

Omaruru, Namibia
July 2010

AFRICA TRIP

OTJANDAUE SAFARIS

Getting There....



Nambian Facts

Size :

825,418 sq km, slightly more than half the size of Alaska

Population:

Almost 2 million people live in Namibia, it is one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world. Life expectancy is around 40 years. Birth rate is on average 4.6 per woman. Literacy rate is just over 84%.

Peoples:

Black 87.5%, white 6% and mixed 6.5%. About 50% of the population belong to the Ovambo tribe and 9% to the Kavangos tribe.

Other ethnic groups are: Herero 7%, Damara 7%, Nama 5%, Caprivian 4%, Bushmen 3%, Baster 2%, and Tswana 0.5%

Religion:

Christian 80% to 90% (Lutheran 50% at least) and indigenous beliefs 10% to 20%.



Meet the Pohambas

Namibian President Hifikepunye
Pohamba
And the First Lady of Namibia, Her
Excellency Mrs. Penexupifo Pohamba



Mrs. Pohamba and Brangelina

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie pose
With Penexupifo Pohamba, the wife
Of President Hifikepunye Pohamba.
The couples first public appearance since the
Birth of their daughter Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt

The van der Merwe Family



Roy, my professional hunter, his wife Janet, daughters Rune' and Kaylin, and Uncle Kobus Roy's Ranch, Otjandaue, is over 40 square miles

More family pics



Rune' with housecleaner Marta (a Bushman) and Celia (a Herero) the cook.



Kaylin with her babies.

Day 1 recap

- Breakfast
- Slowly drove on the ranch.
- Saw impalas – not a shooter.
- Stalked a group of kudus, mostly females but one male. Had the male in crosshairs but didn't shoot. Roy said it was a good, average kudu but it so early in the hunt I let it go. Maybe should have taken it.
- Stalked oryx but they wandered off.
- Stalked black wildebeest, got within 200 yds, saw it was a breeding group instead of a bachelor heard so we called off the stalk.
- Lunch back at the ranch
- Drove to water hole, on the way saw 3 good impala. Stalked them but they got away, very jumpy.
- Climbed up in stand near the waterhole and watched oryx come to drink in late afternoon. Had 5 in front of me, not shooters (young males, pregnant females). Then a big male came in – Roy said he had massive horns. Had to wait almost 10 minutes for him to present a good shot. I shot him in the right shoulder....he only went 15 yards.
- Dinner

Day 1



Roy – sighting in at his gun range

Day 1



Day 1 - Oryx Bull - a gold medal trophy
75 yards - 4:00 p.m. near waterhole,
horn length each 37.5 ", approx weight 500 lbs

More Day 1



Darwin's Missing Link or baboon skull?
You be the judge.



The Bushmen go to work.

Oryx get an afternoon drink.

Day 2 recap

- Breakfast
 - Drove for 4 hours, the hunting was slow as saw very little compared to yesterday. It was probably due to cloud cover early. When the clouds burned off, the wind picked up and that didn't help. Add to that we're in a full moon period and the animals can feed at night easily. The few animals we saw were standing or bedded down. It's the dry season and they're having a drought so probably the place to be especially in the afternoon is ambushing waterholes.
 - Lunch back at the ranch under the thatch roof.
 - We drove 10 km to a high stand overlooking a water hole and watched 30 minutes. Saw a duiker and 3 oryx in that time but the wind switched and blew our scent toward the game so we gave up that stand.
 - We drove around the rest of the afternoon. Saw 4 impala that were pretty good but a little young so we didn't stalk. Saw 2 giraffe up close.
 - Dinner
-

Day 2



Searching for game.



Roy walking to waterhole. Ron doing exactly what Roy says – staying close.
(note the thorns – everywhere in Africa)



Can't shoot these two –
They're the girls pets, Meisie
and Stripes They ride them.
Roy says zebra are the
most difficult animals to
hunt on the ranch. I believe it,
we haven't see any yet.



Day 3 recap

- Breakfast – woke up a little late.
 - The animals were a bit more active than yesterday. Saw a big kudu bull and Roy and I jumped off to stalk it but he was on to us. Females in the area alerted too. When we got to where they were, they were gone. Saw 2 bull hartebeest during the kudu stalk but they alerted on us as well and ran. The bush was just too thick to get close to either kudu or hartebeest.
 - Drove to a waterhole and found 3 black wildebeest in the area. It took a while to creep up to get a clear shot. Shot the oldest at about 85 yards. He'll make a good mount.
 - Lunch
 - Did lots of driving this afternoon. Saw a herd of blue wildebeest, some female kudu and many, many oryx but the animals on my list were in hiding. At the end of the day when we were driving out, a rhino was on the road in front. He didn't want to leave so Kobus honked and he finally moved aside. He didn't bother us. He's a very large male, quite old.
-

Day 3



Day 3 - Black Wildebeest Bull - a nice trophy
85 yards - 11:00 a.m.

