

PRODUCT REVIEW



SILENT PREDATOR™

WOOL APPAREL FOR THE SERIOUS HUNTER

A Cold Weather Hunting Puzzle Solved

By Kevin Wilson



If you hunt in sub-zero temperatures, then you know the challenges. Ambient cold is one thing; add biting winds and deep snow... well, the great outdoors can be a downright miserable place to be. Venture into the woods unprepared and you're in for a rude awakening. Dress properly and all will be right with the world. What does dressing properly mean? In a nutshell, this means layering and wearing materials that retain body heat and cut the wind. Enter one of the newest players on the hunting garment scene: Silent Predator (www.silentpredator.ca).

For many years a shortlist of manufacturers have been providing lines of tight-knit woven wool garments of varying quality. Widely recognized

for their dry or wet heat-retention capabilities, even with the onslaught of high-tech materials and all the marketing hype that goes with them, wool continues to rule as the top choice for cold-weather hunting. If you're searching for the ultimate cold-weather system, look no further, Silent Predator has what you need.

CANADIAN MADE

Silent Predator is an exciting new division of Manitoba-based Modern Headwear. Filling a distinct gap in the market, the Silent Predator line was designed with the hands-on assistance of serious hunters and outfitters, to ensure warmth and comfort in the outdoors.

In my experience, wool apparel is usually expensive and the quality variable. When I discovered this stuff, I was excited to hear that it was Canadian-made, right here in Winnipeg and the quality is second to none. Furthermore, Silent Predator garments are indeed much easier on the pocketbook. They keep the cost down by manufacturing the garments locally and selling direct to outfitters. Knowing this, I had to put it to the test. In my home province of Alberta, most winters offer up a healthy dose of extreme cold and harsh winter conditions, ideal for field-testing garments of this nature. I have to admit, with the mild winter of 2012, I had to wait until heavy snows came and the temperatures finally turned frigid. Putting it to the test during coyote season, my suspicions were confirmed. In a word, this stuff is hard core. The wool used in Silent Predator garments is 22 oz. pre-shrunk virgin wool. The fiber content is 90 per cent wool and 10 per cent cotton. I've used other high end wool hunting garments and I can say, without a doubt, Silent Predator is the real deal. Every stitch, fold, and feature is strong and clearly designed with the seasoned hunter in mind.

CUSTOM SIZING

In my view, one of the most appealing features of Silent Predator hunting apparel is the fact that you order it to a custom fit. Each garment is made with personalized measurements that you provide when placing your order.



One of my own frustrations in buying hunting clothes is that I usually take a size medium pant, but I have broad shoulders, so I need at least a large top. With Silent Predator, I simply provided my own unique measurements (with some minor allowance for layering), and in a matter of weeks it arrived at my doorstep. The end result was a high quality garment that fit like a glove.

FEATURES

I have the insulated white tail parka, polar bib pant, and Dakota vest. Available in two pattern options – Stealth Brown and Grey Ghost – I opted for the Gray Ghost given its ability to

blend in a variety of environments common to the aspen parkland and mixed forests prevalent throughout most of the areas I hunt.

While lighter garment options are available, I opted for the heavy stuff, namely to capitalize on its insulating value. The $\frac{3}{4}$ length parka has four practical open pockets for easy access, and 4 oz. wool poly insulation. The fit and design is functional and comfortable. It is literally loaded with features like a zip-off removable hood, two-way zipper to the top of the collar, an inside shock cord waist adjustment, gusseted cuffs, inside and outside pockets, and get this ... a waterproof breathable membrane on the lining that covers the shoulder area front and back. I sweat a lot, even in the extreme cold. I heat up

and cool down fast. These garments breathe and kept me comfortable through the extremes.

The bibs are equally functional and especially warm. They've got a waist adjustment, two-way zipper, a gusseted crotch, adjustable Velcro shoulder straps, a very handy boot zipper up the side of the leg, heat pack pockets in the kidney area, along with a system of pockets to hold hand warmers and 'cargo' accessories. In my opinion, the nicest feature really is the boot zipper; a real lifesaver when you're all bulked up and trying to put on or take off boots.

The vest is a great accessory garment for added warmth. I often wear it when it's too warm for a full jacket but I need some insulation around my torso.

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AFFORDABLE

Near as I can tell, Silent Predator is priced very competitively. The most comparable product on the market appears to be at least 20 per cent more expensive.

For the discerning consumer, this means a bigger bang for your buck and in my view, any money I can save on gear is money I can put toward another hunting trip!

For example, the cost of the parka is \$389, the bibs are listed at \$349, and the vest is incredibly affordable with a price tag of \$139. In fact, lighter variations of the jackets and pants range in price from \$239 to \$299.

Compare this to almost anything else on the market, and the choice is an easy one. Silent Predator is great value for the dollar.

DRAWBACK

The biggest drawback with wool, albeit minor in the grand scheme of things, is that caution must be taken when cleaning wool. I do machine wash in cold water on a delicate cycle, and lay it out flat to dry in order to avoid shrinkage. It can help to hand stretch it a bit to ensure the original sizing remains unchanged.

TO LEARN MORE

For more information about the Silent Predator line, or to see a list of dealers, visit www.silentpredator.ca.

If you'd like to chat with me personally about this product, feel free to send me a Friend Request on Facebook and I'll be happy to answer any questions you might have. 🗨️