt possible and this takes an investment in time, personnel, equipment and supplies that very few of our competitors are willing to match. It also means that we have to charge a little more for our services, but do you want anything less?

Q: What kind of physical shape do I need to be in when I hunt in Alaska?

A: The very best possible, considering your age and physical limitations. This is not to say that you have to be in first class, top-notch physical condition. Our guides are well trained and considerate. They will quickly determine your abilities and pace and will modify their speed accordingly. Their job is not to run out ahead of you, but to stay with you, guide and assist you.

Just the same, the better condition you are in the more ground you will be able to cover and the greater chance you will have of locating your game. Also, the opportunity for a shot often hinges on your ability to cover a large expanse of country in a short period of time. If game is on the move and you are not in the condition necessary to get yourself in to a shooting position the opportunity will be lost. In other situations, poor physical condition will simple preclude the possibility of your even getting into prime game country.

So you can see, even though it's possible for us to slow down and walk at anyones pace, it can be vitally important that a client be in good physical condition in order to realize important shooting opportunities.

Q: How should I train?

A: Running and walking are both valuable exercises. Do them regularly until you can consistently walk four miles or more in one hour. This is a good base to build from, but is not totally adequate, in that walking on city streets and country roads does not duplicate

the walking action required in the bush. Whether you will be hunting mountain sheep, moose or bear in the bogs, you are going to be lifting your legs a lot, and lifting them high. The only exercise I know that even remotely resembles this muscle movement, is climbing stairs, two or three steps at a time. If you really want to train, and be in top physical condition, find yourself a building several stories high and practice running stairs. As you start to get in shape, consider adding a pound or two of ankle weights to each ankle.

Q: On your equipment list you say I need to bring hip boots. Why do I need them?

A: In Alaska everything is wet. In the center of the valleys, you find rivers. Next to the rivers, you find bogs. On the mountainsides you find bogs, and on the mountain tops you find bogs. Swamps, bogs and Alaskan hunting just seem to go together.

I personally recommend that you have good ankle-fit hip boots on all hunts other than when sheep hunting. **On sheep hunts I strongly recommend that you bring Wiggys light weight waders. You can find these at www.wiggys.com or by calling Wiggys at 1-800-748-1827** Not only do they keep your feet dry as you cross any rivers and streams, but they are very light and packable when not needed. This may not be for everyone, but it is possible you will want to give it a try. Besides all that, there is really nothing quite so illogical as investing your time and money in an Alaskan hunt only to worry about keeping your leather boots dry. That is especially true as you should be concentrating on making a stalk for that trophy animal you spotted just a few hours ago.

You may actually purchase your boots or waders and never have the opportunity to use them on your entire hunt. This especially can be true if you are hunting sheep. However, if hunting bear, moose or caribou their use is almost certain. Regardless, having them along is better than being on a hunt without them, only to find that they are needed.

Q: Will my fishing waders do?

A: Probably not. Waders are generally designed to be loose around the ankle and were never designed with extensive walking in mind. What you need in Alaska are ankle-fit hip boots. These boots are specifically designed for hiking endless miles. They are narrow around the ankle, forming a snug fit that keeps your foot from sliding back and forth as you walk the valleys or climb and descend the mountains.

Q: Where can I buy ankle-fit hip boots?

A: Go to Lacrosse web site www.lacrosse-outdoors.com and order Style No: 700001 Ankle-Fit 600-Gram Thinsulate™. This is the best hip boot I know of.

http://www.lacrossefootwear.com/product_detail.asp?catid=11&prodid=2372

Q: Do I need to bring a pack?

A: The answer is no. If you have a backpack that you are familiar and comfortable with I recommend that you bring it. However, if you have no use for a pack, other than for this particular hunt, please don't be concerned, we have them on hand.

Q: How big should my pack be?

A: We recommend a medium to full-sized frame or soft pack. For the most part, your pack will never be full or heavily loaded. You will use it for carrying your camera, raincoat, a warm jacket and perhaps a bite of lunch. Your guide will be carrying the bulk of the load, but once you are in the hills and have taken an animal the situation becomes a little different. Now there are cape, horns and a load of meat to come out and only one way to do it, and that's on your guides back. In all likelihood its going to be a bigger load than your guide can handle by himself. For this reason, you'll probably want to assist him by carrying his camera, optics and raincoat, while he uses that extra space to stuff in the cape and a quarter or two of meat. With a little help, you will probably get the entire animal back to camp that night, and tomorrow you'll be finishing up the fleshing or in the field trying to fill that second tag. Without your help there will be another day of packing, while you wait around camp, and a precious day of hunting will be lost.

