

HALF-MA

A CARIBOU HUNT IN GREENLAND WAS AN ADVENTURE FROM START TO FINISH.

It wasn't long ago, eight years to be exact, that there was no bowhunting allowed in Greenland. But thanks to the hard work of Frank Feldmann, owner of Bowhunting Greenland and an accomplished bowhunter himself, that all changed in 2012. Make no mistake, it took a concerted and careful political effort and plain old dogged determination on the part of Frank to establish an archery season for muskox and caribou on the big island. Since then, Greenland has become one of the Bowhunter staff's favorite hunting destinations.

Back in 2012, I received an e-mail from Frank letting me know he was conducting a "test hunt" for muskox to determine if bowhunting could be legalized in Greenland. In short order, my flights were booked, and we were on the country's first-ever muskox bowhunt. Our group, which included four bowhunters from three different countries, was so successful in harvesting muskox that Greenland officials approved bowhunting for muskox

on the spot. Afterward, they gave us bowhunting permits for caribou. But, a major problem developed when the weather took a dramatic turn for the worst, which prevented us from hunting caribou.

The following year, after harvesting a trophy muskox, Editor Curt Wells became the first American to arrow a caribou in Greenland. The year after Curt's trip to Greenland, Bowhunter Publisher Jeff Waring took a phenomenal caribou and a muskox. At first, we weren't sure what subspecies of caribou inhabited Greenland. Eventually, the Pope and Young Club ruled they were Central Canada Barren Ground caribou.

When I left Greenland six years ago, I vividly remember vowing to return and hunt caribou with Frank. So, last year I made plans to do just that. Now, fast-forward to September 2018, when we arrived in Greenland with two other bowhunters — Tim Neitzel from Wisconsin, and Charles Robinson from Michigan.

TRATHON IN GREENLAND

BY C.J. WINAND,
CONTRIBUTOR

ALL PHOTOS BY JIM THOMPSON

Greenland is located in the middle of nowhere, so just getting to Frank's camp is an adventure. Most trips connect in Reykjavik, Iceland, and then continue on to Narsarsuaq, Greenland. Next comes a four-hour boat ride through a maze of icebergs to Frank's camp, where you have a better-than-average chance of taking two Pope and Young-class animals, muskox and caribou, on the same hunt.

Tucked away in the recesses of the North Atlantic shoreline is a remote cabin Frank built on a giant slab of rock. The spectacular setting, and the fact that the island has its own freshwater pond, makes for what in this remote area of southwest Greenland amounts to five-star accommodations.

I was only hunting caribou, so on the first day of our hunt, Frank asked if we would film Tim's muskox hunt. It wasn't long before Frank spotted two decent bulls up on the mountainside. With Frank, Tim, and the cameraman Jim Thompson humping

it up the mountain, I stayed near the bottom to watch the action unfold. By the time the group got up to the larger bull, he had moved into some heavy cover. From my vantage point, it appeared the group would walk right past the bull.

Although I could have ruined their stalk, I decided to whistle loudly for them to glass back at me. It worked, and after some hand signals from me, the group repositioned themselves for a perfect stalk. After the shot, the Pope and Young-class bull ran a short distance and fell over. By the time I hiked up there, they were already taking hero shots.

The following day, Frank took me and Charles deep into the high country for caribou. Make no mistake, this hunt is just like a sheep or goat hunt, and I was humbled by the physical shape Frank was in. Two hours into the climb, Charles suddenly dropped flat on the ground and started to take his bow off his pack. We had just stumbled into a herd of caribou.

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After Charles slowly crawled up a little closer, he drew, held, and finally released his arrow. As the bull ran up the mountain, I could see that the shot was perfect, and the bull fell dead within sight.

Then Frank told me to get my bow ready, because while the herd of 20 caribou had run off, they had uncharacteristically started to come back to see what had caused the commotion. This herd, with some rut-crazed bulls, had probably never seen a human before. But as I was trying to get my bow off my pack, I realized that I'd buried my release a little too deep. As I was unbuckling my gear, the largest herd bull stood still, facing us some 60 yards away, but by the time I finally had my gear together he had changed directions and followed the herd over the mountain.

