

<http://www.coueswhitetail.com/forums/topic/50425-trip-to-the-western-cape/>

I just got back into town and I wanted to try and put it all down before I get return to work. That didn't work out so I'll add the stories as I go.

To begin, I picked up a hunt at the Arizona Elk Society Auction a little over a year ago. It was my first trip to Africa so I sought as much advice as I could get from anyone and everyone who ever hunted in Africa. I was given a ton of great advice from a ton of Coues Whitetail regulars but some of the best and most extensive information came from Bill Quimby. Bill gave me great information ranging from animals that should be on my list which are native to the Western Cape to what book I should read before I leave (The Covenant is truly a must read for anyone headed to South Africa). The time Bill spent exchanging emails from me really improved every aspect of my trip, so, thanks a million Bill.

We (my wife, two girls and I) left on the morning of July 2 and landed in J-Burg at about 19:00 on July 3. My buddy and his wife landed about two hours after us so we stayed at City Lodge and picked up a rental van from Hertz the next morning. The drive to Kimberly took much longer than I expected it would take based upon the time estimate from Google but we made it in one piece and met the farm owner, Andries, from Mount Carmel Safaris at the airport. By the time we made it to Danielskuil, it was just about bed time.

Don't let the pictures below fool you, it was COLD. I had been checking the weather and the temperatures were projected to be between 40 to 60 degrees. Lo and behold, an unexpected cold front moved in and the temperature dropped to the 20 to 40 range.

The next morning we were up and ready to go when my youngest daughter started puking. Apparently, there was a 24 hour flu floating around so my wife and youngest were out for the first day. The PH got it too so we headed out for a Black Wildebeest with Andries and the tracker Jim.

It took me about 120 seconds to see the difference between hunting in Africa and Arizona. As we drove out to the veld, we saw a herd of no less than 75 black wildebeest. Andreis decided we would swing around behind Mt. Carmel in order to hunt into the wind. As we did that, I couldn't believe all the different species of animals I saw in this seven to ten minute drive around the small mountain; gemsbok, kudu, zebra and a couple others that I didn't recognize at that time (I got better). I couldn't stop smiling and shaking my head. When we came to a stop, I hopped out of the car with Jim. Jim is about a foot shorter than me but, nevertheless, I was walking upright when he was walking upright. Bad idea. I spooked some blue wildebeest and zebras and it sent the herd off running.

After being scolded by Andries through my buddy Craig, (I should have known better) we were back in the truck driving around for another herd. We ended up seeing four which were apart from the larger herd about a mile away. One was a nice sized bull so we stalked until I was about 75 yards away. One shot with the .300 WBY 200 grain nosler partition and he was down where he stood.

After sending him back to the meat shed, we were back looking for the herd for Craig's wildebeest. We found them and he was able to stalk in to about 150 yards. The shot hit him but we couldn't see where and it didn't put him down. The bull immediately went into the herd and they started running in what can only be described as a crazy red dust wildebeest tornado. After the tornado, we saw that the wounded wildebeest was on the outer edge of the herd. Later, the PH told us that the herd runs in circles to drive the wounded wildebeest out of the herd because the smell of blood attracts predators.

At that point they were too far to take a shot and then the herd took off running. We jumped in the truck, which is permissible there even if it makes us Arizona hunters uncomfortable, and began to chase them. Andries drove through the desert like a mad man while we were seated on a bench in the bed of the Toyota Landcruiser. My daughter put it best when she said, "Daddy, it's like the Indiana Jones ride!" We got to a point where Andries "split the herd" to permit us to have an easier time figuring out which wildebeest was the injured one. By that I mean, he drove right at the herd at God knows how fast and split the herd in two smaller herds. I've never done anything like that and it was awesome. They are so fast and were kicking up huge clouds of red dust that we drove through to see them just a few meters from the truck as they ran.

Ultimately, we were able to find the injured wildebeest and get Craig in a position to put him down. We learned that the first shot was the right height but was pushed to the left, hitting him through the jaw.

That was it for the first day and it was even better than expected. I'm sure you'll all agree that mine was way bigger than Craig's.





Over the next six days we hunted Gemsbok, Impala, Common Springbok, a spontaneous Warthog, Blesbok and a Kudu bull. Not to take away from hunting the first four, they were awesome, but I don't have the time to write about them. The Kudu hunt and my Blesbok hunt though, were they types of experiences that got me looking for good packages back to Africa the day I landed back in the States.

### My Blesbok

We were out hunting for a nice Kudu bull when we came across a herd of Blesbok, Impala and Common Springbok near a water hole which was situated halfway up a decent sized hill. The Springbok were super spooky so they bolted as soon as the truck came to a stop. The Impala stayed a minute or two longer and then wandered away. The Blesbok stayed there though so I thought that I was going to have a shot fairly quickly. As we approached, I looked to my left and saw six giraffes watching us. Watching the giraffes watching me stalk another animal instantly struck me as one of the most fascinating things that I've ever experienced while hunting.