More Day 3



Black Wildebeest



Giraffe

Day 4 recap

- Breakfast

- Drove for 1.5 hours this morning. Saw lots of animals and finally found a herd of zebra. Probably 20 in the herd. We tried to stalk them but the wind wasn't ideal and they were long gone. Then ran into another herd. The stallion at the rear was in my crosshairs but he put a tree between us and I couldn't shoot. The herd ran far into the bush.

- Roy and I sat for a couple of hours over a waterhole. Saw many oryx and female kudu with young. Also a young male kudu came in. A female warthog and her two little ones came in too. Even though we saw a good amount of game, it was windy and Roy says when it's calm and hot, that waterhole is even more busy.

- Lunch

- Wind still blowing after lunch.....no too much by Texas standards, but anything over 10 mph and the animals don't move. We drove the ranch and didn't see much. Set out some game cameras to see what was moving at night.

- Dinner

- The forecast for tomorrow is more wind so I think we'll take the day off and go to the coast and do some sightseeing.

Day 5 recap

- Today, Roy and I drove to the Atlantic coast. It was about a 2 hour trip. The landscape changed from heavy bush to scrub brush and sand to all sand along the way. We had breakfast in Swakopmund at a German/Euro style restaurant with a confectionary and a bakery. During breakfast, Roy ran into his Aunt, Uncle, and cousin and they visited a little. Roy's uncle is retired but has a fishing business and invests in coastal real estate.
- Swakop is a nice resort town where Roy spent his early years. All the housing is Euro style to me with lots of German influence. We drove to Long Beach, another community on the coast and took some pictures, then on to Walvis Bay, another resort city but with a harbor for large ships.
- Then, we drove back to Swakop to a snake zoo Saw many of Africa's "famous" snakes: black mamba, python, zebra snake, puff adder, etc. After that we visited the museum and saw a lot of colonial and native artifacts and much of the history of Namibia - a German colony over a hundred years ago.
- Lunch at a beachfront restaurant in overlooking swimmers in the cold water.
- Then, onto the wood and curio market. At 3 in the afternoon and with customers all around, they love to tell tourists, "you're my first customer". I laughed in their face and the bargaining began. Bought some knickknacks and the vendors wore me out. Drove back to the ranch.
- Dinner

Day 5 – Swakopmund (on the Atlantic ocean)



Breakfast



Downtown



Souvenir Market (mainly the Ovambo people)

Day 5 - Snake Farm



Day 5 –Swakopmund Museum



Headdress



Early photos of
Various tribes

Day 6 recap

- Breakfast

- Back hunting today after sightseeing yesterday. We stalked some impala but they gave us the slip. The wind picked up so we sat by a waterhole. Was very windy though a few kudu females came in after 45 minutes, then after them, a group of 6 oryx – one nice bull but I had already shot my oryx. After another hour and more wind, the wind dropped and Roy spotted a warthog. Roy said he has a massive right tusk and the left one is good too, but slightly worn. (Note: when Roy says “massive” to describe an animal, it’s time to take the safety off). I checked him and he looked great to me so I shot and he dropped without a kick. He was a nice big male, probably 120 pounds.

- Lunch

- We found a large group of impala but they were a breeding group so we passed them by. 5 minutes later, we found a small bachelor group of about 5 impala. We began the stalk and of course, they spotted us and moved away but weren’t too alarmed. Bullet frustrated Roy when he ran in front of us and Roy had to adjust his attitude. Bullet behaved from then on. After stalking for 10-15 min, we finally got in position and Roy told me to shoot one standing broadside. He went 20 yards.

- For the last 1.5 hours, we sat in a blind overlooking a waterhole. Saw oryx and duiker then a HUGE herd of eland came in – the world’s largest antelope – approx 45 of them. The herd bull weighed a ton. We watched them for 30 min. Incredible and very fortunate. Approx 40,000 lbs of eland in front of us.

- Dinner

Day 6



Big male warthog - noon



Bullet (Fox Terrier) takes revenge

Day 6



Impala - 70 yards



Huge Eland herd
In dry waterhole - 30 yds



Day 7 recap

- Breakfast

- The weather forecast called for 15 kph winds which is right at the edge to hunt but we went out anyway. We drove a bit and saw a few animals but it kept getting windier, maybe up to 20-25 kph. So, we decided to not hunt this morning and go into town (Omaruru), get some lamb for the evening barbeque (a Saturday regular), and have some coffee.