With the caribou gone, it was now time to celebrate with Charles. His bull was absolutely beautiful, with long, sweeping antlers and a prominent white mane. Although I was thrilled for Charles, I kept beating myself up over the lost opportunity.

My anxiety was compounded over the next two days as we got hit by Hur-



Tim Neitzel (right) from Wisconsin started off on the first day with this trophy muskox. Cameraman Jim Thompson (left), and guide Frank Feldmann (center) join in for a well-deserved "hero" photo.

ricane Florence. Although we had no data on actual wind speeds, whenever we opened the door to the cabin, it almost came off its hinges. The winds were so strong the cabin literally shook. There was absolutely no way anyone could hunt. It was hard enough just going outside. Normally, the camp only loses one or two days a season due to severe weather. Turns out, we were the "lucky" ones!

Although the next to last day of the hunt didn't bring the best of weather,

we determined there was a 100-percent chance of not killing a caribou at the cabin, so we humped it up the mountain. It didn't take long to see the lower elevations were soaked with rain, while the higher elevations were covered in snow. We were somewhat dejected when none of us spotted any caribou.

The weather on our last day, however, started out beautiful. All we had to do was find some caribou. We hiked up a mountain that Frank believed offered us

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our best opportunity. But as we reached the top, every boulder field and trail was covered in snow, and worse yet, there were no tracks. At this point Frank said, "With these strong winds and snow, we have to change our plans. A better option would be to hike back down and go up another mountain." After 2½ hours

of hiking up the mountain, we reluctantly followed Frank's lead back to the boat, and then on to a different mountain.

As we started our second uphill climb of the day, we knew that we had about a six-mile hike to where Frank was leading us. Just past the halfway point, Frank asked me if I was okay? Although I was mentally and physically beat, I was also stubborn and not about to give up.

Finally, when we'd almost reached the summit of the snow-covered mountain, Frank said, "C.J., I think I see some tracks coming from the other side of the mountain." Those words sent my adrenal gland into overdrive. I dropped my pack, grabbed by bow, and continued through the deepening snow to a large boulder, which provided us with cover and protection from the winds.

As Frank and I glassed, we began to spot caribou, and some good bulls, too. The herd of some 60 caribou were still a few hundred yards away, but there were at least eight or 10 shooter bulls spread over the snow-covered tundra. Some were bedded, while others were grazing in between the snowdrifts.

If we wanted to get any closer, we'd have to go around the caribou into a shallow draw. The problem was, this would guarantee the herd would see us. Going around the opposite way would allow our scent to reach the herd. We were simply stuck behind the huge boulder, and it didn't take long to realize that staying put was our best option. Although the temperature was in the low 30s, the boulder protected us from the 35-mph-plus winds. Still, we could hardly hear one another speak.



Charles Robinson from Michigan spotted this bull as we neared the top of the mountain. His perfect shot resulted in the bull falling within sight. Although we had a long hike back to the boat, Charles packed his beautiful bull the whole way.

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Dreams will always be dreams until we put them into action. My smile says it all as I pose with my first Central Canada Barren Ground caribou. Frank Feldmann's Bowhunting Greenland operation is one of the best hunts a bowhunter could ever experience. Best of all, Frank is one of my favorite guides and is a pleasure to hunt with.

