

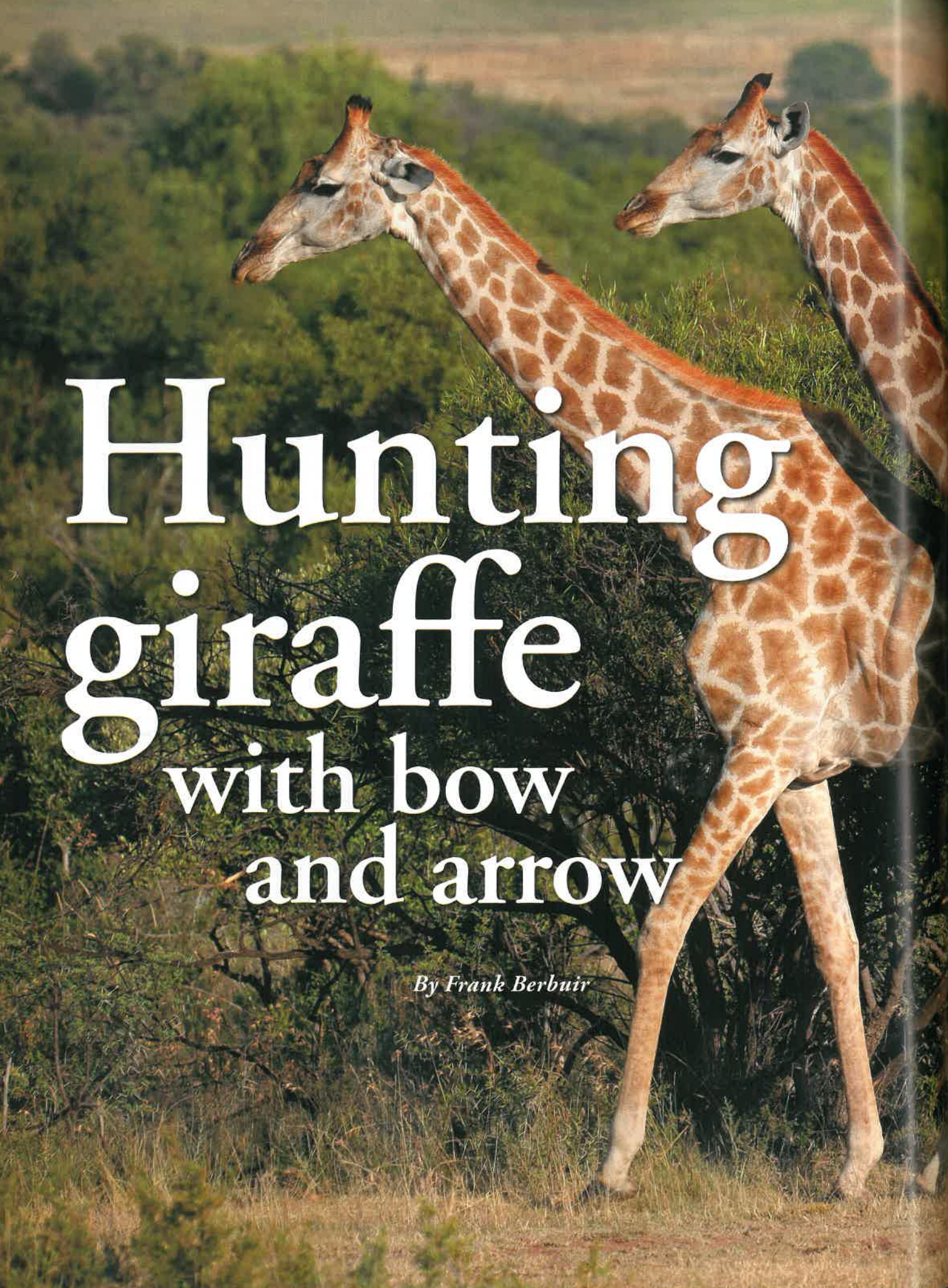
African Hunting Gazette

ESTABLISHED 1995



US\$12.95 • CAD14.95

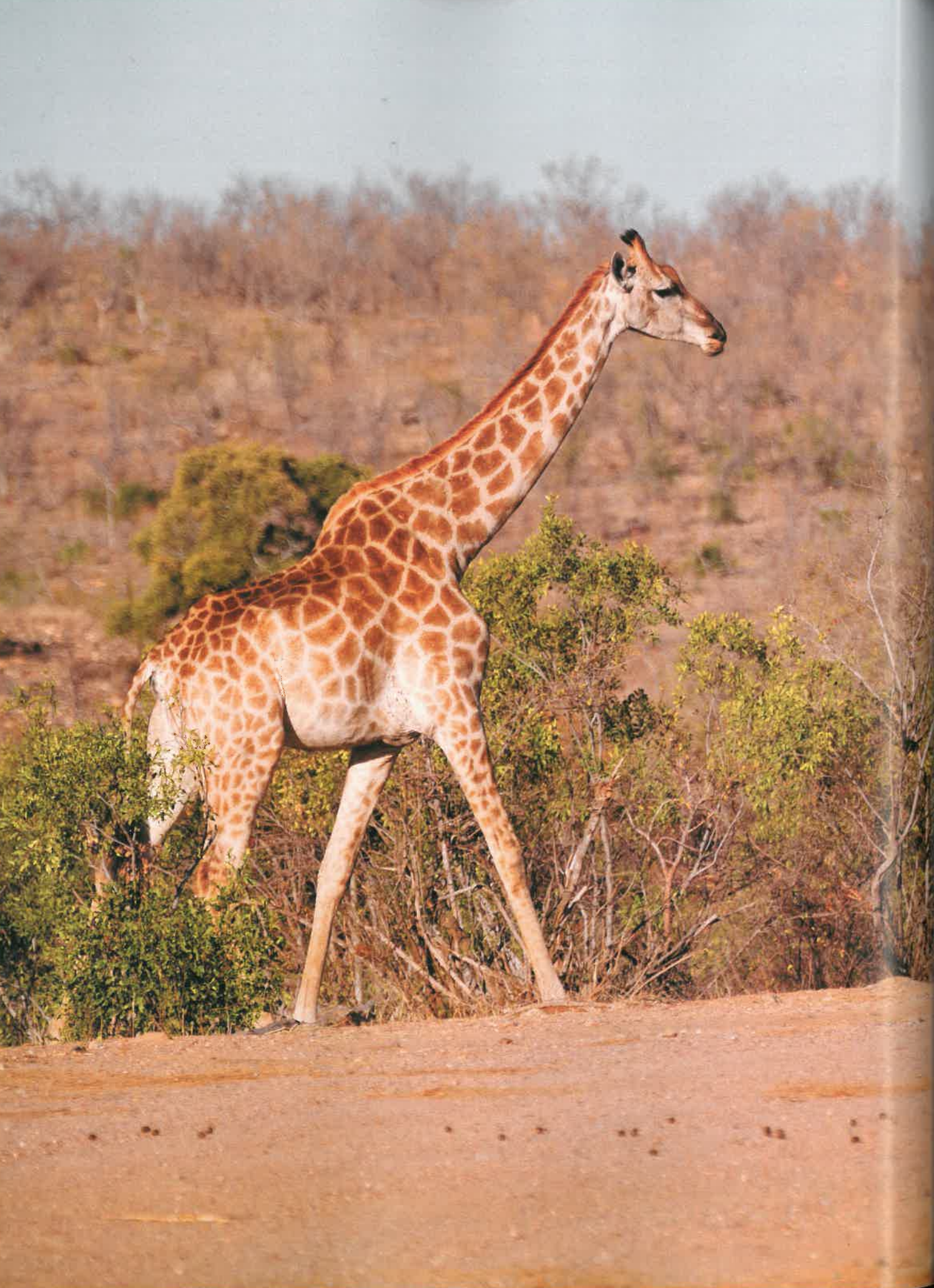


A photograph of two giraffes in a savanna landscape. The giraffe in the foreground is facing left, and the one behind it is facing right. They are both looking towards the left. The background is a dense thicket of green trees and bushes. The ground is covered in dry grass and some small plants.

