



THE HOG

BY JASON HOUSE

Jay House of Grande Prairie, Alberta, took this colossal whitetail in that province in 2009. It ended a three-year quest for this elusive whitetail. The archery buck's antlers have huge mass and carry a 6x6 frame with a few stickers. The body size of Jay's deer is just totally immense and rolling in fat. The magnificent velvet-covered specimen grosses 195 4/8 and nets 178 2/8 typical points.

It all started three years ago when I spotted this hog of a buck in early rut. I got a look at him running off into the bush after four does. I knew it was going to be a big challenge to get a shot at this deer; he didn't get this big by being dumb. I hunted that area for the rest of the season, but didn't see him again.

It was a year later almost to the day when I got a second look at him. It was the same thing – just long enough to get a look and no shot. He was at the edge of the bush with two does this time. It was early rut, so I thought I might have a chance of seeing him again, but no such luck.

This year I spent a lot more time pre-season scouting. I set up four trail cameras and scouted every free night I had from June until the bow season opened. I spotted him on the second night I went out, and then continued to watch him in the evenings and in the mornings to get his pattern down to a tee.

Then the unthinkable happened: I went out one evening and the field I had been watching him in was cut, and the deer were nowhere to be seen. I scouted the area for the next three days, and on the third evening I spotted the hog about one mile north in a field.

I watched him go in and out of this field for the next two weeks before the bow season opened. He would go on the same trail every evening, and in the morning he would switch things up. I dreamt about this animal for two months, and about something this big all my life.

The day before opening day I didn't see him in the morning, but I spotted him that evening with a couple of other small bucks that were in the area on his usual route. He looked huge compared to the other bucks, and they were pretty nice deer. I talked to my two hunting buddies, Brad and Jeff, and came up with a plan of attack. I decided to just watch the area in the morning and then go in and sit the treestands in the evening. I hadn't seen a lot of activity in the morning when I scouted; it was more of an evening place.

On opening morning I got up and headed to my honey hole, spent some time scouting, but didn't see him or the other bucks. I started to get worried that someone else had spotted them and driven them out of the area or, worse, shot him. I headed back

to camp and got my gear ready for the evening hunt.

My buddy Brad Lynx met me around 3:00 and we headed out. He would be my video man on this hunt. We got in and set up our treestands. The area only had a couple of trees to choose from, so we set up on the trail the deer were using. Brad was situated to the right of me.

It was about 45 minutes before dark when the deer started to move. We spotted three smaller bucks and two does, as well as a 4x4 buck, but not the one I wanted. About 10 minutes after the other deer walked through, I heard something behind me. I looked over my shoulder, and there he was! He looked HUGE, and I began to shake. He took his time to emerge from the trees and head to the right of me. He stopped 20 yards away, but I couldn't get a shot – Brad was in the way. We watched the buck feed for five minutes before he simply walked away. I thought my dream was all over, and it was the one and only chance I would get to shoot something this big.

We waited until dark and then headed back to the truck. At camp we decided to just scout the area again in the morning and get into position in the evening.

We returned on the evenings of the 26th and 27th, but had no luck. Other deer were using the area, but not the hog. I talked to Brad and he had to work the next day, but my good

**Now the work begins.
All photos by Brad Lynx.**



hunting buddy Jeff had just gotten off work and was eager to get out hunting. I called him up and we had a chat. In the end, we opted to switch it up and go out in the morning. Since we hadn't seen the buck the last two evenings, a different strategy couldn't hurt.

We got up at 3:30 a.m. and headed to the treestands. When we got there, we set up the stands such that Jeff was across from me and I could shoot towards the field or the trail, whichever way the buck would come in.

We got into position around four o'clock and then the waiting game began. It was about two hours later when the first two bucks – a 3x3 and a nice 4x4 – and a doe passed through. The waiting felt like an eternity. Around 6:35, the two bucks and the doe came back to feed, then another small buck showed up.

It was 6:50 when I looked over at Jeff, and he was looking back over his shoulder. When he turned forward again, it looked like he had seen a ghost – the look on his face was priceless! When I looked down, I saw the hog coming. He was chasing a doe. I stood up, got into position, and waited for him to cross in front of me. The doe crossed first and he wasn't far behind, but he was moving fast. I looked at Jeff, and he grunted. The hog stopped 35 yards away, and I took the shot. It was the shot of my life, but he took off and ran out into the field. Although I couldn't see if he went down, I looked at Jeff with a smile from ear to ear. I had to sit down and try to stop shaking before I climbed down out of the stand.

When we hit the ground, we just stood there – I still couldn't believe what had just happened. I got Jeff to rewind

the video to see where I had hit the buck. It was a great double-lung shot. We waited for 15 minutes, but I couldn't wait any longer, I had to go. I walked 110 yards out into the field and found him stone dead. As a hunter, it's a feeling you don't forget, especially when it's a deer of a lifetime. I will never forget this hunt as long as I live; it's a memory of a lifetime. 🍷

**A huge Prairie moose before the big moose kill-off in 2009.
Garry Donald photo.**

