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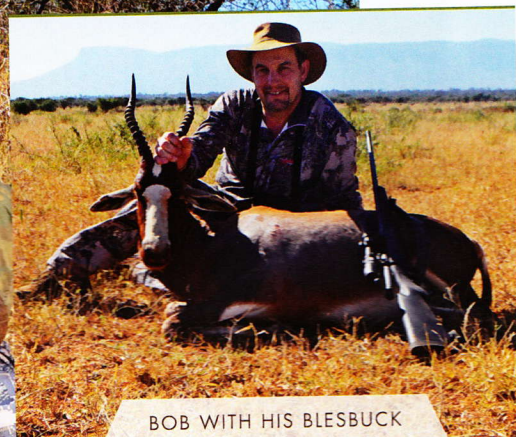
BY BOB NEWLAND

OUR FIRST AFRICAN SAFARI STARTED OUT WITH A LOT OF TALKING AND DREAMING, BUT MY WIFE, TRACI, AND I DECIDED TO PUSH IT a little further and see if we could make it happen. Our 15<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary would be in 2014, so we thought what better way to celebrate our time together than to go to Africa. After exhaustive research and reading, I chose Gordon Brace from Zulani Safaris in the Limpopo region of South Africa as our guide.

rolled around it was one of the activities we were looking forward to the most.

On May 21<sup>st</sup> Traci and I arrived at JFK airport 3 hours before our departure time. The 14-hour flight passed in the blink of an eye, and before I knew it I was walking with my wife, trying to find my way through the foreign airport. A driver from Africa Sky, a bed and breakfast in Johannesburg, met us there with a sign that read "Newland." After a short drive, we were pulling into the guest house.

BOB & TRACI WITH BOB'S WILDEBEEST



BOB WITH HIS BLESBUCK

Gordon told us of a program he offers at Zulani to feed the hungry. He offers non-trophy animals at reduced prices. If we chose to harvest one of those animals, we could personally take the meat and donate it to an orphanage/school he supported in the area, and we really liked the idea. We were even more excited about our upcoming adventure.

Time passed quickly, and all of the details were ironed out. We were set to go. Then we learned of the Blue Bag program. Through the SCI Humanitarian office, if you purchase a blue duffle bag and agree to fill it with school supplies, over-the-counter medications, clothes, sporting goods, and sweets, they will match your effort and send you a second full bag to take and donate on your trip. Traci and I were excited about that, and by the time the trip

It was an oasis in the middle of the city and the perfect place to start our trip.

In the morning, Peter, our driver, returned us to the airport where we set out for the second leg of the trip to Polokwane. Arriving in Polokwane, we were quickly met by Sonia and her driver, Johannes. We collected our bags and rifle and set out for Zulani. Gordon met us at the gate in the safari vehicle and took us on a quick game drive of Zulani. It was like nothing we had ever seen before. I couldn't wait to start hunting.

We got to camp and settled in just before sunset. After 2 days of travel, Traci and I retired for the evening, anticipating the next day's



SCHOOL GIRL & TRACI



hunt. The alarm was set for an hour before dawn, but I had a feeling I would be up long before that.

Morning came quickly, and we dressed and loaded in the safari truck that transported us to the far end of the preserve. Despite the tremendous amount of game in Zulani, that first morning hunt proved to be quite challenging. We saw numerous Blesbuck, Impala, and Hartebeest, but getting within reasonable shooting distance was quite the chore with the winds swirling. The morning hunt didn't yield any harvests, but Traci and I were both enjoying it immensely.

At 2:00 in the afternoon I decided to add a blue Wildebeest to my list of animals. Gordon picked up the spoor of a herd, and we were able to orchestrate a stalk to within 90 yards. One well-placed shot and I had my first African animal. We found him about 40 yards from where I had shot him. We later realized that he would place silver in the SCI record book.

On the second morning we weren't out of the truck 5 minutes when we came upon an Impala herd about 250 yards away. The stalk was on. We approached to about 100 yards, and I prepared to shoot. The large ram turned and started toward us. My 100 yard shot quickly dropped to 20 yards, and I had another SCI record book animal on the ground.

