

Piggin' out in South Florida

by Rick Connell

I was quite surprised when my name was drawn at the 2009 spring shoot as the winner of the drawing for the hog hunt in Arcadia, Florida with the Archery Outfitters crew. This is something I had wanted to do for quite awhile as I had never been that far south from my home in the northern part of the state. After checking with several of my buddies to see if there was any interest in their wanting to go with me, our Vice President Jeff Hester said he would. It was on! I contacted Nickie Roth and made arrangements to come down this past December and give it a go. Mr. Roth has been a long time supporter of our club and has donated this hunt many years as a TBOF raffle.

The day finally came for us to venture south and Jeff and I found ourselves pulling into the town of Arcadia ready for an adventure. Mr. Roth's property is about eighteen miles south of the town and is a working cattle ranch with lots of woods, swamps and LOTS of wild hogs. Even though the weather wasn't cooperating with us (rainy and quite cool) we were itching to get into the woods. After proper introductions to our guide and the other hunters (we were the only traditional bow hunters on the outing), we were given a tour of most of the property and allowed to pick out our stands. Every stand we looked at was setup absolutely perfect for the traditional bowhunter. On these hunts you're allowed to hunt from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning with a limit of two hogs and one deer.

Our hunts were literally a wash out on Friday and Saturday morning, as the rain really came down hard. The clouds parted Saturday afternoon and after a bit of practice with our bows we headed to our stands. It wasn't long after I settled in that I had a decent size pig come wandering by and froze in its tracks, as it must

have caught wind of me, switched ends and ran off. That event got the adrenaline going and I knew the day was only going to get better. Sure enough about an hour later here comes a pack right up to my stand with the biggest of the bunch giving me plenty of time to plan for a shot. I must have said "pick-a-spot" to myself about a thousand times as I drew back and loosed the arrow. POW! I hit it and actually made a decent shot with my RER recurve. The pigs freaked and all headed for safer places, but I felt confident that this one was going to be down soon. I waited about twenty minutes, came down and started looking for sign of a hit. I quickly found both pieces of my broken cedar arrow and plenty of blood. There was plenty of sign to follow, but the pig had run into the thickest palmetto stand I'd ever ventured into. I turned around and headed out to find Jeff. Sure enough, he had just about the same experience, so we had two pigs to find in the dark. With the help of our guide, Don, we were soon loading up our pigs to head to the skinning rack. The pig I took had the neatest coloration of any I've taken and it made some pretty decent sausage to boot. Everyone there took hogs and we were also treated to a "Redneck Limo" tour of the property on a swamp buggy at the conclusion of our hunt on Sunday. Some of the biggest hogs we've ever seen in the wild were out feeding with the cattle, which would make for some excellent ground stalking opportunities. All in all, I was very happy with my adventure on Mr. Roth's property and look forward to planning another trip there soon. Nickie's website is www.archeryoutfitters.us and his phone number is 727-525-2825.