

# MATWETWE SAFARIS

## 2021 NEWSLETTER

It was with mixed expectations that we entered into the 2021 season. Not knowing if the season was even going to happen or not, we had a lot of potential hunters ready to come and enjoy what they love most. A great guy with the name of Gian Van Rensburg joined our team just before the season started. Gian, a student in nature conservation, started as an apprentice PH, but ended up doing a lot more. We love his sense of humor and hope that he will be with us for a long time to come.

In early April we welcomed our first hunters in camp. It was no other than our dear friends Brad Endres and Brian Thompson that returned for the third time. This time they brought two other friends with them. Tom Eckert and Larry Lenard. Tom came as an observer but ended up taking a beautiful old blesbuck. The other three made sure we really started on a high note. 5 days into the hunt, 3 magnificent buffaloes were down with great stories to tell. Larry's went down like a ton of bricks with a spine shot out of his .416. Brad's took a perfect heart shot out of his Rigby, ran 20 yards and died. It was Brian's buffalo that made us work. After picking up their tracks early morning we had an intense stalk and got a shot off in close cover. The buffalo was slightly angled and the bullet didn't quite do the job. After a full day's tracking by the master, Jimson, we finally caught up and Brian could finish the old bull off. Memories that will never be forgotten.

With a full season of no hunting during 2020 there were magnificent trophies out there. These guys ended up taking advantage of it and bagged several monster plains game trophies as well. Brad's 31 and a quarter inch Nyala was surely one of them.



Brad's old dagg boy



Brian



A proud Larry Tom's Blesbuck



It almost felt like a Matwetwe Safari reunion when our second group showed up. The Teetors also came on their third trip with us. A few years ago, Scott got married so he made the bright decision to bring his wonderful wife Lauren along. Lauren enjoyed the safari very much and took a few very good trophies with great shots. It was her blue wildebeest at 31 and a half inches that earned her the 7<sup>th</sup> spot on the Matwetwe Top Ten (MTT). Dan's mind was set on a big Crocodile. He prepared very well and made a pinpoint shot with his .35 Whelen on this brute of a Croc. Matthew and Scott got several fine trophies themselves and it seemed like the more we hunt together the more we all enjoy each other's company.



Scott & Lauren



The whole party with Dan's Croc.

Bill Stockwell from eastern Michigan brought his two daughters to join him on Safari. Maddi the hunter and Sophie the unique character. Maddi made her dad proud with the precise shooting. She bagged a big 31" Waterbuck that brought her the no 8 position on the MTT. Together they spent some quality time together, took some great trophies home, but I think the bird hunt was their favorite.



Our good friend from Kalamazoo, Craig Stull brought his daughter Emily on Safari as well as his friend Chad Van Sparrentak with his daughter Elise. If you could ever define a great time, this was one. We felt like we were on vacation with some friends ourselves. Craig came for buffalo and was rewarded with a beautiful buffalo, a perfect 45" sable as well as several others. Emily impressed everybody with her precise shooting and became only the third lady ever to receive the Harold King Award (HKA). Chad and Elise took several prize trophies themselves, with Chad's crossbow impala (26") that brought him the no6 position on the MTT. We were privileged to deliver several very handy supplies to the Abraham Kriel Orphanage with the help of these guys and the SCI Michigan Chapter.



Elise



Emily & Craig



Chad's Impala



Gerald Lucas and his wife Janet joined us in June on a 10-day safari. Cold nights didn't keep him from going after the night critters, he hung in there and bagged a beautiful genet cat and several porcupines. His shot on the eland was perfect, then we were positively surprised when he scored even higher than we thought. Gerald's eland at 40" brought him the well deserved second place on the MTT. We were very fortunate to hunt blue wildebeest in an area where they haven't been hunted for 5 years. Gerald's blue was the prettiest wildebeest I have ever laid my eyes upon.



Some of the most fun people we have ever had in camp were Joe Humphries and Mark Johncock. They were very appreciative of the smallest thing. Mark, the gentle giant and Joe the comedian, kept us laughing for the whole week. We hunted hard and played hard. They took outstanding trophies and had the privilege to see Jimson do his thing on a track. Joe was a superb marksman and received the HKA for his excellent shooting. Joe's sable measured a staggering 46 inches and was placed 4<sup>th</sup> on the MTT.



