



T.H.S. Buffalo Camp

by Vic Attard

WATER BUFFALO, ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST GAME ANIMALS THAT'S ON THE HUNT-LIST OF MANY HUNTERS TO HUNT SOME DAY. IF THE BIG BOVINE IS ON YOUR LIST TO HUNT SOME DAY AND YOU'RE LOOKING FOR AN OUTFITTER WHO HUNTS BUFFALO THEN READ ON AS WE HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM A 7 DAY BUFFALO HUNT IN THE NEW HUGH CONCESSION OPERATED BY TROPICAL HUNTING SAFARIS TO CHECK OUT HIS CAMP AND OPERATION ON HUNTING BUFFALO.



LEFT ERIC ASSISTANT GUIDE AND RIGHT SIDE, PETER LORMAN OWNER AND OPERATOR OF THS

Leaving camp on the first morning, we didn't have to travel too far along the track and we were already spotting Buffalo throughout the scrub. Travelling a few kilometres in the modified 4wd we crossed the creeks and now into some semi-open grassed Eucalyptus scrub with water-soaks dotted along the way here and there. The big termite mounds on the landscape enhanced the feeling you are in the NT....this is "Gods country". We travelled some 4 kilometres on the dusty track to where we pulled up & put the back-packs on and started our Buffalo hunt.....it was game on!

We checked the wind direction and picked our path through the scrub and it was an easy walk for the first morning. In the distance we picked up on a good herd of Buff eating away, we glassed and seen there was quite a few buff in this herd spread out over a good area, at a guess a good 40 or so strong. We kept our distance for now just trying to see if there was a solid bull running the Cows that was a "taker". There was 4 young buff only about 2 to 3 years of age that ran about the place, mimic fighting & nudging amongst one another as the others

feed away. It wasn't long and we glassed up a nice Bull right at the very back standing with 3 other cows just chewing his cud. Putting the binos on him for a better look, he was a jet-black bull and a solid one at that. Nice curve to his horns and Troy liked the look of this bull. With the Buffalos feeding away from us and the wind strong our way, Peter and Troy planed their stalk and made ways to close the gap, while me and Eric stayed behind and watched on. One off the cows the Bull was standing with must have just started to cycle as the Bull made many attempts to ride her, which was good for Pete & Troy as it kept the Bulls mind on other things, but they still had to watch their way as there were still many other buffalo in the herd keeping eyes out at all times. After some 30 minutes of getting in closer, the Bull and 3 cows being at the end off the line started to make their way back into the herd, which was all the better for Troy as it closed the gap even more for him. I watch the bull and the more I watched him the more he took to me, big strong muscled mature bull, Troy should be pleased if he can put this Bull on the ground!



Eric along side the modified 4x4 used to get around the hunting concession



Camp kitchen with fridge, freezers and stocked with plenty of food. Bedding quarters, fully screened and made for a comfy stay



BACK AT CAMP BOILING OUT THE HEADS

At 70 meters I watched Troy get a rest from the side off the tree they used for cover, I glanced back to the Bull with the binos to watch the bullet strike home. The big Bull slowly feed away but the angle was wrong for the shot, then after some time the bull moved a little further forward and angled his body to give Troy a nice broadside shot with his .375HH. The entire heard lifted their heads as expected from the shot. I glassed the Bull still standing as he was looking straight at Troy, buck fever set in a little and the shot sailed over the Bulls back, recycling a new round, Troy quickly sent another 300gr the Bulls way before he high-tailed it out of there, this time taking the bull in the shoulder. The Bull all-though hurt ran some 50 yards and started to get the wobbly boots, Troy sent another round to put him down for keeps. I and Eric made our way to the down buff and he was a bloody nice animal, they don't have to be over 100+points to impress me. Pat on the back to Troy but he was a little disappointed from missing with his first shot and I could see it in his face. First ever Buffalo hunt and the emotions had set in and it's easy to miss, hell it's happened to us all before at some point! We set the Big buff up with some photos to come...this was a good start to the trip.

THS

Peter Lorman owner of Tropical Hunting Safaris has been running his Boar hunting camp for the past 15 years and now has a new concession of land for Buffalo hunting which is further North-East from his original camp some 300km away. A lot of time and effort has been put into this new Buffalo Camp and is very impressively set up. The new Buffalo camp has all the comforts you need from screened enclosed kitchen, to toilet & hot showers. Fully enclosed sleeping quarters to keep out any bugs/mosquitoes as you sleep with good mattress bedding, tables etc. I must be getting old in the tooth but it's bloody nice after a day's hunt to come back and have a hot shower, get clean, feel refreshed and soldier on for the next days. The camp just has everything there just to make the stay that more comfortable for all ages. Meals at night time are outstanding to say the least, drinks and snacks are on hand during the day whenever you need. A modified 4WD is used to get to and fro from Camp to desired hunting areas along with another 4WD in camp used as a



back-up vehicle. Camp has that Safari feel about it and it's good to unwind, sit back after a big days hunt on the Buff in comfort and take it all in.

