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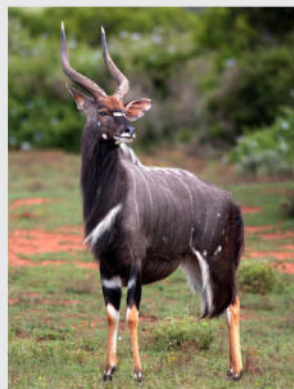
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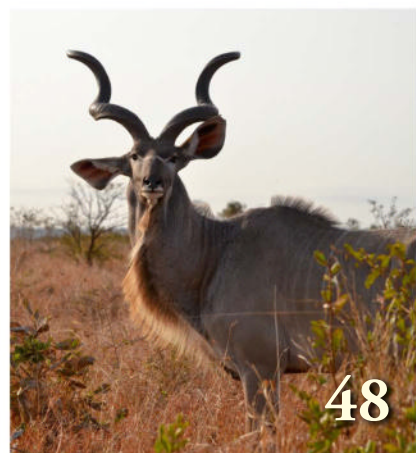
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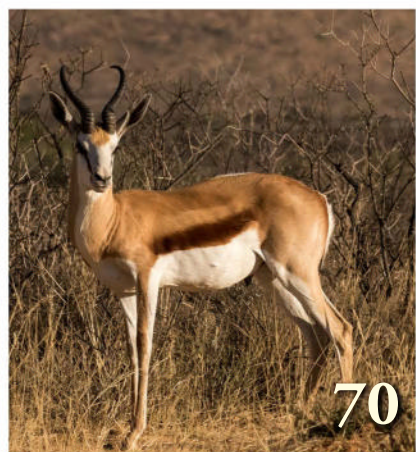
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Zululand – a South African jewel

Earlier this month I went to a lesser-known part of South Africa, northern KwaZulu-Natal, to a game farm near Pongola. This region is not as well visited as other more prominent regions of the country, and does not have many hunting operators there, but it is spectacular countryside. The vegetation is incredible, with both Big Five and plains game there, abundant bird life, iconic fever trees, and butterflies by the gazillion if you are interested in this aspect of the wildlife kingdom.

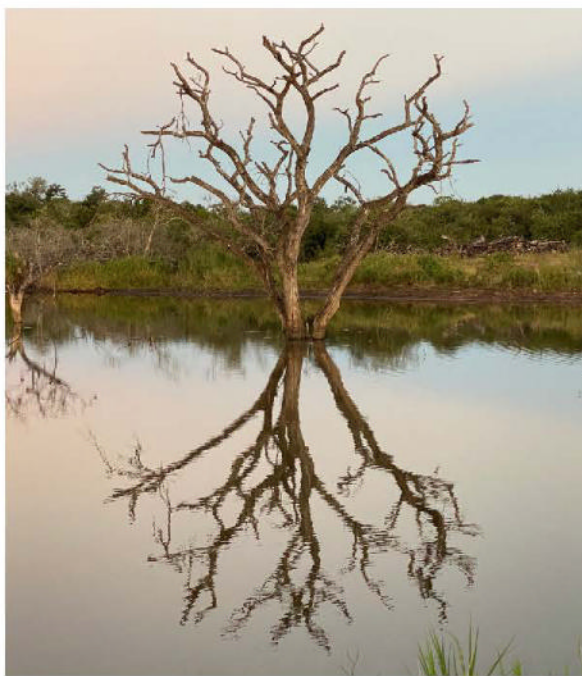
In a small area, over a few days, I discovered that Zululand is a microcosm of what this continent has to offer: Challenges. Beauty. Abundance. Opportunities – and conflict between man and wildlife.

On the drive there, I saw a grandmother selling meat stew and pap on the side of the road to earn enough to feed her grandchildren. It was a wonderful brief change from the oncoming dozens and dozens of coal trucks delivering South Africa's coal to Richards Bay. South Africa has been hoodwinked into exporting its world-class coal to China and Europe while those very same countries are sending their green, renewable, aka – wind and solar technologies to this country, convincing our media, and in turn the public, that it is bad to burn coal and that we need to go green. Africa, which is sitting on dependable sources of coal, which is a reliable source of energy, is opting for less reliable, more expensive and technologically demanding renewable energy. (Solar needs constant sun, wind does not always blow to generate wind power.) Perhaps deeper thinking is needed.

To continue: Jozini Dam, South Africa's second largest, is home to the only tiger fish in the mountainous country and is surrounded by

spectacular scenery, attracting an array of photographic, adventure and hunting tourism. However, the ever-encroaching habitat by local communities is a threat.

Leaving this landmark and arriving deep in the bushveld, one can just see why this is where the nyala belongs. Sure, they have proliferated and can be found extensively around the country and in some neighboring states, but this is really the home of this magnificent spiral-horned antelope.



Their relatives, the mountain nyala, way north in Ethiopia, are truly majestic and highly prized, but their coat cannot compete with that of the nyala, indigenous to South Africa. The front cover pays tribute to this nyala.

Zululand is home to the legendary white rhino and where its conservation scheme started, 50-odd years ago. The Natal Parks Board, as it was then, sent rhino to many countries in Africa. In South Africa the numbers of white rhino grew, and with a solid sustainable model, where hunting was promoted and supported as part of the species'

growth, the story was probably the hunting industry's greatest flagship of sustainable use. I am not going to dwell on the disappointing results of white rhino growth across most of other parts of Africa, but South Africa was on a high of 20 000 plus animals. Until it wasn't.

A compound of a biased or blinkered government, police, environmental department personnel, rogue staff in the parks themselves - nationally and at provincial level – plus corrupt hunters,

game breeders, and CITES, setting the scene globally with the veto to trade rhino horn - fueled an underworld of rhino horn trade.

Legal trade would keep the animals alive. Demand will not go away. And as supply decreases, the demand increases. Rhino are on the slippery slope. It is tragic. Talking with owners Amanda and Willem, made it all so real. Willem, who has been at the coalface of anti-poaching for years, with firsthand unpublishable reports, was off to do his full moon shift in the bush, protecting his rhino. The situation is bleak.

That said, for now, with 2023 in full swing, this region, this country and indeed this continent, we call home - offers huge potential. Opportunities for international hunters to visit very easily, hunt relatively affordably, and experience sights, sounds and wildlife opportunities they simply do not have anywhere else on the planet.

And that is a wonderful fact to dwell on – as you turn the page and read on. 🐾

Regards

Richard Lendrum –

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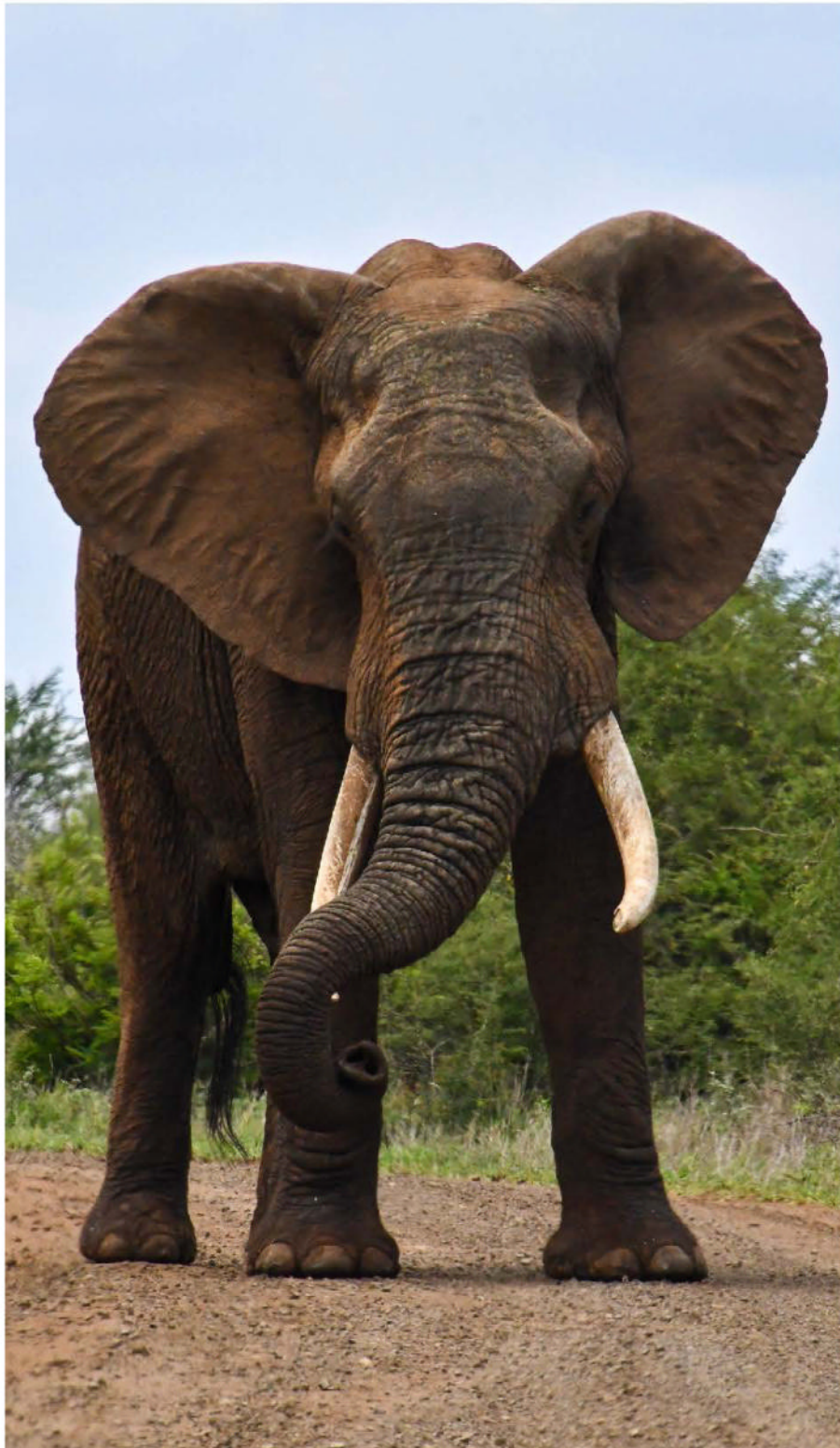
A lioness is shown in profile, facing right, in a savanna environment. The lioness has a tawny coat and is looking down at the ground. The background is a dry, open landscape with sparse green grass and a few trees in the distance.

UK PARLIAMENT

— Supports Bill to Ban —
Hunting Trophy Imports

By John Ledger

On 17 March a Private Member's Bill to ban the import of hunting trophies into the UK passed its third reading in Parliament. Conservative MP Henry Smith proposed the bill, and said it would "help conserve the world's most endangered species." It was approved by MPs after its third reading, and will now face further scrutiny in the House of Lords.



For a shameless display of misinformation, deliberate misuse of the term “endangered species”(including elephants and zebra), and numerous examples of inaccurate statements about the status of various species of African wildlife (such as the alleged success of conservation in Kenya because of the banning of hunting!), watch Mr Smith’s nauseating presentation during the second reading of the Bill in parliament here <https://www.henrysmith.info/news/henry-smith-mp-hails-trophy-hunting-imports-bill-parliamentary-progress>. Mr Smith and others like him have also spread various lies and fake anecdotes that Africans do not benefit from hunting.

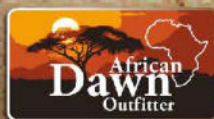
The UK media have mostly rallied behind the call from animal rights and anti-hunting organizations to ban hunting trophies from being imported into Britain. *The Guardian* however offered an uncharacteristic perspective from both sides of the bitterly contested debate:

“MPs have voted to support a controversial ban on importing hunting trophies from thousands of species into the UK, preventing British hunters from bringing the body parts of lions, elephants and giraffes into the country.

“A private member’s bill put forward by the Conservative MP Henry Smith and backed by the government received the support of parliament after years of divisive debate on the issue. MPs from across the political spectrum spoke in favour of the legislation before it passed.

“The government says the law, which will now move for debate in the Lords, will strengthen the conservation of endangered species and has widespread support from the British public. The

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ban was part of the 2019 Conservative election manifesto and comes after a high-profile anti-trophy hunting campaign backed by celebrities including Ricky Gervais, Brian May, Ed Sheeran and Joanna Lumley.

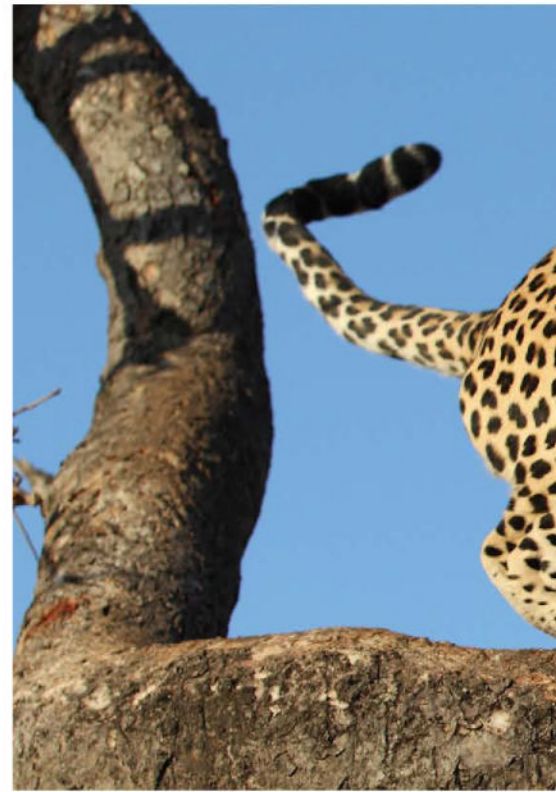
"But many scientists, environmentalists and African community leaders have said the new law could inadvertently accelerate the loss of wildlife, and accused celebrity campaigners of 'neocolonialism'. They point to the contributions of regulated trophy hunting to the recovery of populations of black and white rhino in Namibia and South Africa and the snow leopard in Tajikistan.

"Amid strong views on both sides and accusations of misinformation from pro-hunting groups and anti-trophy hunting campaigners, MPs backed an amendment from Sir Christopher Chope to create an expert advisory board on the import ban. The ban will

cover about 6,000 species and include some of the most endangered and charismatic animals, including hippos, leopards and polar bears.

"British hunters are not a large part of the trophy hunting industry, and the ban is considered largely symbolic by conservationists. In 2015, the killing of 'Cecil the lion' by a trophy hunter in Zimbabwe provoked global outrage and revulsion at the industry, where hunters pay tens of thousands of pounds to shoot and pose with the bodies of wild animals.

"The actor Peter Egan, a prominent anti-trophy hunting campaigner, said the vote was 'sensational' news. Claire Bass, a senior director of campaigns and public affairs at Humane Society International-UK, also welcomed the vote. 'We're delighted that this extremely popular bill has passed its report stage and third reading, with dozens of cross-



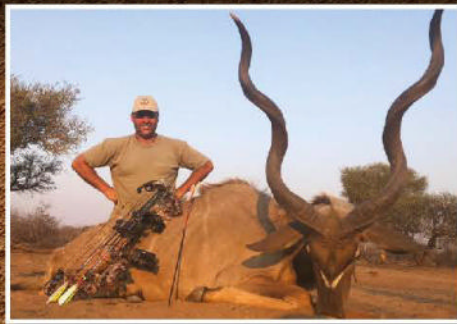


party MPs taking the floor in today's debate to share their strong support for legislation to stop hunters bringing their sick souvenirs back to the UK. We ... look to the House of Lords to ensure swift passage of this vital law,' she said.

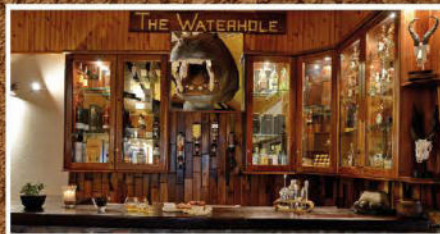
"But others expressed their disappointment and urged the Lords to oppose the law in its current form.

'It is bitterly disappointing MPs have succumbed to an emotive but misinformed animal rights campaign', said Amy Dickman, an Oxford University professor who is an expert on lion conservation. 'This bill will kill more animals than it will save. Hopes for a rational, evidence-based debate now rest in the House of Lords.'

Maxi Pia Louis, a community leader from Namibia, said she was disappointed that the voices of Africans had not been heard. 'Britain has ignored our numerous attempts to engage. What



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is the purpose of the diplomatic ties we supposedly share? This bill will make African communities poorer for many years to come,' she said."

Once can but hope, with Amy Dickman and a number of other rational observers who have gone to great lengths to educate and lobby MPs about the true facts of hunting, that the House of Lords will add some objectivity to the debate, and perhaps implement the suggestion of creating an Expert Advisory Board to bring sense to the administration of the legislation.

Africans are naturally dismayed at this turn of events. (see <https://www.namibian.com.na/120958/read/UK-ban-on-importing-hunting-trophies-devastating-for-Namibia>)

"The President of the Namibia Professional Hunting Association

(Napha), Axel Cramer, says the decision by the United Kingdom (UK) to ban the importation of hunting trophies would have far-reaching devastating effects on the local industry's income.

"Cramer says the ban did not come as a surprise as the issue has already been discussed in the past. 'It is not a good development, although it has not yet been passed by the House of Lords, and it has to go through its final stage, but they are already in the process of legalising this law,'. He says it is a bad development that hunters cannot take their trophies home, adding that Britain is not a target market of Namibia, but the ban could spread to other countries. The majority of hunters who visit Namibia are from Europe, Germany, Switzerland and the United States.

" 'The impact is negative, of course.

It impacts Namibia and Africa at large. What does this mean for local farmers and professional hunters? This means the animals which are hunted would now have less value'. There will be less capital to put into the business to fund conservation efforts, less funds for anti-poaching activities, and the creation of employment for the community will be affected; trophy hunting is part of the total tourism landscape'.

"Cheetah Conservation Fund founder and executive director Laurie Marker says the ban is not good for the country. 'Namibia regulates its wildlife very strictly, and Napha and the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism work closely together to make the Namibian trophy hunting industry sustainable,' she says. The UK should only consider limiting imports of

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those species they are most concerned over and not put a blanket ban on the importation of all trophies.

However, in a country where extreme environmental ideas seem to be taken up by mobs of vociferous supporters, we should probably not expect a good outcome to the debate in the House of Lords. This is the country where supporters of the 'Extinction Rebellion' practice civil disobedience on a grand scale, gluing themselves to trains, aircraft, roads and bridges to disrupt the lives of citizens who just want to get to work and get on with their lives.

The activists associated with 'Just Stop Oil' recently threw Heinz tomato soup on Van Gogh's painting *Sunflowers* and explained that they were protesting this way to make the point that "climate change should matter to

people more than art".

Weeks later, two other climate activists spread potatoes on a glass-covered painting by French Painter Claude Monet inside a German museum, and glued their hands to the walls of the gallery. Another activist attached his head with glue to the glass covering of a famous Johannes Vermeer painting, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, at The Hague in Amsterdam.

These incidents are illustrative of the madness associated with the pseudo-religious notion of a 'climate catastrophe'. The UK government has bought into this myth, and set itself some of the most stringent legislation to curtail the use of fossil fuels in Britain, to the extent that the cost of energy has soared, along with everything else that depends on affordable energy to keep

the wheels of society turning.

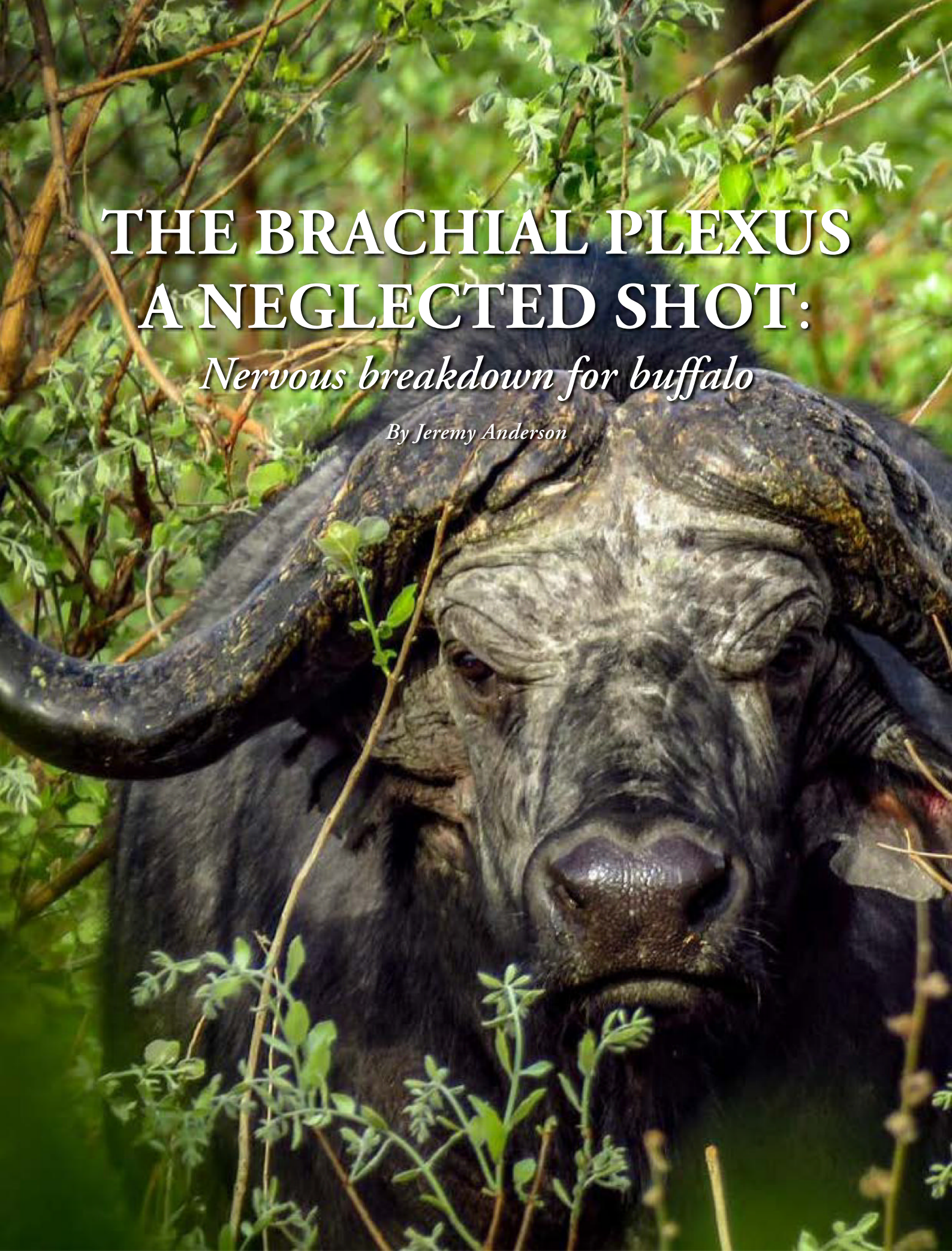
It is therefore not surprising that the anti-hunting and animal rights activists find fertile UK ground in which to sow the seeds of anger and abuse against those who want to bring hunting mementoes back to their homes in Britain. And as for the damage that this might cause to Africans and rural communities that derive meaningful benefits from hunting, don't look to these people for any understanding or acknowledgement of the benefits of hunting to Africa and Africans. They could not care less!

