

California Hybrid

By Marlon Holden

California Pacific Hybrid deer are small, part Mule deer, part Blacktail with an average weight of 120 lbs. If you are not familiar with Pacific Hybrids, size wise they roughly compare to Coues deer. While they are a different species altogether, a great buck is generally around the 110" mark. The hunt was set in the rut and it was hot. After glassing for what seemed like hours we hadn't seen much aside from a lot of small bucks in the 60"-90" class range, when my buddy whispered, "I got one." I focused in on the spot he was glassing and couldn't believe my eyes. A heavy, 21" wide, deep tined 3 point stepped out and turned broadside at 350 yards. I had no doubt he was a shooter and picked up my bow.

It was so dry and noisy after 45 minutes I had only gone 80 yards—only to find the buck was moving toward the next canyon and was making his way up to bed. As soon as the buck went over the ridge I ran up the backside of the ridge he was on to get above him. When I figured I was above him I crossed over the ridge and found I was several hundred

yards above him. As I made my approach, I glassed up a bedded 4x3 that I hadn't seen. He was bedded below me with the other buck feeding his way uphill 200 yards or so below the bedded buck. I snuck away from the bedded buck and angled closer to the feeding 3 point. Finally I was behind some brush with an arrow nocked and waiting along his travel path.

With the 4x3 still bedded and above me now, I glassed and spotted the big 3's rack bobbing toward me at 18 yards and closing! I had a great shooting lane picked out and came to full draw. As he proceeded to come up to me he stood at 10 yards, taking notice of the bedded buck. The bedded buck stood and postured, grunting as he now stepped toward the 3 point. The two were now no more than 12 yards apart and locked on one another. My heart was pounding as the big 3 point took two steps, turned slightly left, and exposed his vitals at 8 yards. I released and punched both his lungs! At the shot the two charged each other and they fought viciously for a few seconds before the 3 point lost pressure and fell over, feeling victorious the 4x3

kept charging and goring my downed buck! He was so aggressive and intent on mauling the other, I backed up a few steps, yelled at the buck and bashed some brush to no avail.

Two minutes later, the buck had his fill and departed. As I walked up to the buck and pulled him from the brush, I was in shock! I knew he was good but wow! He ended up net green scoring 130" and grossing 134" as a 3x3! He is an absolute brute of a buck with a gorgeous cape.

