



As the sun set over the African Sky's, it is also the end of the hunting season for this year. It is like the circle of life, when morning breaks, soon after that we get to see the change in the sky. We can look back and view the reflection of the day. With this reflection I want to take you back to what have happened this year on plain and in the mountains of Namibia.

The year season starts big in May. With a short hunt in my Waterberg area where some great trophies fall to great shots, the best on this hunt was a early morning Oryx bull that we stalk with the first sun light through the camel thorn tree. A long but great shot bring the hunt to an end and as we stand at the side of the animal, we gave it some respect, 400m behind us a leopard start its call. So we know he is also there and we walk in his hunting grounds.

Soon after this hunt I am back at the same area for the first part of 3 longer hunts. In the middle of day three, I stalk with Brian, to a fountain in thick bush close to the base of the mountain, we are looking for kudus. We spot some tracks nearby the water and sit down just as a big bull giraffe pasts us. We crawl closer and spot some young kudu's and impala's close to the water. Still looking for the illusive Kudu bull we have seen a few minutes ago, we crawl down to a river to get a closer look. We look around for the bull or any other, then we see something sleeping under the tree, it was the other kudu bull who's tracks we had spotted before. I know we have a trophy of a life time in front of us, but to make a killing shot will take some doing. We have to crawl some more and move lower into the shade of a tree and then get into a half laying-sitting-shooting position. Slowly it all came together and Brian took the shot, a good shot it was too. We walk up to a real old kudu bull that was past his prime with a 57 inch set of perfect horns. On this hunt we travel to three of my areas, Waterberg, Farm Ruppell and to the springbucks in Gaingu. To end this trip, we added something new, a great day of fishing in the Atlantic. Just an hour and a half driving from Gaingu, we add another day in Swakopmund and went out with the best fishing guide, Henry. He picked us up and we have to drive 30 miles along the Atlantic, such a beautiful view, where we do some fishing on more than one spot. At 13:00 Henry takes us to a spot for sharks and here all the fun starts. The next four hours we have 10 sharks of 60 Lbs, every muscle in your body knows it, and it was great fun, fighting with the sharks.



As the year moved on some old friends came for a leopard hunt and they bring the man with leopard luck, Joe and Becky shows up at the International Airport in Windhoek. It was just great to see them after all this year's again. We left the airport and heading for Gaingu conservancy, leopard hunt is on the list with some springbuck culling. The first two days we have no luck with a cat on the bait. We move to the eastern end of the hunting area to get some more baits up into good locations, but you never know what happens if you hunt with the man with leopard luck. Before we found a good Springbuck for bait, we found a fresh Leopard kill, this is luck. We added some extra fresh bait, leaving it for the night, we made the blind and installed my trail camera's. The next morning the pictures confirm a nice big cat on the kill. The blind is set up to go, we move in at 16:00hrs that afternoon, but nothing happened. Leaving at 11/2 hours after sun set. We came back the next morning, But no cats on the camera that night.

We came back at 0800hrs the following morning, to find out that we had a daylight cat coming the late afternoon and at sun rise to feed. We hang out more bait, sit again, but something happened, just before sunset the oldest leopard I have ever guided, starts to show its beautiful appearance. We decided we have enough time and just watch him feed. The next day all bait was gone, but how did that happened. Not one cat alone could eat this much meat. We check the camera the following morning, and it confirmed not one or two but four different cats where there. How lucky can a man get? We check them all over from big to small and came to the conclusion to take out the oldest one and leave other ones to spread their genes. We went again back to the blind at 16:00hrs, and as we add bait the tracker call me and say, look, on a Rock there 300m away, the old leopard is watching us . He move some distance and we get into the blind. With the last light of the day still visable we saw the old cat again, and Joe makes no mistake the oldest cat I have guide. Two son came for four day hunt just stalking, but on this short hunt they each shoot a great warthog, springbuck and oryx. We tried all sorts of hunting walk and stalk, Sit in the blind, spot and Stalk, we enjoy this every day to its fullest.

August came, Jim and Paul arrived, two great friends and good hunters. We set off on a ten day hunting venture, visiting three hunting areas. Starting in the Waterberg area. As we add impala and black wildebeest to the salt, we get a problem finding the kudu and zebra. I sit with Paul at a water hole for lunch of day three and what you know, a herd of zebra shows up, so that helps. Paul gets his zebra Stallion. The same evening as Paul enjoys the sunset, I stalk a waterhole with Jim and he adds his zebra to the list also. The same thing happened with the kudu the next day, what the one do, the other also does also. Two happy hunters. As the hunt went on, we move to Farm Ruppell, they get what they want, we have two days left, one for springbuck and then the additional day for fishing. As we enjoy breakfast, I receive a phone call, there is a problem elephant in an area close to mine, and do I have a client that is interested. Paul graphs it with both hands and all his nerves starts working. Jim moved with a friend of mind and a good PH to Gaingu for his springbuck and Paul and I went on this two day elephant hunt.

The next morning with sunrise, we show up in the area to meet the Scouts from nature conservation that know where the elephant was feeding. After some driving we meet two Scouts on a hill side and they took us up the mountain, and there, in front of us, a mile away, the elephant was standing between the trees. We start a not so long but very slow stalk and work our way around the elephant. We pray that the wind stays in the same direction, after a long stalking they point the problem bull out. We move closer hope on the wind and closer. At 20 yards we stop and wait for it to turn for a heart shot, as it turns, Paul ends it with some great

shooting. We walk over to the end of a great hunt. We have done the elephant within a day, In an three hour's drive back, we will join Jim for the day's fishing.



