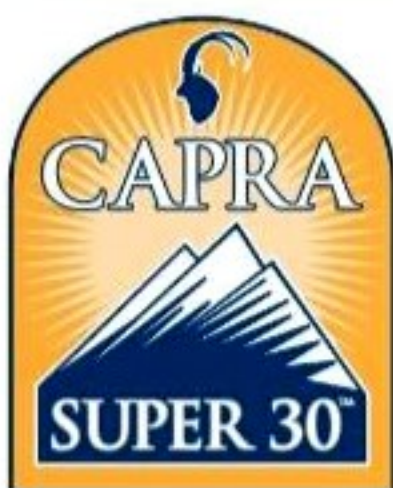


# MILESTONE

## JENS KNUDSEN



Life member **Jens Knudsen** (Denmark) has become the first person from his country to reach the Capra Super 30. He did so in January 2022 with a Himalayan ibex from Pakistan and sent a great report entitled "High Peak Hunting":

Most hunting trips deliver memories for life. Some good, some bad and some that burn a mark that will stay in your memory forever.

My stomach nearly turned over as I looked down into the gorge less than a meter from the car window. Far below the narrow road was a small river and the raw mountain mass rose vertically above us. We were on our way from Islamabad to Gilgit, driving on one of the world's most dangerous roads, the Karakoram Highway.

As darkness fell, we encountered several police checkpoints and were followed from one to the next by police escorts along the unpleasant mountain road. The escort, which aimed to guard us against so called "bandits," consisted of three machine-gun-armed, masked officers posted on the back of a pickup truck. One was standing with the weapon mounted forward, the other two were seated with the barrels pointing backward. If you drive off the road here, it is likely certain death. To my great relief we arrived at the luxury hotel in Gilgit around midnight. After the security guards let us in and the luggage was scanned, we got a good night's sleep.

The next day we packed up and headed for the camp. On the way in through the valley, we spotted the first group of Himalayan ibex. The mountain camp was located on a small plateau over a gorge with vertical mud slopes down to the river. To get up on the plateau, we hiked along vertical cliffs up through a steep landslide. We were invited in for tea and lunch. Our host **Ata Muhammed** was a 70-year-old mountain farmer and former poacher. He and his wife survive on his few livestock and the income he receives as a guide for visiting hunters like me. From Ata's stone hut we could see several ibex on the mountainside just above the village. The animals like to stay close to humans, as it provides slightly higher security compared to pressure from the snow leopards, of which there are many in the area. On the other side of the gorge down toward the river, we also saw a small group of ibex with a nice male in the group.

We spent the afternoon hiking further into the valley. Along the way we saw fresh snow leopard tracks that were less than a day old. We found a group of ibex very high on the mountain but there were no mature males, so we headed back to the house before dark for a good meal.

The next few days we found several groups of ibex. Local spotters were out in other valleys so we could cover as many mountainsides as possible to find the right ibex. The mountains are extremely high and insanely steep but the ibex were lower down the mountain. Each morning and evening we saw animals

at lower altitudes, while in the middle of the day, they rested high up in the steep cliffs. We found our first mature male in the evening of the third day of hunting.

Right after lunch we spotted a good male across the valley that we had not seen before. He was considerably darker and larger than the other males we had seen. He was far away and still high on the mountain, but below him a herd of females and a young male were feeding. The guides believed the big male would be with the group the next morning.

We were up and on the mountain before daylight the next morning and soon spotted the ibex behind a stone ruin lower on the mountain. The females were on their way to a gorge where it would be possible to get a shot. We quickly headed down to a spot to get set up and wait for the ibex. The females had already climbed down the steep side of the gorge, while the big male followed behind them. He climbed down the side of the gorge 410 meters away. I adjusted the turret on my scope and sent the light, flat-shooting 6.5 Creedmoor ELD-X bullet out for the ibex. The bullet hit perfectly and seconds later the ibex was dead and sliding down the gorge. A few hours later, 10 of the village's strongest men were gathered to bring back the whole animal. They carried the approximately 100 kilo ibex along the narrow track, down a gorge, across the river and up to the village. It was very impressive!

It was an amazing experience among amazing people in an amazing culture and nature. A few hours before the start of the 18-hour road trip back to Islamabad, we received a message that the weather forecast finally made it possible to fly from Gilgit instead of driving. We jumped at that opportunity. The flight between the peaks of the Himalayas was one of the most beautiful I have experienced. The trip was truly an adventure. Thanks to **Artem Veselov** from **ProfiHunt [Diamond Supporter]** for organizing the hunt.



Jens Knudsen (Denmark) achieved his Capra Super 30 in January 2022 with this Himalayan ibex from Pakistan with ProfiHunt.