

## **2008 Arizona Big Game Super Raffle Desert Bighorn Sheep Winner Scott Krieg**

I was sitting in my home office in front of my computer when my cell phone rang the afternoon of July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008. I almost did not answer it, as I did not recognize the number. The guy on the other end of the phone asked for Scott Krieg and I figured it was a telemarketer, when I told him that it was me he introduced himself as Chris Denham calling on behalf of the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle, I looked at my watch and it was 3:35, I could not believe it. Earlier in the week I had contemplated going to the Antelope Foundation Banquet but got busy with work and just could not make it. I knew the drawing for the Super Raffle was on that Saturday at 3:30pm. Chris asked me if I was sitting down because I had just won the Desert Bighorn Tag from the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle. My heart skipped a beat, as I had just won the hunt of a lifetime. I could not believe it, I started jumping up and down and trying to stay calm because I was on the speaker phone with the Antelope Foundation Banquet group. I could hear everyone hooting and hollering for me on the phone, it was great. My wife came into my office looked at me funny and asked what happened. I'm trying to tell her that I had won this sheep tag. She says you just told me yesterday that you did not get drawn for anything. The day before Game and Fish had posted their results for the fall 2008 Sheep and Deer tags and I found out that I was not successful in any of my Arizona Drawings this year. Chris then told me congratulations and that they would be in contact later in the week to get me the information on the tag.

The first person I called was my dad and I told him we are going sheep hunting again. My dad starts telling me no because he had checked the results yesterday with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and I did not get drawn. I then told him that I had won the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle and he could not believe it, I think he was as excited as I was. He asked who had called me and I told him I didn't remember because I was too excited and was too busy jumping up and down to remember. Then I started to get this bad feeling in my stomach that someone had punked me so I told my dad I would call him back in a few minutes. I called a couple of buddies to tell them that I had won this tag to make sure that one of them was not punking me. Then I called Larry Heathington of Sheep Ltd who had guided my dad on an Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep hunt the year before. As it turned out he was at the Antelope Foundation Banquet and had seen my name drawn for the sheep tag. So when he told me that yes I had won the tag I told him I would give him a call in a couple of days to hire him for my guide. I called my dad back and told him I had contacted Larry already and confirmed that I had indeed won the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle. Then I called everyone that I knew to tell them the great news.

A couple of weeks later I had all of the information from the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle and I went to the Arizona Game and Fish Department to get my Arizona Special License Tag. The Super Raffle Bighorn Tag covers the northwestern units of Arizona 9, 10, 12A, 12B, 13A, 13B, 15A, 15B, 15C, 15D, 16A and these units have the nelsoni sheep. I also contacted Eric Hunt. Eric won the Desert Bighorn tag from Super Raffle the year before and talked to him about his successful sheep hunt.

The following week Larry Heathington of Sheep Ltd and I set up a plan on how and when we wanted to hunt. Larry has guided on a lot of sheep hunts and has killed some real monsters. He is definitely a person with a vast amount of knowledge about sheep and their habits. Hunting with Larry is quite an experience we had a lot of fun and he gave me a lot of knowledge about sheep hunting that I hope to use in the future when I get drawn for desert bighorn sheep.

I'm self employed and my dad is retired so we had plenty of time to spend hunting for that one ram. Opening day for this tag started August 15<sup>th</sup> and I wanted to hunt right away even though the temperatures were well above 110 degrees. Sheep are tied to water that time of year with the temperatures so hot, we decided to hunt along the Colorado River and Lake Mead areas 15C, 15B & 15D. We stayed in Boulder City NV for the first few days of the hunt and went to the city park, there and saw about 50 sheep sitting in the shade and some of the rams were starting to rut. This all happened at about 30 yards so we sat on a park bench and watched for a few minutes. We took my dad's boat on this trip and went up and down the Colorado River and around Lake Mead, looking for the ram we wanted. Each day we saw about 30-45 sheep with some really big rams but not the one I was looking for. From there we headed down towards the Laughlin area and hunted 15D for a few days and again saw some really nice rams.

After my first trip, I decided to buy a really good digital camera with a 12X optical zoom so I could take some really nice pictures of the sheep we saw. In September we went out again and found lots of sheep and some really nice rams but nothing I wanted to shoot. Then in October on one of our hunting trips we saw a really nice ram that had what I would call perfectly shaped horns not a ding or chip on them. He was a pretty big ram but not quite what I was looking for. During that trip all of the rams I saw I kept coming back to that one ram with the perfect horns for comparison. I think at that moment Larry knew what to look for in a ram that I was willing to go after.