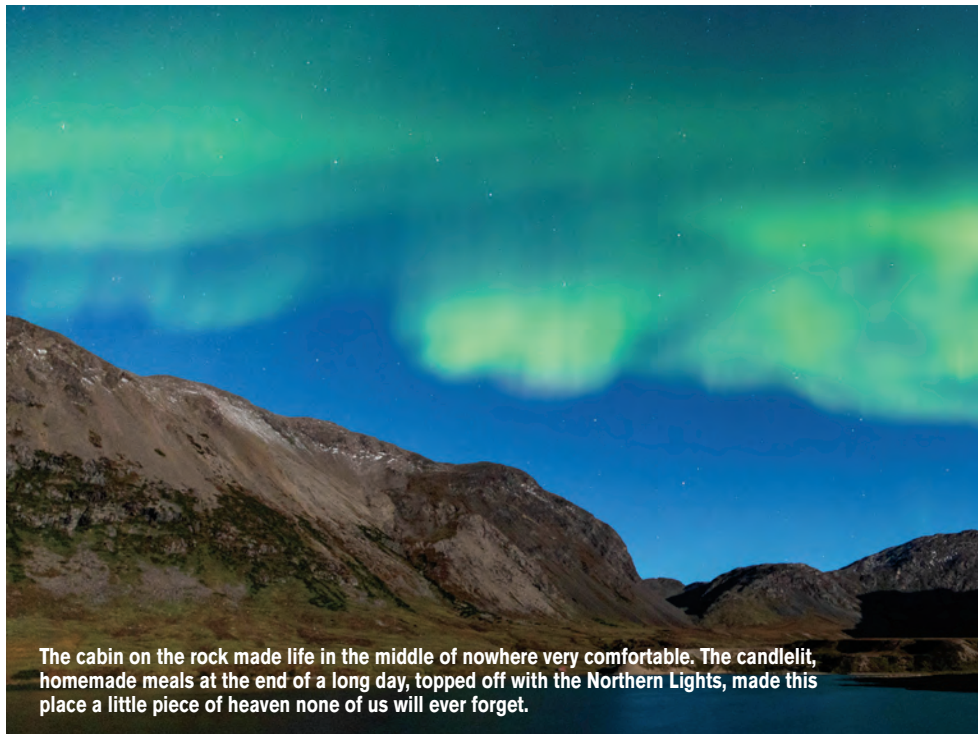
Suddenly, the herd started to get up and move away. But, for no apparent reason, a good bull and five cows headed our way. Within seconds the bull was standing broadside, and Frank lifted his rangefinder and said, "Forty yards."

After all our hard work, it was surreal to finally have a decent bull at 40 yards. I started to draw and get in my shooting "zone," then stopped and let down. A bigger bull had snuck in directly below the boulder, but I could only see his huge antlers. With the other bull and cows watching, I quickly decided to step forward, giving me a clear view of the bull. And without my asking, Frank said,

"Thirty yards." Moments later, my arrow was in flight.

It flew so poorly that I thought I'd somehow hit the rock, but it was just the wind. Fortunately, the arrow hit the bull between the last two ribs. Pure jubilation ensued as we all watched the herd bull stumble and drop just 100 yards away. At that moment, another rutting bull ran over and proceeded to pile-drive his fallen rival.

As Frank and I walked up on the bull, neither of us could believe the length of his horns and his overall size. "C.J., this is our biggest caribou of the season," Frank said. I was almost speechless, as words couldn't describe



The cabin on the rock made life in the middle of nowhere very comfortable. The candlelit, homemade meals at the end of a long day, topped off with the Northern Lights, made this place a little piece of heaven none of us will ever forget.

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the experience. And, to be totally honest, I was too exhausted to jump up and down.

It was already 4:30 p.m. on the last day of our hunt, so we skinned and quartered the bull and made it down to the boat by 9 p.m. Trust me, walking down a mountain in the dark with a load of meat is no fun! We hiked 13.5 miles on that last day — a half-marathon — so this hunt is not for everyone, and yet I truly believe everyone should put this hunt on their bucket list.

Just recently, Frank Feldmann acquired a new concession area with large populations of muskox and caribou, and will be conducting hunts there in the future. His new concession has never been hunted, and is accessible only by helicopter. If that sounds like your kind of adventure, Greenland is the place to go! **BH**

AUTHOR'S NOTES:

On this hunt, I used a Hoyt Carbon Defiant bow, Gold Tip Hunter XT arrows, Rage Hypodermic broadheads, T.R.U. Ball Max Pro four-finger release, Spot Hogg sight, Trophy Taker arrow rest, and TightSpot quiver, and I wore Browning Hell's Canyon clothing in Mossy Oak Break-Up Country camo.

