



## **AUSTRALIAN BUFFALO HUNT IN THE ARNHEMLAND**

7/29/06 to 8/13/06

Outfitter: Australian Big Game Safaris  
Hunters: Paul and Andrew (8 yrs old) Plante  
and Craig and Ann Field

Finally, the trip that had been more than two years in the planning was coming together. After securing the dates with Simon at the 2005 SCI convention in Reno, the long wait began. Then through the normal course of life, things changed which required some additional preparation. The first of which was switching from a one on one hunt to a two on one hunt and making my eight year old son my hunting partner. With many, many local and two out of state big game hunts under his belt, I felt he was ready for a truly remarkable adventure. I would take him along and allow him to hunt a trophy buffalo. I spoke to Simon about it and he was more than willing to give it a try after hearing about all of Andrew's successful hunts.

The next change occurred when many of the sponsors of the vastly popular web based archery site **BOWHUNTING.NET**, that Rich Walton is a co-owner in, agreed to supply me with the necessary archery equipment to hunt these nearly one ton animals. Being a bow hunter in the past, I was familiar with all the dos and don'ts of the sport but that was limited to whitetail deer. Now I had the best of the best as far as equipment. **BowTech** sent their 2006 **Allegiance** bow which was maxed out at 82 pounds and was truly more like a piece of finely made artwork than a simple bow. What a pleasure to shot. The BowTech shot the **Carbon Express Terminator Hunter** 6075 arrows perfectly when tipped with the 150 grain **New Archery Product RazorCap** broad heads and 60 grain inserts. The **Flat Head release** from **Jim Fletcher Archery** fit just like an extension of my hand as was smooth as silk. Now I must admit that it sounds as if I put this rig together with all my no-how but that is the farthest thing from the truth. I have to give credit where credit is due. With help from the likes of renowned archer Gary Bogner, Scott Schultz owner of Robinson Outdoors Inc. which makers of

Sportsmen's Edge, Scent Blocker and Scent Shield and the world famous Chuck Adams whom Scott consulted with on my behalf, Tom Jeffery of Jeffery Archery and the professional folks at BowTech, I was in business. Finally, the advice I received from Mr. David Little who had hunted with Simon in 2005 with a bow was also invaluable.

We left Columbia, S.C. at 2:30 pm on 7/29/06 and flew to Atlanta where we boarded another flight to L.A. We arrived into California around 6:30 pacific time and had a five hour wait till we boarded the Qantas flight at 11:30 pm. The five hours gave us plenty of time to get everything checked in long before the busy time started. The two problems we could have encountered was the plane was a 747 which means long lines prior to boarding and that we were carrying firearms to Australia which requires a great deal of paperwork and I mean a great deal. The only small problem we had was trying to keep Andrew awake till we got on board which didn't occur till mid night which was 3 am our time. That was the latest he had ever stayed up. Up to this point we had already been traveling 11 ½ hours since we left the house.

After boarding the plane and getting settled in, I gave Andrew 25mg of Benadryl which quickly put him to sleep soon after taking off. A little bit of Ambien did the same for me and we both slept quietly for nine hours, waking up just in time for breakfast and a movie. After arriving into Brisbane the am of 7/31, we went through the arduous process of getting the firearms legal to transport. This is the last time I will mention the complexity of this issue but let's just say without an extremely competent person taking care of the huge amount of paperwork and licenses needed well in advance of the trip such as Simon's wife, Elspeth, you are dead in the water, period.

We boarded the plane to Darwin later that morning and flew for yet another 4 ½ hours before landing. We had decided to stay in Darwin that evening to get a rest before finishing the last two legs of our journey. We went into a small resort area in Darwin that was on the bay and had a nice seafood dinner and walk on the beach. The funny thing is even though it was 95 degrees and the water was beautiful, not a soul was on the beach or in the water. We couldn't even find a shorebird. The reason is that the ocean there is teeming with three deadly inhabitants namely the Chironex Box jellyfish, the Irukaidji jellyfish and ever so present salt water croc which precludes anyone or thing from entering the inviting waters.

