



PRONGHORN

Official Publication of the Arizona Antelope Foundation, Inc., a Non-Profit, Tax-Exempt Corporation ~ Volume 11, Number 4, Year End 2005

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MEETINGS

Board meetings are held at 6:30 P.M on the 2nd Monday of each month at the Phoenix Zoo. Visitors welcome!



Pronghorn is a quarterly newsletter for the members of AAF. Letters, comments, news items, articles, pictures and stories are all welcome and will be considered for publication. Address all such items to:

Jim Unmacht, at Pronghorn Editor, PO Drawer 15501, Phoenix, AZ 85060, or by email at azantelope@cox.net.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I started this final President's Message as the President, but time will have it completed as the "Immediate Past" President! Nevertheless the message won't change, but some of the players will. The goals and impact of the Antelope Foundation are in place and notwithstanding the weather; we're on track!

My last message pretty well summed up the events of 2005 with the Unit 21 project in November our last event of the year. As you'll read inside, it was a success with 28 volunteers on the ground. This time the weather treated us better too, so we weren't running after tents or mud bogging our way out of the camp! The Game & Fish fence inventory and progress report Saturday night told us we had plenty of work to attend to in the years to come.

The year really ended on a phenomenal note for the Foundation when the AZ Game & Fish Commission voted the AAF the Conservation Organization of the

Year award! The AAF has done some great work over the last 13 years, but this is the first time the Commission has bestowed such an award on us! We've had some members and Past Presidents who have received some individual recognition, but not the organization. So to have that type of recognition occur on my watch was extremely satisfying! While the award will designate us the Conservation Organization of the Year in 2005, I look at it as the culmination of a lot of people putting out a lot of effort over the last 13 years!

Thanks to all that made this happen. Thanks too to Mr. Chris Kelliher of Ft. Thomas, AZ. Chris nominated the AAF for the award, and we had the privilege to work with him and his sons, and the rest of the Southeast AZ Sportsman's Club members on the Ft. Grant Fence project this past April. We made a difference, and we couldn't have done it alone.

The New Year will be bringing us many challenges and many familiar projects and events. I'll let our new President Dave Laird embellish on some of those details. I'll close my last message to you with some insight on a few new and exciting things we endorsed for the future in our last couple Board meetings...

-Adopt-a-Herd...we've got many members across the entire state that can't get to some projects or events but continue to maintain an interest in what we're doing for pronghorn. Here is a chance to literally "adopt-a-herd" and help both the AAF and Game & Fish find out more about some of our isolated pronghorn herds. Watch for details.

-AAF Conservation Award...many groups sponsor awards for various things and people, but to date, we haven't had such a thing. We do now and will tell you about the criteria soon.

-AZ Big Game Super Raffle...the Commission granted 3 tags per species in 2005, two in the conventional sense, and one per species for a "super raffle". All nine raffle tags were given collectively to us, the Deer Association, Elk Society and Sheep Society. Check it out at www.arizonabiggamesuperraffle.com.

Finally, it takes money to effectively do many of the things we do. I'll never forget the Treasurer's report from our January 12, 2004 Board meeting. As Mr. Hook closed the report, he suggested we hardly had the funds to even cover the cost of our newsletter. We've come a long way since then with back to back fundraising banquets putting cash in the coffers for pronghorn and the associated expenses that come with the effort.

Thanks for your past and future contributions as our 3rd Annual Fundraising Banquet begins to take shape for July 22, 2006.

"Libertas ad vagor"

Jim Unmacht



Chino Valley Circa 1993



SONORAN PRONGHORN

UPDATE



**BY JILL BRIGHT AZ GAME & FISH
JANUARY 23, 2006**

Captive Breeding: All 12 pronghorn in the north half of the pen are doing well. They are all feeding on both alfalfa and native forage. The 2 females that were looking thin have put on weight with the alfalfa diet.

We separated the south half of the pen into quarters. The 3 new pronghorn from the US herd were originally put in the SW quarter, but we opened the fence and they moved into the SE quarter on their own. We did this to facilitate putting new pronghorn from Mexico into the now empty SW quarter. These three pronghorn are all doing well and appear healthy.

On January 13 and 14, we captured 4 pronghorn (1M, 3F) from the Mexican herd and successfully moved them to the pen. They are now residing in the SW quarter. They are all healthy, have grouped up together and have been seen feeding on both alfalfa and native forage. All the females appear to be pregnant based on ultrasounds done by the vets at the pen.

Water Projects: We are planning to build new emergency waters in the Sierra Pinta Mountains, with volunteer help during February 9-12.

Forage Enhancements: We have begun irrigating at Charlie Bell and Adobe Well forage plots, in preparation of a continuing dry winter. The valley habitats are still relatively green, based on our last monitoring flight, but will dry out quickly if we don't get any rain soon. As the valleys dry up, we expect the pronghorn to move upslope to the bajadas habitats, where they will encounter the forage plots.

Other Projects: We conducted a range-wide survey in Mexico prior to the captures. We observed 486 pronghorn, and estimated the population there to be 634 (499-1726). We also put GPS radio collars on 5 pronghorn to assist the Mexican biologists with pronghorn management in Mexico. The habitat in Mexico was also largely dry, although there were patchy areas of green forage.

Wild Pronghorn: We are conducting periodic monitoring flights to assess habitat conditions and to locate the two radio collared pronghorn in Arizona. The two pronghorn have been in the same area (around the Fawn Hills) as they were captured in, with a large group of pronghorn.

