





WORLD RECORD

VELVET WHITETAIL

BY DALLAS HEINRICHS

Dallas Heinrichs of Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, with the absolute giant of a whitetail he arrowed on September 3, 2012. The avid hunter couldn't believe the immense size of this buck as he reached its side. The amazing trail camera photo reveals a true monster, but as always, it doesn't show you all the points those big old bucks have on their crowns. In fact, this buck has 29 scorable points in total. Longest main beam is 26 3/8 along with a brow-tine going a whopping 9 6/8 inches. Longest G-2 is 13 2/8, G-3 goes 11 1/8, and G-4 is 6 3/8. The best circumferences are at the bases and they are 6 7/8 and 6 5/8 inches. The inside spread is a little below normal at 17 1/8 inches. The gross typical score is 180 5/8 with lots of deductions at 18 inches even. The net typical score is 162 5/8, and now this is where this Saskatchewan buck really shines. The deer also grew 19 abnormal points for a staggering 108 3/8 total inches. Adding everything up, the final score is 271 non-typical points. Photo by Jennifer Heinrichs.

With spring bear hunting out of the way and summer half over, all I could think about was the upcoming deer and moose season. The last two deer seasons had been tough going. During the 2010 season, I only saw one nice tall 5x5 scoring about 180, but that was on my trail camera. Once the rifle season opened, I didn't even see that deer on the cameras, and the season ended unsuccessfully. The following year I hunted two different deer. One was a heavy 7x9 with real stubby tines, but he was always out of bow range. I ended up arrowing a wide 5x5 later that season that went 154 but only netted 147.

The 2012 hunting season was fast approaching, and I figured the more cameras out the better, so I purchased a few more. When the time was right, I put out the cameras along with some treestands.

With bow season only a few days away, the excitement and anticipation was building. I had seen numerous pictures of good deer, including two bigger 5x5s around

160 and 170. Then one night as I was scrolling through one camera, a photo came up that looked like two deer in one. The picture was so blurry I thought the deer must have been moving when the picture was taken, so I deleted it. As I continued clicking through the card, my mouth suddenly dropped open, and Jen came over to the table thinking something was wrong with me. With no words coming out of my mouth, I could only point at the computer. "Holy crap, that's big!" she said. I instantly felt nervous looking at this massive deer, but figured the odds of seeing him in bow range were slim.

The day before bow season opened I headed out to shoot my bow. I tried to imagine this deer in front of me, and even though I was shooting at a target, I still felt the jitters. I put out more trail cameras in different areas to increase my chances of seeing him again.

September 1st finally came and I desperately hoped for a southwest or west wind, but it was out of the east. I

therefore couldn't use the stand located near the big buck's bedding area. I decided to try a decoy across the field, hoping for a lucky first day opener.

Once evening approached, every movement instantly sent chills down my back. However, all I saw were three does and one small spike buck. With 45 minutes left in the first evening, a diesel truck came rolling down the road allowance, making a racket. That ended the night early.

The second night was not the best for weather. The rain and inconsistent wind meant I had to pick another treeline along the field. That night was also a bust. I thought to myself that it was going to be a long season with all my thoughts focused on just one deer.

The third night the weather forecast called for gusting winds, which were expected to calm in the evening. The wind was out of the west to northwest, good for sitting in the stand near the big boy's bedding area. I had a long walk in to the stand and climbed in early in the afternoon. As evening came, the wind didn't calm down and my tree was bending badly with every gust. The swirling wind also wasn't good for scent control. Getting nervous about the situation, I contemplated climbing down, but just as that thought entered my mind, a doe walked into the field. I watched her for a bit until she looked to the south and began to stomp her feet. Suddenly she bolted straight towards me and stood under my stand. A few moments

later, she ran deeper into the bush and was gone.

Very discouraged and irritated, I instantly thought someone was driving in the field. I decided to leave, but as I leaned over and slammed my rangefinder into my backpack, I felt a chill and froze. Slowly looking over to my left, there he was, about 80 yards back in the trees and coming down the trail straight to me. I carefully but quickly got my release ready and watched him slowly come in. My heart felt like it was going to jump out of my chest. I sat there just hoping he would come into bow range.

