



Northern Air Trophy
Matt & Julie Owen
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www.northernairtrophy.com

Outfitted Caribou Hunt Pre-Trip Planning

Meeting Your Expectations

At Northern Air Trophy, we make every effort to meet our clients' expectations. We want to understand your requirements fully before you book your hunt with us. So, please make sure you have a discussion with us early in your planning so that we can make every effort to please you.

This pre-trip planning guide is an extremely helpful tool. It sets the stage for those things that cannot be changed such as weather, village life in Kotzebue, etc. Please read this document thoroughly and a couple of times.

Lastly, make sure you identify your priorities for a successful hunt and let us know before you book with Northern Air Trophy.

Budget Planning

Use this section as your worksheet to help you anticipate the costs associated with an outfitted caribou hunt to the Brooks Range.

Estimated Air Fare to/from Anchorage:	\$600	Actual: _____
Estimated Air Fare to/from Kotzebue:	\$420	Actual: _____
Fees to Northern Air Trophy	\$2,850	Actual: \$2,850
Hotel (one-night) in Anchorage	\$110	Actual: _____
Meals (one night) in Anchorage	\$20	Actual: _____
Meals (per day) in Kotzebue	\$75	Actual: _____
Alaska Hunting License	\$85	Actual: _____
Caribou Tags (\$325)	\$325	Actual: _____
Shipping Meat Home (\$2/pound)	\$200	Actual: _____



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Taxidermy per caribou	\$850	Actual: _____
Extra cash if delays due to weather	<u>\$1,000</u>	Actual: _____
Estimated Total:	\$6,535	Actual:

Schedule Your Hunt

Call Northern Air Trophy as soon as possible to schedule your preferred dates to hunt. Make sure to ask for Julie. Ideally, this should be done by January or February; however, openings may exist as late as March. The caribou hunting season generally runs the length of September.

Julie will ask you to sign an agreement and make a deposit of 50 percent as soon as the agreement is signed.

Obtain Licenses

Visit the Alaska Department of Fish & Game Web site and purchase your resident or non-resident Alaska hunting license and one caribou tag. Non residents may take only one caribou in this region of Alaska. Do not wait to purchase your licenses for your arrival in Alaska. Although the ADF&G Web site states that these are available at many retail locations, our hunters have experienced problems finding available tags once the season has started. You will be purchasing your licenses with credit card.

Although we either see several or none at all, Alaska is the only state where you may purchase a tag to take a wolf. The wolf tag is \$30 and it's recommended that you have a couple in your camp. This is something you may wish to consider.

Schedule Your Flights

You may go directly to your travel agent or to the web site for the airline of your choice; however, other good resources are Travelocity and Orbitz. Often, the sooner you schedule your flight the better your pricing will be. Also, waiting a while can cause prices to improve, just don't wait too long so that you end up paying a premium for one of the last seats available.

For the flight to/from Kotzebue, you'll arrange this on the Web site for Alaska Airlines. Pricing generally stays consistent so you're not likely to find a better rate by waiting or scheduling early. Just schedule the flight as soon as you are able. Ideally, you will want to take the first flight into Kotzebue in the



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morning. There are generally three flights; however, the earlier you arrive the greater the likelihood that you'll be prepared with the information you need to take your flight with Matt out to the tundra.

Book Your Hotel

You may go directly to Kotzebue without a layover in Anchorage. But, the early morning flights into Kotzebue could make for a very long and tiring day. We recommend that you get a good night's sleep in Anchorage and arrive in Kotzebue well-rested and ready for what's to come. There are many hotels in Anchorage and they range from \$150 to \$180 per night for double occupancy.

Visit the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Web site to find a hotel that suits your needs. They can be found at www.anchoragechamber.org.

Although there are no hotels within walking distance of the airport, several of our hunters like the Puffin Inn for their free shuttle service and fair pricing. Nearly all hotels are near to a variety of restaurants that serve many kinds of tasty meals. Consider trying some Alaska halibut – you ARE in Alaska.

Preparing Yourself for Kotzebue

Please know that we take every safety precaution to get you to and from your hunting camp. If the weather is foul or visibility is bad, we don't fly. Your safety is our primary concern. That said, the time of year can and often will cause delays that you ought to be prepared for.

Kotzebue is not a large town by any means. It is pretty easy for most healthy hunters to walk from one end of the commercial district to the other. Yet, taxi service is readily available and it will be about \$10-15 to get from one end to the other.

The town is about 95 percent Native and you'll be able to witness a great deal about their culture by walking around town and being friendly. There's a pretty interesting Native arts gift shop that offer some unique gifts to bring back home for loved ones. Many businesses, however, in Kotzebue run on Kotzebue time and this can be very different than what you're used to.

Kotzebue is dry. There are no liquor stores or bars to spend time in. It is illegal to buy or sell liquor in Kotzebue but the residents may possess it and many will have it shipped to them. That said, if you want a cocktail, be prepared to bring your own with you to Kotzebue.

