

FRONT SIGHT



SCI
FIRST FOR HUNTERS

Mid-Michigan Chapter Safari Club International

January-March 2011, Issue 13

Picture taken by M. Harter
Sunrise near Sundre, Alberta
Cougar hunting with
Gordon Burton,
Double Diamond Outfitters

Impressively Beautiful . . .



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The Front Sight is the official publication of the Mid-Michigan Chapter of Safari Club International, keeping club members informed about local club activities, and encouraging and defining good sportsmanship. The Front Sight Magazine is published quarterly: January, April, July and October. Distribution 400+.

Check our own www.midmichigansci.org website for copies of the Front Sight, listing of events, and fundraiser auction items.

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SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter Meeting Schedule

Date	Meeting Type	Time	Location
Jan. 10, 2011	Board	4:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
	Big Buck Night	5:00 p.m.	Comfort Inn
Feb. 18, 2011	Hunter's Convention	2-10:00 p.m.	Soaring Eagle Casino
Feb. 19, 2011	Hunter's Convention	10:00 a.m.-Close	Soaring Eagle Casino
April 4, 2011	Board	4:30 p.m.	Doubletree Hotel
	Membership	6:30 p.m.	One Wenonah Park Place Bay City, MI 48708

Reservations required. Please call and leave a message at 989-944-5140

Message from your President

Summer's long gone and winter is right around the corner. I certainly did enjoy the nice, warm weather we had this summer and fall.

Mary and I enjoyed a great elephant hunting trip to Botswana in September with Ivan Carter as our PH. When we get our video back, we'll show you the trip at one of our member meetings. Then we hunted whitetail deer with Larry and Cindy Higgins at Redpine Whitetails out of Vanderbilt, Michigan. What a place! We bought this hunt at our Saturday auction. From there we hunted mule deer and antelope with Jeff Chadd, Majestic Mountain Outfitters. Jeff hunts a 50,000 acre working cattle ranch and he is the only outfitter they have allowed in for the past 17 years. We both shot very nice mule deer and antelope. Again these were hunts we bought at our Saturday auction.



Our Michigan deer season will be over by the time you receive this. I hope everyone had a great time just enjoying the out-of-doors and the hunting experiences.

Mark your calendars for:
1) Big Buck Night - January 10th, 2011 at the Comfort Inn, Mt. Pleasant, and 2) our Hunter's Convention, February 18 - 19, 2011 at the Soaring Eagle Casino.

Hunt often, hunt safe,

Don Harter

Don Harter

Editor's Comments

What a busy fall. We hunted elephants with Ivan Carter in Botswana, whitetails at Larry and Cindy Higgins' Redpine Whitetails in Michigan, Don went pheasant hunting in South Dakota with his brothers, and I met him in Montana for a mule deer hunt with Jeff Chadd, and we finished up with our whitetails in Michigan. While in Montana we watched the movie, "The Ghost and the Darkness", mentioned in Josh Christensen's book review. We both started archery season with crossbows for the first time and have enjoyed many hours in the woods.



We planted 1,000 daffodil bulbs along our driveway finishing just before the big day of November 15 which found us with a house full of hunters, as usual, with Don's brothers and our children and their families.

Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners are at our house and then we start right in working on our February SCI Fundraiser.

Highlights this fall have been 60+ pound elephants, huge, delicious whitetails, 30" mule deer and nice antelope, and our 9-year old grandson, Kyler, being in the tree with Grandpa when he shot a 6 point buck with his crossbow and a 7 point buck with his rifle.

Most important is making new friends, sharing hunts and memories with old friends and relatives, and working on staying healthy enough to wade swamps to my armpits, climb trees, and track game. We are certainly blessed.

Mary J. Harter
Mary Harter

MID - MICHIGAN CHAPTER SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL MIDMICHIGANSCI.ORG APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I hereby apply for membership _____
FIRST MIDDLE LAST

Fill out both mailing addresses as well as email. Please indicate by placing a X in the appropriate box where you would like to receive club correspondence.
If at all possible we would like to utilize your email address for this purpose. ☐ _____

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18 +	1 Year	\$ 55 National Dues	\$ 20 Local Dues	= \$ 75
	3 Years	\$ 150 National Dues	\$ 60 Local Dues	= \$ 210
	Life	\$1500 National Dues	\$200 Local Dues	= \$ 1,700
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BOOK REVIEW

by Josh Christensen



Title: THE MAN-EATERS OF TSAVO

Author: Lt. Colonel James Henry
Patterson, D.S.O.

Publisher: St. Martin's Press
(Peter Capstick, Series Editor)

Copyright: Originally published 1907,
copyrighted 1986

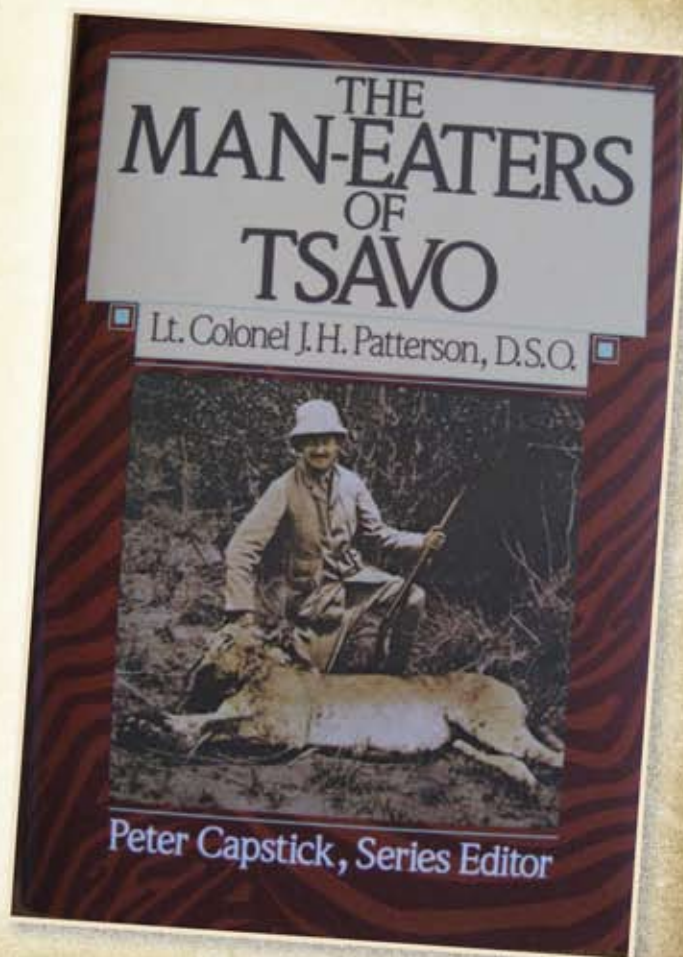
List Price: \$23.95 (Hardcover)

The Man-Eaters of Tsavo is the amazing story of two man-eating lions that stopped (for a period of time) the British government from constructing a railway line in British East Africa, current day Kenya and Uganda, in the late 1800's. Through his words and photographs, Colonel Patterson brings a part of Africa, that is lost, back to the reader; a time when trophy fees and governmental fees were void.

The beginning of the book concentrates on the two lions and the terror they inflicted upon the Indian workers and the railroad staff. After the dispatch of these massive animals through some crazy tactics, in which Colonel Patterson was almost one of the estimated one hundred people eaten by the lions, he takes us on many other safaris and introduces us to different tribes of the area, as well as the eland named after him; *Taurotragus oryx pattersonianus*.

This is one of those books that you will find almost impossible to put down. I enjoyed reading about the untouched Africa; the Africa before people over hunted and before regulations were placed on the hunting industry. I found Patterson's detailed writings to be insightful and interesting. I was truly fascinated by the geographic and historic aspects of this book. An example of a historic aspect would be in the appendix where Colonel Patterson goes through and explains what's needed and the costs of going on a "shooting trip" to British East Africa in 1907. On a side

note, a portion of this story was made into a film released in 1997; *The Ghost and the Darkness*, starring Michael Douglas and Val Kilmer.



**Mid Michigan Chapter of
Safari Club International**

presents

Big Buck Night

Open to the Public

Monday, January 10th at the Comfort Inn
2424 S. Mission • Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Adults \$22 • Kids 12 and under \$17 • Under 5 yrs. FREE

Bring your rack that you shot in 2010 and get it professionally
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White tail and Mule deer

All tickets are pre-sold. Must have ticket prior to event.

