



**Jeff Pralle Services, LLC. dba High Country Alaska**

Jeff Pralle Master Guide #GUIM128  
3060 N Lazy Eight Ct., Ste. 2 ~ Box 176  
Wasilla, AK 99654  
907-414-7545 - jkpralle@gmail.com

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## FAQs

### Suggestions from Jeff Pralle Master Guide 40 years guiding hunters in Alaska

#### *What are success rates? What can I do to improve success?*

**Your physical and mental preparation** will be the determining factor in success. Alaskan hunts are tough. We have nearly 100% opportunity to stalk trophy class animals. You do not need to go fast. You need to be steady. Keep placing one foot in front of the next, onward and upward, and know it will be tough. We have guided a 24 year old that was physically fit, he quit on day 2, and had a 72 year old hunter take a sheep, moose, and a caribou in 10 days. Be in the best possible physical and mental condition. Our guides will not run you into the ground or run off and leave you. That is not how we operate. We will hunt as hard as you are willing and physically able so long as it is safe. It is your hunt. We are there to help make it a success. You will have a better hunt if you are in the best physical condition possible. Today is the time to start getting in shape. Cardio and picking your feet up as high as your knees in training will help you on your hunt and will make it a much more enjoyable experience.

**Weather will be the second limiting factor** for success during your hunt. Hunters that maintain a positive attitude during bad weather have higher success rates. I think it is a direct influence on how hard they will work to make the hunt a success rather than heading back to camp early because they are tired, wet, sore, whatever and in a bad mood because of some discomfort, missed opportunity or shot, etc..

**Gear is important.** The right gear will help and the wrong gear can ruin you and destroy your hunt. Fit and weight sum up most of the problems with gear. Primarily backpacks, rifles, and footwear. You will be intimate with all by the end of your hunt. Backpacks, raingear, and footwear are the most important pieces of your hunting kit for an Alaska. They **MUST** FIT! I cannot stress this enough.

#### *What should I bring for my backpack? How large should it be? What do the guides use?*

**Sheep Hunts** Your pack should be large enough to EASILY hold and COMFORTABLY carry your sleeping bag, pad, a change of clothes, layers to stay warm when stopped, rain gear, ammo, camera, small personal items etc. and still have some room left over just in case. Don't guess, put your stuff in, and make sure it fits comfortably on you. The most critical factor in pack selection is getting one with a mountaineering style suspension system that FITS. TRY IT ON! Go into the store get the pack fitted to YOU and load it up with 50 pounds walk around wear it a while with your hunting gear on. Believe me if your pack doesn't fit it is worse than underwear 3 sizes too small. DO NOT buy a pack based on a gimmick like a spotting scope/rifle pocket, camo pattern, fabric, etc.



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**Mountaineering Quality Internal Frame Pack**, internals ride closer to your body, allow for more stability in rough uneven terrain. Top loaders are preferred - fewer zippers to blow out. Color should be the last concern when buying a backpack. Camo or earthy color is nice, definitely not necessary. My packs are black, gray, or red and have been for more than 15 years. Coated Cordura, pack cloth, or other hard-shell waterproof or highly water repellent fabric that does not soak up water, is more important than quiet and soft on an Alaskan hunt. This keeps your pack from adding unwanted pounds during a stormy rainy hunt.

**Moose and Bear hunts-** can get by with a Medium size pack 2800-3500 cubic inches I still recommend a pack of 4500 Cu In or 55L.

**Packs –**

- <https://www.stoneglacier.com/collections/expedition-packs>
- <https://store.kifaru.net/all-packs-c3.aspx>
- <https://www.kuiu.com/collections/packs>
- <https://www.sitkagear.com/products?filter=gear,packs>

Most of our guides use Kifaru packs.

Look for mountaineering packs not travel packs or hunting packs.

Packs must fit your body. They are as personal as underwear or shoes.

