

Renee Snider (CA) has taken an amazing 36 different species of sheep and it appears she will not slow down until she reaches that amazing, magical #40. Renee had this to say about her Siberian trip in August 2011 where she took three different species:

*Well, this all started with a dream. Many years ago I had told my husband that my "ultimate dream" was to collect 45 sheep, but I'd settle for 40. When China and Kazakhstan closed, I knew it was never going to happen. Then last fall Iran opened, and a "window of opportunity" was suddenly a slight possibility. I immediately called **John Jackson** and **Mike Carpenter** to get the facts correct so I knew what was happening with Americans having the ability to finally import trophies from Iran back into the U.S. after 32 years.*

*Then at the SCI convention in Reno in January 2011, I happened to walk past the **ProfiHunt** booth and stopped to visit with my dear friend and sheep hunter extraordinaire, **Vladimir Koscheev**. As we chatted he asked what my hunting plans were for the year. I told him about my "sheep dream." He asked why I did not just go do that and I explained that I would need the three remaining snow sheep from Russia and I knew I was not physically able to do that. He was on the helicopter with a group of hunters coming out when I was picked up from my camp after my Kolyma hunt several years ago and my feet were so blistered and my knees also from my braces that I could barely hobble onto the chopper.*

*As we sat there he said just go do it. I said, "Well, to do that, I would have to book with **Kulu Safaris** (I had met both **Irene & Sergey Rudakov** but never hunted with them before) and I would have to go for those three remaining snow sheep and I know I am physically not able to do that because of my bad feet and knees. He could see my desire and realized how much this personal goal*

would mean to me. He looked me straight in the eyes and said, "Well, if that's what you really want to do, let's do it!" To my astonishment as he completed that statement he suddenly stood up and just started walking quickly down the aisle. I said, "Vladimir, I don't even know where Kulu Safaris is located in here." Without turning around he said, "I do, and we are going to go talk to them right now!" I caught up with him and said, "How can you do that, when you work for ProfiHunt?" He looked at me, smiled, and said, "Don't you worry about that, we will work something out!" At this point my mind was racing and all I could think of was that I knew my feet and knees would not tolerate three back-to-back sheep hunts.

We sat down with Irene and Sergey, and Vladimir explained my dream and window of opportunity with Iran just opening up. I sat quietly and listened. I then asked Sergey how long he thought this might take and he immediately said, "FORTY DAYS!" I asked why it would take so long and he simply said, "Because of the unpredictable weather," which having hunted the Kamchatka and Koryak with Vladimir Treschov, I understood very well. Sergey then looked straight at me and asked, "Can you give it forty days?" and I said yes. (Silently I knew my heart and head are willing to try, but I knew these knees and feet would be a very serious problem, but at that point I knew I had to at least try.) Now, I can truthfully say that without Vladimir, none of this would have happened. We all sat and talked about available dates and scheduled my upcoming hunt beginning August 1 and concluding on September 10, 2011. As we sat together all I could think about was how terribly crippled I would be even attempting to do these hunts back to back. I can honestly say, "I was sweating bullets just thinking about this Russian hunt for the next seven months." I was taking a huge risk going for three sheep at one time, and I knew

the consequences if I might be crippled just going after the first one.

Finally, July 30 arrived. I was met by Vladimir at the Moscow airport and after filling out all the required paperwork and registering my firearms with the police we traveled on to Magadan, which is an eight-hour flight. I was relieved my duffels and rifle arrived with me, and we were met by Irene and Sergey. Only time would tell if this would become a reality for me. We drove to Sergey's office, which is conveniently located above his sporting goods store, where we had a cup of tea and signed some paperwork. There I had the pleasure of meeting two fellow hunters from Moscow, **Konstantin Popov** (who you all know from his many photos in the GSCO publications), and his friend **Evgeny Kurgin**. Later we checked in to a local hotel with hopes of leaving early the following day to fly to the helicopter location, which was a nine-hour drive. Unfortunately we were not able to fly due to the weather, so we made the nine-hour drive with Sergey, hoping to meet the helicopter. After we arrived in Seimchan we were told we would just have to wait because there was a very serious forest fire and the helicopter was being used to haul water to help put out the fire. Finally, we realized that we were not going to be leaving and the helicopter pilot was kind enough to let six of us sleep over in his apartment, as there are no hotels in Seimchan. Until one has experienced a stay in a Russian



