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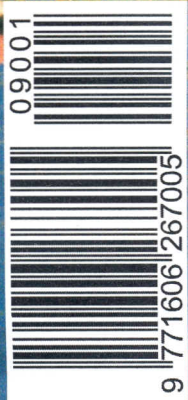


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Good things come to those who wait



By Frank Berbuir

The sun shone into my face that November afternoon while I sat, four metres high in a camel-thorn tree, chasing the longed-for duiker. It was the second last day of my bowhunting trip at Omalangi Safaris in Namibia. This wonderful hunting farm is located about 40 kilometres west of Otavi in the north of Namibia.

Together with my PH, Gustav Bauer, who was equipped with the video camera, I sat and enjoyed the view while we ate bananas. After my successful bow kills during the past week I was still pursuing a duiker ram I had seen the previous year but did not get a hunting opportunity. Birds and butterflies gathered at the waterhole and a turtle made its burdensome way through the grassland from the nearby bushes.

With the setting sun the sky started its blaze of colour. All of a sudden everything was utterly quiet. A duiker ram stood at the edge of the bushveld – and it was an excellent specimen. Nervously he checked the surroundings and looked suspiciously at the water while moving one step to the left and back again, then one to the right. He was about 60 metres away when he finally decided to draw closer.

So far Gustav and I had sat motionless in the tree, our heads down and only our eyes on the duiker's movement.

"Here we go," said Gustav. "This is your one."

We were sitting left of the waterhole in the tree. The wind blew slightly from ahead and the duiker stood at eleven o'clock from our position. The best shooting position would be at nine o'clock, when he would be beside us, but this would also be the last chance to shoot because later he would get wind of us.

The duiker seemed to relax and approached the water slowly – directly in front of us. Suddenly a grey lourie squawked for some reason and a pigeon flapped up, almost driving the duiker away. Fortunately, he was not over-anxious and just stopped to observe the spot. During the flutter of the birds I used the opportunity to pull my Carbon Express arrow out of the quiver and nocked it in. Gustav meanwhile prepared the video camera.

The duiker raised its head and started sniffing, then snorted – once, twice, three times.

Damn, I thought, something is bothering him. But it must have been in the bushes on the other side, because his eyes were fixed in our direction.

"Don't go, don't go," I whispered.

My plea helped; he did not go, but took off to the left so that he would come out on my left.

"Get ready, boy, and stay calm!"

The duiker was at about 22 metres and walking slowly straight ahead, his head turned to his left as he observed the waterhole. A branch of the camel-thorn tree was between us. Two steps forward and he would stand free and broadside. I felt my heart beating as I drew my Mathews LX, slowly and quietly.

The duiker took the first step forward, then the second – so I released the arrow, which penetrated the animal perfectly through its lungs. He buzzed off into the bush to the right and we heard the cracking noise of the brittle branches.

All of a sudden it was dead quiet. We heard two loud barks and it went quiet again.

Gustav gave me a pat on the back and said: "You made it! He's down, directly behind the bush he flew into."

We climbed down and walked straight in the direction from where we had heard the barking. There he lay, under a small acacia.

Once again it had been a thrilling bowhunt and a good experience. Together we enjoyed the success and took some trophy photos. Later we measured the horns, which ranked in SCI's gold medal evaluation.

On our way back to the car the sun hung low and we saw a hare sitting beside a bush. We decided to stalk him from behind, since the wind was in our favour.

I put down the duiker and we walked in a circle to get behind the hare. We crept up to 20 metres from it, as it sat there, still unaware of our presence.

I drew the Mathews LX again and pulled the trigger. The Carbon Express arrow, equipped with a 125 grain ABC Sonic broadhead, hit him directly behind the front shoulder. He made a back somersault as the arrow penetrated, twitched for two seconds and passed away.

What an amazing and successful afternoon. I had a great time with Gustav at Omalanga Safaris. Thanks to all who made these special moments forever memorable.