After a restful night sleep, we arose at 4:30 am to catch the flight to Gove and then the charter plane to camp at Walker's river. We finally touched down at noon on 8/1/06 onto a barren dirt runway deep in the middle of the wilderness in our six passenger single prop fixed wing charter plane after a total of 26 hours in the air. The flight getting into there was magnificent, flying over literally hundreds of thousands of pristine square miles of virtually uninhabited Arnhemland along the Gulf of Carpentaria. Only a few isolated villages of Aboriginal tribes claim this

place as home. Simon was quickly there to pick us up and transported us to a perfectly situated tented camp overlooking the forbidding waters of the river below us where the massive and deadly salt water crocodiles lie in wait.

After getting settled in and unpacked, we had a bit of lunch and were given the advice to not touch any part of the tree that offered shade to the dinner tent in the heat of the day. Apparently, the tree is the Cook Kettle Iron wood variety which boasts two reputations, one of which is that it is the heaviest and densest wood on earth and secondly that the mere ingestion of two of its leaves will easily kill an adult human. After lunch we quickly checked the zero on the rifles and the accuracy of the bow and headed out into the bush in an old Toyota Land Cruisers that had been through hell and back many times. To say Andrew was in hog heaven would be an understatement. It was all just too overwhelming, sensory overload, not to mention that Simon and Elspeth had there two children in camp, Alison age six and Dylan age 8, and a new puppy named Gypsy.

The afternoon was fabulous. We drove for hours through all types of terrain and vegetation and right up to the ocean. We spotted one beautiful young trophy bull of 102 inches with numerous others in the 90's and countless females and calves. The photographic opportunities abounded. The terrain is rolling woodland very similar in nature to scrub Africa with the exception of been dotted with numerous small swamps, lakes and ponds. It couldn't be laid out better for a bow hunt. Truly a bow hunters Garden of Eden and despite it being their winter season the temperature was still into the 90's with bright sunshine midday's. We returned to camp knowing we were in for an experience of a lifetime. Dinner was followed by the numerous hair raising accounts of buffalo hunts gone bad and then a welcomed bed was next in order but not before the kids went night hunting for the very poisonous Cane toads. These creatures were introduced into Australia scores of years ago in an effort to control the population of a certain type of beetle that infested the sugar cane crops. Although it worked, the toad without any type of natural predator quickly spread throughout the whole of Australia and now is a huge issue and a deadly problem. When threatened they emanate a whitish gel like secretion from the pores on their back that when touched and ingested is lethal. Before bed time, they had collected two large specimens and dispatched them.

The night was perfect, clear and in the low 70's and perfectly silent except for the occasional large splashes and rushes of water heard in the river below, undoubtedly from the our patrolling neighboring crocodilian reptiles. We awoke on 8/2/06 to a cool and slightly fogged in morning with a variety of birds providing us with a melody of music. We all had had a very restful night of needed sleep.

After a quick breakfast we loaded up into the vehicles and headed out for the morning hunt. The fog burnt off around 9 am and the intense sun started beating down on us unrelentingly. The plan was to hunt the am and then return to camp since Elspeth was to meet a charter plane that was going to drop off the .308 rifle

for Andrew to use. We ran into not one or two but three very mature bulls throughout the morning that scored in the low 90's. We spent near about an hour and half on each of them stalking them trying to get into bow range. Every one of the stalks involved sliding and crawling through the grass in between the short and scattered trees and termite mounds as I tried to stay as flat as possible all the while attempting to keep the bow with an arrow nocked in a safe position. All three stalks were blown in the end by the early am swirling winds although on one of the buffalo I charged up to within fifteen yards of him just as he got our wind and bolted. We didn't capitalize on any of the attempts but what a great intense morning. And I must say that the all too familiar sound of Simon's large bore gun's bolt being quietly cycled while loading a cartridge as a safety precaution gave me a sense of security as I singly closed the distance to these almost 2000 pound animals with nothing but a bow in hand.

Back to camp and a quick lunch before Andrew test fired the .308 rifle. Then we made the plans to leave in the am to a remote, uninhabited offshore island to fish for a variety of species for a couple of days. Around 4 pm, we left out for the evening hunt bringing Dillon along also. It wasn't that long before we located a mature bull bedded down that Andrew could give a try at harvesting. In this scenario, hunting with a .308 is very similar to hunting with a bow. You must be close and have the right angle on the animal to make that lethal shot. Well the stalk went just like the ones in the am, long and drawn out with a lot of crawling and waiting for the buffalo to make a mistake. Finally after an hour and only moving fifty yards, Andrew made a perfect angling away shot that dropped the ancient heavy horned bull in his tracks in no more then thirty seconds. No other shots were fired except for Andrew's insurance spine shot which made Andrew the youngest person Simon has known to ever take a buffalo all by them self without any back up shots. Andrew was elated at his success and marveled at the size of this monarch. After the mandatory picture session, we cleaned the buffalo and headed home in the dark to a nice evening and dinner with a lot of anticipation for fishing trip in the am.

