

## PRO ADVICE ON ARCHERY HUNTING

The far North is a very exciting place to be and home to some great Caribou hunting. But in order to insure the best time possible, you should plan and be prepared for anything as the Far North can also be unforgiving!

One thing you can almost always count on in this country is that the wind will be blowing. This adds a great degree of problems for the Bowhunter, especially if you never get a chance to practice in the wind. If you do have the chance to practice in windy conditions prior to your hunt, do so -- it will be the best practice you'll ever have in preparing for a Caribou hunt.

The last thing you want to have go wrong on your trip is to have equipment problems. To lower the risk of such bad experiences always use and take along good high quality gear. Nothing will ruin a trip faster than finding out in camp that your equipment won't or can't perform well in the Northern conditions or to have it simply break down at the worst possible time.

Several months in advance of your trip, you should start working with your bow and other gear. Practice often and look to ensure all your gear is working and performing perfectly. This is also a critical time to make sure that you are also performing at your best. Like any athlete, you need to practice to get in condition and to train your muscles. Those who spend lots of time practicing and shooting a lot before a hunt will certainly be more prepared to pull off the shot and make it good when the opportunity presents it's self. You'll also be well advised to practice shooting in various positions such as kneeling down.

Not only is it important to practice shooting, but it's also very important to get yourself into good physical condition. Hiking on the tundra is like walking in sand or on a big sponge. Its hard work and you might find yourself hiking several miles a day. Get in shape. It will make your hunt much more enjoyable and it will greatly improve your odds of success!!

During this time it is usually a good idea to replace your string and cables but keep your old ones and take them along as your back ups. A sharp broadhead can take out a string or cable in a second especially if you're in a rough boat ride to the other side of the lake.

As with any Bowhunting, make sure you practice with your broadheads to ensure your broadhead tipped arrows fly straight and to make sure they are sighted in. This is one of the most common bowhunting mistakes of all time. You may have to re-sight your bow as broadheads and field points don't always hit in the same place. On your hunt, you want your bow shooting broadheads accurately and hitting where you are aiming.

Most of the Far North country is barren and getting close to Caribou can be difficult. Make sure you are prepared for slightly longer than normal shots. If you normally shoot accurately at 30 yards, work hard at improving your skills so that you can



comfortably take a 40 yard shot or even a 50 yard shot. In general it's a good idea to practice shooting at these longer distances anyway as it improves your short shot accuracy and will make these shots feel like a slam dunk.

Caribou are large animals and they have great endurance capabilities. You should hunt a with 60 pound bow at a minimum if possible to increase you hitting power at those slightly increased distances. Lighter weight bows generally will work fine on Caribou as long as you get in close and make great shots, but heavier equipment makes good sense on bigger game if you can handle it. But do not over bow yourself to the point that it compromises your shooting accuracy.

On a Caribou hunt, you might consider taking a few extra arrows along. Caribou are big animals, but they are constantly on the move and in this country the wind is usually blowing. Assume you are going to miss a few shots and the ability to recover your missed arrows is slim as the tundra is like a big sponge and your missed arrows are likely to disappear in it forever. Nothing is worse than trying to borrow arrows from a friend or hunting partner when your that far away from home.

Make sure you use a good strong broadhead and never shoot broadheads that don't have new blades installed or have been honed to be razor sharp. Practice heads are for practice and you never want to take a chance on wounding any animal because your head was dull or had been previously shot and missed.

Finally, trust your guide. This is their backyard and you'll experience more success as a general rule if you listen to your guide and to let him be the Caribou hunting expert.

Good luck and good Caribou hunting,

**Randy J. Walk, President, Hoyt USA**

