

AN ENCOUNTER OF THE SPECIAL KIND WITH BLACK-BACKED JACKALS

BY FRANK BERBUIR

AT 4:00 a.m. in the morning my alarm clock jolted me out of my dreams and sleep and made me aware it was time to get up, take a shower, and slip into my Sniper Africa Camo clothes.

Outside it was still dark, quiet, and peaceful when I closed the door of my nice, cozy room.

It was the end of August, and I was luckily back in Africa, staying on a wonderful family-owned farm called Okapunja in Northern Namibia, which was close to the Etosha National Park. Around the house under the Lapa, I met Gustav, my Professional Hunter and an overall really good guy. After a quick cup of coffee and some homemade cookies from Uschi, his wife, we headed out into the bush

in an old, almost indestructible Land Rover. The windshield folded down so we could feel the fresh morning breeze on our faces and smell the nature around us, although the smell from the unburned fuel from the old "Landy" was present too. We park the reliable old-timer under a camelthorn-tree before we walked the last three-quarters of a mile to our blind through the dark savanna.

Gorgeous, rosy-faced lovebirds and masked weaver birds were the morning messengers with their chirps in the bushes around our blind, welcoming the rising morning sun. Like the sunsets, the sunrises are always wonderful and the immediate feeling of the upcoming warmth makes you feel more comfortable. The first light also brings the

first animal visitors to the little waterhole – helmeted guinea fowls and doves.

It was around 6:20 a.m. when all of a sudden the bunch of fowls and other birds ran and flew away in a deuce of a stir. What rocked the boat? Two black-backed jackals (*canis mesomelas*) seemed to appear out of nowhere, heading straight to the waterhole. What an amazing surprise. I was not only awake now, but really excited. The jackals were behaving excited and skittish as well as they came closer to the waterhole. The younger and smaller one was nudging and teasing his fellow when they arrived at the water, whereas the bigger jackal was looking in our direction, checking to see if everything was alright.



The old Landy, not only reliable but also useful as an overlook.



EQUIPMENT

Bow: Mathews LX 70#

Arrow: Gold Tip Lazer

Broadhead: German Kinetics Silverflame

Optics: Zeiss Victory Binocular & Bushnell Rangefinder

Release: Scott

Camo: Sniper Africa



Lucky Frank with his first bow & arrow black-backed jackal

Rudy and I were both dead quiet and turned into a pillar of salt in our blind. I had my loyal and faithful Mathews LX bow in one hand and the Gold Tip Lazer carbon arrow in the other hand and I stared at them through the mesh of the blind while they were 21 meters - or 23 yards - away. Gustav was also standing deadly silent behind the video camera, focusing the jackals. The big jackal is bugged out by the younger one, and he bared his teeth and barked at him. This short distraction gave me a quick opportunity to nock in the arrow, lift up my bow, and get to full draw. The “wild dogs of the African savanna” stood still at the waterhole and both dropped their head to have a sip. That was the one and only chance to put the sight on the vitals of the big male in front. Fortunately, the younger was not standing behind or in front of him and the firing line was clear when I released the arrow on its deadly mission. The arrow, with a Silverflame

125-grain broadhead, completely penetrated the body of the animal shortly over the left front leg, and the jackal jumped up immediately. In three, four, five wild turns, he tumbled around to the right before he expired within seconds only 10 yards away from where he was shot. No long suffering. The young jackal was completely irritated about what happened and ran around the dead jackal two times before he escaped somewhere. We waited a couple of minutes before I sneaked out of the blind to pick up the jackal and to look for the arrow, which we finally found 70 meters behind the shooting spot. What an experience and unexpected start to the day.

It was two days later when I sat with Rudy, the other PH on the farm, in the same blind at about the same time in the early morning when the entire scene restarts like a play-back, and the younger, smaller rooijakkal visited the waterhole again. Suddenly, we saw him creeping out of the thick bushes in a

southeast direction from us moving slightly nervous in a quick paced to approach the waterhole. Cautiously, he checked out the area before he lowered his head for drinking. Once again, the distance was 21 meters - or 23 yards - and the jackal was standing quartering toward us a bit. The spot on the vitals was small, but feasible. The jackal was still having a sip when I drew my bow at a snail's pace and focused on the target. The arrow hit him hard, penetrating exactly where I aimed. Again, the animal swirled around to find out what hit him before he dropped dead within 5 seconds and 5 yards from where he was shot. Rudy was astonished how quickly and cleanly this happened with bow and arrow. What an amazing, awesome morning again, and what a lucky hunter I was.

Always good hunting,
Waidmannshei, and
Alles van die Beste.

— Frank UHM

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