Antelope Aplenty...Pick Your Buck



Foreword by David E. Brown

This story, published in the May 1945 issue of *Outdoor Life*, sees Jack again hunting pronghorn on Anderson Mesa, this time accompanied by his wife Eleanor, his good friend Carroll Lemon, and fellow Tucsonians, Al and Marion Ronstadt. Although not stated, the hunt described takes place in the fall of 1941—the first pronghorn season to be authorized in Arizona since 1905. That Jack and Eleanor have permits is highly appropriate as O'Connor had been agitating for an antelope hunt on Anderson Mesa since at least 1935. Now the time had finally come!

Although there were still plenty of big bucks on Anderson Mesa, most accounts, including Jack's, have the population much reduced since the mid-1930s prior to the ravages brought on by too many antelope, droughts, and a severe winter that halved the population. And, as before, Jack and his party hunt his pet area around Hay Lake, the same area where he and his friend J. C. McGregor had collected pronghorn for the Arizona State Museum in 1936.

True to form, Jack tells the story as it was. Although all of his hunting partners take trophy-sized bucks, Jack does not. He instead takes a 500-yard shot at a large buck, and without following up his shot, proceeds to kill a much smaller buck from the same distance!

That all 30 of the hunters in the Hay Lake area kill a buck on opening day is an indication of just how many bucks then roamed Anderson Mesa (pre-hunt surveys had showed a buck: doe ratio of 1:1). Photographs accompanying the article show that the bucks taken were nice specimens, and it was a shame that Eleanor's was later stolen. Nonetheless, although everyone in the party killed a buck with horns 15 inches or more in length, save O'Connor himself, none of them are in the record books.

Nor, despite his implied promise, does Jack ever return to Arizona to hunt those 15 inchers. Although Arizona had antelope seasons again in 1942 and 1943, the season was then closed and not reopened until 1949. By then, Jack and Eleanor had left Arizona for Idaho, his old stomping grounds having become too crowded by the post-War boon in new residents.



not a doe, not a fawn.

Though we traveled thirty miles across some of the best antelope country in North America, we saw not an antelope. In past years that drive across central Arizona's beautiful Anderson Mesa would have shown a thousand spotting the rolling grasslands with white rumps and bellies. Now not one, not a buck,

My wife and I were in the lead car, as I knew the country well. Now and then, as we stopped to open a gate, we were joined by the rest of my party, and I could see that they were profoundly skeptical of the tales I had told them of the great pronghorn bucks of Anderson Mesa. Their lower lips were hanging down so far they could step on them without half trying. Things lightened a bit when we stopped and talked to a couple of other hunters who were making camp. They actually had seen a couple of antelope from the road. Well, prospects didn't look hopeless after all.

Shortly after noon we checked into the fly camp, where about thirty other hunters had pitched tents; and not long after that Carroll, Al, and I started out for a scout, leaving Al's wife and mine to do the mysterious little things which women always like to do around a camp and which come under the head of "creating a homelike atmosphere."

The antelope, the doe had it, were in the timber, such as it was—scattered evergreens that spotted rolling yellow grasslands. A mile from camp we turned off the road and edged the station wagon over volcanic boulders toward a tank where we planned to park before scouting the ridges.

Suddenly a buck antelope walked out of the cedars at the end of the wide draw and stood staring at us 300 yards away. A doe joined him, then another and smaller buck, a second doe, and two fawns. It was evidently a reception committee. Out came three pairs of glasses, and we looked them over. The first buck had a very fair head and none of the pronghorns seemed alarmed. But antelope season wouldn't open until next morning.

When we got out of the car, the herd suddenly took fright and ran. Anyone who hasn't seen an antelope go into high gear has missed (continued on the next page)

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one of the most beautiful sights in the world. They stretch out in a series of long, low, elastic bounds. And in less than 100 yards they can hit their top speed of close to sixty miles an hour.

In the next few minutes we saw a dozen other antelope. One herd of five big bucks walked single file behind an intermittent screen of junipers, never seeing us, and less than 100 yards away. Two more bucks watched us from the top of a ridge, then wheeled and ran along the skyline when they didn't like our looks. In the middle of a big flat we spotted a lone buck with an enormous head. Other hunters were scouting that stretch of country; so antelope-like, he had put all the space he could between himself and danger, trusting to his marvelous speed in an emergency.

After our five-mile circuit was complete, Al and Carroll thought they knew where they wanted to hunt antelope come dawn right where we had scouted. But knowing the mesa of old, I wanted first to look over the section around Hay Lake, where I had always seen lots of bucks, big ones.

On our way there we saw not an antelope from the road, and Al and Carroll were more than ever convinced that they knew where they wanted to hunt. Seven miles from camp we turned the car off the road, walked about half a mile over a ridge-and stopped short. Below us lay a great valley, rimmed with fairly thick timber, and literally spotted with antelope. About 300 hundred yards away a big buck stood guard over half a dozen does and fawns. Farther on, two big bucks lay at the edge of the timber. About forty in all were in sight when we topped the ridge, and even as we watched through the glasses others came leisurely out of the timber, picked us up with their telescopic eyes, and watched us calmly.

And those Hay Lake bucks were for the most part big ones, with heads that would go in the record book!

