

Gary Parker (NE) has accomplished a pretty amazing feat. In August 2005 he traveled to Azerbaijan and Russia to take all three turs on the same trip. He booked his hunt with **Vladimir Melnikov**, and Vladimir was with him for the majority of the hunt. It took almost an entire month, but Gary got the job done, and here are the reports:

### **Dagestan (Eastern) Tur**

Early in the hunt we spotted a group of 150 rams moving about 800 to 1000 yards away from us. They had probably been 200 yards from us earlier, but we could not see them below us in the rugged terrain. We kept track of the rams and eventually got within 100 yards of them, but we elected to pull back in fear that the younger rams closest to us would wind us and spook the entire group. The five biggest rams finally bedded down at the top of the mountain ridge while the younger rams moved lower.

The ram I wanted was about 650 yards from our location with open area between us, which made getting closer almost impossible without our movement being spotted. Fog began to move in after a while and Vladimir decided we could use the fog as cover. After four or five starts and stops, we were within 365 yards of the bedded rams on the ledge.

Now the fog was getting thicker, and if we tried to get any closer, we might spook the lower rams. The ram I wanted was lying down at a 3/4 angle facing me, with most of his body covered by rock. I decided to take a shot with him lying down. I squeezed the trigger and the big ram lunged forward off the ridge and came to rest 20 to 30 yards below the ledge. I had my first tur: a 12-year-old Dagestan with the longest horn being 36"+. Vladimir took an exceptional ram himself the following day, on the way back to base camp. That tur of Vladimir's was seen last time in OVIS.

### **Kuban Tur**

Two days later we were in a new base camp, ready to hunt Kuban tur in the Karachaevsk region of the western Caucasus Mts. The weather was unusually warm, and for this reason insects were thick and the turs were not in the anticipated areas. We spent the next seven days climbing, glassing and setting up spike camp after spike camp.



This Dagestan (Eastern) tur was taken by Gary Parker (NE) in Azerbaijan, August 2005. He booked with and was guided by Vladimir Melnikov of Profi-Hunt.



Gary Parker (NE, right) and his Kuban (Western) tur taken in August 2005 with Vladimir Melnikov (left) and Profi-Hunt in Russia.

Our luck changed when local guide Rashid spotted two lone mature rams on the ridge across the canyon about 1000 yards from us. As before, the fog was beneficial in providing intermittent cover, allowing us to close within 370 yards of the bedded Kuban turs. I was able to get into a comfortable position, and we waited for the ram to stand. The longer we waited, the thicker the fog was getting. Just as I told Vladimir I would shoot the tur lying down, he stood up. Within a fraction of a second I squeezed the trigger. The ram took a leap forward off the ledge and ended up 80 to 100 yards below, but still a long way from the bottom. My Kuban was 11 years old with big bases and a length of 32"+.

### **Mid-Caucasian Tur**

After a long day driving from the Karachaevsk area, I arrived at the hunting department. The next morning, my guide Max and I were loaded into a vehicle and four hours

later we met the local guides, sighted rifles and started climbing to where we would establish the first of three spike camps over the next eight days. Warm weather was again a major factor during our hunt for Mid-Caucasian tur. We were challenged by rugged mountains, warm temperatures and heavy foliage on trees at lower elevation, making this the most difficult of the three tur hunts.