

Carson Chatterley

Miss Lori

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The Archery Super Slam

Thin mountain air. Boot against rock. Full-curl horns. Sixty yards to thirty with an arrow on the string. *Thud...* A trail of red. The heavy pack-load of success. The Super Slam is the most exciting hunting quest invented, comprising the most adrenaline drenched hunts known to man: Polar Bears, Stone Sheep, Yukon Moose, Grizzlies, Mountain Goats; any hunt imaginable. The current Super Slam consists of 29 species of Big Game recognized by the Pope & Young Club (P&YC) and the Grand Slam Club/Ovis (GSCO). Harvesting all 29 North American Big Game species with archery equipment is the pinnacle of modern bowhunting achievements.

In the early 1970s Bob Householder began keeping track of all the hunters who had harvested the original 27 big game animals recognized by the Boone & Crockett Club (B&C). Soon the P&YC established its record book, and in 1993 they added Central Canadian Barren



Figure 1: Tom Miranda
<https://www.realtree.com/tom-miranda>

Ground Caribou and Tule Elk to the list of Big Game

in North America which brought the total to 29. A

complete Super Slam requires five deer, five caribou,

four sheep, four bears, three elk, three moose, a

Mountain Goat, a Pronghorn, and a Mountain Lion.

Hunters going for the Super Slam must be members of

both the GSCO and P&YC (Miranda 33-35).

Originally when Householder found the GSCO he was only keeping track of hunters who had taken The Grand Slam of North American Wild Sheep—which was the pre-cursor to the Super Slam—and only consists of taking four sheep from the six subspecies of wild sheep in North America: Rocky Mountain Bighorn, California Bighorn, Desert bighorn, Fannin, Dall, and Stone Sheep. (Rocky Mountain and California bighorns are interchangeable as are Stone and Fannin sheep. Fannin Sheep are a Dall/Stone Sheep hybrid and have the physical build and horn shape of a Dall Sheep with the coloration of a Stone Sheep.) John Frost of Alaska was the first bowhunter to achieve the archery Grand Slam. He harvested his fourth and final sheep on Oct. 30, 1985. Less than a month later, Tom Hoffman of New York became the second man to complete the archery Grand Slam. His fourth ram was taken Nov. 28, 1985 (Miranda 195).

The Grand Slam is difficult by itself, but imagine throwing another 25 species onto the goal and bowhunting all of them. That's the Super Slam which would be hard enough with a gun when a hunter only has to close the distance to around two or three hundred yards. With a bow, most hunters have to stalk to fifty yards or closer, raising the chance of spooking the animal. Plus, a modern rifle has fewer moving parts than a modern bow, and if any one thing is off on a bow, it can cause numerous things to go amiss. Wind has much more effect on an arrow at forty yards than a bullet at two-hundred making shots much less consistent. Super Slammer Tom Miranda even had his bow blow-up from extreme cold on a musk ox hunt. With this perspective it's easy to see why only 21 of the 173 registered Super Slams are archery Super Slams.

As if the Super Slam could get any harder, the officials of the GSCO are very picky about which animals may be entered. For example: Mountain, Woodland, and Quebec Labrador Caribou are all the same species, but they must all be harvested in specific areas to qualify as a separate trophy. The good news is that the animals required for the Super Slam are found

throughout the entire North American continent, but many of the animals require hunting with an outfitter. Most of the bears, sheep, and moose are required to be hunted with a guide. Taking outfitter expenses into account, almost all hunters will be financially unable to complete the Super Slam. The lucky few who are privileged enough will have accomplished something that less than one percent of hunters in North America have.

It is beyond argument that the Archery Super Slam is the most difficult hunting accomplishment in North America, but even with all the odds against bowhunters, some still have amazing luck. My favorite Super Slammer, Frank Noska, has officially entered over 130



Figure 2: Frank Noska

<https://album.kuiu.com/post/98156122079>

bow-killed animals into the P&YC record book, and John Frost was lucky enough to qualify his entire Super Slam for the P&YC record book. After hunting for so long, every once in awhile things are bound to go well.

All bowhunters that accomplish the Super Slam are lucky, but they don't just have good luck. They are tough in the fact that they can for days without seeing an animal and just keep hunting with a smile on their face. Henry Ford said: "The man who thinks he can and the man who thinks he can't are both right" (Miranda 344). Most, if not all bowhunters, fall into the category of those who think they can. I know I do, and although I'd love to do the Super Slam, the Grand Slam is a more achievable goal for me. One thing is certain: archery Super Slammers are the best, most determined, hunters on the planet.

Works Cited

Miranda, Tom. *Adventure Bowhunter*. Krause Publications, 2012.