We awoke on 8/03/06 to a clear, still and high 60's morning with the same chorus of birds playing for us. The two boats were transported down to the river the day before, loaded with everything we needed to make the 15 mile offshore fishing and camping trip. The type of fishing to be done was explained to us and let's just says they fish somewhat differently here. Frequently, they tie a large shark hook to an anchor rope that is secured to the stern of the boat and hand pull these behemoths in as they lurch the boat in all directions. After a quick breakfast and packing a few clothes to stay overnight we were off on another part of our adventure.

We reached the boats in a short 20 minute drive, loaded the remaining gear and we were all off to the island. Craig and Ann Field who are long time hunting companions of mine joined us in the boat with Simon while Bill, Craig's guide and Gadea, a sweet 17 year old girl from Spain who has been helping out around

camp were in the other boat. It took another 20 minutes to reach the mouth of the river where it dumps into the ocean and while on the way we saw numerous crocs with one being over 15 feet which quickly disappeared back into the murky river water from his muddy sunning spot. Onward we went for another hour heading to the barely visible island across a vast shallow expanse of turquoise clear water.

Once we arrived, it was breath taking. A multitude of islands were in a chain like formation and some where connected by small strips of sand. No evidence that anyone else had ever been there existed, not even a boat was in sight the whole time. We unloaded the gear on the huge shell littered fine sand beach that had ocean front on both sides since it was between two of the connected islands. After a quick shell hunt and picture session, Simon, Andrew and myself went fishing in one of the boats and it wasn't long before we had a nice Queen fish in the boat taken by trolling large silver spoons on a hand line. We proceeded to the front of the neighboring island and bottom fished in 10 feet of water and started catching our dinner of Golden Snapper. Once that was accomplished, we resumed trolling but this times with rod and reels which proved to be worthwhile since Andrew caught the biggest fish of his life without any assistance from anyone else. It turned out to be a smoking 50 pound Barracuda. What an acrobatic show it performed before succumbing to Andrew's persistence. Back to the beach we went with yet another prize of Andrew's that he desperately needed to show off to everyone.

That evening we cooked the snapper on an open fire and then returned to our tents for the rest of the night. During the night, the wind started to pick up appreciatively to the point that it collapsed our tent right on top of Andrew and me so we slept with a tent on top of us.

On the morning of 8/04, the plan was to go shark fishing or resume trolling but the seas were getting bigger with the increasing winds so we packed up all the gear and gave the leeward side of the island a quick try for some sharks. That futile attempt only resulted in two bites and ever increasing waves so we headed back to the beach and loaded the boat for the sure to be very wet ride back home. Actually, the ride home was much worse then expected because we quickly found ourselves in five foot seas in a 20 foot aluminum boat. The spray pelted Simon and I for 15 grueling miles while we shook from the inevitable bone chilling cold mixture of water and heavy winds.

Finally, we made it back to the river where we stopped to rest and warm up. While we were stopped, we started casting large deep diving plugs into a mangrove overgrown creek that flowed into the river. In a short period of time, we had caught two small barracudas and two nice Barramundis, of course with Andrew catching the largest one as usual both of which were destined for dinner that evening. After our rest, we headed back to the landing while Andrew safely piloted the boat back up the river. We secured the boat onto a mud flat and

headed back to camp for a shower, lunch and a rest before heading out in the afternoon to hunt. This time, things were expected to be different since the constant heavy winds would tip the favor in my odds of getting within bow distance of a nice Australian water buffalo.

