

# Bow Hunter



ISSUE 15

GEAR

**Solo hunter**  
- hunting  
on foot

**Around  
the spiral**

What is in  
a nock point?

**Blue duiker**  
with a bow and arrow

**BOWHUNTING KUDU**

Die groot kruishoring koedoe • Die verlore bloubok



# Tiny Ten - blue duiker with bow and arrow

By Frank Berbuir

Though often overshadowed by the Big 5, or much attention is focused on hunting the large and glamorous African species, like kudu, gemsbok or wildebeest, hunting the tiny 10 species of pygmy antelope in Africa can be an extremely challenging and fulfilling experience.

**T**he Tiny Ten Species are the Damara dik-dik, blue duiker, common duiker (also called grey duiker or bush duiker), red forest duiker (also called red duiker, Natal duiker or Natal red duiker), Cape grysbok (also called southern grysbok), Sharp's grysbok (also called Northern Grysbok), klipspringer, oribi, steenbok (also known as Steinbuck or Steinbok), and Suni.

All of these antelope are extremely small (the largest is the common duiker that weighs less than 50 pounds) and therefore it is very demanding to get close enough for a shot on such a small target. Luckily, a couple of years ago, I managed to bag a common duiker and a steenbok successfully during bowhunts in Namibia and South Africa.

This time my professional hunter, Izak Vos from Vos Safaris, and I took on the challenge to go for a blue duiker with the bow and arrow. The blue duiker (*Philantomba monticola*) is a small antelope found in western, southern and eastern Africa. It is the smallest duiker and the smallest antelope in South Africa.

The Swedish naturalist, Carl Peter Thunberg, described the species first 1789. The blue duiker reaches 30 to 40 centimetres or 12 or 16 inches at the shoulder and weighs 3.5 to 5 kilograms respectively (7.7 to 12 lb). The females are slightly larger than the males. It has short, spiky horns, around 5 centimetres, round about 2.0 inches long, and hidden in hair tufts. The blue duiker feeds on fallen fruits, foliage, flowers, and pieces of bark.

When you get into a blue duiker hunt, you will be pursuing

South Africa's smallest antelope. As we reached the hunting place and spoke with the farmer, he told us that there are about five of these pygmy antelopes around that he usually sees on his property. He stated that when he drives around and spotted them, they would mostly try to hide in dense bushes. It was up to us to accept the challenge to find them.

We started early in the morning when it was still a bit brisk – which it usually is in August during South African wintertime. The farmer dropped us off close to the area where these pygmies usually roam.

We walked very slowly, paused many times to glassing the bushes with our binoculars. It is not that easy to find such a small animal with its slate grey to grey-brown coat (sometimes with a bluish sheen on the back) that blends in perfectly in the dense bush.

We did not find any duiker during the morning, except for some springbok that we spooked when they saw us sneaking out of our ambush. By then it was quite warm and we took off our jackets and hanged on an acacia tree –where we spent our lunch break in the shade.

After a refreshing nap, we continued slowly but surely with our endeavour. After quite a while, Izak suddenly potted a blue duiker under a bush about 100 meters in front of us.

“My goodness they are small”, I whispered when I finally also saw him through the binoculars. “That’s what I told you”, he answered. “You can have the impression they are like a rat on ster-

oids”, he mumbled.

We quickly planned how we would approach this little critter without chasing him away. Slowly and in a bent-over position, we moved backwards. We decided to take a bigger loop around him so that the wind is in our favour and he will not see us directly.

We walked uphill and then back to sneak up from behind where he was not looking. I could feel that my blood pressure was rising as we closed the distance.

After what felt like an eternity. We reached a spot where we could see him again through the binoculars. He was still standing under the bush in the shade and did not realize us. The distance was about 25 meters and the shooting window was small due to some twigs hanging downwards. Tiptoeing, I crept to the right to get into a quartering away position. In slow-motion, I pulled the bow to full draw and settled the pin on his vitals. I released the arrow and... hit a hanging twig. The arrow deflected and flew upward out of the bush. “Damned!” I was whispering.