Registration starts at 5 pm

Dinner at 7 pm

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Cash Bar • Free soda for the kids

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beginning
June 1, 2011

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For more information
contact:

Kevin Unger

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32nd Annual Awards & Hunter's Convention

**Women's
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Games • Exhibitors*



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Friday, February 18, 2011**2:00 - 10:00 p.m. • \$5.00 Admission
Outfitters, Exhibitors, Awards and Auction****Saturday, February 19, 2011****Outfitters, Exhibitors, Banquet and Auction****10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Registration****5:00 - 6:00 p.m.****Dinner (reservations required)****6:00 - Close****Live Auction*****For more information, contact Tim Hauck: (989) 772-5494*****Partial list of live auction items:**

Wycon Safaris - Wynn Condict - Antelope Hunt in Wyoming
 Wycon Safaris - Wynn Condict - Prairie Dog Hunt in Wyoming
 Havago Australia - Dieckmann - Rusa Stag Hunt
 Dan Kirschner Wild Spirit Guide Service - Bob Cat Hunt with Hounds
 Roger Froling's Buffalo Ranch - Buffalo Hunt
 Brian Simpson, Wittrock Outfitters in Alaska - Caribou Hunt
 Jeff Chadd - Majestic Mountain Outfitters
 Shane Quinn, Alpine Hunting, New Zealand - Silver Medal Fallow Deer
 Jim and Adonna Stahl - Mustang Outfitters - Nevada - Mule Deer
 Jim and Adonna Stahl - Mustang Outfitters - Nevada - Mountain Lion Hunt
 Nick Boley - Iowa - Muzzleloader Whitetail Deer Hunt
 David James, Fish Hunter Charters - 2 trips for Salmon Fishing on Lake Michigan
 Griz Turner - Lost Creek Outfitters - Cody, Wyoming - Mountain Lion Hunt
 Larry and Joanne DeVuest - Texas Whitetail Hunt
 Lee Livingston - Wyoming - Mule Deer Hunt
 Johan Pieterse Safaris - South African Plains Game
 Ken and Jeff Harrison - Lake Michigan Fishing Trip
 Mike Cowan - Alaskan Brown Bear Hunts
 Toquero Hunting Services - Fallow Deer Hunt in Spain
 Sam Fejes - Tsiu River Lodge - Alaskan Goat Hunt
 Hepburn Lake Lodge, Arlee Thideman - Saskatchewan - Black Bear Hunt
 R & R Outfitter, Ronnie Davis - Myrtle Point, Oregon - Roosevelt Bull Elk Hunt
 and Steelhead Fishing Trip
 Thormahlen and Cochran Safaris - South African Plains Game
 Mike Carlson, Larsen Bay Lodge - Kodiak Island - Sitka Black Tail Deer Hunt
 Jack Cassidy - Colorado Mule Deer, Elk, and Black Bear Hunts
 Kruipers - Saskatchewan - Whitetail Deer Hunt
 North Star Outfitting - Neil Johnson - Alberta or Saskatchewan Whitetail Deer Hunt
 Raphael Tagliacozzo - Argentine Expeditions - Axis Deer and Dove Hunt
 Joe O'Bannon - Florida - Alligator Hunt
 Don McMillan - Belding, Michigan - Ducks, Geese, Turkey Hunts
 Racks and Tracks Outfitters, Eric and Holly Merritt - Nevada Mule Deer Hunt
 Mike Hubbard, Hubbard's Yellowstone Adventure - Montana Elk Hunt
 Cascade Fur Salon - Cascade, Michigan - Fur Coat
 Hickory Creek Outfitters, Kansas - Whitetail Deer Hunt
 Richard Holmes Safaris, Dwaine Starr - East Cape Republic of South Africa - Plains Game Hunt

Check our website for a complete listing - www.midmichigansci.org

Why Would I Pay to Hunt Turkeys?

by Tim Schafer

A few years ago, while attending our annual Mid-Michigan Chapter Awards Banquet, I came upon an outfitter's booth with a fella calling turkeys. He was from Michigan and guided turkey hunts. I had hunted turkeys for several years and thought I was a pretty good caller. Now our Fundraiser highlights some of the best outfitters in the world, hunting everything from goose to elephants. So why would I pay to hunt turkeys in Michigan?

Last year at one of our monthly membership SCI meetings, Roger Froling had enlisted Don MacMillen from Close Encounters guide service as a guest speaker. Don's business is guiding turkey, pheasant, waterfowl and land leasing. His chore that evening was demonstrating the finer art of calling turkeys. For about an hour, Don amazed us with his knowledge of talking to birds, mannerisms of these big birds, and the tactics of getting these birds close enough to shoot. Now as I mentioned, I fancied myself quite the turkey hunter . . . and Don proceeded to show me how much I didn't know. The evening was a huge success and everyone left very entertained and pretty amazed.

At our 2009 fundraiser, I visited Don in his booth and looking at our live auction list learned he had donated a two day, two man turkey hunt. I got lucky and bought the hunt.

THE HUNT -

Don and I met in the early morning hours, jumped in his truck and we were off. On the short drive, Don explained we would be hunting farm country with small woodlots scattered about. Don and I had talked earlier and this hunt was not just about getting a turkey but learning about being a better hunter. I had asked Don if he could explain the hunt as it unfolded, what he was doing, why he was doing it, what the turkey was doing, and why he was doing that.

We walked, single file across a hayfield to the first woodlot, (Don said single file because that's how deer walk), and got settled on the edge. As it got closer to daylight, we listened for the first chirp or gobble. Suddenly, across the field - a gobble. I looked at Don - another gobble from the same spot and Don is throwing all his gear in his pack - we're going. We sneak across another field and get set. Daylight broke and the hunt was on. There



were turkeys everywhere and Don went to work talking to this one, then that one. Some hens appeared in the field and began working toward our decoys. I positioned myself in case a tom followed across the field and about that time Don is pointing into the trees. A tom is coming from our backside. Slowly I turned around to shoot into the woods, but before the tom was in sight, he was drawn away by other hens. (Be patient.) Meanwhile, the hens in the field are at the decoys about 15 feet behind me. (Hence the name "Close Encounters".) Four jakes appear in the field and proceed to the hens and decoys, all of them now at my backside at about 10 feet. The hens finally move further out in the field and the jakes move further to my right. I can breathe a little now. Don ceases his calls for awhile, just to let things settle down. We listen for the next gobble and didn't have to wait long. To the west, just inside the tree line, after some soft coaxing, three white heads pop out from the trees and kind of hang up about 120 yards

away. Now remember the jakes are about 30 yards from us. Don whispers, "Get ready. I'm going to make those jakes gobble." He lets out an excited call and the jakes explode into a volley of gobbles. That did it. Now the toms are running to our decoys in full strut. Don says, "Let 'em come" and they did. The shot was about 20 feet over my shoulder in a quick spin - bird down!! The tom was nice with 7/8" spurs and an 11 inch beard. Don said, "Curiosity will kill 'em every time."

I will always attend our fundraiser and, hopefully, you will too. We are truly blessed with great people putting this show together and great outfitters present whose donations to our chapter auction allow us to do the good works a club should be doing: working with kids, veterans, and handicapped hunters.

Again: Why the heck would you buy a turkey hunt? Thanks Don.

With KIWI Safaris in NEW ZEALAND

Neil French sent us two photos of his Himalayan tahr and goose taken with KIWI Safaris in New Zealand this past spring. He purchased the hunt at our convention and says the money and time spent on this hunt was priceless. The hunt was on foot a lot like sheep hunting. They took an ATV out each morning about two hours to the top and then it was on foot the rest of the way. It was a tough hunt but well worth it. He saw over 40 bulls each day. The one he harvested was 9 1/2 years old with 12 inch horns and he shot it at 190 yards after two hours of spot and stalk. It had a nice blond mane and he is getting a life size mount.

Neil says the outfitter and accommodations were top notch. He also saw many red stag and fallow deer. Their area had lots of game. He did a duck and goose hunt, also.

You can contact Neil at neil.french@adm.com.



Recipes from Cindy Higgins,

Red pine Whitetails

Minestrone Soup

- 2/3 cup chopped onion
- 2T vegetable oil
- 1/2 pound ground venison
- 1/2 pound Italian venison sausage
- 1/2 cup minced fresh parsley
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 t. oregano
- 1 t. basil
- 2 cans (14 1/2 oz. each) Italian stewed tomatoes
- 6 cups chicken broth
- 1 medium zucchini, sliced
- 1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 can (16 oz.) kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 1/2 cups cooked elbow macaroni
- 2 T. cider vinegar
- 1/2 t. salt, optional
- Pinch pepper

Cindy Higgins cooking in the lodge.
These recipes are delicious.

1. In a large kettle over medium heat, sauté onion in oil until tender.
2. Add the next 6 ingredients, cook until meat is no longer pink.
3. Add tomatoes, broth, zucchini, and mixed vegetables; cover and cook on low heat for 5 minutes.
4. Add beans, macaroni, vinegar, salt if desired, and pepper. Simmer for 3 to 4 minutes or until heated through.

