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SPRINGBOK SLAM

with Bow and Arrow

By Frank Berbuir

Once again, the "Virus Africanus" brought me back to the Dark Continent - back to South Africa. I had been lucky to take my first common springbok with bow and arrow in 2007, in the south of Namibia. On this trip, in August 2017, I was after white, copper, and black springbok, and I was hunting in South Africa with my friend and PH Izak Vos.

Happy hunter with his first common springbok ram.



On the first afternoon and evening, we were sitting in a camouflaged tent blind approximately 25 meters from the natural waterhole where the springbok usually came to drink. I had forgotten that evenings in August in South Africa can become crisp, and I felt a bit chilly just in my Sniper Africa shirt after sitting still for a couple of hours. That changed when Izak pointed to the left and whispered that I should get ready because some springbok were on the way to the waterhole. Immediately my blood pressure rose when I saw a nice white ram in the group of five animals. A couple of minutes later they were at the water, but warily looking around. Now I had to be patient till the white ram stood clear for a shot. They were pushing and nudging each other to get the best spot for a drink. Once they were all drinking, it was my chance when, finally, the white ram stood apart from the others.

A nice white springbuck.



Quietly and smoothly, I drew my bow to full draw and aimed at the vital area. A second later, the Carbon Express arrow with the Silverflame broadhead was on its way. Instantly, the ram bounded off for about 40 meters, turned back in the direction he came from, ran about 100 meters, then fell. What an incredible experience. Izak and I were more than happy about this first endeavour and fantastic outcome.

Early next morning at sunrise, we found ourselves back in the blind. This time I was better prepared and wore a jacket because the mornings are also chilly. For about two hours not much happened, except for some doves that flew in for a drink at the waterhole and a few mongooses that scurried in as well. Then our attention arose again when we saw some springbok heading in our direction. A group of five black springbok trotted cautiously towards the waterhole. We checked with binos for a male in the group, and indeed there were two, a young one and a decent male. Our excitement rose when they arrived at the waterhole and wrangled for the best place. They were all standing very closely together, and the big male was in front of a female – no shooting! Keeping calm was the order of the moment. Once he was clear, I quickly pulled my bow and set the sight on the vitals. Unfortunately, another animal moved forward and covered him just when I was at full draw. I held steady for about 30 seconds when luckily the ram made a step forward, and a small, but sufficient, shooting window appeared. Once the trigger of my Scott release opened, a second later the arrow hit the ram. He bucked, took a long jump forward and was down. Wow! Izak and I were amazed. Even as the experienced PH he was, he had not seen something like that before. Anyway, strike two on the springbok slam accomplished! A great South African hunting morning.


A day later, for the afternoon and evening hunt, after trying different



Fine black ram and happy hunter.

spots without success, we were back in the blind at the waterhole. As the sun started to go down, suddenly three springbok approached the waterhole, checking out the situation. Unbelievably, there was a nice copper ram in the group. That would be the cherry on the top if they came closer and offered a shot on the ram. We sat immobile in our ambush - no movement, no word. The

animals came closer and closer, always with one of them looking and checking in our direction. It felt like an eternity until they arrived at the water, and all of them took their position to drink. This time the object of my desire, the fine copper ram, stood nicely broadside at 25 meters. When their heads were all down to drink, I pulled the bow and focused on his vitals. The arrow hit him



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The author and the copper springbuck.



hard, and he flew away in the direction they had come from, hit a sharp hook to the left, ran for about 100 meters, then dropped. Amazingly, he fell more or less on the same spot as the white ram on the first evening.

Izak patted me on the back saying, "Well done my friend, strike three on the springbok done." The ram was a fine trophy and both of us were more than happy about this outcome. We arranged him for some dignified trophy photos. What a marvellous day. A week later at the end of the safari, I also took a common springbok from South Africa, so the Springbok Superslam was fully accomplished on that hunt. Take care, always good hunting, Waidmannsheil, and "Alles van die Beste".

Springbuck Slam completed on a fine trophy pedestal.



German hunter Frank Berbuir is passionate about the outdoors and hunting – especially bowhunting, which he has practised for more than 23 years. Although he has bowhunted in several countries, he has become addicted to hunting in Africa since his first safari in 2004. Frank is a mechanical engineer and risk manager in the automotive industry.

This medium-sized slender antelope with long legs and neck is mainly found in the dry areas. Their range extends from northwestern South Africa through the Kalahari Desert into Namibia and Botswana. The Transvaal (Gauteng) marks the eastern limit of the range, from where it extends westward to the Atlantic and northward to southern Angola and Botswana. In Botswana, they mostly occur in the Kalahari Desert in the southwestern and central parts of the country. They are widespread across Namibia and the vast grasslands of the Free State and the shrublands of Karoo in South Africa.

The common name "springbok" comes from the Afrikaans words spring = jump and bok = antelope or goat. German zoologist Eberhard August Wilhelm von Zimmermann first described it in 1780. The scientific name is *Antidorcas marsupialis* - Anti is Greek for "opposite", and dorcas for "gazelle" – identifying that the animal is not a gazelle. Marsupialis comes from the Latin marsupium = pocket. It refers to a pocket-like skin flap, which extends along the midline of the back from the tail. In fact, this physical feature distinguishes the springbok from true gazelles.