A few moments later he was within 50 yards but behind a big poplar. As I went to draw my bow, I glanced down the shooting lane and he stepped out into the open at 35 yards. I raised my bow and looked through the peep sight at full draw. My heart sank – a broken branch was in the way and I could not shoot. I had to slowly let off and hope he wouldn't see me move. Instantly he jerked his head back and looked right up at me. I felt like puking because I thought he was going to run.

After a stare down, he finally moved a bit. He needed to take a few more steps to give me a shot opportunity. Still holding my bow out in front of me, waiting for a clear shot and no wind, the big buck was beginning to look nervous. I thought my heart was going to explode. As he stepped into the open and looked out into the field, I drew my bow. It took everything I had because my arm was extremely sore from holding it out for

Can you imagine checking your trail camera and finding a stunning and breathtaking image like this? It is the kind of photo that could put a veteran hunter on his knees in disbelief.





The top Saskatchewan record in the non-typical whitetail category was taken way back in 1957 near White Fox and scored 265 3/8. I talked to a couple of Boone and Crockett scorers in this province, and they told me that if Dallas took the velvet off the antlers they believe it would still score 269 to 270 inches. You have to wonder what this deer looked like the year before. Was he just an ordinary buck or was he a 240 to 250 giant? That likely will never be known as to this date no trail camera pictures have surfaced.

so long. Then I took a deep breath and released. The arrow hit and he ran off. My heart raced with excitement as I watched him run a loop back to the bush.

Replaying the shot in my mind, I hadn't seen him kick, and the arrow hitting him had sounded like a gut shot. Instantly my heart sank to my stomach. I was uncertain of my shot and feared it was too high and far back. I was disappointed in myself; a deer of a lifetime and I was worried the shot wasn't good enough.

I gave the buck some time before I climbed down. I couldn't find a blood trail, and didn't want to follow in his

direction because the wind was blowing that way. Very discouraged about what to do, I started to make my way back to the truck, opting to head for a hill to scan the area for a few minutes first. In the distance, I saw a deer slowly walk into the treeline. Figuring that may be him, I called my buddy Kelly Rainford to tell him the whole story.

I wasn't sure of my shot and needed advice. I didn't want to push the deer if it was gut shot. Kelly suggested I leave the buck till the morning to give it some time. After Kelly and I got a game plan together, I headed home. Unable to sleep, I watched various deer videos to figure out what my shot was



Above: Just to show you what calibre of deer this is, let's take a look at the 13th edition of the Boone and Crockett record book. At a score of 271, there are only 21 non-typicals that score higher. Photo by taxidermist Kent Ringheim of Melfort, Saskatchewan. Kent runs Wilderness Taxidermy, and he did a super job on this new world record whitetail.

Right: The 2012 hunting season produced some great bucks across North America, but none scored higher than this Saskatchewan giant. The velvet-covered whitetail that Dallas arrowed grosses an amazing 289 and nets 271 non-typical points. It stands as the world record non-typical whitetail in the velvet category. Saskatchewan is now honoured with new world record animals taken a year apart with archery tackle, first Cody Robbins' gigantic non-typical mule deer, and now Dallas Heinrichs' non-typical whitetail.

like. One video showed the position of the lungs as they come back above the guts higher up, and I felt slightly better knowing that was where my arrow had hit. All night I just prayed to find the deer first thing in the morning. It was a stressful night with absolutely no sleep.

Daylight couldn't come fast enough. Kelly was going to help me track, but I was too anxious to wait and headed out early. Once I arrived, I got ready knowing if the buck stood up it would have to be a quick draw and release.

While walking around the willows, I found the blood trail, which suggested a lung shot. Slightly relieved, I slowly proceeded. As I made my way through the poplars, I stepped around a log, looked over, and there he lay up the trail. I walked up to him, staring for a moment in amazement before reaching for his antlers. I was relieved,





This photo shows the many points this buck grew during the 2012 season.

excited, and ready for a nap! I gave Kelly a call to tell him I had found the buck and gave him directions how to get to my location.

When Kelly finally arrived, he couldn't believe his eyes. "You're one lucky guy!" he said.

Following field photos, we rough scored my deer at 289,

and after deductions 271. The whole experience was totally overwhelming. I had only ever dreamed of seeing such a big deer. I thought I would be chasing this buck all year without success, but here I was on the morning of September 4th having harvested my biggest whitetail ever. 🍀