We made a long circle around the west side of the valley, constantly picking up more antelope with the glasses. Then, about a mile from the car, three does suddenly popped their heads over a ridge, watched us for a moment, and disappeared. Thinking there might be bucks with them, we followed to where we could see. We saw two herds of does and fawns, each guarded by a big buck. They stopped a couple of hundred yards away, watched us for a moment, and then put on steam and circled around us. Before we got back to the car we had seen fifty more. We had also evolved a plan. The next morning, Carroll was to go up the east side of the big valley along the edge of the timber. Al and Marion, his wife, would take the west side. My wife and I would

then go up about a mile and hunt back toward our friends.

At 4:15 we were up, and with the first gray of dawn we were out in the Hay Lake country moving toward our objectives. The sky was beginning to silver, but it was still too dark to see well, and even though it was September it was cold there at 7,000 feet. My wife and I were moving toward the ridge from which we had seen the antelope in the valley below when I spied a group of white forms slipping silently along just below the skyline.

"Antelope," I told Eleanor. "If it's one of the bunches we saw last night, there's a good buck in it."

I grabbed the glasses hanging around my neck, hoping their extra light-gathering power would enable me to make out horns. But I hadn't seen anything except those ghostly white rump patches moving like spooks in the gray dawn when Eleanor's .257 went off beside me and I heard the plop of a high-speed bullet hitting flesh.

"What's the idea?" quoth I. "I'll bet you've hit a doe. You couldn't see anything."

"I have not!" she said positively. "I got a big buck!"

"How could you see horns?"

"I just lay down so I could see his head against the skyline."

It was as simple as that. She could see that big buck's head silhouetted against the silvering sky from the prone position, so she lowered her rifle until the post in the 'scope disappeared and then she touched it off. The buck was a beauty, with a massive base, long perfect prongs, a well-curved beam of 15 1/2 inches, and tips

white and clear as glass. He had been struck in the spine and was, of course, helpless. Another shot finished him.

Half a mile down the valley I heard a rattle of musketry and knew that Al and Marion had struck another bunch. The sun wasn't even up, yet Eleanor already had a very excellent trophy and Al and Marion were getting shooting. I hadn't fired a shot so you can imagine the speed with which I dressed that buck.

I hung the antelope in a tree and, leaving my wife to her own devices, hot-footed it up to the ridge where I could see down into the wide valley. Not a pronghorn was in sight. The sun came up as I sat there on the ridge using the glasses in hope of picking up some antelope. Below me the grasslands were a rich yellow and the cedars on the ridges were almost black. To the south I could see the pale blue line that was the great Mogollon Plateau, a land of elk, mule deer, and wild turkey, and the summer range of many bands of antelope. Now and then, as I sat there, I heard a shot, mostly very far away. One, just one, came from the direction where Carroll was to hunt, and I (continued on the next page)



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suspected that he had his buck.

Then, across the valley, two buck antelope and three does walked out of the cedars into the open. They were in no particular hurry; but their air showed that they were jittery and felt that all this rifle fire boded them no good. They stood there, heads up, all-seeing eyes scanning the country, a beautiful sight through the crystal-clear lenses of my fine 8X glasses. One of the bucks was a good one with a 15 or 16-inch head.

They were around 500 yards away, but I squirmed down among the volcanic rocks into what was a passable prone position, eased off the safety of my .270, got into the sling, and held well above the back of the larger buck. I was satisfied with the way I had touched off – but nothing happened. I heard no bullet hit, saw no dust, no flinching. However, every antelope's eye was upon me. Then the big buck turned and trotted back into the cedars.

The smaller buck stood there facing me for a moment, then turned broadside and lowered his head to grab a mouthful of weed. I didn't particularly want that buck, but I was irked that I had taken a shot with a good long-range rifle and couldn't even see any evidence of where my bullet had landed. Using exactly the same hold, I put the top of the post well above the second buck's back and squeezed. Again nothing happened - no sound of a striking bullet, no dust, nothing. The buck stood there looking at me, and that was that.

"Oh, to heck with it!" I said to myself. "I don't want that buck anyway, and I'm glad I missed him."

Just then the buck fell over. The does immediately turned tail and fled into the timber. I paced off the distance to the place where the buck lay. It was 535 paces, about one third of which took me downhill and two thirds on the level over volcanic boulders - probably something short of 500 yards. The bullet, a Winchester 130-grain Silvertip, had struck the buck low and just behind the shoulder. Then it had taken off one of the big veins about an inch from the heart, and finally expanded to about .40 caliber on the far side. At that distance the velocity had fallen off greatly, and the buck had bled to death as he stood there looking at me.

As I was dressing him I heard a whoop and Al hove into view. Marion had her buck, he told me, but as yet he had not connected. Together we carried my buck up to the ridge to the tree where Marion sat gloating. That buck was her first head of big game and she was a very happy woman. The first shot from her 7 mm. had broken a hind leg and the second had hit the animal in the chest, killing instantly.

Far across the valley then, at the edge of the cedars, I saw a figure emerge. The glasses told me it was Carroll, lugging the head of a buck antelope. Presently he joined us. My hunch had been correct. That one shot I had

heard had been his and it had done the business. Shortly after sunup he had seen three bucks feeding along through the cedars and had stalked to within 200 yards of them; and at that distance, with Carroll behind the rifle, one shot is plenty. The head was a massive 16-inch, with an exceptionally large base, so pretty that he had to annex it right away.

I went back with him to where the carcass lay and we carried it to the rendezvous under the tree. Not bad. It was still well before noon, and five of us had four bucks. We held a council of war then. The rest of us were to return to camp and get things shipshape while Al stayed on to get his buck. I agreed to drive back to the place where the road crossed the valley and meet him at 5 o'clock.

