



PH Spotlight

**JAPSIE
BLAAUW**

Blaauw with Craig Boddington and a 60-pound elephant.

What do you wish a first-time dangerous game client knew before arriving?

The client must know all the ins and outs of his rifle of choice and the rounds he is using. Because he is hunting dangerous game, he needs to be on top of his game. Very important, always trust your PH and listen to him by all time, whether it is on a stalk, or a dangerous situation or simply about shot placement.

How often do things go about as planned?

On a big game safari, everything normally goes as planned since most successful and professional PHs have structures for conducting our hunts. The one thing that never goes as planned is the way the animal presents itself when a shot must be taken. Therefore the client must know all scenarios – the way an animal can stand and the different angles of shot placement – as you might have only one chance.

Who and how many people make up your best hunting team?

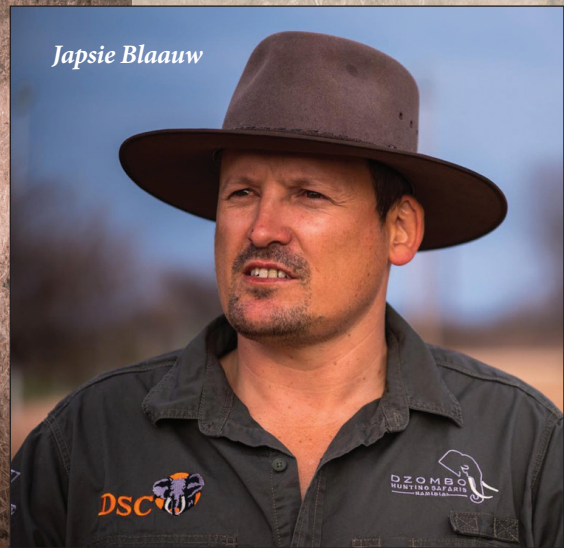
It is simple. Each individual PH have his main tracker. Mine is Mr. Titus. His tracking skills and knowledge of dangerous game, and combined with mine, we are a winning team.



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■ **JAPSIE BLAAUW** IS AN EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL HUNTER WITH A WIDE RANGE OF DANGEROUS GAME HUNTS UNDER HIS BELT. HE LOVES THE OUTDOORS AND HAS BEEN REFERRED TO BEING THE “QUARTERBACK” OF DZOMBO HUNTING SAFARIS. DSC’S “TRAILING THE HUNTER’S MOON” HAS AIRED SEVERAL HUNTS WITH JAPSIE AS THE GUIDE.



Japsie Blaauw

On a dangerous game hunt, you will always have about two to four very good trackers, and one of them will be your leader that helps make final calls.

What makes a good client into a great client?

It is plain and simple. It doesn't matter how many times he has been to Africa, the best client practices target shooting before coming over, and most importantly, listens to his PH.

Do clients do a “starter” safari on plains game, but then “graduate” for a second trip? Or do you have clients who want to do it all?

I always suggest that a first-timer come see what Africa is about and get yourself familiar by doing a plains game safari. Many a time, I have had clients hunting elephant as their first African animal. That is one heck of an adrenaline rush for a first timer, definitely a experience of a lifetime.



An important part of the Dzombo team, head tracker Mr. Titus

What was the best thing about your first dangerous game hunt, either as a pro or on your own?

My favorite will always be leopard and elephant. My own first elephant that I hunted was one that was terrorizing a local village by feeding in their corn fields. He had trampled one villager. We got the call and had to go help. We tracked him for eight hours and finally got up to him, made a great shot. It was so nice to see the local people happy that their problem was solved. They could live in peace, and they had protein to eat for at least six months. It was a magnificent old bull. That was certainly a special hunt.

What was the worst?

I've been in three accidents where we got charged by wounded dangerous animals. Two of them were very bad as the PHs ended up in ICU and out of hunting for several months. I guess the worst is that you have looked death in the eyes and feel so small and defenseless.

Besides not finding an appropriate and legal animal, are there any reasons you would back away from a hunt, or a shot?

When you hunt dangerous game and free range areas like I do, it is often hard to find a very nice representative animal. You always have to be honest with your client and just tell him as it is. We do have criteria on animal sizes, and I will not flirt with those minimum sizes.

What is your favorite dangerous game species and why?

It is so difficult to say which one, as they all are special and we have different ways to outsmart them, but it is probably the elephant. Standing 10-20 yards away from an elephant gets everyone's attention, and the adrenaline is just epic. Most of the elephant hunts are true

In his off-season activities, fishing is a favorite pastime.



tracking hunts, and you might see hundreds of elephants before you get the one you after. It is just all over a complete great experience.

What are your experiences with poaching, anti-poaching and anti-hunting efforts?

Poaching is a reality in Africa and for sure it is a very difficult fight as it does take time and money. We have a very big area and have about 30 game rangers that walk patrols every day. They are paid through hunters' dollars. In three years' time, we have caught more than 15 poachers.


Do you have favorite guns, optics and gear?

As a PH, we are mostly backs-up. Therefore, I love my .500 Nitro Express double on dangerous game hunts, and especially where it is very thick. That helps me to pull off two quick shots. I know the knock-down power is tremendous on a dangerous animal. For clients, I recommend a .416 caliber as I've seen many a time the ability of that caliber and the clients can handle it nicely.

Your favorite celebratory food and drink after a successful hunt?

A springbok filet that is well prepared with some home bread on the fire is very hard to beat. Seriously, after a hot successful day in wild Africa, there is nothing that beats a cold orange Fanta on ice.

If she was willing, would you take your mother on a dangerous game hunt, and would you be her PH?

My mom would love that! I am planning to take her and my dad next year for a buffalo. I would love to show them my way of living as they never been on such hunts. In fact, they are my heroes. 



Elephant is Blaauw's favorite dangerous game animal