



It was the day before the set up crew was ready to fly to Peterson's Point Lake Lodge...

July 1st was the date Jim, Margaret & Bobby (Jim's brother) were to fly to the lodge but as anxious as they were, they were forced to wait. Winter still had its hold over the tundra and spring was slow to arrive. Each day Jim would check with the float plane pilots who flew over the area for an open water update...excited, they were finally able to lift off 12 days later in a twin otter filled with supplies & food.

The ice begins its retreat from the west end of Point Lake where the narrow river opens into the main lake and for a couple of days big sheets of ice begin to drift by the front of the lodge. It doesn't take long to break up once it decides to go nonetheless we need to be cautious when scheduling the first trip of the year; it is a careful balance of anticipation of beginning the lodge season and not getting caught by the massive moving sheet (s) of ice that will easily obstruct the safe landing of a float plane.

Jim, Margaret & Bobby landed safely on July 13th surrounded by the rolling hills covered in emerald foliage, spotted with the colours from the delicate tundra flowers in bloom. They were able to enjoy this brief period as they unloaded the plane but it only took one hour before their presence was discovered by... **THE BUGS**, and as you know they can be unrelenting.

The summer days passed quickly as they prepared for the first fishing guests to arrive...Dennis Ostrander set the tone right off the start with his fly rod, catching more fish in a day than he could count. For 'trophy' anglers, patience paid off as they trolled the crystal waters landing numerous lake trout in the 20 to 30lb. range. Although there was some decent action on spoons & plugs, most of the lake trout were hitting ciscoes on a herring rig with consistency (rotating flasher was optional). It can take some finesse setting the hook when using ciscoes; at times they tend to nibble the tail and/or hit it from the side so you really need to be careful and make sure you have a good hit before setting the hook. A few lake trout got away but many trophy fish were caught! We had entertaining rivalries this summer between fishing partners about who would catch the most and the biggest!

Needless to say it didn't take long before the sun started to dip down below the horizon and the fishing guests departed for the summer. The lodge was now beginning to fill of hunters eager to bag a Central Canadian Barrenground Caribou.

Guy Eastman of Eastman's Hunting Journals returned to hunt with us this year with his father, Mike Eastman and magazine editor Cameron Hanes. Cameron wrote a five-page article in the November/December issue of Eastman's Bowhunting Journal, on their hunt called "*Life on the Arctic Tundra is Hard and Final. The Legacy Lives On.*" They also produced a show that aired in November on the Outdoor Channel. We have enjoyed working with the Eastman's team. Like us, they are a family owned and operated business and have always believed in ethical hunting & the pursuit of game with a fair chase philosophy.

Saxton Pope best summarizes our hunting season with his quotation "*The true hunter counts his achievement in proportion to the effort involved and the fairness of the sport.*" The hunt was a challenge for our guides and guests as they were boating round trip up to 50 miles per day and averaging 7-10 km of walking as they tracked the scattered caribou migration. But the rewards paid off; they included bagging some very nice caribou and developing lasting friendships by sharing unforgettable adventures while hunting and fishing at Peterson's.

You may recall that the caribou traditionally migrate through the west end of Point Lake (Esker and Hollywood Bay) in mid-August when our hunting season begins. This year caribou were not found in this area until the final hunt; where mature bulls were occasionally spotted; cows, calves and young bulls constituted the majority of the migration at this end of the lake. There were sporadic sightings of caribou on the southwest shore between Esker and Wolf Bay throughout the entire hunting period. The area between the Outpost Camp and Itchen River, where it flows into Point Lake, yielded the best results as small groups of mature bulls were scattered inland throughout this area. Caribou were spotted here from August 17 to September 11th. The season was as unpredictable as the weather. For example, after the last group of hunters headed home with their trophies a large number of mature bulls arrived at the lodge. Our 2005 success rate for two caribou was 96%. We also harvested two white wolves.

