

I have not proofed this one for errors yet

Dyer New Brunswick Black Bear Hunt

Danny Dyer

Russ Robbins and I were shooting his bow, concerned about his arrow flight with his fixed brood heads. We had previously tuned his bow weeks before, but something had happened to his rest and he had a new one mounted on his bow. There hadn't been time to return his bow and now his broad heads were planing. His bow wouldn't hold a close pattern, even at 20 yards. I suggested he try one of his mechanical heads, so he did. It was amazing the difference. He grouped them all within the orange circle. Russ suggested we get going or we would miss our plane. I told him we had plenty of time.

I went home, changed clothes, said my long good-byes to the girls, packed my bags, then went over to Russ' house. We packed his bags, then went back to my house to pick up some things I had forgotten. After about 45 minutes into our travels to Montgomery, I realized I had miscalculated how long it would take us to get to the airport. Russ began to drive a little faster and then a little faster still.

Before too long, we were traveling between 85 and 90 miles per hour trying to make our flight.

At the curb, I ran in with 7 minutes to spare from the departure time. The agent phoned the gate and told them we were coming. Russ hired a porter to load the 6 bags while he parked the car. I waited, impatiently inside while the agent explained that if the porter didn't hurry, we would miss the plane. I ran outside to find the porter waiting on the sidewalk for Russ to return before he brought the bags inside. I whistled and waved him on and he got the lead out and came over. Russ arrived at the counter about the same time the bags did which let him know something was wrong. I was supposed to be completely checked in, bags and all, waiting for him with our tickets and gate number. The porter blew those plans.

When we went through the metal detector they ask to go through my carry-on bags. I told Russ to run to the gate and hold the plane. They asked me to demonstrate both video cameras and all three still cameras. The battery of one of my video cameras was dead and wouldn't turn on. Fortunately, the battery to the other camera fits both cameras and I was able to eject the battery from the one and put it in the others.

Finally, I was running to the gate. I was out of breath, but there stood Russ with tickets in hand. I looked out the window and the plane was still parked at the gate. Russ informed me that they weren't going to let us on. I huffed and puffed out the word, "Why?" He told me that they had already shut the door to the plane. We stared out the window for over 10 minutes at the plane before it pulled away and toward the runway.

We decided to drive to Atlanta to try to make our connection there. As we ran to the car, we told the agent to go ahead and send our bags to Atlanta, we would catch them there.

When we got to the car, Russ convinced me to let him run back inside the make sure our bags would make it. Good thing he did. They told him they would not send our bags on a flight we were not on. We had to reclaim our bags and load them into the car and then we were off to Atlanta. Forty-five minutes from the Montgomery Airport, we saw a sign that indicated that Atlanta was 157 miles away. We decided to call Delta to see what our options were. They informed us they would not honor our tickets if we didn't originate from Montgomery. We had to turn around and go back to the Montgomery Airport. We found our best option to be a flight from Montgomery to Atlanta to Boston to Bangor, MA. Only the flight from Boston to Bangor was the next day, which meant an expensive night in a hotel and arrival into Bangor at 9:30 a.m. with a four hour drive to camp. Not to mention that our guide would be at the Bangor Airport waiting for us in just 3 hours with no way of getting in touch with him to let him know of the changes. We booked the flight, but decided to rent a car in Boston to drive to Bangor instead of waiting until the next day. We called the guide and left a message with his wife in hopes that he would call the lodge before he gave up waiting on us and went back to camp. Russ and I traded turns driving and drove through the night to arrive at the Bangor Airport. Fortunately for us, the guide was still there waiting, asleep in his van. We finally got to camp, without sleep, just in time to unpack, eat, shoot bows, and go to our stands.

We were both hunting stands that had bears hitting the bait but when hunting the fall, the bears aren't as consistent. Russ didn't see any bears but I did. I had a bear come in about 30 minutes before dark. It looked like it weighed around 450 lbs. It was a big bear but not the size I was looking for. I wanted a 500 plus lbs. bear. I was disappointed to think that my guide had misjudged this bear and was afraid I wasn't going to get what I had come to New Brunswick for. I glassed the bear and found a knot on the right side of the bear's head between his ear and his eye. He also had a small patch of white hair under his right front arm. After about 30 minutes, the bear had eaten all he wanted and then he left. About 5 minutes before it was too dark to shoot, the bear came back.

I named him "Warthog" because the knot on the side of his head looked like a warthog knot. After watching the bear for about 60 seconds I felt as though the bear had grown to about 550 to 600 pounds. I realized that the longer I looked and debated over whether an animal is a trophy or not, or big enough or not, the animal tends to grow. Knowing this, I figured that was what was happening. Never the less, I got my binoculars to take a closer look. I couldn't find the wart or the patch of white hair. I began to study more closely how high his back came up to the metric barrel and realized, this bear was a good bit bigger than old Warthog.

About that time, from the opposite side, here came old Warthog. I had named the other bear "Big Boy." Well, when Big Boy saw Warthog, I could tell there was going to be trouble. They chased each other around but only briefly and then the fight began. Boy was it exciting. Growling, snarling, and slapping. It didn't take long and old Warthog fled the scene. Big Boy went back to the bait and started eating again. I picked up my bow and turned on my video camera. I had mounted my camera on a tripod and screwed it into my tree. But it was too dark for my camera to pick up "Big Daddy." I could still see my pins well enough to shoot but it was the first night and I wanted to get the kill on film. I decided not to shoot.

The second night I hunted all the way until dark and didn't see a thing until right at dark. Big Boy came in right at dark but he took so long to get there that I couldn't get a shot. Russ didn't see anything again.

The third night it was raining and the wind was blowing very hard.