Our original plan was to take a Wildebeest as our animal to feed the children, but since I had harvested one the day before, we made a decision to have Traci take an Impala ewe. Traci and Gordon stalked to within 75 yards of a herd of Impala while I stood back a bit and videoed. Traci executed a perfect frontal shot that dropped the ewe instantly. I was so proud of her accomplishment, and we were equally excited that this meat would go to such good use. Our plan was to visit three schools, so one Impala ewe would not be enough meat. We made our way to the plains and came upon a herd of Blesbuck. From 140 yards I took a ewe, and we had enough meat to share between the three schools.





TRACI WITH HER IMPALA EWE

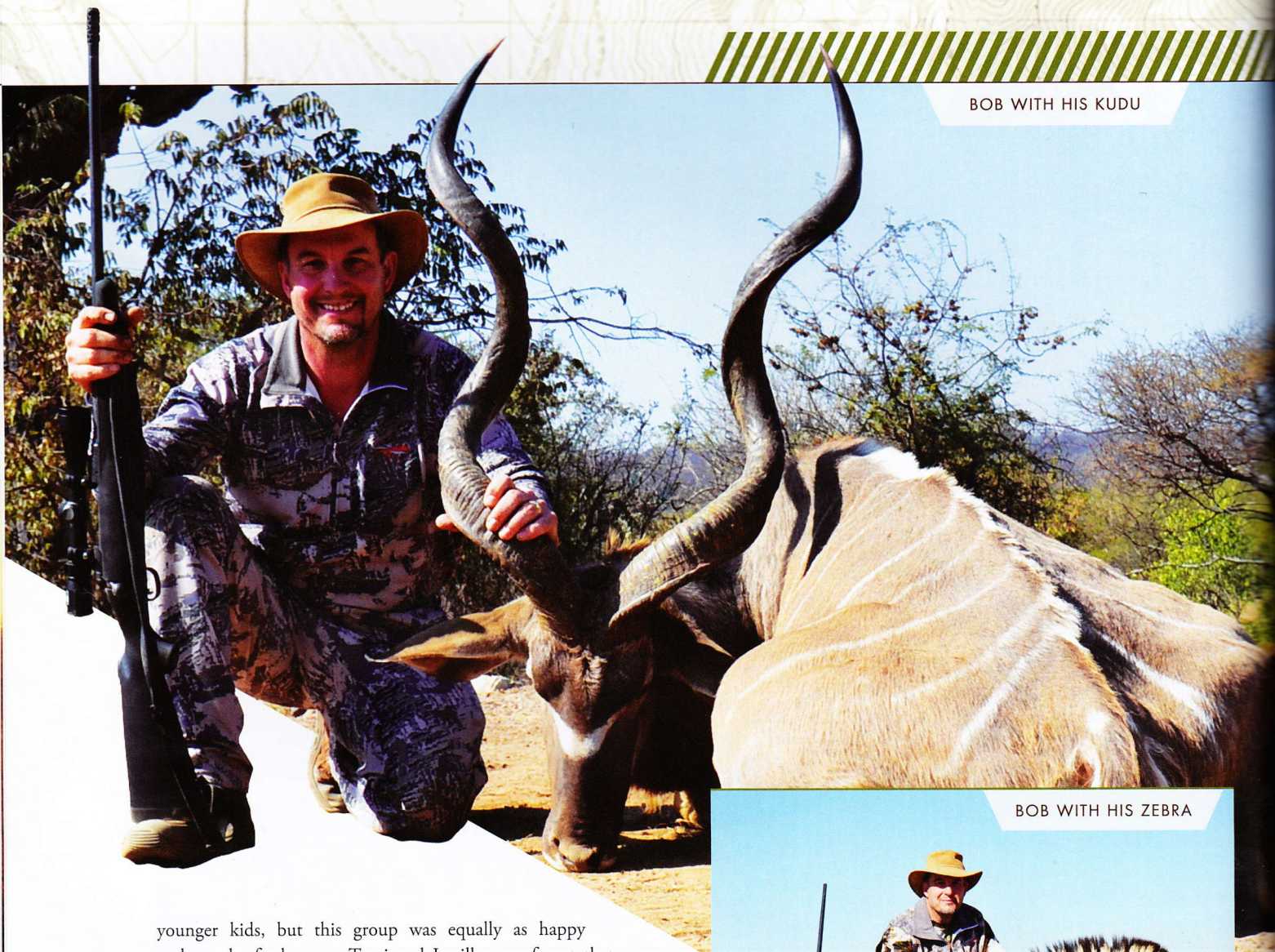
Later that afternoon I harvested our fourth animal of the day and fifth of the trip. A large Gemsbok presented us with a 145 yard quartering away shot. The Barnes 180 grain bullet did its job again, and he only ran about 50 yards. The following day we took a zebra out in the open plains, and he went down without taking a step. He was a beautiful stallion warrior with scars from his many battles.