Q: How much ammunition shall I bring?

A: Bring at least two boxes, probably three. Bring more if you are bringing bullets of several weights. You may have sighted in your rifle the day before you left, but it's a rare hunter indeed that doesn't want to confirm the accuracy of his rifle once he arrives in camp. A change in humidity or a bump on the airlines may have changed your point of impact enough that you will need ten or fifteen rounds to bring it back to zero. Bring enough ammunition so that you are prepared for the worst situation.

Q: At what range should I be sighted in?

A: Personally I sight in dead on at 200 yards. At 100 yards, I am a few inches high, at 300 yards, just a few inches low. I have never found trying to guess range and calculate trajectory to be particularly edifying when a trophy animal is making good its escape. When the point of impact is zero at 200 yards, one can simply put the cross hairs on and fire in virtually any situation that you are likely to encounter in the field. You may find that you are more comfortable with a 250 or a 275 yard figure, but just keep the general principle in mind when you make your selection.

Q: What caliber do you recommend?

A: I recommend that you bring the caliber that you shoot well. Beyond that I am particularly fond of the 270 & 30-06 cartridges regardless of manufacturer. I believe that the .338 Magnum cartridges is to Alaska what the 30.06 is to the Lower 48. It's capable of handling any game in Alaska to a greater or lesser degree, though obviously; in specific

situations other calibers will out perform it. For brown bear, I highly recommend a .375 H & H, followed by the .338 Winchester magnums.

Q: What kind of raincoat do I need?

A: A good quality Gortex raincoat is adequate for the Brooks Range and in most cases will be adequate for hunting the interior mountain ranges of Alaska. Gortex is not acceptable if you will be hunting the Alaska Peninsula. In this harsh environment we recommend that you equip yourself with heavy duty Helly Hansen commercial grade rain gear. A lighter, alternative that we have found to be acceptable is rain gear made by Helly Hansen, called Helly Hansen Impertech. You can order this at: www.backcountryinc.com

Q: How do I purchase my license and tags?

A: It's simple; just fill out the forms that we will send you. Then return them to us. We are a license vendor and will have your licenses and tags waiting for you in base camp.

Q: Do I need to purchase tags before I shoot an animal, or can I wait until after the trophy is taken?

A: You must purchase a tag for each animal you intend to hunt, prior to the start of the hunt. Licenses and tags, once purchased, are non-refundable.

Q: What is the procedure once I arrive in Alaska?

A: The procedure for all of our hunting camps is basically the same. Only the location will vary. Let's discuss our **sheep and caribou** camps first. Your destination will be Deadhorse, near Prudhoe Bay. You will probably arrive in Anchorage or Fairbanks in the afternoon or evening. Follow the itinerary that we have provided for you. The following morning you will return to the airport, at which point you will embark on a commercial flight to Deadhorse. In Deadhorse, you will be met by one of us, who will assist you in collecting your gear and loading it into our vehicles. As soon as all of the hunters and their baggage are accounted for, you will travel directly to our base camp located approximately 80 miles or 2 hours driving time from Deadhorse.

Brown bear hunters should also plan on arriving in Anchorage, Alaska. After overnighting in Anchorage, you will return to the airport in the morning in time to make a 9:00 a.m. departure on Peninsula Airways. Pen Air is a scheduled carrier, serving the Alaska Peninsula and the Aleutian Islands. Your flight will probably be on a Boeing 737. After approximately 2 hours flight time you will arrive in Sand Point, where I will meet you.