When the appointed time came, I had skinned and quartered three bucks, eaten a large and satisfying lunch, and polished off a couple of bottles of beer. Eleanor and Marion were both fast asleep in the tent and I felt a bit drowsy myself. At the rendezvous, Al was not in sight. Far up the valley a doe and two fawn antelope were feeding nervously, while a couple of crows with the wind behind their tails blew swiftly across the blue and polished sky. The wind was chilly, but inside the station wagon it was warm and snug...

I must have pounded my car for an hour when some sixth sense awakened me and I looked up the valley to see a lone figure gesticulating. It was Al, and when I had approached to within a couple of hundred yards I could see that he had a buck beside him, a fine one with a big 16-inch head.

He had seen worlds of antelope, he told me, mostly bucks, but the shooting had made them very jittery and he couldn't get within a quarter mile of any of them. Finally he decided that instead of hunting them he would let the antelope hunt him. So he hid in a little clump of cedars, and finally three bucks fed within range. He picked out the biggest, but as he swung his rifle around they all started to run. His first shot with the 7 mm. hit the antelope he wanted in the flank, quartered its body, and came through to rest in the neck.

Back at camp, we found that luck had been typical rather than exceptional, for every one of the thirty hunters in that area had connected!

The next day we checked out. Literally dozens of heads worthy of inclusion in the record books had been taken, but nothing very close to the long-standing world record (20 5/16 inches in outside curve) was listed.

(continued on the next page)



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With gas and tires short there won't be much hunting on the magic mesa for a while, and when peace comes, some of those plentiful 15-inchers may have added enough horn material to become the new No. 1 trophy. Anyway, I know of some hunters who are going back to find out!

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BIGFOOT

BY TERRY HERNDON

When most people think of Antelope in Arizona they think of open plains, or meadows. What a lot of people don't know is that there are some huge antelope bucks living among the elk and mule deer in the pines and junipers here in Arizona too.

The 2004 draw results were posted and I was a lucky man! I drew a unit 8 muzzleloader antelope tag with only one bonus point!!

As soon as I found out the results I called my good friends Tony, John, and Eli Grimmitt. The Grimmitt's own and operate Pronghorn Guide Service and have taken some exceptional animals over the years.

After speaking to Eli and telling him of my great fortune, he informed me that he had seen some nice bucks in my area and he proceeded to tell me where I should start scouting, and scouting I did! My hunt was scheduled to start on October 1st and I had about a month to find my buck. I scouted hard five times before the season started and, even though I knew that the buck I wanted lived where I was scouting, I never once could find him! I started to understand why the Grimmitt's called him Bigfoot! He was just like the big hairy creature people claim to see from time to time, and yes, he was that hard to find!

Opening day found me and my hunting buddy looking at every opening and patch of grass for over four hours without seeing as much as a glimpse of Bigfoot! To say I was getting a little nervous about not seeing him would be an understatement!

I decided to head back to camp and change my strategy a little. I picked up my wife Margie and her and I would go looking for some other bucks I had seen earlier in the scouting season. Bigfoot lived in an area that had a small meadow and was surrounded with tall mountains with huge ponderosa pines. As Margie and I turned towards Bigfoot's meadow we saw a group of antelope, in the back of this group was the infamous and hard to find Bigfoot! He was a good 500 yards away and in the open, so I knew I had to get closer, and be out of his and his harem's sight.



I drove another mile down the road to where the pine trees started to get thick, and there is where the stalk began. I stayed in the cover of the tree's until I found the spot that I mentally noted as where I saw the group last. As luck would have it, they hadn't moved. I ranged the distance with my Bushnell Range Finder at 137 yards. I opened my Harris bipod, applied the primer to my Traditions Evolution LD .50 caliber muzzleloader, and settled in for the shot. I heard my heart in my ears, the mouth was getting dry, and my whole body started to get that shaky feeling and I didn't even feel the rock of the muzzleloader before I saw the big buck go down. I can honestly say that I would rather be lucky than good any day and on this day—I was! The 4-30 grain Triple 7 pellets and the 250-grain Traditions sabots did the job. Bigfoot green scored in the mid 86" range and will be officially scored on December 1st.

JACK O'CONNOR AND THE PRONGHORN ANTELOPE

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As a young man Jack O'Connor hunted pronghorn antelope in the Mexican State of Chihuahua while living in El Paso, Texas. One rifle we know he used was a Remington Model 8 in .35 Remington. In 1928 there was practically no legal hunting for pronghorn antelope in the United States. Mexico was rather lawless in those days and apparently young Jack judged it worth the risk.

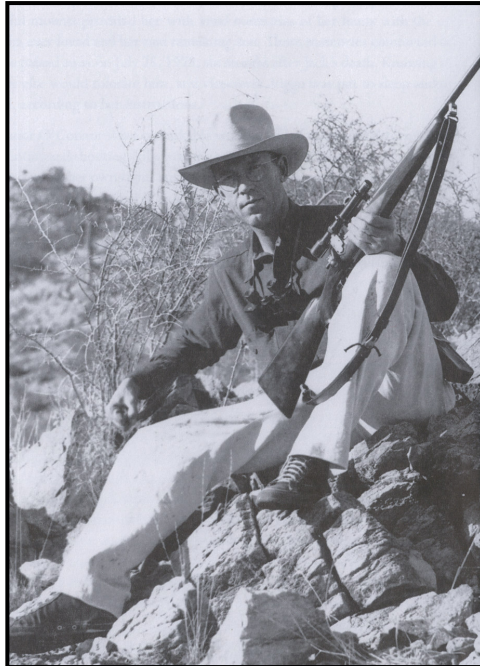
After a stint as a professor at Sul Ross State Teachers College in Alpine, Texas, he accepted a new job at Arizona State Teachers College (now Northern Arizona University) in Flagstaff. Jack moved his family there in 1931 and they stayed until 1934. It was in these four years that he became intimately familiar with the Anderson Mesa antelope herd about 30 miles south and east of Flagstaff. In 1934 it numbered about 4,000 head. (Sadly, today the Anderson Mesa herd is estimated to be less than 200 animals, the result of drought, severe overgrazing by livestock, and lack of coyote control.)

