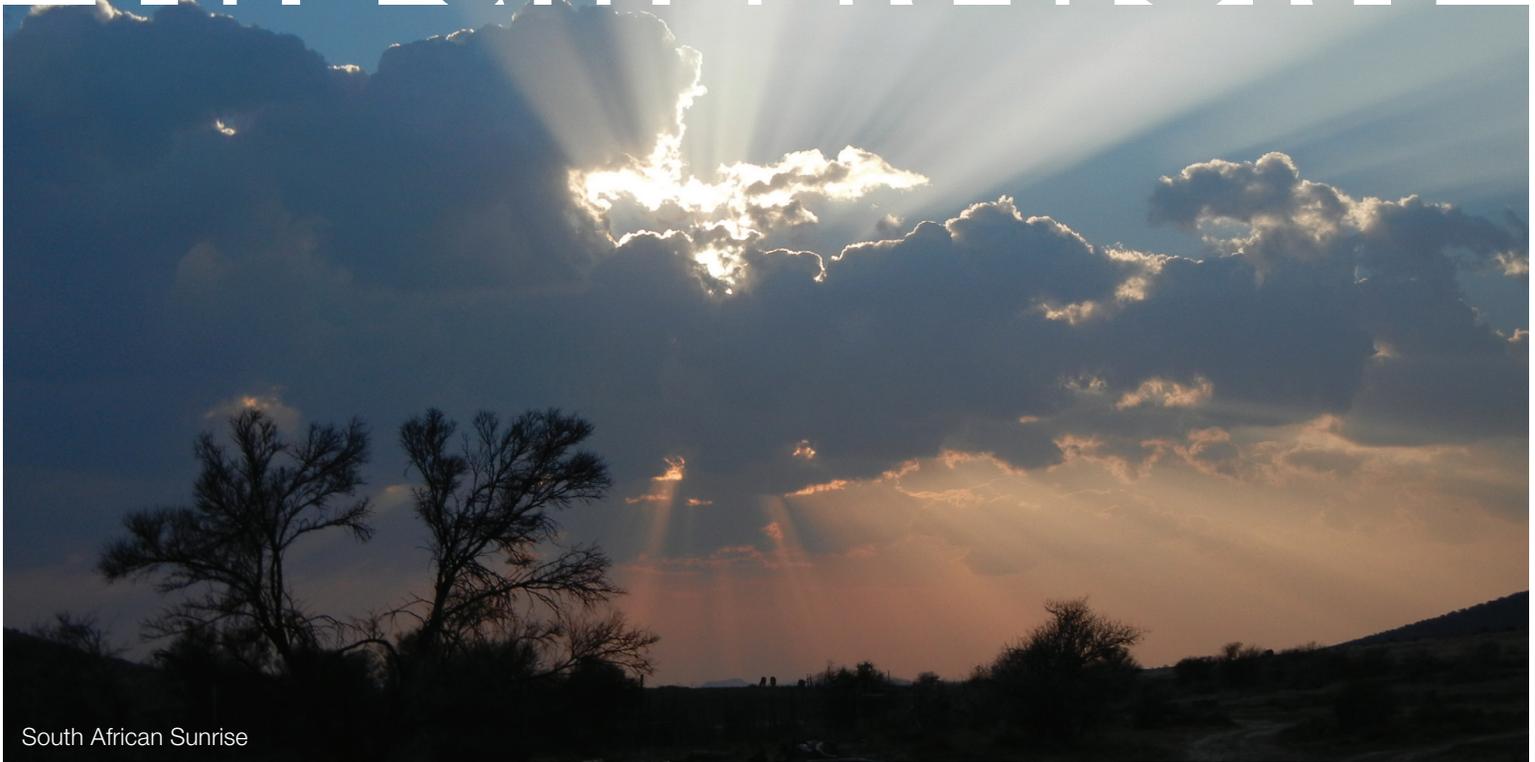


THE GREEN HUNT



South African Sunrise

Social media has become a large part of our every day lives. There is a type of social media for every type of interest. Now, social media has crept into the outdoors. Less than two years ago I launched SeeMe-Hunt.com, the interactive social network for hunters. It is a social media outlet where you can share your experiences and pictures of your outdoor adventures and meet other hunters and outdoorsmen from around the world.

This past August I was invited to join the World Wild Adventure Team to go to South Africa to co-host part of their Big 5 African Game Series.

