

It doesn't look like **Dan Parks (DE)** plans on slowing down any time soon. He just sent in this hunt report for his Kuban (Western) tur:

*Once again I traveled to the Caucasus Mts. to hunt tur. I hunted on the western side for Kuban tur and Caucasian chamois in Russia's Karachayevo-Cherkesiya Autonomous Republic. This hunt was booked through **Profi-Hunt**. The 10-hour flight from JFK to Moscow went very smoothly. After the usual long wait to clear customs in Moscow, we were met by Profi-Hunt's representative and taken to the hotel for the night. The following day we flew from Moscow to Mineral 'nyye Vody which took about two hours. After meeting the local game manager, we traveled another five hours by van to his guest cottage. Another 5-hour drive by truck the following morning, and we were in base camp.*

Day one of the actual hunt broke clear with no clouds. Our camp was situated in a saddle with mountains both to the east and to the west. While eating breakfast, I observed chamois on the mountain to the west. Later, I also observed a few chamois on the mountain to the east. Our plan on this day was to head to the tur mountains to the west of camp. About a mile out of camp we noticed bad weather rapidly approaching us. About the same time we came upon a group of five chamois. Looking at the weather situation we decided to hunt chamois and save the tur hunting for tomorrow. We quickly moved down the mountain with hopes of intercepting the chamois before they disappeared. Searching every nook and cranny in the cliffs, we finally found our quarry. The problem was that they were now still more than 400 yards away, down in a tree-choked valley.

After an hour in our observation position, it became clear that they had somehow given us the slip. With the weather bearing down on us, we high-tailed it back to camp. Luckily for us we arrived just as the skies opened up with very heavy rain. The plan for day two was to, again, head west toward the tur hunting area. Once again we observed chamois on the mountain to the east. A few miles out of camp, we saw the weather coming in again, but we decided to continue on anyway. By the time we arrived at the tur area we could only see about 100 yards due to heavy fog. My guide and I decided to go ahead and climb to a "guaranteed" area for tur. In my guide's experience, he had always seen tur around this particular peak. Well, there is always a first for everything. Standing on the top, we decided to walk down a ridge to an observation point where we could look over some prime tur real estate. The visibility was poor and progressively getting worse as it started to snow. Within an hour, with 2" of snow on the ground, we reluctantly decided to call it a day and head back to camp.

The following morning, after a conversation with the guides, it was decided to spike out a few days in another area. The tur were definitely not where we were hunting. Before leaving camp "my" chamois were on the mountain to the east again. The plan was made to make a quick dash up the mountain and see if we could connect. Within an hour we had our chamois on the ground. In the late morning, we moved camp which took the remainder of the day. Day four began with heavy frost and more snow on the mountains. We headed up a ridge behind camp toward another "guaranteed" tur area. It was much colder this morning with moderate fog. About halfway up the ridge, to our surprise, we heard three gun shots. The guides looked at each



Dan Parks (DE) scored with this Kuban (Western) tur while hunting in the Republic of Karachayevo-Cherkesiya, Russia in September 2006. Dan booked this hunt through Profi-Hunt.

other and immediately were on the phone to inquire who could possibly be in our area. We were told that there were some chamois hunters off to our right, but no one was permitted to be in our final destination. After about another minute, shots rang out again. This time there was no doubt where they had come from. There were poachers in our area. After coming upon a camp set up on the side of the mountain our suspicions were confirmed. In total, 12 shots were fired. After confirming by phone with the local game manager, the guides told us to stay put as they went up the mountain to apprehend the poachers. A few hours later, the guides returned with the five men. The hunting day was ruined and now the area was too disturbed for future hunting. The guides thought the tur would run a few mountains over and that we would try to hunt this area the next day.

Day five began at the base a very large and steep mountain. We could see tur tracks in the snow about halfway to the top. The guides were certain we would find animals today. The weather was clear for the first time. From the top you could actually see Mt. El'brus, some 40 miles to the east. We scaled the first peak and found no tur. We descended to the valley floor and climbed to the next peak, but, again, came up empty. My guide looked at me and asked if I was up for climbing to the top of another mountain. He knew my reply when I just started to climb again. Halfway up we finally spotted some tur. Unfortunately, they were all small males. We continued upward in search of something larger. By this time I was starting to get a little tired. While following my guide I was starting to wonder if this was going to be another wild goose chase. Suddenly, my guide dropped to his knees. There were two good looking male tur near the top of the mountain ready to cross through a saddle to the other side. We quickly moved up to where we had last seen the animals. Hopefully they would still be somewhere in sight. To my surprise, they were still only about 400 yards away. It would be a tricky shot due to distance and a pretty strong crosswind. I was not crazy about the shot at all. My guide agreed that we should try and close the distance.

As we ran closer, I could only hope they would still be unaware of our presence. Looking over the jagged rocks, I was pleased to see both animals at only 75 yards. I was told to shoot the tur on the right. Everything was happening so fast. At the shot I was surprised to see the tur on the left drop and roll down the mountain out of sight. I could not figure out what exactly had just happened. Upon inspection of the tur, we noticed that the shot had hit him dead center of his forehead and exited behind his left ear. A brain shot. We figured out that at the last possible second the tur had stepped forward into the bullet path which was intended for his partner. Unfortunately, the intended target was slightly larger, but I did not care at that point. I was just happy to be successful. After only seeing six tur in five hunting days, I felt very fortunate.

With the completion of this hunt I now have ten animals toward my Ovis World Slam. I never thought I would ever get to this point. I have two sheep hunts booked for 2007 that, hopefully, will put me over the top.

Congratulations, Dan, on taking two very difficult animals. And, good luck in 2007 on achieving your Ovis World Slam!