***What kind of boot do I need?***

**ALL HUNTERS will need hipboots.**

Animals live or die on the hunters' foot condition. Take care of your feet! Stop and adjust your socks or boots when a hotspot develops. Don't be the "Tough Guy" and just suck it up. Duct Tape works better than moleskin - it is thinner and stays on better. Bring PLENTY of socks. The boot system we use has been the culmination of years of trial and error. This Boot System works incredibly well when sized properly. The Breathable hipboots with neoprene feet and goretex uppers (do **not** bring all neoprene hipboots) allow crossing streams efficiently and weigh very little. The gaiters are an integral part of the system, protect the hipboot, and keep gravel out of your boots. Making this system work is dependent on a 3 simple steps -

1. get the hipboot first
2. take the hipboot and the socks you are going to wear (we wear merino wool, NEVER cotton) and TRY ON the boots with the socks and the waders you are going to hunt in. Make sure there is enough room in the boots you buy. If it feels tight you will be miserable, if the boots feel loose, and there is motion your feet will blister. If the boot is Gore-Tex remember Gore-Tex boots stretch very little to not at all. I prefer non Gore-tex boots, they allow the water to squish out while walking,



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meaning your boots are lighter (the stockingfoot hipboot inside your hiking boot will keep your foot dry). Get a hiking boot, you will be walking MILES in them.

3. Try on the gaiters with the boots, pants, socks, and waders. The same gear you plan to hunt with. Make sure the gaiters are large enough to be easy to get on and off and not bind your leg with the wader folded down inside the gaiter.

***Failure to fit the boot system properly can be disastrous to your hunt.***

### **Boot Choice**

I believe the human body was designed to allow the foot to flex first, the ankle second and the knee third, hip last. By wearing stiff heavy boots you eliminate the foot flex and ankle flex placing all the stress on your knee. This results in high risk of knee fatigue/injury. There are exceptions, if you have weak ankles or have had an injury to your foot or ankle that requires support then you will need a stiffer boot. Pay attention to the weight of your boots and remember they WILL BE WET the entire hunt and taller boots will weigh more when wet than shorter boots. Ounces WILL become pounds... Full grain leather boots will hold up better than Nubuck or split/suede. DO NOT bring all Cordura boots your feet will be hanging out of the boot by day 2 in the rocks sheep hunting.

**NOTE:** Speaking of your boots being wet the entire hunt... Most folks hate wet boots and try to dry their boots by the fire or stove with horrible results. If you do this your boots will shrink, create hard spots, crack, melt or otherwise cause you untold suffering. Just leave them wet and trust your hipboot to keep your feet dry. It works. Wear your lightweight camp shoes when you want dry shoes on.

### **Hipboot system**

Footwear Summary-

Don't just buy the boot brand I wear, your buddies wear, or the salesperson says is best. Your feet are yours and you are an individual. You may need a boot cut on a different last than I do. **The key** - make sure the boots FIT. If it feels wrong in the store I don't care who endorses it, how expensive it is, what brand it is, the boots will eat your feet in the field. I look for boots and shoes that feel broke in immediately upon trying them on. You can bring whatever footwear you wish. If you do not wear hip high waterproof boots you will be wet and cold the entire hunt. Many hunters wish to take off the waders once in the high country, I wear mine all season, if you plan to take off your hipboots, add additional socks to make up the space in the larger boots sized for the waders and a pair of Gore-tex socks, sized accordingly, to keep your feet dry.

### **Hip Boots –**

- [https://www.amazon.com/Chota-Outdoor-Gear-Original-Breathable/dp/B00AL240EO/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1529368562&sr=8-1&keywords=chota+hippies](https://www.amazon.com/Chota-Outdoor-Gear-Original-Breathable/dp/B00AL240EO/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1529368562&sr=8-1&keywords=chota+hippies)
- [https://www.cabelas.com/shop/en/white-river-fly-shop-three-forks-felt-sole-hip-waders-for-men?ds\\_e=GOOGLE&ds\\_c=Shop%7CGeneric%7CAllProducts%7CHigh%7CSSCCatchAll&gclid=Cj0KCCQ](https://www.cabelas.com/shop/en/white-river-fly-shop-three-forks-felt-sole-hip-waders-for-men?ds_e=GOOGLE&ds_c=Shop%7CGeneric%7CAllProducts%7CHigh%7CSSCCatchAll&gclid=Cj0KCCQ)