Dr John Ledger is a past Director of the Endangered Wildlife Trust, now a consultant, writer and teacher on the environment, energy and wildlife. He lives in Johannesburg, South Africa. John.Ledger@wol.co.za



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THE BRACHIAL PLEXUS A NEGLECTED SHOT:

Nervous breakdown for buffalo

By Jeremy Anderson

It was a couple of days before Christmas in 1978 and I was tasked by the warden of Umfolozi, John Forrest, to shoot a buffalo for a neighbouring chief. I took the station .458 Winchester from the armory and half-a-dozen 500-grain solids, then collected a field ranger and two laborers to help load the animal.

We found three buffalo bulls lying out on an open hillslope about 200 meters away from the track we were on. Old bulls all of them, black, and hard-headed, like Mike Tyson triplets, well fed and ruminating in the early morning warmth. The grass was about waist high, still a little damp with dew; the wind was fine, blowing towards us from Mpila to the northeast, and there was not much in the way of any other cover, just a few straggly *Acacia karroo* saplings. As the grass was wet, I didn't want to "bottom bounce" to get closer, but by using folds in the ground and crouching low I felt that I could get to about 30 meters from the bulls without being seen.

I was wrong, or more likely I didn't bend low enough and, when about 50 meters away from them, one of the attendant red-billed oxpeckers snatched on me and rose, *chirr-chirring* its alarm call. The bulls grumbled to their feet and peered down their Roman noses at me for a count of three. Then one grunted, flicked his head up, and they took off down the slope. Normally I would not have taken the chance at a running shot, but I fired at the base of the neck of the last bull – hoping to either break his shoulder or hit him in the lungs, feeling that there would be time enough to get in a second shot if needed.

The bullet hit where I had aimed, without breaking his neck, and yet he died on his feet, hitting the deck and not making a sound or even twitching. It was like using lightning. When we got him back to the skinning shed, I

confirmed that none of the obvious vitals had been hit. I then recalled that years before when doing a game count on Doddieburn, one of the first two game ranches in Rhodesia, Don Cowie had told me that when he was culling buffalo, he found that a shot at the base of the neck proved immediately fatal.

So, what killed him then? I gave up thinking about it until I came across a paper by Dr R. Hoffman and Scholze (1968), who had studied the anatomy of game animals in East Africa to determine where the most suitable "vital centers" were for game cropping or culling – with the aim of reducing wounding rates. The mystery of the lightning bolt was revealed.

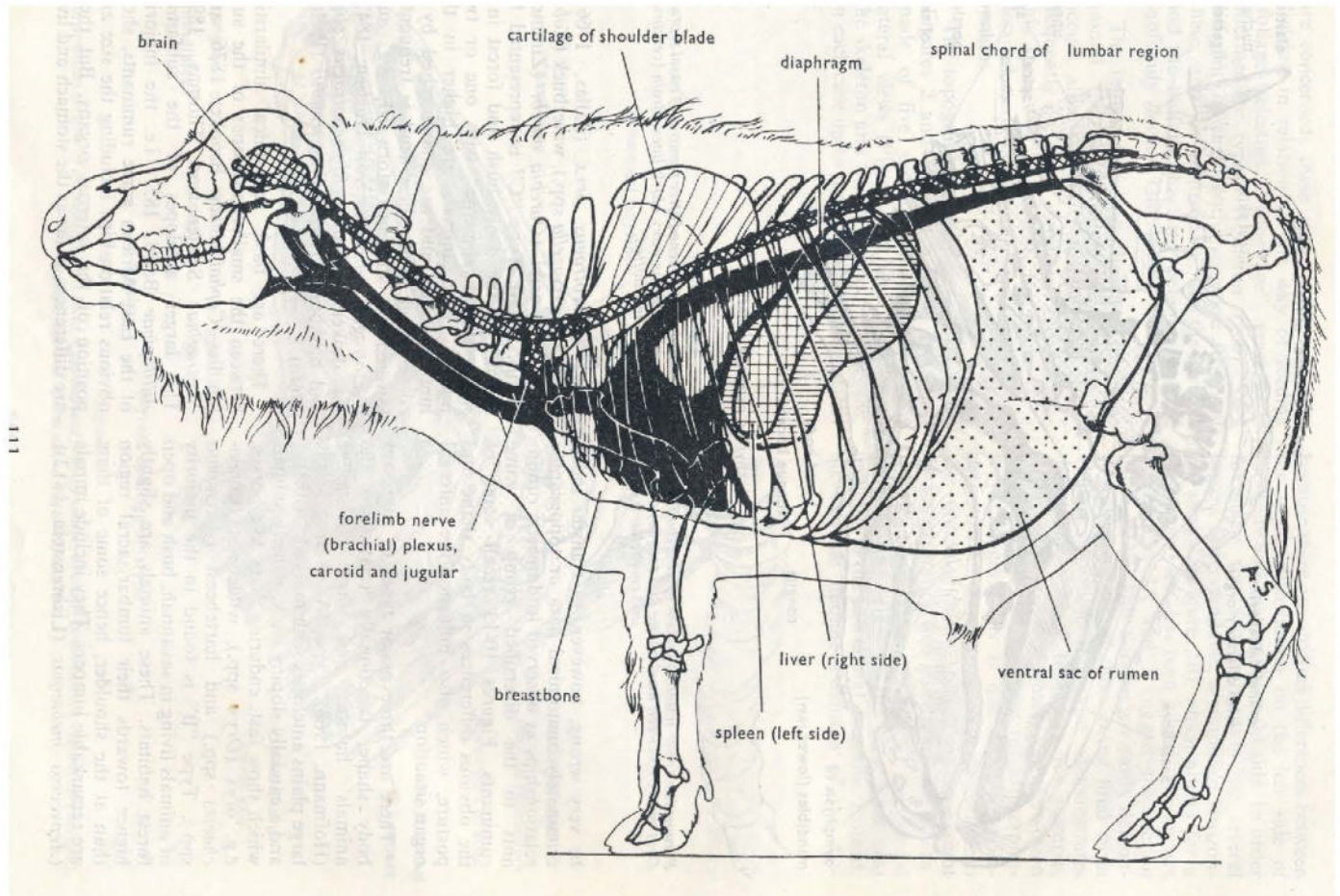
In an earlier paper, Hoffman (1966) describes the rather grisly way they went about determining the exact location of these vital centers in a standing animal. When an animal is shot while lying on its side, it is likely that internal organs, such as the lungs and heart, will not be in the correct position that they would be if the animal were standing, and are likely to be damaged. To overcome this, he devised a method whereby he could dissect an animal while it was in a normal standing position. He first immobilised it with a dart, then while it was unconscious, he suspended it on a sling in a normal standing position in a metal frame. He then infused a formalin solution into a vein while allowing the heart to pump it around for the few moments while draining blood out of an artery. The animal was unconscious, and I hope insensitive to pain and trauma. With the animal now fixed in a standing position (Fig 1) he dissected away the layers of skin and muscle to illustrate the vital organs in their true position. Whatever one may think of the ethics of this technique it was effective and gave results useful for science.

Fig 1: The setup used by Hoffman to infuse formalin into an animal's blood system to preserve it for dissection

In both impala and buffalo, he found and illustrated the position of what is termed the "*Brachial plexus*" – a network junction of eleven nerves extending down from the spine. Hofmann illustrates the location of the brachial plexus in a dissected buffalo and then shows on a photograph where this plexus is located. It turns out that there are eleven pairs of nerves meeting in this plexus.



Fig 2. The diagram in Hoffman and Scholze (1968) showing the location of the *Brachial plexus* and other vital organs.



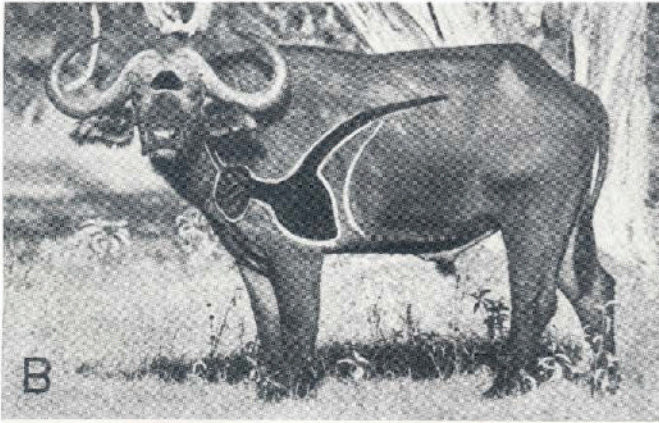


Fig 3. The *Brachial plexus* marked on a photograph of buffalo standing side-on. (Hoffman and Scholze 1968)

This brachial plexus is not exclusive to buffalo, it is just that it is a very small target on species such as impala.

It is also a shot that has been recognised for years, but perhaps not understood. One must agree with the authors Hoffman and Scholze (1968) when they quote Stigand and Lyell (1909), who wrote in *Central African game and its Spoor* that, when hunting buffalo, “there is no better place to shoot than the point of the shoulder if the beast is broadside on” and it is obvious that they were referring to the brachial plexus. Of course, it was also where Don Cowie had recognised it as a vital

point of aim. In Peter Flack’s (2017) book, “Hunting the African Buffalo”, there is a chapter by Hans Schabel who, before hunting his first buffalo, researched Hoffman and Scholze’s paper and mentions specifically aiming for the brachial plexus with the desired instant results. More recently, Kevin Robertson (Doctari 2022) ponders on the phenomenon of twice seeing a buffalo drop dead instantly and unexpectedly to a heart shot (p89). My guess is that both these shots were taken from an angle slightly forward of the animal where, in order to reach the heart, the bullets had traversed the brachial plexus. This position is illustrated in Fig 4 where the brachial plexus overlaps the heart and would be a proverbial double whammy of a shot to take.

Fig 4. Viewed obliquely from the front, the *Brachial plexus* overlaps the heart

I discussed the brachial plexus with a great friend, the late Dr Carl Fatti who practiced at rural hospitals at Bushbuckridge and Acornhoek in the Lowveld, and he knew it well in humans, and said that when he was called to do an orthopaedic procedure on a patient’s arm, and if there was no anaesthetist available, he would use a local anaesthetic into the brachial plexus.

So, if the heart and lungs are regarded by hunters as the “Engine room”, then think of the brachial plexus as being the “Fuse box” and remember it, as it may prove useful when you next hunt buffalo.



Jeremy Anderson has been in wildlife conservation for nearly sixty years. He has hunted primarily for work in managing wildlife populations and in resolving human-wildlife conflict. He strongly supports sustainable utilization of wildlife as a realistic option in conserving biodiversity in an increasingly human-dominated landscapes. He founded International Conservation Services (www.ics-consulting.co.za) and still actively consults in Africa and the Middle East. 🐾

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Game Animals of Africa

Game Animals of Africa Map

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- 6. Kudu, Greater;
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| 2. Addax | 21. Duiker, Bay | 40. Gazelle, Thomson's | 59. Impala, Eastern | 78. Oribi | 97. Suni |
| 3. African Wild Cat | 22. Duiker, Black fronted | 41. Genet, Large Spotted | 60. Impala, Southern | 79. Oryx, Fringe-Eared | 98. Topi |
| 4. Baboon, Chacma | 23. Duiker, Blue | 42. Genet, Small Spotted | 61. Jackal, Black Backed | 80. Oryx, Scimitar Horned | 99. Tsessebe |
| 5. Barbary Sheep | 24. Duiker, Common | 43. Gerenuk | 62. Jackal, Golden | 81. Oryx, Southern | 100. Warthog |
| 6. Blesbok | 25. Duiker, Red | 44. Giant Forest Hog | 63. Jackal, Side Striped | 82. Oryx, Beisa | 101. Water Chevrotain |
| 7. Bongo | 26. Duiker, White Bellied | 45. Giraffe | 64. Klipspringer | 83. Puku | 102. Waterbuck, Common |
| 8. Bontebok | 27. Duiker, Yellow Backed | 46. Kudu, Greater | 65. Kob | 84. Red River Hog | 103. Waterbuck, Defassa |
| 9. Buffalo, Cape | 28. Duiker, Zebra | 47. Kudu, Eastern Cape | 66. Lechwe, Black | 85. Reedbuck, Bohor | 104. Wildebeest, Black |
| 10. Buffalo, Forest | 29. Eland, Common | 48. Grey Rhebok | 67. Lechwe, Kafue | 86. Reedbuck, Common | 105. Wildebeest, Blue |
| 11. Bushbuck, Harnessed | 30. Eland, Lord Derby | 49. Grysbok, Cape | 68. Lechwe, Nile | 87. Reedbuck, Mountain | 106. Wildebeest, Nyasa |
| 12. Bushbuck, Chobe | 31. Elephant, Forest | 50. Grysbok, Sharpe's | 69. Lechwe, Red | 88. Rhino, Black | 107. Wildebeest, Western White Bearded |
| 13. Bushbuck, Limpopo | 32. Elephant, Savanna | 51. Hartbeest, Lichtenstein's | 70. Leopard | 89. Rhino, White | 108. Zebra, Mountain |
| 14. Bushbuck, Meneliks | 33. Fox, Bat-eared | 52. Hartbeest, Red | 71. Lesser Kudu | 90. Roan | 109. Zebra, Grant's |
| 15. Bushpig | 34. Fox, Fennec | 53. Hartbeest, Western | 72. Lion | 91. Royal Antelope | 110. Zebra, Hartmann |
| 16. Caracal | 35. Fox, Cape | 54. Hippopotamus | 73. Monkey, Colobus | 92. Sable | 111. Zebra, Burchell's |
| 17. Cheetah | 36. Gazelle, Roberts's | 55. Hyena, Brown | 74. Monkey, Vervet | 93. Serval | |
| 18. Civet | 37. Gazelle, Soemmering's | 56. Hyena, Spotted | 75. Mountain Nyala | 94. Sitatunga | |
| 19. Crocodile | 38. Gazelle, Dorcas | 57. Hyena, Striped | 76. Nubian Ibex | 95. Springbok | |



ARE CAPE BUFFALO REALLY THAT DANGEROUS?

By Ken Moody

We've all heard the stories. The maniacal, charging buffalo bearing down on the quivering client as our hero, the professional hunter, brings his mighty double rifle to bear, ending the chaos with a well-placed shot, or worse - getting killed in the process.

Yes, buffalo tales have been told and re-told around the African campfire since man began hunting the beasts, and many of these have appeared in magazines and blogs dedicated to our love of buffalo hunting. But how much of it is true and how much is just simple lore, embellished to give the buffalo demon-like qualities, and unstoppable powers? Let's see if we can separate fact from fiction and give our hunting brethren a look at old 'Black Death' and see if this gentleman really deserves his dark reputation.



I am the owner/director of Ken Moody Safaris, a close corporation opened in South Africa in 1994, and since that time have had the privilege of conducting around 400 hunts for Cape buffalo. While most of my safaris have been in South Africa, I've also hunted Zimbabwe for twelve years and Mozambique for eight, all for buffalo as the primary species. In Zim, I've hunted buff in the Omay, Dande, Chirisa, Matetsi, Gokwe, and the Beitbridge areas, and in Mozambique, I mostly hunted Coutada 10 and other areas bordering KNP. South Africa has found me hunting buffalo in seven of the nine provinces, mostly the Limpopo, NorthWest, and Kwa-Zulu Natal. I offer the above as only an indication of my experience hunting these animals and knowledge gained in doing so. I know buffalo, but if anyone, regardless of their level of experience, claims to know it all, they are lying.

So, what made Cape buffalo so different from their bovine brethren?

That can be summed up in one word: environment. Unlike other species of wild cattle, the Cape buffalo lives in a hostile world. The environment that is home to the African buffalo is also home to an array of predators including lion, wild dogs, hyena, and others, that single out sick, weak, or young buffalo and hound them until they can kill and eat.

Then, there's man that hunts them for sport and food. It is this constant pressure that has forced Cape buffalo to evolve into such tenacious survivors.

Living, for them, necessitates their fighting spirit, for if they displayed the traits of their brothers in Asia, South America, or Australia, they would have been wiped from Africa long ago. It's kill or be killed in Africa, and no species knows this better than the Cape buffalo. They will fight for life until the very end.

Hunting buffalo is generally a standardized process depending on where they are hunted.

Ideally, the focus will be on finding lone bulls or small groups of bulls that have

moved out of the herds. In wild areas one focuses primarily on water sources, talks to locals, and checks the roads for tracks indicating movement. Once an acceptable track is found - generally a large, circular, square-toed print - the tracker will take the spoor and eventually lead the professional hunter and his client to the buffalo or herd. Then, it's up to the skill of the professional to get the client onto the correct buffalo and into position to make a shot. When hunting the floodplains and river areas in Mozambique and other places, where tracks are often difficult to discern, glassing for cattle egrets which ride atop buffalo is one of the best options. Once the birds are located, and with the correct wind, the professional will lead his client into the proximity of the herd and begin the selection process of bagging a nice bull. Google Earth and apps such as OnX Hunt nearly preclude the need for the old topo maps, but when hunting wild, open areas, a good map combined with GPS are, in my opinion, necessary tools.



**A boutique store in Dillon, Montana,
selling African art, décor and curios handcrafted and shipped over from Africa.**

The outlier for buffalo hunting is South Africa.

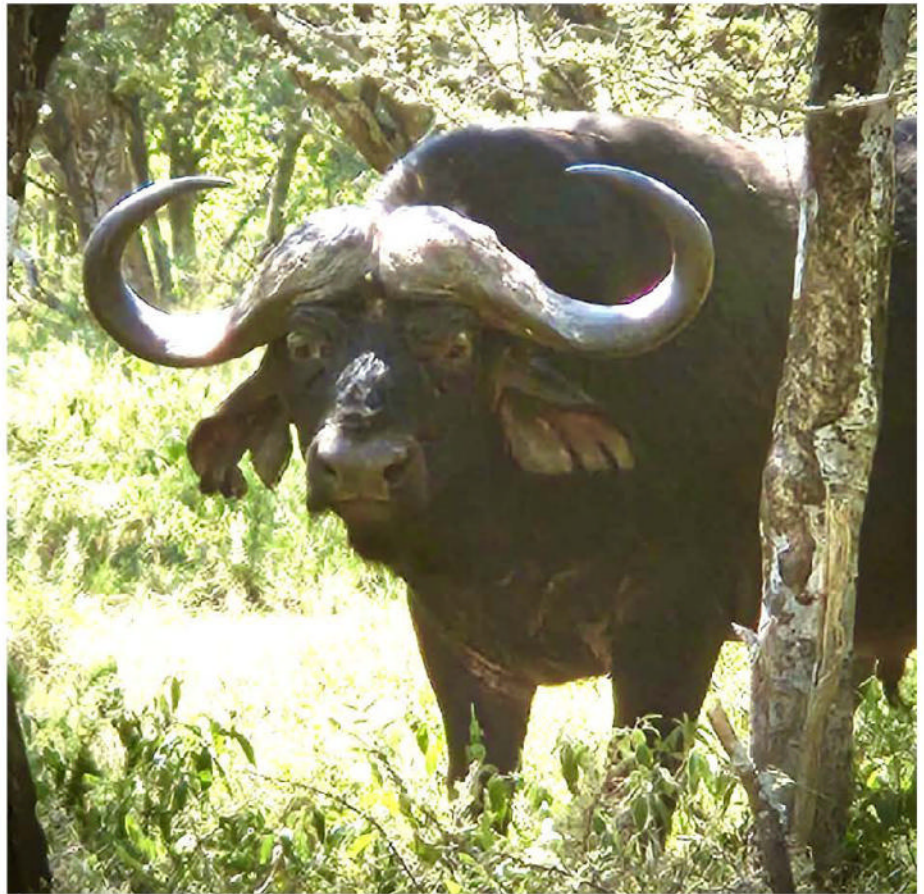
It is here where international clients can have either a superb buffalo hunting safari or a canned, less than desirable experience. It is also here where less experienced dangerous-game professionals can be found operating, as the licensing procedures and mandates necessary for the acquisition of a dangerous-game hunting permit are somewhat less stringent than in other countries. Being open on one's register does not equate to having experience. It simply means the professional is legally qualified to conduct the hunt.

While there are areas in South Africa which can technically be classified as open or free range, bordering KNP and other locations, most hunting for buffalo will occur on high-fenced, privately owned ranches of various sizes. These ranches will feature either naturally propagating animals, a combination of naturally propagating and released, or purely 'put and take' small affairs where game is bought and released specifically for hunting.

Game sourced for stocking is either acquired through game-capture companies that locate and capture game and move it from one ranch to another, or by purchasing at auction where game has either been raised/bred for auction, or captured and moved to auction.

Buffalo are no exception and are frequently moved and restocked. As the hunting environment is controlled by the presence of high fence, the landowner must decide how he will operate his property. He may opt to simply breed animals, or he may choose to hunt them. If he acquires a P3 Exemption Permit, he will be allowed to legally regulate his own game and allow hunting on the property for all species indicated on the P3 (I am a former landowner in South Africa have gone through this process myself).

The landowner may then offer his game for hunting to a licensed outfitter who must have written hunting rights from the landowner, and have the venue inspected and approved for hosting



He's waiting on you. Are you ready?

international clients. The landowner will also provide a specific game quota to the outfitter for what game may be hunted and in what numbers. *The above is the process, and anyone being secretive regarding it should be a red flag to potential clients.*

Hunting buffalo in South Africa is not very different from hunting them elsewhere. While the terrain and experiences vary from province to province, most buffalo hunting will occur in the thick bush. Buffalo love the thornbush, and it is here where they will likely be found. Well-maintained ranches in South Africa usually have good road networks, and good professionals in SA take full advantage of them.

Concentrating initial search efforts around waterholes, trail cams are usually deployed to capture images of potential target animals and pinpoint the area where they operate. They can also allow one to see the actual buffalo so that a

quick determination can be made as to whether to pursue or pass.

This time-saving effort allows the professional to move on to seek better options for his client if necessary.

If trail cams are not deployed, then a manual sweep of the waterholes is required to see what is drinking where. Once a reasonable track is found, then an initial track is established to see the buffalo's direction of travel. At this stage, the road networks come into play, as most ranches in South African are divided into blocks with roads around them. These blocks can be 100 to 1000 acres in size, sometimes much larger.

The savvy professional will then begin jumping blocks by taking the buffalo track into a block and then driving around it to see where the buffalo exited into an adjoining block. Once the buffalo is isolated in a particular block, the party will return to where it entered, and track into the bush until finding the herd. If the wind is wrong, as it usually is, then



the professional may cross track or back out and return when more favorable winds are present. The process is repeated daily until a buffalo is bagged or other tactics utilized.