Renee Snider (CA) took this Yakutia snow sheep from Russia in August 2011. Renee was hunting with ProfiHunt and Kulu Safaris.

apartment in a remote area and community, there is simply no describing it. Let me just say it is an unforgettable experience and definitely beats sleeping sitting up in the vehicle all night. Although we three hunters were anxious to get out to the mountains, we understood the fire crisis. We ended up staying there for two days and we laughed a lot and made the best of the circumstances.

Late in the afternoon on August 3, the pilot called Sergey and said to come now, and he could fly us three hunters to our camps. Konstantin was dropped at his camp first, and then I was dropped at my camp, and then Evgeny to his. These are huge helicopters and we had it filled with our camp necessities. These first camps were set up and our guides were there waiting for our arrival. After being dropped off I was met by and introduced to Anatoly, my Kulu guide, and Konstantin, my assistant. I asked him what he was to do and he said, "I am here just to help you." "Help me do what?" I asked, and he said, "Whatever you need me to do." I thought it would be great to have this strong young man carry my rifle up the mountain for me... great idea indeed! I had my own two-man tent and those three shared a larger tent where they slept and we also had our meals. After settling into my tent I went into their tent for dinner and Vladimir explained to me what they had discussed and decided we should do. (Anatoly did not speak English, so Vladimir was also guide and interpreter for me).

Anatoly had seen sheep a few days before I arrived and they felt we needed to start climbing early the next morning toward those sheep and set up a fly camp so I would not be climbing up and down the mountain every day. Fine with me gentlemen, whatever it takes, I am willing to try. We climbed for seven hours and I was thankful it was foggy to keep me just a bit cooler while climbing. At times rather than climbing up on the slippery rocks I would hold Konstantin's hand with my left hand and jab my walking stick into the icy snow, very much like a glacier front, for more stability. It was steep and slick. Konstantin informed me as we were climbing that he had a small tent for me when we reached a point where we would set up our fly camp.

Finally we arrived at the location Anatoly and Vladimir felt would work for us, although the mountain was sloping and I wondered how we would keep from slipping to the bottom of our tents.

We stopped to glass periodically during the entire climb and saw young rams only. It was very foggy while setting up the tent, and I was exhausted. Vladimir and I went inside the lightweight two-man tent and lay down on the ground to rest while Anatoly and Konstantin went back down to our base camp to carry up another tent and our sleeping bags. An hour or two later Vladimir unzipped our tent flap to check the weather and announced the fog was beginning to lift. It was cold now, so he told me to stay inside. After another hour he got excited and told me to hurry and get outside to look through his spotting scope at the sheep he had just spotted between mists of fog on the mountain to our left. There are two rams and even at this distance one looked quite promising. I sat there shivering, watching these rams, and finally saw Anatoly and Konstantin far away, but ascending. I was looking forward to crawling into my sleeping bag, as it was getting colder and also dark. I was encouraged as I fell asleep that we might have a chance at these the following day.

