

MATWETWE SAFARIS

2019 NEWSLETTER

Here we are again at the end of another season. It feels like just the other day that I wrote the 2018 newsletter. Time flies. It was John Madson who said, "I do not hunt for the joy of killing, but for the joy of living and the inexpressible pleasure of mingling my life, however briefly, with that of a wild creature that I respect, admire and value". It is therefore, yet again, my great pleasure to share some of those moments with you to also keep the thought alive that it is all within our reach to experience the ultimate hunting experience - An African Safari.

This year we started early. I wasn't even back from the Flint SCI banquet yet and brothers Jim & Bruce Brodie, together with their friend Dave Warne, came to hunt buffalo cows on the border of the Kruger National Park. My very experienced friend, and PH, Chris Lordan volunteered to guide them along what was extremely difficult hunting grounds. The late rains had the bush thicker than ever which severely decreased visibility. They worked hard but each got their shot in and went to hunt some other plains game afterwards.



Dave & Jim with their cow buffalo



Bruce's cull wildebeest



Blue skies and good weather



Dennis & Jamie Burger was on their first safari and stunned at the number of animals they saw. Dennis was the hunter and took some gorgeous trophies, especially this 24-inch impala.



Jerry Klock & Mike Macacron



Jerry Klock asked his friend, and very experienced hunter, Mike Macacron to join him on his second safari to South Africa. Mike advised all the youngsters, but had only one trophy in mind for himself- giraffe. He made a perfect shot and the job started. Of course, my winch broke just as we started to lift the heavy animal. Alternative plans with a backhoe got the job done and now I have a brand new Warne-winch. The brothers Andy and Jonah Mast also joined them and collected some fine specimens. Andy, being a 24 year old professional bull rider, was one of the tougher clients I had to be in shape for.



The Mast brothers Jonah & Andy



Bill



Mark's sable



Bill's buffalo



Mark Swidd's kudu

Early June was time for Bill Macdermaid's handgun buffalo hunt. Bill cleaned up his .500 S&W for the job and loaded it with 550gn lead cast bullets. I was very impressed with the penetration and overall performance of that bullet so eventually we couldn't just stop after the buffalo hunt. We went on to hunt several other species too. Bill brought along Mark Swidd, a fellow Blaser fanatic and marksman, with his R8 in .338 Win Mag. Mark took sable, kudu, zebra and a few others. We had a great time around the fire discussing ballistics and listening to Mark's heavy Polish accent.



Brad Endres with his 2 beauties



Brad Endres came on his second buffalo hunt with us. This time the hunt was planned last minute, so I asked my friend Chris Lordan to be Brad's PH on this hunt. Chris, who has hunted more than 100 buffalo in his career, was really pleased with the trophy quality and got Brad lined up with this well-shaped 41 incher. Colorful, hard chase they've had. On one of the hunts they just couldn't pass on this beautiful 54 and a half inches kudu.



Chad & Julie's kudu



31"

Very familiar names in Matwetwe circles are those of Chad and Julie Clements. They have hunted with us twice before and Chad has proven himself to be one of those die hard, give it all you got until you reach your goal, kind of hunters. The ones you read of only in books. He had taken 2 kudu and a waterbuck before, but insisted on doing that again as he enjoyed the chase so much. After a careful plan to flush a big kudu out for Chad, the magnificent bull stepped out in the open at 60 yards. He measured at 54 and a half inches. We will never forget that sight. It would have always been hard to top his first 30" Waterbuck. This time, getting a 31 incher was priceless.



Ed & Angela Shaw, Nicolas and Alex De Cresce as well as Anders Garner decided to still come and do the hunt after Nick, who organized the whole thing, got sick. Nicolas took down a big blesbuck to show dad that he CAN do it. Ed and Anders were on the kudu chase and were both rewarded with beautiful old bulls. According to them the bird hunt was the highlight of their trip. The bird hunt bag included 7 species and caused a whole lot of shooting. Well done guys!!!



