

Chris Jackson (MO) is one of the youngest members of GSCO to have achieved the Grand Slam, Ovis World Slam and Capra World Slam, giving him the illustrious distinction of having a Triple Slam. Chris achieved this goal when he took a mid-Caucasian tur in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkariya, Russia in September 2009. This is what Chris had to report about that hunt:

*Accompanying me on this hunt was a great group of guys: **Jim Dovenberg, Jim Kelly and Mark Megazzi**. We each met in Moscow, where we stayed overnight before flying the next day to Mineral'nyye Vody (ProfiHunt's mid-Caucasian tur hunters frequently fly to Nalchik, but **Alexey Maximov** advised that the quality of aircraft servicing Mineral'nyye Vody was newer and more reliable). We then drove several hours to a government hunting lodge on the outskirts of Nalchik. The following morning we drove into the hunting area, sighted in our rifles and then split into two groups. Jim Dovenberg and Mark hunted from a camp located on the glacier-covered southern side of the Baksan canyon, and Jim Kelly and I climbed a little over 3,000 feet to reach a decrepit shepherd's cabin on the sunnier northern side of the canyon. Fortunately, Jim packed a small two-man tent, which was a welcome alternative to sleeping communal style with six snoring guides on a 10' x 10' collection of ragged blankets.*

Before sunrise on the first day, we hunted in opposite directions, arriving back at camp well after dark. I hadn't seen any tur, but did encounter quite a few venomous adders that are prevalent on the northern side of the canyon. The next day, our guides planned that Jim and I would hunt the upper and lower portion of the same drainage. We would then move toward one another, and any tur in the area would be located in the middle and most likely pass near one of us. Because we didn't see any trophies, our guides decided that we should move to another camp, which consumed the next day and prevented us from hunting.

En route that evening to our next base camp, we experienced some mechanical problems with our Russian UAZ 4 x 4. Nevertheless, we arrived just before dark. One look at this "cabin" and I was even happier that Jim had packed his tent. After another dinner of boiled lamb, we plotted our strategy for the next day. Alexey said he wasn't feeling well and he wouldn't join us on the hunt, but we were to explore an area where the guides hadn't hunted for tur. To do so, we would leave camp (located at 6,500 feet) around 1 a.m., which we did. We hiked and climbed steadily through the darkness until around 8 a.m., when

we reached the base of a massive bowl that was a couple of miles wide. At the far end were two large glaciers, and the entire bowl was surrounded by near vertical jagged peaks. After having gone this far, Jim and I were a little dismayed at the prospect of trying to stalk tur with so little cover. Little did we realize that the plan was to scale the south face of the bowl and hunt along the knife-edged ridges back toward camp. I expressed reservations to the guides about the terrain and the wet slippery conditions, but soon found myself heading up the mountain. The higher I climbed, the more I realized what a mistake I had made for not having been more adamant about my reservations. When we finally reached the top at just over 13,500 feet, Jim questioned our sanity and he too expressed his concerns, further pointing out that animal recovery would be nearly impossible. Our guides assured us that the terrain would soon be much better... which wasn't the case.

We were now miles from camp, our guides had moved so far away that we couldn't see them, and to make matters worse, thick fog appeared and it began to rain. Over the next several hours, we made our way down the most vertical portions of the terrain and then over boulder fields with openings large enough to swallow a school bus. Only twice in the entire time did we catch up with our guides, and only briefly did they stay with us to help navigate our way back to camp. After a few more harrowing crossings over sheer cliffs, we reached a recognizable trail that led back to camp. Upon arrival, I surprised the guides by approaching them with a huge smile on my face, shaking their

hands and thanking them for a wonderful day. Their expressions provided the biggest joy to come from that day, as they seemed to expect a different reaction; however, I was determined not to let them know how badly they had whipped me.

Alexey now seemed to be feeling much better. Jim and I reviewed the details with him and strongly advised that he never allow clients to hunt this area again. We all agreed that it would be wise to change camps due to the altitudes and indifference of the camp personnel and guides. Alexey quickly made a few phone calls, and within minutes we had packed our gear and were headed back to town. Unfortunately, the change in camps again meant that we would lose valuable hunting time.

That evening, the local hunting officer graciously treated us to dinner and allowed us to sleep in his office/apartment. The next day we moved to another camp, consisting of several buildings including a small multi-room cabin and several barns. Mark



Chris Jackson (MO) completed his Ovis World Slam and Triple Slam when he took this mid-Caucasian tur in southern Russia in September 2009. Chris was hunting with ProfiHunt.

greeted us when we arrived and said that he had hunted in the area the previous day, with no success. He then told us that both he and Jim Dovenberg had seen numerous old trophy quality tur while hunting out of their first camp. Unfortunately, we couldn't go to this area because of a conflict with his local guide, who had stolen some items and demanded a bribe that Mark refused to pay. During the next day of hunting, his guide began drinking vodka heavily in the afternoon. After they returned to camp, he demanded that Mark leave HIS hunting area the next morning. Fortunately, ProfiHunt's representative handled the situation well after he returned to camp from Jim's successful hunt, although nothing further could be done.

After a bit more chit-chat at our new camp, Mark and Jim were transported to a spike camp on the opposite side of the mountains. Alexey planned that he and I would hunt the following day on the cabin side of the mountains.

Once the local guide finished his farming chores the next morning, the three of us began our ascent. As the day progressed, we moved farther and higher into the mountains without spotting any rams. Just before 4 p.m. we reached a saddle at the edge of the highest bowl. We crawled into a prone glassing position and spotted two lone rams over 600 yards away. Alexey estimated the

biggest ram to be seven years old. Because this would be the last day to hunt, he suggested that I strongly consider taking this ram and I agreed. With gusts of wind circling around us, we anxiously waited for the rams to feed closer. When they were just beyond 400 yards away, I took the shot and the ram fell dead.

As we arrived back at camp, Mark and Jim were already there. Unfortunately, they finished their hunt without taking a ram. Both of them had worked incredibly hard, maintained a positive attitude throughout the hunt and deserved to have harvested a ram as much as me. Within days after we arrived back in the States, Jim Kelly was admitted into a hospital for six days due to a mysterious food-borne bacterial infection that attacked his intestinal system. He's recovered and we're all hoping to book another adventure at the upcoming GSCO convention in Las Vegas.

1. Dall sheep (2003) 2. Stone sheep (2004) 3. Rocky Mtn. bighorn (2005) 4. Aoudad (2005) 5. Desert bighorn (2006) 6. Koryak snow sheep (2006) 7. European mouflon (2006) 8. Armenian mouflon (2007) 9. Red sheep (2007) 10. Kuban (Western) tur (2008) 11. Dagestan (Eastern) tur (2008) 12. Mid-Caucasian tur (2009)