Hunting giraffe with bow and arrow

By Frank Berbuir





It is the beginning of August and I am very happy to make it back to beautiful South Africa. Once again I want to hunt with bow and arrow, together with my friend and professional hunter Izak Vos from Vos Safaris. After a long overnight flight from Europe I am happy to see him. Before we leave the Gauteng province to head up north to the Limpopo we quickly visit an outdoor and hunting shop to get me some more Sniper African clothes and a pair of these special wildebeest/ kudu leather hunting shoes – excellent shoes for hunting in Africa.

During our drive to the Limpopo Province close to the Botswana border, Izak and I enjoyed talking about our ambitious hunting plans for the following eight days. After our extremely successful bowhunt on a Cape buffalo, waterbuck, bushbuck and bushpig last year, I decided to take along again for this hunting adventure my trusty and reliable Elite GT500 bow. With 90 pounds draw weight and together with the Easton Full Metal Jacket 250 Dangerous Game arrows and the Muzzy Phantom SS 200-grain broadhead resulting in a total arrow weight of 800 grain, I had excellent experiences the year before. I felt very comfortable with that equipment and bow set-up last time and all the shooting and practices went very well in the preparation this time again. “Never change a winning team,” was my thinking, especially with regard to our intention to take a Cape eland.

It was on the third day of hunting that Anton, the landowner and farmer visited us in our hunting camp and asked if I would like

But when we wanted to get closer we were busted.

to hunt a giraffe bull with bow and arrow. At that time I did not really think about a giraffe. Why shoot a giraffe – for the trophy or for the meat? A giraffe is a game animal like any other, and you can hunt it legally in South Africa and other African countries with rifle or bow, whichever weapon is legally approved.

“I’ve not taken a giraffe before,” I said. “But probably with that bow and arrow combination it is possible, and I could step up to the plate.” A giraffe could be twice as heavy and tough as a Cape buffalo and so it would



Giraffe on the road.

be a great challenge. I know hunting a giraffe can be a touchy and sensitive topic for some, and especially for the anti-hunters, but Anton explained why he wanted this bull taken.