Venison Chop Suey or Chow Mein

- 1 1/4 # ground venison
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
- 2 1/2 t. salt
- 1/4 t. pepper
- 2 cups diced celery
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1/2 cup sliced water chestnuts
- 1 jar (4 1/2 oz.) jar sliced mushrooms, drained
- 2 cans (1 # each) LaChoy Bean Sprouts, drained

Thickening:

- 3 T. cold water
- 3 T. cornstarch
- 1 1/2 T. soy sauce
- 1 1/2 t. sugar
- 1 T. LaChoy Brown Gravy Sauce

1. Cook meat and onions in butter until lightly brown.
2. Add salt, pepper, celery and water and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer 15 minutes.
3. Add remaining vegetables and heat until hot.
4. Combine the thickening ingredients and add to the meat mixture. Cook until slightly thickened, stirring constantly.
5. Serve over hot cooked rice or chow mein noodles.



WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE AUTOMOBILE?

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UGANDA - 2009

Roger Card and Rod Merchant

One of the questions I am often asked, as a well-traveled hunter, is "How long does it take to get there?" This time I know the exact answer. From the time I walked out the door of my home in Mecosta, Michigan until I crossed the threshold of my Kampala hotel room, thirty-six hours had elapsed. It is never easy but you have to get your mind set right—the marathon of airports, planes, taxis is part of the deal.

Before I start my story of a mixed bag hunt in Uganda, I want to say there is one expression that has served me incredibly well over the years. Never, ever book the first or the last hunt in a camp! On this particular hunt I was not only going to be their first hunter in camp, this was going to be the first hunting safari in Uganda in over forty years, a maiden voyage for everyone—government officials, outfitters, professional hunters, guides, cooks, trackers, skimmers, camp staff, and drivers. None of these people had ever been in a Ugandan hunting camp before.

It is fair to say this situation seemed to provide new challenges almost hourly. It was really exciting, hunting land hopefully teaming with game that had not been pursued in three or four decades, but right from the start there were problems. My rifle came up missing on the flight from Amsterdam to Entebbe so, even before the safari began, things seemed to be running off about "half a cog".

On our second day in Kampala the Northwest flight not only brought my rifles but long time friends and hunting companions, Walter Broith and Michael Valencia. The four of us and our outfitter, Christian, headed out early the next morning to a brand new tent camp, in an all new hunting area. Unfortunately, we learned along the way that the United Nations had placed an emergency tent order that superseded ours, so our tents had been hastily purchased at the local grocery store—not so good! Also, one of our four-wheel drive hunting vehicles was tied up in some sort of a bureaucratic paper shuffle—even worse! It was never released during our hunt despite furious begging, pleading, screaming and yelling by Chris into his cell phone. Oh yes, I failed to mention that almost everyone in Uganda talks



on their cell phones non stop, just like here in the U.S. In my humble opinion, the world has gone slightly nuts when a Ugandan tracker, stalking buffalo in the middle of the bush, gets a call from his girlfriend. Like I said, there were some "kinks" in this safari that needed to be worked out.

After the morning confusion died down, we finally left camp and my first day of actual hunting went quite well. We did three one-hour stalks and by noon I had collected a nice oribi and a bushbuck. Earlier that morning I had checked out my 7mm and found that somehow, in the twenty-four hours my rifle had been missing, the scope was damaged beyond our ability to repair it in the field. I had brought my 375 for the buffalo, so switched rifles and continued the hunt. Even with solids a 375 is way too much for an Oribi but what the heck, we were hunting and having a good time.

The game was so plentiful in this area that everyone filled their licenses the very first day. There was no need to hang around any longer so that night, while we enjoyed dinner and camaraderie around the campfire, we watched our staff tear down camp and get ready to move out the next morning. The African sky was clear and spectacular as always and it was wonderful to be back sitting under it.

Our second morning brought still more confusion but we were soon loaded and started the eight hour trip north, to our Nile River camp. Our actual lodge was located inside the Murchinson National Wildlife Preserve and the wildlife we spotted there was unbelievable. There were buffalo, kob,



giraffe, bushbuck, oribi, elephants, peccary, warthogs, and hippos everywhere you looked. Our hunting area was just across an imaginary line that represented the west boundary of the preserve so, man, were we pumped for the next part of the safari!

We retired after a nice meal that night and were up at 4 a.m. for what we hoped would be a fantastic buffalo and kob hunt. It was not to be. As the African sun got hotter and hotter, we encountered one problem after another. The whole day was just a meltdown. Not one hunter saw a buffalo or kob. One of the biggest problems appeared to be that Christian had put together quite a large group of local scouts to help him locate the buffalo, once we arrived. These people had no concept of hunting. If there was one area where they had seen a buffalo in the last few months, maybe they could get your attention and con you into following them. That seemed to be their goal. The bottom line was the day was a bust. Period!!!

That night the hunters and our PH had a pow-wow and a plan was hatched for the following morning. No one wanted to relive this fiasco the next day. The wake-up call came precisely at 3:30 a.m. as promised, and we were off with enthusiasm and anticipation.

Then the wheels fell off completely.

Which of the following situations do you believe could ruin your hunting safari?

- A. The PH has a near death experience with malaria.
- B. The natives have eaten all the wild game in the area.
- C. Poachers have devastated the game population in the area.

D. It is the wrong time of year and the ten-foot elephant grass is much too tall in which to hunt buffalo.

E. Both the kob and buffalo understand that the border of the game preserve is not an imaginary line and refuse to cross onto our side.

F. Being the very first hunt in Uganda, no one has any idea how to locate and hunt an animal.

G. All of the above.

If you guessed "G" you would be correct. For three days we continued to get our hopes up, only to have them dashed by one ridiculous situation after another. We finally threw in the towel and returned to Kampala.

Along the way we popped back into our original tent camp where I collected a nice Harvey's duiker. Although this was a new species for me and I was happy, it was hardly compensation for what should have been a wonderful, big game safari.

Upon reaching Kampala, Rod and I spent a couple of days on a really unique adventure. We were told by several people that the original "African Queen" was still in the harbor and could be visited. We were excited about having our pictures taken where Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn had been, so many years ago. It seems, after the movie was made here in 1951, no one knew exactly what to do with the boat, so it got moved around, from one location to another. Unfortunately, like the Nile buffalo and Ugandan kob, the African Queen was a phantom, just out of our reach. We soon tired of that pursuit as well, and booked an early flight home.

My final words on the three-week safari in Uganda have to be, "Don't ever book the first or the last hunt in any camp. Never, ever!"

OUR 2010 TURKEY HUNT

By Joanne Witte



Joanne's Michigan turkey

We had a great time hunting Eastern turkeys on our 100 acre hunting property this year!

Larry, who is right handed, had surgery on his right wrist on April 14. He has a rare form of muscular dystrophy and it had caused him to be in constant pain since Nov. of 2009. He was unable to use his right hand even to pick up a cup of coffee. The surgeon in Grand Rapids said he could fuse the wrist by removing several of the damaged wrist bones and putting in a stainless steel plate. As a result the wrist will not flex at all. The healing period is 8 to 12 weeks.

Larry said he would go with me to hunt and provide moral support. We used a ground blind and took nonessentials in the day before our hunt started on April 26.

April 26 was the day he had to go back to the surgeon to get the stitches out and see how things were coming. That meant we could not hunt until April 27.

The night before he said, "I think I will take a shotgun, just in case I can shoot left-handed." The next morning I tied his boots, found a jacket that would fit over his enormous bandage, packed a lunch, and drove the truck to our hunting property. We walked to our tent blind before 6:00AM and I loaded both shotguns.

Larry was able to use a call and by 6:45, I had a big gobbler. We stayed until 3:00PM hoping another big tom would come in, but only a jake showed himself.

The next morning we were on our way again before daylight. This time Larry got all set up to see if he could

shoot left-handed. He thought he could do it. As luck would have it, no gobblers responded to our call at first. About 7:30AM we heard a gobbler far away. From his gobbles over a two-hour period we could tell he was coming closer and closer. By 9:30 we had attracted three hens to our two hen decoys. One of the hens had a 5-inch beard.

