

PH Spotlight

Wikus Groenewald



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

Homework! Homework! Homework! To me, it is important that a first time client knows exactly what he is getting himself into – not just the danger factor but also the physical and mental effort he needs to exert. Clients should also know that we as PHs want to do our best in order to deliver a safe and successful safari to the client.

How often do things go about as planned?

With good preparation, knowledge, some skill and lots of luck things generally go as planned. Even if you encounter some obstacles on safari, one can overcome those obstacles and still have a pretty successful safari.

Who and how many people make up your best team?

A lot of individuals play a big role in making up a good team. Trustworthy trackers, like my main man Iddi Zuberi, will stick with you through thick and thin and can track stuff even if it is flying. I take him everywhere! The driver and game scouts with their knowledge of the



Patience and preparation are keys to dangerous game hunts.

area add serious value to the team. A client with a great spirit and the will to seek adventure makes up the last detail of a great team.

What makes a good client into a great client?

Luckily, most clients are already good clients, which make this a great profession. However, a great client is one who appreciates every effort on safari, one who shares a great passion for Africa, one who respects nature and the animals in it. A great client comes with an open mind, rolls with the punches and accepts the flow of the safari. I have been fortunate to have hunted with many great clients.

Should 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 would say there are both! It is never a bad idea in my opinion for a client to go on a “starter” safari to see if it is what he expects. By doing that the client builds a great platform from where he can prepare for his next African adventure and give

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attention to detail that might have been missing on his first safari. At the end of the day, a PH will cater to the needs of the client.

What was the best thing about your first DG hunt, either as a Pro or on your own?

My first thought was that I just made my dream a reality. It was the start of a career I worked so hard for as a youngster. On that first hunt, all of a sudden, everything you went through to get to that first hunt just comes together and everything makes sense.

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

Yes, I will pull out a hunt when I feel the situation is getting too dangerous and, if we pursue, lives could be at stake. I will pull out of a shot if I believe we might not make a good kill shot. Most importantly, if the client is simply not comfortable with a situation whether it is a dangerous situation or the shot then you should pull out! It is better to practice patience and get your client in the right position to make the best shot possible.

What is your favorite dangerous game species and why?

Doing a successful leopard hunt the right way takes a lot of preparation. It is very time consuming. During this whole process one goes through a lot of mixed emotions. One minute, you can be at the ultimate low when checking baits and nothing hit, and the next minute, you can't contain the adrenalin and excitement when finally the big boy climbs into the tree. Leopard hunting is on a totally different level.

What is the best advice you received as you were growing up and doing a PH apprenticeship? Who are your mentors and heroes?

The best advice I ever received as a young hunter was from my Dad. He always told me to practice severe patience when hunting. If you do, it will all come together and work out.

I owe most of my dangerous game hunting knowledge to Professional Hunter Johan Calitz. Not only did he teach me about hunting dangerous game, but he established the will to maintain a standard of the highest level when hunting and handling clients.

Kruger Human of Marakalalo Taxidermy knows and understands this hunting industry inside out. He always there with valuable advice when I need it.

Do you have favourite dangerous game guns?

I like my .500 Nitro Express Heym double rifle — a lot! I have only been using it for the last few years. It is reliable and accurate, and gives one that extra bit of confidence when entering a potential dangerous situation. A .375 H&H with good optics goes a long way in Africa! If you know and understand a rifle like that, you are deadly regardless of where you hunt.



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

Over the years, I have been lucky to have worked with and for safari companies who put in endless efforts to fight poaching. We as hunters and anti-poaching units share valuable intelligence when operating in an area.

Favorite celebratory food and drink after a successful hunt?

Nothing beats an ice cold Coca-Cola and buffalo tail soup! Nothing!

When you are not hunting, what do you do on holidays?

I have a beautiful wife and two wonderful kids. I try and spend as much time with them when I am not hunting. They love the beach so whenever we can we go to the beach, which is not close!

If she is willing, would you take your mother on a dangerous game hunt, and would you guide her?

Yes, I would love to guide my mom on a dangerous game hunt! That way, she might realize that my profession is not one big holiday. My mom is a sweetheart and very supportive in what I do. 🐘



Groenwald (left) and client with a superb buffalo

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