



# BANG FOR

## THE WEATHERBY MARK V HUNTER RIFLE & HAWKE FRONTIER SCOPE DELIVER AT CHECK OUT AND IN THE FIELD

BY MARK HOFFMAN

Weatherby's history has been charted by the development of trail-blazing cartridges and some mighty fine rifles. Their rifles have either orchestrated or reflected market trends, with the introduction of dangerous game to ultra-lightweight mountain rifles.

While many of these rifles showcase innovative cartridge technology, Weatherby wisely did not ignore the many standard and proven cartridges that hunters had grown to love. That tradition was reflected in the 2022 introduction of the Mark V Hunter, as they stayed the course by chambering it in seven of their magnum cartridges and 10 non-Weatherby cartridges. Meanwhile, what piqued my interest was the Hunter's price tag.

Historically, Mark V rifles have carried a heftier price tag than their Vanguard models. In some cases, considerably heftier, but not so with the Hunter.

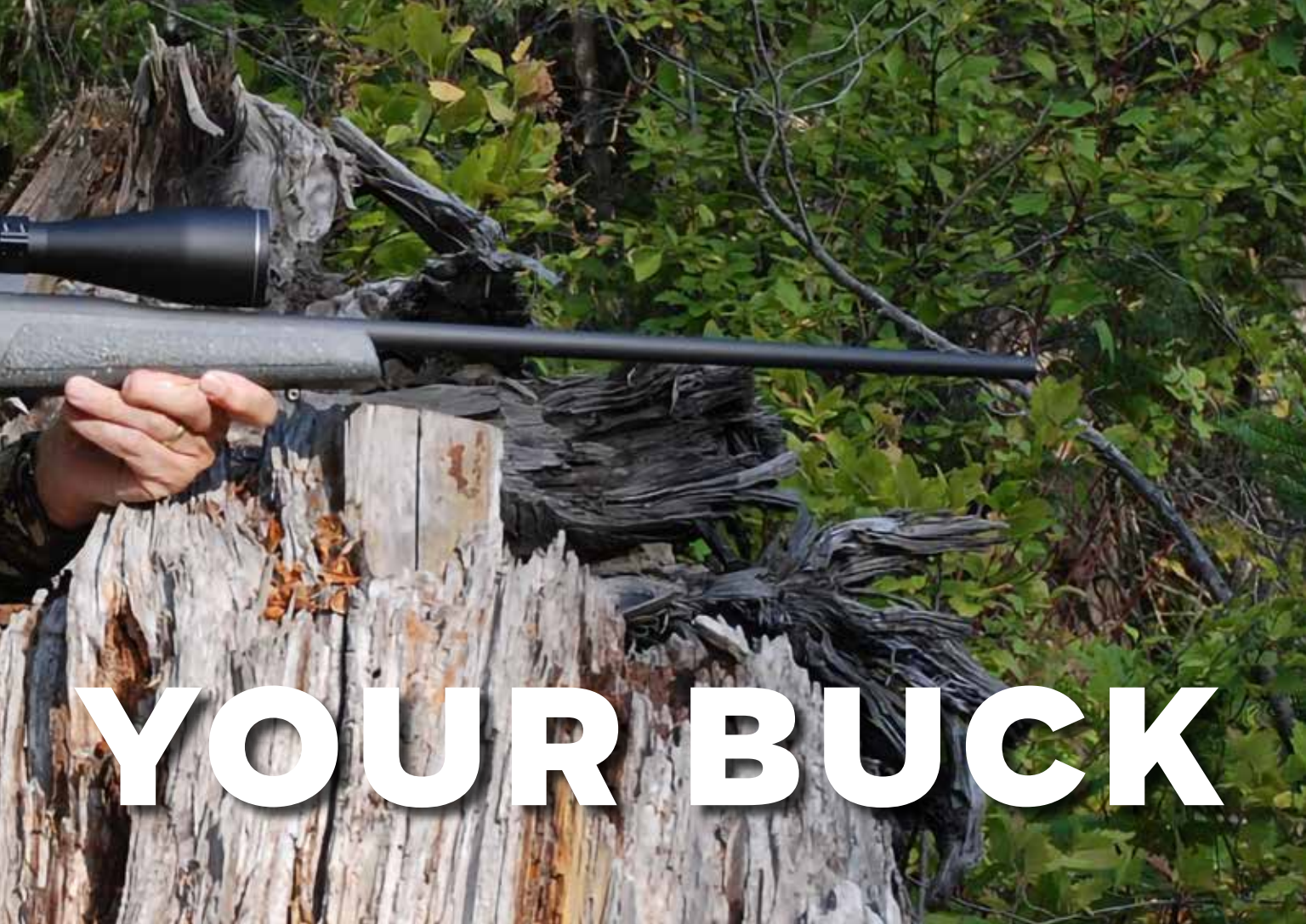
### **WEATHERBY MARK V HUNTER 6.5 WEATHERBY RPM**

While this is a standalone model with a new stock design, it does carry many of the attributes of the Mark V Backcountry series that Weatherby introduced

in 2021. The Hunter's stock features the same trim, flat-bottom forend, ambidextrous palm swells, aluminum pillar construction and is finished in an Urban & Black Speckle. The recoil pad is new, specifically designed by Weatherby for the Hunter. Their engineers increased the wall thickness in order to provide additional support during the heavy recoil generated by magnum cartridges.

Mechanically, the Hunter utilizes





# YOUR BUCK

Weatherby's signature multi-lug bolt system. It is available in both standard and magnum action sizes, with the standard utilizing a six-lug design, while the heavier-recoiling magnums use the traditional nine locking lugs. The Hunter also offers other safety features, including three rings of steel around the base of the cartridge, a fully enclosed bolt shroud and three gas relief ports in the bolt body to vent dangerous pressure should there be an unlikely cartridge failure.

The barrel, receiver and trigger guard are finished in cobalt Cerakote and the bolt, bolt knob and safety are finished in graphite black Cerakote. The weight-reduced, deeply fluted bolt features a removable bolt knob that, with its 54-degree throw, offers quicker follow-