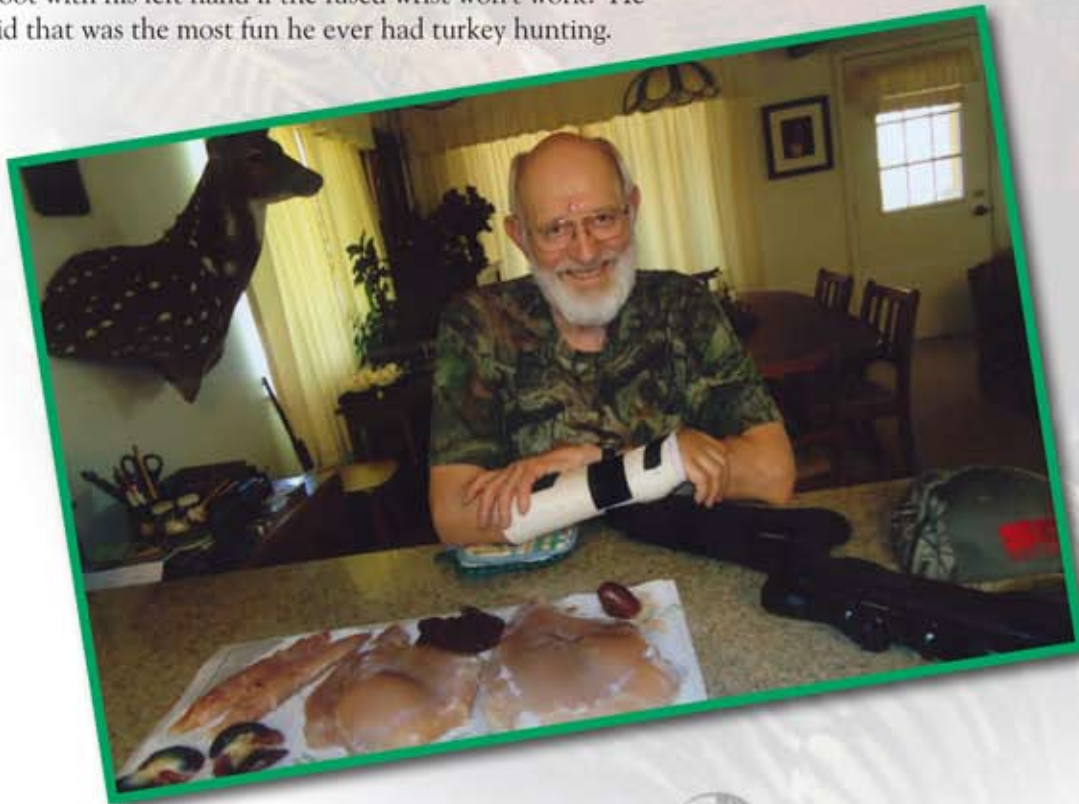
Finally I spotted the gobbler in the woods and told Larry he was coming his way. He got ready. The gobbler stepped out of the woods in full display and BOOM. He dropped like a stone at 21 yards. Larry was thrilled. "I can shoot left handed," he said. Unfortunately he got a big goose egg and cut above his eye from the shotgun scope. He had planned for everything but dealing with the recoil of a 3- inch magnum when shooting one handed. He said it was worth it.

An interesting note, when we first went to the surgeon, we took a blank thumbhole rifle stock so the surgeon could see how Larry wanted the wrist to bend. We were probably the only people who ever took a blank stock to a surgeon's office. The doctor was quite intrigued. He said there are three choices for bends in the metal that gets screwed into the wrist. He had Larry put the stock up and he said he thought the middle bend would work.

Larry is greatly relieved to think that he can learn to shoot with his left hand if the fused wrist won't work. He said that was the most fun he ever had turkey hunting.



Larry after shooting his Michigan turkey



ALBERTA

Winter Wolf Hunt

by Paul Conner

Over the many years and many hunts I've often wished a wolf would wander by, but the truth is . . . I've seen only one wolf while hunting and he was a long way out of reach. Then, as luck would have it I met another hunter that had the same 'itch' and had found the cure, a hunt specifically for a wolf. After a little searching on Google, "the hunter's friend", I found the exact wolf guide I was looking for, the one with a very high success rate in an area with a large population of wolves, Lowell Davis of Alpine Outfitters in the far northwest corner of Alberta. I called him immediately. He answered and invited me up for a hunt in March 2010. The only thing he said was to bring Nozler Ballistic tips and warm clothes.

The flight to Grande Prairie, Alberta was a familiar flight as we've hunted there several times over the years with much success. It is truly the "Happy Hunting Grounds". A quick shuttle ride to the Holiday Inn and I was totally unprepared to be right in the midst of a live camera crew interview with a star of the Arctic Olympics being held that very week. A very big event for northern folks from all over the world. No one gave my gun case a second look, this is hunting country. Dinner and a bed was all I needed today.

The next morning, on time, Lowell was at the hotel to get me as promised. Always a good sign. A long drive through a beautiful winter landscape and we were at his warm and comfortable lodge. There I met the only other wolf hunters -- Sam and Judy from Montana. We were all anxious to get started, especially after we went to the living room where a beautiful full body mount wolf is standing.



Paul Conner with his wolf

hunting wolves and then later, finally worn out, we went to bed for some much needed rest.

Early the next morning we met again for breakfast and listened to Lowell and Manny give some last minute information, helpful hints and warnings. Then it was time to go hunting. It was below zero and still very dark. The cook gave us each a sack lunch and a small thermos of coffee as we headed out the front door. It was so slick and icy we damn near fell on our butts trying to walk to the waiting trucks! (Lowell had that problem fixed by the time we returned.)

After a fairly long drive we arrived at an area with recent wolf activity. We parked the truck and walked about 250 yards as quietly as possible to a well camouflaged corrugated tin hunting blind. I had a small propane heater for the coldest part of the morning and after a few encouraging thoughts from Lowell, he left to check for wolf signs at other hunt locations. I was all alone in a small tin shack in a very remote part of Northwestern Alberta with absolutely no idea where I was. Then, about 2 minutes later, Lowell returned with his wife's cell phone and said to call if I got a wolf.

It was a great morning. It was a clear, sunny, cold morning and it had 'the' ingredient for a successful wolf hunt. Ravens! As Manny said, "No ravens, no wolf". The wolf bait, a concoction just for this area, was about 200 yards away. I had a clear field of view, a loaded rifle and fresh, hot, black coffee. Is this good or what?! The heater was finally starting to warm up the blind a few degrees and soon the water would be . . . less frozen. The ravens, about



The small tin shack

After making sure our rifles were still sighted in we had dinner together and talked about wolves for some time. Manny, the guide for Sam and Judy, and a great guy, told us to dress warm for our first day of hunting because it might be cold in the early morning hours. It's northern Alberta in the winter. We were ready for it. As the excitement grew we talked some more about





20 of them, were very loud and flying around everywhere while reducing the wolf bait by the minute. I glassed everything everywhere and did it again. No wolf. I was getting frustrated. Lunch time came and passed, then I fought off sleepiness for a couple of hours. Then the ravens went nuts again and made so much noise it probably scared any wolves away. I'm still trapped inside a metal blind with about 20" of snow everywhere and no wolves. I'm in prime grizzly country but Manny said they don't like food out of sardine cans. I haven't seen a bear, just ravens, lots of ravens. It's about time for Lowell to pick me up and I'm tired and hungry. Back at the lodge we learned that no wolves were seen . . . again.

Another day arrived with dawn and off we went with high hopes of getting a wolf or at least seeing one. Another day with more ravens, more snow, and more wolf tracks seen on our early morning walk in to the blind. Two eagles were being taunted by a bunch of ravens until the eagles decided "Enough was Enough!". Their uneasy relationship was being stretched to the breaking point and soon the eagles were in attack mode. The ravens gave up quickly and all retired to various trees for a clam and quiet waiting period, at least a few minutes. Still no wolf, but another incredible day in northwestern Alberta. What a beautiful, remote place. I wish I had painting skills. This is one neat place to see.

Now another wolfless day had passed but the new morning starts with a unique new breakfast meal . . . breakfast burritos! I decided to pass and just had a large bowl of oatmeal with toast. I think Sam had to break 'the cardinal rule and leave the corrugated tin blind due to that breakfast burrito. The oatmeal was the right choice for sure. They both said the long, cold days and no wolf sightings were wearing them down. One more day and they planned to give up. It's a tough hunt and patience is a must.

The next day was like all the rest, eagles and ravens and no wolves. The worse thing was - I forgot my lunch today. Thankfully, I always have supplies in my backpack during hunting trips. My hunting partner of many years

and many hunts, Jim Stender, who always reminded me to pack munchies, was home recovering from a heart attack which left me to fend for myself. This first hunt alone in years was just not the same without Jim to share the experience. He's trying hard to get better for the next big hunt.



I occupied my time by measuring the distances to all the possible spots that a wolf might be seen, out to about 400 yards. I was hoping for a nice, easy, 200 yard shot though. The day dragged on forever with the ravens making too much noise and no wolves. I took many pictures to help fend off sleepiness, and from time to time, grabbed the binoculars to glass the whole immediate area from top to bottom once again. I had brought along a neat new toy to try out, a small digital voice recorder that downloaded directly to a computer and the recordings can be sent via E-mail and played with any of the current video players. It was much easier Than taking notes with a pencil and paper.

