

PLAINS GAME QUOTAS IN THE ZAMBEZI VALLEY

BY DAVE FULSON & TIM DANKLEF
Updated 1-4-2010

The lower Zambezi River Valley has long been considered one of Africa's premier dangerous game destinations, and for good reason. Five of Africa's "Big Six", lion, leopard, cape buffalo, elephant and hippo are found in exceptional numbers in all of Chifuti Safaris hunting concessions.

In addition to the dangerous game species, the valley has a healthy population of popular plains game species. The quotas on the plains game trophies are set by Zimbabwe National Parks Department and are firm and fairly limited, quota wise.

While premier species such as buffalo, elephant, lion, leopard, hippo and croc are on a guaranteed quota at the point a deposit is made and the contract is issued, plains game species are on a first come - first served basis and cannot be held in advance for a client.

Here is an example: Our Chewore South concession has a quota of 60 buffalo bulls, but only 12 Kudu bulls. Obviously not everyone who hunts buffalo will be able to tag a Kudu.

Upon arrival in camp, the client will meet with their Professional Hunter assigned to the safari and the P.H. will go over, in detail, the species that are available on quota at the time your safari starts.

Each evening of the safari season, the P.H.'s radio in their harvest reports, which are then updated on the quota sheet. When the last Kudu, Zebra, Waterbuck etc... on the quota is accounted for, that species, for that area, is now off limits for harvest.

Since the Zimbabwe governments land distribution scheme eliminated most of the premier plains game areas in the country, the areas that have hunting, such as the Zambezi Valley, have had more restrictive harvest quotas put into place by Zimbabwe Parks.

These tighter quotas are felt by every operator in the country, including Chifuti Safaris. The days of the seven day buffalo hunt that includes unlimited plains game are a thing of the past in Zimbabwe.

With that said, most all of our clients will pick up some excellent plains game trophies on their buffalo hunt, and clients with longer safaris for species such as lion, leopard and elephant may take a couple more due to their extra days in the bush.

Obviously the earlier in the season one books, the larger the quota availability may be. However, the prime time to hunt that species may be later in the season, so hunting luck will have to be taken into account.

This system assures that Chifuti will be able to harvest our allotted quota, and is a fair system for our client.

For many of our clients who have hunted South Africa or Namibia where your plains game bag is only limited by your wallet, the Zim system may seem unusual, but it simply is what it is.

Our advice to our clients is, and always has been, to concentrate on your primary trophies and spend the majority of your hunting time dedicated to shooting a mature buffalo, leopard etc...

However, if a client or group absolutely has a desire to shoot a large bag of plains game while in Africa, Safari Classics could set up a second hunt in an area where that is possible. This will, of course, require a change of area, as well as additional days, but we can readily arrange this type of hunt prior to, or after your Zambezi Valley Safari.