The blue duiker was obviously surprised and started running out of his hideout. When I saw him running it honestly looked like a rat on steroids. Izak followed the route the duiker was running and said: “Calm down and relax, he is not going far.”

Indeed, the blue duiker only ran and stopped in a bush about

30 m from us. After a five minutes break and some deep breaths we sneaked to the left and made our way behind some bushes to draw nearer to our quarry. Luck was on our side since we managed to creep up to a 27 meters distance from it. The little mammal was standing slightly quartering away and facing to the other side when I sent the arrow on its mission.

This time it hit the spot and after a short cat-like meow it was quite dead. What exciting hunt. It took a load of my mind. Izak shook my hand firm, gave me pat on the back and said: “Congrats, well done my friend. You got a blue duiker!”

When we arrived at the place where he expired, I knelt down, looked and examined this specific gorgeous specimen of the pygmy antelopes. Again, it was an awesome and challenging experience with bow and arrow and finally I could harvest this awesome tiny blue duiker. After some nice pictures, we radioed the farmer to pick us up and then we all enjoyed the success with a cold beer.

Once again I had an unforgettable experience and memorable hunt with my friend and PH Izak Vos from Vos Safaris in South Africa.

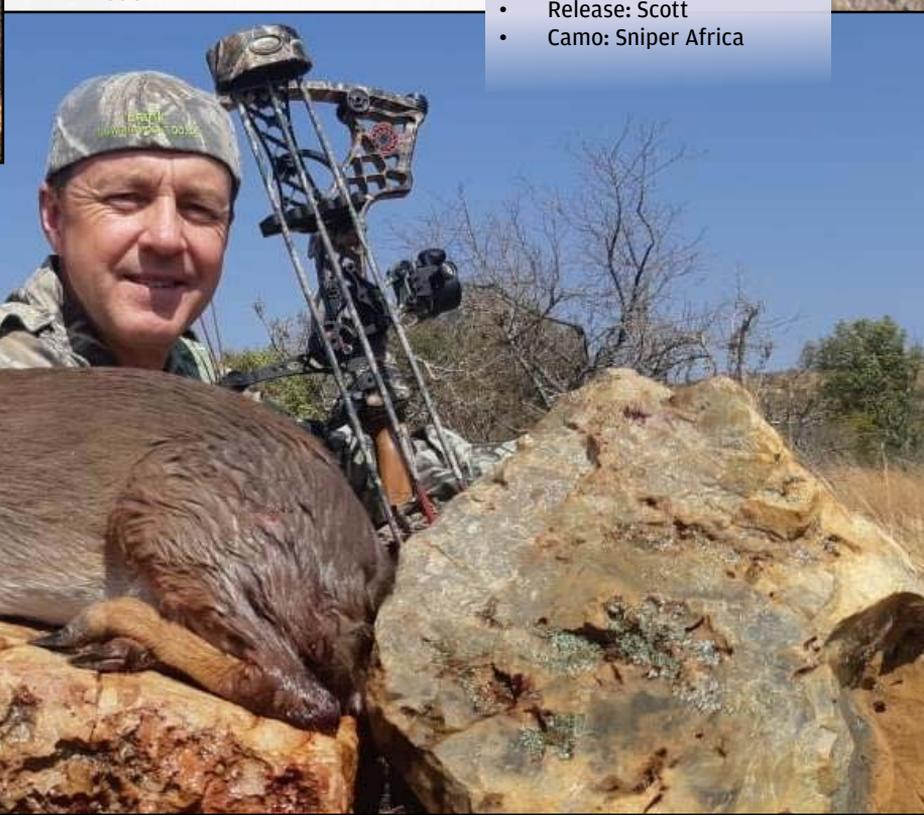
*Shoot straight, take care, always good hunting, “Waidmannsheil” and “Alles van die beste”.*



Left: Rough dense terrain



Bellow: Magnificent blue duiker and a happy hunter.



#### Equipment:

- Bow: Mathews Z7x @ 70 lbs
- Ararow: Carbon Express Maxima Hunter 350
- Broadhead: G5 Dead Meat @ 125 grain
- Optics: Zeiss Victory Binocular & Nikon Rangefinder
- Release: Scott
- Camo: Sniper Africa