

A True "Late Hunt"

My Wife and I made our second trip to South Africa in June 2001. Our 16 and 17 year old daughters each have animals in the Safari Club record book, but none outside the U.S. So, we decided to take them along.

After months of studying pictures of animals, one of them decided to shoot a Zebra and the other would shoot Ostrich, Blesbok, and Impala (of course, by the end of the hunt they had each shot several more animals!).

Unfortunately, when we arrived, the outfitter had us mixed up with the hunters scheduled after us, so he sent us with another PH to an area that did not have any animals we wanted!

Then, in order to make up for it, he took us to an area that had one monstrous Greater Kudu. Unfortunately, after three days, we had not seen any shootable bulls (or anything else for that matter).

We eventually left because he was offered the opportunity to remove a problem hippo from a ranch near Krueger. Unfortunately, after a full days drive, we found the hippo had left the area!

We were now fairly discouraged, since we only had 8 days left in a 15 day hunt. We had only taken three animals, and none of them were on our list of 15 preferred animals.

The good news was that the girls were having a great time and they were seeing a lot of Africa. Also, our PH, Geffert Pretorius, was still very positive that we would get our animals, and he was willing to hunt and travel 18 hours every day!

Finally, we headed for his lodge and home area in Zulu Natal. Then things started to happen. I took Safari Club top 10 Handgun Kudu, Nyala and Impala.

The girls shot a couple of animals every day. The oldest one, Kathe, shoots with a pistol too. Her .270 Encore with 130 gr bullets totally amazed the locals. She dropped each of her Zebras in their tracks with one shot. Our youngest daughter, Danell, picked up the nickname of "one shot Nellie". Her .257 Roberts dropped three animals over 300 yards! Geffert's wife, Zoe, took wonderful care of the girls and my wife, Kathy. They toured Zulu land, went to the beach, and went shopping in Durban (real hunting!).

I really wanted to take some Duikers, but after several days of hunting them we had seen about 45 females and not trophy males. We finally gave up and headed to the Karoo region (a 10 hour drive). During our two day stay, Danell took two Springbucks and an Ostrich.

I took a top 10 black Springbuck, white Springbuck and Eland. My big pistol took down the Eland with one shot, while he was facing me, at 284 yards. This was one of four animals taken over 220 yards. My "big" pistol is a .378 GNR and uses a 270 gr Hornady SP and Leupold 4x.

My best shot, and way beyond my normal ability, was a snap-shot that took the white Springbuck head-on at 223 yards. This was with the .270 Encore, 130 gr Core-Lokt, with a 3-9x Burris. By the way, I sent the scope back to the factory again upon our return and told them to keep it; most useless scope I have had.

After an eight hour drive we arrived in Western Natal. We now had two days of hunting left. Fortunately, on the first day I took my common Reebuck and top 10 Bushbuck.

The Bushbuck was pure luck since he was running and had just made his last jump into the brush when I dropped him with a neck shot at 120 yards. The common Reebuck was a common 100 yard shot, but not a common animal. He was double the normal size, and he is number 2 overall.

The hunt was a good lesson for the girls; as with most things in life, persistence wins. The PH and I hunted and travelled 18 hours every day for 15 days with no breaks. We covered over 4,000 miles. The girls took eight trophies and I took 11. Nine of mine make top 10, two of which are top 10 overall; and eight of the nine were taken during a six day timeframe.

The big disappointment was that after 12 night hunts for Fox, Cat, Jackal, Hyena, and Bush pig we had not bagged a single one!