We took a break from hunting the next morning and made our trip to the three schools. Upon arriving at the first school, we found kindergarten age boys and girls huddled in a group in the dirt playground. As we pulled in they started singing songs to us. The Blue Bags were unloaded, and some of the meat was distributed. Traci and I passed out candy, toothbrushes, balls, and toys. One young girl latched onto Traci and did not want to let go. It felt so good to be helping these kids. We spent about an hour with them, playing and enjoying their company, and then moved on to the next school.

We approached a small concrete, metal building with the word "Classroom" written on the door. This was a school for handicapped children. It couldn't have been more than 15' x 15' and contained virtually nothing. They had no tables, chairs, toys, or supplies. One of the children had a birth defect that caused his feet to grow in the wrong direction. We were told he needed special shoes that they couldn't afford. A baby lay on the floor with nothing but a blanket under him. Traci had him in her arms within minutes. One of the young boys stood and said a prayer for us. His intensity was beyond compare as he squeezed his eyes so tight while reciting the verse. Again we passed out some toys and shared some candy with them. We certainly want to do more to help those children.

Our final visit was to an older group's school. The children ranged from about 8 to 13 years old. Singing and dancing was shared with us, and more meat was distributed. Most of the items we had collected in the Blue Bags were distributed to the



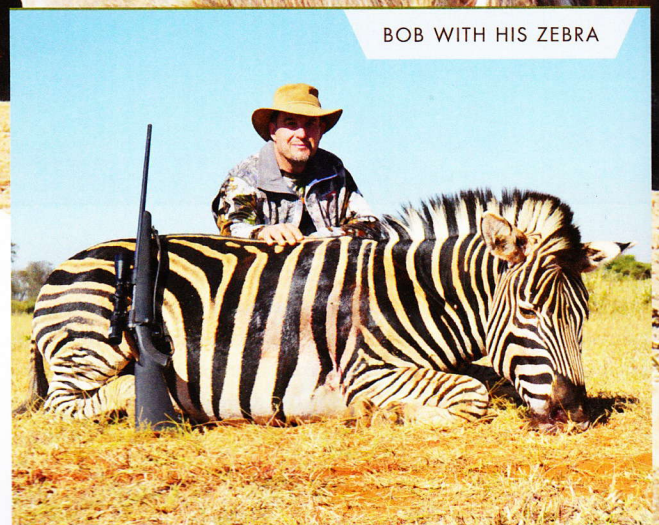


BOB WITH HIS KUDU

younger kids, but this group was equally as happy to have the fresh meat. Traci and I will never forget that experience, and we will make it a part of every trip we ever take to Africa.

Upon returning to Zulani that evening, Gordon and I set out to do some nighttime calling for Jackal. We took the safari truck out and parked on the edge of the plains. Gordon made a few calls that were almost immediately answered by several Jackal. The Jackal barked, and Gordon would periodically shine a spotlight to see how close they were approaching. One was coming within range, so I held on that area. Gordon flashed the light, and the crosshairs found the shoulder. I touched off the round, and the Jackal fell. Unfortunately we couldn't find him in the dark and had to return in the morning to locate him in the tall grass.

Next was our pursuit of Kudu, which was proving to be impossible. The grey ghost was hidden well in thick cover. Gordon asked if we would mind making a trip to another area. He had a connection in a more mountainous region that wasn't as thick. We elected to head there the next day. The decision proved to be a good one as I



BOB WITH HIS ZEBRA

harvested my SCI silver medal Kudu in a short time. Our hunting portion of the trip was complete. We had harvested eight animals, with three of them qualifying for South African gold awards and SCI silver and bronze awards. The trip was a huge success!

It is so true when they say that once the African bug bites you, you're hooked for good. Traci and I loved every part of this trip and all the people we met while visiting. We can't wait to return. **EF**