Jack O'Connor's very first magazine article for *Outdoor Life* was "Arizona's Antelope Problem" in 1934. That same year the O'Connors moved to Tucson, but Jack continued to lobby for an open season to harvest some of the outstanding heads that were being lost to old age on Anderson Mesa. In *The Big Game Animals of North America* (1961) he said,

"The largest heads I've ever seen were on Anderson Mesa in Arizona back in the days before the season was opened. The country was full of wonderful bucks about to die of old age, and some of the heads I saw would make a trophy hunter drool. One old boy I glassed many times had horns about 1½ times the length of his head. They were well curved and had massive prongs. If that head didn't go 22 or 23 inches, then I am no judge of antelope heads."

In *The Art of Hunting Big Game in North America* (1967) he said,

"In the early 1930's on Anderson Mesa about thirty miles from Flagstaff, Arizona, there were about 5,000 antelope and many of them were ancient, mossy-horned, and arthritic old bucks. They were not wild and I used to spend a lot of



time watching them. I saw several that I am sure would have measured between 19 and 21 inches and one that I thought would measure almost 24. None of these old bucks were harvested."

In 1936 he obtained museum permits to harvest a buck and a doe antelope for the Arizona State Museum in Tucson. He collected both on Anderson Mesa. Robert Anderson, O'Connor's biographer, reports the size of the buck as a 'handsome 15 1/8-incher', no slouch but certainly it wasn't that 23-incher. This 15 1/8 inch buck made the 1939 Boone and Crockett records, then based solely on length. Jack wrote about this hunt in the April 1939 *Outdoor Life* magazine article 'Antelope to Order'. (*Editor's*

note: this article appeared in the previous edition of The Pronghorn.)

Finally, in 1941, Arizona opened a pronghorn season, their first one in modern times. Jack drew, or otherwise obtained, permits for himself, and his wife Eleanor. They hunted in a party with their friends Marion and Al Ronstadt (Aunt and Uncle to Linda Ronstadt, the popular singer), and with Carroll Lemon, another long-time friend.

That one day of hunting, near Hay Lake on Anderson Mesa, was described in the May 1945, *Outdoor Life* magazine in the article entitled "Antelope Aplenty - Pick Your Buck". (*Editor's note: this article appears in this edition of The Pronghorn on page 5.*) In it he tells how his wife shot a splendid buck before the sun had risen by settling the post in the scope of her rifle on its silhouette as it walked along, but first having descended to the prone position to get skylight behind the buck.

"The buck was a beauty, with a massive base, long perfect prongs, a well-curved beam of 15½ inches, and tips white and clear as glass. He had been struck in the spine and was, of course, helpless. Another shot finished him."

This buck's photograph has graced almost every book and magazine article Jack ever wrote about antelope. He described it whenever he wrote about antelope trophies or the right gun and caliber to use for antelope. O'Connor never claimed to have bettered his wife's trophy, even though he did claim a 16" buck in print (*Hunting In The Southwest*, 1945, p. 110). No photographs of it (continued on the next page)

Jack O'Connor continued from page 9

survive apparently.

Contrary to the usual shrinkage seen by most hunters, his wife's trophy grew larger with the years. In *Hunting in the Rockies* (1947), p. 160, he says,

"I am illustrating one of the prettiest heads I have ever seen. It was shot by my wife on the mesa at dawn on the first day of the first season. It is very massive, very symmetrical and the points are white and clear as crystal. It measures 16¼ inches around the beam."

By 1967 it had grown even larger - *The Art of Hunting Big Game in North America* (1967), p. 339,

"Any head with a curve of 17 inches is very, very good. I have never shot such a head, but my wife's first antelope had a long prong, a heavy base, and well-hooked horns tipped with ivory and 17¼ inches long."

The photograph on p. 340 shows Eleanor O'Connor smartly dressed in a leather jacket and a hat with an antelope buck and her rifle. (Jack was one lucky guy to have a wife who embraced hunting wholeheartedly.) The caption says,

"Eleanor O'Connor with an exceedingly fine antelope head. The top of the horn is deeply hooked, the tip ivory-colored, and the prongs are well-developed. This head measured 17½ inches."

You really ought to go look at this photograph. It is outstanding. The same buck is shown again, in a poorer photograph, on page 215 of the same book, later in the day after it had gotten warmer, the buck had stiffened up, and Eleanor had braided her hair and shed the leather jacket.

So this admittedly fine antelope grew from 15½ inches, when it was shot in 1941, to 17½ inches in 1967. Actually, the only thing that grew was Jack's memory of a fine trophy. This tells me that the O'Connor's didn't save this head when they left Tucson in 1947 to move to Lewiston, Idaho. In fact, they may not have had the head mounted at all. (Also, some of the O'Connor's mounts were stolen off their back porch one night in Lewiston.) Jack's memory of the 23-incher may have spoiled him for a goat of merely 15½ inches of length. And so his memory of his wife's fine antelope grew with time.

