

## Hunt Report with Paw Print Safaris

My wife and I went on a hunt with Pieter Erasmus of Paw Print Safaris from 7/9 to 7/20/2015, and we had the time of our lives. After only a few days, my wife went from "this is a once in a life time trip" to "we have to come back again". Pieter's motto must be to under-promise and over-deliver! He was waiting for us at JNB even though our flight arrived an hour early. From that moment on, he took care of every detail.

He drove us to Flintbeck Nature Reserve, where we enjoyed dinner family-style in a traditional thatched-roof African lodge. We were made to feel instantly welcome and comfortable. We hunted the next day, and my wife took a zebra.

The following day, we traveled to Hoedspruit in the Limpopo region to pursue a marauding hippo in a dam on a citrus orchard 300m from the Blyde River. The hippo had been harassing the farm workers for three months. He had also torn up a green house. The first afternoon we searched the thick reeds around the dam but no hippo.



The next morning, we checked again for the hippo but saw no fresh tracks near the dam nor on the farm. We returned to Essenwood Lodge at Wild Rivers Reserve and hunted plains game while one of the PHs monitored the dam for hippo signs. That morning I took a mature impala ram from a very cool old stone hide with my Contender in 375JDJ.



Later, we drove around to see what other animals were moving and came upon an old giraffe cow. We jumped off the bakkie and made a stalk. We'd get close and off she'd go. Finally, she was broadside at 50m, and I set up for a shot. The PH said aim for the shoulder. I made a good shot, but off she went. We set up again, and I put another round into her shoulder. One more round, and she was out. Another victory for the 375JDJ!



That evening, we enjoyed the fabulous African sunset.



The next morning, we got word that the hippo was in the dam. We arrived to find him under the reeds and facing away. With just his ears out of the water, I put one round into his neck. He was not impressed. He went under and swam towards us, so I fired one into his head close to his nose. After that he only poked his nostrils out quickly for air. He'd pop up, and I'd fire mostly being behind him. DeWalt, another PH with us, started helping out with his .375H&H. We would get close, but could not break him down. I switched from my Contender to my SSK Beast in 44mag loaded with Buffalo Bore's .44 +P+ 340g load so I could be quicker on the shot. Suddenly, the hippo took off into the reeds and managed to get on ground before anyone could get off another shot. Pieter and Eddie, the 3rd PH with us, went into the thick reeds near the dam with their 500s.

They pushed the hippo back in the water, and he made off for the other end. Pieter and Eddie each put one in his shoulders, but he was unfazed. Pieter put a 500 in the top of his skull, and the hippo swam into the reeds and stopped. I had one round left and went in the reeds with Eddie. I put my last round just under his ear to finish him off. Surprisingly, he thrashed around then backed into the water. Finally, he lost steam and went under for good. After two hours he had still not floated up. Steve, Pieter's tracker, went in to the water to tie a rope to his leg because the hippo died with his feet stuck in the sand. Finally, he was hauled ashore, and we took pictures as the sun was going down. This was truly a team effort. The citrus orchard owner and workers gathered around, happy to see the hippo gone for good.





The next morning, we headed back to Flintbeck where we enjoyed lots of great fellowship with the Schlotfeldt family around the dinner table and the campfire. By the end of our stay, we had made new lifelong friends. The next morning I missed a wildebeest in the open stone still with the Beast, but that afternoon, my wife scored a mature impala in the tall grass as light was fading using her Marlin 30-30 lever action rifle.



Saturday we took a break from hunting and hit the Chameleon Village to shop for gifts. We went to the lion park where my wife enjoyed petting 4 mo cubs. After lunch at an outdoor cafe with live music, we headed back. A fun day!





Sunday, after a delicious outdoor lunch, we headed back to the farm where my wife had earlier shot her zebra in search of wildebeest. I saw a nice bull, but he was not willing to come out of thick cover. Soon, we spotted a fine bushbuck in thick brush in a ditch. Pieter was awesome. He looked at me and said - "David, I know this is not on your list, but bushbuck would be a huge trophy with a handgun." As the bushbuck moved into the field, I put a 300g Swift from my 375JDJ into his shoulder. He went down in 10m. What a beautiful animal! A fitting end to our first safari.



Pieter Erasmus was great! Every detail was attended to, and he made sure we both had a fabulous time. The PHs Pieter had join us in the Limpopo region were great hunters and awesome people, and the 100 year old lodge overlooking the Blyde River with chef-prepared meals was classic Africa. The Schlotfeldts were great hosts who made us feel right at home in their newly renovated lodge. My wife and I wholeheartedly recommend a trip with Pieter and Paw Print Safaris. We can hardly wait to go back again! She's already made her list!