

GEAR

Thinking about gear and its related bulk and weight, think small, light, yet top quality for performance and diversity. Good things in life are generally expensive. Finding the perfect equipment that will do it all, last a lifetime, and become a family heirloom is important.

Boots - For **High Mountain Hunts**, the proper boot is the most important singular piece of equipment you will ever own. On it everything depends: your feet, ankles, knees, back, neck, your hunt and your life!

Some say an ounce on your feet is like a pound on your back. I say, "invest six more ounces in your boot to stay warm and protect your feet and take six pounds off your back". I have also heard it said that there is no single boot to cover all hunting needs. I have put on many pair of wet, frozen boots and walked them dry; and I believe from an extensive fifty-four years of testing and research that one stands out above all the others. It performs perfectly from ninety-six feet below sea level at 115°F to 16,500' at -58°F. While supporting a 70 pound back pack for weeks and months, Meindl Perfekt (400 grams Thinsulate) 10" Glockner Sil-Nubuckleather, made in Kirchanschoring, Bavaria containing 400 ounces of thinsulate and weighing in at about 4 ¼ pounds does the trick. These boots can be found at Cabella's. I suggest that you put a thick coat of tennis shoe goo on the toe, and they will last for years. This boot is the intelligent choice and inexpensive for what it does and how long it lasts. In the highly unlikely event a hot spot develops while wearing any boot, immediately unwrap a piece of duct tape from your gun barrel or pack frame, and put it over the hot spot thus preventing blisters

Rainwear - Your life depends on staying dry. Spend what it takes because, when you hunt enough, you will be rained on and often. Cabela's MT050 Professional Rainwear will do the job and is quiet too. Use it as an outer layer of clothing when you stop climbing. It's a great wind stop.

Sleeping Bag - On one of my many 21 day stone sheep hunts, my cheap, light weight, small packable rain suit was almost ripped from my body and I stayed cold and wet all day. Upon returning to camp just at dark, in a driving rain storm, I saw that our rain fly over our sleeping bags had been blown away and the unrolled bags had been exposed to the storm all day. To my surprise, my 7 pound goose down bag was dry. The quality shell had turned all the rain. In the '80s the \$450 price tag was more than worth that night's sleep. With today's compression sacks, there is no reason not to have a bag that does it all. My poor guide agreed.

Clothing - Dress in layers. Your clothing must breathe, be quiet, comfortable and wick the moisture your body generates while climbing in the mountains. If you sweat, you freeze! Starting at the bottom, I use cotton socks even in sub-zero conditions. In the middle of the day, when temperatures and time permit, while glassing or sleeping, etc. I remove my boots, laying them on their side thus allowing drying of the inner boot. If damp, I remove socks and dry them or replace them with a dry pair. An army moves on its feet and so does a **High Mountain Hunter**.

For **High Mountain Hunts** in cold weather, I prefer black silk long Johns with Northern Outfitters Vaetrex quilted bottoms and tops. The outer shell should be quiet and wind proof. Goose down coat and hood and Northface goose down mittens (Nuptse) finish it off. For hunts in medium cold weather, I prefer the black silk long Johns with wool pants and suspenders, wool shirt, and medium-weight wool jacket. If necessary, I use the rain wear for wind relief. For **High Mountain Hunts** in light cold weather, I wear the black silks, wool pants, wool shirt and upon occasion, rainwear. Kangaroo leather gore-tex shooting gloves (super tough) are my choice for all-around climbing.

While climbing, I unbutton my jacket, shirt and pants (that is the reason for the suspenders). This gets rid of the moisture. When not climbing, close up everything and put on rain jacket.

Binoculars - Ziess 10x25B-Field of Vision - 282 yards, 8.4 oz. It folds and fits nicely in a shirt pocket.

Range Finder - Nikon Monarch Gold Laser 1200 yard range. Without a ranger finder, I've watched many hunters miss at 200 yards thinking and arguing that it was much farther. Why pay big bucks to go on the other side of the earth and dumb out by not bringing a finder.

Spotting Scope and Tripod - Small, compact, light weight, great clarity and light gathering capabilities, fitted with a very short, light-weight tripod is the Alpen 711 20x50. The cost is about \$90 which is surprising quality for the price; however, if someone else is carrying your weight, take the Swarovski, it is the best (approx. \$3,200).

Rifle - I believe that any brand of 7 mm magnum and a 168 grain bullet will handle all African and North American animals, except elephant, rhino, hippo, lion, cape buffalo, brown and polar bear. That is seven animals out of hundreds. This is a tried and tested opinion. I prefer a 7 mm magnum Ruger model 77, fitted with a custom Shilen 24" stainless steel barrel (don't worry about shooting it out) and custom folding stock. This rifle fits inside or outside a backpack (36"). When going downhill, I carry my rifle in front across my chest to protect it from catching on limbs and rocks or in the likelihood that I should slip and fall. It is protected as it is secured to my chest. Put a piece of tape over the end of the barrel for protection and shoot through it. It doesn't hurt anything.

Rifle Scope - Leupold 3-9 power. I've never seen a Leupold fail. Leave it on 3 power. More game has been missed because hunters have their scope on the highest power and can't find the target quickly. When and if time permits, one can adjust upwards. A 3" wide piece of tire inner tube is the most reliable scope lenses cover. It is inexpensive, tough and won't break.

Rifle Sling - I prefer the **Dick Murray** quick adjust.

Flashlight - I prefer a headlamp

Insect Repellent - A small finger mister applies it efficiently and accurately.

Satellite Phone - **9575 Iridium**

Global Rescue - <http://www.globalrescue.com/highmountainhunts>

Water - stay hydrated! Always carry 2 liters of good, fresh, healthy water in your pack. You don't have to eat, but you have to drink! Altitude, dampness, cold and water are the most important things you have to worry about, and in that order. They all can be deadly. Take them very seriously and plan accordingly.

Fire - In an emergency, be prepared to spend the night away from the base camp and/or the fly camp. That means you must have fire and fire starter. In a rainfall, you should have the starter. Both should be carried in your pocket and not your pack. You may have to give your pack to a bear. Don't ask me how I know!

Ultra Violet Radiation - From sea level to 10,000', UVR increases approximately 90%. Adding to that, snow reflects about 70%; therefore, you will get burned if you don't take precautions. Cover bare skin and use sun screen. Protect your eyes with good sun glasses.

Wind - It can be your friend. When hunting, keep it in your face. When trying to survive, keep it at your back and get away from it as much as possible.

Lightening - When you are near cumulonimbus clouds and you feel the hair on your arms, neck and head stand erect, know that you are in lightning's crosshairs. I choose to immediately dive to the ground shucking my rifle and pack in the process and pan cake out. This allows for the hairs to rescind and the body's positive charge to be dispatched. I have experienced this on many occasions and lightening stuck very near. Some experts advise to have as little contact with the ground as possible. I don't know how to do that on a mountain top. Stay away from tree trunks, ridge lines and mountain points and know that lightening can travel horizontally for many miles. Use your best judgment as I have not been trained by an expert.

A Lesson in Life



If you don't know about something.....

Don't screw around with it.....

Or, you might lose your butt!