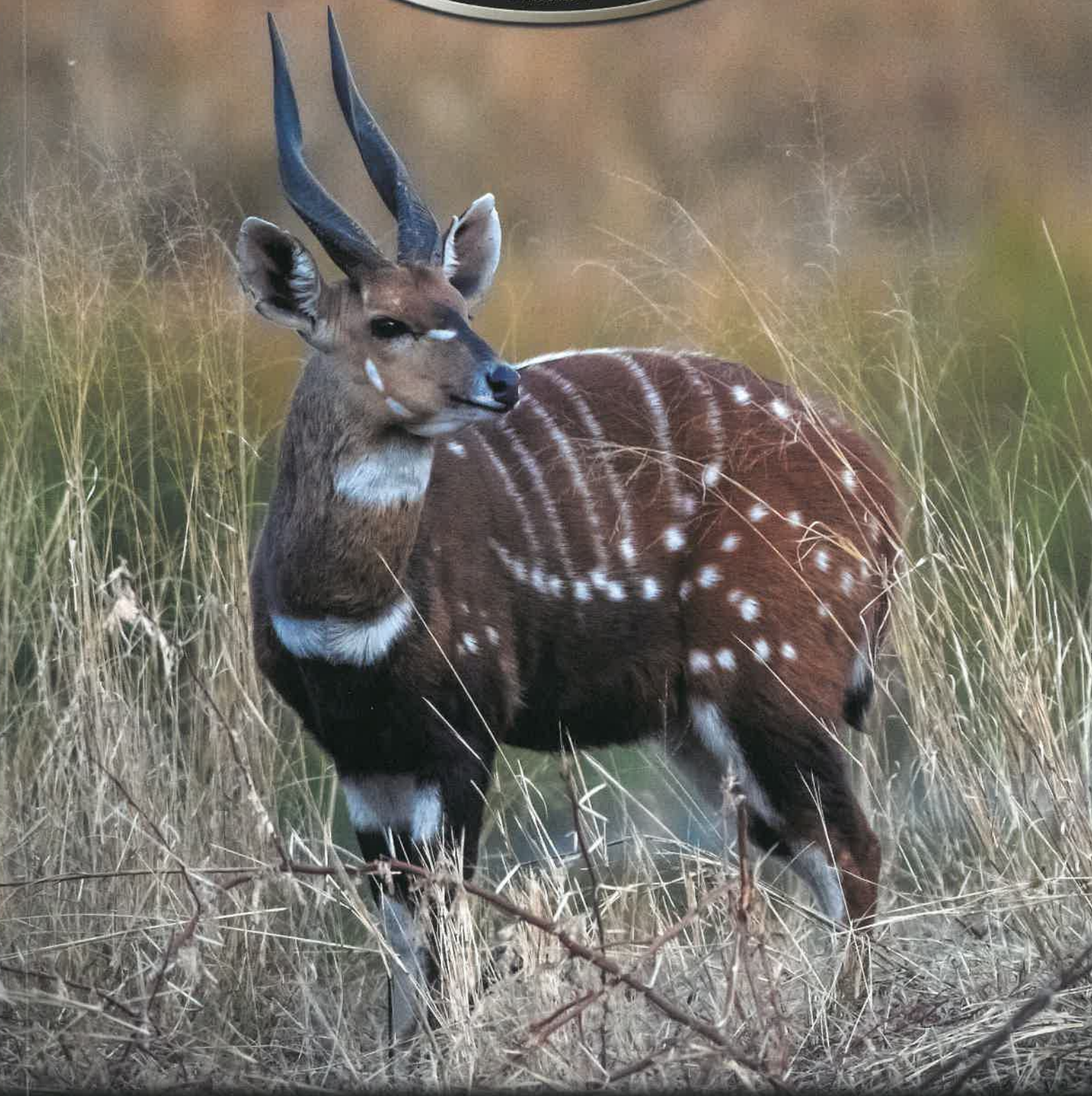


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Bow and Arrow and a Sharpe's Grysbok

By Frank Berbuir

All hunters have bucket lists of hunts they want to do, and trophies they want to collect, and usually the buckets are big and the lists are long, and at a certain point, become even more special.



The view to the waterhole

When hunting with bow and arrow it is always a challenge, but going for pygmy antelopes makes it even more exciting. After successfully bowhunting a southern bush, blue and red duiker, as well as a steenbok and a klipspringer on several hunts over the last years, I am on the next adventure this year for another most sought-after specimen of the tiny ten - a Sharpe's Grysbok.

Together with my PH and friend Izak Vos from Vos Safaris, we are on a nice farm in the Limpopo Province. It is middle of August, South African wintertime, but at 7 o'clock, it is already 20 degrees Celsius. Probably this will be a hot day sitting in the blind. Izak had set up a blind weeks before close to a waterhole where several grysbok trails were visible according the landowner. Once we sit in the blind, it is always a great joy to observe the surrounding nature and wildlife, especially when you are in this comfortable, new 360-degree-view-blind where you can see everything outside but you cannot be seen.