Once you arrive in camp the procedure is the same for every area that we hunt. First, you will be introduced to our staff. One of these individuals will be assigned the responsibility of moving you and your luggage to your accommodations. Another individual will give you a quick tour, showing you through the facilities and explaining the functions of the various

pieces of equipment and the camp procedures that we employ. Their job is to answer any and all questions that you may have about the area, the hunting, and basic operations. Other individuals will have prepared the shooting range and within a couple hours you will have the opportunity to check the optics on your firearms, prior to departing for the field. At some point I will also meet with each and every hunter. I use this opportunity to give you your hunting license and tags, explain safety equipment and emergency procedures, and will deliver to you any specialized equipment that you may have ordered. We will also use this time to fill out the last remaining paperwork and close out the finances before the hunting begins.

If weather and time permit, we will begin moving people into spike camps the same day. When placing spike camps, I first fly your personal guide and camp equipment from main camp into the field. During this flight we will carefully inspect the area and locate the first spike camp that you will hunt from. Once your guide has been put in place, I will return to main camp for you, your equipment, and any spike camp materials that may not have gone out on the first flight. You will have a camp of your own, shared only with your personal guide.

Q: What are spike camps like?

A: They vary with the species being hunted, but generally spike camps are set up with extreme weather expedition tents. These tents are both easy to pitch and are secure and dry in the worst of weather. They are quite comfortable for two men and gear and have the added advantage that they can quickly be struck in the event we find it necessary to move into a more productive hunting area. If you are a male, you will probably share a tent with your guide. If you are a female hunter, you will have a tent of your own, to give you the privacy and comfort you deserve. All cooking and camp chores are done by your guide, though he will welcome your assistance in any area that you feel comfortable. The exception is in sheep hunting where ultra light tents and equipment is used to minimize weight and volume. We still use two tents for female clients but other equipment is minimized so that loads are light and easily carried with you on the hunt.

Q: Once we have been dropped off in spike camp when will you pick us up?

A: That depends entirely on you and your hunting success. As a rule, I check in with you and your guide on the satellite phone every day or every other day. This allows us to re-supply your camp with grocery items and monitor your hunting success. Once a trophy animal is taken, we will in all likelihood pull camp immediately and move into an area that promises the best chance of success for the next animal you intend to pursue. If, on the other hand, your hunt has not yet been successful, we will probably move you into another area that shows more promise. What we **will not** do is drop you off in a camp and forget you until the end of the hunt.

Q: Do you use horses?

A: No, we do not use horses in any of our operations.

Q: Is this a backpack hunt?

A: It depends on the hunt and the hunter. For Caribou, Grizzly and Brown Bear, no, this is not a backpack hunt, at least to the extent that you would be carrying your tent, food, cooking gear, sleeping bag, etc. with you while you hunt. It is likely that you will have a pack in which you carry your personal possessions, such as camera, binoculars and raincoat. All of our camps are placed in position by aircraft and are located so that you can hunt directly from the spike camp in the morning, returning to it each evening. For sheep hunts, yes this can be a backpack hunt.

We are convinced that a sheep hunt is much more enjoyable when you carry a very light camp with you, stopping when you are tired, rather than being committed to back tracking many miles to your spike camp every evening. Packs are kept as light as possible, yet are comfortable. A traveling camp can be a real pleasure when sheep hunting, and a whole lot less work.

Q: What is the weather like?

A: This depends entirely on the area that you hunt. In the Brooks Range, where we conduct our sheep hunts, the weather is generally very good. Still, you should expect some rain, some cloud cover, and in some years it is possible to get a trace of snow, especially in the latter part of the second hunt. For the most part though, you will find the days warm and clear, with the evenings being cool and even dropping below freezing at some point on the second hunt.

People who are planning on hunting brown bear in the Aleutians expect the weather to be absolutely horrible. You may have a few beautiful sunny days and when you do you will be impressed with the grandeur of the Alaska Peninsula. But, for the most part, you should expect winds from 15 to 60 mph and a steady diet of passing rain squalls. The weather is somewhat better in the spring than it is in the fall, but it's never good. If that sounds discouraging just remember this: there is not a location where large brown bears live in conjunction with good weather. So... put on your raincoat, tie down your tent, and prepare to enjoy one of the harshest and most enchanting areas on earth.

Q: What about safety considerations?

A: Your guide is trained in First Aid & CPR. He has an extensive First Aid Kit available to him in your spike camp. All camps are equipped with Iridium satellite phones, so not only can we call the spike camp, your guide can call base camp and you can call home, if you wish. In addition, in his pack your guide has a highly efficient two-way radio. As a rule, he will use the radio to speak to the aircraft during the course of your hunt. If there are any serious complications, he should be able to notify us and we will get to you by aircraft immediately.

