

The McMillan Mozambique Safari



Kelly McMillan and Gordie White with Kelly's bull

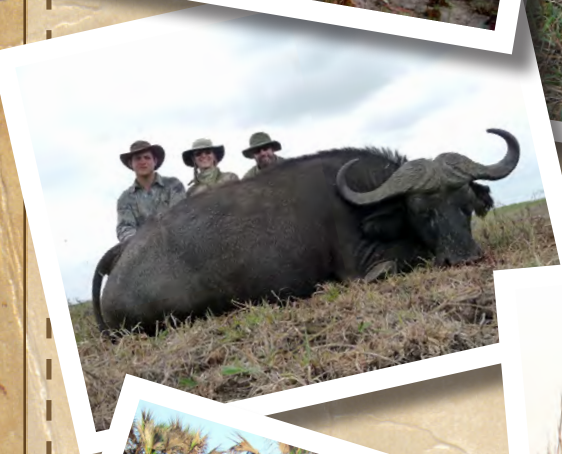
Two years ago, Kelly McMillan and I thought it would be interesting to arrange an African safari to test his rifles and new line of ammunition. Craig Boddington, outdoor writer, accepted an invitation to co-host the group. Plans were made to hunt Mozambique with Mark Haldane, owner of Zambeze Delta Safaris.

I have recently returned from the safari and it was not only interesting but extremely successful. Hunting along with Kelly and Craig were Dr. Bruce Dunn, Mel Zeman, J.C. Bell, Sean and Cathy Murtaugh. All participants were supplied with two McMillan Custom Hunting rifles – one rifle for plains game and the other for buffalo. Plains game rifles were chambered in 7mm Rem Mag, 300 Win Mag and 338 Win Mag. Buffalo rifles were chambered in 375 H&H, 404 Jeffrey and 416 Rem Mag. All game was taken exclusively with McMillan's line of premium ammunition. Buffalo were taken with McMillan African Dangerous Game (ADG) ammunition. I am very pleased to report that rifles and ammunition performed perfectly. McMillan rifles and ammunition are clearly in a league of their own.

I would like to thank Kelly, Craig, Bruce, Mel, J.C., Sean and Cathy for traveling to Mozambique and making the McMillan Safari possible. I would also like to thank Mark Haldane and the entire ZDS staff for providing exceptional service and an incredible safari. The concessions are huge (3 million acres), home to tremendous game populations and truly one of the finest wild hunting areas in Africa to hunt buffalo, sable and many plains game species.

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CRAIG BODDINGTON - TRIP REPORT - MOZAMBIQUE - OCTOBER 2012

Provided you use some care in choosing both your outfitter and your area, most guided hunts are pretty darned good. This is especially true in a good African area, where the variety and quantity of game can cover a lot of sins in outfitting and guiding, and where the specter of bad weather—ever present in North America—almost never raises its ugly head. So most African safaris are both good and productive...but anywhere in the world it's unusual to rate a hunt as *perfect*. That's the way I think of a safari just concluded with Mark Haldane in Zambeze Delta Safaris' Coutada 11, coastal Mozambique.

This was an unusual hunt for me in that, while I expect to meet other folks and make new friends in camp, I'm a bit of a loner by nature and I don't often get roped into "group hunts." But I love coastal Mozambique, and I've enjoyed several great safaris with Mark Haldane. He and Kelly McMillan



(McMillan rifles) approached me quite some time back and asked me to join a group scheduled for mid-October 2012. It didn't take much arm-twisting. October, though getting hot, is a very good time in Mozambique—especially for nyala, which was my primary interest. Also, although Kelly and I are much the same age and grew up in the business together, we didn't know each other well and I hadn't done much with McMillan since his Dad, Gale McMillan, passed away.

The group consisted of J.C. Bell from Georgia; Mel Zeman and Bruce Dunn from Colorado; Sean and Cathy Murtaugh from Phoenix; Kelly McMillan and me; and hunting consultant Gordie White. (Another hunter had to cancel last-minute due to a detached retina and, good guy that he is, Haldane rescheduled him for next year, no questions asked. Most of us had shaken hands at McMillan's reception at SCI last year, but we didn't really know each other. Almost amazingly, the group came together very well...everybody had a great time, and camp life was lively and friendly.

In part this was because the camp and camp staff were great...and the hunting was just plain amazing. Everybody went different directions, and almost every night we had more than one spectacular success to celebrate. Everybody took a good, mature buffalo...Bruce shot two, and on the sixth day Sean and Cathy each took nice bulls from the same herd. I suppose you could say that buffalo was the primary goal for all of us, but we each had specific plains



game trophies in mind, and these goals were met as well. Three of us wanted sable (and got them), some wanted waterbuck (and got them), and I wanted a nyala. On the first morning Mel shot a spectacular nyala, and on the third day Sean shot an equally spectacular nyala. More about mine in a moment. Some wanted bushbuck, others the little guys—suni, red duiker, oribi. For some reason big warthogs were on parade; there were six really big warthogs taken, more than I've ever seen at one place and time.



My nyala. Well, that's been a saga. I've long wanted a big one from Mozambique, native range and free range. There are plenty, but they're not easy to hunt. I messed up five years ago, and two years ago passed some bulls I shouldn't have passed and took an "okay" nyala at the tail end. October is a good month for nyala, with the animals tending to come to water at the big clearings they call "pans." But I think the bonus was that, purely by chance, we hit the dark of the moon. I mostly hunted with Kelly and Mark Haldane, but I spent a few days sitting at pans with young PHs John Forsyth or Etienne Hoeksma. Like the big warthogs, the nyala were on parade: In one exceptional day I saw 35 nyala *bulls*, so I felt like it was just a matter of time, and indeed it was. I think it was the seventh day when I finally got the kind of nyala I've been looking for.

In addition to the nyala, additional goals were met: I was able to spend some time with Kelly McMillan and his rifles. I used a left-handed .404 Jeffery and a left-handed .300 Win. Mag., both in McMillan synthetic stocks (of course). They were awesome rifles that shot straight and handled well. I took a Selous zebra at 396 yards with the .300. This is one of the longest shots I've ever needed to make in Africa, but on the wide-open floodplain that's as close as we could get! Also I got to spend time with Gordie White...he and Kelly are good guys and good hands, and altogether it was an awesome hunt.

Now I have to find a new excuse to return to Mozambique, and I'm sure I can come up with something. It's one of the few areas in wild Africa that I see getting better every year!

Craig Bockington



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Gordie - Can't tell you how much I enjoyed the hunt, and it truly was as close to perfect as such things can be!

Craig Boddington - Executive Field Editor, Intermedia Outdoor Group

Gordie - I just wanted to thank you for putting together the McMillan/Boddington Cape Buffalo hunt for me. Zambeze Delta Safaris was definitely the right outfit to handle this hunt. You made the entire process easy and worry free. You know you will get a call the next time I put a hunt together with McMillan.

Kelly McMillan - McMillan USA


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