This particular hunt really did peak my interest. We would be hunting a White Rhino. This was number one on my Big Five hunting list. This hunt would be a bit different than most. This was to be a "Green Hunt". It would have all of the thrill and excitement of a big game hunt, but instead of using a 375 H & H, I would be hunting this great beast with a

tranquilizer gun. The fact is, green hunting requires more skill and precision than hunting with a rifle because the animal must be shot at a much closer range. The darted animals can become very unpredictable. The animal could bolt or it could charge. The tranquilizer gun does not have immediate results like a conventional rifle which leaves a large margin of uncertainty.

After twenty hours of traveling, we finally arrived in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Our PH for this trip would be Stephan Tam, a young, confident and very competent professional. I must admit, I was a bit nervous to hunt my first Big Five animal, but all of that would change. We got settled in at the lodge and the hunt would begin the next morning. I was up before sunrise. I was overwhelmed with excitement. I watched the sun come up and I was in awe of just how beautiful it was. We discussed our strategy over breakfast and we set out about eight in the morning. The trackers were out about an hour before us looking for signs of rhino.

Around mid day the trackers spotted a rhino going down into a creek bed. We carefully followed over the rocky terrain and down into the creek bed. It was a bit unnerving wading through the high reeds of the creek bed because rhino were not the only big game in the area. There are Lion and Cape Buffalo which are just as aggressive and just as dangerous. We followed the trail out of the creek bed and into the thick brush. My view was obscured by the thick thorny brush that adorns the plains. Our PH, Stephen was on point and he silently moved us within thirty yards of this six thousand pound colossus. As I cleared the brush, the rhino came into view. My heart skipped a beat when I realized that not more than eighteen yards away were TWO huge rhino's. There is a certain degree of uncertainty of how a rhino will react when it is shot with a tranquilizer. However, when two rhino's travel together the risk factor increases considerably. Stephan's calm demeanor put me at ease while we got set to take the shot. I raised the tran-

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quilizer gun and took careful aim right behind its shoulder. Stephan whispered “Take em when you are ready”. I squeezed off a round and watched as the tranquilizer dart hit home. The time factor for the tranquilizer to take full effect is approximately fifteen minutes. Fortunately, both rhino's bolted in the same direction away from our hunting party.

The two rhino's ran for about a mile with our trackers in hot pursuit. We caught up with them in the truck only to come upon a very dangerous situation. The drug was starting to take effect on the darted rhino, however, his companion was not going to leave his side. With time at the essence, we needed to separate the two as quickly as possible. We tried to scare off the second rhino by beeping the trucks horn but it only seemed to agitate him. The rhino began to charge the truck. Only stopping yards from hitting us on three separate attempts. The situation was dicey to say the least. With the clock ticking, we were finally able to scare off the second rhino. We had to work quickly and efficiently to collect the DNA samples. The veterinarian drew a vial of blood while I took some hair samples and blood swatches. We were able to take some scrapings from the rhino's horn. We took measurements of this prehistoric beast in-



Chris Avena from SeeMeHunt.com and the veterinarian tend to the rhino after darted





cluding its height, length and the length of its horn which measured 29.5 inches long. With our main task completed we still had a little time for our recap for SeeMeHunt.com and snap a few pictures for prosperity.

The DNA samples were sent to James Derr PHD, the director of the DNA technologies laboratory at Texas A&M University. Doctor Derr supplied us with the DNA kits so we would be able to log the DNA from the rhino into their global data base. We have a responsibility as hunters to assist with the conservation efforts so animals such as the rhino will continue to flourish in the wild for years to come.

You can find out more about our African adventures at www.SeeMeHunt.com the interactive social network for hunters or watch us on World Wild Adventures which airs on the Pursuit Channel. Our next adventure

will take place in Costa Rica where we will team up with the wounded warrior foundation so we can show the men and women of our military just how much we appreciate their service, dedication and the sacrifices that they have made for our country to protect our way of life. We will take them on the trip of a lifetime to Crocodile Bay Resort where we will go deep sea fishing for Monster Marlin. These are not just any Marlin; these are 2-300 pound Marlin that you will be telling your children about some day. We will defy the laws of gravity while zip lining over a 1000 foot gorge, skimming the canopy of the rain forest and admiring the views below.

If you are interested in attending one of these trips to Costa Rica or you are interested in becoming a sponsor, you can email me for details at SeeMeHunt.com@gmail.com