

SPATSIZI

The Place of the HUNT

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #111 —

A few hunting places stick in my mind more so than others — perhaps because there's something special and unique about them; and I find myself telling the same stories time and again — not just about the hunt, but also about the place of the hunt. The Spatsizi Plateau, in north-central British Columbia, is one of those places.

British Columbia is considered by many to be one of the most beautiful places on earth, and the area the Province calls Spatsizi Wilderness Park is truly one of their gems. Of course it's remote; there are no roads to get you there and none to get you around, once you are there. Your only means of transportation are bush planes or horseback.

The park consists of 3600 square miles of mountain peaks, timber and rivers; nothing new for BC, but there's

also a unique feature — the Spatsizi Plateau. The plateau is a flat-like land formation that rambles and rolls around aimlessly at an elevation of five

or six thousand feet — all above the timberline. Generally there are drainages on either side — sometimes coming together at the lower end. Off the edges of the plateau are smaller drainages that carry the water down to the rivers. Yes, there are fish in the rivers; but this is big game country — mountain goat, Canadian moose, mountain caribou, grizzly bear, black bear, wolf and wolverine and most importantly Stone sheep, which is why we were there.



This twelve-year-old Stone sheep had very dark hair. Brenda also shot a nice sheep on this trip — SS # 17.

From base camp at Bug Lake, it was a ten hour horseback ride to our tented camp, broken into two parts, with an overnight stop to set up a spike camp for moose and caribou hunters coming in a couple of weeks.

After we settled into spike camp, Brenda and I both shot nice old rams, a day apart, and caught a few fish,

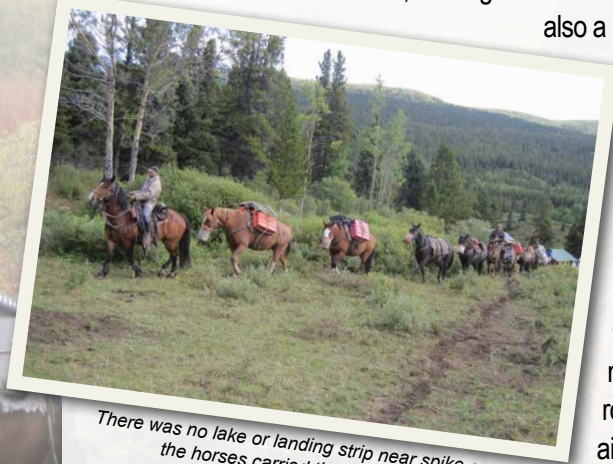
"...a place worth talking about time and again..."

using willow poles, with raw bacon on the hooks. Our hunt now over, we rode 12 hours south — down the plateau to another base camp called Highland Post. Our first sighting was from the top of the plateau — 1500 feet above the river bottom and camp. It took us an hour and a half on zig-zag trails, for the horses to reach the bottom. The Spatsizi Plateau — a place worth talking about time and again and certainly worth going back to.

Midway USA

Larry Potterfield

Elk Horn Camp
The Spatsizi Plateau
British Columbia
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There was no lake or landing strip near spike camp, the horses carried the packs and the riders.



Coming down off the plateau, our tiny spike camp was nestled just below a ridge, at the edge of the timber. Still some snow on the ground, in the distance.