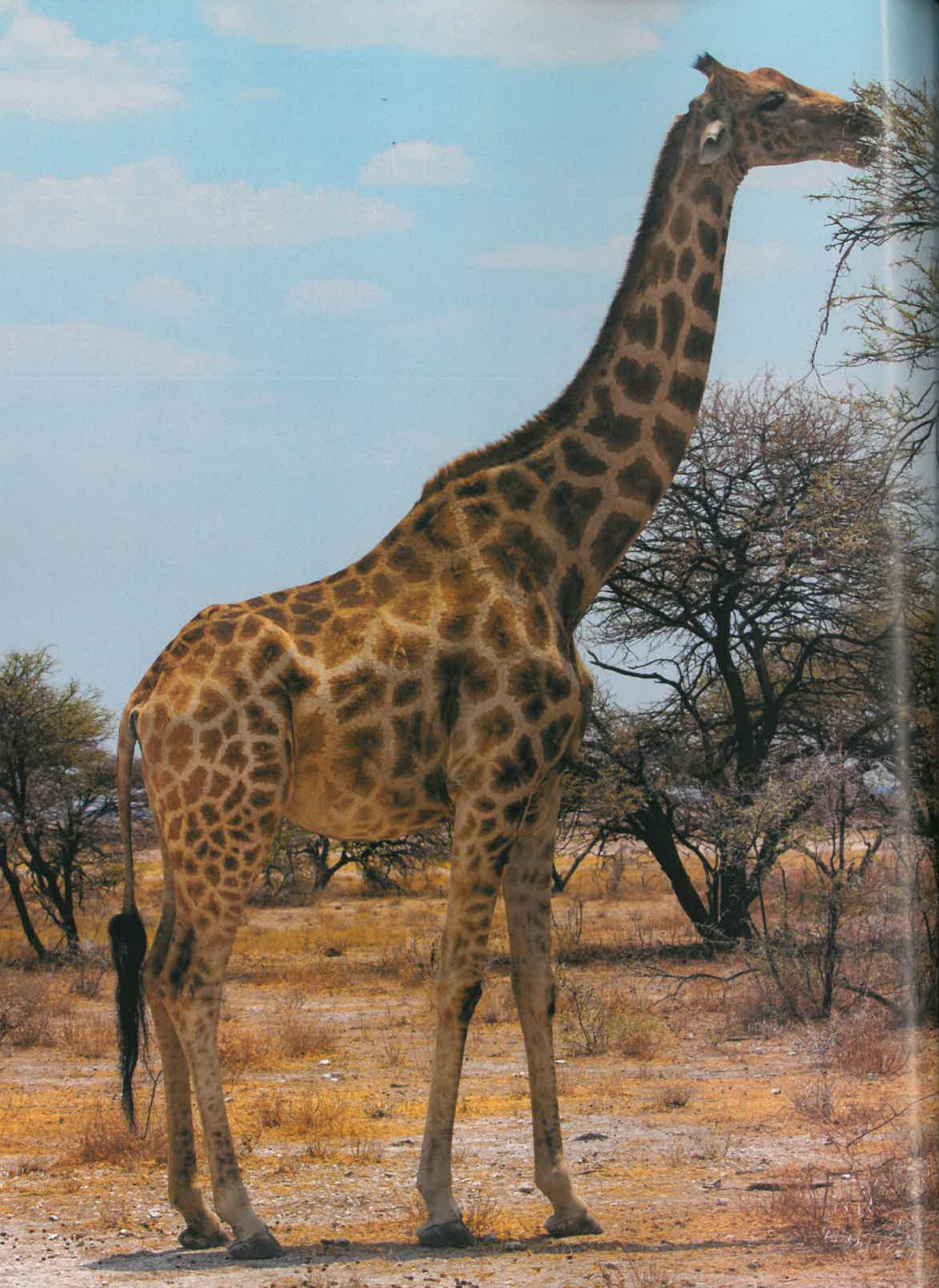
“Guys, I have right now four giraffes here, a female, two young ones and this big mature bull which is about 15 years old, the son of the big female giraffe. The two youngsters are from him, which means he mated with his own mother. Moreover, he disliked another mature bull I had, and continually fought and chased him, till in the end he died, due to all the tough fights. So, if I want to refresh the bloodline of my giraffes, I need to take him out. That’s the major reason.”

Izak and I looked at each other, and after a short discussion I said, “Ok, let’s go for it.”

The next morning after breakfast, Anton picked us up and we drove close to the area where we have seen the giraffes the days

before. He said we should phone him in case we needed him. We jumped off the vehicle and walked for about a kilometre before we glassed the four giraffes for the first time, and started our walk and stalk. Even though it was winter in Africa, it became quite warm, about 25°C (77°F), and I started to sweat – probably also because of the excitement. The giraffe, *Giraffa camelopardalis* (kameelperd in Afrikaans), is the tallest animal on earth and really big as well. But because they are so well camouflaged, we had to look very carefully for them, and be wary not to spook them. We focused on their heads feeding on leaves in the tops of acacias. Being nearly six metres tall (20 feet), they can see a hunter approach from a long way off, and with a few gentle strides can create a lot of distance between them and the hunter.

This happened a couple of times when we first spotted them and tried to sneak in with





Challenging stalking arena.



Wonderful Limpopo.