Early the following morning Vladimir told me to stay inside and the three of them would split up and head different directions scouting for the sheep we had seen the evening before. About noon Vladimir arrived and told me to make myself ready for hunting, which translates into get dressed, get your boots on and let's go – PRONTO. They had seen the sheep. Anatoly had continued to get closer and keep an eye on their movement and location and Vladimir, Konstantin and I climbed as quickly as we could in his vicinity. Finally, via radio, Anatoly was able to guide Vladimir into the area we needed to reach to locate the sheep. Anatoly was much higher on the mountain, looking down at us, and we had climbed up and around the mountain looking for him and the sheep. Vladimir finally spotted them and motioned for me to move closer to him. The three rams were all bedded at 600 yards. I was able to slowly crawl up a bit closer. At 580 yards I sat up, carefully put my rifle on a rock on my left, propped my right elbow on my right knee and fired. Vladimir and Konstantin went back several hundred yards to retrieve their backpacks (I had mine with me), Anatoly climbed down from his perch above us, and I slowly started moving down and across the mountain toward my ram. Of course these gentlemen are strong and in great physical condition so in no time they were at the ram and Vladimir kept whooping and hollering so I knew we had a nice Yakutia ram, harvested in the Tuonnakh Mountains. The date was August 5 and I was elated to be looking at a beautiful 13-year-old ram. After some quick photos I headed back down to our base camp while they did the skinning. I knew I would meet them somewhere along the way back, as they were able to move more quickly than I could maneuvering through the rocks. Almost immediately after taking photos



This Okhotsk snow sheep from Russia was taken in August 2011 by Renee Snider (CA). Renee was hunting with Kulu Safaris and ProfiHunt.

it started raining, then hailing, then just a soft rain for several hours as we all hiked back to our base camp. Of course there were celebratory vodka toasts with dinner that evening! Later we learned that Konstantin Popov had been extremely lucky and shot his beautiful ram just a couple of hours after arriving in his camp. He flew back to Magadan the following day and I waited another for Evgeny to harvest his ram so we could come out in the chopper together.

Finally Evgeny and I flew back to Magadan and were able to join Irene, Sergey and Konstantin for a nice lunch and later that evening Konstantin ordered a delicious dinner at a Chinese restaurant, which we all enjoyed. We next hunted the Okhotsk in the Seimkan Mountains. Again Konstantin was dropped off at his campsite first and again shot his ram the day after arriving. Now what kind of luck is that!

When the chopper dropped me at my campsite, we were told that there was

another guide out doing some pre-scouting for me. We were busy setting up our tents when Alexander returned and informed us he had seen some rams. The following day my guides left camp early to start scouting again and Vladimir and Konstantin came back to tell me we would climb NOW while Alexander kept a close eye on the rams. I grabbed my gear and we were off. It was a very windy day and several times while climbing Konstantin would reach out for me, as the powerful gusts were enough to blow me over! Finally, we were near where Alexander had told us they were bedded, and slowly Vladimir worked his way around the mountain, mostly crawling, as these sheep are always out on these bare rocky ridges and we had no cover to stalk. He finally motioned me to follow and when I crept on my stomach to where he was sitting in the rocks I asked him how far the sheep were. He said 600 yards. I then asked how fast he thought the wind was blowing and he said about 30 mph (I thought 35 mph). There were five rams all bedded, and of course the one I was aiming for was both lying and looking straight at me, which drastically narrowed my target area. All I could do was slowly get into a sitting position, pulling his backpack onto my lap so I could rest my rifle on it with my elbows on my knees. On August 12 we were all delighted to harvest this beautiful 10-year-old Okhotsk. After photos I headed back to camp while they all did the full mount skinning. I was back in camp about an hour when they returned. Yes, that is how slow I am! Yes, more celebratory vodka toasts with dinner. The high winds brought in a huge storm and for the next six days we were cooped up in our tents. I was grateful that Irene had given me four of her books to read, and I read them all twice. My tent did not zip, so Vladimir was continually trying to improvise to keep the rain out and the wind down for me. Although it was a bit breezy, I stayed warm in my sleeping bag and just read. Thank you, Irene, for sending all those books for me to read! What a pleasant surprise to see Dennis sitting on the chopper when it arrived to pick us up to move to the next camp. He had arrived in Magadan and was heading out for his Okhotsk snow sheep.

