

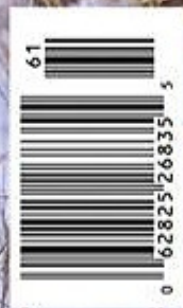
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**ALOHA!
SPANISH GOAT
ON THE BIG
ISLAND**

**BIGHORN
QUEST:
LUCKY #7**

**WET
WEATHER
CARIBOU**

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THE REWARD FOR OUR PATIENCE: A WATERBUCK

BY FRANK BERBUIR

Together with my PH Izak Vos from Vos Safaris, I had a tremendously good hunt with unforgettable impressions and memories the past week in South Africa. On my second to last day of this trip, before we headed back to Johannesburg for departure, we were close to Rooiberg on a huge farm in the Limpopo province. We decided to sit this time in a nicely constructed pit blind in an area of the farm where the owner told us that bushbuck, waterbuck, kudu, and warthog roam frequently.

Since eight o'clock in the morning, we had been in the blind, and after we had fixed our stuff and I had drawn my bow as exercise to be familiar with several shooting positions, we were sitting stock-still, and it was quite chilly that early in the morning in mid-August. However, I watched and soaked up again the beautiful awakening of the African bush with the manifold chirps, tweets, and singing of the birds and the rising sun with their upcoming warmth that made it even more comfortable in the blind. A pair of birds, so called Blacksmith Plover (*Vanelus Armatus* or "Waffenkiebitz" in German), came within two meters of our blind, running around picking seeds. That was exciting and amusing ... and the only activity until 11:30 in the morning.

Nevertheless, it was good that we kept quiet and paid attention because all of a sudden two young kudu bulls stood static at fifty meters behind some bushes, gazing in our direction. The natural waterhole was more or less dry, but their focus was probably the salt-lick stone. They were about two years old and nothing we wanted to shoot or were looking for, but it was exciting and interesting to watch and follow their behaviour and reactions.

As always, it was amazing how good those "grey ghosts of Africa" merge and camouflage in their natural habitat although they are big mammals. They stood there and did not move for about five minutes before they walked slowly, always checking all directions, to the salt lick stone. It was close to noon when they came in. Often at this time, hunters are gone back to camp or to the farm for lunch, a break, a nap, or whatever.

How clever of the kudu to have come in now. We observed them for the time being until they left the way they walked in. An hour later, another kudu bull couple visited us, and the two boys from our earlier encounter accompanied them in the back. How interesting that they all sneaked in during lunchtime. Then, it became quiet again, really quiet, and Izak and I decided to alternately take a



Frank's Waterbuck with Izak.

nap in the chair after we had some tasty wild boar salami from the pig I shot on the first day. After seven hours in the blind, at three p.m., we were a bit bored because since the kudus, nothing more had happened. But now would come again the hours where the animals started to roam through the bush after the midday heat started to steal off. From time to time, I took my binoculars and scanned through the bushes just in case some animals were standing somewhere or approaching our location. And the hunting gods were in our favour when I spotted three young waterbuck.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon, and they were quite far away at about hundred meters, but hopefully they would come closer and moreover maybe a good bull would accompany them at the end of the gang. Within a split second, the tension was back and Izak praised: "Well spotted, Frank", when I whispered to him that there are waterbucks possibly coming closer. Slowly but surely, I took an arrow out of the quiver, put it on the arrow rest, and knocked it in without any noise.

I was standing left of the shooting window covered completely by the wall when I grabbed with my left hand around the Gripwerks quilted maple bowgrip and lifted the bow. My release was knocked in and I was ready to move back to the shooting window again when Izak

tipped on my shoulder and mumbled: "Stay there, don't move – a big waterbuck bull is coming in and staring straight in our direction. Now, the tension was more than back and I noticed my increasing blood pressure. I did not move although my body and nerves were all on edge and I did not see how the waterbuck bull looks like. Then Izak whispered: "Can you pull the bow now and hold it at full draw. I will slowly pull you over to the window." There was just little space to draw my 90-pound Elite GT 500 bow, but with that high adrenaline level, I did not realize if it was hard to pull or not. I just pulled the string back.

Izak left me at full draw for about ten seconds which felt like eternity before he turned my upper body over to the shooting window in slow motion and whispered: "The bull is facing us head up, he will probably not turn broadside once he realizes you. Can you do a frontal shot? Aim exactly in the middle and on the centre of the chest!"

Normally, a shot like that is not recommended with bow and arrow, but with my ninety pound, fast bow along with the 800 grain arrow, and a shooting distance of about twenty-five to thirty meters to the bull, I felt safe and answered: "Yes, I can do that!"

"Ok, then do this as soon as I pull you to the opening of the shooting window. I ranged him with the Nikon exactly at twenty-six meters," Izak said and simultaneously I arrived in my final position at full draw and a clear shooting window.

As said, the waterbuck was looking in our direction when I aimed on the center point of his chest and sent the Easton Full Metal Jacket Dangerous Game arrow with the Muzzy Phantom SS Two-Blade broadhead on its deadly mission.

Not even a second elapsed between releasing the trigger, the impact of the arrow, and the jump up and running away of the bull like an express train. "Did I miss him or did I hit him good," I asked Izak.

"Your shot was good my friend, just about a centime-

EQUIPMENT:

Bow: Elite GT 500 @ 90 lbs

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

Camouflage: Sniper Africa

tres left of the centre, but the arrow went completely into the waterbuck. I saw the arrow dunking in," he answered.

Wow, that was impressive. After fifteen minutes of waiting, we decided to climb out of the blind for the follow up because it would start

to get dark very soon. On the spot of the impact, we found some good blood and deep tracks, and Izak is a good and experienced tracker as well and we could precisely follow the flight of the waterbuck which was not far. About 100 meters from the shooting point, he expired. My first waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*) lay beside a bush - what a beautiful specimen of the ringed-horned antelopes of Africa. I was overwhelmed and more than happy together with this awesome trophy. We loaded him on the pick-up, and back in camp, the slaughtering brought back to light the arrow. That was amazing, too. Due to the power, mass, and speed of the arrow, it went completely into the body of the animal and was just stopped by the right hip bone. Although it was an extremely sturdy and tough arrow, it was bent and the stainless steel broadhead was broken in two pieces. Unbelievable. What power a bow and arrow could have.

In the end, good things come to those who wait and our patience paid off with a very nice waterbuck bull.

What an exciting day. Once more, thank you very much to Izak and his outstanding experience, company, and organization.

Shoot straight, always good hunting. Waidmannsheil and "alles van die beste." UHM

HOW THE WATERBUCK GOT ITS WHITE RING

AN AFRICAN FOLK TALE

One dark night, when there was no moon, a waterbuck mother and her young ones grazed very close to a tribesman's hut. This man had been busy whitewashing the walls of his hut in preparation for a visit by a relative, and he had left the pots of whitewash outside.

One of the waterbuck accidentally knocked over the pots in the dark, making such a noise that the tribesman woke up. He ran outside and was very angry to see that all of his nice white paint had been spilled. He shouted at the buck and chased them. The waterbuck scattered and ran in all directions.

In his anger, the tribesman picked up a pot and threw it at the mother waterbuck. It struck her firmly on the hindquarters, and left a large white circle on her rump. Now this was very useful because it showed up nicely in the dark, and her young ones were able to follow her to the safety of the forest.

When the waterbuck realized how useful it was to have a white ring around their bottom, they decided to keep it. From that day to this, no self-respecting waterbuck has been seen without one. UHM