Lost in that moment, I walked behind the PH when we saw a Blesbok ewe standing 30 yards from us. She was well below the herd and caught us completely by surprise. We stood there without moving since we had the wind and watched as she slowly walked back up the hill and joined the herd. No sooner than she joined when the entire heard began a jog-like trot towards the giraffes.

The herd and giraffes were in a forest of trees akin to our scrub oaks. We began to weave our way through them towards the herd. Craig was in the truck and later told us, "I couldn't see where you guys were but I knew exactly where because all six giraffes were fixed on you everywhere you went."

We continued on when suddenly we saw another ewe standing 25 yards from us. Again, we had the wind so we just stood motionless as she stared at us. After a few minutes, she wandered on back to the herd and we moved to get in a position to see the herd and find a ram.

We started moving back up the hill when the giraffes spooked and took off running. For as big as they are, it was shocking how quietly and quickly they can get away. After they ran, we saw four Gemsbok trotting to our

right. They probably had been in the thick stuff all along but we couldn't see them. Since this was a few days into the hunt, I began to suspect that many of the herds rely on the senses of the other species for protection.

We swung back towards the Blesbok to the left and began another approach. When we came to a small clearing, we saw two more ewes staring us down. Both were at 25 yards and one was at 2:00 while the other was at 10:00. Again, we stood still until both of them wandered back into the herd. Once the ewe at 10:00 joined the herd, we saw them run down the hill away from us. I would have been more upset but the PH caught a glimpse of some back towards where the ewe at 2:00 wandered.

We headed in that direction and saw a big ram munching on a bush about 40 yards away. For those who don't know, many of the animals in Africa have horns regardless of the sex. Generally speaking, I am the worst at picking out which were the males and which were the females without the guide's help. But when it came to this ram, even I could tell that he was a big boy.

The PH put up the sticks and down he went. In the picture, I'm holding Flacke the long legged Fox terrier. Attached Thumbnails







## My Kudu

If there was one single reason for going on this trip it was because I wanted to hunt for Kudu. We started this pursuit on Tuesday by heading to a property owned by a friend of Andreis (they call them concessions). I'm not sure precisely how big these areas were but we spent a lot of time on dirt roads looking for kudu.

Within the first three minutes, we came across a small herd. They were running along a road that runs along a high fence. I had heard a lot about South Africa's high fences and wasn't enamored with the idea of hunting behind one. However, we were fortunate that Andries' property was so big that we rarely saw it. Additionally, when it came to Kudu hunting the big bulls are able to jump them. The PH, whose name was PG, said, "Today they're our Kudu, tomorrow they're our neighbor's." During this first sighting, I saw what he meant. As we approached the herd we could see a couple small bulls with them. The bulls built up a head of steam and jumped over the high fence as did some of the cows. I couldn't have been happier seeing that they could get away even when faced with that obstacle.

Over the remainder of Tuesday, we saw close to 14 bulls. Most were small but we did see one that the PH guesstimated at 44-45 inches. PG told me that it was bigger than any bull he had personally shot but told me to wait for something bigger.

The next day we drove and glassed for miles and didn't see near as many Kudu as we had on Tuesday. We headed over to another concession and came across the Blesbok that I described above but no more Kudu. After lunch, I was getting a little nervous since I was running out of time. I started thinking about turning my attention to a huge waterbuck I had seen a few days earlier at Andries' farm.

Around 3:00, we came over a hill to a large valley. The guide, Jim, saw a Kudu bull down at the bottom so we stopped to glass. The one he initially saw was small but then we saw a bigger bull behind him. I asked PG and he wasn't able to guesstimate it from that range and said we should get closer.

We stalked down the hill to get closer when the wind changed enough that we couldn't get to the spot we wanted. Fortunately, we were close enough that PG was able to guess it at about 48 which was more than enough for me. We climbed back up the hill and ranged him at 400 plus yards when he began walking away. We then saw that there was another small bull (3<sup>rd</sup> bull) with him eating shrubs but with his head facing us. Because of where the small bull was, we couldn't get in a good position to get a shot at him.

I suggested going around a large hill and coming in from the opposite side but PG thought it would take less time and let him walk over a small rise, let the smaller bulls follow him and then sneak up using the rise as cover. I guess that's why he's a professional because that's exactly what they did. After clearing the rise, we went down the hill and quickly moved to the top of the rise. When we got to the top of the rise, we learned that they had turned around and were heading back towards us. He was practically on top of us when PG set up the sticks and I shot him at 50 yards. After he was down, PG said his curls were a bit deeper than he originally suspected and he was actually 50 inches.