Guinea fowls and francolins are the usual visitors in the morning. Then, what always tends to happen is that those animals appear that we have hunted before and are no longer on our list, like the huge stunning solitary sable bull that approached the waterhole. Three years before we successfully hunted a sable bull, so it was not what we were looking for. Half an hour later, a majestic kudu bull



Sharpe's Grysbok.

came to the waterhole - also not on our list, followed after by a group of mountain reedbucks with two major bucks. But I had been lucky to get one in 2017. However, it

It was not what we were looking for

is always a pleasure to observe these animals and their behavior in this beautiful setting. Then things became quieter as

the day warmed up.

All of a sudden, around lunchtime, we noticed some movement around a bush to our right. Cautiously we checked it with our binoculars, and there he stood behind a thorny brush - a Sharpe's grysbok, this small, shy antelope. Izak indicated that I



Our 360-degree-view-blind.



Phenomenal Sharpe's Grysbok, a happy hunter and his PH.

should not move at all now because the buck was looking in our direction. For minutes we sat frozen. Then the bokkie left his cover and sneaked, forward continually checking the path to the waterhole to ensure all was safe. The distance between him and us was about 50 meters. He would likely stop at 25 meters from us on his way to his drinking source. I slowly and quietly took my bow and set the sliding sight pin at this distance. Holy moly! I felt my pulse and rising blood pressure with every move the grysbok made.

Izak looked at me, raised his eyebrows and nodded his head. No words were said, but I knew that I should get ready and stay calm waiting for the right moment. The little buck stopped several times on his way to the water, cautiously checking his surroundings. Meanwhile I gradually stood up to put the bow and myself in a correct shooting position. The arrow was nocked in and the release was put on the string. The bokkie finally arrived at the edge of the waterhole and checked the scene once more before he lowered his head to drink. That was the decisive moment. Izak raised his index finger – it was time.

I pulled the bow to full draw and set the pin on the vital area of the antelope's body. The arrow was released, and a second later it went through the animal's body exactly where I had aimed. The grysbok jumped, ran off, and after 20 meters he dropped. What a moment again! I had to take a deep breath as Izak congratulated me. We left the blind and walked to where the

grysbok lay. I knelt down and examined this gorgeous specimen of the tiny ten antelopes. I was more than happy.

Once more, it was an awesome and challenging hunt and experience with bow and arrow. I finally had this awesome Sharpe's Grysbok. After some nice pictures, we enjoyed our success with a cold beer from our cooler box. Again a tremendous hunt with unforgettable impressions and memories together with my friend and PH Izak Vos from Vos Safaris in South Africa.

Shoot straight, take care, keep well, always good hunting: "Waidmannsheil" and "Alles van die beste".

German hunter Frank Berbuir is passionate about the outdoors and hunting – especially bowhunting, which he has practised for more than 20 years. Although he's bowhunted in several countries, he's become addicted to hunting in Africa since his first safari in 2004. Frank is a mechanical engineer and risk manager in the automotive industry.

Equipment:

Bow: Mathews Z7x @ 70 lbs

Arrow: Carbon Express Maxima Hunter 350

Broadhead: German Kinetics Silverflame 125 grain

Optics: Zeiss Victory Binocular & Nikon Rangefinder

Release: Scott

Camo: Sniper Africa

Description:

Sharpe's or northern grysbok (*Raphicerus sharpei*) is a small, shy, solitary antelope found from tropical to southeastern Africa. They are in Transvaal (South Africa), Caprivi Strip (Namibia), Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania to Lake Victoria. It is similar in size to the gray duiker, but has a stockier body and elongated fur over the hindquarters. It stands about 45–60 cm at the shoulders and weighs only 7–11.5 kg. Its coat is reddish-brown streaked with white eye-rings around. Mouth, throat and underside are off-white. The males have stubby horns, which are widely spaced. Sharpe's grysbok has a short, deep muzzle with large mouth and heavy molar (grinding) teeth. The short neck and face on a long-legged body result in a high-rump posture when browsing. Although its territorial range is large, Sharpe's grysbok is infrequently seen.

Males and females seem to form brief associations, but the species is usually encountered singly. Territory is marked with dung middens. Their habitat is rocky hill country, but preferring fertile zones on the lower slopes. They are nocturnal browsers and spend the day in the protective cover of tall grass or shrubs. They are extremely timid and will run away at the first sign of anything unusual, although this flight is accompanied "short stamping hops".

They move well away from where the disturbance occurred before stopping (unlike steenbok, which stop and look back). Sharpe's Grysbok likes to take refuge in aardvark burrows, like steenbok. They browse on leaves, buds, herb and fruits in the dry season. Their food is typically tough (for which their teeth and jaws are adapted). Grazed grass makes up about 30% of their diet. Like the Cape grysbok, which is slightly bigger and has a thickset body and a rich rufous-colored coat, they use a communal latrine and mark sticks in its vicinity with pre-orbital gland secretions. Only the rams have horns, which are 60-100 mm in length.