Block jumping is a tedious process but does save time when compared to simply taking the track from the point at which it is initially found and walking it for the duration, entering/exiting blocks as progress is made. In areas of large buffalo concentrations, sweeping the roads by dragging brush behind a vehicle will help in finding fresh spoor the following day, getting the party onto a good track more quickly.

It's always the client's choice as to how he wants to hunt his buffalo, and many opt to track it from the onset of finding the first good track. Regardless, even in South Africa you can count on doing a lot of walking unless hunting from a hide/blind. Hunting buffalo properly in South Africa can be an exciting, fulfilling adventure provided quality operators are chosen to conduct the hunt. One must simply decide on what type of buffalo hunt is wanted, and then select the team that offers it.

And now we get to what makes a Cape buffalo that of which nightmares are made.

Going on the track of wounded buffalo requires the correct mindset and preparation because yes, Cape buffalo really are that dangerous. Whether you're hunting them in the northern Omay of Zimbabwe or among the baobabs of South Africa, a buffalo is a buffalo, and, once wounded, will quickly revert to his well-earned reputation regardless of lineage. While only about five in a hundred will charge, it's the chargers that must be dealt with calmly and professionally.

A buffalo charge is controlled chaos. How much 'control' depends on the experience of those tasked to stop it. In my company, I have one standing rule that cannot be violated... a professional hunter will NOT track a wounded buffalo alone. There must always be two



A worthy trophy.

experienced guns on the track and the client doesn't count.

An inexperienced client can be a bigger threat to life than the buffalo itself. The professional is there to protect the client and cannot expect the client to properly handle a buffalo charge. Of much benefit to all is a good tracking dog. A dog saves lives, and the little Jack Russell terrier seems to have found a niche in finding and baying wounded buffalo. Small and nimble, the little Jack will bark and harass the beast, allowing the hunting party to close in and drop it. Without a dog, everyone must have their heads on swivels, spatial awareness being critical.

If shot from a herd, the wounded bull will usually stay with the herd for as long as he can, the herd pulling the wounded one along with it. As he weakens, the bull

will separate, hopefully staying alone. If shot from a group of old Dagga Boys or a small bachelor herd, the entire group will generally stay together moving into the thickest parts of the bush. The track may be direct or meandering depending on whether the buffalo is moving to a place of known safety or just wandering about looking for cover. If the wounded bull is badly hurt and moving slowly, he might separate from the group, but always expect to find the wounded bull 'covered' by a comrade. It's these satellite bulls that must be accounted for, as they charge and kill as many people as the wounded ones. ALWAYS expect that there's another buffalo lurking.

The initial track must be steady and deliberate, as the best time to close and kill a wounded buffalo is the first

encounter. You can expect to find the wounded bull on your flank, as they often circle back like a fishhook to watch their backtrack, and it is from here that they will launch a charge or run away.

Mostly all of them will run away so if the wounded bull isn't killed on the first encounter, the hunting party must press the track, moving quietly but as fast as feasible, as the buffalo knows he's being pursued.

He now must be 'walked down' and forced to stay put from fatigue and blood loss or charge, as giving him rest breaks during the track results in a continuous string of bump-and-run encounters until darkness stops the track. A professional who believes it best to move very slowly and over cautiously after the initial encounter is simply afraid and/or inexperienced. The bull will almost certainly go with the wind in his favor, so your odds of sneaking up on a wounded buffalo are slim. You simply must close and kill him.

Eventually, the buffalo will come to a decision point. The constant hard pursuit combined with the effects of the wound will cause the bull to find a thick, nasty place to stop and wait for his pursuers. A good tracker can sense when the bull is close, and a good dog knows it. The presence of any fresh blood should be a good indicator of proximity. If the buffalo

has decided to make his last stand, one of two things will occur... he will stand motionless hoping to be passed by or he will charge. A motionless bull you will find and kill even in thick cover, but a charging bull is a different story.

The line of march on track is primary tracker; professional hunter; client; backup rifle, then second tracker. The second tracker comes forward when the primary needs help, and the backup rifle may move to a flank from time to time to help scan the area and provide unobstructed frontal fire if needed, but generally, this is how the party moves on track. It is a good idea, terrain permitting, to have the client up with the professional so that he can be directed, sometimes with a hand on the shoulder to guide him into position. Everyone wants the client to kill his buffalo, so every opportunity is given to him.

A buffalo charge is sometimes preceded by a 'woof' from the bull, alerting the group as he comes. Not always, but sometimes. The charge will be fast and deliberate, an explosion of noise from breaking branches and hooves pounding the ground. In thick bush, it will come from close range, so don't expect to see any bolt actions being cycled. For a professional, a good double rifle is a must, in my opinion, as a close-range charge will likely only allow for one decent shot and

maybe a last-second lifesaving shot.

These are expensive investments, but how much is your life worth? The internet professionals that speak of shot placement on a charging buffalo have likely only seen one on TV as, in truth, all you can do is put the front bead of your barrel on the area of the buffalo's bobbing head and wait until your odds of making a crushing shot are the greatest. This moment is the most anxious you'll ever experience. Never try and follow the head, just level your barrel, and wait until he closes then give it to him. For the professional, a backup rifle caliber must start with a 4 or larger, and the bullets used should be of a meplat type solid, capable of finding their way to the brain or spine, which are the only places you can hit to stop a charging buffalo. You may turn a charge with enough lead, but only a brain/spine shot will end it. After the buffalo is down, one or more follow-up shots are a must. Never, ever assume a buffalo is dead until he's in the salt.

If contemplating a buffalo hunt, think about what it is you want in your safari and don't romanticize about it.

Reading is easy, and marveling over the adventures of others while seeing yourself doing the same is great, provided you can do it. Do an honest assessment of your capabilities, and look for an adventure that fits you, not one that you cannot enjoy. If you're unfit, or unhealthy, please don't burden a professional with your presence on a 12-mile-day buffalo hunt into the wilds and woolies of Zimbabwe. No one will enjoy it, you least of all. Customize your hunt to your capabilities, and you'll have a helluva good time. Getting yourself in better shape by walking is highly advised.

Choose a rifle that you can shoot accurately. Bringing a .600 Nitro double rifle that scares the hell out of you is not impressive. Rather opt for a good .375 or .416 with a 1x4 scope that you are 'dead nuts' with and can help the professional help you.

Once you're honest with yourself and decide on how and where you'd like to hunt buffalo, do a little research. Be

A 12 mile track on this wounded buffalo ended on a positive note



wary of internet postings either praising or tearing down an operator, as many of these are simply other operators posting as if they were clients, agents of other operators, cousins, friends, whatever. Social media is full of misinformation, and the hunting industry is no exception. Also, watch out for the 'too good to be true' ads that offer buffalo hunts at unreasonably low rates. There are reasons for them, and, while some are legitimate, most are certainly not quality hunts and almost all of them are from South Africa where animals can be bought and dropped for shooting quickly.

The bottom line is to be wary, regardless of your hunting destination desires. Make sure your assigned professional hunter is dangerous-game qualified for the province you'll be hunting in, and ask specifically of the company you're considering a hunt with how many buffalo it bags in a season. Is it a buffalo hunting company or do they only do a few each year, spending most of their time shooting impala and warthogs? A dangerous-game license in

SA can be obtained with a few photos and testimonials, so ask about the PH and his actual level of experience. You wouldn't want to ride in NASCAR with a driver in his first race, so why risk your life hunting buffalo with an amateur? Most buffalo hunting fatalities occur in South Africa, and while most of that can be attributed to the fact that most buffalo are hunted in South Africa, there are also instances of inexperience which has led to death.

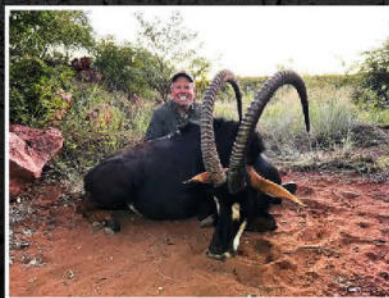
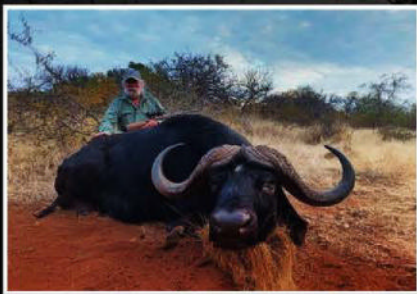
With that being said, I can state for the record that South Africa offers the best buffalo hunting value on the continent, has the best logistics, best accommodations, best food, and some of the finest professionals to ever walk a track. Those 'fly by nights' that give the country a bad name are greatly overshadowed by the vast majority of those who want to do things the right way. Seek out those guys and you'll have one of the most enjoyable, satisfying adventures you can imagine. Good reputations are hard earned, not made up.

So, is Cape buffalo hunting really that dangerous?

You bet your last dollar it is. Regardless of where you hunt them and under what conditions, once a buffalo is wounded and flips that switch, all the survival instincts of his ancestors are immediately brought to bear. This 'Bush Tank' is relentless and his unwillingness to succumb to the reaper is legendary. He can take more lead than a foundry and is not impressed by you. He will not give you his life willingly. It must be taken.

Those who wish to pursue him, should do so totally prepared for what might happen, as there's nothing more humbling than facing one's fears and shortcomings when the possibility of death is present. You can possess all the wealth in the world, but Nyati don't give a damn! You can't buy your way out of the trouble you sought. You paid for it, and you came looking for it on his turf.

So, what now, Bwana? Did you choose wisely? 🐘



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Hunting the Big Little Buck

By Daryl Crimp

*“He’s an absolute monster,” said PH Pete matter-of-factly,
“and he lives on this big plateau.”*

‘Big’ was an understatement. Even ‘huge’ didn’t cut it. The landscape in Eastern Cape is steroid- expansive, and Pete’s ‘plateau’ was the size of Switzerland. The ‘he’ Pete was referring to was a steenbok and, paradoxically, the ‘monster’ was a bit bigger than a hare but smaller than a large puppy. One of South Africa’s ‘tiny ten’ antelope, it is a fascinating animal and extremely challenging to hunt, unless you are a long-range shooter, which I am not.



Ironically, hunting these miniature species never appealed to me before coming to Africa, but they grew on me; got right under my skin in fact. The steenbok especially, had won my heart, though initially I was averse to hunting them. They mate for life and the thought of killing a mate didn't sit well with me. However, once I remembered that a predator could have the same effect, and that a mate could be replaced, my qualms disappeared.

I set my heart on a particular diminutive steenbok, and I coveted the little antelope. And his little horns were big!

"I have had hunters come back the past two years specifically trying to get that buck," Pete said, "but those horns don't get big by him being stupid."

"He'll be record book!"





Karoo landscape steenbok country.



Crimpy Ryan Karoo.

“Definitely,” Ryan agreed, “for sure.” My two new PHs and I were enjoying an afternoon recce, checking what animals were available and familiarising me with the territory. Ostensibly, we were after a nice old steenbok, but I didn’t allow myself to get too excited for a number of reasons: finding that buck was like the proverbial needle in a haystack; Africa had already smiled on me that morning—twice—and I felt that hoping for a third was pushing it. The cards were stacked against us, and it never pays to count your chickens.

Just on daybreak that morning we had stalked and shot my dream kudu; a very old, black-faced bull, well past his prime, and sporting worn horns that told of a rich and fulfilling life. It had recently broken free from a poacher’s snare and was dragging the long tether

from its neck - had I not ended it there, death would have been a miserable event.

While tracker Jimmy was caping the kudu, we hunted further into the long mountain valley. The slopes, basins, cliffs, and undulating levels supported sparse vegetation - native grasses and low bushes dotted here and there. The only real cover was in the main creek or the dongas that fanned down over the escarpment. We were heading to check out thirty-odd mountain reedbuck spread across a sunny face, when Ryan noticed a loner low on the opposite side. It immediately caught our attention because the signs indicated an old animal: it was well away from the main herd, held a harem of two, commanded a very good vantage point, and had an escape route immediately at hand.



The stalk was perfect: challenging, remote, and tortuous. Ryan and Pete utilised every trick in the book to squirrel closer. We leopard crawled, bum crawled, lizard crawled, hunched-old-man crawled, and crawled painfully until my knees bled. It was awesome. We used tiny bushes to shield our approach, and all three of us managed to conceal ourselves behind a rock. We crossed 700m as the crow flies over open ground without being spotted. This was real hunting. If I were a long-range shooter, the hunt would have finished an hour and twenty minutes



Wild steenbok through spotting scope.

ago, and the excitement would be long over.

The old ram dozed on his feet, in the sun, 120m away, completely oblivious of us.

"His horns aren't as good as I thought," Ryan said, looking through the spotting scope. "They are well broomed."

"But he's old," Pete said. Perfect, in every way. The horns were better than I could have imagined. Not long worn down, but thick with age and maturity and cunning.

"It can't get much better than this," I said, thanking my PHs for a magnificent morning. Or could it?

"Steenbok next," chirped Ryan. I just laughed. It was a novelty having an ADHD professional hunter. But it was time to get the animals on ice and have lunch.

"Is that the steenbok you were talking about?" I asked later that afternoon, indicating a dot in the distance.

"Tiny bugger—looks like him," Pete whistled. "Could be your lucky day."

Ryan checked through the spotting scope and confirmed that indeed, my initials were tattooed on that buck's rump.

With no real cover on 'Pete's Plateau', the only real advantage we held was the strong afternoon wind that had picked up. Funnelling over the contours of this monumental landscape, it bent grasses and shrubs, disguising our movement, and masking any sound we made. It also anchored the steenbok and his mate on a lee slope, giving us further opportunity to get close.

Using a donga, Pete, Ryan, and I doubled over and set off. When opposite the animals, we leopard crawled in single file until we were tucked behind a small anthill, 90m away from our target.

The antelope had bedded down in the time it had taken us to cover the exposed ground, so we took reference marks and settled in to wait them out. My knees and legs bore fresh wounds, and my muscles and sinews protested a little too loudly, but I felt almost euphoric. The



Karoo landscape.



Mountain reedbuck afford a challenging hunt in the wild.



Tortuous stalks over open ground are required when hunting wild steenbok.

whole experience had a surreal feel to it, and I kept replaying the morning's hunts in my mind.

"He's up," Pete hissed, and I rolled into a kneel behind the tripod. The steenbok stretched and stood broadside - the perfect shot. I settled the crosshairs, squeezed off, and... missed by a country mile! I couldn't believe it. The sight picture looked fine, but it's a good liar who tells you he never misses. Fortunately, the little buck gave me a



Sunrise over the karoo.

second chance; it ran in a tight circle and stopped on the same spot. That's where it dropped.

The guys couldn't believe the size of the needle-like horns. The buck was an absolute monster. They reckoned record-book material, but I'm not into that, so we didn't run the tape over it. I sat against an anthill as the sun set and a baboon barked in the distance, taking in the full measure of the hunt. In one day we'd successfully stalked three superb old animals, each of a uniquely different species.

If I were a betting man, and I'm not, I'd wager an 'African Trifecta' doesn't come along every day.

Daryl Crimp is a New Zealand based hunter, author and publisher who also hosts tailored safaris in Africa. Having hunted extensively throughout New Zealand since the age of five, Daryl has also hunted internationally, throughout the Pacific, Europe, UK and Africa. He has a deep love of The Dark Continent and enjoys facilitating this unique hunting experience with others. Daryl can be contacted at: darylcrimp@gmail.com





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Our 139-mile Elephant Hunt

By Divan Labuschagne

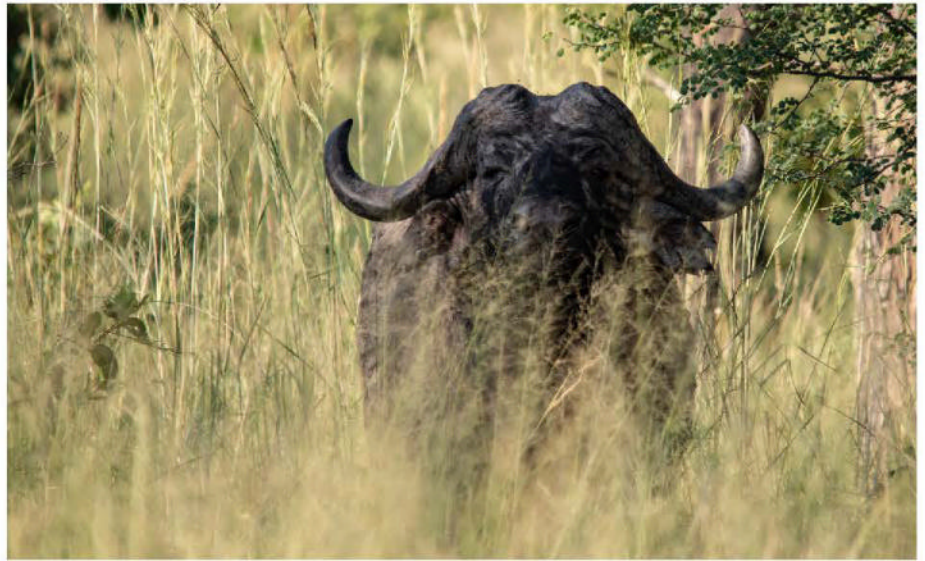
Image: Divan Labuschagne

On the hunt

It was April, and the vegetation in Bwabwata was thick. Grass towered six feet tall in some places with visibility mere meters. I love this time of year, up close and personal with some of my favorite species - elephant and buffalo. Bwabwata is a 280 000-hectare wilderness area sandwiched between Botswana to the south and Angola to the north, with elephant, sable, buffalo, leopard, lion, and many, many more. This is truly a hunter's paradise. It's normal later in the year to find huge groups of elephant numbering into the high hundreds, with daylight sighting of leopard, African wild dogs and lion.

Erin and Mike had joined me for an epic safari in Namibia's famous Caprivi. Mike's focus was a big elephant, and for the next two safaris we were hunting elephant the way it was meant to be - by tracking - while also hunting buffalo and hippo along the way. Erin, *from Giving Back TV*, was filming. Bwabwata is known for its big herds of buffalo and has produced some of Africa's very best Dagga Boys. Bull herds with up to 20 in a group were very common, and tracking these bulls into the thickets was as exciting as it gets.

One late afternoon on our way back to camp my tracker Johnny caught a glimpse of a buffalo about 400 yards off the road. We got our rifles ready and started following. The bull was alone and slowly walking in grass taller than the Land Cruiser. I knew right there and then it was going to be close and personal, just the way I liked it. We tracked the bull for about 20 minutes when Johnny suddenly spotted it and pointed. Right in front of us was the bull feeding, totally unaware of our presence. The wind was good and quite strong, thus giving us the chance to get in even closer. I got Mike in close behind me. We slowly made our way forward, eyes fixed on the bull's every move. The grass was so thick that Mike was struggling to make out the buffalo now standing broadside. We inched



forward a couple more steps and put Mike on the sticks, and I whispered to him to make sure before squeezing the trigger.

There was a loud bark from the .416 Rem mag. The bull bucked and was gone before a second shot was possible. As a professional hunter I like to wait some time for the shot to take effect before following. We stood there for about five minutes then slowly walked to where the bull had been. Straight off the bat we found some lung blood. We followed the bull that was now heading into some very thick scrub, and heard it crashing through the bushes a couple of times. Time was ticking and we were losing light quickly.

On high alert I got Mike in right next to me with Erin as camera man and Johnny following the tracks of the departing bull. We tracked, stopped and listened. At one stage the bush was so thick it was almost dark in there. Then spotting the bull standing in some thick brush facing us, Mike managed to put in another shot, hitting the bull behind the shoulder but a little too far back. We waited a few minutes before following with caution. The bull was heading into some very thick bush, and with daylight fading quickly we continued after it. Johnny spotted it once more, facing us and Mike put in a frontal chest shot. The bull grunted and came straight for us. I fired the first barrel of my .470 NE hitting it in the chest, and Mike followed with a perfect brain shot, putting him down for good. Everyone was relieved at the outcome. Mike got a fantastic bull, and it was a great start to a wonderful safari ahead.

Later that same week we followed another bull close to the Botswana border. It was slowly walking southeast after a nice mud bath, and it wasn't long before we saw it feeding towards us. This was ideal, and I got Mike on the sticks. The bull was now about 25 yards, coming our way. Then, from our right another bull appeared, a slightly



younger one and still soft. We stood motionless trying to hide behind some tall grass. The younger bull suddenly winded us and took off, spooking the first bull that had been unaware of us, and he also took off, seemingly not sure what had just happened.

We followed and saw him once more, slowly walking away into the omuramba (ancient riverbeds found in the Kalahari Desert). Inside Bwabwata, every few kilometers there were these beautiful open omurambas running from northwest to southeast. In the rainy season they were filled with water, and buffalo just loved visiting the mud pools. We could now see the bull's back as he moved from one mud pool to the next. Buffalo love to bath in mud to cool down and to get rid of parasites, as this time of the year it was hot, and ticks were everywhere. We leapfrogged to the right trying to intercept the bull. The wind was good, and we had plenty

of good cover in the long grass, but it was impossible to take a longer shot because of the grass.

The bull then walked parallel to us, giving Mike the perfect opportunity to take a fatal shoulder shot. It ran about 50 yards before stopping. I could see it was struggling to stay on its feet and Mike put in another great shot. This was buffalo number two for Mike, and what a bull it was. We loaded it, and by the time we were done it was dark. We had about a two-hour drive back to camp in time for dinner and a good night's sleep, ready to be on the road the next morning at 5 a.m. looking for elephant.

At this stage of the safari we had followed some elephant bulls but none that excited us. Big cow herds were plentiful. We knew it was just a matter of time before finding the right track. Slowly driving the cutline between Namibia and Botswana one morning we found the tracks of a big bull





Image: Divan Labuschagne



heading into our area from Botswana. We followed the bull that at this stage was just walking, not too fast but fast enough to keep in front of us. We followed the tracks into the omuramba to a pan where it drank. We could clearly see the tracks in the mud, and they looked even more impressive than they had earlier that morning.

After almost six hours of fast tracking, we were still not catching up to it. We cleared another omuramba and saw the bull had changed course, walking north. The sun was setting fast, and we had only a few hours of daylight left. We followed him for another six miles before time ran out. We had to abandon the tracks, as daylight was now almost gone. We had walked about 42 km from 8 a.m. that morning to sunset.

We followed more elephant that safari without any luck of a big bull. We saw plenty of elephant but just

couldn't find the right one. Mike had to leave without an elephant, but the plan was to return later in the year to try and find the right bull.

It was now October and hot as hell. Mike and Erin made their way back to the Caprivi in pursuit of a big tusker for Mike. Most of the pans had dried up and most of the animals were concentrated close to the Kwando River. Hundreds of elephant drank daily, and we were following them left and right. The sun was extremely hot, and walking in the soft Caprivi sand didn't make it any easier. I had two teams of trackers. If we got on a track and followed it, the other trackers and driver would continue scouting. We came across a very nice track of a bull elephant close to Horseshoe Bend, heading west. The only problem was that every day, hundreds of elephant drank there and tracking was not easy. Once we had found the track again it

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wasn't long before the bull joined up with yet another giant cow herd. This made things difficult as we had to maneuver our way between these cows to get to where the bull was. We had numerous close calls in the thickets only to lose the track again.