Simon picked us up at the tent at 4 pm and we headed out again. Within 30 minutes, we had already located small bands of cows with calves and young bulls spread out in the scrub. The wind was holding as planned and continued to blow. As we made our way down a dusty, bumpy path, we saw a lone old female that was feeding in the dense underbrush. As we drove right past, Simon mentioned that, that particular situation would be a perfect opportunity to begin the bow hunt on the right foot. 200 yards later he pulled over and off we went with the wind perfect for a stalk. I sneaked in to less than 30 yards on my knees that gave me a semi broadside shot through a narrow window in the underbrush. I put the release on and stood and drew my BowTech at the same time and found my mark. The Carbon Express arrow struck a few inches back from the aim point and went right through with the NAP RazorCaps. We immediately thought it was all over when she fell 15 seconds later. Then she got up and walked off crossing a ravine at the end of small water hole as if nothing had happened. So I followed silently directly behind her as the wind was still good and nocked another arrow. She turned to face me just as I tried to imitate a bird noise. The angle was not good but it was now or never so I let the second arrow fly at 20 yards with a complete pass through the liver. She turned slightly away so I dashed behind the brush and made my way down an embankment behind her and to the left. Just as I got into position to place a third arrow at 7 paces, she saw me and lunged at me so I jumped over the embankment grasping a large tree hanging over the waterhole. She turned her head looking in the direction of where Simon and Andrew were waiting some 35 yards ahead and as she did, I came to full draw at 10 yards and passed the arrow through her heart and lungs. She collapsed within seconds and was gone. But before I could feel the elation, I began to experience sharp pains diffusely over my whole body from my groin up to my head. I was being bitten every where by green tree ants. I happened to grab onto the one tree in the area that they called home and they swarmed all over me getting into all my clothes. As I ran up the embankment, I was quickly shed all my clothes and attempted to kill the ants with my flaying arms. After the amusement that I gave Simon, he congratulated me and we began the picture and cleaning chores. We all remarked on how the BowTech Allegiance along with the Carbon Express arrows and NAP RazorCaps performed flawlessly on this half ton animal with three complete pass throughs. It just seems on dangerous game the more arrows you can get into the animal at close range the more exciting, thrilling and dangerous the whole experience becomes plus it puts them down faster.

We went back to camp to finish the caping process and get ready for the morning hunt. I literally just washed off the Terminator Hunter arrows and resharpened the

RazorCap broad heads and put them back into the quiver. We had an early dinner and went to bed with only seven more days of hunting left.

August 5<sup>th</sup> brought us another glorious day of clear weather with the temperature in the 50's in the early am. We waited till around 9 am to get going for two reasons. One to let the temperature start rising which induces the buffalo to go to water and number two to let the normal winds start to pick up so we can stalk easier through the nosy underbrush. After leaving we went to a distant aboriginal village in which the Australian government has put in a solar satellite phone system which we could access with a credit card so I called Jane my wife at home and the travel agent from the middle of the outback.

We made our way north for more then an hour seeing many good bulls on the way in the dense scrub but not quite what we were looking for although one was tempting with very heavy horns but just a little short in the width. Simon pulled over and indicated that we were going on foot for a while to check a chain of off the road billabongs or large mud holes as I would call them. So I got the bow while Simon carried his gun and the camera and Andrew carried my .416 Weatherby. We made our way through very dense low growing evergreen bushes and tall noisy grasses and came out upon large billabongs. With the wind in our favor, we quietly skirted the edges of them looking for the buffalo. On the path around one of the billabongs we came upon fresh tracks and a huge dung pile of a very large bull so we pressed on. It was not long afterwards that Simon spotted a huge form some 70 yards off into the brush. We waited till it moved while observing it with our binoculars and when he lifted his head up there was no question that we needed to try to get this bull. He was very heavy and carried the weight all the way out and was impressively wide. The wind was good so we formulated a plan to close the distance for a bow shot.

Just as we gathered our equipment to begin the stalk, I spotted a cow with a calve in between us and to make a very long story short, we spent the next hour and half trying to maneuver ourselves out of her way without spooking her or getting upwind of them. No matter what we did that damn cow kept changing directions while she fed and made us back track constantly. As you can imagine, eventually she crossed one of our paths and caught our scent causing her to leave the area immediately with the calve in tow. As normal, the big bull wanted to keep his "girl" in sight so he also started to follow her but from a distant. It was now or never again situation, so we rapidly tried to close the distance from behind as he walked away into ever thickening timber. I wanted to try to harvest him with the bow but the closest we could get before he heard us racing through the vegetation behind him was 40 yards and that was too far for the bow. Once he heard us, he quickly turned to face his pursuers with a very angry look in his face. At this point, we were 60 yards apart so I put the bow down and took my .416 from Simon and started crawling forward in the thick grass just to intensify the situation. I closed the distance to 40 yards again before he got nervous and started circling downwind to get our scent. Once he had it, he immediately faced