Anders



Ed & Divan



Nicolas & Alex



The bird bag

Chara Mc Minn decided to join her husband Jeff on his bow hunting safari. She enjoyed going along on all the hunts and found the elephant interaction very interesting and fun. Jeff proved his bow skills with a sharply angled shot at this beautiful kudu. However, it was the warthog that was responsible for the technicolor. It was the tail end of the rut and this huge 15" hog came in with a sow. After some commotion he took off running, just to turn 10 seconds later and come right in. This hog ended up at number 3 on the Matwetwe Top Ten list. This list is a new concept that we've introduced this year. It is plainly a top 10 listing of the best 10 trophies of the year, regardless of the hunt itself.



This year, Dirk Blunck came on trip number 21 with us. His wife, Miriam and son, Cyril joined him again. He once again did the long-range thing and ended up with a few kills at over 700 yards. A real marksman that knows his equipment. He did it all with a 30-06 in Tikka and a good Zeiss scope. Miriam enjoyed the beautiful Arabian horses while Cyril also started pulling the trigger this time.



Dirk's Yellow blesbuck



Miriam



Lee's wide kudu



Jim's Heavy sable

Lee Hoyt wanted a kudu as his #1 animal. After some struggle through the thickets and the mountains he finally got this nice wide one on the flats and in the open. Jim McGuirk joined his friend Lee and took a few more trophies he was planning on. Don't know why, but that always happens. Jim made a perfect shot at 80 yards on this heavy sable.

Then it was time for a busier hunt than usual. Todd and Trudy Grasman brought their whole family and most of them hunted. They were 8 in total. Between Herman, Divan and myself we were running around like mad men to get them all lined up for the trophy of their dreams. What a nice, happy family to spend time with. I truly enjoyed their company, energy and good senses of humor. They took some super nice trophies. Todd and his son, Mike both brought their bows. Todd took this nice eland and was also rewarded with a beautiful 54 and a half inch kudu. Mike's fiancé, Lauren was always there to share in Mike's bow hunting highlights.



Todd did a great job teaching his daughters to shoot. Both Kelsey and Nicole made perfect shots at some quite long distances. The husbands, Ryan and Tylor, had a lot of pressure on them but came out on top every time. It was quite a highlight to have so many good-looking women in camp at the same time.



Kelsey and Ryan



Nicole and Tylor



My good friends Gary Tatro, Jay Grebner and Jeff Lynett came back in August. This time Gary wanted Kudu and Nyala. Initially, we struggled a bit with the kudu but were rewarded at last light with a beautiful bull. Gary's 28 and a half inches Nyala was the best of all the animals he took this year. Jay was haunted by Waterbuck for a few days and got this beautiful 29 incher on the last afternoon.



Gary



Jay

Jonathan Drury, alias Johnny Jihad, brought his girlfriend Kelly to join in on the fun. What a guy to have around. We are still laughing at some of his comments. Johnny shot a huge golden wildebeest as well as several other species. It was a blast!!! Part of their group was Jeff Lynett, who brought his girlfriend Cathleen Lynch along this time. Cathleen was very well prepared for this trip with her Tikka 30-06 and Swarovski scope. She took the most animals of the group, with beautiful Sable, Roan, zebra and several others. She also took the impala slam with common-, black- and white flanked impala. A first for Matwetwe Safaris. Jeff took a few good ones with great shots, but his eland stood out and made the no.6 spot on the Matwetwe Top Ten at 38 and a half inches. Congrats!!!



Jonathan



Beautiful roan



White flanked Impala



Jeff's Eland

I dubbed Stuart Thompson the best prepared hunter of the season. He knew the main principle of hunting ballistics for African hunting: "a slow, heavy bullet of good construction is the way to go". His choice: a 30-06 with 200gn Swift A Frame. The bullet combination, along with his ability to use split second opportunities, was the secret to his success. Exceptional Nyala (28") and Kudu (54 and a half) were amongst his rewards.



Stuart's spiral horned family



6 years ago, in Traverse City at the Northern Michigan SCI banquet, we started talking about it. 3 couples (fellow exhibitors) wanted to do a South African Safari. Together with Johan Combrink from Numzaan Safaris we all became good friends over the years. When the decision came on where to go hunting, the group decided to first go to Kruger National Park and then to both Matwetwe and Numzaan. So firstly, Kruger was a huge blast. Then it was off to the Matwetwe main camp.