This bull had an unmistakable front left foot with a very distinctive deep crack, making it easy for the trackers to follow. An elephant's track is like a human fingerprint, and if you can read a track, you will be able to follow such an animal for a long way. For the next few days we repeated the same process over and over, just to lose his track in the middle of thousands of elephant heading daily to the river and back. On day 10 of Mike's second safari of the year, we found the tracks of the same bull again, heading west after being to



the river to drink. It was about midday and actually very late to start tracking an elephant that had walked there the previous night. But knowing they don't go too far, we set out to follow once again.

This time we got lucky. The bull was walking along a well-worn elephant path, and every now and then had stopped to feed. Later on he joined a group of cows in a burned area, feeding on some fresh leaves from the cluster-leaved terminalia trees. We could now hear elephant not too far away and we set off at pace. Soon enough we could see elephant here and there. The problem was to find the bull without spooking the rest of the herd. We swung around to the right to try cover the whole herd before they went into the thickets again. As we came close to the end of the burned area, we saw the body of a big bull towering over the few cows that were surrounding him. I looked through my binoculars trying to see his tusks, but the angle was not great. We moved back to the left, zig-zagging our way between some young bulls.

We could now see the elephant clearly. It was him. A bull of a lifetime, with thick and beautiful ivory. I got Mike in next to me and we started walking towards the bull slightly quartering towards us. Other elephants made it very difficult as we didn't want to spook any of them, as then the whole herd would take off, leaving us to start over the next morning. Slowly Mike and I got into shooting position. Mike was using a .470 NE. We didn't have too much time left and it was getting dark. We got in to about 30 yards and Mike took aim.

The 500-grain bullet took the bull on the forehead just to the right, missing the brain. As the elephant swung around, Mike put in the second barrel, getting the bull in the stomach. I took a shot with my .500 Jeffery, hitting the bull as he was now running away from

us. I knew we had hit him and it was just a matter of time before we would catch up again. We tracked him for a few miles, but we were losing light fast. Then we found blood and realized that

bull now only walking. A good sign.

Suddenly my tracker Johnny spotted another elephant walking our way, a younger bull. We detoured to the left trying not to spook it as we didn't know where the big one was. Then Kenneth, another great bushman tracker, found the bull standing still. We moved into position and Mike dropped the bull right there. What a giant he was, truly a bull dreams are made of. The weight of the heavier tusk came in at 70lbs and the smaller one at 67lbs.

It was a remarkable hunt - by day 10 of the second safari we had walked 139 miles to find the right bull. This is what elephant hunting is all about. It is said that you hunt buffalo with guts; leopards with your brain; lion with your heart, and elephant with your feet. I couldn't agree more. At the end of a wonderful safari Mike had taken two beautiful Dagga Boys, a hippo, and a big Caprivi tusker.

It was a worthwhile walk! 🌿





Trip Rifle

By Bruce Moon

Remember the adage, “Beware the man with one gun, he knows how to use it.” Well, for regular hunting, I am just about the opposite. I love rifles and have accumulated a few. From a Civil War carbine to a modern rifle with a cutting-edge scope, if I own it, I am going hunt with it—not just stick it on a wall or in the back of the gun safe to collect dust. My job is to allow them to fulfill their purpose—to be used in the field. Where I hunt here in Texas, I am not going to see a B&C whitetail. I am going to see does and pigs, so handicapping myself with an old open-sighted lever rifle or Trapdoor for a weekend is not likely to cost me an entry in the record books, but is going to provide me with a challenge, and tremendous satisfaction when successful. Using only one rifle all the time is boring, and an insult to all the other rifles out there. All that changes when I go on a trip.



Author and Black Wildebeest. South Africa, 2022

Out of state, out of the country, big trip, hard trip, lifetime trip, one gun is certain to go with me - my Trip Rifle.

I had a nine-month research project to select the optimum one cartridge for all North American game and African plains game. My focus was on effectiveness, accuracy, availability of ammo, cost, plus the possibility of handloading in the future. I had caught the hunting bug bad, and dreamed of future adventures beyond those in

Texas, but reality made it doubtful I would own multiple specialized rifles. I chose the .300 Winchester Magnum. It was 1990, and nothing I have read or experienced since has shaken my opinion.

The rifle I bought was the old-style Ruger M77 with the tang safety. Why? I saw an ad for that model in the local newspaper— new in box in any caliber for only \$300. I did not know that Ruger was selling them off to make room for the new Model 77.

Zebra, South Africa, 2022. Author and Trip Rifle.



It wouldn't have made a difference. I was the proud owner of a quality rifle in what I considered the ultimate medium cartridge. Now what?

My list of lifetime hunts at the time was short of elk. I made friends with an experienced elk hunter who lived in Denver who invited me to come up to hunt with him. I did two years straight. The price was right, and I figured I would learn a lot. It was a learning experience all right, mostly valuable for future hunts and hunting-related activities.

My friend was an older engineer and an experienced handloader. Our first stop was the range. I had brought 180-gr factory loads, advertised velocity 2960. He introduced me to the chronograph. Actual velocity was 2850. He advised me to use his load, a 200-gr bullet at just over 3000 FPS velocity. He stated guns were over-engineered and assured me his load was perfectly safe. He also assured me blown primers and a partial casing head failure were normal as well. All that was filed away and avoided like the plague when I began handloading.

My first trip out of the USA, to Eastern Canada for caribou, advertised as a near sure thing, ended without a shot opportunity at a mature animal. Things were not working out as I had dreamed. Life took over for a decade, and during that time the "Trip Rifle" lay unused, unnamed. Bow hunting had become a passion, and I completed the first of my lifetime hunts, for elk, with the bow. My list of lifetime hunts had now expanded to four.

Hand loading had also become a passion, first for the .375 H&H (Africa for Cape buffalo had been added to the list. I had bought the gun nine years before I was able to make the trip) followed by the .270. Accuracy became paramount to me and the .300 was not interesting with 150-gr factory loads shooting 2"+ groups.

The pig invasion hadn't occurred in Texas yet, so there was no need for heavier bullets. Nothing big to shoot,

not that accurate, not fun to shoot compared with .270 so the Trip Rifle became my bad weather gun, loaner, and I even contemplated selling it to a close friend.

Time to reassess. I discussed it with my gun mentor Uncle Pete. He said I was an idiot. He said it was a great cartridge but needed 180- or 200-gr bullets for best accuracy and effectiveness. He recommended handloading it and predicted excellent performance. I also reviewed my dad's hunting files which ended in 1959 with his death. I found multiple articles on the various .300 magnums, and even an article discussing Winchester's future entry. I had been right - just stay the course. All was filed away for future attention.

Then came Africa, second of my lifetime hunts, in 2004. Cape buffalo and common plains game in Tanzania -



Springbok, South Africa, 2022. Author and Trip Rifle

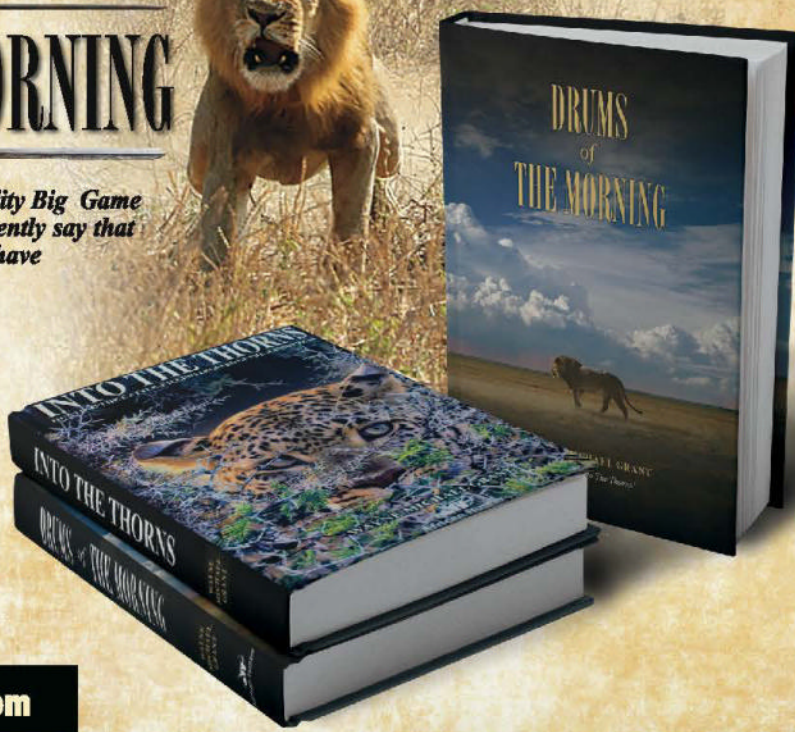
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Cape Kudu, South Africa 2022. Some dreams do come true.

.375 H&H and .300 Win Mag.

I read Boddington's book *Safari Rifles*. He recommended one caliber size up each, but the PH survey matched my decisions. I decided on 200-gr Nosler Partition bullets in a HE load for plains game thanks to the book and other references on the toughness of African game. Off to the range to see. Eureka. Legitimate 1" groups. Pete was right, Dad was right, I was right.

In Africa, Trip Rifle went from an afterthought to priceless. It proved devastating on the plains game allowed on the safari: Zebra front on, the only bullet that did not exit; impala; warthog; red hartebeest; white-bearded wildebeest (shot too far back, two quick following shots to anchor, all exited), and Robert's Thompson's gazelle.

My dream antelope, kudu, was not on license. I would have to return someday if I were to get it and promised myself I would, after the rest of my four lifetime hunts were completed.

Remaining on my lifetime list were mountain hunts for Dall's sheep and Rocky Mountain goat. It was time to handload Trip Rifle for ultimate performance.

Research indicated 180 gr was best for my purposes. Testing proved my rifle liked flat-based bullets —Nosler Partition and regular old bullets. My final load produced sub 1" groups, slight pressure signs and excellent velocity. I practiced rigorously from 100-400 yards and from hunting positions. I shot exactly 218 rounds in 11 sessions over nine months. When I boarded the first

of four planes for my Dall's sheep hunt, I could ethically shoot at 400 yards if conditions were perfect. I needed every bit of the practice. I ended up needing to make a 405-yard shot. Conditions were indeed perfect and, with one shot, a beautiful Dall's ram, for dad, was ours. Unfortunately, the stock was broken on the mountain on the trip back to camp, and I used a borrowed rifle for mountain caribou.

"Trip Rifle" officially got her name.

Big trip, hard trip, big money (to me) on the line - that was the rifle I wanted in my hand.

Often with rifles I experiment with different bullet weights when handloading. Not with Trip Rifle. Why mess with perfection? For trips I use the 180-gr Nosler Partition, my max load

and UF or 1x f cases. It ain't play, it is all business.

A McMillan stock eventually replaced wood, and with a butt stock shell holder from Murray Custom Leather made from my Cape buffalo hide and a good shooting sling, the ensemble was complete.

Supposedly my final mountain hunt, for Rocky Mountain goat and Alaskan Yukon moose, took place three years later. I finally took my goat at 150 yards on the sixth day, and two days later was forced to shoot the moose between the eyes at 30 yards. The results were dramatically effective. By now, in my mind, there was nothing the Trip Rifle couldn't do.

A few years later that rifle took a good black bear in British Columbia on a quick challenging shot at the end of a difficult week, and accompanied me to Kodiak Island where it took a decent deer and a huge silver phase fox. It wasn't needed for either but would have evened the odds had a Kodiak bear contested matters, and that was a comfort. I unadvisedly tackled another mountain. The Trip Rifle was ready



Alaskan-Yukon Moose, Northwest Territories, Canada, 2010. Only shot was between the eyes at 30 yards off-hand. Trip Rifle was up to the task, again.

as we practiced at the range and in the field. I had 10 rounds of ammo to use for in-field practice. We took six pigs, one raccoon and missed three coyotes. It turns out I was the one not ready, physically. The Mountain broke me. We had over three foot of snow, the airline lost Trip Rifle, I never saw a

legal stone sheep, used a borrowed rifle to take an impressive Canadian moose at 275 yards, (eventually) and had to grip tightly while a grizzly threatened camp while I was there alone. I really wished the Trip Rifle was with me, but I collected it on the way back, thankfully.

My long-awaited return to Africa came 18 years after Tanzania. South Africa this time, for kudu, another zebra, and other plains game. I again practiced out to 400 yards and spent plenty of trigger time behind African-style sticks - something over 200 rounds total. I also again used the Trip Rifle in the field for off-season varmint hunting to familiarize myself again, taking several feral hogs and even a couple of coyotes in the months leading up to the safari.

Having a great safari company like BSG Safaris paid off, plus a great PH like Mark Weber and all the practice. My kudu was the first animal taken, at dusk at the end of a magnificent stalk after a long hard day. We crept a few yards at a time for over 300 yards to get within shooting distance on the opposite hillside. The kudu was sharply quartering away at 240 yards,

Dall's Sheep, Northwest Territories, Canada 2007—author and Trip Rifle.





Robert's and Thompson's gazelle, Maswa, Tanzania, 2004—author and Trip Rifle.

not ideal presentation, and certainly the longest shot I will ever attempt off sticks. The results were devastating. The kudu was down for good within 10 seconds of the shot. I finally had my kudu.

I now I had the experience described by Selous, TR, Hemingway, Ruark, O'Connor and Boddington.

The rest of the safari was simply a celebration of the beauty of the land and animals, and a tour de force of the Trip Rifle's capabilities. There were no

long tracking jobs. A good rest and a steady hand behind the trigger did the job: Zebra, again front on, taken at 180 yards, collapsing within 75 yards; springbok, broadside, dropping immediately at 220 yards; blesbok, front on at 150 turned broadside at the shot, obviously sick, and dropped immediately at the follow up. An autopsy proved the second shot hastened things by only a little.

Completing the package, another blesbok fell at 275 yards broadside, then

a magnificent ancient black wildebeest at 240, with a follow-up at near bayonet range to end things immediately.

Then my PH asked if I would like to shoot a cull animal for management purposes. Of course I did and he found a perfect blesbok.

"See if you can take him from here."

I took a good rest and asked the distance. "Just over 300 yards," he said.

The shot broke cleanly. I was so locked in that I saw the bullet strike. The blesbok stood following the shot. I cranked another shell in and watched through the scope. Right at 15 seconds he staggered and fell.

I looked over at my PH. His expression was priceless.

"You are a weapon," he said.

Not really, but with my Trip Rifle at hand, I know that any ethical shot is makable, and that makes all the difference.

I do not know what (if any) far-off adventures remain for me and the Trip Rifle, and at this moment I don't really care. I do know that, given the chance, the rifle has performed magnificently on two continents, and we have now taken over 20 species.

Not bad for a 32-year-old \$300 rifle! 🦏

PH Andre de Kock, right, with buffalo and plains game taken by author on right. Maswa, Tanzania, 2004.





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The Triple Deuce Safari

By Kim Stuart



Two old guys, two double rifles, and two Cape buffalo each.

I know, this sounds like an African wreck waiting to happen. When long-time hunting buddy Jim Gefroh and I sat down with Jacques Senekal, owner of African Maximum Safaris in the North West Province of South Africa, and laid our hunting parameters, things did get worse, at least for him.

The conversation went like this.

“Hi Jacques, great to finally be here. Jim and I have a few things you should know. Well, Jim is kinda hard of hearing, not bad, but you have to speak up a bit, even when standing next to him. Oh, and my eyesight isn’t what it used to be, especially in low light conditions. But we figure between the two of us you’ve got one pretty seasoned hunter.”

Jacque smiled weakly and shifted slightly in his seat.

“And, just so there are no surprises, we have a self-imposed maximum shooting distance of 50 yards. We won’t shoot unless we have a perfect broadside shot on a buffalo, no moving targets. We’ve agreed that unless a scenario is perfect, we won’t take the shot. We would rather go home without shooting a buffalo than mess things up. Oh yeah, and I’m allergic to chocolate.”

After a quick change of clothes, we headed to the shooting range with professional hunters T.J. and Arri. They kindly accommodated us by setting up a target at 50 yards. Our trackers, Medina and Songas, as well as a group of curious onlookers were there to see how the old guys would do.

Jim was spot on as usual. His .500 Nitro Express, built by Varney Caron for Griffin and Howie, was a tack driver. He consistently drove 570-grain bullets into the center, a 6x6 square in the middle of the target. My turn. After six shots I finally got on the larger, 12x12 paper target.

Our (my credibility) dropped like a



Kim's buffalo taken with his single trigger over and under .375 by Chapuis.

Victorian window-weight. The silence behind me said it all, and I know that T.J. and Arri were thinking, what every PH thinks when witnessing an incompetent shooter... We are really in trouble, let's hope this guy doesn't wound a buffalo.

The next day we left African Maximum Safaris at Woodstock Farm, and headed to Thabazimbi. There we would hunt on a property not far from the border of Botswana, one with the romantic name, roughly translated from Afrikaans as, Scent of Spring.

The hunt Jim and I booked months before was a cull hunt for four, two each Cape buffalo cows, ideally those too old to breed. We would be accompanied by our two PHs, our two trackers and a tracker from the property where we would be hunting. He would help to identify an individual cow that could be taken without endangering any other animals in the herd.

When I began writing some years ago, a fellow hunter and long-term respected friend told me almost as a directive, "Kim, you must always tell

the truth."

In this case it would be easy to use artistic license when recounting the facts of a hunt, especially when all does not go according to plan.

Jim was on a bubble our first morning, but it didn't take long to realize buffalo in a high-fenced area, even one of approximately 1,000 acres, are more skittish than fair-chase buffalo. Many stalks over the first day yielded only filtered views of various buffalo through the thick acacia bushveld. By late in the second afternoon they were even more difficult to find.

Suddenly, T.J. rapped on the hood of the Toyota bakkie. He pointed to the right of the vehicle, at a dark spot approximately 60 yards away, indistinguishable to me from any other dim shadow. He whispered, "Cow buff, let's go."

I stayed with the vehicle as Jim, Arri, T.J. and our local tracker tried to maneuver through the thick brush, closing the gap on the old cow. She shifted, disappeared, appeared again, joined her small herd, began

to wonder off, stopped and... at 62 yards, presented a clear shot, slightly quartering towards Jim. His .500 Nitro Express barked, followed by the unmistakable sound of a round hitting flesh. The cow buckled, stumbled and disappeared.

There was a small amount of blood, not much, but a slight trail we were able to follow forty or fifty yards before tracking became too difficult. Her prints were mixed with the others of the herd that bolted with her after the shot. In addition, dusk was upon us and to continue in the low light conditions could easily have compromised what spoor we had.

We resumed tracking early the next morning and, after thirty man hours of tracking, found not one more drop of blood or sign of a wounded buffalo, or one in distress.

T.J., Arri, and our local tracker gave the call: "We think the buff was clipped in the brisket, initially bled when it bolted, and we are sure the buffalo will be OK. We have done everything we can to find her, criss-crossing the

concession multiple times and see no reason to continue.”

A PH often asks a hunter after a shot, “How did it feel?”

I had asked Jim, “Would you take the same shot again?”

His answer was a most definite, “Absolutely, no doubt of it.”

I had known Jim and hunted with him for almost 45 years, in trips to Canada and Alaska, California, Texas, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, and including over two dozen hunts in Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. Many of the African hunts were for dangerous game. Never had I ever seen Jim miss. He has hunted many species with a custom-made flintlock, a single-shot handgun, and many large-caliber rifles, both single shot, bolt action and double barrel. I’ve never seen Jim muff a shot, he is just too careful, too much a seasoned hunter, and too responsible.

As you can imagine, Jim felt horrible, but was comforted by knowing the buffalo would be OK. However, I had a surprise in mind that would make him feel better.

We returned to Woodstock where Jacques had kindly arranged a hunt on a nearby cattle ranch of many thousands of acres.

With a new area to hunt, and many undisturbed buffalo, this was my possibility for redemption.

T.J.’s hawk-like eyes picked up the slight movement and dark shapes of buffalo cautiously sifting through a small clearing. We eased off the bakkie, and moved diagonally to the slowly drifting herd. T.J. whispered, “Just over 60 yards to the old cow on the far right.” I could clearly see the protruding hip-bones and prominent ribs of the cow he was pointing to. We set up the shooting sticks, moving them again to clear some low-hanging branches, and again as the cow eased past a few bushes, and once more when she finally stopped and stood broadside.

I was shooting a single trigger over-



Jim's buffalo taken with his V.C. .500 Nitro Express double.

and-under .375 by Chapuis. The rifle felt as comfortable as an old golf club when I slipped it onto the shooting sticks and squeezed the trigger. T.J. reacted like a lottery winner. “Nice shot, wow, nice shot!” The cow was down within a few yards from where she stood, and a follow-up shot was probably not necessary, however, always a safe bet.

If T.J. was excited, I was secretly elated. Why my shooting at the range a few days before was so bad, I’ll never know. The feeling of making a clean shot on a buffalo of any age is like casting the perfect fly. So many variables have to come together: distance, wind, cover, noise, nerves and an accommodating-target.

Jim was on a high again. Another new area, and a different challenge. Jim was to take a buffalo that was, according to the landowner, “Cheeky.” In a multiple-acre, high-fenced area with thick bush, one single animal is difficult to locate, stalk, and successfully shoot.

Thankfully, Jim’s hunt ended well. Even with our two PHs and a tracker, it was a challenging half-day event in the thickest bush and on the hottest day we had experienced.

The surprise I mentioned earlier

was a birthday gift for Jim. He was in the dark, but our two PHs were not. Although Jim had hunted his two buffalo, T.J. advised him to keep his rifle with him as there might be an opportunity to shoot a warthog, if we were lucky. The trap had been set!

We arrived at the same property where I had taken my buffalo some days before. After a few hours of driving and covering areas of the large farm we had not previously scouted, we spotted fresh buffalo spoor and eventually saw the filtered, dark and dusty colors of a small herd slowly drifting through the bushveld.

Jim’s casual attitude was not one of a hunter ready to stalk and shoot a Cape buffalo. In his mind, his safari was over, and he was along for the ride, basically on vacation. As T.J. and Arri slipped Jim’s rifle out of the case, I leaned over and said, “Happy birthday, this buffalo is yours.”

I had to repeat it, not because of his hearing, but because he just couldn’t believe what I was saying.

“Yeah, Jimmy, you’re hard to buy for, so for the guy who has everything, how about hunting another Cape buffalo?”

Many of us save for years with the



goal of visiting Africa to hunt a Cape buffalo, hoping for one successful safari. Jimmy had the opportunity to hunt three, and my gift of the last buffalo couldn't go to a more deserving friend.