me with his nose up and I knew I had to take him right then with a frontal shot. Upon the impact of the 400 grain Barnes X he rocked backwards lifting his front feet off the ground. He spun and bolted through the brush. As this occurred, I had already reloaded and was tracking him and when I had an opening, I fired again with the perfect rear spine shot which dropped him immediately. I ran up to him as quick as possible but he was already done as is always the case with this caliber. I put a safety spine shot into him as insurance and the elation started. I went and retrieved Andrew from where I had made him stay right before I fired to keep him safe and came back and admired the massive old warrior we had just taken. We had lunch right next to him before taking pictures and caping and quartering him. I can't say enough about the absolute phenomenal hunting area and game that Simon has nor can I be any more impressed with the .416 Weatherby that I shoot. Nothing walks away from it.

After getting the truck loaded, we headed for home around 4 pm looking for a meat calve for the camp which Andrew quickly dispatched. Andrew also spotted three of the elusive Dingo's throughout the day of traveling. That evening was spent caping the heads out and celebrating with a fabulous dinner that Ray had prepared the traditional way by cooking it in a deep pit in the ground. We didn't get to bed till 11 pm after we all had hot showers from an improvised boiler system.

August 6<sup>th</sup>, we woke to another fine day and the morning was spent on chores needed for the care of the hides and capes but the plan for the next six days was for me to bow hunt and let Andrew hunt with the .308. As expected it took the better part of the day to get all the hides fleshed, turned and salted but at 4 pm we did go out for an afternoon hunt but didn't find anything worth hunting. The good news was that Craig did take a nice buffalo with my borrowed .375 H and H Weatherby rifle. After a nice spaghetti dinner we went off to bed with an all day trip planned for the next day.

August 7<sup>th</sup>, the sixth day of the hunt found us up early so we could depart for a distant area. It seemed as if I would never get tired of the chorus of birds perched along the river bank that we awakened to each am. There must be a hundred different varieties of them including macaws and cockatoos of all colors. Anyway, after a short breakfast we started the long drive to an area that Simon thought we would be able to locate some good bulls in appropriate settings for a bow hunt. We saw numerous buffalo on the way but nothing of the caliber that we were looking for but once we arrived to nearly almost dry brackish water flats we began to spot lots of bachelor herds dispersed over the region. The problem was the animals were still out in the open feeding so we decided to sit in the shade and have an early lunch while they made their way back to the nearby waterholes and thickets.

As if on queue, the small bands of males proceeded back into the bush so we packed up and drove down a bit too where if we walked in the tree line following

the flats the constant wind would be in our favor. It didn't take long to locate mature bulls resting in the shade of the heavy vegetation and actually it wasn't too hard to stalk up on them since the wind was in our favor. That not only eliminated our scent problem but it also covered our noise. We did get up on two or three mature bulls but they were just not what we were looking for so we pressed on dodging the small bands of females we ran into.

At around 3 pm, we were hunting along a long billabong when we spotted a good bull feeding on the other side so we made our way all the way around the muddy waterhole through all the heavy vegetation till we came in downwind of him to take another look. We easily assessed him as a definite trophy with a bow so in we went to close the distance. At 40 yards, I told Andrew to stay behind a particularly large termite mound and watch the whole show unfold. He had been previously instructed to stay absolutely still, hidden and silent if a bull we were hunting began to get close to him unexpectedly. After leaving him, I crept forward with Simon right behind me with the camera in hand. When I got to 20 yards he was facing away from me so I closed the distance through the lush vegetation to 15 yards when he finally turned broadside again. The problem was that where he stopped had two small trees right in front of where I needed to shot so I skirted sideways till a small window opened up giving me a small shooting hole. I came to full draw unnoticed, found my mark, touched off the release and immediately heard the Carbon Express Terminator Hunter arrow hit hard just as I saw the huge black bull bolt forward then stop and look back. We didn't move but looking we could not find any tell tale sign of the hit on the bull but we decided that the arrow had to have buried itself inside of him.

