

2019 EDITION ||| A COMPLETE HUNTING GUIDE FOR WESTERN COLORADO ||| FREE

HUNTER

Colorado

HUNTING NW COLORADO'S
TROPHY UNITS!

THE WORD
ON THE HERD

WHAT THE WET SPRING
**SPELLS FOR
HUNTERS**

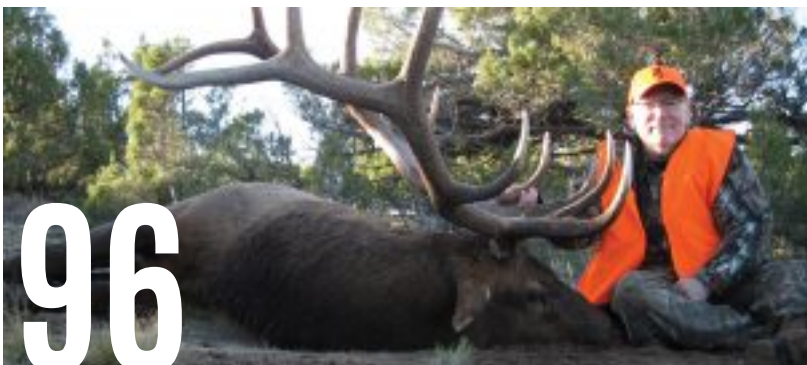
& MORE!

WHAT'S
NEW FOR
2019

LATE-SEASON HUNTING TIPS

PLUS BUSINESS DIRECTORY + HERD UPDATES + FEES + DATES + SAFETY TIPS

COLORADO HUNTER 2019 • TABLE OF CONTENTS



14 **WELCOME MESSAGE**

16 **LETTER FROM CPW**

18 **SHORT SHOTS**

What's new for 2019, elk studies, the Antler Man, wet spring spells big racks, what hunters wear, online licenses, sighting-in tips, hunting with pack rafts and more!

24 **A PHOTO'S WORTH ...**

Special photo section highlighting shots from the field.

48 **SKILL SETS**

Late-season hunting tips, field dressing hints, choosing an outfitter, advice for bagging a "mighty six," cooking with elk and more.

58 **READER PHOTOS**

64 **OUTFITTER PROFILES**

Steamboat and Summit County's Colorado Outfitters, Grand County's C Lazy U Ranch and Meeker's Adams Lodge.

74 **GMU BREAKDOWN**

Features:

88 **THE WORD ON THE HERD**

After an uber-wet winter, this year's hunting season is shaping up to be another great one in Northwest Colorado.

92 **MOOSE HUNTING**

94 **CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE A REAL CONCERN**

Affecting local deer herds, chronic wasting disease is "an issue that will be with us for decades," says CPW, which is responding to the threat.

96 **HUNTING THE "TROPHY" UNITS**

Ask any hunter worth his weight in lead to name Colorado's top hunting units, and GMUs 1, 2, 10 and 201 rise to the top of the list.

102 **F.M. LIGHT & SONS: A FAMILY TRADITION**

In Steamboat Springs, the Dillenbecks represent the fifth generation of family ownership of this 115-year-old, hunter-friendly retailer.

106 **GEAR**

112 **FISHING**

118 **HUNTER DIRECTORIES**

Guides and outfitters, meat processors/taxidermists; and visitor information.

126 **ADVERTISING DIRECTORY**

COVER PHOTO: Colorado photographer John DePalma captures a bugling elk on an autumn afternoon.

C LAZY U RANCH

by LANCE MAGGART

A HUNT WITH C LAZY U OFFERS HIGH-END ACCOMMODATIONS AND ANTLERS.



Hunting is often a spartan endeavor. Cold weather, wet feet and cramped bunks are simply part of the process and the price one often has to pay.

But not for guests at Grand County's C Lazy U Ranch. Here, a big game hunting trip resembles something closer to a 19th century African safari, replete with luxury accommodations,

chef-prepared meals and the comfort of hot showers and a soft bed.