We were out hunting several more times and Larry was out scouting a lot. I was in constant contact with Larry during his scouting trips to hear about what he had seen. Then I got a call from Larry telling me to come up as he had seen a couple of really nice rams. I had my bags already packed so I grabbed them and loaded my truck up. My dad and I were there a few hours later in the afternoon. That afternoon Larry took us over to one of the rams he had seen earlier in the day. This ram was a really nice 165 ram and he was only 20 yards away with a group of 13 other sheep. We watched these sheep for 20 minutes and they did not even care we were there. He was a big bruiser of a sheep and he looked like he had been in a lot of fights by the looks of his horns. Larry asked if I wanted to go after that ram, he said that ram is really nice and he has a lot of character. I was tempted to take that ram but elected to wait to see the other ram he had seen.

The next day we went to find that other ram. Larry had seen this ram at 75 yards and estimated him to be around 170 a really big ram for a Nelsoni. We hunted that area for the next five days and could not find that ram. This is why they are sometimes called the grey ghost, that ram had disappeared on us.

It was a few weeks later in the afternoon when Larry called me to tell me he had seen a ram that I might be interested in. So I grabbed my bags and headed for the hills again that evening. Once I was there I asked all kinds of questions about the ram as I think Larry knew this ram was probably the one I was looking for. Larry told me that he was not as big as some of the other rams we had seen but he had all of the attributes I was looking for in a ram. He estimated him to score around 160. It was pretty hard to fall asleep that evening as the excitement was building and knowing that my hunt might be over the next morning. We were in the area well before sun up and it was hard sitting in the jeep waiting on the sun. Once the sun was up it did not take long to find that group of sheep that Larry had seen the ram in the day before. There were 4 rams and 7 ewes in this group and a couple of the rams were close to the same size. The ram we were looking for was there he had those perfectly shaped horns with no dings or chips. After looking at this ram with my Bushnell 12X binoculars and Larry's spotting scope for a few minutes I said lets go after him.

We watched the sheep milling around for a few minutes and came up with a plan. Larry asked how close I needed to get for a shot and I told him that I felt comfortable at 300yards. I had been practicing a lot at 300 yards and know the gun I had would do just fine. I was using my Sako 300win mag with a Bushnell Elite 4200 2.5X10 with 180 grain Remington Core-Lock ammo. Well nothing goes as planned of course so at 300 yards and a couple of shots later, the sheep ran to the next ridge and stopped to look at us. Larry asked me what went wrong and I said I don't know. It was pretty frustrating but the look that Larry gave me was priceless and after a few words we went right back to it. We watched the sheep for about 20 minutes to let them settle down and as luck would have it the sheep bedded down. There was a ridge between us and them and if we could get to the top of that ridge it would be about a 200 yard shot. So we worked our way up to the top of that ridge and peaked over and the sheep were still there beaded down. We ranged the distance at 220 yards. The only problem was the sheep were all piled next to each other and I could not take a clear shot, which was good as we could take our time and relax for a minute. The sheep had no idea that we were there and it was probably about 25 minutes later when they started to stand up and mill around. The rut was still going and the rams were rubbing and bumping each other so it took a few more agonizing minutes before they separated enough for me to take the shot. Well the ram I was after stopped and gave me a clear shot which I took before they moved again, the unmistakable sound of a hit echoed back He took a few steps and I shot him again and he dropped right there. There were a lot of emotions when that sheep dropped. As we walked over to my ram it was hard to believe that the hunt was over. In the last few months of this hunt I had seen a lot of new territory, made a few new friends, had a lot of laughs and will never forget all of the jeep rides with Larry. All of the hard work that we had put into this hunt had come together for a very successful hunt one that I will never forget.

I want to thank Larry Heathington of Sheep Limited and his helper Jay Meyers for their time and effort plus the information that they supplied to make my hunt a successful one. A big thank you to my dad (Leroy Krieg) for the amount of time and support to make this a great hunt that we will always remember. Eric Hunt for his friendship and sharing his stories about his successful 2007 Super Raffle Bighorn Hunt. I also want to thank the Arizona Big Game Supper Raffle for giving all of us hunters the chance to win a tag such as this, it is a remarkable opportunity for us to enjoy. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> year that I had put into the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle and will definitely be putting in again in the future. In the 2008 raffle I only purchased 1 deer, 1 antelope and 1 sheep and yes I won the sheep tag with purchasing only 1 ticket.