The new Buffalo concession run by THS has plenty of Buffalo on its concession, whenever we drove to a new area to hunt each day we would see Buffalo all over the place through-out the bush. On all our walks we would always pick up many Buffalo and this just built the atmosphere to the hunt you are on, there is no shortage of Buff here! Herds of Cows and their young, Bachelor herds of young Bulls that had grouped up together, loan Bulls spotted here and there, this was some excellent Buffalo country that's for-sure. This area has a wide range of diversity of different landscape to hunt in, there is the grassed semi open timbered scrub to the natural springs that run for several kilometres to then hunt the thick lush Pandanus Palm soaks that are spread through-out the land. We spent a couple days hunting some very tall timbered forest that I had no idea would be up in this country that was just a pleasure to walk through and had a completely different ecosystem ...untouched and untamed wilderness! This place was for some special

country to walk in on the lands of Arnhem Land and something you don't get to do every day.

Day 2 and we headed to a good spring, Pete said he had spotted a good Bull there a few trips back and wanted to see if he was still in the area. With packs on, Guns loaded we slowly walked the spring. On the opposite side a loan buff was standing under a tree in the shade, straight away the excitement starts and we got a little ahead of ourselves thinking it would be a load Bull on his own, but panned out to be a very old cow that had the old Harley-style horns. We walked on further and crossed the many game pads that led to the soak where the Buffalo had been coming to wallow and drink during the day. Ahead of us we spotted more buff 100 meters out, some were wallowing in the middle off the spring while a few hung out along the edges of the tall timber, grassing away. 4 cows and a very big young bull were the ones feeding to the edges, we glassed in on this bull but he was not a taker. Still very small for what we wanted to take and another 5 or so years if left could be a very good bull down the track. We slowly edged pass those buff trying not to scare them off to see what was further on the soak. An Hour up this spring we



TROY WITH THIS BOAR HE TOOK AS IT WAS FEEDING AWAY ON THE OLD CARCASS

walked through some waist high saplings when the signal to halt was given... buffalo ahead. We dropped to our knees and started to glass, there were a few buff just 100meters out, but there was also a few more at the back off those that we just could make eyes on due to the trees and scrub. A big wash-out in the middle of this soak that we were on made for good concealment so we all went forward slowly. 70 meters out and the wash-out came to an end but we could now glass the buff at the back, I was glassing over the ones to the side when Pete whispered to me, "there's a real good bull at the back, you want him". I glassed over that 8 or so Buff and found the one he was speaking about, "hell yer". He was busted & broomed off on the ends, had character and was a nice sweeping bull, id be mad not to take him. We couldn't go forward from where we sat, it was just to open, so me and Pete left the boys there and back-tracked out from there some 70 meters before it was safe enough for us to get up into the tall timber and get up closer to the good bull. Making out way through the timber we where now level back with the boys to our right, we glanced up and the bull had moved forward and was now down and wallowing in the mud. Even though the bull was facing direct at me I had a big tree I could use for cover that would close the gap down to about 40 yards from him, but it wasn't that easy, 5 feet to his left was and always is a cow standing there looking straight my way just to make things difficult. No need to panic, he wasn't going anywhere, let's just play things out. As the bull tossed and turned in the wallow, ol cow was content to stay at his side and pissed me off just a tad. 15 minutes passed and I got the break I needed, the cow turned and went back to the heard, seeing my chance I closed the gap to 45 yards before the Bull rose hard from his wallow and his eyes where fixed hard onto something to my right....the other 2 boys. The bull must have picked up on some little movement from them. With a lick off his nose and head tilted back, he gave that hard death stare to that spot and started to make his way towards what he had seen. This move was playing all my way, I engaged the 9.3 and my heart was racing. I waited until that bull was dead level with me and now some 30 yards from me broadside on I made my move. I could read that bulls body language, all he was interested in was what he seen and nothing else mattered. I stood up and walked straight towards the bull in the open, 28, 26, then 25 yards out I called out to the bull that turned to my call giving me a good raking shot to the opposite



MY FIRST BUFFALO FOR THE TRIP, HE HAD CHARACTER AND MADE FOR A GREAT CLOSE IN STALK THAT WAS A GREAT ADRENALIN RUSH

shoulder, the 286gr TSX left the barrel hitting the bull with a double lung shot, following up with the second barrel hitting the bull with a good raking shot as he turned. He ran back towards the rest off the herd some 30 meters away and started to get the staggers. With his body starting to stiffen up the bull toppled over....that played out all too sweet and I was pretty pumped from the adrenalin getting around. We went to where the bull had fallen and he had it all in my eyes and I was pretty stoked with taking this bull. He had great sweeping horns with good mass to his bases...today was a good day! With photos all done and the sun starting to drop we made our ways back to camp. Kicking back in the 4wd as it made its way through the dusty tracks & creek beds, I reflected back on all the day's events and the terrain we walked, the low sun's rays that filtered through the scrub trees made this feel like a real Safari Hunt.

Over the remaining of the 3 days, some good management Buffalo and Trophy Bulls were taken with Troy taking out a Trophy Bull that went 108 that was very impressive with solid bases. There are many stories and memories that have come from this Buffalo hunt and will leave for another time to tell. Hunting Buffalo is a great hunting experience in many ways for a hunter to experience and one I hope most hunters get to explore some time in their life. Tropical Hunting Safaris has an excellent concession for Buffalo, there are plenty of Buffalo there to glass and stalk, the land is just a pleasure to walk in and the pictures don't do the landscape justice. Camp, Food and amenities are first class. Tropical Hunting safaris offer a range of Buffalo hunts from Trophy Bull hunts, to management bull and Cull hunts, if you're interested in doing a Buffalo hunt sometime in the future call THS to discuss your next Buffalo hunt.

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