The weather was much 'better' than last year. There was not nearly as much rain, wind, sleet or snow squalls. The only exception was a huge windstorm (50-60 mph) that blew in on August 26th, leaving seven of our guests and three of our guides to wait out the storm at our outpost camp. The outpost camp is filled with survival equipment, including sleeping bags, food & fuel in case of emergency situations. The group enjoyed hunkering down for the evening, telling tales of their hunt while eating some fresh caribou backstrap.

On September 16th Chad and Jim began to make preparations to close the lodge for the year. Fortunately they had some time to spend a few days hunting before returning home for the winter. One day while they were out hunting, about ½ mile west of the lodge, they spotted an extremely large bull in a group of twelve. They began their stalk, got in position among some low bushes and focused intently on taking the shot - all of a sudden a group of 20 cows and young bulls stampeded towards their position missing both of them by inches. The stampede picked up the group of bulls and disappeared over the horizon. It was a first experience for both Jim and Chad and makes for another exciting chapter in the Peterson's hunting legacy. Two days later, Chad and Jim headed up to the East Arm of Redrock Lake to Blueberry Hill where Egan had spotted a 48-inch bull moose in the latter part of August. At 12:00 pm they had to rub their eyes a few times before confirming that they spotted a 2-3 year old Bull Moose. They had it down by 1:00pm. It took them three trips to pack it out. This was the first moose harvested at Point Lake!

Eager to participate in wildlife projects and studies, this fall we took part in a pilot project with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to help study the health/condition of caribou. This included recording fat reserves and parasites as well as collecting kidney samples. Results should be available in the New Year; we hope that the data will be available to include in our 2005-2006 Point Lake Newsletter.

It is now December and we are in the midst of winter. Margaret & Amanda are working on completing a couple of overdue projects including the Point Lake Lodge cookbook and revisions to our website, both due for completion January, 2006! Jim is busy with marketing the business and daily administration. Chad continues to work on the Hercules aircraft and enjoys his time hunting moose and caribou.

The shortest day of the year is around the corner, December 21st, when we only get approximately 4 hours of daylight, compared to June 21st when the sun never sets. Of course, there is a dramatic difference in daylight hours in Yellowknife compared to the lodge. Given the extreme environmental conditions in the barrens over the winter it is always a mystery how the harsh whiteness can transform into so many beautiful colours in the spring.

This time of year is always special, not only because it's the time of year for sharing and spending time with family and friends over Christmas but we also look forward to the extended daylight. For, from this date forward things are looking up, as the days become longer the thought of spring is that much closer. Soon Jim will be talking to the bush plane pilots to get a report on how the ice is melting on Point Lake because like every year, he will be anxious to get a line in the water!

It was great to see so many of our past guests return and it was equally enjoyable to make so many new friends. From our home to yours Merry Christmas,

Jim, Margaret, Chad, Amanda Peterson & Staff

MARGARET'S CHRISTMAS RECIPE

Cranberry Chutney

2 large shallots (3 oz), coarsely chopped
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 (12-oz) bag fresh or frozen cranberries (not thawed)
2/3 cup sugar
3 tablespoons cider vinegar
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 teaspoon minced peeled fresh ginger
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon dried hot red pepper flakes

Cook shallots in oil in a 3-quart heavy saucepan over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 3 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, just until berries pop, 10 to 12 minutes, then cool.

SPORTSHOW LISTING

Please stop by and visit us at the following shows:

Chicago, IL	All Canada Show:	January 12 – 15, 2006	booth #: 603
Sacramento, CA	International Sportsmen's Exposition:	January 19 – 22, 2006	booth #: 1965
Denver, CO	International Sportsmen's Exposition:	January 26 – 29, 2006	booth #: 801C
Minneapolis, MN	NMMA Show:	March 28 – April 2, 2006	booth #: 741



We wish you Joy, Happiness & Health
Merry Christmas 2005