With new purpose and a morning shot of hunter's adrenalin, Jim, T.J. and Arri slowly eased off the truck and into the bush. The wind was favorable and moisture from the morning dew softened carefully placed footsteps on the grassy approach to the buffalo.

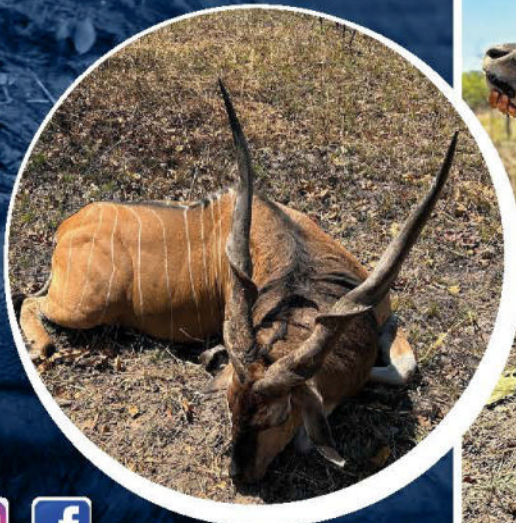
When the scenario of two seasoned PHs and a confident hunter come together, the ending is like that of a well-rehearsed play. Jim's hunt ended successfully, taking the buffalo at 35 yards. It was down cleanly, all hands were safe, and the curtain of our safari closed with our small audience silently acknowledging a very positive ending to our, "Triple Deuce Safari." 🦒



Longtime hunting buddies, Kim Stuart and Jim Gefroh with Jim's birthday buffalo.

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Huntress Diana



A Spot of **DANGER**

By Kendal-Ray Kaschula

I'm sure I speak for all hunters when I say that we all have those moments in life when we wonder what the hell we're actually doing. Maybe it's at three a.m. when you're yanking on your boots and trying to tie laces while still half asleep. Maybe it's when you're waiting for the kettle to boil so you can have your sanity-restoring cup of very black, very strong, coffee. Or, if you're like me, it might be in the middle of a mopane and duiker berry forest so thick you can barely see your tracker beside you, the sun straight overhead, beating down a glorious forty degrees of summer.

And then I remember exactly why I'm doing this. Somewhere, in the wilderness surrounding me, is a leopard that was eating at least five calves a week, and my entire purpose was to hunt it.

The cattle boy who found the latest killed calf was plowing through the brush with stony-faced skill while I trudged after him with my tracker Prosper, coughing and spluttering up mouthfuls of leaves and doing my best not to be a complete baby about the massive golden orb-web spiders hanging from every branch. I do not care what anyone says, just because you like being outside doesn't mean you have to be spider tolerant. Hunters are not immune to phobias. That is a myth.

After what felt like another three kilometers, the cattle boy stopped, and in hurried, whispered Shona (Zimbabwe's most used local language) explained that the calf was just ahead. We continued extra quietly, and soon reached the calf. The leopard had pulled it under a thicket, effectively hiding it from vultures. Further inspection showed that it had only been half-eaten as well, meaning there was plenty left to bring the leopard back.

Immediately, we set to work. Careful to make as little noise as possible in case the cat was not far away, we started cutting a shooting lane, clearing the trees and brambles enough so that

Image: Kendal-Ray Kaschula, Location: Mwenze District, Zimbabwe, Africa



Me with leopard, the tracker Prosper Nyati, Thomas the "cattle boy", and kneeling with my rifle is Zivani, my father's old hunting partner.

I could make out the carcass from my blind, and shoot unobstructed. While I did that with the cattle boy, Prosper started scoping for tracks, no easy feat in an area with such thick grass cover. Later he informed me that it was a mature female, one leg slightly dragging. I was not surprised at that information, as very rarely will leopards resort to such consistent killing without a reason: If a leopard is lame, domestic calves are one hundred percent an easier prey option.

With the bush being so thick, it soon became clear that the seventy-to-eighty-yard lane I prefer wouldn't be possible. The only option was to hack a highway, and I did not want to open such a big space as it increased the likelihood of the leopard picking up on our presence. Instead, we cut a short

lane, a mere fifty yards in length, strung up the rheostat, and built a three-sided blind using green shade cloth and cut branches. We pulled the calf from the thicket and put it where we could view it from the blind. Not ideal, but 'We make a plan' is not Zimbabwe's standard motto for nothing. We finished just after 2 p.m. and left for lunch, and by 4 p.m. my tracker and I were settled into the blind.

My .375 was set up on my shooting sticks, pointing towards the carcass, loaded and on safe. My tracker wore the headphones that connected to the listening device for when it got dark. Silence enveloped us. Nothing but the odd pheasant calling. The shadows began to get longer, and then, just half an hour later Prosper tapped me and pointed towards the carcass.

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"I can just hear something walking... all over," he whispered. I nodded and strained my eyes, hoping to pick up a flash of spotted gold as I settled the butt of my rifle into my shoulder. He tapped me again, wide-eyed and quivering. I swear he gets more excited than me sometimes! I leant further forward, ready to use my scope, when I saw a ripple of yellow, barely visible through the thick bush. Then, slowly, so, so slowly, a leopard stepped into the open. The whole body was tense and outstretched towards the carcass, obviously concerned about it having been moved. It paused.

I shifted slightly and settled the scope's X on her shoulder, and a nanosecond later my shot shattered the silence. There was a moment of chaos as, with a loud growl, the leopard jumped and twisted in mid-air before hitting the ground and taking off. And instead of going in any direction away

from us, it headed straight for our not-very-able-to-hold-off-a-leopard-attack open-backed blind, out of view for another shot.

And this, ladies and gentlemen, is when I realized that fifty-yard lanes are perhaps not the wisest idea. Because, not only did it take all of five seconds to be within a ten-yard radius of us, though we still couldn't see it, but my shot had also been too high. So instead of a dead leopard, we had one slumped the ground, right near us. It was only moving slightly, if sound was anything to go by, because my bullet had stunned her spinal column.

In short, we were stuck in a mostly open blind, surrounded by thickets, and we had a wounded leopard not ten yards away, if not closer. There was something undeniably nerve-wracking about being able to hear our quarry panting, but not being able to see it. The sound of its heaving carried on

for a good ten minutes, during which my tracker and I held our breaths, not wanting to draw its attention. And then, with much more noise than normal with a feline predator, the leopard started to move through the brush, snapping branches as it headed directly for us.

Did she know we were there? Or was she just trying to leave? I'm not sure, but I didn't want to find out either way. A moment later, a sickly, coppery smell met our nostrils, and my tracker's eyes widened to saucer size. How close could she be if we could smell her, even without a breeze?

I shook my head at him slightly, lifting a finger to my lips, and took a deep breath. The blood smelt different from my past experiences. Not rich, or sickly sweet, like when I solidly hit the vitals. It didn't smell like a stomach hit either, though I guessed that one. Rather, it was just a straight, heavy coppery smell, mixed with the potent feline scent that was all leopard. The danger diagnosis: "Too high."

Immediately, I knew that what we needed was my dogs, and I could get them. We had a radio with us. All I had to do was radio home and have my father bring them, but I wasn't keen on making any noise that might attract the cat to come closer to us.

Also, it was getting late and darker, and that would bring its own set of problems. I turned the radio dial slowly, trying to keep the volume low because it beeped when turning on. There was still no movement from the leopard, but lots of labored breathing, and still too close for comfort.

I covered the radio's flashing light with my middle finger before radioing home in a whisper. I had to do it twice - the first time my voice was too soft to go through. The second time my father heard and answered, except - bless his soul, he didn't seem to understand why I was whispering, and he yelled his response through the radio. I cringed, and I think Prosper

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had heart palpitations, but after a very quick explanation we managed to establish the problem, and then all that was left to do was wait.

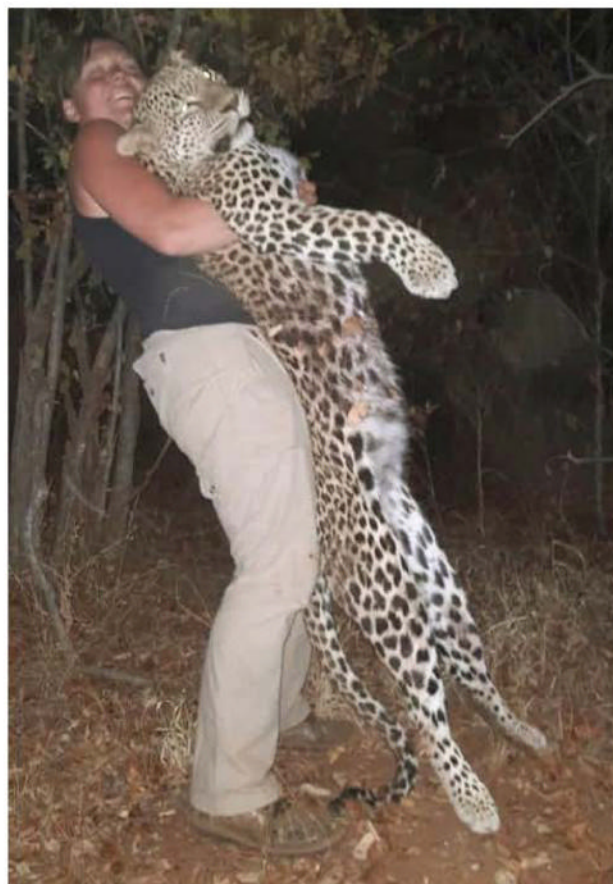
Bear in mind, the dogs were a good hour and a half away, which meant that we had to sit within earshot of the labored breathing of our wounded feline, us breathlessly, until the cavalry showed up. I had no desire to try to see and shoot our cat when I was the only one armed. *In future get the tracker a weapon.*

We watched the bush get darker, the winter sun setting early. We also heard our leopard's breathing slow down from heavy and straining to something slightly more even. It was last light when the radio crackled again. My father, with the hounds in tow, had reached the cattle kraal. All that lay between them and us were three kilometers of paddock. Three kilometers of thick brush was not enough to deter them. Dad was only too happy to drive his Cruiser through the thickets rather than walk all the way in.

I couldn't blame him for the choice. The dogs have an uncanny way of knowing when they're going hunting, and their excitement is not easy to deal with. Often you are left being pulled through the dirt as they drag you along by their leashes. And three kilometers of that is hardly a good start to fixing a wounded leopard.

It took them, miraculously, only thirty minutes to get within hearing distance of Prosper and me. They were close enough when they stopped so we could see their

Image: Kendal-Ray Kaschula, Location: Mwenzi District, Zimbabwe, Africa



Me and the PAC leopard.



ROYAL KAROO SAFARIS
REFINED ADVENTURE
FAIR CHASE HUNTING

torch beams through the thickets and hear when they slammed the car doors. Most of all, we could hear the hounds, already howling with excitement.

Obviously, if we could hear them, so could our cat. By then her breathing was almost perfectly even, something that worried me no end. More than anything else, it sounded as though she was recovering. I was even more sure of this when, after the car doors slammed and the dogs started up, we heard her move for the first time in a good hour, and thank heavens it was no longer towards us.

Surprisingly, and I honestly have no idea why (but let's not look a gift horse or leopard in the mouth) she did a full one-eighty and took off at a clumsy-sounding run in the completely opposite direction, going back past the calf, and disappearing into the bush.

"Thank God," I whispered, and I'll admit, I was wiping sweat off my forehead at that point. For an entire minute I just sat there, relieved at not having been bitten, when Prosper spoke, sounding panicky.

"They're coming in from the wrong side. They'll walk into the leopard!" And indeed, he was right. The dogs, with my father in tow and whoever was helping him handle them, were coming in from the direction the leopard was heading. Not knowing how far out the cat had gone I immediately realized that my tracker was more right than I gave him credit for. There was a good chance my father would walk into the leopard and, wounded as it would be, I didn't doubt it would lay into them.

"What can we do?" I whispered back, not too panicky, but honestly not sure what to do about it. Prosper seemed

to enjoy dispensing bad news, and continued to do so.

"Not just that... if they shoot at it, the bullets are coming to us!" He was right. Us at one end, our cavalry on the other, and the wounded cat possibly in between. Our options were ridiculously limited. What else could we do but flick on our torch to help guide them to us and hope the leopard had turned away. Five minutes later, without any mauling, we all met up at the carcass - my father, the cattle boy who was helping with the dogs, and my dad's old hunting partner. Our wounded cat must have moved far enough out.

I explained what had happened, and after a quick discussion we let my first, and main, hound, Remington, off her line. She immediately picked up the scent, following it to where the cat had walked up close to the blind and then back past us going out in the opposite direction. A minute later we heard her signature "boo" noise - a long, drawn-out howl unique to hounds - and immediately released Charlie, a Dogo who was the fighting part of the pair. She took off, and almost immediately the leopard starting roaring and growling as it fought the dogs.

We ran in, spotlights sweeping the thick bush, just as the leopard grabbed Charlie over the head. I lifted my rifle, firing at the mass of gold, and the cat released its hold on my dog who immediately pulled back, giving me room for another shot which finished the cat. For a moment we all just stood, getting our breaths back, our adrenalin subsiding. Charlie was bleeding, but not broken, and Remy was all good, excitedly ripping into the cat carcass.

I sighed, relieved we'd made it out without more bloodshed, and standing there, the hunt going through my mind detail by detail, I remembered once again just why I do it.

I love it. It is who I am. 🐾

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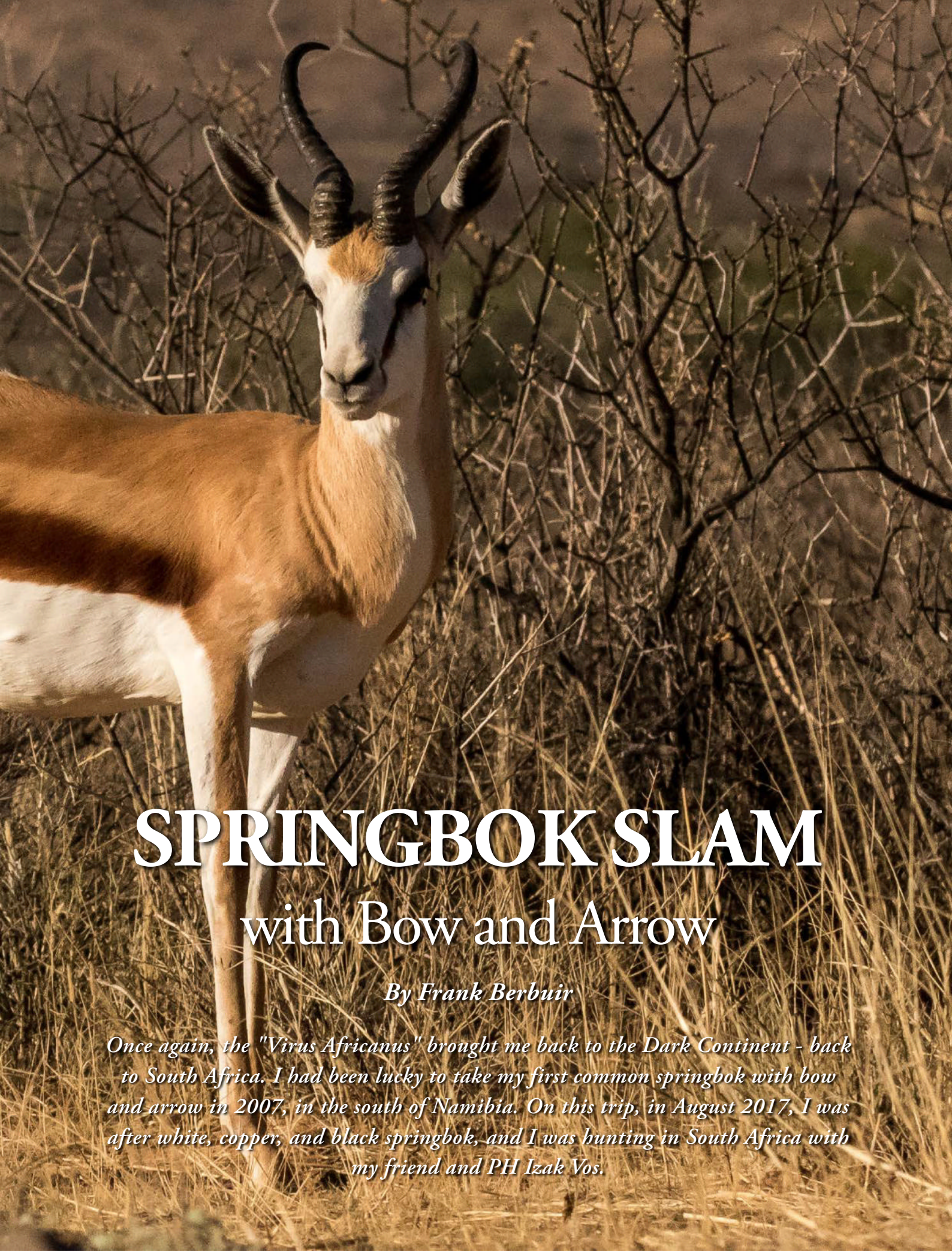
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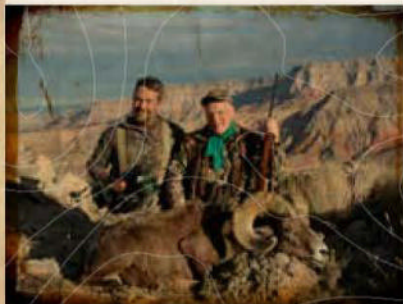
SPRINGBOK SLAM

with Bow and Arrow

By Frank Berbuir

Once again, the "Virus Africanus" brought me back to the Dark Continent - back to South Africa. I had been lucky to take my first common springbok with bow and arrow in 2007, in the south of Namibia. On this trip, in August 2017, I was after white, copper, and black springbok, and I was hunting in South Africa with my friend and PHI Izak Vos.

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Happy hunter with his first common springbok ram.

On the first afternoon and evening, we were sitting in a camouflaged tent blind approximately 25 meters from the natural waterhole where the springbok usually came to drink. I had forgotten that evenings in August in South Africa can become crisp, and I felt a bit chilly just in my Sniper Africa shirt after sitting still for a couple of hours. That changed when Izak pointed to the left and whispered that I should get ready because some springbok were on the way to the waterhole. Immediately my blood pressure rose when I saw a nice white ram in the group of five animals. A couple of minutes later they were at the water, but warily looking around. Now I had to be patient till the white ram stood clear for a shot. They were pushing and nudging each other to get the best spot for a drink. Once they were all drinking, it was my chance when, finally, the white ram stood apart from the others.



A nice white springbok.



Quietly and smoothly, I drew my bow to full draw and aimed at the vital area. A second later, the Carbon Express arrow with the Silverflame broadhead was on its way. Instantly, the ram bounded off for about 40 meters, turned back in the direction he came from, ran about 100 meters, then fell. What an incredible experience. Izak and I were more than happy about this first endeavour and fantastic outcome.

Early next morning at sunrise, we found ourselves back in the blind. This time I was better prepared and wore a jacket because the mornings are also chilly. For about two hours not much happened, except for some doves that flew in for a drink at the waterhole and a few mongooses that scurried in as well. Then our attention arose again when we saw some springbok heading in our direction. A group of five black springbok trotted cautiously towards the waterhole. We checked with binos for a male in the group, and indeed there were two, a young one and a decent male. Our excitement rose when they arrived at the waterhole and wrangled for the best place. They were all standing very closely together, and the big male was in front of a female – no shooting! Keeping calm was the order of the moment. Once he was clear, I quickly pulled my bow and set the sight on the vitals. Unfortunately, another animal moved forward and covered him just when I was at full draw. I held steady for about 30 seconds when luckily the ram made a step forward, and a small, but sufficient, shooting window appeared. Once the trigger of my Scott release opened, a second later the arrow hit the ram. He bucked, took a long jump forward and was down. Wow! Izak and I were amazed. Even as the experienced PH he was, he had not seen something like that before. Anyway, strike two on the springbok slam accomplished! A great South African hunting morning.

A day later, for the afternoon and evening hunt, after trying different spots without success, we were back in the



Fine black ram and happy hunter.

blind at the waterhole. As the sun started to go down, suddenly three springbok approached the waterhole, checking out the situation. Unbelievably, there was a nice copper ram in the group. That would be the cherry on the top if they came closer and offered a shot on the ram. We sat immobile in our ambush - no movement, no word. The animals came closer and closer, always

with one of them looking and checking in our direction. It felt like an eternity until they arrived at the water, and all of them took their position to drink. This time the object of my desire, the fine copper ram, stood nicely broadside at 25 meters. When their heads were all down to drink, I pulled the bow and focused on his vitals. The arrow hit him hard, and he flew away in the direction



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The author and the copper springbuck

they had come from, hit a sharp hook to the left, ran for about 100 meters, then dropped. Amazingly, he fell more or less on the same spot as the white ram on the first evening.

Izak patted me on the back saying, “Well done my friend, strike three on the springbok done.” The ram was a fine trophy and both of us were more than happy about this outcome. We arranged him for some dignified trophy photos. What a marvellous day. A week later at the end of the safari, I also took a common springbok from South Africa, so the Springbok Superslam was fully accomplished on that hunt. Take care, always good hunting, Waidmannsheil, and “Alles van die Beste”.

Springbuck Slam completed on a fine trophy pedestal.



German hunter Frank Berbuir is passionate about the outdoors and hunting – especially bowhunting, which he has practised for more than 23 years. Although he has bowhunted in several countries, he has become addicted to hunting in Africa since his first safari in 2004. Frank is a mechanical engineer and risk manager in the automotive industry.

This medium-sized slender antelope with long legs and neck is mainly found in the dry areas. Their range extends from northwestern South Africa through the Kalahari Desert into Namibia and Botswana. The Transvaal (Gauteng) marks the eastern limit of the range, from where it extends westward to the Atlantic and northward to southern Angola and Botswana. In Botswana, they mostly occur in the Kalahari Desert in the southwestern and central parts of the country. They are widespread across Namibia and the vast grasslands of the Free State and the shrublands of Karoo in South Africa.

The common name “springbok” comes from the Afrikaans words spring = jump and bok = antelope or goat. German zoologist Eberhard August Wilhelm von Zimmermann first described it in 1780. The scientific name is *Antidorcas marsupialis* - Anti is Greek for “opposite”, and dorcas for “gazelle” – identifying that the animal is not a gazelle. Marsupialis comes from the Latin marsupium = pocket. It refers to a pocket-like skin flap, which extends along the midline of the back from the tail. In fact, this physical feature distinguishes the springbok from true gazelles.





DIVERSITY

is the Name of the Game

By Ken Bailey



When I went on my first safari there in the late 1980s, Africa was considered almost exclusively a destination for big-game hunting. That's why I went, and that's why virtually every other visiting hunter went; wingshooting there was virtually unheard of. Sure, there was the odd hunter who would shoot a guineafowl or two for the soup pot, and every now and then you'd hear of someone who shot sandgrouse because they'd read about them in some of the classic African hunting literature, but that was the extent of it.