Well now the uncomfortable situation arose as the bull began to circle downwind to catch our scent. As he circled us, he put more distance between us and him but rapidly was closing the distance to where Andrew was observing this whole scenario. That got Simon and I a little nervous because if Andrew did not hold his position and got scared and tried to get away he would certainly draw a charge at that range but he never moved a muscle or uttered a sound. When the bull was within 25 yards of Andrew, I had to do something or we were going to have to shot him with the rifle. As the bull circled us he would move a few steps and face us head on never giving me a broad side shot of any sort. So I stood up, came to full draw on my BowTech with the bull standing 42 yards away, aimed at his lips, touched off the release and watched the Carbon Express arrow and NAP broad head arch downwards landing squarely into the middle of chest penetrating half the length of the shaft. That worked as he immediately bolted in the opposite direction from Andrew.

We quickly but silently followed and watched him through the underbrush for a few minutes before he lay down. Once he lay down, I circled around the back of him and with the wind in my face I again closed the distance slowly to a mere 8 paces. He was lying there but with his head up and I wasn't going to take any

chances with him running into the nearby water. So I again came to full draw on my Bowtech and circled around

the tree that separated us and just as I did he stood up and spun around and took two steps which put him facing me a 6 yards, not a good position to be in. I quickly sized up the situation and decided that if I let my BowTech back down he would certainly charge me and I would have to get out of the way with a razor blade dangling in front of me. I didn't like that option so the only other option was to shoot him again but with a terrible frontal angle so I opted for option number two knowing that the arrow would probably not penetrate at all. I released the 580 grain arrow traveling at 266 fps and buried it into shoulder which did not do any good but to draw the inevitable charge. As luck would have it, he was done anyway because as he took his first lunge towards me it was his last and he collapsed onto his chin. What an incredible hunt with unbelievable intensity but now the unbelievable revealed itself.

We could not find any evidence of the first arrow striking this huge bull. All he had was two triangular holes in him, one in the front mid chest and one in his front left shoulder. So we went back to where it all started to get Andrew and see what happened and there it was in all its glory. My arrow deeply stuck into a wrist sized iron wood tree. I had pulled the shot no more than three inches but that was all it took to have a total miss. So the 42 yard frontal shot killed him all by itself which we later found my broad head in the left ventricle of his heart. I couldn't make that shot again if my life depended on it and wouldn't have ever taken it on a non wounded animal but we just didn't know. We were so excited and in shock all at the same time. We got our pictures and did all the necessary dirty work before making the long way back home for dinner and much needed rest. By the way even the best broad heads like the NAP RazorCaps fold up like paper at six yards when you hit solid bone. No need to do a Myth Busters show on this one. With three days left, we plan to hunt another bull and let Andrew take a cow then fish for some Barramundi's also.

August 8<sup>th</sup>, the seventh day of the hunt, we arose late because of the previous late night, had breakfast and started gathering together all the equipment again. I needed to resharpen some of the NAP RazorCaps, flesh out the hide and sharpen our knives before we went out again later that early afternoon. Simon and I changed plans and decided to go and stalk buffalo and shoot them with blunts instead of broad heads. We took his little boy Dylan and Gadea a camp helper along for the fun. What a blast, we stalked four or five different bulls through a variety of vegetation and successfully got within 20 yards of two very big bulls and arrowed both of them all the while having a group of five of us sneaking in but the heavy constant wind did help a lot. The first bull I arrowed with the blunt was the highest scoring bull we had seen so far on this trip. That particular animal would have likely been the new number one SCI but we didn't

know that till we got in there with him. After all the fun we headed home, had dinner and went to bed early since we were planning to leave early for a distant place but we didn't get to bed before seeing the thousands of Flying Foxes (huge fruit bats) fly over our camp on their daily trip up the river to feed.

August 9<sup>th</sup>, the eighth day of the hunt. After arising early and having breakfast we left for the day. We made our way all the way to the ocean by midday on another glorious day. On the way there we spent two hours slowly stalking all the way around a very large swampy billabong surrounded by tall weeds. Andrew almost had a shot on a huge boar but it caught our scent and disappeared. After reaching the ocean, we had lunch right there on this grand beach that looks as if it had never been set foot on by man. The only exception is the miles of fishing nets that over the years have washed up and become tangled in all the trees. They have come all the way across the ocean from Indonesia I was told.