Equipment:

Bow: Elite GT500 @ 90#

Arrow: Easton Full Metal Jacket 250 Dangerous Game with heavier inserts

Broadhead: Muzzy Phantom SS 2-Blade @ 200 grain

Optics: Zeiss Victory Binocular & Nikon Rangefinder

Release: Scott

Camo: Sniper Africa

extreme caution. Several times we could shorten the distance between them and us down to 70 or 60 metres, always keeping the wind against us and hiding behind some bushes or trees, which was quite challenging with four pairs of eyes checking their surroundings. But when we wanted to get closer we were busted. For several hours all our stalking attempts were in vain, when suddenly the big bull separated himself to the right from the other three, and went to some higher trees to feed. Now we had a small chance to sneak in closer to him using some scraggy bushes as cover. Izak crept slowly forward, and I followed in his tracks directly behind him. We stopped at the last ambush between the giraffe bull and us.

Izak took my rangefinder, checked the distance and whispered, "He is standing steady at 40 metres nicely broadside – now or never, Frank." So rock 'n roll, it was up to me now.

I knocked in the arrow quietly and pulled my Elite GT500 bow, smooth and calm, to full draw. I needed to take a step to the right for a clear shooting window and aimed with the 40 metres pin of my Spot Hogg sight to where Izak told me – a spot above the front shoulder at the height of the "chest bumps" or protruding knobs on the chest, roughly 10 to 11 inches back to get a heart or lung shot. I could feel my heartbeat in



Impressive giraffe bull.

You do not want to get hit by a hoof of a dying giraffe.

my own chest while aiming and finally tapping on the trigger of my Scott release. The Easton Full Metal Jacket Dangerous Game arrow was on its deadly mission, and within a split second hammered into the giraffe's body where I had aimed. "Yes," Izak said. He had followed the action with his binoculars. "The arrow went in exactly where it should and the penetration is good." Indeed, even without binoculars I could



Happy hunter and PH with the giraffe trophy.

see that only the rear part of the arrow with the feathers was sticking out and blood was running down the shoulder – unbelievable. The giraffe immediately started to run after the impact, and the three other giraffes followed him. We tracked his getaway with the binoculars and then started to walk after him. He ran about 400 to 500 metres and then stood behind a tree. We saw him slowly lower his head and then finally sink to the ground. An absolutely amazing picture – I will never forget when this big majestic animal went down.

Izak smiled at me, shook my hand, hugged me and said: "Congrats, well done my friend, he is down but let's just take some time to be sure before we approach him." It was a good



thing that we waited – definitely you do not want to get hit by a hoof of a dying giraffe. Then all was quiet. Silently we walked to the bull and the congratulations from Izak were overwhelming.

We phoned Anton, and he was also very happy and congratulated me heartily when he arrived with the *bakkie*. They asked if I would like to stay with the giraffe for some minutes while they drove back to pick up some of the farm guys for loading this roughly 1.4 tons huge giraffe.

"Take your time", I replied. It gave me the chance and time to bid farewell to this magnificent animal and to finally realize my bow and arrow's success.

When they returned we arranged the bull for some nice and respectful trophy pictures. Then six South Africans, a German, and with the help of the winch, loaded this giant in 10 minutes onto the Land Cruiser. Very impressive to see how these guys can load. Back at the farm the Castle Lager beer tasted excellent. The skinning and slaughtering of this colossus was another challenge for the

farm workers. The next day a refrigerated cargo truck came in to pick up round about 900 kilograms of meat. The trophy, backskin and leg bones went to Izak's uncle Jan Viljoen, my taxidermist of confidence, who did a fantastic job on my trophies before, but that's another story.

One more time, thanks very much to Izak for the great organization, his experience and company, Anton our host, and as well to all the nice people I had the opportunity to meet during this fantastic time.

"Baie dankie and Alles van die beste."
Frank

German hunter Frank Berbuir is passionate about the outdoors and hunting – especially bowhunting, which he has practised for more than 18 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. ♥



...and finally the trophy on the wall.

Tanzania Big Game Safaris



A Safari Tradition

And affiliates

Email: enquiry@tbgs.co.tz Website: www.tanzaniabiggame.com