Usually, there are two restaurants to choose from. There are a few other shops that are open from time to time to offer some variety, but they cannot be counted on. The best food, with the greatest variety can be found at the Bayside Restaurant. They also have pleasant hotel accommodations if weather should require you to stay in Kotzebue for a few days.



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If you are on a guided hunt, Northern Air Trophy covers the cost of your accommodations if a delay should be necessary. If you are on an outfitted hunt or a drop hunt, you will want to be prepared with reservations at any of the following Kotzebue hotels:

Bayside Inn: 907-442-3600

Nullagvik Hotel: 907-442-3331

Bison Street Store: 907-442-2758

You can learn more about the village of Kotzebue and understand options available to you while you're staying here by visiting <http://kotzpdweb.tripod.com/kotzlinks.html>.

We will readily admit that Kotzebue is strange to many first-time visitors. Businesses are not clearly marked with signage and it's difficult to know who offers what. If you need something, in many cases, you just have to ask. Often, many hunters are able to find much of what they need at the AC Store. They carry a wide variety of groceries (be prepared for expensive food) and general merchandise. At the minimum, it's an interesting place to visit if the weather is forcing you to spend some time in the village.

At the minimum, please bring a good book or two. You may always read to pass the time and do so at our base tent on the airport tarmac or in a restaurant.

Hotel accommodations are generally easy to obtain if weather should turn sour on us. Just be prepared with a credit card and/or cash to cover your expenses during these delays.

Most businesses take credit cards and there is a cash machine at the Well's Fargo bank.

Our best advice is to be mentally prepared for an unusual village with unusual customs. Be prepared to be patient if the weather should force us to delay your trip into the tundra. Be patient and friendly with the locals. Some locals won't be too excited to help non-Native hunters. Just know that you can go a long way by being friendly and respectful. Avoid conversations that may become adversarial. You need not worry about physical violence. However, some locals feel as though your presence is a detriment to the caribou population. Stay respectful and be a good ambassador for the hunting community.

We request that our hunters do NOT wear camouflage or blaze orange hunting attire while walking around the village. You will find the locals to be far more friendly and helpful if you are not wearing your hunting gear. We want your experience to be a good one, so please consider this important request.



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Your cell phone is not likely to work in Kotzebue and certainly will not work in the surrounding area. Northern Air Trophy has satellite phones for guided camps so that the guide can be in touch with the base camp. Outfitted hunts or drop hunts may rent satellite phones from the following providers. These rental units are recommended and can be sent directly to the hunter's home or can be picked up at Northern Air Trophy in Kotzebue. These phones are entirely the hunter's responsibility.

- TSE Communications: 800-770-5500 or 907-561-6501
- ACS: 800-808-8083 or 907-563-8000

Hone Your Skills & Be Prepared

Choose a firearm that you are comfortable with and practice, practice, practice. Many shots are going to be in the 100-150 yard range; however, it will benefit you to be able to be comfortable at 200 yards shots and 300 yard shots. Even if you're already an incredible marksman, it will be wise to set your scope sights to 150 and run no less than 50 rounds through your gun at 100 yards, 50 rounds at 200 yards and 50 rounds at 300 yards.

Some of our hunters take the time to load their own ammunition to come up with a recipe that improves their accuracy and consistency. Just find what works well for you so that you can always hit a paper plate at 150 yards.

Be physically ready to handle the terrain. If you walk 1-2 miles per day (at least 4 days a week) in June, 2-3 miles a day in July and 4-5 miles a day in August, you will certainly be ready for anything this terrain has to offer. If you have access to a treadmill, use the incline feature to be prepared for uphill walking.

Keep your gear selection to a minimum but choose gear that is going to be 100 percent reliable and keep you comfortable and happy. Ask a lot of questions of other hunters and rely on their advice when choosing the gear you will take with you. Other hunters will be far more helpful than any clerk at a retail store. Review various gear selections over time and buy items at appropriate times so you can test and try each. Do not wait for the last minute to buy any gear that you may need. For example, if you're going to bring shooting sticks (bi-pod or monopod), buy this item in June and practice with it. It will make a huge difference in your success rate when you are finally in the field.

You will need detailed maps. Consider picking up the DeLorme Alaska Atlas and Gazetteer. This will help you get to know the details of the Kotzebue Sound area and key mountain ranges and other village locations.

If you really want detailed maps, you can find the link to TopoZone maps on our Web site and you'll be pleased with the detailed maps they have to offer you.



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Outfitted Hunt Equipment Checklist

Please know that most major airlines allow up to two bags per person that may not exceed 100 pounds total. No one bag may weigh more than 70 pounds. You may break these rules, however, and pay an extra fee to the airlines when you check in at the gate. Be sure to weigh your gear before you get to the airport.

Please check your airlines Web site for properly carrying firearms into an airport. It is not difficult, but you will want to make sure you follow their guidelines closely to prevent any problems.