After lunch, we went to try to locate me a good bull to stalk or a good huntable cow for Andrew. For the first time, we could not locate a suitable bull to shot with a broad head so over the afternoon we stalked two different bulls and shot them with blunt arrows. To me it is just as exciting to stalk in that close to these massive animals no matter what you are going to shot them with. We spent the remainder of the afternoon stalking one herd of females after another for Andrew but to no avail. They ended up picking us up each and every time and bolting. As we started to lose sunlight, we headed home just as the full moon started to rise and on the way home we passed one big bull after another, it was amazing how many we saw. We ended coming home empty handed but Craig had taken a very nice bull earlier in the day and Ann had seen the first snake of the whole trip which was a green tree snake.. After a much needed shower and dinner it was bed time. The plan is a repeat of today but we will collect Andrew's cow in the am and concentrate on a bull for the bow after that.

August 10<sup>th</sup>, the last full day of the hunt, what a fiasco it turned out to be. After getting up and leaving early, we spent nearly four and half hours constantly stalking herds of cows to get Andrew within 40 yards of a management cow. Although Andrew can shoot accurately much further then that, it just seems getting that close is a real challenge. After miles of walking and stalking multiple herds unsuccessfully, we finally gave up and started the long trek back to the truck only to find a cow and a bull within a few hundred yards of the vehicle. After short stalk and stealthy moves, Andrew was within 35 yards. A perfectly placed broadside shot and he had another one shot trophy. A quick picture and cleaning session and we were off to find me a bull with the bow.

We stopped and had lunch on a river bank while we soaked the cape in the cool creek water to get the temperature down and clean it off. After driving around a large swamp, we parked the vehicle for yet another long hike. We found multiple bulls but could not get close enough for a shot till the last one on that particular jaunt. It was absolutely amazing. Long story short, I got within six yards of a big

bull and had him broadside of course with his vitals behind a tree. All I needed was one more step and he was mine. He took the step but then turned directly towards me with the front of his chest behind a large bush. I had no shot and was watching the hairs on his lips move at 10 feet. Simon was to my left with his unloaded gun on the ground and the camera in his hands pointing at the bull but not daring to take a photo which would likely draw us a charge. The bull had us if he wanted. He could have cleaned both of our clocks in one fell swoop but he finally caught our scent a trotted off not giving me any opportunity for a shot. Even Andrew who was watching this unfold silently at less then 20 yards told me later that the bull was way to close that time.

The rest of the afternoon was literally the same. We stalked no less then a half a dozen shootable bulls to no avail and I can't even blame it on the wind. We had good wind most of the time. It seemed to always be something from stray cows to pissed off bigger bulls to twigs breaking or as simple as the bull taking the wrong path which put a few bushes between us. To say we were frustrated would be an understatement but that is hunting sometimes. We came back to camp, cleaned up, had dinner and packed all we could. The plan was to hunt till about one pm and get back to camp by two to be ready to meet the charter plane by four pm to get us back to Gove.

Friday August 11<sup>th</sup> was the last morning that I heard the melody of birds. We were up early again to yet another beautiful day. Simon and I were going to head out alone to try for a bull with the bow and let Andrew sleep in and play with the kids. After a quick bite, we headed out to a nearby flood plane that we had not been to yet. On the way we ran across three or four shooter bulls but they were not in a good position to stalk so we passed them looking for a really stalkable bull in good cover.

After reaching the edge of the flood plains, we did locate a few bulls but again not in ideal situations whether it be the wind, the cover or the pace they were traveling at so we pressed on. Finally, near 10 am we spotted a lone bull slowly feeding up wind with good cover around him so we quietly parked the truck and got ready. We quickly and deafly made our way through the loose red noise dampening dirt till we reached a brush line that he would appear out of. I made my way to the last piece of green vegetation and waited till he walked out. When he did I came to full draw on my BowTech and rested the sight right behind his shoulder at 17 yards and hit the release while Simon caught it all on a high speed camera just as before. The bull lurched forward from what looked to be a good shot and headed for the bush with the Carbon Express arrow tipped with the NAP RazorCaps buried deep inside of him.

After letting him settle down for a few minutes, we started in on him just to keep an eye on his location. Simon informed me that the waiting period normally taken after a bow shot was not a good idea on these animals for three reasons. First, they do not pour blood from the wound because of the inch thick hide that easily closes over the wound very similar to large boar. Second, normally a wounded

animal goes a short distance before stopping and checking his surroundings and if all is quiet they begin to walk off slowly but surely into thick cover making it near to impossible to track him. Lastly, once in the thick stuff he just stays there and waits on any potential pursuers. So we silently inched in on him and found him standing facing away with his head down. I closed the distance crawling through the underbrush to less than thirty yards and just as I got up to put another arrow into him he began to walk off in a semi-steady pace. We visually followed him at a distance as he crossed the relatively open woodlands but could not gain distance on him with his pace and us trying to keep quiet and downwind. He was at most dripping blood and heading for the thick stuff just as Simon had warned. Once he entered the swamp thickets, we lost him visually but could follow his tracks. It was at this point that I knew that unless we saw him before he saw us I would not get another arrow into him even though the first one was good. We had a sneaky suspicion he was waiting on us.

