

North Carolina

Bowhunter

Magazine

Winter 2009

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Dayne Welborn Scores BIG on African Safari

By: Ramon Bell

Dayne Welborn attended last years NCBA banquet as he always has for the past 22 years. In fact, he initiated the first banquet himself when he was president of the association in 1987. That banquet was held at Kepley's Barn near Greensboro, which burned down several years ago. Last years banquet was held at the N.C. State Fairgrounds in Raleigh in the Kerr-Scott Building, as will this year's event on March 7, 2009, the same weekend as the annual Dixie Deer Classic. NCBA officers and volunteers have held a big "Hunts Raffle" at this annual event for the past decade or more. This past year, they had over 50 hunts that were raffled off at the banquet. Dayne Welborn was there and he told me personally that he had a feeling he was going to win something big at the banquet this year.

He spent much of the day at the convention talking with a guide from South Africa who had donated a hunt to NCBA which would be raffled off that evening at the banquet. To make a long story shorter, when the time came to give away all those hunts, Dayne Welborn won the top prize, an African Safari with Willem Frost of "Matlabas Game Hunters." The hunt would take place in the fall of 2008 in the Limpopo province, about 3 hours north and west of Johannesburg, S. Africa. He would take his wife, Shirley, along with him on the hunt. She was a bit apprehensive about going to Africa, but once she arrived, Dayne says she was glad she went.

The lodge had satellite TV and all the amenities that go along with a first class African Safari, but Dayne and Shirley chose to stay in a tent so, as Dayne says, "We could be closer to nature and hear all the birds and animals of the day and night." I think I could identify with that myself.

Dayne was the last hunter Willem had at his compound for the year. Dayne and Shirley arrived on September 23rd. He hunted only four days, then took a few more days to just watch the African wildlife and enjoy the scenery and the trip in general. Here's a shortened version of his hunting journal that he kept of the hunt.

September 24, 2008 (Wednesday): I hunted an elevated blind at a waterhole and I saw 59 animals including: Kudu, Warthogs, Impala, Monitor Lizard and Gemsbok cows.

One Gemsbok was missing an ear, had an eye put out and was missing one horn. The PH (Professional Hunter), "Flippie", Willem's son, said Gemsboks were one of the meanest animals on the plains. They have been known to take on lion and leopards, and come out the winner. I saw lots of animals this first day, but nothing I wanted to fling an arrow at. (NOTE: Dayne is a full-time bowhunter.)



September 25, 2008 (Thursday): I hunted a pit blind on this day. The action started early as a trophy Kudu bull came to the blind. I shot him with a Magnus "Stinger" 4-blade 125 grain broadhead using a 55 lb. Hoyt (compound) bow. The arrow broke off after achieving full penetration. The big bull went only 60 yards and went down. (NOTE: Kudu bulls are big animals that can weigh 600 lbs. or more.) Dayne says, "One of my goals when I went to Africa was to shoot a zebra for a rug. While we were tracking the Kudu, six zebras came by near us. They saw us, spooked and ran. I never had another chance at a zebra. Good reason to go back some day!"

September 26, 2008 (Friday): Hunted box-blind at ground level. I saw Blue Wildebeest, Monkeys and Mongoose. In fact, I saw a whole "troop" of Mongoose go by, all in single file. Flippie said that's what they call a group of Mongoose.. a "troop." They are the "cutest" animals I saw while in "Africa. The most "comical" animals I saw were Warthogs. On this day, I shot a nice trophy Gemsbok. After taking a nice Kudu the day

before, this Gemsbok was another really great African trophy for me. After I shot the Gemsbok, four Wildebeest bulls came into the blind area. Although I could have, I didn't shoot because they were not on my priority list.



Flippie had many photos of animals, especially snakes. He had one of a big Python and a Black Mamba, the latter being deadly poisonous. Dayne was surprised to learn that they don't kill the snakes, even the poisonous ones. They capture them and haul them off to another area and release them.

The seasons are reversed in Africa. Our "Fall" season is their "Spring" there, and summer begins about the beginning of December.

Dayne says if he ever gets a chance, he will return to Africa. It was a wonderful trip and the hunting part of it was just the "icing on the cake" for him. He says, "We saw things we will never forget and we made some friends for life."

For information about the NCBA Annual Banquet, go to: www.ncbowhunter.com

Want to go on an African Safari with "Matlabas Game Hunters"?

Contact Ramon Bell at: oldsouthadv@yahoo.com

September 27, 2008 (Saturday): I was back in the elevated blind I hunted the first day. I sat this blind all day and saw Warthogs, Giraffe, Kudu and Eland. Right at dark, at last shooting light, a huge Waterbuck came into range and I took the shot. It was a good shot, but the PH told me that Waterbuck were one of the most difficult animals to track because of their thick fur, they didn't leave a good blood trail. We found a small amount of blood and decided to come back the next morning to resume tracking the animal. The native trackers found only small spots of blood, and for the most part, they tracked the animal by his hoof prints. It was amazing watching them do this. They tracked for four hours and found him not a long way from where I shot him, but without a good blood trail, it was a difficult tracking job. It was a good shot though, so I was pleased with this, my final African trophy.



Accommodations and meals at Willem's lodge were great! All meals were prepared and served on fine china. We had daily maid and laundry service. They spoiled Shirley. She went on daily tours to shop or just ride around in a four wheel drive vehicle looking at animals on the African plains while I was in a blind hunting.