Located just north of Granby along the banks of Willow Creek, C Lazy U is one of Colorado's most luxurious guest ranches, rated as the number one resort in Colorado by Conde Nast Traveler in 2018. The ranch operates year-round with a heavy emphasis on summer operations. Each fall however, as the days

grow shorter and the leaves on aspen trees start turning gold, it gears up for the start of big game season.

"We offer a luxury hunting experience with a great guest ranch atmosphere," says assistant GM Paul Klees. "Hunters enjoy renovated cabins, gourmet meals and 20,000 acres of private land."

While luxury accommodations and epicurean meals are major

selling points, clients also encounter world-class hunting guides, with an eye toward customer service and trophy class animals. Because C Lazy U's business model doesn't rely exclusively on hunting, the ranch is able to husband its local big game herds, offering incredible harvest opportunities for clients.

Klees said the ranch conducts around 40 hunts a year and puts a heavy

“TROPHY HUNTING MAKES UP A BIG PART OF C LAZY U’S OUTFITTING BUSINESS, ESPECIALLY EARLY SEASON.”



AFTER HARVESTING YOUR ANIMAL, TELL YOUR TALE AROUND THE FIREPLACE IN C LAZY U’S LUXURIOUS LODGE.

emphasis on mitigating overall impacts to local herds to help ensure continued harvest success. The ranch offers hunts for archery, muzzleloader and rifle, with the season beginning just after Labor Day and continuing through early December.

“We focus a lot on elk and mule deer,” Klees says. “But we also offer some moose and antelope hunting.”

Klees adds that bull elk taken on C Lazy U average around 275 inches and during his tenure he has seen nearly a half-dozen bulls harvested in the 330- to 350-inch ranch.

“We’re in a great spot here,” Klees explains, noting that C Lazy U sits almost directly in the migration corridors for big game animals that summer near the Continental Divide but head west toward lower elevations during the fall. “It’s also a bit of a trophy

unit for deer. We have some big muleys come through the ranch.”

Klees notes that about four years ago a guest harvested a mule deer just shy of 250 inches. Overall, around 90 to 95 percent of rifle hunters harvest a big game animal at the ranch, while around 30 percent of archery hunters are successful.

“We really try to have a high opportunity rate so the guests have a fun experience, and get to have that buck fever,” Klees says. “We try to create an environment that allows people to see animals in their habitat and follow through with a clean harvest.”

Trophy hunting makes up a big part of C Lazy U’s outfitting business, especially early season. But Klees notes that in recent years the ranch has seen a steady increase in cow

elk harvests from hunters looking to take home meat.

“Some of our members who had no idea about hunting have really embraced that aspect,” Klees says. “It’s helped get new people into the hunting scene.”

The hunting trips are highly customizable and the ranch puts a heavy emphasis on customer service and accommodating clients’ desires. Still, a typical five-day hunt follows a fairly standard routine. Hunters will rise and enjoy a prepared breakfast in the main lodge, where their guide will meet them. A hunter and guide will normally head out into the field in vehicles before first light searching for big game. They’ll then head back to the lodge for lunch before returning into the field for afternoon and early evening hunting.

The ranch’s

accommodations also make it an ideal option for hunters looking to bring their families along. Sportsmen can spend the day traipsing around the mountains as their spouses and children relax in C Lazy U’s world-class spa or enjoy horseback rides around the ranch.

Despite C Lazy U’s status as a luxury resort, prices for a weeklong hunting adventure are surprisingly modest for a lodge-based hunting experience. An early season archery elk hunt comes in at \$6,000, while muzzleloader and rifle hunts range up to \$6,500 and \$7,500, respectively. The ranch also offers a combo elk and deer hunting option in early and mid-November. The cost includes lodging, meals and guide service as well as access to most of the ranch’s activities and amenities. ➔

Info: www.clazyuoutfitters.com