Over time, and over succeeding safaris, however, I became increasingly intrigued with the bird-hunting potential. When I really took time to note the game birds I was seeing, it dawned on me that I was missing out on some fine sport. I'm an avid wingshooter at home, so I was a little surprised that in my focus on big game, I had completely overlooked the abundance and variety of game birds found in the most commonly hunted areas of southern Africa.

I finally took the plunge on a hunt with the folks at Aru Game Lodges in Namibia. I'd packed along a shotgun in addition to my rifle, and I was

determined to use it. Fortunately, my PH grew up in a British wingshooting culture, so he was as keen as I was to dedicate some time to bird hunting. So, in between chasing kudu, eland, springbok and their kin, we would take our smoothbores for a walk each day. We shot sandgrouse, francolin and guineafowl, and I came away from the experience with a new attitude—moving forward I would try to make wingshooting a meaningful part of every safari. Since that epiphany I've hunted birds from one end of South Africa to the other, as well as in Namibia and Botswana. Part of the appeal, as it is with big game, is a diversity of species unmatched anywhere else in the world. If you still haven't dedicated time to wingshooting on your safaris, consider the following a brief summary of what you can expect.

Pigeons and Doves

Most wingshooting enthusiasts who travel have, at some point, visited Argentina to hunt doves and pigeons. The number of doves there is legendary, and tales of 1000+ bird days is pretty commonplace. Truth be told, you're unlikely to kill 1000 doves in a day in Africa, but in some regions of South



Africa 300 to 500 doves in a day isn't out of reach, and for my money, that's more than enough shooting.

Similar to Argentina, you'll be shooting them in an agricultural setting, the primary difference being that you're likely to shoot three or four distinct species, from the ubiquitous Cape turtle and laughing doves to the small and beautiful Namaqua dove.

The pigeon shooting I've done, again much like in Argentina, is most often conducted over spinning-wing decoys. Rock doves (the common pigeon we all know) and speckled pigeons are the most common, although there are a couple other species that might show up in the bag depending on where you're hunting.

Guineafowl

The helmeted guineafowl is an iconic species found nearly everywhere in southern Africa. From a hunting perspective, I think of them as a cross between a turkey and a pheasant. Like a pheasant they'd rather run than fly, and they possess the otherworldly senses of a turkey, making them near-impossible to sneak up on.

Among the prized waterfowl in southern Africa is the large and aptly-named spur-winged goose.





If you're going to hunt grey-winged partridge, be prepared for lots of walking in landscapes with lots of vertical relief.

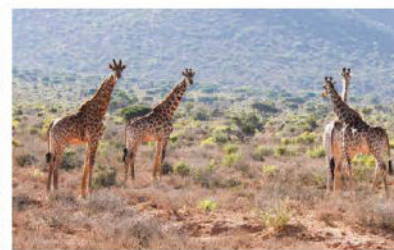
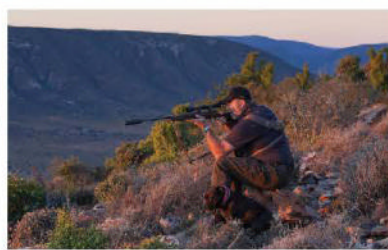
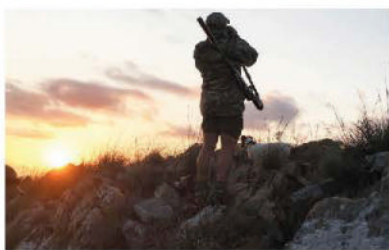
I've spot- and stalk-hunted guineas on numerous occasions, with highly mixed results. It's a ton of fun, but more often than not you're busted before getting into shooting range. Some people hunt them with .22s, which is obviously far more successful, but it's not very sporting and should be reserved for those occasions when you're desperate for some dinner meat.

Most fun of all is driven guineafowl hunts. After spotting a large flock move into cover, you set up the shooters along their probable escape route and have as many beaters as you can muster push them towards the waiting hunters. At some point the guineas will tire of being bumped along through the grass and will noisily flush. When it all works, they fly over the waiting guns; when it doesn't, they break through the line unscathed. Either way, is an exhilarating and downright enjoyable hunting experience.

Waterfowl

Ducks and geese are the least hunted of the available game birds for visiting hunters, but it's not because they aren't abundant or widely distributed. It's largely a function of the necessity for dedicated spotting time because of their propensity for jumping between fields and ponds, coupled with a requirement for more gear—blinds and decoys—than for other gamebirds. They're not well suited for spur of the moment hunts. Still, if you get the opportunity to hunt them, don't pass it up.

Ducks are generally hunted over small marshy impoundments called "vleis," generally with a couple handfuls of floating decoys and shoreline blinds. As most are seldom disturbed, ducks here tend to be more reliable than those elsewhere. While there are numerous species found in southern Africa, the most common are the mallard-like



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yellow-billed ducks, red-billed teal, Cape shovelers and southern pochards, the latter being the only common diving duck in the region.

Ducks are generally hunted in the late afternoons and evenings as they return to water after feeding. I can't remember ever having a poor duck hunt in Africa, and I've enjoyed some that were nothing less than outstanding. In fact, more than once I've put my shotgun down and just watched the spectacle of flight after flight coming in, having already shot more than enough to satisfy me.

The two common geese you'll find are the Egyptian and the spur-winged, which is the largest goose in the world and approaches the size of a North American tundra swan. Both are unique in appearance—the Egyptian features a beautiful buff-brown body, chest and eye patch, while the spur-winged is mostly black on top and white underneath, with bony, forward-facing spurs on their wing joints that give them their name. Geese in Africa are hunted much as we do in North America—in the mornings among agricultural fields over decoys, including spinning-winged decoys, and e-callers.

Francolin

We won't get into the popular and scientific name changes given to the widely dispersed birds alternatively called francolin, spurfowl and partridge, but think of them all as broadly resembling the Hungarian (grey) partridge of Europe and North America. As many as a dozen distinct species can be found across southern Africa, and all provide superb wingshooting. Undoubtedly you've flushed many while stalking big game. Typically they're hunted over pointing dogs, with English and German short-haired pointers being the most popular breeds I've encountered.

Among these birds, the most



Don't let their unusual appearance fool you. Guinea fow are crafty birds that are difficult to get close to.

iconic is undoubtedly the grey-winged partridge, a bird of higher altitudes considered by knowledgeable wingshooters to rank in the highest echelons of upland bird hunting. In some circles they're spoken of with the reverence generally reserved for the red grouse of the Scottish Highlands or the capercaillie of Eurasia. Hunting greywings requires that hunters be fit enough to walk several miles up and down hills throughout the day in the hopes of putting up a handful of the widely dispersed coveys; you'll earn every greywing you manage to tumble.

Sandgrouse

Not a grouse as North American and European hunters would imagine them, sandgrouse are, in fact, more closely related to pigeons than to grouse.

Still, they're among the most revered game birds in Africa and have been celebrated in literature for their sporting qualities and their Swiss watch-like reliability—they arrive at watering holes at exactly the same time each day and it's there that they are generally hunted. These fast and erratic flyers can humble even the best

shotgunners, which has led to them being so glorified within the shooting fraternity.

There are few big-game hunters who don't enjoy wingshooting. If you're one of those, you owe it to yourself to add a day or two of wingshooting to your next safari. Better yet, consider a dedicated bird-hunting safari. With the diversity of species available in this target-rich environment, you won't be disappointed. 🦋

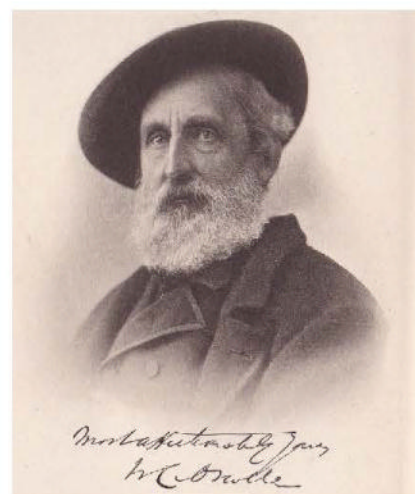
Doves and pigeon are so plentiful in some regions that even those who've hunted Argentina will be impressed.



A close encounter with a lion

This account of a close encounter with a lion near the Limpopo River in 1845, appears to have been written by William Oswell, a former big-game hunter, three years before his death.

Groombridge, 7 July 1890.



A photograph of William Cotton Oswell

My Dear Baker

Mr Oswell and myself thoroughly enjoyed our stay with you and your charming wife in June. It was a true pleasure for us both to renew old times and friendship. We trust that your trip to India will be a pleasant one, and the ship you are travelling one, the *Arcadia*, will once again provide safe and pleasant transport to Bombay.

I have taken your advice, bought a ream of foolscap, a box of J pens, and a gallon of ink, and have decided to write a book. As you say, the Africa we knew is long gone, and the new smokeless rifles take all the fun and danger out of hunting. Readers might well be interested in my encounters with big game.

As you have written many books, I would appreciate your comments on what follows: my close encounter with a lion, in the country of the Ba-Wangetsi in 1845.

"One morning, our head man told me there was no food for the fourteen dogs that protected us at night. I thus took up my gun, which was loaded only in one barrel, and strolled out on the chance of a shot, but as, kill or miss, I intended to return immediately, I did not carry any spare ammunition. A reedy pond lay close in front of the wagons, in a little opening; beyond this, as on every other side, stretched a sea of bush and mimosa trees.

"Two hundred yards from the outspan I came upon some quaggas and wounded one, which, although mortally hit, struggled before falling. I followed, and marking the place where it fell, turned back, heading (as I thought) towards the wagon, meaning to send out men for the flesh.

"No doubt of the direction crossed my mind – the pool was certainly not more than four hundred yards away in a straight line and I thought I could walk down upon it without any trouble; so I started, not realising how the line of my own tracks had to follow the quagga.

"It was now about 10 a.m.; little did I think that 5 p.m. would find me still seeking three vans nearly as large as Pickford's [a furniture removal company], and half an acre of water. In my first cast I cannot say whether I went wide or stopped short of the mark I was making for, and it was not until I had wandered carelessly hither and thither for half an hour, feeling sure that it was only the one particular bush in front of me which hid the wagons, that I very unwillingly admitted that I was lost in this sea of bushes and trees.

"The sun was nearly overhead, and gave but little help as to direction, and having to constantly turn to avoid thick patches of thorns made it practically impossible, to walk in a straight line. I tried walking in circles in the hopes of crossing the wagon's wheel tracks, but

though this plan had worked before, it now failed.

"I plodded on with the empty gun. Occasionally, small herds of rooyebuck [rooibok, impala] and blue wildebeest, evidently very much at home, swept and capered past me, and stopping and looking at me with wondering eyes, increased my feeling of loneliness. I had no doubt of regaining my party next day at latest, and cared but little for passing a night in the jungle; but bewildered and baffled, I envied the instinct of the co-called wild animals, which careless of their steps, never got lost.

"Twilight near the Tropics is very short. Just before the sun set, therefore, I followed a game track which I knew would lead to water, as it was still early in the season and the rain supply had not dried up in the hollows. At dusk I reached a pool similar to the one I had left in the morning. After a good drink of water, I began collecting firewood. But, because it was very scarce and the night closed in so rapidly, I had barely got enough for an hour's fire when the sun set.

"Partly to save fuel, partly in the hope that as night crept on signals would be made from the wagons, I climbed a tree which stood by the side of the water, and had not been long perched before I heard, though so far off that I could hardly catch the sound, the smothered boom of guns. Alarmed at my absence

my companions suspected the cause and were inviting my return; but it required a very pressing invitation indeed to induce a man to walk through two miles of an African wood, in those days, on a dark night.

"This particular spot, too, was more infested with lions than any other, save one, I had ever been in. Although lions are harmless and cowardly enough, as a rule, in the day, they are far more active and dangerous at night.

"But I had been walking all day under a tropical sun, my clothing was wet with perspiration, and it now froze hard - for freeze it can in Southern Africa - and I was bitterly cold. I determined to come down from the tree and light my fire. I knew it would last but a short time, but thought I would make the best of it and thaw myself before attempting to return.

"I had just reached the lowest branch of my tree, and placed my hand beside my feet to jump off, when a loud growl from the bush immediately under me and the sound of a heavy body slipping through the thorny scrub, warned me that a lion was passing by. Whether the creaking of the tree had aroused his attention and made him speak just in time, I don't know, but without the warning in another half second I should have unwittingly jumped onto his back. I very quickly climbed two or three yards back up the tree.

"Presently from the upper end of the pool came the moaning pant of a questing lion; it was immediately answered from the lower end. The lions were searching for their supper, and had divided the approaches to the water between them. It was much too dark to see anything, but from the sounds they seemed to walk in beats, occasionally telling one another of their whereabouts by a low pant; of my presence I think they were not aware.

"This went on for an hour or more and I grew colder and colder; my beard and moustache were stiff with frost; I could not much longer endure the cramped position in my scraggy tree, and I felt I must get down and light the fire, when

suddenly up rose the blessed moon and right beneath her the sounds of three or four muskets fired together. With the help of her light and partial direction in case my companions grew tired of firing, I was not going to stay up a tree to be frozen.

"Waiting, therefore, until the moon was about one tree high above the horizon, and until the lions were as far away as I could hear from their sounds, I came down and capping [loading detonating caps into the gun] my empty gun [Oswell had not loaded it with balls and gunpowder], I ran to the end of the water, and dived into the bush on the opposite side.

"While I was in a hurry, I soon decided to move slowly and cautiously. An African forest was then alive at night. I thought only of the lions, and especially of the two I had left at the water; but every nocturnal animal that stirred kept me on the stretch - the less noise the more danger; the movement of a mouse might well be mistaken for the stealthy tread of the King of the Cats.

"Among the trees the moon gave but a scanty light, and nearly every minute I had to stop and listen as some unseen animals passed near me. Sometimes I could recognise them by their cry, but mostly it was a running that could not be seen of skipping beasts, that troubled me. The only animal that I really saw that night was a rhinoceros with head and tail up, and in a terrible fuss, that crossed my path a few yards ahead of me.

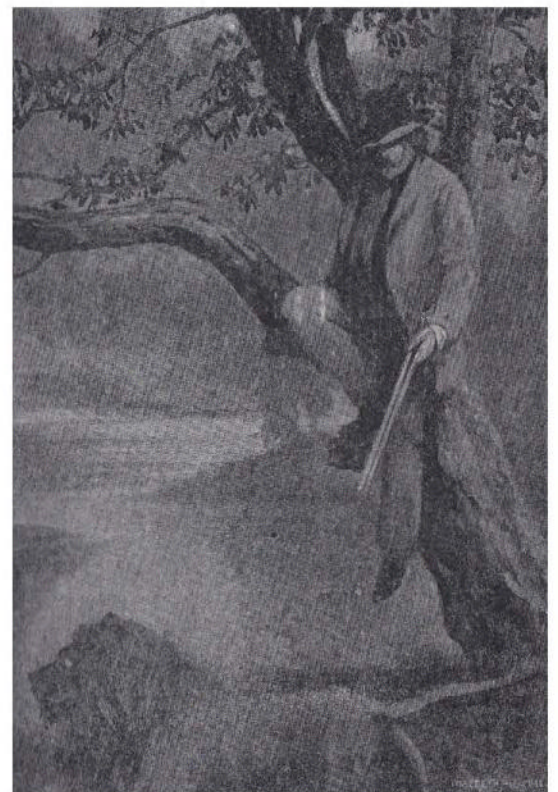
"A sound in front, and I strained my eyes into the shadowy darkness in advance: the rustling of a leaf could be life to the right or left; the snapping of a twig of possible death in the rear. But I struggled on for an hour I should think, when, stooping to clear a low bough, four or five muskets fired together within fifty yards, told me that I was at home at last.

"I hope I was thankful then; I know I am now. Two of my assistants and some helpers had come some distance into the bush in the hope of meeting me, and escorted me to the fire in triumph. As I held my half-thawed hands over the fire, the bawled roar of a disappointed lion rang through the camp. He had not been heard before that night. "He has missed you, Tlaga, by a little this time," said my black friends, "let him go back to his game".

"They were right, for in the morning we found his spoor following mine for a long way back. Whether he had come with me from the water, or I had picked up a follower in the bush, I never knew. My constantly stopping and listening probably saved me, for a lion seldom makes up his mind very suddenly to attack a man, unless hard pressed by hunger. He likes to know all about his prey first, and my turning, and slow jerky progress had doubtless roused his suspicions".

Affectionately yours, William Oswell."

Oswell suddenly realises there is a lion just below him





The Elephant

in the Room at Pensbury Place

By Diggory Hadoke

When hunting big, dangerous animals, there is a convincing argument to be made that bigger is better, and few rifles come bigger than the .600 Nitro Express: very few.



When hunting big, dangerous animals, there is a convincing argument to be made that bigger is better, and few rifles come bigger than the .600 Nitro Express: very few.

The cartridge itself is a thing to behold: a three-inch case, originally packed with 100 grains of cordite and topped with a bullet weighing 900 grains. It leaves the muzzle at 2,050 feet per second. The energy delivered on impact is a massive 7,600 ft/lbs. Clearly, these proportions and qualities are positively elephantine.

It is, therefore, of no surprise that the intended quarry for this double barreled monster is the pachyderm itself. The first .600 was launched onto the market around the time of the First World War, by Jeffery. It was always a specialist's tool and relatively few have been made to date.

However, collectors have always harbored a deep passion for this, the largest, commercially produced hunting cartridge in the world until quite recently. Vintage examples, when they appear, command strong prices.

John Rigby & Co. is fortunate in that it regularly attracts orders from loyal customers that fall into the category of 'interesting' and the company considers every non-standard commission a welcome challenge.

If the customer has a vision and Marc Newton and his team of dedicated gunmakers can bring it to life in walnut and steel, they will do everything in their power to make it happen.

To Marc, the more extreme the request, the more boundaries it pushes, the more challenging the tasks involved in



making it, the better.

It is, he says, the gunmaker's equivalent of haute couture in the fashion industry. It is also a long way from the traditional, dare we say, conservative tastes of the British gunmaking establishment.

The result of one such request is a spectacular example of this type of a headline-grabbing project. Six years in the making, it has now emerged to excite Rigby collectors and rifle-making enthusiasts the world over.

This is not the first rifle Rigby has made with elephant hide as an engraving theme. A .450 magazine rifle was commissioned a decade ago when the idea was raised by the customer. At first, Rigby engravers tested it on a grip cap, then a trigger guard, eventually extending the theme around the rifle and creating something unique.

However, that customer had put a condition on the commission: He stipulated then this would be the only rifle of its kind to emerge from Pensbury Place.

Another good Rigby customer saw the .450 at a gun show and was immediately interested. He asked Marc for another but, due to the original agreement, he had to politely decline.

The only option available that would honor the terms imposed by the first customer but acquiesce to the wishes of the second was what Marc considered a 'bit of a stretch'.

If he recalls his words at the time correctly, he said; "You'd have to be a psycho to do it, but if someone ordered a rising-bite double rifle, engraved with an elephant skin theme, we could make that". Without missing a beat, the customer replied: "I'm your psycho".

A contract was agreed, though a budget could not be set due to the unknowable cost of the engraving. A hefty deposit was paid and work commenced in 2016.

The .600 is built on the very largest frame Rigby employs for the newly re-engineered nitro version of the 1878 Rigby & Bissel patent action, which is so iconic to aficionados of the double rifle.

Building the rifle was not a problem. This, after all, is what the London company is famed for. The engraving was another matter. While the rifle builders got to work, the engravers began to explore their approach.

Rather than just do an impression of elephant hide, Marc provided some samples of the real thing. The three engravers, who are from the same family, working in shifts, cut the steel to the patterns of the genuine article; no two surfaces are replicated. Just as on a

real animal, every inch of every surface is unique, not a repeated pattern from a template.

Rigby has worked hard to cultivate a small but dedicated number of customers who are supportive of these cutting-edge commissions. Just as Formula One technology and practices feed into the wider world of motor vehicle manufacturing, gradually improving and refining everyday models, so these 'Products of Excellence' (to borrow a term coined by the late Malcolm Lyle of Holland & Holland) help to ensure that the Rigby team innovates and improves by accepting challenges beyond the skills employed in the making of well-known models with universally applied finishes.

These unique concept-builds have to be pitched to the top-tier of customers and they are, by definition, expensive.



Each concept can only be applied once, or perhaps in a limited edition set of five or 10 iterations at most.

Rigby has, once again, demonstrated to the world that it can meet demand in the sector from exhibition pieces costing hundreds of thousands of pounds, to the sub £10,000 price point available to any working man with a love for the brand and a desire to invest in something special with which to hunt deer.

Returning to the elephant hide .600, it will be going to Africa in the company of the original elephant-styled .450 magazine rifle, for the two customers have now made one another's acquaintance and are planning a safari together. 🐘

*For more information about the Rigby Academy, or to apply for an apprenticeship, visit:
www.johnrigbyandco.com/about/academy*

Bell and his small bores: Stubborn resolve or logical choice?

By Doug Manzer

It's nearly 70 years since W.M.D. Bell left this world, but I do wonder if his opinions on rifle and caliber selection were well reasoned, especially for the time he lived. He certainly wasn't afraid of voicing an adversarial view, but was there more to it than stubborn Scottish resolve and a desire to make his own path?

The lockup on a Rigby double includes a top extension that secures the barrels to the breech face. This is known as the Rigby & Bissell Rising Bite, patented in 1879, and is a highly refined and secure locking system where this third grip is engaged by a bolt that rises up into the slot in the extension. The Rising Bite double is still available today as a big bore, or as a shotgun similar to the vintage 12-bore displayed here.



Bell is a highly regarded, if somewhat contrary figure in the modern history of hunting sportsmen. He was one of the most accomplished hunters of his era, and he did so with an unorthodox approach in his choice of arms. He also enjoyed poking fun at his contemporaries, especially those in the Double Barrel Big Bore camp, which he categorized as the DBBB1 gang. He clearly had fun with this, and generally shrugged off the advantages offered from big bores against the disadvantages they imposed on the hunter, particularly for his style of hunting.

Before his name became associated with the .275 Rigby, Bell bought, used, sold and traded a plethora of rifles and calibers. He went through an early period of trial and error that shaped his views on hunting as well as the rifle and caliber combinations most capable of the task at hand. These early days primed his quest for a reliable and easy shooting arm, that when matched with the available ammo, would perform as expected.

Born in 1880, Bell's formative years occurred during a period of heightened change in arms development. The patent houses were in a flurry of activity, and many of the lockup and extraction mechanisms that we enjoy today were established during this period before WW1. Black powder was being phased out, and advances in primers and smokeless propellants made ignition and burn rates more reliable. Powder pressures were still evolving, along with their stability in varying ambient temperatures. Cartridges developed in the temperate areas of Europe were

being tested by traveling explorers, hunters, and military regiments in much hotter zones nearer the equator.