I was just voicing my thoughts on the deep snow covering this oil pumping field, the beauty of the forests that go on forever and the fact that my water bottle was once again frozen when out walked a huge black wolf. He was walking cautiously towards the bait about 200 yards out, the exact range my .300 Weatherby was sighted in for with the 165 grain Nosler Ballistic tipped bullets. He warily approached the bait area stopping twice to look back in my direction. The picture in my Zeiss scope was clear and flawless. He was the trophy I came for! At a little over 200 yards he stopped and looked back . . . one last time.

Robertson's Taxidermy in Yellowknife did a full mount on an ebony pedestal which is elegant as you can see in the photo. This hunt is an adventure hunt with a better than average chance at one of the most elusive trophies in North America. Book this hunt of a lifetime for yourself by calling Lowell Davis of Alpine Outfitters at: 1-866-539-4209. Tell him I sent you and maybe he'll even throw in a free breakfast burrito!

Paul Conner

CONSERVATION AFFAIRS/ MICHIGAN INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

by Larry Witte

The SCI-Michigan Involvement Committee (SCI-MIC) is comprised of representatives of the 11 Michigan SCI chapters. Pledges provided by Michigan SCI chapters along with matching grants from SCI Foundation enable SCI-MIC to participate with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) to provide funding support for a number of important wildlife activities and research projects.

SOUTHERN MICHIGAN BEAR PROJECT

A dart gun was purchased earlier this year to assist with collaring efforts. The gun is powered by compressed air. The pressure is adjustable allowing its use for close shots in a den and for shots at full power up to 50 yards. Hounds can be used to tree bear for darting. Once a bear is darted in a tree the hounds are removed and the tree is hit with a club causing the bear to back down. The bear is allowed to run off, is then tracked and recovered and collared.

Two bear were collared in Oceana County. One sow has three cubs which will be collared in their den.

WOLF POPULATION PROJECT

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has given notice that wolf populations warrant removal of the wolf from the endangered list. There is a 12-month period for comments. If the wolf was transferred to the threatened list DNRE could manage wolves and take care of problem animals. Currently DNRE can not use lethal methods to deal with problem wolves.

The wolf population in the U.P. is down a little this year. There are breeding animals in the northern Lower Peninsula. Three pups have been captured, given ear tags and released.

FURBEARER POPULATION ESTIMATE

Population estimates are difficult to get for bobcat, martin, fisher and otter. This can be done by sectioning the teeth of harvested animals to determine their age and backdating the birth year to estimate population when the animal was born. In addition data on reproduction and survivorship will be integrated to make better population estimates.

EPIZOOTIC HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE (EHD)

Earlier this year deer deaths from EHD were confirmed in Cass, Van Buren, Ottawa and Berrien counties. The virus, which causes internal bleeding and fever in infected deer, is carried by biting midges from infected deer to healthy deer. The virus is not believed to affect people or the eating of the meat. Hunters are always cautioned to cook venison properly.

The virus was first detected in Michigan in 1995 and has caused die-off over the intervening years. EHD typically continues in localized areas until a hard frost kills off the midges. Because the disease generally is confined to small groups of deer it is not as worrisome as some diseases.

GRADUATE STUDENT GRANT PROGRAM

Eight thousand dollars has been awarded this year to be shared by five masters and Ph.D. candidates from Grand Valley State University and Michigan State University. Grant project subjects include various aspects of predator/prey relationships, Canada geese, black bear and coyotes.

FERAL SWINE

Legislation was introduced earlier this fall to regulate captive hog shooting ranches and wild boar breeding facilities. The legislation imposes standards for fencing and reporting. Feral hogs escaped from ranches, breeding facilities and domesticated pigs escaped from farms are prolific breeders in the wild. They damage habitat and pose a threat to wildlife.



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PLAINS GAME ADVENTURE

by Terry Anderson

in South Africa



Terry, Jonathon and Joe after recovering Terry's Mountain Reedbuck

As with many of our hunts this one began with a successful bid at the MidMichigan Chapter fundraiser February 2008. Due to hunting plans in 2008 Joe Christiansen from Houghton Lake, Michigan & I booked this hunt for May of 2009. After viewing Thormahlen & Cochrane Safaris website we knew we made a good choice. They are headquartered in Nelspruit, S. Africa.

After the usual planning for plane tickets, preparing our gun permits and going over the trophy fees on various animals we departed from Detroit Metro Airport on May 17th. After a connecting flight in Washington, D.C. Joe & I finally arrived in Johannesburg, S. Africa on the evening of May 18th. We overnighted in Johannesburg not far from the airport. I use my own wind up alarm clock for good reasons. Unfortunately the radio alarm clock between our beds went off at 1:00 in the morning. Yikes! Joe gets up and heads quickly to the shower. I said, Joe, "what are you doing?" "I am taking a shower", Joe says. But I replied, "it is only 1:00 a.m.". No way, it must be 5:00 a.m. by now. Joe showers anyway. I went back to sleep.

No time to get over jet lag as we had to board a flight to Nelspruit at 9:00 a.m. After a smooth one hour ride we landed at Nelspruit, which is about an hour's drive from Kruger National Park. We were promptly greeted by our professional hunter, P.H. Jonathon Middleton. Thankfully our luggage and gun case arrived with us. The time we spent with Jonathon and learning about his background during our hunt was very enjoyable. I would gladly hunt with Jonathon on my next safari.

After topping off Jonathan's Land Cruiser with diesel fuel we stopped by Peter Thormahlen's beautiful home and visited with his wife Anso. Peter was off leopard hunting in Namabia with another client. We learned later his client killed a 200 pound Tom.

After an enjoyable visit with Anso we then visited a local taxidermy shop. We were introduced to the owner. We learned they mount and ship over 5,000 animals per year. We then drove straight east out of Nelspruit for a good hour before we reached our camp for the next eight nights. We would be hunting in the lowveldt. The northern region of South Africa is called the bushveldt. We took a two hour drive before dinner. Joe & I were already amazed at the wide variety of animals including rhino and giraffe on this concession. We arrived back at camp around dinnertime for a couple of sundowners. After a delicious dinner we settled into our chalet.

Wednesday, May 20th _ We were up at 5:30 a.m. and headed out to the concession after a light breakfast. We saw many cow rhinos with calves. It was not long before Jonathan spotted a good duiker. After a short stalk Jonathan spotted the duiker and threw up the "shooting sticks". I took the shot quickly and the animal disappeared in the tall grass. We covered the 50 yards quickly but no duiker! We spread out with our tracker Vusi. We could not find my animal. I decided to go back where I originally took the shot. I then went to the spot where I thought he stood when I shot. There was my animal about 10 feet away. He blended in so well we all walked by him. He was a beautiful trophy and a good way to start our hunt.





Joe with his trackers after recovering his Bushbuck

100 yards past the spot I tapped on the roof of the Land Cruiser and told Jonathan what I thought I saw. I gave Jonathan a description of the cover. He and Joe decided to take a walk back up the trail for a look. Surprisingly, they walked up to within 30 yards of what turned out to be a very nice 24 inch impala ram. Joe made a quick clean shot. Already we had two animals collected on the first day.

Around 5:00 p.m. we were working our way through the concession heading back to our camp when Jonathan saw a nice group of female impalas. We decided to stop and glass them. They were about 200 yards away. After several minutes Jonathan spotted a very good ram coming out into the open to check on the females. Jonathan asked me if I would be comfortable taking that long of a shot. Since I have not done much long range shooting I was somewhat concerned but you have to trust your hours of practicing. He put up the sticks and I promptly dropped the animal in his tracks. We chose this time of the year to come here because it coincides with the impala rut. All during our time in the bush we were treated with the sounds of blowing and snorting which is so common to the impala ram.

On our way back to the camp we were treated to one of the beautiful African sunsets. The sky literally seemed to be on fire. Arriving in camp at dark Elaine was fixing us another very nice dinner. We enjoyed our sundowners around the campfire. It was nearly 10:30 and we both were very tired. The jet lag finally caught up to us.

Thursday, May 21st we decided to head to a different part of the concession and go up into the higher country looking for mountain reedbuck. I did not have one. Jonathan thought this would be a good area.

