

Local hunters kill wolf on Lindstrom



Brett Payne killed this wolf March 18 on Lindstrom Peak. He and Kevin Shaw stalked the animal for about two hours before getting a shot. He killed the male from about 300 yards with his .270. - Submitted

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Published: Tuesday, March 23, 2010 3:13 PM PDT

They made it their spring break goal to find and kill a wolf.

And after four days on the hunt they got their trophy.

Brett Payne and Kevin Shaw of St. Maries were hunting on Lindstrom Peak south of town last week when they came across fresh wolf tracks in the mud.

"We've been hunting them all week," Mr. Payne said the morning after his kill, still energized from the experience. "This was the first time we saw tracks we followed them for about two hours."

Around 6 p.m. on Thursday the two friends spotted a male wolf lying across a draw in the middle of a dirt forest road.

"It was intense," Mr. Payne said. "Just seeing him, we talked about this afterward, it's sort of a surreal feeling to look through your scope and see a wolf looking at you."

Mr. Payne said it took a great deal of effort to calm himself down in order to take the shot.

"I'd say it was probably a minute, maybe a minute and 15 seconds," he said of how long it was between spotting the wolf and pulling the trigger. "I had time to lie down, get a good rest and share a few words with Kevin."

For one reason or another, the wolf was never spooked by the men's presence.

"I think it was a combination of things," Mr. Payne said. "One, we had the wind in our favor so he didn't smell us and we were being really quiet. It took almost two hours to walk half a mile."

Distance and camouflage also worked in their favor.

"We were so far away that he didn't feel threatened," Mr. Payne said. "My guess is he knew something was there but it wasn't enough to spook him."

After looking at an overhead view of the area on Google Earth, Mr. Payne and Mr. Shaw

estimate they were nearly 300 yards away when Mr. Payne took his shot.

"It saw us then just laid its head back down," Mr. Payne said. "Then right before I shot it picked its head up really quickly."

That is when Mr. Shaw said to pull the trigger.

"I told him you better shoot it quick because it's going to run," Mr. Shaw said.

Bang.

The bullet flew over the draw and directly through the wolf's chest, dropping it on its side instantly.

Mr. Payne said the emotions that followed were both awe and disbelief.

"First you're like "Holy cow, we finally found one,"" he said. "Then disbelief not only did we track one down, we actually shot it."

As with killing any animal, Mr. Payne said he felt a certain sense of remorse. However, he said the thought of how many elk and deer he might have saved by the kill gives a certain sense of accomplishment.

Instead of gutting the animal to lighten the weight, Mr. Payne threw the wolf over his shoulders and carried it 80 yards down the mountainside to a dirt road he could access with his pickup truck.

"We haven't got it weighed but I'd say it's right at 100 pounds, maybe a little less," Mr. Payne said.

The two men drove directly to Mr. Payne's father Doug's house.

"When I got to the house I told him (his father) there was something wrong with my truck and he needed to come look at it," Mr. Payne said.

An avid hunter himself, Doug Payne was shocked to find out that the "problem" was there was a dead wolf lying in the bed of his truck.

"He (Doug) was freaking out," Mr. Payne said.

"I had told him before he left that killing a wolf on any given day was a one in a thousand chance," Doug said. "I was tickled I'm glad he and his buddy were able to get one."

Mr. Payne said he has taken the wolf to Eidnes Furs to have it shoulder mounted and the skull boiled out. That process will likely take a few months.

Since their successful spring break hunt, Mr. Payne has returned to Moscow where he attends the University of Idaho and Mr. Shaw is back in Logan, Utah where he is a student at Utah State University.