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Combined Buffalo And Elephant Courses Of The Southern African Wildlife College

Southern African Wildlife College, Sustainable Use & Field Guiding Unit

On request from our training partner, The SA Hunters & Game Conservation Association, the SAWC buffalo and elephant course has been combined. The six participants arrive on a Thursday afternoon to get settled in the tented camp on the SAWC's shooting range and unpack before the a game drive to acquaints them with the SAWC's 4,000 ha core training area where the 'out in the veld' aspect of the course takes place.

Friday morning is classroom time. An early 7:00 start allows enough time to go through the elephant and buffalo hunting theories which includes detailed aspects of these species, their ecology, reproduction, sexing, ageing, trophy assessment, shot placement and hunting techniques. Friday afternoon is used to search for elephants and buffalo so that practical examples of the morning lectures can be demonstrated. Saturday morning is spent on the shooting range. Each participant shoots his own rifle under 'veld conditions' - i.e. off shooting sticks, from the 'sitting with your elbows on your knees' position, and standing. Rifle fit, function, feeding and reliability is scrutinized carefully - and it is not uncommon to uncover a lurking problem or three! Our life-size, life-like elephant targets are shot first. Each target represents a different scenario - head up, head down and side-on. This is where participants put into practice what they have learned about the various 'head position angles' associated with elephant hunting. The target design and construction makes a shot placed into the correct area change color. This allows the PH to see if the shot was correctly placed or not. If no 'color' is seen, participants need to shoot again to be sure.

While the elephant and buffalo targets are exchanged, the course participants once again spend time in the veld. All bull elephants encountered are approached to experience this technique. Buffalo are also 'stalked', hunted and shot at with the laser-equipped .753 Lindeque. The buffalo course gets tackled on Sunday morning. This involves engaging eight different targets on four separate 'hunts'. Shots are taken from 'off sticks', freehand and from the 'sitting on the ground' position. There are even some simulated 'shoot under pressure' shots, guaranteed to get the adrenalin pumping in even the most seasoned of dangerous game hunters. The course concludes with the handing out of 'attendance certificates' and participants depart at around noon.

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