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Q67nUoIVn\_G5bRV0tdEtFgcUT\_ujwaAonhEALw\_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds

**Hiking boots** - These are boots we have worn that have held up well. Boots need to fit you. If they have to be "Broken in" you will most likely get sore feet. Make sure you have enough room in the toe to accommodate the wader. Remember you will be wearing a neoprene sock inside the boot wider fits are more comfortable and warmer.

- [https://www.keenfootwear.com/p/M-VOYAGEUR-MID.html?dwvar\\_M-VOYAGEUR-MID\\_color=1008904&cgid=activity\\_hiking](https://www.keenfootwear.com/p/M-VOYAGEUR-MID.html?dwvar_M-VOYAGEUR-MID_color=1008904&cgid=activity_hiking)
- <https://www.simmsfishing.com/shop/mens/wading-boots>

**Camp shoes -**

We all use slip on very comfortable camp shoes. Mine are ankle high waterproof and are easy on and off. Some of us use Crocs. The slip on is great if you have to get up at night and go out. Some people bring running shoes or old hunting boots. Just bring COMFORTABLE shoes you will be glad you did. This is the Cabala's page showing several styles that will work well. Boots are highly personal choices. Make sure they fit.

**Gaiters** - avoid zippered gaiters they are a pain to put on and blow out. Wide Velcro down the front is best. The Outdoor Research Crocodiles what most guides use.

<https://www.kuiu.com/search?q=gaiters>

- [https://www.outdoorresearch.com/us/mens-crocodile-gaiters-243118?search\\_result=1](https://www.outdoorresearch.com/us/mens-crocodile-gaiters-243118?search_result=1)
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**What is the terrain like?**

Our Alaska Range hunting area is comprised of large glacial "U" shaped valleys with glacier fed silty rivers flowing in them. The valley floors are boggy and timbered in many areas. Mountains are steep. Side valleys are often steeper and narrower with clear water fast flowing streams many with glaciers at the head.

**What is the elevation**

Main Camp is at 2100 feet, timberline is around 2500 feet, most sheep live at 5000-5500 feet, and peaks are near 7000 feet.



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***Where does the game live?***

**Sheep** live in alpine valleys and near the tops of the ridges.

**Bears** live throughout the entire elevation range from sheep country to the valley floor.

**Moose** are typically valley dwellers but we do take them above tree line on the mountainsides every season. Most of our landing strips are in the valley floors on gravel bars. This is where you will walk from. You will be walking in rough uneven terrain. Slogging through muskeg, pushing through brush. Most of our moose country is right at the timberline or slightly below.

**Caribou** are found throughout our country. They will be higher on the mountain early season when weather is warm and the bugs are out. Later in the year when the snow starts we will see them in the valley more regularly. This is a resident herd and they do not migrate.

***Is there fishing?***

Fishing is minimal in most of our area on the West side of the Alaska Range, there is some good fishing on the East side at the lower elevations where the salmon spawn. We have fishing tackle if you hunt on the east side

***What should I bring for a rifle?***

**Dall Sheep** - A .243, 6.5, 25-06, or .270 Win our recommended minimum, does well, a 30.06, .300, or 7mm mag works great. Sheep are thin skinned and easy to kill, around 200 lbs. live weight. Sheep rifle should be **handy carry easily, lightweight, accurate, reliable**, composite stock, quality waterproof optics in strong mounts, & stainless. A working gun you don't mind scratching and abusing.

Mine are –

pre-64 Winchester Model 70 in 30.06 Ackley Imp, Brown Precision composite stock, 22 inch HS Precision stainless barrel, Swarovski 3X9. This rifle weighs about 7.5 pounds loaded.

Montana 1999 X2 20 inch barrel .338 Win Mag, Leupold 6X scope in Talley detachable mounts, iron sights for backup, stainless, composite stock, weighs in just over 8 pounds.

