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# BOWHUNTER

*& archer*

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# My pursuit of blesbuck in Namibia

The author with the old capital ewe.



Frank with his fine blesbuck ram.



By Frank Berbuir

It was a wonderful African afternoon in November when I climbed up the tamboti tree at 3:30 pm and into my tree seat. I caught a nice sun fan, watched ostriches stroll to the water, took a view on the different Toku's, observed a group of young warthog that dropped by for a sip, and enjoyed the birds visiting me in the tree, obviously surprised by the strange creature sitting there.

I was not only at Omalanga Safaris in the north of Namibia near the Etosha National Park to savour the wonderful biota; I was on a bowhunting trip and was sitting there owing to personal observations that many *Damaliscus dorcas phillipsi*, better known as blesbuck, appeared frequently at this waterhole.

As I relished the sun and surroundings I suddenly glassed two blesbuck stepping out of the bush from a westerly direction. They were heading to the water and were about 200 metres away, but my blood pressure was already starting to enter a range a physician would not normally recommend.

Okay buddy, get ready and stay calm, I thought. The buck were approximately 100 metres away from the water and through the binocs I saw that they were a young ram and a very old and capital ewe with long, polished horns.

"Wow! Amazing", I whispered to myself and nocked the Carbon Express CX Hunter 300 Advantage arrow with the Silverflame 125 grain broadhead.

I was sitting 4.5 metres above the ground. The wind was in my favour - blowing from the direction the two blesbuck came. They did not detect me so far away and headed side by side to the water. When the doe stood free it would be up to me to write a success story.

They reached the water and had started to drink when the female turned away from the ram and stood broadside at 27 metres. "This is your chance, Frank", I thought. I drew my 80 pound Mathews LX, sighted in on the vitals and released the arrow. It penetrated and the blesbuck went galloping off. About 50 metres later she stopped, looked behind her, lost her balance and collapsed.

It was 5:20 pm and I felt lucky, overwhelmed, shivery and awestruck. I called Gustav on the radio and left my stand. When he arrived he congratulated me on my fine trophy. We took some great photos and he told me that he would take care of the rest and that I should get back into my tree seat as he guessed that more blesbuck would come to the water. So I climbed back up again.

Believe it or not, one hour later two fine blesbuck rams came to the water, galloping towards it as if in a hurry and standing very close together so that no shot was possible. They drank quickly and turned directly to leave the waterhole. They trotted very slowly and somewhat apart, but they were still on the move. The sun was low and I knew for sure that I would not get a second chance like this one today. I had experienced the same situation two years ago together with Gustav when we were on a bowhunt and a warthog wanted to leave the waterhole urgently. I remembered the scene and blew a short whistle, hoping to make the blesbuck stop. He did at 30 metres, slightly quartering away. I was at full draw for ten seconds and aiming on the vitals when he stopped at the sound of the whistle.

It was now or never. I pulled the trigger of my release and the string accelerated the arrow to the 277 fps. It smashed through both lungs. He jumped up, ran several metres and stopped behind a bush. Then it was dead quiet. Five seconds later I heard a final bark come from behind the bush and he expired within 40 metres of the shot. The sun was down when I climbed down from the stand and together with Gustav, who I called again on the radio, we found the ram. It was a good trophy and, as always, we took some photos. Back in camp that night, along with a couple of beers, everybody enjoyed listening to my tale several times.

As a lifetime memory their shoulder mounts always let me relive these awesome moments. Thanks to all who made these special moments memorable forever!

## Equipment:

**Bow:** Mathews LX 80 lbs (customized - one of 12 Sets available for 80 lbs on the LX). **Sight:** HHA Optimizer Sight. **Rest:** Trophy Ridge Drop Away Rest. **Stabilizer:** Vibracheck Stabilizer. **Quiver:** Mathews 5 arrow quiver. **Release:** Scott Wildcat Release. **Arrow:** Carbon Express CX Hunter 300 Advantage. **Broadheads:** Silverflame 125 grain. **Optics:** Zeiss Victory 10x40 and Leupold RX III Rangefinder.