

# My first Eastern Cape hunt.

by Danie Terblanché

On an early Saturday morning during May 2010 when I was on the shooting range testing hand loads for various calibres I was invited by a very good friend Gerhard Verdoorn to join him and some other hunters for a hunting trip at Aliwal North in the Eastern Cape. The hunt was organized by Org Hamman that also committed himself to be in charge of the kitchen.

So my first Karoo hunt was during the last week of June on a farm called Ribbokrant and I decided it will be a handgun hunt. I left Pretoria at 04:00 on the Tuesday morning to be at Gerhard's house at 05:00. We picked up his brother Johan at his house and hit the road towards Bloemfontein. We got to Aliwal North during the afternoon and made a quick stop to buy hunting licences. Another hour later we drove onto the farmyard and I was glad the long drive was over. The region had a cold front and  $\pm 25$  mm rain three days before we got onto the farm. The "Twee Spoor" tracks were full of water and it was cold with spots of snow on the mountains towards the far North- East.

There was just enough time left before sunset to zero the firearms sights on the shooting range at various distances. Then it was time to relax and enjoy the excellent meal Org prepared.



On the first hunting morning the wet soil and small patches of water was frozen during the previous night's sub zero temperature. I quickly realised that there is not much cover to hide in and it would be quite a challenge to get within handgun hunting range of the game and "Leopard Crawl" was the only option.

Within two hours of walking I spotted a herd of Blue Wildebeest that was already aware of my approach and all eyes were watching me. I was able to get within safe shooting range of the herd and crawled to take aim over an ant-hill about 12 inches high to get the best rest ever; "Mother Nature" flat on my stomach. The 357 Herrett Thompson Contender topped with a Bushnell Trophy 2-6 X 32 telescope was loaded with a semi-wad-cutter shape brass bullet at a muzzle velocity of  $\pm 2300$  fps. I took aim on a big bull on the side of the herd standing broadside and slowly squeezed the trigger. When the 357 barked the herd trotted away to watch me from a distance. I marked the position where I was lying on the GPS and after a few minutes stood up and walked towards where the bull was standing, marked the spot and only then realised what the shooting distance was. The GPS showed 213 metres and that proved that I under estimated the range by at least 50 meters. I then walked to where the bull was lying; it was a good lung shot.



The farm owner Jurie was driving past in his Land Cruiser to the other side of the farm when he spotted me. He quickly winched the bull onto the load bin of the well equipped pickup with very little effort. I was very happy with the perfect one shot kill!

At the slaughtering bay we saw the performance evidence of the bullet penetration and almost no meat damage on the entry and exit wounds.



I believe this bullet load was an excellent choice and it again proves that good shot placement and a hard penetrating bullet for handgun hunting brings the meat home. The bullets are solid brass 358 Impala 180 grain, cut shorter from the nose to a conical flat nose ending up at 165 grains. The next investment to my hunting arsenal would be without a doubt a good but small Rangefinder.

My experience on this hunt was something to remember for a long time and it was a privilege to hunt on Ribbokrant with the kind and friendly people. I will go back at any time and recommend this farm to handgun hunters that are willing to put effort into walk and stork. There is more than enough game and species to choose from for the trophy or biltong hunter.

For more information on handgun hunting in South Africa go to:

[www.handgunhuntersa.com](http://www.handgunhuntersa.com)