

South Africa: Copper springbok



Equipment reviewed by: Adrian Sailor

Product: STEYR MANNLICHER PRO HUNTER .30-06

Distributor: Sportsman Gun Centre ■ www.sportsmanguncentre.co.uk

Price: £1,600

Comments: Performed faultlessly, smooth action

Product: Scope: ZEISS DURALYT 3-12X50

Distributor: Sportsman Gun Centre ■ www.sportsmanguncentre.co.uk

Price: Around £745

Comments: Optics very clear with good coating



acacia bushes and termite mounds, trying not to damage the vehicle too much. I was driving when there was a tap on the roof from my tracker. I could not see anything but he was pointing to the side of the kopje in front of us. Climbing on the back of the truck, I saw the herd of coppers scampering away and rounding the kopje out of sight. I was surprised by how skittish they were, considering I was the first to hunt them here.

We decided to wait and have lunch to let the animals calm down. Sitting under a small tree, we watched a black eagle circle and a secretary bird perched on top of an acacia about 200 metres away. I felt a million miles from civilisation. The people who live here and

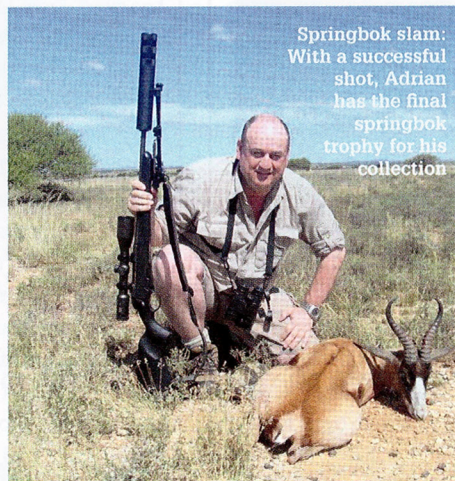
have this scenery around them every day are very lucky.

As these animals seemed to spook easily, we decided to leave the truck and stalk back around the kopje where we had last seen them. The ground was covered in gravel, which made walking quietly difficult, and we no longer had the vantage point to see where they were. We decided to walk up the side of the kopje and through the rocks to try and get above the herd. We spotted them eating happily in the shorter grass further towards the dam. There was a thick line of bush between them and us that would give us a shelter to sneak along. I hoped it would get me within range for a shot.

We quietly crept towards the unsuspecting herd, all the time checking their location and where we were walking so as not to spook them again. A short crawl to the last piece of cover had me looking through the scope towards the group. The .30-06 was on the sticks at a distance of 200 metres from the nearest animal. They were grazing and occasionally looking up to check their surroundings. Somewhat smaller in build than a common, they had a shiny

copper coat with a darker brown stripe. There were several males in the group but they were facing away from us and none presented an easy shot.

I felt the wind change and about 40 heads lifted to look around. There were far more here than I had originally thought, including some decent trophies. I quickly scanned the herd to try and find a shooter. They all began to run off to my right, but were getting closer. They ran in a long line, sometimes jumping and bouncing in that particular gait that gave them their name. At the back were two males. I focused on these but they did not want to stop. The front animals disappeared into the vegetation, about 300 metres to



starting to melt. We decided to move the truck to the other side of the kopje, hoping the springbok would be there.

Parking up again, we glassed the area for signs of life. There were springbok on the dam wall and in the grasses, but still no elusive coppers. After another 30 minutes, we spotted movement at the far end of the kopje in the acacias. There they were: about 20 copper springbok, their coats shining in the sun. We decided to drive the vehicle closer for a better look, hoping to find a trophy among the herd. Stopping 800 metres away, we glassed for the springbok again but they were nowhere to be seen. We watched for the next 20 minutes with no luck.

A brief discussion saw us turning around to where we had begun, as we realised the herd had disappeared around the back of the kopje. There were no vehicle tracks here so we were dodging in between the

my right, with the long train following behind.

I gave a quick whistle and the two males stood to investigate. At the shot, there was dust everywhere from them all bolting. I could not see my animal after the recoil but had heard the hit. The tracker said the shot was good, although the springbok had run. He was watching it and it went down after about 50 metres. We watched where it had gone for five minutes before walking over. The bullet had stuck slightly forward in the chest and had gone straight through, but it was dead. This was a beautiful looking animal with good, even horns. It would make a nice addition to my trophy wall, along with the other two colour forms of the species – which means my springbok slam, as they say on the other side of the Atlantic, was now complete. ■

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