During the steep climb, which took about thirty minutes, we saw numerous animals. Arriving at the top of

www.midmichigansci.org



With the warthog in rut we already had seen a few decent males. You have to be careful since the females also can sport some nice tusks. Since we were hunting together Joe wanted to spend the rest of the morning looking at warthogs. Either Mr. Warthog saw us first or when we did see one they did not stick around long. Usually you had only a couple of seconds to decide whether you wanted to shoot one. Just before lunch we caught a big male with a female leaving a water hole. Jonathan did not think they would go too far into the thorn bush and long grass. Again we drove by the spot where the warthogs departed going a safe distance to cover our vehicle noise. We all got off of the cruiser together. The tracker, our PH and Joe trailing tried to quarter into the light breeze and see if they could intercept the warthogs. We were not very optimistic given the thick cover but Joe said he would give it a try. It was not long and I heard Joe shoot. Soon one of the trackers came back to the Cruiser to get Joe's camera. It turns out he shot a very nice male warthog sporting 13 inch tusks. As Joe described it they literally stalked right up within 10 yards of the animal. Joe had only had time for a quick snap shot and spined him.

During the rest of our hunt we never saw a larger tusked warthog than his. We probably did this male a service. It is one of the few adult warthogs that I have seen that was very thin and weighed probably half his normal weight. This old boy probably would not have lasted another season.

After a nice bush lunch under an evergreen tree we spent the rest of the day glassing many animals including cape buffalo, blue wildebeest, giraffe, warthog and the list goes on. Around 4:00 p.m. I spotted what looked like a nice impala ram sparing with another ram. We kept on driving as not to alarm the animal. Once we were about



the ridgeline Vusi spotted several mountain reedbuck top out and disappear over the side. We did not get up here as early as we planned. Jonathan indicated that severe drought had taken its toll on the reedbuck and bushbuck in this area. Not good news!

After about thirty minutes of driving, stopping and glassing Vusi spotted a single mountain reedbuck. I could not see the horns with my binoculars but he was certain looking with his naked eye. After several safaris the natives continue to amaze me with their incredible vision.

Approaching to within 300 yards of the animal he suddenly looked right at us and bounded into thick cover. Jonathan thought it was a respectable male. He indicated when alerted they usually run into one of the ravines and sit tight. We backed away and gained altitude and worked our way around the other side of the ravine. Jonathan and Vusi volunteered to hike several hundred yards down the mountain. They spread out and walked up both sides of the ravine. They guessed the animal would come out the other side and attempt to go over the top of the ridge. It was not long after they started their climb that I saw movement darting up the ravine. Spotting a small gray deer, hopefully with horns, at 150 yards going in and out of cover was quite the challenge. I had to be sure it was not a female. Jonathan said to be ready because the animal will quickly cross out of the ravine and disappear out of the backside. I heeded his advice having the shooting sticks already in position. I got on the animal quickly and was able to make a good shot as the animal tried to escape over the top of the ridge. At the shot the animal turned and ran back into the ravine disappearing quickly.

Everything happened so fast. After lengthy shouting to help locate the animal they found my buck. Jonathan was able to carry the animal up the ravine to the trail himself. He announced that he had both good news and bad news.

The good news was I did get my mountain reedbuck. The bad news was the animal broke off one of his horns when he fell. By now Joe had walked back from the vehicle and heard the good and bad news. After a few minutes everyone got a good laugh at my expense. Both horns were intact. Never completely trust your PH! After several photos we loaded the animal into the truck and continued on our way.

As it was warming up we needed to get the animals back to the skinning shed. What an exciting morning. By now it was nearly lunchtime.

Rosanna and Elaine had prepared a nice lunch of us. We all were quite hungry. The cold cuts of tender wildebeest, fruit dish with an assortment of cheese and crackers hit the spot. Around 3:00 we headed back out to see if Joe could collect a nice Bushbuck. We drove looking over a variety of cover along the various creek beds hoping to find something for Joe. We did see some white rhino. Several were attending to their calves.

Friday, May 22nd - We headed out at daybreak to find a Bushbuck for Joe. I still had hopes of collecting a trophy warthog. After a long warm dry day and numerous diet cokes we headed back to camp. We saw so many animals in this concession you never get bored. Arriving at dark the campfire was already glowing. We had some sundowners, which included some Amarillo and peppermint schnapps. Another fine dinner prepared by the camp staff and we went to bed.

Saturday, May 23rd – Daylight greeted us with a warm sunny morning. Traveling through the concession we saw plenty of game. Passed up a beautiful Nyala. Early morning with the low sun angle is a good time to find a Bushbuck. The low sun made it hard to see into the cover. Joe nearly got his shot at a Bushbuck. He disappeared quickly. After driving and glassing most of the day we headed back to camp. The bush lunch under the evergreen trees near a water hole was a delight. After cleaning up and enjoying some local wine we had a nice grilled steak dinner.

Sunday, May 24th – We stopped by Vusi's cinderblock house and picked up Oupa another game scout. His name means "slow". As we bounce along on one of the numerous game trails the effect's of the wine last night was slowly receding. This morning we all felt confident that Joe would get his Bushbuck. We saw Sable, Blesbok, White Rhino, Roan Antelope and numerous Duikers. Oupa who came along to give us another pair of eyes spotted a Bushbuck thirty yards off the trail. Quickly Joe got out and shoots the animal before it could disappear. I wish you could have

seen the excitement in Joe's eyes. He was so thankful to have this opportunity to take the animal of his dreams. After much backslapping and picture taking we loaded up the animal and continued to look for Warthogs the rest of the morning. After we glassed quite a bit of ivory tusks but none were bigger than what I already had.

After a much needed nap Joe & I loaded our daypacks and rifles into the Land Rover for the afternoon hunt. Finally around 5:00 p.m. Jonathan spotted a decent Warthog. I was fortunate to make a good shot at this animal. At the bark of the rifle and with a cloud of dust he bolted over the riverbank and disappeared into the tall grass. He only went about forty yards. He had nice twelve-inch tusks. We could also smell that he was in the rut. This explains why we saw numerous males out and about during the midday searching for females.

Another fine dinner and off to bed after a couple more sundowners. Tomorrow morning we could sleep in as Joe & I collected our mixed bag of plains game. Jonathan was going to treat was with a day trip into Kruger National Game Park. We had no idea of the experience we were going to enjoy. When we arrived at the entrance to the park we were surprised at the number of tourists who were also going into the park. Many of them booked a ride on one of the numerous open window buses that toured the park daily. I wish my wife Phyllis were here to enjoy our ride in the Park. It was awesome.

We saw so many animals. The list is too long to describe in detail. The birds that Jonathan identified were spectacular. Their coloration of their plumage contrasting with the fall colors of the trees and grasses. Herds of buffalo, which we had, to stop and let cross in front of our vehicle. Some of the elephants came within 20-30 yards of our vehicle. Jonathan had his foot on the gas pedal to make sure we did not get too close. The highlight was coming upon three male lions sunning themselves near the side of the road. Watching them disappear into the grass and seeing how quickly they blend in. I can see why the animals are constantly on the alert in their environment.

We have one last day before catching our flight back to Johannesburg and the long ride home. We were going to Swaziland to visit a tribal culture dance and tour. This turned out to be very entertaining. The food, drinks and native dancing were a real bonus. I found out Joe was quite the dancer! All the girls enjoyed dancing with him.

Thursday, May 28th – We were up early and headed back to Nelspruit to catch our flight. We had the good



pleasure of stopping by Peter Thormahlen and his wife, Anso's beautiful home and had a brief visit before going to the airport. Peter had just returned from a successful leopard hunt with a client in Namibia.

After a 45-minute plane ride we arrived at Joburg Airport where we found we had very little time to check our rifles and baggage and go through customs and make our flight. We literally ran through the airport and barely made it to the boarding gate. One final note, on our flight back over the Atlantic Ocean Joe suffered severe headaches and chills. We discovered that he had a reaction to several tick bites. At home with proper treatment and medication he recovered quickly from the effect of his tick bites.

Reflecting on our trip I must say to was truly a pleasure to share the experience with Joe Christiansen. Joe's life long dream was to go on a safari to South Africa. I know I enjoyed the time with him.

SUBNOTES: I would highly recommend anyone planning a safari to South Africa to consider Thormahlen & Cochrane Safaris. They have supported our annual fundraiser for many years.

You can visit Thormahlen & Cochrane Safaris on their website www.trophyhuntingafrica.com. You can e-mail them direct at anso@trophyhuntingafrica.com. Annalise at Gracy Travel Co. arranged our flights. She did a superb job with our travel arrangements. Their phone number is 1-800-299-8558.

CARIBOU HUNT - AUGUST 2007

Rough Water and Sunshine in a Timeless Land

by Gary Jaeb, True North Safaris,
Northwest Territories

Alison and I moved slowly up the hillside "glassing" the vast barren land ahead of us. We had spotted caribou from our boat and the leader was bringing his band of bulls into the valley below. We waited as Gordy and Parker caught up.