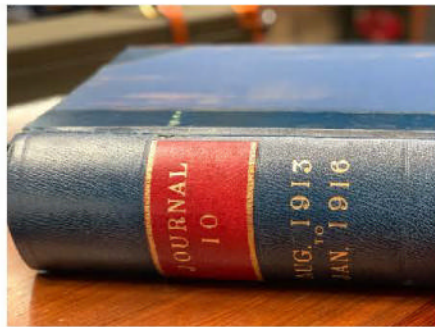
One Shot

When aged 16 and after much persuasion, Bell convinced his reluctant guardians to outfit him for East Africa in 1897 where, by sheer pluck, he talked his way into a paid position as hunter for an advance survey crew on the Kenya-Uganda rail line. He'd left Edinburgh with an elegant Fraser falling block .3032 that performed beautifully in the moderate temperatures of Scotland. His cartridges were filled with nitroglycerin-based smokeless powder commonly known as cordite that, when combined with the precise chambering in the Fraser, led to extraction issues in the heat of the equatorial sun. Once a round was fired, he would then ram the spent hull from the chamber with a rod before a second shot could be made. This certainly made him aware of his imposed limitations and helped ignite his inclination toward one-shot kills.³

After continuous extraction issues he traded his modern Fraser .303 for a less refined gun, but one he thought would extract more reliably in the heat: a single-shot Winchester .450, using a long-tapered case filled with black powder. The transaction included a stash of hollow-point copper bullets which, on the surface, appeared to be a fair deal. This combination worked well enough on plains game, although he soon found that selective shot placement was required to avoid large bones on heavier game. A lasting impression on the shortcomings of soft-core bullets eventually came to a head with an event he describes as his first true run-in with a lion. BA 16

Bullet Construction

Bell took on his first lion just months before the Man-eaters of Tsavo effectively halted construction of the railway in 1897. He took a head shot from 30 yards when, instead of dropping, the lion



Established in 1775, John Rigby & Co. has detailed sales ledgers that track the orders of Bell and his contemporaries. The ledgers of gunmakers are a fascinating history of sporting heritage.

turned tail and headed into cover. Bell hoisted himself into a tree for a better look, while at the same moment the big cat lunged forward, missed his dangling feet and put chase to his companion. He immediately dropped down and shot the lion on the shoulder as it turned to grab

his friend. That shoulder shot should have been the coup de grâce, but instead the lion made for cover once again. Bell later found that his first bullet entered below the left eye and shattered the lower jaw, while the second mostly splattered on the front shoulder without penetration. He finished the lion with a third round at very close range, which all told, heightened his awareness of the gravity of bullet construction, and its importance for penetration. BA 18, WH 177 He went back to a .303 soon after this incident, but now in a magazine rifle with nickel-jacketed 215gr. solid bullets.

Jump forward a year, and Bell was in the opposite extreme, facing the cold as a market hunter in the Yukon Klondike gold rush. He'd acquired another falling block from Fraser during his travels from East Africa to Dawson

Becc. W. O. M. Co.		13	11	10
Hutton & Cookson, Brazzaville				
French Congo, via Matani				
1 .416 bore "Big Game" Mauser Rigby, 1000'				
Fitting Rigby peep sight	3/10			
Winchester case brass corners	1/16			
Cleaning rod & apps barrel				
Pull two light turn screws				
Large oil large blind				
Vaseline Oiling				
Leather front sight protector	4.			
Ten tins of rape oil	12/6			
500 .416 Special carb. solids	9/7/6			
10 tins Rope hand & foot	13/6 1/4 15			

Bell wasn't content with the configuration of the first .416 Rigby he received in July 1913 and had another built later that same year. Rigby reused the stock and lengthened it 1/4" by fitting a wood extension; they also removed the original peep sight and fitted it to the new action along with a barrel 1" shorter than the first. The second rifle weighed 10oz less coming in at 9lbs14oz. Rigby shipped the rifle to Bell in October of 1913 in care of Hatton & Cookson, French Congo, along with a .220 High Power; one 30 loop canvas belt for .416 cartridges; cleaning rod and accessories; turn-screws; leather front-sight protector; 10 tins of rape oil (stock conditioner), as well as 500 rounds of "Special" .416 solids.



The three-leaf rear sight on a .275 Rigby set for 100, 300, and 400 yards. The leaf pack can also be ordered in a traditional 65-, 150-, and 250-yard setting, which seems practical when running the rifle without a scope.

City, although this time in .360 caliber which, he thought, would have lower pressures than the .303. BA 21

He spent the winter on snowshoes taking moose and caribou, while methodically relying on one-shot opportunities to stretch his 160 rounds of ammo through winter. His partner was making 25-day return trips on dogsled to market the meat, but didn't return for the last run and swindled Bell of the entire poke. The 18-year-old Bell hawked the rifle to attain funds to head south to Calgary, Alberta, where he joined the 2nd Battalion Canadian Mounted Rifles, and soon embarked for South Africa and the Boer war.

Bell amassed a small pool of savings from his stint in the army and, from this, outfitted his kit for hunting in Uganda. He cut his initial selection of rifles in 1902 to those with a military pedigree. BA 29 He'd come to recognize that military arms and loads were being scrutinized for their dependability under prolonged hard use, with nations funding their development. ID 284 He surmised they were more consistent and less expensive than calibers designed primarily for hunting, and favored these heavily over the next 10 years. 4

The battery for this first well-organized expedition into Uganda included two 10-shot Lee Enfield .303s, with the barrels shortened and pistol

grips added: they cost £8 each. In true Bell fashion, his initial hunt on elephant left a mark. He came upon eight bulls in the mud and placed shots in the upper dome portion of their heads, where he assumed the brain to be lodged, based on spurious advice he received from an acquaintance. ID 21 He was surprised to see very little response to the noise or bullet placement, so he shot one behind the shoulder to see if this had the desired result. The bull reacted immediately with loud squeals, and even though it was anchored, the other bulls fled immediately.

Determined to learn why his initial shots hadn't worked, Bell borrowed a large saw and opened the skull vertically for a rudimentary post-mortem. This exposed the brain far lower down and to the rear of where he'd assumed it to be, and of a size roughly three or four times that of a human brain by comparison. He studied the possible shooting angles leading toward the brain from different positions around the head, and sketched them in his note book. BA 35 He put this newfound knowledge to use at the next opportunity, and dropped the bull with a single brain-shot from the side. The others nearby were not particularly alarmed and continued milling about, and this outcome provided the beginnings of his tactical approach for taking more than one individual from

a group at the same encounter. ID 293

Bell spent time with his friend Daniel Fraser before the latter's untimely death in December 1901, and assisted him with regulating the barrels on big bores from the bench. He found the recoil unpleasant, and readily acknowledged that this left a lasting impression. He found his groups spreading apart through a day of regulating the barrels at a specific distance, while in contrast, Fraser wasn't affected in the same way with the latter's groups improving as the barrels came into convergence. BA 29, Bell recognized early on that recoil affects people differently, and was aware of the negative effect it had on his own accuracy.

The Uganda Battery

His initial time in the Unyaro area of Uganda in 1902 was a financial success. He took 63 bull elephants averaging 53lbs/tusk, KS 19 which enabled him to outfit his first safari into the Karamoja region of North East Uganda. He again took a .303, but added to this his first bespoke .275 Rigby Mauser, as well as a .450/400 double rifle, suggesting that he remained open-minded about big bore doubles even after his experience on the bench.

John Rigby & Co. began collaborating with Paul Mauser in 1897 and soon released the .275 Rigby on the Mauser 98 action. The .275 Rigby, as many will recognize, is also known as the 7x57mm or 7mm. It has a bullet diameter of .285", but Rigby took a different approach using the distance between the countries (.275") to rebadge the round in a brilliant marketing strategy that appealed to many anglophiles. The Mauser action and this cartridge were first designed by Paul Mauser in 1891, and widely sold as a military weapon where it earned its early reputation. The case shape was designed to feed and extract reliably in extreme field conditions, in both bolt action and automatic firing machine guns. The common barrel twist rate is quite high

at 1 in 8.7", and enabled the .275 to stabilize its long and relatively heavy 173gr. jacketed military bullet. It moved these along at 2300fps, and Bell concluded this moderate pace was associated with enabling these long bullets to penetrate deeply, while holding their course without distortion. ID 290

Over the next seven years and four safaris into the Karamojo, Bell gained a graduate degree in the practical application of rifle use. His attention focused on three calibers in particular with each from strong military roots and which were fed a steady diet of solid bullets. ID 287 It's no surprise the .303 remained on his list with its 215 gr. solids. The .275 Rigby also gained a spot, and through time excelled to account for 75% of his lifetime taking of elephant - he favored the reliability of German DWM cartridges with 173gr. round-nose solids. WH 180 The .275 burned more efficient Ballistite smokeless powder compared with the cordite in the .303s, which gave the former greater performance. Third, and perhaps used more than the other two for obtaining camp meat, was a .256 Gibbs Mannlicher with long-nosed 156 gr. solids. Bell later obtained a .256 Mannlicher-Shoenauer refined by Fraser, with a "snaky feel" that made it a "pleasure to handle" at only five and a quarter pounds. KS 20,42

Bell preferred light guns that he could carry all day long and for months on end, literally. He estimated that he walked 70,000 miles pursuing game! He also valued a short bolt-throw and accredited this feature as being critical for acquiring rapid kills on multiple targets in close proximity. When encountering a group of elephant, he often took the first two or three within yards of each other, but then pursued the remaining animals on foot and at a brisk run, often for miles. This required a rifle that was both light and shouldered quickly. WH 179,183 Shots on running elephant were taken from the side and



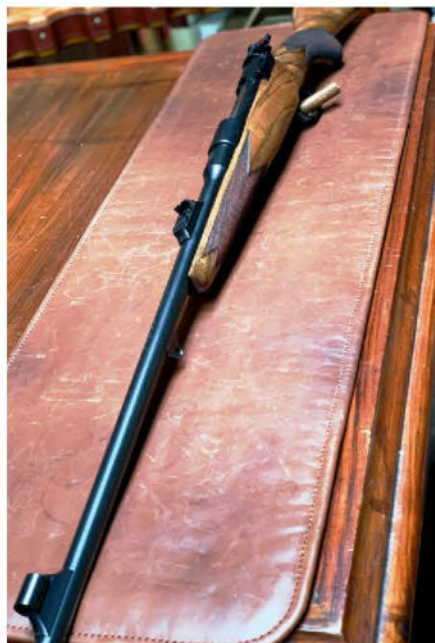
A .275 Rigby Mauser in the John Rigby & Co. London shop, with a three-position safety that rotates over the bolt axis as Bell would have used.

usually from behind at an oblique angle. He carried 35 rounds of ammo on his belt daily, and large-bore ammo simply weighed more for the same desired one-shot kills.

Up Close in the Tall Grass

Rather than packing it in for the rainy season in 1902, Bell established a camp well above a low-lying wet area in the distance that enabled him to glass for bulls in the tall grass below. The ground below was wet, with deep water-filled

A .275 Rigby Mauser in traditional specification, with a fold over three-position safety, hooded front sight, and three-leaf rear sight.



holes resembling puddles, that often swallowed him "to the armpits" ID 210 while stalking a bull somewhere in the tall grass ahead. They'd follow the paths left by elephant as the latter fed through these swamps, with the tracking job easy but the going a slow slog. He gave high praise to the Mauser action in these situations, as his .275 Rigby would cycle reliably even when coated in silt from the tall grass where the elephants had passed through. In contrast, he criticized ID 210, a double for these situations for fear that grit would find its way onto the action face or bite, and prevent lock-up by virtue of its precise and finely crafted design. WH 182

The tall grass was well above head level, and Bell came to rely on a system of shooting while perched on the shoulders of his gun-bearer. ID 205 They'd get up to the bulls as close as possible, and Manzema would stand with Bell up top allowing a better view for an unobstructed shot. A light recoiling rifle helped him retain balance, ID 67,283 and a short length of pull improved Bell's rotation for any off-angle presentations. Once a bull or two were down, he'd drop down and run to a fallen animal and scurry onto its back and gain a few more feet in height for any additional opportunities. Pursuing elephant in the tall grass and getting in very close to multiple bulls became his base tactic and is now, to my mind at least, textbook Bell.

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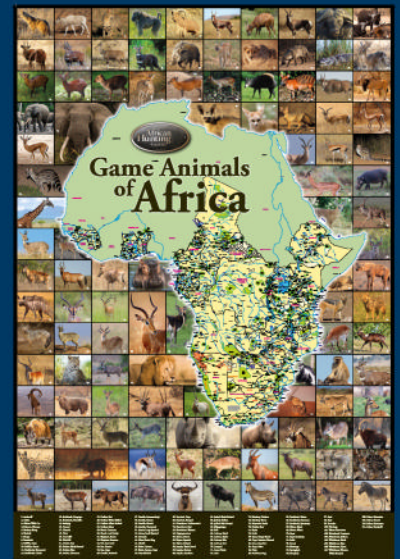
Kobus Moller – Classic Big Five Signed
& numbered, unframed 'giclee' on
canvas

OR



OR

Nkosi Jubane –
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scrimshawed Giraffe bone knife



Game Animals of Africa Map

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www.africanhuntinggazette.com



This highly ornate Rising Bite double rifle was refitted in Rigby's London shop for a second barrel set in 9.3x62mm to accompany the original .350 Rigby Magnum barrels. The extension seen at the breech end of the barrels fits very precisely into the action where a bolt rises into the slot on lockup to form the rising bite. This lockup is very sound, although Bell had mixed feelings for double barrels in general, and was cautious about their utility in harsh conditions that might hamper lockup. He often sought out wet areas in tall grass when in pursuit of elephant, and preferred a well-made bolt feed that would lockup when covered in silt and grit.

Short Bolt-throws

In 1908, Bell traversed Abyssinia and the Omo River valley moving east towards southern Sudan. He was pursuing elephant once again and had good success. He'd been out for some time and was about to move on, when asked to deal with a rhino that had killed a woman from the local village. Now he'd been packing around a long-action .350 Rigby Mauser that hadn't seen much use, so he tackled the rhino with it. In true Bell fashion, he followed the animal into tall grass and took the first shot, head on, just yards away. Bell worked the bolt and took the second with the barrel touching its neck when the firing pin fell on a spent primer: he'd short-stroked the bolt and re-loaded the spent case! ID 69, 292, WH 181 This led to a dicey few moments before a killing shot was made. The man had an ample portion in the kahuna department.

Cycling the action is a subconscious move in such a perilous moment, and the longer bolt stroke was outside his normal pattern. Bell constantly made a point of cycling and dry firing his normal carry-rifles, ID 256 and recognized

what this did for creating calm in a pressurized situation. He didn't have the same familiarity with the longer action .350 in this case, but he also recognized that, with sufficient practice, a longer stroke could be reliable, although a bit slower. KS 281

Big Bores

Bell ordered guns through several leading British gunmakers of the time and often sought new models and calibers as they became available. It would be easy to assume that he forged an unwavering opinion favoring small bores over large, very early in his 20s. However, his purchase history did not bear this out as he bought and used large bores well into his 30s, including a .450/400 Fraser double rifle along with at least two renditions of the .416.

He purchased the first .416 in July 1913 from John Rigby & Co. on a Mauser magnum action, but shortly thereafter sent it back requesting a different configuration (see sidebar). The second rifle had a new action and one-inch shorter new barrel, but Rigby was instructed to reuse the original stock and lengthen it by a quarter inch.



Three Rigby rifles in varying stages of refinement taking shape in the London shop. John Rigby & Co. has finished rifles available, but is also very willing to undertake bespoke orders in much the same way they accommodated Bell with his guns more than a century ago.

The second rifle was more than a half-pound lighter at 9lb 14oz. He rounded out the order with 500 rounds of .416 ammo and a 30 loop canvas cartridge belt suggesting he intended using this caliber a fair amount.

The new rifle was shipped to the French Congo where Bell was searching for new grounds (see sidebar), and exploring the river system in a small, purpose-built steamboat. If you think "African Queen" you wouldn't be too

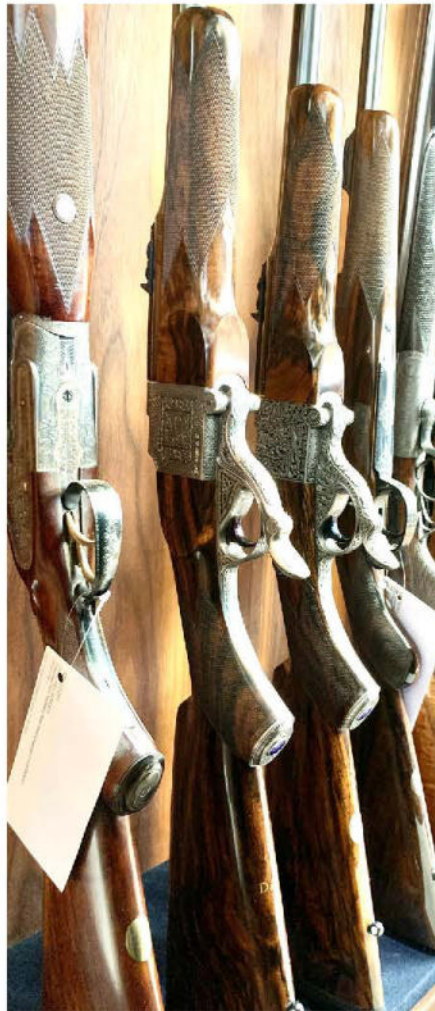
far off, and he used the craft to great advantage as a mobile camp.ID 48 He was again focused on elephant, and I wonder if he considered the additional weight of a .416 less of an issue with his water-based transport. This was two years after Rigby launched the .416 in 1911, and only one after Holland & Holland patented the .375, with both offerings on bolt-action frames. Bell was quick to give the former a go.

Any time spent reading Bell's biography reveals a fastidious nature,ID 158 continually seeking perfection from his shooting and arms. He experimented continually by refining the balance, handling characteristics, and the sighting apparatus of his riflesID 259 and weighed their benefit through a particularly narrow lens. Bell took elephant with the .256, .303, .318, .350, .450/400, and .416 and compared their virtues.KS 22 And, he was by all accounts a remarkable shot,ID 259 and described by noted contemporary Colonel Townsend Whelan, as the best rifleman in Britain, and perhaps almost attained by only one or two in the US in the day.BA xv

In his last known published work in 1954, and only months before his death, Bell gave praise to the .416 as a "grand killer" with serious penetration ability, with his Rigby well balanced and "not feeling its weight".ID 288 His reservation, as with all big bores, to be fair, is that it did not suit his fast-paced style of hunting, or his aversion to recoil and the affect it had in delaying the next shot. He argued that dead is dead, regardless of caliber, and the big bores didn't provide him with enough advantage to make up for the extra weight, recoil, or cost of ammo.

Room for the Middle Weights

Bell regarded the medium bore .318 very highly,KS 282 noting it as the "deadliest weapon of the push-bolt type" known to him.ID 289 He preferred 250gr. bullets for their penetration, being especially adept at coursing through hide and



Three Rigby rifles in varying stages of refinement taking shape in the London shop. John Rigby & Co. has finished rifles available, but is also very willing to undertake bespoke orders in much the same way they accommodated Bell with his guns more than a century ago.

tissue on quartering away brain shots. He kept notes of his shot count, and credited the .318 with a slightly better shot-to-kill ratio compared with the .275 when used specifically on oblique-angled head shots from the rear. He selected the .318 (.330" actual) as the main battery for his venture to Bahr Aouk by canoe in 1918.ID 167

He clearly liked the .318 and invested in 6,000 rounds of ammo to support this favor. Even so, the reliability of this batch was poor, making it unsuitable for serious work, having three misfires in ten. Instead, Bell used it to hone his

skill with the rifle by taking birds at distance on the wing.ID 259

A man of his time

Bell recognized that his leaning towards small bores was heavily influenced by his early and extensive success with their use.ID 288 He clarifies that if he'd had similar success with a big bore early on, he may well have found himself in the other camp, extolling their virtues with similar enthusiasm. Being Bell, he often sought out the tall grass where elephant of the day tended to hole up, and used tactics that relied on a light-framed, low-recoiling gun that still functioned when smeared in grit.

My own conclusion is that Bell was a pragmatist at heart, and selected his battery based on the evolving supply of reliable ammunition, and this brought him to those from a military pedigree coupled in light-framed-rifle configurations. His selection was preconditioned by his intent of building a bag from the groups encountered, rather than selecting one individual as is the common practice among hunters today. He remained willing to adapt and test different calibers well into his 40s, although even in his 70s, he still considered the advantages from a short bolt-throw and low recoil to outweigh the penetrating qualities offered by the heavyweights. He was a highly accomplished rifleman and, given his willingness to select the shot, his caliber choices made perfect sense - for him.

1. W.D.M Bell, Incidents from an Elephant Hunter's Diary, Second Edition, (Long Beach, California, Safari Press, 2018), 282, (hereafter ID within text).
2. W.D.M Bell, Karamoja Safari, (Long Beach, California, Safari Press, 2011), 14, hereafter KS within text.
3. W.D.M Bell, Bell of Africa, (Long Beach, California, Safari Press, 1989), 29, (hereafter BA within text).
4. W.D.M. Bell, Wanderings of an Elephant Hunter, 1923, (Long Beach, California, Safari Press edition, 1989), 6, hereafter WH within text.



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95 Years Young

By Neil Brown

“Age has nothing to do with it” ... How many times have we heard that in our lives?

Sometimes I must admit that I know that it does has a lot to do with it! My 67-year-old body is just about worn out, but with other things, such as rifles, sometimes age can improve them. I have a large diverse rifle collection with a mixture of modern and old firearms. I keep a keen eye out for any information to keep me up-to-date on any old or new rifles and to help expand my knowledge. I am amazed at the amount of new technology out there today, such as in calibers, projectiles and rifles, some of which I am very impressed with and other stuff that I

think is just sheer sales crap.

My new generation rifles are all synthetic stocked, stainless steel-engineered marvels in modern calibers. They all shoot amazingly accurately and don't mind cold wet weather at all. Most are lightweight mountain rifles that perform brilliantly on what they were made for. They are excellent capable rifles and I use them a lot, but I find I just don't get attached to them. They are just tools to be used.

