

I recently heard from **Gary Hansen** (CO) when he sent a report about his Hume argali hunt in Kyrgyzstan:

In early November 2008, my very good friend **George Harms** (NJ) and I traveled to Kyrgyzstan in search of the Hume argali. We booked the hunt with **ProfiHunt**. **Vladimir Koscheev**, who has guided me on other ProfiHunt adventures, accompanied me throughout this hunt. From Bishkek we drove 12 hours south to a comfortable base camp located at about 10,000 feet elevation. The next morning, we rode horses another 8-9 hours to our spike camps – at about 11,000 feet, where we hunted from each day. Be prepared for a lot of horseback riding (up to 12 hours/day), as it is huge open country with lots of sheep to look over. The first couple of days we had seen decent rams but we were being very selective early in the hunt.

Mid-afternoon of the third day Vladimir spotted a bachelor group of six rams with one that seemed to stand out, about 4-5 miles away, so we planned an early departure the next morning. We were on our horses at 5 a.m. and some nine hours later we were off the horses and climbing to get a closer look. An hour or so later, we reached the top of the plateau to where we could see the rams. They were still about 3/4 of a mile away and moving slowly out. We all agreed they had not seen or winded us and were simply “moving” so we followed them about another 1/2 mile, up and down until we caught up with them where we could see they had joined up with another seven rams! The 13-ram bachelor group had then descended all the way down to the river basin below us and were bedded at the base of the ridge that ran down across from us.

From about 2,000 feet above and across from them, we had the opportunity to carefully glass all of them and the sight of those magnificent Hume argalis all bedded down together was an experience I'll never forget. Within the group were three nice rams, with one exceptional ram that was heavy in mass, flared down, out, back up then down again – that classic argali flare! All I could think was what a hog, and how were we going to get all the way down there and into a shootable position in time before they moved out. Vladimir, Amman (local guide) and I quickly discussed our only two options; the first to backtrack back up and over to the other ridge across from us, then hike down to a point slightly above them – it would provide a good position and more importantly a much closer shot, but I felt it would take too long. The second option and the fastest was to go straight down the ridge we were on, keeping to the back/shaded side, which was hard pack snow/ice and then ending up with what I estimated to be about a 450 to 500-yard shot across the basin. With the high gusting winds, that would also prove to be much dicier, so I decided on what any level headed sheep hunter would do – stay on our ridge and go down the back side at them.

The steep hike/slide down took us about 20 minutes but there we were (more accurately, me), exhausted, soaked from sweat and about 460 yards straight across from them. Lying there with bipod down, waiting for the wind to subside, allowed me precious time to gather my composure and

breath. Three rams had stood up and wanted to move but my lead ram was content to lie there a while longer to provide me the time I needed to take him in his bed. What a day – what a hunt and what a result – a gorgeous true Hume argali! Some seven hours later, we arrived back at spike camp at 11:00 p.m. Vladimir Koscheev and ProfiHunt delivered again for me. I can't say enough for the quality, excitement and outcome of this hunt.

It's this type of experience that keeps us all going back.

Just as a closing note and suggestion for any of these Asian horse hunts: I would suggest taking a pair of over-size stirrups that allow you to get your hiking boots in and out quickly and safely, a tie-on saddle pad for added comfort, and a quality 60-power spotting scope needed for long range spotting.



Gary Hansen (CO) took this great Hume argali in Kyrgyzstan, November 2008. Gary was hunting with Vladimir Koscheev and ProfiHunt.