Saying good bye to my friends at the airport there is a big change in my life. During the two weeks in August since I have start with hunting again, me and my family decided to relocate to the coast, Swakopmund and left Windhoek behind. Smaller towns provide a better quality life for kids, especially if they are still needing schooling. As a lot of my business is in the western area, it was also a great change for my work. Swakopmund is awesome, we love it here, the wet weather is not always so nice, but we have learned to cope with that. One thing is clear, the children love it here.

As we were busy unpacking the last boxes, the first of three hunts in the new Kunene conservancy was on me. I met Richard, and shortly after that our journey begins, with the long road to Kunene. We decided in the car that leopard and blackface impala was on the list and wanted animals. We arrived into a wild area with a big drought problem. Walking our feet to blisters, we saw leopard tracks and a lot of cattle and goats laying dead. The cats that must survive here in this drought have now plenty of fresh meat every day to eat, dead cattle and goats lying around, they do not even bother to take the bait we hang to the threes. In between the days of baiting and walking we found a nice big fountain where some Blackface Impalas are drinking water regularly.

We quickly set up a bush blind under a tree and sit and wait for movement. The first day we saw over 20 rams and more than 70 impala's, it was so good we forgot to shoot, we make this a regular lunch and relaxing stop. As we move into the area more game showed up, on the river bank big crocs start to get more, we saw a lot of 13 feet crocs on a sand bank 12 feet on a rock. All licenses was sold out to other client's, otherwise we could have continued hunting. On day four at the new lunch spot we shot an Impala and make history for the first free roaming from the Kunene in 48 years. What a great moment, with great hunter that have come all this way, just to make this possible.

As September came to an end, Dexter arrived in Namibia, we went back to the Kunene conservancy, now for Crocodile, maybe Impala also, you never know in Africa. On day three down the river we saw a single male Blackface Impala, one fast look, we knew it was a very good

one, stalking ?, no questions needed to be asked, we understood what we have seen. Twenty minutes later we look down to a monster Impala, just over 25 inches of beautiful matching horns and Maybe it can be the new world number two for free range Blackface Impala, we will have to wait and see.

As the time went by, We stalk, We walk, We hang baits, seeing crocodiles of around 14 feet, but more on day five. Temperatures Soar, hard to work out what time off the day the Big Crocs are sunning themselves. Then half in the water and half on the river bank, we had to cross a channel, then crawl and stalk up to 50m from a 13 foot crocodile, Dexter made no mistake, two good shot (one as insurance) with his 338WM, the 250Grn bullets did their job.



A week later, I have returned to the Kunene a third time, with an old friend Jost and Johannes. This time the interest was for more Blackface Impala and the Crocodiles we have planned for the last four years. We were standing on a river bank where the water was higher, but all the crocodiles moved to another sand bank. We walk-stalk, drove through part of the dry river, we saw plenty of crocodiles and try to get closer to some. The morning of day two we saw one crocodile, all the others where too small. We stalk it four times, but eventually gave up, decided to move to another area and wait there. One of the conservancy people call us to confirm a crocodile had just caught a goat, we were so exited, we nearly run over each other tring to get to the car in such a hurry. Excitement was high

When we arrived in the area, we stalk for a while, we saw the crocodile swimming away with the goat in its mouth, but we could only stand and wait. After some time we pulled back, saw another crocodile, but it is smaller one, same as the one we saw this morning. We stalk some Impala and in the afternoon we went back to the place where we saw the big crocodile. In the distance, only 300m in front of us, the crocodile that have caught a goat is feeding on it. We slowly move in to get cover and to come closer to the crocodile. The dead goat lay on the side of the sand bank and the crocodile have to come out of the water to pick it up. It came out of the water, then went back, come closer again and went back. After a third attempt the crocodile came eventually out for the goat, Jost could see that this crocodile was very clever, and that this cat and mouse game must end now.

We walked over and dragged it out. It was a big old monster, over 14 feet, a successful day of hunting is now over. On the road to home, we look into the beautiful horizon, and see a very special sunset, it was the end of the day with some special friends.

We left Swakopmund with Johannes and Dirk for a day of fun in the Gaingu conservancy, on arrival we could see the landscape there have changed dramatically, it was everywhere extremely dry, and it was now more than two years ago that Namibia has seen a proper rain season. Dirk shot a big wildebeest and the last day a 56inch kudu bill. Johannes got his chance to shoot his cheetah that he was looking for a long time. As I started this year, we end it with a cat hunt again.

So after all this hunting, you may ask what is there for next year, 2014. I have kept all my areas, but I have hunting rights in the Etosha Area as well, where there is always a change to get face to face with the King of the Jungle. As the leopard tags came out next year, I will let everyone know how much I must get, I hope it would be around 5. I will continue looking for new and better areas. It is also confirmed, that I may do my first hunt in Zimbabwe next year, close to Victoria Waterfalls, and so also in South Africa, for those guys that are looking for something different.

My family is doing great, my wonderful wife, Ronel, will be taking over part of my office work, so your mail correspondence will be a lot with her too, in the coming year. My children, Arizhia and Jeremy got bigger and quatter by the day, my daughter and son have come along on a day hunt trip in the Gaingu area, it is amazing to see how children can appreciate and enjoy such a day.

Enjoy Christmas day with your families, and may your plans for 2014 be even better!



May the winds stay true?

You're sincerely

Gert van der Walt