Once you arrive in Kotzebue, you will want to have smaller bags inside your bags to be able to pack your gear into. The storage spaces in our planes are too small for many of the larger style bags you may be carrying with you on your way to Kotzebue. Make sure these smaller bags are lightweight and waterproof to protect your gear. Having these smaller bags makes things so much easier for you and for us as we prepare to take you into the field.

You will want to leave one bag behind with Northern Air Trophy that includes a clean pair of clothes. Northern Air Trophy allows no more than **70 pounds of gear per person** for the outfitted caribou hunts. Please respect this policy and help us help you get into the field quickly and efficiently.

Here's a great checklist for the Outfitted Caribou Hunt:

Sleeping

- One Sleeping bag (good to -10F, no down bags)
- One sleeping pad (provided)
- Cots (provided)
- Tent (provided)

Clothing

- Two pair glove liners
- One pair water/windproof glove shells
- One water/windproof camo hat with brim
- One balaclava or stocking hat
- One water/windproof camo pants or bibs
- One water/windproof jacket with hood
- One wool or fleece light jacket
- One wool or fleece pants
- Two wool or fleece shirts
- One wool or acrylic sweater
- One flannel shirt
- One pair jeans
- One pair waterproof hiking boots



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- One pair camp shoes
- 10 pairs of socks (at least four pair are wool)
- One set of lightweight, wicking long underwear
- Five pair of undershirts and underwear (non-cotton is best)
- One personal hygiene kit (toothbrush and paste, deodorant, aspirin, band-aids, towel)

Hunting Gear

- One hard-sided gun case for airport travel
- One rifle (.270 caliber or larger)
- 40 rounds of ammunition
- One rifle scope with rain cover
- Binoculars or spotting scope
- One diamond hone knife sharpener
- One skinning knife
- One utility knife
- One Wyoming (bone) saw
- One Mag-lite with extra batteries
- One handheld GPS with back-up batteries and back-up compass
- One camera or video recorder with spare batteries
- One day pack
- One Nalgene water bottle
- One space blanket
- One bottle Deet insect repellent
- One head net
- One pair sunglasses
- Game bags for meat and cape
- Extra roll of toilet paper
- One butane lighter (purchased in Kotzebue)
- Gun cleaning patches (oiled patches)
- Hunting license and tags

Optional Gear

- Range finder
- Shooting sticks (monopod or bi-pod)
- Maps of the area
- One roll of duct tape (you just never know)

Food

- Meals and snacks are provided

Cooking Utensils



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- All are provided

Offer a Helping Hand

If you end up waiting at the base tent at the airport tarmac, offer returning hunters an extra hand with their gear and trophy. You'll hear many great stories and get a lot of tips that will help you in the field.

The more helpful you are to returning hunters, the sooner we can get to you and your hunting party. Truly, you'll be surprised by how many new friends you get to make from locations around the country.

Caring for Your Caribou Meat and Trophy

In the field, you will take great precautions to properly cut all your meat and make sure to follow the ADF&G guidelines to ensure there is no waste. Meat must come out of the field "ON THE BONE." New regulations are very stringent so as to prevent wanton waste.

Upon your return to Kotzebue, you will probably want to further bone and process your meat for ease in shipping. There are no businesses in Kotzebue that will do this work for you. We have waxed corrugated boxes that we will sell to you. We also have a friend that you can pay to use his facility (\$20 per person) to further process and package your meat. The meat will need to be inserted into plastic to prevent leakage before being inserted into the boxes. We have bags available as well.

You will want to cool your caribou meat as soon as possible. Northern Air Trophy will offer you assistance if you end up delayed in Kotzebue for a few days.

It is possible to donate your meat to the area food shelf if you don't wish to bring all of it home. Northern Air Trophy will provide the proper forms for you to complete and make the call for the meat to be picked up. You are responsible for your caribou meat until it is picked up by the food shelf. Although it is not the requirement of Alaska Department of Fish & Game, it is the policy of Northern Air Trophy that any donated meat must include more than neck and rib meat. Donated meat must be accompanied by at least one front shoulder and at least one hind quarter. This policy helps maintain good relations with the local community and shows them that our hunters are respectful of the animal and appreciate the value of all usable parts.

Caring for Your Trophy

You may package and ship your cape and antlers back home (about \$300-350) or you may ask for a referral for the taxidermy. Shipping from Alaska plus the taxidermy will generally be about \$850. Your



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cape will be stored in a freezer at our base on the tarmac and your antlers will be stored outside until the trophies from the entire season are shipped at one time to the taxidermist.

If you prefer to bring your trophy to your own taxidermist, we will help you obtain appropriate boxes and packing materials. Please note: capes must be carefully packaged so as not to leak blood and antlers must be carefully wrapped so as not to protrude through the side of the box. Some guests ignore this logic and end up re-packing their trophy a time or two.

Answering Questions

Should there be a question or two that is not answered here, you can always call Julie at Northern Air Trophy for assistance.

We appreciate your business and want to ensure that you have a safe and enjoyable hunting experience.