up shots and maximum scope clearance. The Hunter is equipped with a Triggertech trigger that provides a zero-creep break, extremely short overtravel, is externally adjustable and, with its precision-cut stainless-steel components, ensures safe, reliable and consistent trigger pulls from shot to shot. The Hunter, like all Mark V rifles, also comes with a three-shot sub-MOA accuracy guarantee when utilizing their factory or premium ammunition. Last, the barrel is threaded 1/2x28 for the potential installation of a brake.

## RIFLE SPECIFICATIONS

**Calibre:** 6.5 Wby. RPM  
**Overall length:** 45 inches  
**Length of pull:** 14 inches

**Weight:** 6.2 pounds  
**Barrel length & contour:** 24 inches  
**Twist rate:** 1-8 inches  
**Magazine capacity:** Four plus one  
**Drop at comb:** .625 inches  
**Drop at heel:** .30 inches

**Note:** Weatherby confirmed that none of the present Hunter chamberings can or will they ever be able to attain 10,000 joules.

## HAWKE FRONTIER 2.5-15X50 LR

I did not choose a scope for the Hunter lightly. I was determined to find a scope that offered optical quality with an array of features, but at a price point that matched the cost and potential performance of the Hunter. A bit of research led straight to the Hawke Frontier



Weatherby Hunter.



Hawke Frontier  
2.5-15x50 LR scope.

2.5x15x50 LR. It ticked off every one of my requisites, including a non-cluttered lighted dot reticle, a reticle that uses thicker outer posts for quicker target acquisition in low light, but thinner inner posts, centered by a dot, to keep the target visible when aiming. Meanwhile, only the dot is illuminated (six levels) so you don't have to deal with the glare of a fully illuminated reticle. The lower thin portion of the vertical post also includes a number of hold-over aim points.

The Frontier's optical quality begins with Hawke's new H7 optics that features optimum clarity and light transmission. Starting with the glass, it has the very best glass and coatings Hawke has ever offered. To be exact, high-grade, low-dispersion crown glass with 21-layer, fully multi-coated lenses. The 2.5-15x50 LR also features side focus, wide angle

field of view, high volume eye box, four inches of eye relief, multi-LED high-intensity reticle, fast focus eyepiece with lock ring, patented exposed Zero Lock 'N' Stop elevation turret, zoom magnification throw lever (removable) and a 30-millimetre mono-tube chassis. It is additionally shock proof, nitrogen purged, water and fog proof and comes with professional Flip-Up lens covers and a Hawke lifetime warranty.