Johnny's 60" kudu and 45" Buffalo



Johnny and Sue Fowler, from Missouri, and I were looking for a cape buffalo for Johnny. Not too long into the hunt we spotted the herd grazing. After a few hundred yards of stalking, the buffalo smelled us and started to move around nervously. Then, as if somebody had pushed a button, a huge bull appeared and presented a full frontal shot at 40 yards. Johnny acted and the .375 soft nose went through the top of the heart. As the buffalo turned and ran away, Johnny did what he anticipated so many times in his preparations to the hunt; he threw a solid from the .375, right through the chest cavity. The buffalo measured at an astonishing 45" with 19" bosses. Seeing as we didn't want to sit around in camp that afternoon, we went out for kudu. We spotted a huge bull and Johnny swung around and shot the bull on a full run at 70 yards. I was stunned. The kudu measured 60 and a quarter inches. Now what are the chances of that on the first day of your first

safari? Johnny's Kudu made the no.1 on the Matwetwe Top Ten, with the buffalo at no.2.
Congratulations Johnny!!!

It was all downhill from there and Sue went on to take zebra, gemsbuck and impala with excellent shooting. Doug & Kerry Wood went out with Johan and took this huge sable, which made number 5 on the MTT.



Doug's 45" Sable,



Sue's



Lola's Gemsbuck



Kerry's

When we went west to Johan's camp the fun just continued. Doug and Johan, whilst waiting for kudu at the waterhole, had the priceless experience of being entertained by the presence of a leopard for 20 minutes. Doug ended up getting this perfect 55 and a half inches kudu late that same afternoon. Dave and Lola took some wonderful trophies while hunting with Chris and Brent. Amongst them was this old 52 and a half inches kudu.



Doug's 55"



Dave's kudu

Andy Edwards made it over again. This time to complete his dangerous 7. He did so with a perfect shot to the spine on this 12-foot crocodile in the Limpopo River. He was well practiced and prepared with his .416 Rigby to make that single shot that a croc will offer. We went back to the Matwetwe main camp and hunted bushpig, but just couldn't pass up this monster warthog. The tiny 10 started the show themselves and we could get shots at common duiker and steenbuck. Next time to the more difficult little ones! We spent some quality time together as always.



Some of Andy's rewards for 2019

It was, as usual, such a privilege and honor to welcome Dave & Jane Owen in camp again as the last group of the season. Dave came to hunt Roan. Little did we know that there were roan in this class around the area we hunted in. After spooking it a few times, Dave made a 350-yard shot and anchored it. It measured at an astonishing 32 inches and made the no.4 spot on the Matwetwe Top Ten. After taking a nice bush pig on a hunt that was supposed to prepare Dave for a leopard hunt, we went down to the Free State for Red Letchwe. Dave ended up taking several more nice trophies down there, but it was his shooting that impressed the most. He became the only hunter for 2019 to get the Harold King Award. By doing so he also became the first ever two-time winner of the award. Congratulations again Dave!!!



Dave & Jane

The 2019 season was unique, as well as familiar, in many ways. With careful planning, Annie and I took a couple of weeks during the season to go hunt in New Zealand. What a wonderful country and experience that was. My youngest son, Harm, finished school this year and got accepted at the North West University to go study a business degree in 2020. Hennie, my oldest, just finished his second year in cost engineering. We have been so blessed to have had the opportunities and health to do all that.



I want to thank each and every person that made this possible. From the Matwetwe staff, who made sure the camp was in good shape, to Jimson who used his incredible skills to track down animals that were not hit that good the first time. A huge thanks to the old friends that returned for yet another chapter in their lives' recreational diary as well as the new members of the Matwetwe family who trusted us to help fill theirs with precious and colorful memories.

We must honor and thank God for the privilege, health and opportunity to live life at the fullest in His creation. So many rules out there also apply to us in the race of life. Let us pause for a moment to realize that we have a huge responsibility.

I am again planning to come and do my rounds in Michigan during February and March of 2020. My schedule will be a little different than usual because of some show dates that were moved. I will not be attending the Outdoorrana in 2020 but will be in Hudsonville on February 14th and will end my trip in Flint on March 14th. Please come by or email me so we can get together and catch up.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy new year. Enjoy this time with your loved ones as it is even more precious than we might think.

Until next time

Hendrik Botha

Matwetwe Safaris