

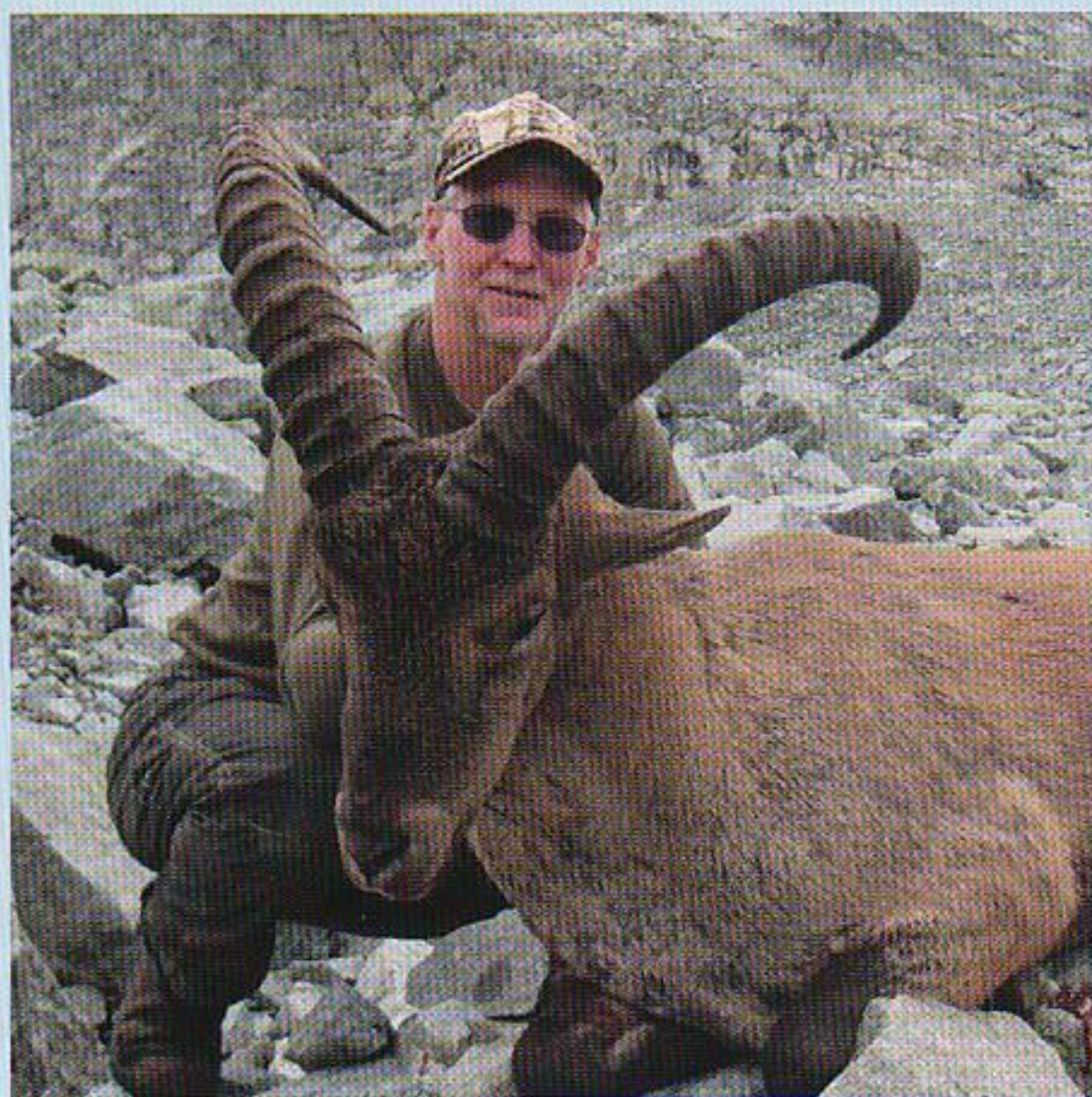
George Latham Myers (WV) submitted a detailed report about his hunt in the Caucasus Mountains for Kuban (Western) tur. George titled his report, "Russia Once More" and it goes like this:

*My quest for a Kuban (Western) tur continued when **Lou Rupp** and I met at Washington's Dulles International Airport for our flight to Moscow. There we met and were accompanied on the rest of our trip by **Vladimir Koshcheev**, a professional hunter for **ProfiHunt**. We spent the night in Moscow, and the next day flew to Mineral'nyye Vody. From there we drove to Cherkessk, the capital city of the Karachayevo-Cherkesiya Republic, where we stayed at a nice hotel, and the next morning drove to our base camp near the Georgian border, along the Aksant River. We met the other members of our team, guides **Aliy Kochkarov** and **Ivan Yufkin**, and our cook, **Vladimir Shevchuk**.*

The following morning we loaded our gear onto five horses, headed west, and immediately started to climb the foothills of the Caucasus. We gained altitude quickly and soon enjoyed stupendous views all around. We rode for three hours, and made a spike camp at about 8,000 feet, just above a small turquoise tarn. After lunch, we hiked up the ridge above camp, and soon discovered how steep and rocky these portions of the Caucasus really are. We made it back to camp before a thunderstorm, had a bite to eat, and that evening I enjoyed the rain's staccato rhythm hitting the nylon tent.