We slowly and stealthily picked our way avoiding every dry leaf and branch that we encountered along the trail. It wasn't long afterwards, with Simon directly in front of me and slightly to my left that we heard a crunch from very close. We both froze in our tracks and there was dead silence. Simon silently indicated to me that he saw a piece of the bull that was hiding within a dense clump of palm trees directly in front of me some eight paces away. As I reached for an arrow the bull stepped forward sticking his head out of the palm thicket glaring directly at me. I knew a charge was imminent so I motioned for Simon to shoot him right then but he couldn't see him at all then because of his position. I was in direct view of the beast at 20 feet with his nose flaring and eyes partially rolled back showing me the classic white eye scenario. Unfortunately, I had no sizeable trees to duck behind when the inevitable charge was to come. Even though I knew better, I decided to ever so slowly try to nock the arrow with the hopes of putting one directly under his neck. While that thought was going through my mind, Simon looked to me for some type of update or direction but I had no advice to give. The arrow never even made it out of my quiver. With the slightest movement of my hand backwards, the bull came full bore and head on with me in his sights. His head was swinging back and forth as he mowed down all the saplings in between us. With literally three steps, he was in front of Simon who was well aware of the proceedings and was swinging his rifle into position. With the swinging movement of the rifle, the bull refocused on Simon and changed direction with one step just as I was about to try to side step out of the way of the rapidly oncoming bull with nothing but a bow in hand. That last step was his last though because Simon put the end of the barrel on his forehead at three feet distance and pulled the trigger. The bull crashed to the ground hitting a tree next to Simon with full force which caused him to flip over violently towards me. He came to rest at my feet and his nose had hit the ground within 24 inches of Simon's feet. All this occurred in a few seconds but it sure seemed to be happening in slow motion.

When the dust settled, we relived every part of what had just occurred. We were lucky to have escaped uninjured but were grateful for the experience. We tracked

the buffalo back to where he charged from and found where he had been quietly waiting for us and took numerous pictures of the whole scene. After cleaning and capping him, we began the arduous duty of transporting him out of there. We cut down a nine foot long iron wood sapling, lashed the pieces to that and then proceeded to carry him out on our shoulders to a point where the truck could access. The plan before we started the day was to return to camp by 2 pm so we would have time to get everything in order before the charter plane arrived to pick us up. We pulled into camp at 1:50 pm, took very needed showers and had everything ready to go by the time the charter plane touched down.

Then started the long and semi-hectic trip back home weaving our way through all the gun laws and masses of paperwork again. But it all eventually worked out well. I can't say enough about the trip. After nearly 60 big game trips all over the world this ranks right up there with the best of the best. All in all, Andrew and I harvested four trophy bulls, two females and the calve for camp meat. The quality of the animals was fantastic with the two rifle bulls going SCI gold and silver medal for rifles and the two bow kills easily going SCI gold. The area is diverse as it is beautiful and as ideally suited to intense and thrilling bow hunting as any place in the world without any of the normal technical problems such as weather, terrain, unpredictable winds or vegetation.

I can't recommend Simon and Elspeth of Australian Big Game Safaris any higher as I will definitely be back as soon as I can. If you need anymore information on their operation feel free to contact me via our web site at [www.thehuntdoctors.com](http://www.thehuntdoctors.com). Lastly, as mentioned before the BowTech Allegiance bow, the Carbon Express Terminator Hunter arrows and the NAP RazorCaps performed flawlessly on one of the biggest, toughest and dangerous game that exists and did so multiple times. I also want to thank again all the folks that gave me the invaluable information that led to this overwhelmingly successful trip. And finally, the Robinson Outdoors product of Sportsmen's Edge was a huge help in helping me feel great for the entire hunt despite the 25 hours of traveling. I highly recommend it and you can find detailed information on it on our web site also.