Most shots are around 200 yards. We have to get close enough to be sure the ram is a legal trophy. Some hunts we may not be able to close the distance to this range so be prepared to take a 400 yard shot under field conditions. Almost any bullet will work OK for sheep. I still prefer a controlled expansion bullet that will exit and leave a blood trail. You will have your rifle in your hands in steep rough terrain more, and for a longer time, on a sheep hunt than anywhere else. Weight is critical - Ounces become POUNDS!

**Combo hunts** adding a bear or moose plan a .300 with 180 or 200 grain bonded core or all copper bullets as a minimum. The bigger the .300 the more important it is to use a bonded core or monolithic copper bullet. A .338 Win Mag with .250 grain bullets is a better choice if wanting to add a grizzly or brown bear. Be careful when shooting your ram. I



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have seen a .270 Win completely exit a ram at 400 yards and still smoke the rocks behind him! Killing more than one sheep by accident is easy to do by shooting all the way through and striking another ram you cannot see.

**Moose – 30.06 .300 is recommended minimum.**

**No VLD or Match** bullets designed to break up like Sierra, Berger, Ballistic tips, Hornady ELDX. Our bulls are the size of an average Cape Buffalo! Would you take your .270 or 7MM to shoot a Cape Buffalo or a large Bison? Not if you want to assure a quick clean kill. Please reserve the smaller rifles for appropriate game.

**Our five year average weight of the meat on the bone to fly to town was 740 pounds per moose.** Not including the cape or antlers. Knocking one down in its tracks can be a challenge. 30.06 with 180 grain bullets is the recommended minimum. Bonded core or monolithic copper like Barnes XXX.

**Bears - .300's minimum No VLD or Match bullets** fragile bullets designed to break up like Sierra, Berger, Ballistic tips. I could fill a volume. My philosophy is, "You can't kill them too dead. So shoot for the lungs and if it licks its lips shoot it again before it can get up." So shoot the biggest rifle you shoot well with the heaviest bullets. Bonded core or Barnes (most of us shoot Barnes Triple Shocks). .338 Win Mag or a .375 H&H always makes your guide happy. We try to get under 100 yards on Brown Bears and Grizzlies if possible.

***Should I bring a handgun?***

Unless your handgun is your primary it is extra weight on most hunts.

***Gear and Equipment choices-***

Every season we are faced with hunters arriving unprepared with inadequate gear. Bring what is on our gear list and you will have what you need.

By all means bring what you want to use. Be aware the wrong footwear, raingear, rifle, ammunition, or backpack have ruined many hunts. The equipment we suggest is what we use every hunt. It has stood the test of time and our guides. Not for one hunt. For many seasons of abuse.

***Where do I get my License and Tags?***

**Please purchase your license and tags online.**

If you are having difficulties call the office we can help. Our Concierge will help check in Anchorage before your flight to camp.

**\*\*Due to a change in the States licensing regulations we are no longer license vendors and cannot sell License, Tags or provide Harvest reports in the field.\*\***

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=huntlicense.main>

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**What Lic. and Tags do I need?**

**US Citizens not Alaska Resident:**

- i. Non Resident Hunting License
- ii. Metal locking Tags for each animal that requires one. (**NOTE:** We are hunting in Game Management Unit 19C and 16B. Check the regulations for these units. *Wolf tags are **NOT** required.*
- iii. *Harvest reports/tickets – get them for every species even if you do not plan to hunt that animal it will keep your options open; Moose, Caribou, Black Bear, Dall Sheep all require Harvest reports. They must be in your name. These are free and are required for all species except Grizzly/Brown Bear, Wolf and Wolverine*

**NOTE:** Alaska will allow you to place a tag of higher value on another animal or downgrade (one tag = one animal), for instance, a sheep tag is \$850.00 and can be used on a sheep, a moose, a black bear, or a caribou, but, not a grizzly/brown bear which is \$1000.00. The grizzly/brown bear at \$1000.00 is the most expensive and can be used on any one animal during your hunt. By law you must purchase the tag before hunting. Hunting is defined as pursuing with intent to take. There are no refunds once you buy the tag.