Finally we set up our third and final camp in the Ola River Mountains. Konstantin remained in our last camp because **Malcolm King** from England was arriving and he would be helper and translator for Malcolm. For the first three days Vladimir and Anatoly went out scouting and I would remain in camp and stay busy airing out our sleeping bags and clothing when a ray of sunshine would peek through the clouds. I would have dinner ready for them upon their return, knowing they would be hungry, tired and wet. We were hoping to bring the chopper back in to move to another location and finally on the fourth day Anatoly spotted one lone ram. Vladimir came back to camp to get me so we could

hopefully find Anatoly and this ram. It was a 12 to 15-mile hike, up and down ridge tops, and after three hours of fast walking/climbing, we met Anatoly. It took a short time to locate the ram, but we finally did. He was bedded and facing down the mountain and was unaware we were above him. I sat down and lifted my body with my arms as quietly as possible to shorten the distance between us. Vladimir told me the distance was 225 yards and I slowly lifted the rifle and fired. Vladimir reached over and gave me a "congratulatory hug" and we sat for a few seconds just reflecting on this entire hunt. On August 22 we harvested a beautiful 10-year-old Kolyma, and I am still so excited my heart races just thinking about it. We had to take some quick photos before we lost daylight and then I head back toward camp. It started raining, and then snowing, and I finally stopped and sat down under a huge tree and waited for them at Vladimir's request. With the cloud cover, rain and finally snow it was quite dark now and I was not sure which saddle our camp was on. (And I don't think they wanted to come looking for me). At 2:30 a.m. we arrived back in camp and although we were all exhausted, we were so pleased with our success, even at that hour we cooked a hot meal, and of course, had more congratulatory vodka toasts.

Sergey and Irene entertained us like royalty while we were in Magadan with great lunches and delectable dinners.

They invited us to join them our final night for another scrumptious dinner. It was such a pleasure for me to finally spend time with them. They are not only hospitable and accommodating, but really fine people, and now good friends. The following morning Dennis, Vladimir and I flew back to Moscow. Vladimir traveled back home to his family and Dennis and I were chuckling to ourselves at dinner time. Tonight we were sitting in a very small "cafeteria" (because the restaurant was closed in our hotel), which was also without air conditioning, having a very basic meal, but enjoying the conversation.

Our campsites were all located on mountain passes, or saddles, and the beauty of these mountains is breathtaking. We were able to pick berries every day, even in the rain, and toss them into our porridge, which was hot and nutritious. When setting up our tents we lined the entire bottom flaps with huge rocks to keep them from blowing in the wind, yet the winds were so strong they still would sway and I continually wondered if mine might just come down on me. These wilderness areas are indescribably beautiful. I still cannot believe that I was fortunate to harvest these three handsome rams. It all started with a dream, then putting our thought into action to make them become a reality. I never thought it was possible. This dream became a reality because Vladimir and Sergey listened with their hearts and their heads. This is the first



Renee Snider (CA) and Vladimir Koscheev of ProfiHunt with Renee's Kolyma snow sheep from Russia, August 2011. Renee was hunting with both ProfiHunt and Kulu Safaris.

time I have ever been on any hunt anywhere in the world where there has been pre-scouting. They knew how rigorous this hunt might have been for me and they did all they could to ensure my success. This speaks volumes about two competitive hunting organizations, ProfiHunt and Kulu Safaris, working together in a real team effort; to not only ensure my comfort, but also my success collecting these three beautiful rams. I booked a 40-day hunt and we were fortunate enough to do it in 22 days, and I will be forever grateful to my entire team. They all worked hard and I had a great time. It was interesting for me to sit back and observe Sergey every time we were in the helicopter holding his GPS as we would fly to different locations. He definitely works very hard to hopefully put his hunters down in a favorable area. My guides were just

the greatest - all of them!

And to Vladimir Koshcheev, who carried my rifle up and down every mountain and successfully moved me in to every shooting position, you listened and you took action and you made it happen. It was my dream becoming a reality and I thank you from the bottom of my heart!