

# Beginner's Luck

JON KELLER

My story starts back in the summer of 2003 when I talked with Ryan Hatch. I had already drawn a Colorado deer permit for that year and Ryan told me I needed to contact Wes Atkinson of **Atkinson Guide Service** in Colorado because he was seeing a handful of 200-inch bucks and had spotted a monster non-typical. I contacted Wes the

Wes called again with some different news, saying that he had not seen the big buck for a while but that he had videoed a cactus buck and three other great typicals. My hunt started on September 26th and we looked for 2 1/2 days for the big non-typical and the cactus buck but failed to locate either of

them. Wes decided to hunt where he had seen the big typicals and within an hour, he had found the bucks. Call me crazy, but I decided not to try for either of the 180-190 inch class bucks. Wes was disappointed but I couldn't shake the thought of the big non-typical.

The next morning found us up at first light. As we drove down the canyon, I suddenly noticed two bucks. Wes said that one was a good one and looking through my Zeiss 20x60's I saw this huge typical. I told Wes, "I'll shoot that buck!" We stalked the buck as he was feeding across a wash and were able to sneak within 16 yards of him but I couldn't shoot because of a

bush covering up his chest. The bucks blew out and we watched them settle down quickly and start feeding again. We made another stalk but this time the big boy was 51 yards away. Finally he turned and looked towards the other bucks. I drew my bow, put the pin behind the front shoulder, and released the carbon arrow. Wes knew that I had made a great shot and the buck ran 90 yards and fell over. Wes was able to capture all of this on film! We celebrated as we made our way up the hill to take a look at him. The buck was bigger than we thought; taping 27 inches wide and scoring 197 gross! What a great first archery buck! I know it was beginner's luck to have taken such a great buck on my first hunt with a bow. I have to give thanks to Griz and Wes. Without them it would have never happened. Wes scouts and hunts harder than any other guide I have been around. To all you guys, give archery a try, you might be lucky too!



August trail camera pic



GROSS SCORE: **197** | POINTS: **4x4** | SPREAD: **27** | LOCATION: **EASTERN COLORADO**

Leica | Sport Optics

www.leica-camera.com



Jon's awesome hunt was videotaped by guide Wes Atkinson and can be seen on MuleyCrazy's new DVD "Trophy Mule Deer Overdose"

next day and couldn't believe it when I found out the non-typical lived in an over-the-counter unit and I couldn't even hunt him with the tag I had. The next year, Wes encouraged the archery hunt as he thought it was the best chance to kill the buck. I have never hunted archery because all of my friends, including Ryan, told me how hard it was to kill a buck with a bow. But the thought of being the first to hunt the huge non-typical in 2004 had me convinced so I took the plunge. Knowing nothing about archery, I went to Griz at Central Valley Archery in Fresno California and he hooked me up! I was amazed at how easy it was to shoot accurately. I practiced several times a week and was getting good groups out to 60 yards. In late July I got a call from a very excited Wes saying that he had located the giant non-typical! A few days before the hunt