#### SCOPE SPECIFICATIONS

- Magnification:** 2-15x
- Objective lens:** 50 millimetres
- Length:** 14.8 inches
- Weight:** 23.3 ounces
- Eye relief:** Four inches
- Tube:** 30-millimetre aluminum mono-tube
- Elevation/windage adjustment:** 110 MOA

- Field of view:** 43.3 – 7.5 feet at 100 yards
- Exit pupil:** 0.79 – 0.13 inches
- Reticle:** LR dot
- Focal plane:** Second

#### TEST RESULTS

I had originally set my sights on testing the Hunter in a .240 Wby. Magnum, but due to the uncertainty surrounding ammunition availability, a 6.5 Wby. RPM became its replacement.

Out of the box, the light weight of the Hunter so surprised me that I headed straight for my postal scale, where it weighed a paltry six pounds. With Talley lightweight medium-high mounts, the Hunter and Frontier weighed seven-and-a-half pounds together. I then checked the trigger pull weight, which, at its factory set weight of three pound, four

SCOPE PHOTO BY HAWKE

#### FACTORY AMMUNITION

Brand	Bullet	Advertised Velocity (fps)	Group Size (in)
Weatherby Select Plus	140-grain Nosler AccuBond	3,075	1.251
Weatherby Select	140-grain Hornady InterLock	2,975	.510

#### HANDLOADS

Bullet	Powder	Case	Manual Velocity (fps)	Group Size (in)
Hornady 143-grain ELDX	H1000	Weatherby	2,990	1.610
Hornady 129-grain SST	H1000	Weatherby	3,120	.718
Hornady 140-grain InterLock	H1000	Weatherby	3,015	.640
Nosler 140-grain AccuBond	H1000	Weatherby	3,025	.405
Barnes 127-grain LRX	H1000	Weatherby	3,175	.958
Barnes 127-grain LRX	H1000	Weatherby	3,115	1.052
Barnes 120-grain TTSX	H1000	Weatherby	3,210	.960
Berger 130-grain VLD Hunting	H1000	Weatherby	3,140	.910
Berger 140-grain VLD Hunting	H1000	Weatherby	3,015	.540

*Note: Manual velocity refers to the velocity extrapolated from Hodgdon's reloading data and reduced by 50 feet per second to account for the Hunter's shorter barrel. All groups are three shots at 100 yards.*





Handloaded 140-grain Nosler AccuBond bullets and Hodgdon H1000 powder provided the best accuracy out of all the ammunition tested with this excellent .405-inch, 100-yard, three-shot group.

ounces, was a touch heavier that I wanted so I adjusted it down to a consistent two pounds, 12 ounces. The trigger lived up to its billing, with no identifiable creep or overtravel. I also liked the clean lines of the Hunter, as well as its palm swells and textured grip on both it and the forend. The larger pear-shaped bolt knob added visual appeal and user-friendly practicality.

While the Frontier scope was impressive across its full range of features, editorial space limits me to a few key notables. Foremost was optical clarity, which was superb from edge to edge. The user-friendly lift and adjust turrets, the long eye relief and the uncluttered lighted dot reticle were also likes. Before heading off to the range, I removed the Zero Lock 'N' Stop feature, as it would simplify zeroing a variety of loads. In fact, if you are not into ultra-long-range shooting, I would

recommend removing it permanently. Just follow the instructions in the accompanying Hawke manual.

I was only able to include two factory loads that I had on hand and nine handloads. This, despite a continued effort to include all four of Weatherby's factory offerings. Shipping has become a real issue.

#### LAST SHOT

I was not sure what kind of accuracy to expect from the Hunter, this despite my past successes with a number of Weatherby rifles. Possibly it was its light weight or barrel contour or a combination of both. I should have feared not, as seven of my handloads bettered MOA, with a couple hovering at or under a .500 inch. Weatherby Select 140-grain Hornady InterLock also delivered .510-inch accuracy.

I was impressed with both this rifle and scope. For their price point, they delivered on all fronts. The rifle, with its simple, clean lines, accuracy, weight and balance, fit and finish bettered my expectations. The scope ticked every one of my requisite feature boxes, as well as providing optical clarity well beyond its price tag. ✕



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