

OF THE OUTDOORS | GARY HOWEY

Hunting For S.D. Antelope

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

Traveling west on Interstate 90 towards Belle Fourche, both Larry Myhre and I didn't know what lay ahead of us on this antelope hunt as well as what we might find for numbers in the area we'd be hunting. We'd heard some reports indicating antelope numbers might be down as much as 50 percent or more.

We'd been talking about doing another antelope hunt in the Belle Fourche area for several years. On our last trip to the area, Larry and I both were able to tag nice antelopes, which now adorn the walls of our offices bringing back wonderful memories each time we look at them.

Our good friend Ed Goss has helped to make each trip to Belle Fourche excellent ones as Ed was well known and I doubt if there are many folks in the area that Ed doesn't know.



Gary **HOWEY**

the father and son team that operated the Jackson Dental Clinic when they weren't hunting.

Ed wanted us to stop by the clinic to meet the Jackson's, to get everything lined up for the Saturday hunt and to see the amazing mounts they had on display in their office. By the mounts displayed on the walls, it was obvious these dogs could hunt!

Our plan would be, with the help of Chris to scout the area, allowing us to look over the ranch the day prior to the opening of the South Dakota 2011 antelope

season. But before Chris could head out Friday, he needed to help pick grapes at the family vineyard, the home of Belle Joli Winery and Ed thought it would be interesting for us to join the group.

The following morning Larry and I had the opportunity to meet some of Chris's family and family friends and were introduced to the finer points of grape harvesting.

After lunch Chris, his son, Larry and I made our way to the ranch to scout for the following days hunt. Chris knew the ranch well, and it didn't take him long to locate several nice bucks in the 13 to 14" range and to put together our plan for the following morning hunt.

The following morning, I was up well before my early morning wakeup call, rounding up my hunting gear, loading tapes, checking/changing batteries and packing camera gear. After meeting up with Chris & John, we headed back to the ranch, hoping to beat the sunrise that was quickly chasing away the dark of the night, replacing it with a breath taking sunrise the upper Midwest is well known for.

As the sun made it's way in the eastern sky, we made our way onto the ranch, shortly after entering the



PHOTO: LARRY MYHRE

Chris Jackson of Belle Fourche is pictured with the 16.5 inch antelope he took while hunting in the 2011 South Dakota antelope season near Belle Fourche.

ranch property, Chris's pulled over, took out his spotting scope and began the search where we'd seen the first buck the day prior. It didn't take long for Chris to locate the buck working its way across the field below the road.

Larry checked it out and decided that he wanted to try to put a sneak on the buck. With Chris in the lead, we slowly worked our way off the road and down through a swale, helping us to keep a rise in the terrain between the buck and ourselves.

Approaching the fence, Chris ranged the buck at 200 yards, which would be no problem for Larry. Resting his 243 on his Bog Pod, he took careful aim, dumping the buck where it stood. John was able to bring the pickup right up to the buck and after field dressing the buck and a few pictures; we were off to find our second antelope.

We hadn't driven far when Chris spotted a 2nd antelope, since Larry's rifle was out and ready, I chose to use it on the 200 yard shot off my Bog Pod, and as luck would have it, I put one right over it's back and before I could get on the buck for a second shot, the buck along with his doe were on the move. Chris knew the lay of the land, so we quickly relocated, but each time I'd get set up for the shot, the buck would move away, getting out over 400 yards.

John suggested I try Chris's rifle with the custom made long range scope. I was game, so he grabbed it and once again, each time I tried to steady up for the shot, the buck would move off, getting farther away with each step. When he finally stopped, Chris ranged him at 475 yards, which for me wasn't a shot I wasn't comfortable with, but Chris seemed pretty confident it was doable, reaching down, he clicked the scope to 500 yards and said, "put it right on him." I centered the crosshairs on the antelope's chest and touched off the shot. As the round reached the buck, the tell tale thump of a hit could be heard and Chris said, "Nice shot, you got him." I'm not sure which of us was surprised more the antelope or I.

It was 9:30 p.m. and our two antelopes were tagged and in the truck, not a bad day or should I say a couple of hours.

As we headed back towards Belle Fourche, as we were about to leave the ranch property, Chris spotted an antelope, which quickly got his attention, as at a distance it looked big.

Chris grabbed his rifle, I grabbed the camera and Larry, John and I did our best to keep up with Chris as he headed out across the prairie. After covering what seemed to be a mile, he'd closed the distance on the buck, verified it was the one he was looking for and took aim. As in the past, the thump of the bullet hitting home could be heard. It didn't take long for us find out the buck now lying before us was "Big" as it measured 16 1/2". What a way to end a day.

Making our way back to the Americinn in Belle Fourche where we were staying, we couldn't be more pleased as not only had we gotten our 2011 South Dakota antelope, we'd the opportunity to spend time in the plains of South Dakota with friends hunting one of the plains fastest animals, the Pronghorn Antelope.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament angler, hunting and fishing guide. His *Outdoorsmen Adventures television series* can be seen on Fox affiliates throughout the upper Midwest. For more information on the outdoors go to www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

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