

## A bear with issues

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Where did it go, the sun?

All week it has been sunny and beautiful, perfect for bear hunting and running baits and hanging stands. When we took the boat into Bear Lake fishing, it was sunny and 70. When we chopped the ATV trail through the brush, it was Sunny and 65. When we set the barrel and spread the grease, it was hot and the bears hit immediately and ravaged the bait site. I have never seen a bait site hit that hard, that quickly. When we hung the camera stand, it was fantastic and when Gary climbed into the stand it, it was perfect.

What happened to all the perfect weather? I wondered about that as the wind gusted off the lake moaned through the trees and caused our stands to sway and Gary to cover up the camera. I grabbed the slender trunk of the tree to the right of my stand and held on as my tree swung in the wind. My stand, just eight-feet off the ground was 22-yards from the bait location. It was in a slender tree, just fine for a calm day such as the one in which we started out. However, an eight-foot fall from a slender tree can kill you. This is compounded, if a 400-pound bear with issues is looking at you.

Bear Lake, (we named it) lies at the western end of a real big lake I cannot spell in northern Saskatchewan. We have 30-plus baits spread out in the surrounding bush. Most are hit every night. Monday afternoon, Cecil, a hunter from Rhode Island killed a medium bear, his first and yesterday, Roger; a hunter from Mound City, KS killed a nice bear with his bow.

That filled the paying hunters out and left me with four days to finish the video before the next group of hunters arrived. We had the cutaways, the two shots, the filler and all that crap done. All we needed was the kill shot. I had to stick an arrow through the boiler room on a bear on camera or there would be no video. It was a last minute project and we had hurried through the filler "stuff". I had promised to be home by June 1 and I intended to be. Three weeks, guiding bear hunters is enough. Thirty-minutes of carrying heavy bait buckets through dense bush with biting insects are enough and I had been doing that for 19 straight days.

I found the location on Bear Lake while walking back into the bush to answer the phone. When Ma Nature calls, I answer. The trail was huge and the many prints were deep-perfect place for a bait site. Using the ATV and an axe, we cut a road in and set the bait. It was hit hard the first night.

We hung the shooting stand and then the camera stand and gave it a day. Now it was time to hunt. We went in by motorized canoe, Gary and I to make no unneeded noise. I roped off all his camera equipment and climbed into my shaky perch as he pulled everything up. (This was in the day of heavy, bulky cameras and tripods.) Arrow nocked and facemask down I got ready.

Then, the sun vanished, ominous clouds began to build, the temperature dropped, the wind picked up, howling off the lake, Gary covered the camera to protect it from rain, I grabbed a tree to keep from falling and a huge bear walked into the clearing.

This was not just any bear. It was a better than average cinnamon bear. It was, in my opinion, a big cinnamon bear. That is a color phase to which I am almost addicted. I love cinnamon colored black bears. They are in good numbers in western Canada.

I have killed a total of four in my life and camera or no camera; I intended to kill this one. He had, you see, issues.

I am not afraid of bears. I respect them, certainly. A bear, even one with an attitude and issues does not immediately turn my legs to mush and my bowels to water. However, I do respect them, yes I do! This one, for sure, had issues. You can always tell that by the tongue hanging out of the side of their mouth.

I glanced at Gary. His eyes were the size of softballs. I suspect this had to do with the bear standing three-feet from the base of his tree and growling like an old truck climbing Hard Bargain Hill in double grandmaw. I slowly lifted the bow, set at 62-pounds, off the hook. The 125-grain Thunderhead quivered in the wind. At least I think it was the wind making it quiver. Something was causing the shaking.

Thunder rolled in the west, blending in with the growling and tooth popping. It hurt so I quit popping my teeth and returned my attention to the bear. His head had more scars than R. David Allen's, a sure sign of a bear with issues.

At that point, in time, I had no consideration for the fact, Gary had the camera turned off and covered up. All of my attention was on the bear. This was due to the bear now looking straight at me and slobbering like Dave Bishop with fresh donuts, another sign he had issues. I am sure the bear did as well.

Gary, either on purpose or by accident, let out a low moan and the bear turned, exposing his left front shoulder and the three inches behind it. The bright chartreuse sight pin locked on the area and I released the bowstring. I had no memory of drawing but anyway, I opened my fingers and the arrow went through the bear and into the ground.

With a horrific roar, the kind you would make if you had serious issues, the bear spun and ran head on into the bait barrel. In less than a second, he was into the bush and gone. Reminded me a little of Harry on the 13th step. Then, I heard him crash. I knew he was dead.

The wind lay, the clouds began to break up, the sun came out and Gary got busy packing up camera gear while saying something about needing a shower and not getting a video.

I have wondered many times why the weather seems to clear just after shooting an animal. I have had it happen many times.

I called Bob on the radio and told him to come in with the ATV. He said he would as soon as the storm let up. Then a huge black bear walked into the zone. He too, appeared to have issues.

However, that is another story. It is a good one, too.

I'll tell it some day. Suffice it to say, at some point, we got down and recovered the cinnamon bear and as Bob took it out on the ATV, Gary and I motored back to camp enjoying the sun and bemoaning the fact, we had no video. When it comes to bears, be careful of the ones with issues.

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