When I look at that photograph of Eleanor and her buck (also published in *Jack O'Connor, The Legendary Life of America's Greatest Gunwriter*, by Anderson and Buckner; another fine photo of this buck can be found in *The Last Book* on the fifteenth page of photographs) I can believe it is a massive 15½ inch head. I'm no expert, but it doesn't look like a 17½ inch head to me.

That said, I wouldn't hesitate to shoot this buck if I saw it in the game fields. It's one fine buck and certainly looks to me like it would surpass the Boone & Crockett minimum score. But then, like I said, I'm no expert. Take a look for yourself and see what you think.

In his book *Hunting In The Southwest*, copyrighted 1939 but published by Alfred Knopf in 1945 as a trade edition of *Game In The Desert* (originally published by the Derrydale Press in 1939) Jack said,

"If I were ranking the heads of American big game as trophies, I'd put antelope second only to sheep."

In later years Jack hunted pronghorns in the Red Desert between Rawlins and Casper in 1944 (he also describe the area as 'near Lander'). His buck, pictured in the May 1945 *Outdoor Life* on page 84, is no record-breaker and can't compare to Eleanor's buck. I know the feeling O'Connor must have felt, looking for a monster buck and not finding one, until time runs out and you have to shoot the next decent buck you see, or go home empty-handed.

Then he hunted Wyoming antelope again in 1950 in the neighborhood of Gillette. As Jack put it, this made him an authority on Wyoming antelope. He shot this buck at 485 long paces measured by three witnesses.

So in 1955 he was off once again to hunt Wyoming pronghorns with Les Bowman who guided and outfitted from his LB Bar Ranch on the South Fork of the Shoshone River south and west of Cody, Wyoming. Jack wrote the wonderful story 'We Got The Chill' in the February 1956 *Outdoor Life*. Later, in 1963, it was republished slightly edited with a new title, 'Antelope Aren't So Dumb', in *Jack O'Connor's Big Game Hunts*. (Strangely, he mentions the year 1954 in this rewrite. There was no such mention in the original article. The publishing of the original article in February 1956, and the attribution by Buckner to 1955 in the Anderson biography, makes me believe that this hunt actually took place in 1955, and not 1954 as O'Connor wrote in the 1963 rewrite. He had taken his second big trophy bull elk with Bowman in 1954. He wrote largely from memory. He did a lot of hunting. I think he simply misremembered the antelope hunt as 1954 when it was really in 1955.)

This buck was killed late on the last day of the season. It was October I believe. Jack had just about given up on filling his license that year in Wyoming. It was no longer important to him. He had killed many antelope before. He had shot a magnificent bull elk with Bowman the previous year, and as an avowed sheep hunter I think O'Connor came to hold antelope in low repute.

It was, however, one of the most spectacular running shots O'Connor ever made. He wrote about it in great detail no less than seven (continued on the next page)

Jack O'Connor continued from page 10

different times while describing long-range shooting, or running shots, or just plain good skill and judgment in hunting.

In the various accounts the antelope's speed varied from 3/4ths to 'full throttle'. Its distance varied from 275 'long paces' to 285 paces (Bowman wrote it was 225 yards). Jack's lead varied from 2½ to 3½ lengths of the antelope, or '8 to 10 feet' in one account. The buck slid anywhere from 25 to 40 yards after being hit, again depending upon which account you read. One shot was all it took. Here's how it ended:

I swung the .275 H. & H. Magnum I was shooting that day along with that running buck antelope so that the horizontal crosshair in the 4X scope slid right along the middle of his body. When the vertical crosshair looked to be eight or ten feet in front of his nose, I squeezed the trigger. "You hit him, by golly!" my gallery yelled as that plop of the striking bullet came floating back. The buck's momentum carried him twenty-five of <sic> thirty yards. Then he collapsed and slid to a stop. He was as dead as a canned salmon when we got over to him and the bullet was right behind the shoulder. He fell 275 long paces from where I had fired.

"That was one heck of a shot!" Boyd said <Boyd Binion was the guide>. "Do you do that every time?"

"Heavens no!" I said.

He was, alas, no great shakes as a trophy antelope. His horns were not long. One went east and the other west. But I have shot my share of trophy antelope, and this one was very good in the frying pan. By the time we got his insides out and had him in the car it was dark. I had connected -by the skin of my teeth!

I find one more trip to Wyoming for antelope in 1958 when Jack hunted with his son Bradford, the musician Leo Filipino, the accordionist Charlie Magnatti, his favorite gunsmith Al Biesen, and his dentist Doc Wygant. Jack used a custom Winchester Model 70 in 7x57 Mauser, remodeled and restocked by Biesen, and used the 140-gr bullet. He wrote that this buck measured 15¼ inches. In my book that's an outstanding antelope, but Jack doesn't seem to have appreciated it like I would have – perhaps he was still haunted by that 23-incher on Anderson Mesa that died of old age.

As far as I can determine that was Jack's last antelope, that is to say, pronghorn antelope. O'Connor was too busy shooting African and Asian antelope and goats, not to mention his beloved sheep, to worry about finding a substitute for that 23-incher.

According to Eldon Buckner in *Jack O'Connor, The Legendary Life of America's Greatest Gunwriter*, Jack's last hunt (he shot nothing) was for antelope and white-tail in Montana with his friend Henry Kaufman in 1977. Jack O'Connor died the following January. Jack has no antelope in the Records of North American Big Game today.

