

WHITETAIL BLUFF

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Bear Hunting - Picking the place to go !

I have been fortunate or unfortunate depending on how you want to look at it to have hunted Grizzly / Brown bear in British Columbia, Alaska and Russia the last 3 years. Owning and operating a hunting operation myself I thought I knew enough to venture out and select an outfit to go Bear hunting with. No matter what precautions you take I have learned things can still go wrong.

2008. Word of mouth led me to British Columbia. I talked with the Outfitter on numerous occasion and became comfortable enough to book the hunt. The hunt cost roughly \$8,000 which was somewhat inexpensive compared to others but it fit my budget and the word of mouth and self investigation convinced me to go. Positive Notes - British Columbia is the most awesome place on earth in my opinion. The mountains and lakes absolutely are indescribable. Accommodations were adequate and meals were adequate. Travel was relatively simple getting in and out of Canada. Negative Notes - The Bear Hunting sucked. We never saw a Grizzly Bear in 9 days. Saw a few tracks. We would travel log roads on 4-wheelers and glass mountains and cut blocks looking for bear. Then we would hike off into the mountains starting off below the snow line and eventually getting to snow so deep we would put snow shoes on and continue to travel upward. Some days we would hike for 3 or 4 hours only to find the snow was to deep to get where the guide wanted to go and turn around and come back. Other days we would hike to a slide chute where the green grasses were coming up and see no bear and then hike back. The reason I considered this hunt a failure was because the guide did absolutely no scouting prior to our arrival. We did the scouting upon my arrival and half the days were lost because conditions did not allow us to get where the guide wanted to go. In my opinion being a guide or outfitter requires work prior to the arrival of your clients. When people are spending this kind of money you owe them more than an over priced camping trip.

2009. Hunted Mule deer with an outfitter in Nebraska that also did Brown Bear hunts in Alaska. Mule deer hunt was OK and the guy assured me the Alaska trip was a slam dunk. The hunt was roughly \$8,000 and included 2 brown bears and 2 black bears. Positive Notes - Going into camp on Bush Planes and Float Planes was quite and experience. Accommodations were OK - Camp food was OK. Travel to Alaska was OK. Negative Notes- Prior to the hunt the outfitter was injured and could not follow through with the hunt. He called me and assured me he had worked things out with a guy he trusted take us to his spots and help fulfill our life dream of killing a brown bear. Arrival in camp was shaky as the outfitter was very young and obviously did things half ass. First impression was not good. But a couple bears would over shadow that so we remained positive. Got flown into remote tent camps and started hunting and noticed all the sign was a couple weeks old. Ran out of bottled water the first day and were left to filter water from a stream where a thousand dead salmon were. We gave it a couple

days and called in and requested to be moved. Could not get moved right away because they were moving the other camps who saw nothing but old sign as well, 8 of us were on this trip. After 4 days my personal guide with me started coming clean about how he was hired for this hunt and what a half assed operation this was. Mosquitoes ate u alive. In short there was 8 guys hunted over a week and killed 1 small brown bear. One other guy saw a sow and 2 cubs. A couple black bears weighing under 100 pounds were killed, that was it. Again the outfitter had done absolutely no scouting or he would have easily seen we hit in between the Salmon runs and the bears were gone into the mountains. I would have had more respect for the guy if he has called and postponed our trip until the next salmon ran came. Trip was a total disaster.

2010. For the Past couple years I had been talking to an outfitter (Denny) offering hunts in Russia. The cost of the hunt was roughly \$12,000 and had deterred me for that reason. After returning to Anchorage from the camp on our Alaska disaster I emailed Denny from the motel to see how his recent hunts went. Again like years past they were 100%. I told the other guys whom I had met in Alaska about Denny and showed them the pictures ect. I emailed Denny back from the motel and told him I would put a group together and see him in the spring. Positive Notes- Food was OK, Accommodations were OK, Guides worked extremely hard and were very knowledgeable. Bears everywhere when weather turned. On the last day of the hunt the weather broke and we got to a mountain range we had been trying to get to all week. Upon entering the ravine on snow mobile I saw 8 bears basically at one time. Picked out a nice bear and shot it as it went over the edge of a mountain. Saw smaller bears with one being within ass slapping distance of the snow mobile. The guides hiked the mountain and a couple hours later reached the bear and shoved it off the mountain where it fell nearly all the way to me. Negative Notes- Travel in Russia. Be prepared to spend a couple days traveling and acknowledge the fact you are not in the USA and time means nothing to the Russians. Weather - Obviously nothing an outfitter can do about this but the weather grounded the helicopters. This forced the Outfitter to use Snow Track machines to get us into and out of camp. They salvage our hunt by doing this but the snow track rides (7 hours in and 9 hours out were a living hell). I considered this hunt a success.

Conclusion. I honestly feel that if the weather permits YOU WILL KILL A BEAR in Russia with Denny. The bear population is amazing and they will do whatever it takes to make sure you are successful.

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