Parker had taken a bad step, doing a nosedive into the tundra. Fortunately he had landed on some moss, Labrador tea and blue berry bushes.

We had left Mackay Lake Lodge after breakfast with 3 boats, heading toward the Snake River, about 20 miles north-east on the big lake.

We ran into a thick fog and lost contact with one of our boats and decided to put ashore in a bay, at the base of an esker/gravel ridge that was left by the glacier 10,000 year ago. It runs for miles along a creek bottom full of willows and alders, with century old, caribou crossings worn deep into the tundra. We would wait for the fog to burn off as the sun climbed higher.

A flock of willow ptarmigan startled us with their sudden burst of beating wings. They seemed to appear from nowhere at our feet. These had just begun turning white for winter but their camouflage was still working. They roost in the valley and come to eat cranberries and blue berries on the hillsides at this time of year.

As the fog began to lift, we saw flocks of geese and swans and a peregrine falcon. The young were testing their wings and getting ready for their long journey to the south. The long



Gary and Bertha Jaeb at a recent fundraiser

summer days make a vibrant growing season up here. The land was anything but barren.

Dave and Alex walked to the next hill glassing the far valley. We waited and glassed our back trail. The country was endless but we saw no caribou. Parker was smiling and rode on Gordy's shoulders back to the boats, a good mile of easy walking on the esker.



We found our third boat at the rapids on the Snake River. As we spread out on the tundra with our lunches, Tyson and Gail came down off the ridge with stories of a herd of huge bulls apparently heading north. So north we went, splitting up and spreading out along the rugged shoreline dodging islands and glassing the deep bays.

After Gordy and Parker joined Alison and I at the top of the hill we spotted Tyson, Gail and guide, William, across the valley. They were set up perfectly behind some rocks and the caribou were meandering toward them, magically covering distance as they grazed. Then sensing some danger, they flashed their white tails, and trotting nervously, changed direction and headed for the lake. Seventeen great bulls, they entered the water single file.



William pushed off the far shore, slowly bringing his boat around in the clear shallow water. Three big bulls split off from the herd and swam in our direction. As they landed, shaking the water from their hollow hair, Ali slipped off the ledge and moved to a pile of rocks; "ranged" the distance and moved to another rock; then steadied and we heard the rifle blast, saw the bull stagger and then heard the whop of the bullet hitting the target.

The two remaining bulls, just hung around grazing, seemingly waiting for their companion, who had gone down. It is amazing, these bachelor bulls hang out together only to fight, sometimes to the death, for the right to mate a month later. They really do not know humans and did not understand the gunshot they had just heard. Earlier, they had sensed some danger and swimming across the lake, as they had done, is a classic caribou defense when threatened by grizzly bears or wolves.

We moved in on Alison's outstanding trophy and spooked the waiting bulls away.

This monster had all the parts and more. Outstanding top points, double shovels, long bez heavy beams. We took pictures. Parker helped Alison hold up the huge antlers.

I skinned for a life size mount and butchered while Gordy, Ali and Parker packed the meat a couple hundred yards to the boat.

We gave thanks to the caribou and the land and our creator for this wonderful day and headed for the lodge



ahead of a dark cloud that was threatening us from the west.

The other boats arrived a couple of hours later, cold and wet but in good spirits.

After dinner, we warmed by the fireplace in the lounge. Alison's caribou was the only one to come in that first day. It was the largest caribou the guides had seen in years, maybe ever. It would score way over 400 but she planned to have it mounted in velvet and didn't really care about the score. She had set the bar awfully high for the rest of the hunters in camp.



My sons, Daniel and Malcolm were guiding bow hunters and they had scouted more caribou moving in from the west. It didn't matter that the storm closed in and we stayed in camp the next morning.

Day 2

Afternoon, Gordy and Alison and I bounced across to the north shore and walked up a partly treed valley to the highest hill. We could see back across the lake to the lodge, which was a series of cabins and main buildings spread out on an esker with a runway at one end. We saw some hunters on hilltops in the distance, glassing the endless barren land. No one had gone far from the lodge in the storm today.



Pointing to a stand of stunted black spruce trees in the distance, Gordy told us about finding some old leg hold traps and a fur stretcher, a few years ago. I recalled, "Over the years we have found copper arrowheads and pieces of birch bark canoes from the fur trade era and stone tools from the ancient people who had used the eskers and ridges for campsites after the ice age." We looked out across the timeless wilderness, sheltered from the wind by a huge bolder, that seemed out of place on top of our hill made of bedrock; the glacier had dropped it here.



"Mackay Lake and Warburton Bay are named after Hudson's Bay Company traders who had hunted musk oxen up here in 1895. They paddled and portaged with their Dene guides, bringing along some dogs from trading posts on Great Slave Lake. After freeze-up, they abandoned their birch bark canoes and walked back with the dog teams loaded with dry meat and furs."

"In the 1900's gold was discovered in the ancient volcanic rock that forms the entrance to Warburton Bay. Today we have diamond mines in the younger kimberlitic pipes that blasted, like volcanoes, up through the Canadian Shield 60 million years ago. As large as the mining contributions are to our economy, the mine sites themselves are lost in this vast wilderness."



"When the ice on the lakes is 6 feet thick and the aurora is dancing in the night sky, the world's longest ice road is ploughed from Yellowknife, the end of the all weather road, across frozen lakes and portages into the arctic. We hunt wolf packs around Mackay Lake while the "Ice Road Truckers" re-supply the mines."



Day three

We headed into the wind with our open 18 ft aluminum boats. At half throttle, it took us 2 hours to cover the first 20 miles, up and down into 4 foot waves. The wind picked up spray off the curling white caps and occasional sleet half blinded us. Alex hunkered down behind the windshield and Parker and Alison pulled a waterproof tarp around themselves. Gordy, Dave and Lindsay landed their boat beside us as we stopped to stretch our legs and look for a washroom/boulder on the leeward side of a rocky point.

We planned to cross over to the narrows at Warburton Bay. My son Daniel has a camp there, if we needed shelter. We waited for a dark cloud to pass by and the crossing to the north shore was relatively calm.



I talked to my other son Malcolm on the marine radio. His bow hunters were already stalking caribou. We continued past them about 10 miles and landed on a sandy beach in a sheltered cove as the sun came out. The ridge that loomed above us is called "Nodinka" meaning, "look out" in the Dene language. It was another beautiful day in the barren lands and the rough ride was quickly forgotten.

We had been seeing caribou on the skyline for a few miles and now spotted three good, looking bulls up the slope. There were rock outcroppings for cover and the wind was in our favor for a stalk.

After securing the boats, all seven of us headed off with rifles, cameras, daypacks and binoculars. We left the beach, crossed a muskeg and got onto higher ground.

The biggest bull had a white cape and dark chocolate antlers. Dave's shots echoed off the ridge behind and spooked the remaining animals toward us. One had great long back scratchers and good beams; Alex took him. The third caribou still didn't know where we were. He had incredible bez and shovels. Gordy said thank you and ended the hunt.

Three good bulls; like snow, flakes, all different, and it wasn't noon yet. Not too far to pack back to the boats. Parker had let out a "whoopee" when his Dad's caribou went down. Then he found another berry patch as we took photos.

Caribou were scattered all around and a big bull stood and stared at us as I caped for a shoulder mount. I quartered and de-boned it Dene style. Using the ribs and hind-quarters for the frame and the back hide as the wrapper, I made a pack with a 10 foot piece of thin rope and a head strap.

Alex and I headed for the boats with the whole caribou on our backs. Then we all helped carry the bulls. Gordy and Ali had field dressed. We were back on the beach by 2:00 PM.

There were caribou on the ridges and more in the valleys along the shore. We had a leisurely lunch. Alison fished for lake trout standing on a rock by the beach while Gordy made a small fire for tea.

We loaded the boats now hundreds of pounds heavier with 3 caribou. They were giving most of the meat to our staff for their families back home. It would be dried and smoked in the big teepee or frozen and sent back as we have room on the charter airplanes.

We said a huge Masi (thank you) and surfed about 35 miles back to the lodge with 3 ft rollers and the wind on our backs.

At the lodge we learned that Tyson and Gail also got their caribou. Some of the bow hunters still had tags left to fill.

Day 4

Gordy planned to take his family fishing for arctic grayling at the King River. They planned for a shore lunch there with a bottle of wine, fresh fried fish, beans, corn, fresh bannock, roasted potatoes and a salad. Later they would try trolling for lake trout at some drop offs on the big lake or casting for northern pike in some shallow bays.

The guides told them to bring their rifles along for an off hand chance at a wolf or wolverine and just in case a tundra grizzly decided to join the shore lunch.