Q: Should I bring a spotting scope and binoculars?

A: Yes, certainly do. We recommend that you bring the best quality binoculars you can afford. The preference in our camps is either the 10 x 40 Leitz or Zeiss Travoid binoculars, made in Germany and Portugal. Your guide will have binoculars with him, but a second set of eyes is always beneficial. As likely as not, you will be the one to spot the trophy animal you're after. Your guide will also have a spotting scope, but it never hurts to have a spare in camp in case his is damaged in a fall, or should fail due to some other calamity.

Q: Will I be able to get phone calls from home, or be able to make calls from main camp to my office?

A: Yes, though the situation will vary depending on the camp that we are hunting from. In all base and spike camps we have Iridium satellite telephones. From them you can call out and receive calls. Calls can be made directly to the main camp and relayed to your spike camp's satellite phone to satellite phone. Making satellite calls can be expensive so we appreciate it if such messages are reserved for emergency and high priority communication purposes only. Your guide only has limited batteries in spike camp; we ask the calls be limited. If you need to make a lot of calls please rent a phone and bring it along with you.

Q: Is success guaranteed?

A: No, not only is it impossible to guarantee your success on any given hunt or for any given species, but it is also unethical and illegal.

Q: What happens if I book a hunt, send in a down payment, and then am unable to make the hunt?

A: Your payments will be forfeited. A down payment guarantees a client a hunt, and "guarantees" the outfitter that the client will come. If not, what would be the point of money changing hands in the first place? I make one exception. When a client makes arrangements for another hunter to take his place, we return the down payment, providing this is done in a timely manner before we go to a lot of expense attempting to re-book the hunt. If you have a replacement hunter to take your hunt, I can return your payment immediately upon receiving payment from the alternate hunter.

Q: Is it normal to tip my personal guide, pilot, cook, and if so how much?

A: Our guides are paid good wages and tips are not required, however it is traditional to provide a tip to your personal guide upon the completion of the hunt. The amount given often varies with how much effort you feel your guide put out for you, his concern with your comfort and success, and his attention to your personal needs. The other camp staff also plays a major role in you hunt and the cook works hard to make sure you & your guide are taken care of.

The normal tips run something like this.

- Guide 5-10% of hunt cost.
- Pilot 1-3% of hunt cost
- Cook 1-3% of hunt cost

Q: How will my trophies be transported from camp?

A: In most cases the hide is too wet to ship without serious risk of spoiling. In this event, the hide will remain in camp until it is fully processed and dried. It will then be shipped to an expediter in Anchorage, Alaska. They will contact you for directions and will either ship it to you or to the taxidermist of your choice. We will bill you for the actual costs related to the shipping of your trophy from camp to the expediter. The expediter, in turn, will bill you for any tanning, crating and shipping required to get the trophy to its final destinations.

Q: What can I do with the meat from my sheep or caribou?

A: You have several options. We suggest that you consider these options before you arrive in camp and let us know so we can get your meat ready for shipment. Here are some options:

- You may give the meat away to the “Food Bank”, which is an organization that will process and distribute it to the homeless and needy.
- You may decide to give it to Deltana Outfitters.
- You may decide to keep part of it, and give the remainder to us.

Depending where you live, some of our clients will take some meat home with them as excess baggage on the airplane. This is your risk as spoilage can occur easily if luggage is bumped at any of your airline changes.

You may wish to have your meat processed in Alaska and sent to your nearest airport with freezer accommodations for your pickup. We can recommend the better meat processors and will have a list of them made available to you. The cost of processing will vary depending on what you want, i.e., cut and wrapped, Italian or breakfast sausage, links, pepperoni sticks, etc.

We will have plastic containers for you in camp for purchase to put your meat in for shipping to your home or to the meat processor. You also need to know that we do not bone the meat. We are not butchers and the meat will not spoil as quick if it is left on the bone.

I hope that these few pages have helped answer your questions. I doubt I have covered them all, so please do call with any additional and I will answer them to the best of my ability.

Good Hunting,

Ralph & Jim