

Special hunt for jackalope



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

Long thought to be extinct, the jackalope is doing quite well in Colorado and Wyoming. A recent count by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) places the state population estimate at nearly 2,500, although very few people have actually seen one.

The town of Douglas, Wyoming, has claimed the name of “Jackalope Capital of the World.” The first jackalope, or warrior rabbit as they are sometime referred to, was spotted there in 1829. A large statue stands in the town square commemorating the sighting.

Douglas Town Council was the first to declare a legal hunting season for jackalopes, and sells a limited number of licenses. The season is one day only, June 31 of each year.

Colorado has a hunting season for them also. The Colorado season will run Feb. 29 of each year, except leap years, which is the mating season for them. The state decided not to hunt them during their mating season, since it occurs only once every four years. This could explain why the males of the species are so vicious, but that is another story.

The jackalope is a fairly small animal, reaching only 24 inches in length, and weighing in at around 10 pounds. They live as long as 15 years in the wild.

The crowning feature of the jackalope would have to be the antlers. The antlers may reach as much as 12 inches in length, and a real trophy could have forked horns totaling four points. The female of the species, or does, do not have horns. In fact, they are often confused with jackrabbits as their appearance is nearly identical.

The fur on a warrior rabbit is tawny or tan color, with white on the underside. The fur is thicker and softer during the winter



Picture of the trophy jackalope the author scored near Walden, Colorado. (Special to the Montrose Daily Press/Mark Rackay)

months. They can run for short bursts of up to 30 MPH, and are very sure-footed and agile. These critters are strictly nocturnal, which is why they are seldom seen.

The jackalope has a strange diet for a descendant of the jack-rabbit. He survives the winter by eating prairie grass, and living off the stored body fat from summer overeating. During the summer months, jackalope will spend most of their time scrounging for their favorite food, the Oreo cookie and ice cream.

Jackalope consume about two quarts of water a day in the wild but their preferred drink is Canadian Whiskey. There have been stories of a single animal consuming a quart or better, at a time, of this adult beverage. It is also rumored that jackalope sightings increase when the hunter consumes copious amounts of whiskey as well.

I was very fortunate to draw one of the coveted jackalope hunting licenses last year. My tag was for the trophy unit up near

Walden, Colorado, so I naturally had high hopes of a big one when I left on the trip.

I met my guide, Pete Kowalski, in town the night before the hunt, at the Wild Apple Bar. We spent the evening discussing our hunting plans for later in the night and downed quite a few glasses of a locally made “apple jack” drink. Due to a certain characteristic of the apples used to make this drink, I am a bit hazy on the details.

That night, when the moon was

just right, my guide and I headed off into the prairie in search of a trophy male jackalope buck. Guide Kowalski drove the truck, as I ran along behind the truck. We covered many miles of sagebrush before one spooked out in front of us.

Because I was suffering from a blinding headache, again because of those stupid apples, I have little recollection of the actual hunt itself. I do know that I bagged a real trophy that night because I have the shoulder mount from the taxidermist to prove it. He was eventually scored and qualified for the Boone and Crocket records book.

Hunting jackalope can be an expensive venture. The cost of the guide can run upwards of two hundred bucks a night, plus expenses. The largest expense would be for the bait used when hunting jackalope. Each hunt will require several bottles of Canadian Whiskey. I suspect that some of that whiskey goes in the guide but can't be sure of that.

If you want a real Colorado adventure, book a jackalope hunt. CPW tells me that there may be some landowner vouchers available next year. This will give some folks, who were unsuccessful in the draw, an opportunity to hunt.

Several Colorado towns are offering nighttime photo safaris for the elusive jackalope, for those folks who do not hunt. These safaris always start out at a local bar in each town offering said trips. Check with the chamber of commerce for names of local outfitters.

Normally after I return from one of my hunting adventures, it takes a short while for me to recuperate. The joints and muscles need a day or two to heal. This hunt seemed different. I had the nagging feeling that I had taken part in a long night of debauchery. I never saw Kowalski again; must be those stupid apples.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, and an avid hunter, who travels all over North America in search of adventure, and serves as a director for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. He can be reached at 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or by email at info@mcspi.org.



Debbie Reed

Broker Associate
(970) 209-1396
DebbieReedRealtor.com

As I write this...

... I don't know the results of this weekend's Final Four, but it doesn't matter. What matters is the chaplain of the Loyola-Chicago's Ramblers, who are in the Final Four for the first time since 1963. At 98, Sister Jean has been a basketball player, a coach... and a nun for 81 years. She appears courtside at the games in her wheelchair wearing a Loyola ball cap, with a letter jacket on her wheelchair. She prays with the players before each game and gives a scouting report. She has lived in residence halls on the campuses at various times over the years, offering counsel to students in need. Her counsel often involves asking them to do a daily personal reflection at the end of each day, highlighting the positives, and learning from their day.

You go, Sister!!

Phelps Real Estate Group, LLC

501 S Townsend Ave • 970.209.1396
Montrose, CO 81401

TBD Ogden Road

- 7.34 acres on Ogden Road, just north of Otter Pond Subdivision and bordering the east boundary of the Montrose Recreation Center.
- Residential zoning
- Close to schools, shopping, and the fabulous Montrose Recreation Center!

MLS # 731983 \$385,000



FIND YOUR NEXT CAREER

HERE!

→ LOOK NO FURTHER!

From shop mechanic to registered nurse and the culinary arts to electrician, our local employment marketplace has exactly what you're looking for.

**MONTROSE
DAILY PRESS**

montrosepress.com/classifieds/job