We breathed the clean air and could drink water straight out of the lake while we enjoyed the camaraderie that had grown stronger in the rough water and the sunshine on this timeless barren land.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE -

The number of caribou tags in Northwest Territories have been severely cut and are putting this type of hunt in jeopardy. Gary Jaeb, along with other outfitters, are working hard to try and convince their government to reinstate their quotas. The outfitters can prove there are plenty of caribou and that their hunts do not hurt the population.

Mary and I have hunted with the Jaeb's twice and many others from our chapter have had very enjoyable hunts with them. They need our support. You can contact Gary Jaeb at contact@truenorthsafaris.com.

A huge caribou from True North Safaris, Mackay Lake, can be seen in the Card Wildlife Museum at Ferris State University.



Jason

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Together we are providing meaningful "outdoor adventures" for youth who suffer life-threatening or life-altering medical conditions. Thank you.



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Cody

Cody Hunt who the Mid-Michigan
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Alex

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Nan, Words can not explain how grateful we are for what you and MID Michigan SCI have done for Cody. It definately was a dream hunt for him & us as well to be able to see it. It was also a big bonus to meet all of the wonderful people that we did. Nan you are a great person with a huge heart. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We love you and we will never forget what you have done for us. God Bless you always.

Cody Hunt &
The Whole
Hunt family

P.S. We will send pictures for you when we get them in the mail from Mike O.K. take care.

Dear Mid-Michigan SCI:

Merely saying "Thank You" seems so insignificant compared to the joy the Tony Semple Foundation for Hope has given to our son, Alex. This amazing opportunity to go deer hunting, just like all the other guys in our family, was a dream come true. Alex is especially enjoying the fact that he has a bigger buck than ANYBODY he knows!

Mid-Michigan SCI's generous support of Tony Semple's foundation is heartwarming and greatly appreciated. I am still in awe when I think of the wonderful people we had the pleasure of meeting and spending time with for those four great days. The warmth, sincerity, and complete commitment to making sure these boys were happy, having fun, and having a successful hunt speaks volumes about the people associated with the foundation.

Sincerely yours,

Cindy Shunabarker

Alberta Cougar

by Don and Mary Harter

We purchased this hunt at the SCI Convention in Reno in January 2009 having met Gordon and Tracy Burton at a cocktail party held by Shane Quinn, New Zealand outfitter. We had met Gordon and Tracy several years before at our own Mid-Michigan fundraiser and they had stayed at our home. But now - the real deal - we booked the 10 day hunt with Double Diamond Outfitters, gordon@albertahunt.com, and left Grand Rapids on December 26, 2009 for Calgary, Alberta.

We were fortunate not to have booked from the Detroit Airport as the Nigerian "underwear bomber" had been discovered only the day before and Detroit had become rather hectic. Canadian security had also been tightened as the incident took place over Canadian airspace.

Gordon met us in Calgary and drove us to Otokots and their ranch where we spent the night.

Up early the next morning and we drove to Sundre where we unloaded at a local hotel where we were staying for the next several nights.

Gordon drove me in his pickup with Roxie and Radar his two Black and Tans in a straw filled dog box in the back and a snowmachine loaded on top of the dog box.

Don rode with John Burton and his Blue Tick and Red Bone, Red. Burton also hauled a snowmachine. He is a taxidermist.



Gordon Burton and John Burton

We were up every morning early, ate a good breakfast and were out searching for tracks by 8 a.m., John taking Don one way and Gordon taking me another. You could see tracks on the side of the road beginning about 8:30 until 4:30. Daylight was at a premium this time of year.

We drove around on old and present logging roads and roads well maintained to gas pipeline stations. Most roads were plowed and we usually saw little traffic. The pipelines were owned by BP, Husky, or Suncor. Some areas were being logged and they had huge stockpiles of logs just waiting to be hauled away.

We let the dogs out several times each day, usually at a pipeline station and let them run a ways behind the truck for exercise. Gordon's Black and Tans, a male and female, were well trained and we would both watch in our side mirrors to make sure each dog did their morning business.

Daily we would see mule and whitetail deer, coyotes, feral horses, Shiras moose, golden and bald eagles, pileated wood peckers, and an occasional elk. Of course we saw lots of tracks of what had crossed the roads and checked out a lot that were from wolves.

We found several cougar tracks but they were either too old, too small, or a female sometimes with young. The young would cross the road stepping in their mother's tracks. Gordon would dismiss most of the tracks quickly but some he would study and measure the stride to try and judge the size of the animal.



Fresh tracks of a small cat





Gordon checking some fresh tracks



Gordon with Roxie and Radar



Feral Horses

One day John and Don found very fresh tracks but they were too small. If it had been earlier in the day, we would have let the dogs run them just for the experience.

Ideally we wanted large, fresh tracks going in to a section, would drive around the section checking to see if the cougar had left the section and if not put the dogs on the fresh track. A cougar will make a kill and eat on it until it is gone or in warm weather, until it is too rotten for a cougar to eat. When you put the dogs on a trail you hope that the cougar is still in the section, has eaten his fill from his fresh kill, and will climb a tree when the dogs find him.

If a male and female are together, usually the female will tree and the male run off so you only wanted to go after one set of tracks.

On New Year's Day, the temperature when we began was -22C and it warmed up to -8C. We had a huge Chinook Arch across the sky which kept the area warmer than usual. We had gorgeous frost in the mornings that grew even more beautiful when the sun hit it. Sometimes we had hoarfrost that was half inch crystals. The sides of the roads just shimmered until the sun melted it. I took a lot of pictures.

We were hunting along the Rock Mountains that extend up from the U.S. into Alberta. We were hunting the foot of the mountains and mostly flat lands where the cougars lived but when they climbed into the mountains they became mountain lions. Even what we call pumas are

all the same species. Now to just find a nice one.

We ate evenings at either the Outlaw Grill or the White Goose Grill. We didn't have many choices.

Don had hoped to be successful during the first few days of the hunt but wasn't and after seven days of the 10 day hunt, we had to fly back home for our local SCI meeting and other business Don had to attend to.

Gordon called Don when the weather got a little colder and Don returned to Alberta on January 29. Gordon would hunt on a daily basis beyond the 10 day hunt until Don was successful. I didn't go back the second time so Don has to write "the rest of the story".

The Rest of the Story

by Don Harter

I arrived back on January 29th we started hunting the next day. Snow conditions were better with a fresh blanket of white snow on the ground. We looked at lots of tracks but found no big fresh ones to follow.

The second day we found a large track. We followed it with the trucks and snow machines for three days and the cat kept going into steeper country. On the third day the track was very fresh but the cat was still traveling, apparently looking for a "kill". We gave up on this cat to look for another one.



Don Harter, Gordon Burton,
John Burton, and the cougar



Roxie and Radar



On the 4th day we had three trucks driving around looking for that special track! Amazingly at about 11:30 a.m., "I" spotted a big fresh track. (This was the only one I had spotted first.) As we passed by, John said, "Are you sure, Don? It looked like a feral horse track on my side." I said, "I'm sure, back up." It was very big and very fresh. We called the other two trucks and within a half hour they arrived. Everyone agreed it was a nice cat so we all set out to "box it in". We were going to make sure it had not crossed another trail or road.

When we all got back together it was time to let the dogs out. They do not use GPS systems on their dogs so when you let them out you stay with the dogs as best you can. In a short time they jumped the cat and the chase was on. After a short distance, less than a mile, the cat

treed. The dogs were baying and we had to get there as quick as possible. Then I saw the cat with the four dogs baying at the bottom with the cat growling and snarling down at the dogs. After getting there they caught and tied each dog to a tree.

It was time for me to do my job. I was using a single shot 12 gauge with a slug and open sights that belonged to John. I shot it tight to the front shoulder which knocked it out of the tree. To my surprise it got up and ran. I looked at John with a puzzled look on my face. He said, "Don't worry. That was a great shot. It's not going far." I went less than 100 yards and there lay my 173 pound cougar. What a prize! I called Mary on my cell to tell her of my success and she could still hear the dogs baying.

Looking Ahead -

In our next issue -

Hunting Osceola Turkeys
by Joanne Witte

Brazil - 2010
by Roger Card

Fishing Alaska
by Dr. Terry Braden

*And more articles, poems, recipes,
and jokes yet to be submitted.*



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If you put the federal government in charge of the Sahara Desert, in five years there would be a shortage of sand. **Milton Friedman**

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When the people fear the government, there is tyranny; when the government fears the people, there is liberty. Thomas Jefferson



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It is better to deserve honors and not have them than to have them
and not to deserve them. Mark Twain



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A Liberal is a person who will give away everything he doesn't own.

Unknown



FRONT SIGHT

Jeff Chadd

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*We would like to thank
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