The next day we headed up the rock scree and glaciers to the west of camp. We must have gone three miles to a notch, where we spotted five rams on the skyline. Aliy was pushing the tur our way, so Vladimir and Lou set up on the ridge at the notch, and Ivan and I posted up on a ridge a little further to the northwest. Later, three shots rang out from Lou's direction. We continued to watch the backside of the mountain for another hour and a half, but never saw another tur. We met back at the notch, and discovered Lou had connected on a 330-yard moving shot on a very nice ram. After pictures and caping, we returned to spike camp, just before a rain-storm brought a premature end to our celebrations.

The following morning, Vladimir and Lou rode down to base camp to take care of his trophy; and Aliy, Ivan, and I hiked up to the main ridge above camp to the south, gaining 2,000 feet of elevation in 1 1/2 hours. From there we split up, and Ivan and I gained another 1,000 feet of elevation before setting up on a dominant ridge, just as a severe lightning and thunderstorm erupted.



George Latham Myers (WV) took this Kuban (Western) tur from the Karachayevo-Cherkesiya Republic of southern Russia in August 2010. Latham was hunting with Vladimir Koscheev and ProfiHunt.

We had been sitting for an hour, getting colder by the minute, when a nice tur came trotting over a sub-ridge below us. I made the mistake of taking my eyes off the ram for a second, and when I looked back down the mountain, all I saw was the rear end of the ram disappearing over the ridge. Soon the fog enveloped us, and we frustratingly made our way back to spike camp. It had been one of the most disconcerting days of hunting I have experienced. A moment of hesitation had cost me a shot at a very nice tur, and I was sorely disappointed in myself.

It rained most of the night, and was still raining the next morning. During a break in the rain, we got out of the tent, and soon spotted a Eurasian brown bear and two cubs across the canyon. However, it started to rain

again, and we made a decision not to hunt that day, and it was a good decision. I had plenty of time in the tent to replay in my mind the opportunity I had missed. All I could do now was try to stay positive, and hope that I would have another opportunity in the two days of hunting I had left. After all, mountain hunting is not like going to the grocery store and grabbing what you want; and hunting is hunting.

We needed a break in the weather and the next morning we got it. I started up the ridge above camp by myself, knowing I would be slower than the guides. Having topped out on the ridge, I sat down and started glassing. Immediately I spotted two tur on the horizon on the dominant south ridge. One was small, but one looked like a shooter. When my guides caught up with me, we continued up the glacier west of camp and set up on the notch, close to where Lou had killed his ram. With the radios, Vladimir and Aliy devised a plan to try to push the tur in our direction. Aliy came off the high ridge toward our position, and soon had the two tur I had spotted above camp running our way. We had to immediately move 30 yards to another position. I didn't have time to range them, but I excitedly got some lead in the air, and good things started to happen. On my second shot, I heard the bullet hit, which slowed the ram down. My third shot stopped the ram, and after reloading, my fourth and fifth shots anchored the ram. The Kuban (Western) tur was down in the Caucasus! He was a mature 9 1/2 year old ram, and I was thankful to have had another opportunity. After a brief lunch, pictures, and caping, we headed back to spike camp, arriving around 2 p.m. Vladimir then decided to break spike camp and return to base camp, where we arrived just before dark.

That evening we enjoyed a nice tur soup, fresh tomatoes and garlic, bread, cheese, and vodka toasts to our success! A lot of work, preparation, and coordination went into this hunt, and that had paid off. The following day we had delightful weather, and Vladimir worked on our trophies, salted the hides, and boiled the horns off the skull plate. We decided to stay in base camp that day to allow the hides to dry properly. That afternoon, the military came into camp to check our paperwork and gun permits. This border area is politically and geographically sensitive and a permit is required to camp there. They were friendly, and curious to look through my rifle scope, but only stayed for 10 minutes. We had a nice party that evening, and the next day returned to Cherkessk, a hot shower, and civilization.

I happened to be awake the next morning when I heard the melodious call to prayer for the Muslim faithful. I realized full well that another hunt was ending, and my long trip home beginning, but I hoped that one day I would return to Russia once more.