- Lunch

- We went out around 3:30 p.m. and drove to the back of the ranch looking for our final 3 and most difficult to hunt game: kudu, zebra, and hartebeest. The wind had calmed down as it does usually in the afternoon. We had hunted for about 45 minutes when Roy spotted a single male zebra which is the ideal zebra to shoot. It was running to the right and it took a minute to get into position but the zebra was still trotting. Roy whistled and the zebra stopped to listen. I shot from the shoulder and it fell in its tracks. It was a beautiful big male and will make a fine trophy. Glad to get this animal as it is probably the most difficult species to hunt on the ranch. Kobus to it back to the camp for the bushmen to skin and butcher and Roy and I hunted a waterhole until it got dark. Saw some oryx and duiker.

- Dinner (barbequed under the thatch roof house – a Namibian Saturday tradition).

Day 7



Stallion Mountain Zebra - 120 yards

Day 8 recap

- Breakfast

- Drove and drove looking for kudu but all the ones we saw were females. There was a nice bull with some females at a waterhole but they bolted when they heard the car.

- Lunch

- We had a short lunch and headed back out to the waterhole where we saw the male kudu earlier. Saw a lot of animals come in – oryx, impala, female kudu, steenbok, warthog, blue wildebeest – but not the ones we're hunting – male kudu and hartebeest.

With 1.5 hours left of sunlight, we drove looking for male kudu. Again, saw lots of animals, even a young male kudu, but no shooters. Shortly after sunset, Roy spotted 2 hartebeest running about 125 yards away. He hurried me to get my gun and I could barely see them. It was difficult to tell front from rear but I knew they wouldn't stay still so I took a shot. Didn't feel good about placement as I was rushed. We looked for blood but couldn't find so we concluded it was a miss.

Dinner

Day 9 recap

- Breakfast

- Got out a little early to hunt the ranch for kudu and hartebeest. Was pretty windy so we weren't expecting to see too much activity until after lunch. We drove quite a bit and were headed back to the house for lunch. On the way back we passed a waterhole and Roy noticed some female kudu in the area so we drove closer. The group ran from the hole and I saw a lot of female kudu and a young male. Roy asked if I got a look at the lead male and I said the only male I saw was a young male trailing who had just started to grow horns. So, we drove the dry riverbed and found the group. A shooter male was in the group and he ran from them and stood behind some brush and a large tree. Roy said to shoot if I could get a shot. I waited and the bull finally made a run for it. I put a good shot on him and he went 50 yards before he fell.

- Lunch

- We sat in a blind and hope the final species on my list would come in, the red hartebeest, but none did. Quite a few other animals were seen.

- Dinner

Day 9



Kudu Bull – noon, 30 yards, next to riverbed

Day 10 recap – last day

- Breakfast

- The last animal I wanted to get is a red hartebeest. Roy has hartebeest on his ranch but they have been very hard to find on his 40 square miles and when you do see them, they run away quickly. So, Roy and I went to another concession where he has access that has a higher concentration of hartebeest. We hunted the ranch and found a breeding group but couldn't find any males outside of the group. It was impossible to shoot one of these because there are just too many eyes and the group was jumpy.

- Lunch

- Roy made some calls and we went to a different ranch that also has hartebeest for the afternoon hunt. We drove the large ranch for 3 hours and didn't see any hartebeest. At the end of the day, the ranch foreman said they had shot a number of them last month in order for the count to match the carrying capacity of the ranch since they're in somewhat of a drought. Although they said they still had a good population, they were probably driven deeper into the bush because of the cull.

- Dinner

Summary for future hunters

I had a great time on this trip and am very pleased with my trophies. The family setting, facilities, food, and service at Otjandaue were top notch. Roy and his family are fine hosts and he does a nice job blending a great hunting experience with a vacation.

Roy hunts hard to find you the trophy animal you want. He changes tactics daily depending on the species, the weather, and your desires to drive, stalk, or ambush. His knowledge of game habits, the ranch, and the specific animals on the ranch will save you lots of time in your pursuit. He is an ethical PH who believe in fair chase and quick dispatch. When the animal is with range, he doesn't tell you what to do but rather let's you make the decision. His advice falls into these categories:

- that's an exceptional trophy, a great animal to take
- that's a very good trophy, he would make a nice mount
- that's an average trophy, we might be able to do better but you decide
- that animal needs more time to grow, has uneven/broken horn, or otherwise is not a good trophy for you.

I would wholeheartedly recommend Roy and Otjandaue to any hunter whose objective are plains game trophies and a memorable experience.