Joe's 46" Sable



Mark's 40" Gemsbuck

If you have ever seen somebody that had everything 100% prepared it was Michael Harrel. Mike and his wonderful wife Michelle had a blast. She didn't hunt but joined in on every new experience. PH Herman Harmse hunted with Mike and Michelle. Being the fun guy that he is, Herman made sure they were enjoying every moment while going down their wish list. They brought their parents Bob and Sue Jones along. Bob was after only one animal. A real trophy kudu over 55". We hunted hard in some rough country, saw some very good kudu but we wanted this one bull that we got a quick glance at on day 2. On day 4 with almost no daylight left he offered a shot and Bob took it. The bull measured a beautiful symmetrical 57 inches. We celebrated hard that night. On the last afternoon with everybody's wish lists filled, we had a sundowner at the Baboon cliffs. What a way to end a great safari.



Breanna and Kyle Terpstra were first timers in South Africa. They loved the alone time and just being in the outdoors. Breanna, a fairly inexperienced huntress impressed with her good shooting and took a few prize trophies with clean shots. Her wildebeest was the biggest thing she ever took a shot at, and it only took one to put him down. He measured 29 inches. Kyle was very happy with his huge Gemsbuck. The smiles say it all.



Kyle's prize Gemsbuck



Breanna's Blue Wildebeest

Since Bradley Henion hunted with us the first time 15 years ago, he had that dream of going after Africa's "black death". This year was Brad's 4<sup>th</sup> trip with us, and we did it. After several stalks and the buffalo only showing their behinds to us, we finally got the right one to offer a shot. The first shot nicked a small twig and didn't quite go where it was intended. Then the game was on. After several close encounters in the thick stuff, Brad put the final shot in, and it was done. A beautiful old bull with hard rough bosses was the sweet reward, but Brad's experiences with the toughest animal he has ever hunted will be with him till his last days. Andy Edwards, his son Ross and friend Logan joined Brad on the hunt and took several great trophies themselves. We were hunting for Klipspringer in the mountains in an area that wasn't hunted for years. Andy got a beautiful 5 inch, then Brad said: "while we are here, let's try for one for me too". We were very lucky to find one taking a nap on a hidden rock, away from the wind. Brad's shot was good, and he was rewarded with maybe the best trophy that he will ever take in his life. The Klippie measured 6 inches with 2 and a half inch bases. This brought him the no 1 spot on the Matwetwe Top Ten. The rest of the week was a great time for us all. Ross's Honey Badger was another highlight. After several attempts at this little illusive night creature, Ross finally was in the blind at the same time the HB was at the bait. He took the Honey Badger with his 6<sup>th</sup> shot and won the HKA by doing it. An all-over great hunt.



We were lucky enough to welcome Dave & Beth Read and Bob Rawlings & Becky Pagan for the third time. This time Dave was after buffalo. Bob always said he doesn't want a buffalo, he will just shoot Dave's buffalo. Fate had it that, that was exactly how it happened. Dave's first shot was an inch off to the side and again the game was on. After 2 days of tracking and planning, we finally ambushed the old bull by using Bob as the ambush-shooter. Luckily he brought some solids for his .300WSM. The plan worked like a charm and the bull came out just where we thought, and Bob did it with the final shot. Celebration and laughter followed, and Dave decided that this buffalo

hunting thing was the best time ever, so he booked his 2023 buffalo hunt right there. The 10 days went by like the blink of an eye, with wonderful memories between some good friends. We are all looking very much forward to the 2023 hunt.



A picture can speak more than a 1000 words.



Dave & Beth's 45<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.



Steve & Stephanie Harshberger and Steve & Sheri Harmon came in late August on their safari. The girls did not hunt but were there all the time to experience what South Africa could throw at them. Being ex police officers, the two Steve's really impressed with their quick accurate shooting. Their skill together with being at the right place at the right time gave them the edge to collect some superb trophies. Steve Harshberger's kudu was likely the most beautiful kudu for the season. I will never forget how cold I was when we went after the wildebeest and got stuck in a rainstorm. We stalked a bachelor group of blue wildebeest bulls, got within shooting distance, then the storm was on us before we could shoot. We waited it out for half an hour, as did the wildebeest. Luckily they were still there after the rain and Steve made a "Matwetwe" shot at over 250 meters. S,S,S & S are now new members of the Matwetwe family for sure.



Harsh



Harm



Spectacular sunsets

The empty spot on the wall in Sonia Fry and JD Hutchinson's living room stayed empty for a few years because they had a dream of doing a "His & Hers" Kudu-display of both their Kudus on it. We were fortunate to help make that dream come true. Hers measured 54 inches and his was 55 inches. I will never forget how my heart missed a beat when I saw JD's bull's one horn appearing at 20 yards. Sonia's warthog was the biggest for the 2021 season at 14 and a half inches and got her the no 5 spot on the MTT. Thank you for trusting us with your dream.