I feel greatly indebted to Jack O'Connor for instilling within me a hunting ethic I might never have otherwise risen to. I learned a lot from *The Art of Hunting Big Game in North America*, more than I can explain. It set a high standard for me towards which I still strive.

I've come to love the American pronghorn antelope above all other big game. To me they represent the West. They are unique, like no other animal in North America or anywhere else in the world. I love to watch them for hours on end through binoculars and spotting scopes. I love to hunt them. I love the way they smell. I love to photograph them. I love to cook and eat them too. Someday, maybe, I'll shoot one good enough for the Records of North American Big Game. Thank you, Jack.

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS 2006

The following slate of officers was elected to serve your AAF at the annual meeting in December:

2006 Officers & Directors

President	Dave Laird
Vice President	Connie Taylor
Secretary	Tice Supplee
Treasurer	Jim Mehen

Directors with terms ending 12/31/06:

Sue Foote Thom Hulen David Brown

Directors with terms ending 12/31/07:

Matt Massey Brian George Scott Anderson

UNIT 21 PROJECT

NOVEMBER 5, 2005

On November 4, the AZ Game & Fish Department held an annual habitat enhancement work project to benefit pronghorn in GMU 21. Twenty-eight volunteers with the Arizona Antelope Foundation (AAF) and Arizona State University, and staff from the Prescott National Forest and the Department's Adopt-A-Ranch Program helped modify a ¾ mile stretch of fence to wildlife standards. This work completes an approximate 4-mile stretch of fence that bisects north to south within some of the most suitable pronghorn habitat in the unit. The Department presented to the group the results of a recent fence inventory mapping effort, which will provide for prioritizing future work projects. The Department is currently finalizing a draft report on the GMU 21 Pronghorn Investigation Project. The draft report includes data from May 2002 through November 2004 on the distribution of pronghorn, fawn hiding cover evaluations, fence inventory and related analyses. The GMU 21 Pronghorn Workgroup is expected to reconvene in late January 2006 to proceed with the development of management actions and resolutions related to pronghorn and habitat management issues and concerns.



Thanks to the following volunteers:
Phoenix: Paul Webb, Jim Unmacht, Tracy Unmacht, Jimmy Unmacht, Dave Laird, Sue Foote
Glendale: Tom Ramey, Brett Ramey
Gilbert: Matt Massey
Chandler: Patricia Browne
Scottsdale: Jerry Guevin, Scott Anderson, Jennifer Anderson, Allison Laughlin, Hayleigh Laughlin, Brittany Wagner, Nicole Wagner, Don Farmer
ASU: David Brown, Brian Latham, Philip Tarrant, Nicole Witmer, Dyonna Van Valkenberg, Jaime Vasche, Anita King, Shawn Carroll



THE "STATE" OF ARIZONA'S PRONGHORN RECRUITMENT

2005 Pronghorn Survey Data

Unit	Year	Males	Yearling Males	Females	Juveniles	Unclassified	Buck:Doe Ratio	Fawn:Doe Ratio	# of Groups	Region
01	2005	80	0	263	52	0	30	20	49	1
02B	2005	42	0	119	14	0	35	12	30	1
02C	2005	48	0	269	58	0	18	22	57	1
03A	2005	47	0	141	63	0	33	45	44	1
03B	2005	19	0	110	27	0	17	25	16	1
03C	2005	15	0	49	15	0	31	31	12	1
04A	2005	20	0	134	47	0	15	35	18	1
04B	2005	23	0	137	66	0	17	48	36	1
27	2005	8	0	21	6	0	38	29	10	1
05A	2005	15	0	38	15	0	39	39	16	2
05B	2005	36	0	99	36	0	36	36	31	2
06A	2005	4	0	11	7	0	36	64	6	2
06B	2005	10	0	15	4	0	67	27	5	2
07	2005	33	0	108	60	0	31	56	37	2
08	2005	22	0	101	55	2	22	54	21	2
09	2005	33	0	67	30	0	49	45	27	2
12	2005	5	0	32	19	0	16	59	9	2
13A	2005	36	0	178	114	0	20	64	53	2
13B	2005	19	0	35	21	9	54	60	20	2
10	2005	128	0	285	131	5	45	46	90	3
15A/15B	2005	19	0	3	1	0	633	33	5	3
17A	2005	32	0	47	22	0	68	47	15	3
17B	2005	79	0	64	27	0	123	42	25	3
18A	2005	59	0	209	71	0	28	34	41	3
18B	2005	50	0	148	74	0	34	50	35	3
19A	2005	166	0	337	215	0	49	64	79	3
19B	2005	135	0	280	92	0	48	33	64	3
21	2005	19	0	55	21	0	35	38	16	6



Photo by Jake Fousek, AZ Game & Fish

MEET THE COMMISSION AWARDS BANQUET

The AAF wasn't the only "antelope related" award from the Commission on January 21st...

Congratulations are in order to the following individuals:

- AAF Life Member, Representative Jerry Weiers,
Award of Excellence
- AAF Sustaining Member & Director Tice Supplee,
Conservationist of the Year
- AAF Member, SE AZ Sportsman's Club President
Scott Heap, Volunteer of the Year
- AAF Family Member, Levi Heffelfinger, Youth
Environmentalist of the Year



SHORT SHOTS

COMMISSIONER'S SPECIAL TAGS

As previously reported, the AZ Game & Fish Commission granted all three pronghorn Special Tags to the AAF. Two have been designated for auctions and the third is included in the AZ Big Game Super Raffle.