**Where do I find the hunting regulations?**

- <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=huntlicense.main>
- <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=wildliferegulations.hunting>
- <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/hunting/maps/gmumaps/gif/16.gif>
- <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/hunting/maps/gmumaps/gif/19.gif>

**Is it a draw?**

No all our tags are over the counter. We are in a General hunt area.

**Can we Party Hunt within our group?**

No.

Party hunting in Alaska is illegal.

**Should I bring my radios?**



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No.

Radios are not allowed for assisting in the hunt. Guides all have communication via Aircraft VHF, SAT Phone, or InReach for logistics and safety.

***What do I do with my meat?***

Most hunters take home some meat to share with friends and family. A small amount is easy to pack up and keep frozen to take with you on the airlines. An entire moose is another matter 740 pounds of hanging weight meat requires a processor to handle it properly assuring great table fare. We work with Alaska Sausage And Seafood in Anchorage. They do a great job.

<https://www.alaskasausage.com>

We can assist in donating guided hunters meat. None of it goes to waste HCA is proud to help feed around 20 families in Alaska each year with your donated meat!

If you choose to handle the meat yourself plan extra time in Anchorage to cut, package, and freeze before shipping. At present I am not aware of a facility in Anchorage offering cold storage without processing.

***How should I pack and what is the weight limit?***

70 pound weight limit

**Pack in soft-sided bags.** Hard suitcases are not well suited to loading in small planes. **Large bags for airline** travel then have your gear in **smaller bags inside the large duffle** for transferring to the bush planes to go to camp. We need small heavy bags and larger light bags to be able to load the planes within the weight and balance limitations. I recommend **keep your backpack empty** for travel and placing it in a duffle bag on the airlines to prevent having the straps ripped off in the conveyor belts or by the baggage gorillas. Keep your backpack empty and have a small duffle to put your extra gear in. This allows us to load the Super Cubs easier and gives you a bag to work out of in Spike camp. I use small waterproof duffle bags, North Fa, Kuiu, Alps, SeaLine, with a zipper top opening or roll top dry bags like I use when rafting. A 10-11 inch tall rectangular bag works great for the belly pod on the cub. The medium Kuiu is a great example.

Airlines require hard gun cases to fly. They need to be left with our concierge, at the charter operators in Anchorage. The exceptions are bow cases. Due to the fragile nature of archery tackle we allow archers to bring their hard cases to camp.

***Alcoholic beverages –***

We do not sell or provide Alcoholic beverages please feel free to bring your favorite adult beverage. Keep in mind aircraft travel with regards to weight. Cans and plastic are preferred to glass bottles.

***Air Charters –***





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***2022 guided hunters have the charter included in the hunt cost.***

**2022** charters estimated at \$1700.00 per person round trip from Anchorage. If your charter is not included you will normally pay Regal Air for your charter when you arrive at their office on Lake Hood in Anchorage. Regal Air accepts cash, check, or credit card. Your flight from Anchorage the Main Camp is scheduled for start date on your contract. Most of the flights are scheduled to depart Lake Hood mid-day. Flights are an hour each way.

Flights to camp are based from Lake Hood Airstrip. We will all be in camp at the Hartman when you arrive in Anchorage and you will meet us at the Hartman Main Camp when you fly in. Normally you will fly on a Cessna 206 with 2-3 guests per flight with your gear.

If you exceed the maximum weight for the aircraft you will be deciding what you are going to leave in Anchorage at the charter operator or paying additional to have a second charter bring your extra gear and paying again on the return to Anchorage after your hunt. Maximum of 70 lbs. gear per hunter please. They will weigh you and your gear before loading the plane. I suggest leaving your street clothes in Anchorage and wearing hunting gear on the charter to camp.

**Feel free to call our office number 907-631-0605.**

Safe Travels,

Jeff Pralle