Hunting Africa was always on Brandon Leitzke and Tylor Borgers's bucket list. It came a little earlier than planned after attending a WTU fundraiser. They decided to bring their wives Colette and Stephanie along and do some sightseeing on the side. They had a great time, shared some good memories, while hunting several of South Africa's plains game. After the hunting part of their safari, they went on a photo safari to Kruger National Park, did some Zip-lining in the Waterberg and saw the Blyde river canyon. A "must see" in their opinion.



Fun times



Mike Behunin and his wife Kathy were very frustrated with this whole Covid-delay thing. They just wanted to get to South Africa. Mike was well prepared with some very fine equipment. His Blaser R8 in .375H&H and Cooper in 280 Rem with the right bullets, was a very good choice for the kind of hunting we do here. Mike took some phenomenal shots at close and long range. It was the kudu hunt that stood out. To Mike this was a very humbling experience when he saw that magnificent kudu on the mountainside and having the opportunity to hunt such a beautiful bull in the perfect environment. Kathy decided to also give it a go and she made a perfect shot on this old blue wildebeest. Gian took them on a 3-day trip through Kruger Park before their hunt. They claimed that it helped them get over the jetlag to focus better on the hunting. We all enjoyed their company very much.



Mike's 56" Kudu



Kathy's Blue Wildebeest

Some experienced buffalo hunter once said: "it is easy to kill a buffalo but its hard to convince him of that fact". Cary McAfee came by himself to fulfil his dream of hunting Africa's Black death. His experience was exactly the same. After having the old bull down, Cary was in total awe and appreciation when seeing this tough animal up close. Cary enjoyed himself immensely and went on to hunt a few other species as well. A few days after Cary had gone home, a guy with the name of Ira Gates were on a photo safari in South Africa for a month. He wanted to hunt buffalo only. We got lucky to get an "almost" open shot early on the hunt. The bullet hit the only twig in the way and got deflected. What happened in the next 8 hours will be with me forever. A better tracker than Jameson Khantsa will be hard to come by on this continent. How he stayed on that track all that long in those circumstances and judging the buffalo's behavior is beyond my imagination. I just felt so lucky to have had him by my side for so long and hope he will be around for many years to come. We finished the old bull off and Ira could take one of the most beautiful buffalo trophies I have ever seen home with him.



Cary



Ira

Our last hunt for the season was in Mid-November when the De Young family from Ada, MI spent a week with us. By that time, it was already warm, so the swimming pool was a winner for the kids. Alex couldn't see enough of all the "creepy" critters the summer had to offer. With the way he was seeking for scorpions and snakes I am sure this kid will be some famous biologist one day. Chris(dad) wanted his family to have the best experience and they did. He gave opportunities to Joel, Alex, Natalie and Arlene to hunt the plains game animal of their choice. The boys grabbed the opportunity and made perfect shots on both their animals. Alex took a blue wildebeest (bigger than dad's) and Joel a nice wide blesbuck. Arlene and Natalie went on several side trips, rode the elephants, and just had a blast. Another welcome addition to the Matwetwe Family.





The De Youngs having a blast



In retrospect we look back at an absolute great season, when in March we didn't even know if any safari was going to happen. It makes one feel guilty to have doubted and so very grateful that the Lord created this perfect environment that He is lending to us to manage and reign over. I want to thank each participant that made this season so successful. First and foremost, I want to thank the Dear Lord for giving us the ability and opportunities to do all this. Thank you to you the client(friend) that trusted us with your precious time and dreams of doing an African safari. Thank you for the huge role my wife Annie plays behind the scenes as well as the rest of the family. I am so proud of Harm that is showing his natural talent in the industry. I am kind of grateful that the online classes have brought him home for a large part of the season, although he was busy with his studies at university. Just as proud am I of our oldest son Hennie who graduated with his honors degree in cost engineering this year. He landed a great job in his industry and will start there in January of 2022 to start the new chapter in his life. A great thank you to all my staff for each important role everybody plays to make the Matwetwe Machine run smoothly. From Marietjie's finger licking cuisine, Jimson's phenomenal tracking skills, skimmers, cleaners as well as the laundry personnel. Thank you so much.

If all the travel restrictions allow me, I am planning to be in Michigan again during February/March next year. Please come by the many events and shows that I am planning to attend and say hi. It will be great to see you all again.

Merry Christmas to everybody. Take a good rest, enjoy a great time with your loved ones and be thankful for the life we have and that He has saved us all through His Son Jesus Christ.

Until next time!

Hendrik Botha