If you're interested in hunting muskox, caribou, or both, contact Frank Feldmann, Bowhunting Greenland, at: 011 299 2848 51, mail@greenlandoutfitters.com, BowhuntingGreenland.com.



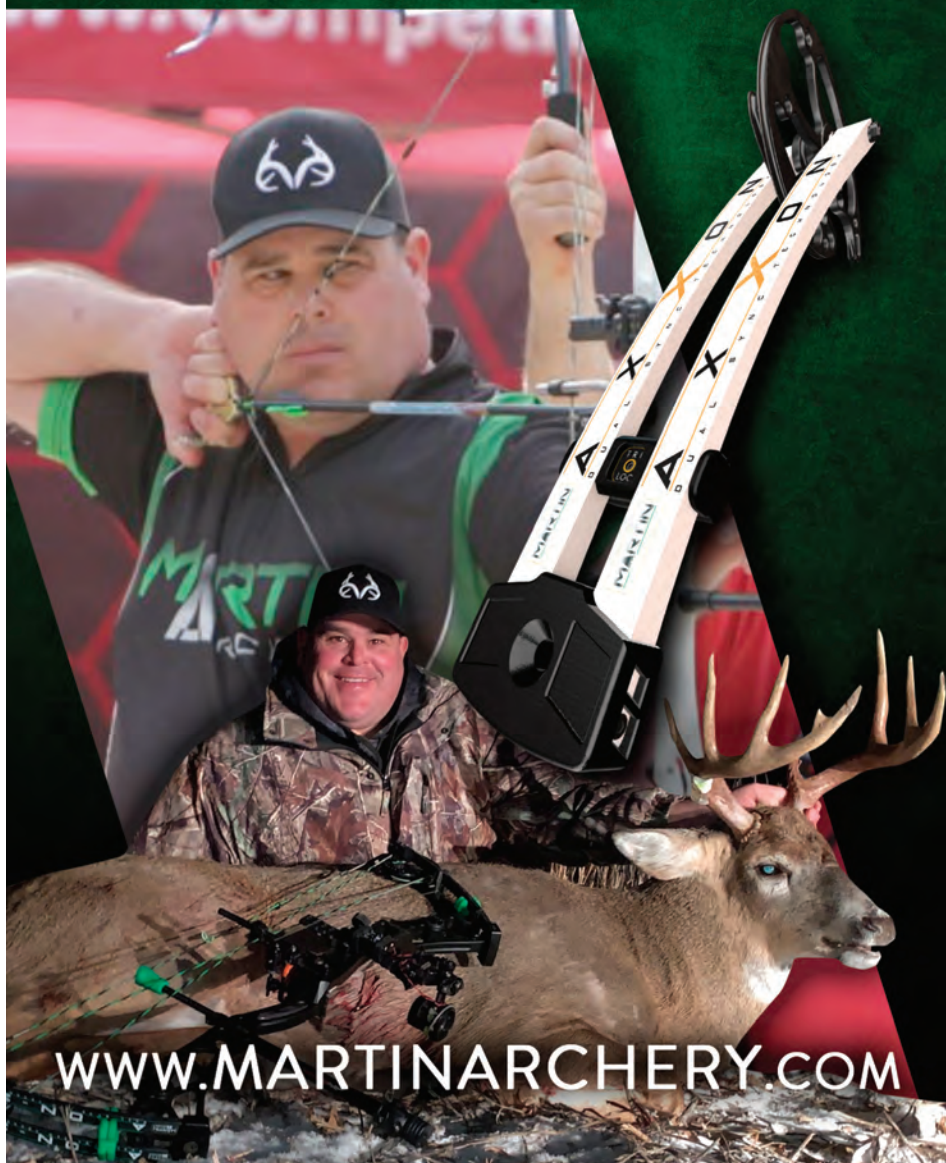
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