

# AGE THE Bull

This is the 31<sup>st</sup> in our series of guess the age of the bull.

THIS IS ONE OF THE PHOTOS OF LAST ISSUE'S BULL AND THESE ARE THE PANEL'S OPINIONS:



## >Tyron

This bull is in terrible physical condition, most likely in late winter - his hips are nearly sticking out through his skin and he'll need to be lucky for spring to kick in early to save him.

He's very old - it's always hard to see the tiny age rings for the last couple of years on truly old bulls but it's easy to see he's stacking them up close to his hair line.

He has very little horn height above his forehead for an old bull, and is very narrow horned. He looks to only be around the 8.5" - 9" wide mark to me when considering ear tip to ear tip he'll be averaging somewhere between 9.5"-10.5".

He looks like he may have his right horn slightly broomed although hard to tell for sure. His bases are very small also, as visually he has no mass at all when considering the lack of height on the horns to begin with (bull's with no height often look like they have bigger bases proportionally). When taking into account his lack of height of horn, lack of width of horn, and small bases this bull's not going to measure well. My guess is he's 10+ years in age. He has under 8" bases, 11-11.5" in horn length.

Douglas score 38-40 at best. Great old character bull but won't score well.

## >Marcus

This is definitely an older bull, difficult to see all his growth rings in the photos, but he looks to be at least 11 years old though could be up to 13 years old. He is not in good condition,

his hips are very obvious. Though having survived winter he might make another year. His horns are not huge considering his age, his right horn tip is well broomed and he has also rubbed the ridges or keel off the front of his horns. By doing this a bull can often reduce their overall horn length by an inch or so. Rubbing off their ridges also greatly reduces the bull's base measurements, as is the case with this bull, his horns lack mass.

My guess is this bull's right horn is in the 12" vicinity could be just over or just under, his left horn looks a bit better probably around 12 1/2. His bases look to be less than 8" so I will say 7 3/4". So if we say his right horn is 12" he is likely score 39 1/2 Douglas Score or thereabouts.

This bull will never be a top tahr trophy given what he has rubbed off or broken from his horns, however this bull has a heap of character and is the ideal animal for a hunter to take for their first tahr trophy. It is far better that people take an older bull like this than kill a young bull with good tips full of potential. Now that we have a significantly smaller tahr resource we are all going to have to be more selective with what animals we choose to take.

## >Joseph

First glance he is certainly no obvious 'trophy'. A closer look reveals his age.

He is thin through the body and looking pretty worn out, with his head turned toward us we can easily see the washboard effect of stacked annuli. This bull is certainly in the 10+ age

bracket, and judging by his condition he is nearing the end of his life. An older bull will be very difficult to age exactly on the hoof, as once they get into the 10-12+ age bracket those annuli can be so close its hard to see.

His horns show obvious signs of wear, missing ridges and worn tips. It's also worth noting the thin bases on this bull. Fairly common traits of West Coast bulls of this age class. He would sit around the 12" mark, maybe 12.5 if we are being generous, small bases would be not much over 8", if at all. So horn wise he is no monster, but a bull like this will certainly not get any bigger. He is fully grown and likely at the end of his life cycle.

Would you shoot him? It really depends on what you're looking for. A bull like this is a 'trophy' in my books, he is old and worn with plenty of character and has lived his life. He will never get any bigger as a 'trophy', and these types of bulls are the perfect animal to take for hunters looking for a good mature bull. It is much better we shoot these animals, than the 5-year-old 12 incher with loads of potential.

## >Greg

As the guys have said, this bull has had a rough time of it nutrition wise, and has no mass in his bases. He also had a lack of feed in his first year as his lamb tips are stunted as well. All in all, he is definitely an old bull that will make a great character trophy for someone's first bull, but he won't score well. I would be guessing around the 11.5 inch mark with under 8 inch bases so around 38 DS.



## EVALUATE THE STAG

**THE WINNER**  
OF OUR READERS GUESSES  
AND THE STONEY CREEK  
PRIZE FOR ISSUE 80 IS:

**M. Baker**  
Who guessed 10 years plus.

For Red stags we have a mix of our existing Wapiti and tahr judges - taxidermist and hunter **Tyron Southward**, trophy stag deer farmer and hunter **Jere Dearden**, and **Cam Speedy** who needs no re-introduction.

What we have asked them to do is give us an age estimate, and a trophy evaluation. As with the Wapiti and tahr, readers can

email in an age and general trophy evaluation, and the closest to the judge's estimates will win the prize. Please do email in any good pics or ideally series of pics you have of any Wapiti bulls, bull tahr or Red stags, and if chosen for the Age the bull/stag candidate you also will win a prize. So let's see how we go on aging and trophy evaluating Red stags!

## AS WITH THE OTHERS...

Readers can email in an age and Douglas Score guess, and the closest to the judge's estimates will win the prize. Please do send in any good series of pics you have of any bull tahr, and if chosen for the Age the tahr candidate you also will win a prize.

Email in your answers and  
any photos for future competitions to;  
[agethestag@nzhunter.co.nz](mailto:agethestag@nzhunter.co.nz)

## FOR THE NEXT ISSUE...

First up we have photos from expert West Coast hunter and great mate Derek Johnson, who some of you will remember from some of our tahr and Wapiti TV Show

WE NEED  
ONGOING PICS  
COMING IN TO KEEP  
THIS SERIES GOING  
**SO SEND  
THEM IN  
& WIN A  
PRIZE**

