

BowHunter

ISSUE 17

GEAR



Hoe gemaak
met beseerde
wild
wanneer
jy jag

Moose hunt
with a longbow

Meet the
vampire deer!

**BOWHUNTING
COMMON REEDBUCK**

Baboons and chimps are ruthless hunters!



A common reedbuck with bow and arrow

By Frank Berbuir

We were lucky and happy to finally harvest a nice mountain reedbuck after four days intense hunting (See previous issue). Now the next challenge awaited us – a common reedbuck. We were on a property close to Bela-Bela in the beautiful Limpopo Province. Deriving its name from the geothermic hot springs around which the town was built, it was called Warmbaths, until 2002. It was the end of August 2017 and I luckily made it back to South Africa to hunt again with Izak Vos from Vos Safaris.

After arriving on the property and settling in we first wanted to do a game drive to get familiar with the terrain, the area, and the game, especially where to find the common reedbuck. Even though it is a game drive I always take along my bow and arrows because you never know what can happen. In the early afternoon, we slowly made our way through the bushy and grassy grounds. The first animals we saw were some nice nyalas and warthogs.

Suddenly, when we turned right around a bush, four Cape buffalo bulls were standing in our small driveway just about 10 meters in front and they were not amused to see us. We stopped and kept dead quiet. You could hear a pin drop. The gang of the four beasts was moving and shaking their heads and sniffing to catch our smell. Luckily the wind was in our favour and after some “showing off” and bragging the bruisers turned around and moved slowly but surely back into the



Habitat of the common reedbuck.

bush. Holy moly, that was an exciting encounter!

We were slowly continuing our drive when I whispered to Izak to stop, since I had seen a pair of horns sticking out of the grassland. We both checked with our binoculars we spotted a good specimen of a common reedbuck bedded down in the grass.

Gently we sneaked out of the car to try stalking closer because the ram was lying about 80 meters from us. As quiet as possible we tiptoed from bush to bush. We managed it to shorten the distance down to 50 meters when the buck suddenly stood up. At that moment we were in the open between two bushes, but the antelope luckily did not look in our direction. Quickly I pulled an arrow out of my quiver and put it on the rest. I was at full draw and ready to release the arrow when the reedbuck turned his head and stared at me.

Not good! The moment I pushed the trigger and send out the arrow, he ducked down (string jumped) and the passed over him. What a pity! That is life. But Izak put my mind at ease. “Don’t worry, the buck was just surprised to see us. He probably will not go far and we might have another chance,” he said.

Ok, no sooner than done. We looked for the arrow, luckily could pick it up and watch out for the reedbuck where he was going. We carefully checked where to move using the available cover of the bushes and keeping an eye where the reedbuck was walking. Fortunately, he did not run and we

could follow him slowly.

Roughly an hour later we arrived at the edge of a bushy area we stalked through to follow him. We could see him. He was standing calm and relaxed 65 meters from us at the edge of a bushy area as well. The only problem was, just grassland between him and us and no cover to hide and sneak in closer.

It is a far shot for a bow and arrow, but I practiced far shots as well. I decided to take the shot. I put an arrow on the rest and pulled the string, aimed a bit lower in case he might stringjump again and – undershot him! The arrow flew tightly directly behind his front legs under his chest into the bush. He jumped up two times before he vanished into the bushes.

Izak looked a bit disappointed at me but I was, nicely said, more than upset and swearing at myself. We decided to leave it for today and went to the car to drive back to our camp. I also wanted to check the problem was buckfever or if something was wrong with the bow, sight or arrows.

Back in camp I did a bunch of shots on the practice block and came to the conclusion to take the sturdy German Kinetics Silverflame broadhead instead of the mechanicals I used on our first outing this afternoon. Their flight and shooting results were more precise. Izak handed me a beer and told me to relax at the campfire. “We will find him again tomorrow. Don’t worry. Relax. He is an old buck and they

are territorial”, he stated. Sitting around a campfire under the African sky with a tasty South African beer is indeed relaxing.

Next day – new chances! It was early morning when we started and not that we were superstitious, but both of us skipped shaving this morning in the hope of better luck.

With the bakkie we drove close to the place where we had seen the reedbuck the day before. At crawling speed we were moving forward checking the area simultaneously with the binoculars. All of a sudden we spotted him about 200 meters away where he bedded down in the grass in front of a bush. He wasn't aware of us.

We stopped, got out of the car quietly, and started our stalk. It was quite challenging not to spook the ram while moving forward between the bushes and grassland. But silently and slowly, step by step, we shortened the distance down to 32 meters. It was early morning and quite crisp – maybe that is why the buck did not notice that we were in his neighbourhood. He was still lying calmly and relaxed. However, I felt quite the opposite. I could feel my heartbeat rising rapidly when I drew the bow in slow motion and aimed at his chest cavity. Once I released the arrow on its mission it hit him hard within a split second. Now the reedbuck jumped up and ran away at full speed. We looked after him before he went out of sight and gave it a break for 20 minutes.

This also helped me to calm down and to get my blood pressure back to normal.

We found a good blood trail and followed it for about 50 meters before it abruptly stopped. That was somehow strange but not to amend.

We called in the help of Jacob, the tracker of the farm, who had been waiting in the car. To make a long story short, it took us three hours before Jacob finally found the animal where it slipped under a dense thick brush. These trackers and their abilities to read the signs are amazing.

We all were relieved to find the reedbuck and I was more than happy! I harvested a mountain reedbuck and now also a southern reedbuck. It had been another awesome and challenging hunt with bow and arrow and I bagged a fine specimen of a common reedbuck. I had a wonderful time with fantastic experiences and memories with my friend and PH Izak Vos from Vos Safaris in South Africa. ●

Shoot straight and always good hunting.

Equipment:

Bow: Mathews Z7x @ 70 lbs

Arrow: Carbon Express Maxima Hunter 350

Broadhead: Silverflame XL 2-Blade @ 125 grain

Optics: Zeiss Victory Binocular & Nikon Rangefinder

Release: Scott

Camo: Sniper Africa

Meet the vampire deer!



When you see the skull of this animal, it reminds you of something from a horror movie – an alien animal from another planet. Yet, it is only a harmless deer. . .

When you see only the skull of the vampire deer, you might think it to be a dangerous animal from a horror movie, since it has long fangs and peculiar horns or antlers. In fact, it is quite a small deer that is fairly harmless. However, it is one strange animal even when seen alive. It does have a bark and a bite – although it only uses its fangs to fight other males during the rutting season. The antlers look strange since it has a fleshy sleeve about two thirds up the antlers. When inspected up closely, seems like the animal's skull has two elongations, with short little antlers situated at the top.

Muntjac deer, also known as the vampire deer or barking deer, are small deer native to south Asia. They have fangs, strange antlers, have a sixth sense other deer do not have, they bark; and one subspecies of this deer has the least chromosomes of any mammal species alive.

Not much is known about this animal due to its late discovery in 1894. The name Muntjac originates from the Sudanese “mencek”, which means small deer. This group of deer consists of 12 known species and several subspecies.