The first auction tag is set to be sold at the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society Banquet on March 4th at the El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium in Phoenix. Phone bids are welcome, so if you're interested, contact any Board member or the ADBSS for information. You can obtain contact information at www.azantelope.org or www.adbss.org. You can also call ADBSS at 480-854-8950.

The second auction tag is set to be sold at the AAF Banquet on July 22nd ...so save the date, more to come on that topic!

AAF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Arizona Antelope Foundation will fund two scholarships for the year 2006 to students enrolled in either a graduate program or an internship involving the study of pronghorn antelope. To be eligible the student must submit a one-page written application to the Board of Directors on or before September 15, 2006 that outlines the work performed and how it benefited Arizona's pronghorn. Awards will be presented to successful student (s) at the October 2006 Board of Directors meeting. Eligible students must assist on at least one AAF work project during the year, and be willing to present the results of their study to the BOD. A maximum of two students will be eligible for an award each year. Should several students apply in any given semester, Arizona residents at Arizona schools will be given precedence. Scholarship awards will be \$500 per semester for a maximum of \$1000 per annum per student.

LIFE MEMBER RANKS CONTINUE TO SWELL

As 2005 came to an end we added Life Member #16 to the list. Bill Keebler, now hailing from Happy Jack joined our esteemed group of 2005 Life Members! The Class of 2005 also includes his wife Mary, Al Sue and Charlie Kelly from Scottsdale, Art Boswell from Tucson, and David Brown and Chrissy Weiers from Phoenix

2006 has begun with a bang too. Terry Schupp and James Stewart will soon receive their AAF Life Member plaques...who'll be next?

ARIZONA BIG GAME SUPER RAFFLE

Here is your chance to win one of the coveted Commissioner's Special Tags for pronghorn (or one of eight other species too) for the price of a raffle ticket! Ticket prices vary per species from \$5-25, but if you want pronghorn tickets, they'll run \$10 each. Buy as many as you'd like, as often as you'd like, as there is no limit!

Here's how the raffle will work. Pick up a raffle order from the website listed below, or from one of the many sporting goods stores that will have supplies (photocopies work too) and fill out how many tickets of each species you wish to purchase. Multiply the # of tickets desired and tally the column. Attach a check or money order to the order form and send it to the address listed on the form. Every ticket you purchase will go into a barrel for that species prior to the draw. One winner will be picked per species.

One key question Where does the money go, in particular from folks that buy antelope tickets? Answer: to pronghorn and pronghorn management. All administrative costs for the raffle are being covered by a Swarovski Optics package raffle, sponsoring organizations, and volunteer efforts. So the more tickets you buy the more money that goes directly to wildlife and wildlife management!

If you're the lucky winner of a tag, you'll have a full year to hunt – that's right – 365 days to find that trophy antelope! The drawing will be held July 9, 2006 at the National Bank of Arizona in Phoenix. Check out the details at

www.arizonabiggamesuperraffle.com

Good Luck!

ISE SPORTSMAN'S EXPO

Come out and see the AAF display at the upcoming Expo at the Arizona State Fairgrounds on March 10th, 11th, and 12th. The AAF will join the WCC member organizations in a large booth, giving you an opportunity to see many of Arizona's conservation organizations in one area. You'll be able to purchase AAF gear and of course the WCC license plate. See you there!

**3rd Annual Fundraising Banquet
July 22, 2006
El Zaribah Shrine, Phoenix**

ARIZONA BIG GAME SUPER RAFFLE

AAF

Sponsors: Arizona Game & Fish Commission • AZ Antelope Foundation • AZ Bowhunters Association
 AZ Chapter of Safari Club International • AZ Deer Association • AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society
 AZ Elk Society • AZ Wildlife Federation • Foundation for North American Wild Sheep • Mule Deer Foundation
 National Wild Turkey Federation • AZ Chapters of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

For information go to: www.arizonabiggamesuperraffle.com

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Number of Tickets
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Dollar Amount
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BUFFALO	Hunt Units per Commission Order #29		\$10 each	
COUES WHITETAIL	Hunt Units per Commission Order #29		\$10 each	
DESERT BIGHORN	Hunt Units per Commission Order #29		\$25 each	
ELK	Hunt Units per Commission Order #29		\$20 each	
TURKEY Gould's or Merriams	Hunt Units per Commission Order #29		\$5 each	
JAVELINA	Hunt Units per Commission Order #29		\$5 each	
MULE DEER	Hunt Units per Commission Order #29		\$10 each	
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SPORTSMAN'S CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS!

<i>WHAT?</i>	<i>WHEN?</i>	<i>WHERE?</i>
The Arizona Antelope Foundation Board Meetings	February 13 6:30 PM March 13 6:30 PM April 10 6:30 PM	The Phoenix Zoo 455 N. Galvin Parkway
AAF Work Projects	February 25 April 1 June 17	BANWR Unit 21 Anderson Mesa
The Wildlife Conservation Council Board Meetings	January 24 6:30 PM February 28 6:30 PM March 28 6:30 PM	AZ Game & Fish Department 2221 W. Greenway Rd
International Sportsman's Expo	March 10-12	AZ State Fairgrounds
AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Banquet	March 4 4:00 PM	El Zaribah Shrine
AAF Fundraising Banquet	July 22	El Zaribah Shrine

Would you like the Pronghorn via email...let us know! Or if you have an upcoming event, send us the information at azantelope@cox.net.