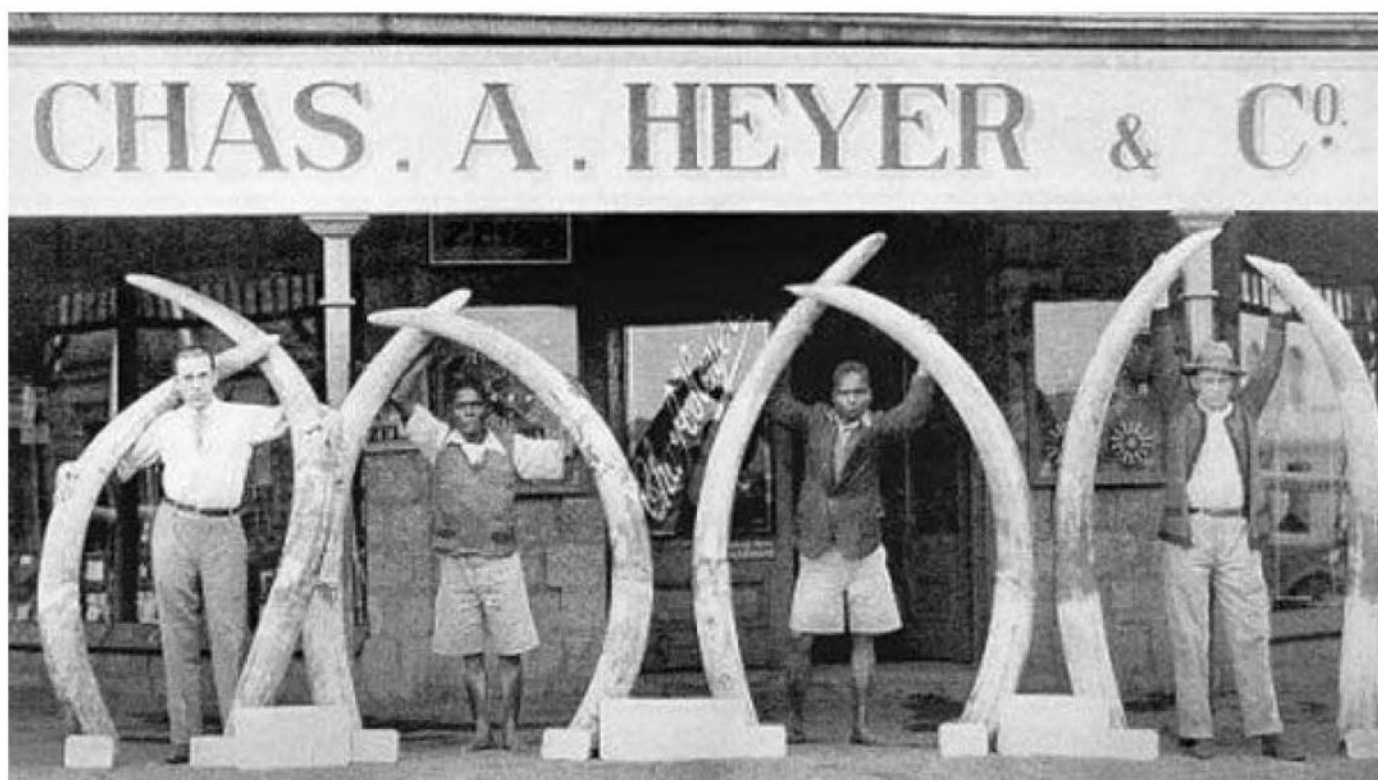
On the other hand, I have had a long obsession with fine old rifles, and the ones I own I have become very

attached to, they give me an enormous amount of pleasure. (Mentioned in the African Hunting Gazette, Winter 2019: “Why don't they make rifles like this anymore”, and Spring 2021: “Old Bolt Action Workhorses”).

Some of these old rifles are over 100 years old and they all still perform superbly. They would certainly hold their own and, in many cases, be better when compared with modern rifles. The one I would like to talk about now is one I acquired about 10 years ago from a used-gun website here in Australia. It is an original Mauser Oberndorf Sporting



A 45-inch gemsbok: Another great trophy taken by the old Mauser.



rifle in 9.3x62mm caliber. At first glance it looked pretty rough. It had no butt plate, and had rust on the action and on the barrel. I got it at a good price and instantly sent it to my gunsmith for a total restoration. A few months later when it returned, I was lost for words. It was very hard to believe that it was the same rifle - it looked brand-new, as if it were straight out of the factory.

In Jon Speed's great book, "Mauser, Original Oberndorf Sporting Rifles" it lists my rifle's serial number has having been made in 1928. That makes my Mauser Oberndorf "Model A" 9.3x62mm about 95 years old. I suppose that this is nothing super special, except that I think that it is the best-balanced and best all-around rifle I have ever held. I am starting to get on a bit in years now, but all my life I have been hunting and around firearms, and over the years used a huge variety of rifles. I am no expert, but I do know what I like and what works best for me. Those old gunmakers back then certainly knew what they were doing. This rifle just feels, looks, and handles superbly. Of all the people who have held it, not one has said a bad word

about it. Surprisingly, most ask the same question: "Why don't they make rifles like this anymore?" In my opinion an old grand rifle is far more enjoyable than a shiny new modern-day gun.

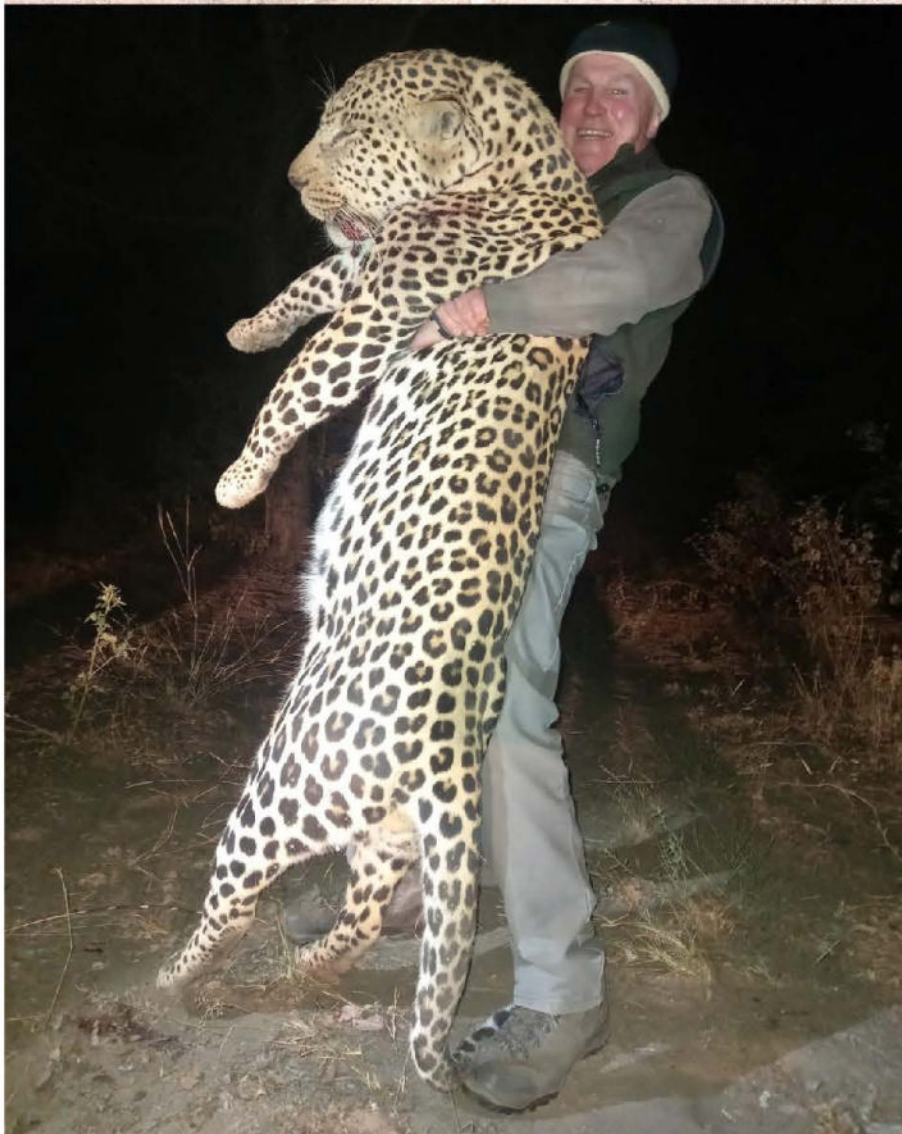
On the barrel of this rifle is the inscription: "Specially made for Chas A Heyer & Co, Nairobi". After doing a bit of research I found that Chas A Heyer was a company that was one

of the pioneers and oldest firms of outfitters of shooting and safaris in British East Africa, starting around 1900. They specialized in the setting up and running of safaris, supplying staff, camping equipment, clothing, guns, licenses, rations, and even hunting areas if required. They had several firearms companies making and supplying guns for them to sell in Africa with their own

A photo from a trail camera of a big tom leopard feeding on a bait.



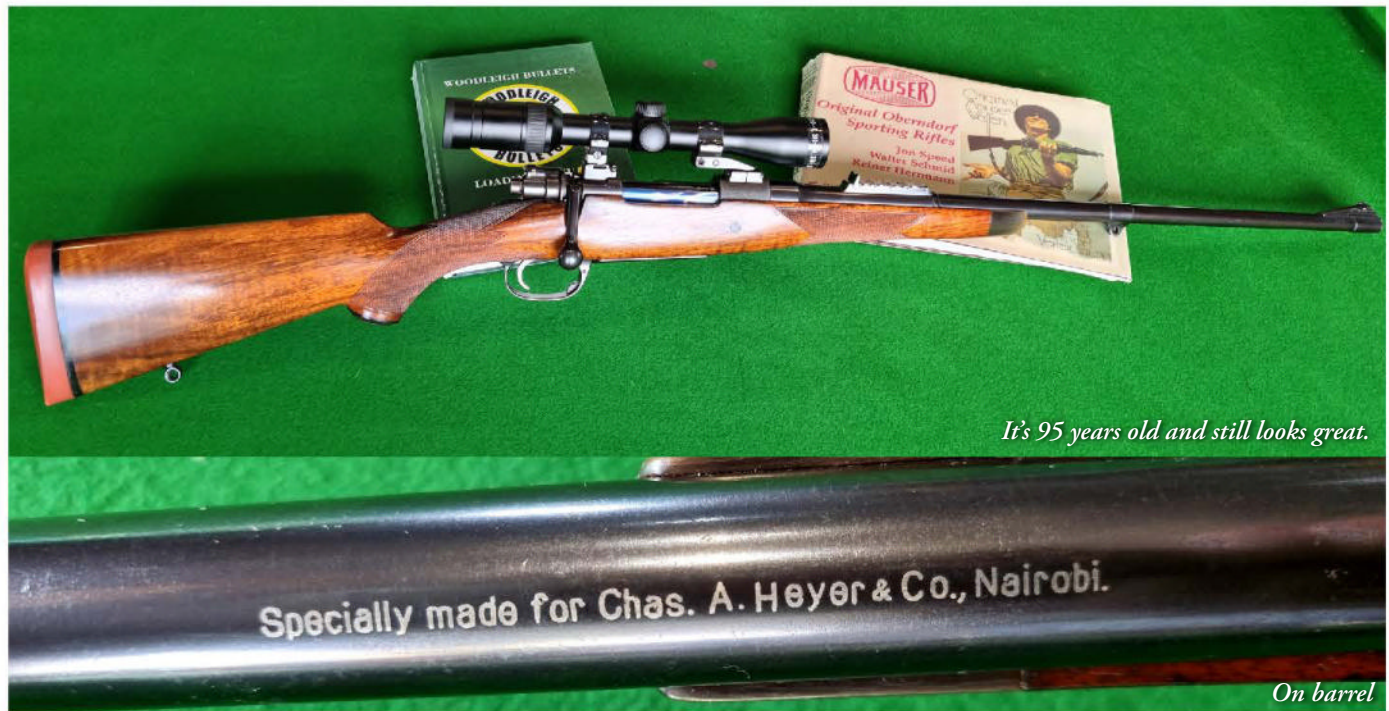
This big tom was dead under the tree. The size of this cat is why you should carry a big stick.



name on the barrels, including Walther pistols, Suhl shotguns, Mannlicher rifles and, of course, Mauser rifles.

I have attached an old, well-known, and circulated photograph of the front of Chas. A. Heyer's store in Nairobi. The four sets of elephant's tusks average 115lbs per side. I believe that they were shot in 1932 by Freddie and his daughter Diana Guest on a 6-day hunt with the great professional hunter Baron Bror Blixen. I think Bror was the best, or one of the very best, Great White Hunters from the golden days of African hunting, certainly one of the most colorful. The photograph was most likely taken by either Blaney Percival or J A Hunter. I would love to think that my rifle could have been inside the shop on a shelf, and maybe one of these famous hunters had handled it at the time this photograph was taken. One of them could even have been its first owner, which would have been very cool, but unfortunately the previous owner to me did not know or care what the rifle's history was, so I can only imagine it. But one thing for sure, this rifle comes from the golden era of African hunting.

As back then and now, the 9.3x62mm caliber has always been a fantastic African choice. It was, and still is, widely used throughout the whole continent and in many other countries worldwide. Using heavier projectiles, it is legally permitted to be used on dangerous game in most countries in Africa, and is a magnificent choice with lighter projectiles for plains game. I personally just wanted to use this rifle on plains game, doing my own reloading, and after trying a few difference projectiles I settled on a 250 grain Woodleigh PP SN (Protected Point Soft Nose). These start at around 2580fps, which is 3695ft/lbs of energy. That is almost .338 Win Mag performance without the massive recoil. Accuracy averages about 1.5" three-shot groups at 100 yards which I find very acceptable for the hunting I do with this rifle. It is pleasurable to shoot



with mild recoil, and is very effective on even large plains game. I have used this combination with great success on a few safaris to take zebra, gemsbok, bushbuck, impala, kudu, and leopard.

I have used this rifle and load combination to take three leopards on different occasions and I think it suits this purpose brilliantly. At 70 to 100 yards down range the projectile is still travelling at 2400 to 2340fps, enough velocity to ensure a good dose of hydrostatic shock for the animal. If things go well, the leopard will drop under the tree; if things go wrong and you need to shove your barrel down his throat, the 250g Woodleighs will basically come out the tip of his tail. This, believe me, is a great thing to know while hunting leopards in the dark when you can have some doubts in the back of your mind.

The scope I normally use on this rifle is a Swarovski Z3 3-9x36. This helps keep the small, light, handy feel to it while giving outstanding crystal-clear views. It works great in low light and has what I think is the perfect power range. On my last leopard hunt I tried a Swarovski Z8i 1.7-10x42 which, of course, performed outstandingly with



the illuminated reticle making sighting at night on a big tom's shoulder an easier task. I will never forget as long as I live, the magnificent sight through the scope of a big tom leopard standing in the tree with the red dot firmly held on his shoulder.

My grandson is now 10 years old and a very keen young hunter. In six or so years' time I will take him along with the rifle and introduce him to the wonderful sport and pastime of African Hunting. He will be around 16, and the old Mauser rifle a bit over 100 years old. While celebrating the taking of his first trophy I will present him with the old

rifle as a gift. I then hope he will have many more enjoyable hunts and years of valuable service with it, maybe passing it down the family line even further.

So, a bit of friendly advice from an old Aussie: Keep your eye out for a good old classic rifle. With a few dollars spent on restoration you can have yourself a rifle that will enhance your enjoyment of hunting. If you are lucky, you could end up with a real old treasure and something to pass onto your children after many years of enjoyment yourself.

Remember, age only makes a good rifle even better, and life is too short not to own and use a great rifle.

Vintage double rifles - pitfalls to avoid

PART II-THE REST OF THE BITS

By Johan van Wyk

In the previous instalment, we looked at what to look out for when it came to the barrels and jointing of second-hand vintage double rifles. There is much more to look out for, however, so without further ado, lets sally forth!



A Westley Richards hand-detachable lock boxlock-actioned shotgun with the left lock removed from the action. Note that the firing-pin protrusion is integral with the hammer...

The insides of a double rifle's action have been compared by some with the insides of the human body. Generally, if all is well and working as it should, it is better to leave well alone and carry on. When things go wrong, however, they often go wrong badly and this is when the services of a "surgeon" in the form of a highly skilled gunmaker is called for.

Although over the years a handful of action designs were introduced that made use of coil springs, the British by and large favored the use of leaf springs instead. Leaf springs are, however, tricky to make and require not only careful filing and fitting but a touch of metallurgy as well to work properly. I know of very few instances where leaf springs, even some very old ones,

have failed, but being mechanical in nature they certainly can fail. Since it is impossible to predict exactly when a leaf spring, especially an old one, will fail, this is one of the risks inherent in old British guns and rifles that must be accepted beforehand. The same goes for other parts of the action such as the hammers, firing pins, cocking levers, and the like.

In my time, I have had exactly one leaf spring break on me. This happened on the first morning of a high-end guinea fowl shoot in South Africa - they always wait for such occasions to break, don't they? The gun was a best grade boxlock ejector from a famous Birmingham maker dating from 1895, so the gun was almost certainly fired thousands upon thousands of times over the years before I came to own it. Luckily, a friend had a spare 12-bore side-by-side that I could use to finish the shoot with, so no big deal except for the irritation factor.

Fast forward a year. The same gun; the same hosted guinea fowl shoot. During a drive, I fired at a guinea fowl, missed with the first barrel, swung ahead of the bird again and pulled the rear trigger. The guinea fowl went down but as I broke the gun to reload, I heard a dull click which didn't sound good. This time around, it turned out that the cocking lever had broken, an almost unheard-of ailment as the particular action in question made use of a one-piece cocking lever that was a rather substantial piece of steel.

After the first breakage, I contacted the original manufacturer of the gun (they are in business to this day), explaining my situation. They kindly wrote back, commiserating with the fact that one of their guns had broken down and explaining that, while they would under normal circumstances be more than willing to help with spare parts, they only had a limited number of spare parts left for guns manufactured after 1923! It didn't do my cause any good, but I had to smile at the wording of the e-mail. In the end, a friend of a friend was able to source a similar gun from the same era in the UK. The gun in question was abused and neglected to the point where it had been condemned for destruction, so the friend-of-a-friend quickly arranged for the internal body parts to be harvested (I just had to slip that in here!) and shipped to me.

Interestingly, on both occasions I was unable to close the gun after the breakages occurred. The broken pieces



The lock of a classic Purdey sidelock ejector shotgun. The mainspring of the lock is clearly visible, as are the other moving parts. If such a mainspring breaks, it can be quite a headache to have a replacement made by a skilled pair of hands.

lodged themselves in places inside the action that made closing the gun and thereby recocking the undamaged lock impossible. This really put paid to the oft-repeated "gospel" that a double gun or rifle is actually two guns or rifles in one and when one goes wrong the other one keeps functioning. Not necessarily!

Some years ago, a friend using a nice old Army & Navy boxlock in .450 NE for dealing with troublesome elephants, suffered a similar fate. (He's one of those lucky individuals who don't have to deal with mortgages and other similar modern-day hindrances, rather spending his time in a wild corner of Africa where troublesome big game is a notable feature of everyday life). He was out testing his double rifle and found that the right lock wouldn't fire. Being astute enough not to try and fix the rifle himself out in the bush, he switched to a back-up bolt-action rifle and sent the rifle to a gunsmith. The latter diagnosed a broken hammer, and after some hours of machining and fitting, the double was made right again and resumed previous duties.

I mention the three instances above not to scare potential buyers away or to imply that such serious breakages are

everyday occurrences, because they are not. It is, however, a fact of life that many British double rifles are well past the 100-year mark, and it isn't unreasonable to have something go wrong with one somewhere down the line. Many of these old rifles have led adventurous lives out in the bush and the odd breakage is to be expected after the passage of so much time and big-game animals.

Other mishaps such as a broken firing pin is quite often less of a problem. Firing pins are by and large relatively simple things and a skilled machinist can usually make replacement pins with moderate effort. There is one notable exception to this, though, and that is the famed Westley Richards hand-detachable lock (or "droplock") double rifles and shotguns from certain eras. With these, the firing pin was machined integral with the hammer from a single piece of steel. If the firing pin extension should break off or get damaged for some reason (such as when the lock is dropped - sorry again!), it is a good bet that any gunmaker entrusted with the repair will have a few choice remarks before picking up a file! Again, this is but one unique example and far from the norm.

Fine walnut, just like fine whisky, is one



This best-quality self-opening sidelock ejector rifle bearing the name of RB Rodda, an Indian retailer, has all the hallmarks of fine quality and condition. It is chambered in .450/400 (3") NE.

of the things almost guaranteed to tug at the heartstrings of many. Some avid wood merchants, and even gunmakers and gun buyers, literally go to the ends of the earth to source fine old walnut, either for sale to other gunmaking concerns or to tuck away in their personal stashes for future use. This is one of the reasons why good quality, well-figured walnut for gunstocks has become scarcer and more expensive during the last decade or so. The remaining stocks of suitable walnut are found in more and more inaccessible areas and are therefore more and more difficult to get hold of.

In the olden days, the British trade had the luxury of being able to buy stocks of walnut not only from merchants from across the Channel, but also had access to wood that was as highly prized but not as expensive. Many an old double rifle, especially the higher-grade guns, were therefore stocked with exquisite walnut that was no doubt a source of pride to the makers but a source of joy to the well-to-do buyers of those rifles.

As is the case with old springs, wooden gunstocks sometimes also don't fare well against the ravages of time. This is sometimes very evident on rifles exported to India, the subcontinent

where the climate is moist, and temperatures are high. A walnut stock, even though it may have been fashioned from a blank more than a century ago, is never completely dead and continues to shed and absorb moisture over time. The wood of a gun that has been stored in a warm and moist climate and is suddenly moved to a much drier climate (such as the African bush) will dry out over time and the gaps between wood and metal will increase ever so slightly. Add in recoil and neglect, and cracks will form over time.

Because of the way that the wood is inletted, boxlock-actioned guns and rifles are generally more prone to cracked stocks than their more upmarket sidelock-actioned cousins. If I were contemplating the purchase of a dated yet expensive double rifle, I would certainly request an inspection of the gun by a stockmaker who knows what he's doing. Restocking a double rifle is an expensive proposition at the best of times and may in the end not even be worth it in most instances. So look (or have somebody who knows what he's looking at do it for you) before you buy. Some cracks can be fixed, but the fix won't necessarily always be permanent.

Oil soak is another potential problem that may or may not be fixable. This usually occurred when too much oil is applied to a rifle and the rifle is then stored away for a considerable length of time in such a way that the excess oil is allowed to seep into the wood. The first sign of oil soak is usually a patch of wood that appears dark and stained. Walnut that has absorbed too much oil can in no way take the pounding of recoil and the inevitable result is an expensive restocking job. The good news, however, is that excess oil can be removed from a stock if the damage is not too severe. It is time-consuming, however, and not a job for the rifle owner in a hurry. To avoid oil soak is quite easy. To begin with, apply just enough oil to the gun or rifle's metal surfaces, and not too much. Secondly, and this is especially relevant in the case of a double rifle or shotgun, store the firearm muzzles down in the safe. This will allow excess oil to seep into the barrels where it can easily be wiped out.

The subject of wood also brings me to another matter that is misunderstood by many who appraise especially vintage British firearms at first glance: chequering. The British makers traditionally applied what is known as flat-top chequering to their guns. As the wording implies, flat-top chequering left small, flat diamonds on the chequered areas of the stock that worked well at absorbing moisture and provided a secure grip. Flat-top chequering is also more difficult to apply because the person doing the chequering not only has to concentrate on the pattern but on the depth of the cut as well.

The result is that many stockmakers these days use off-the-shelf chequering tools sourced from companies like Brownells. Using these tools on a vintage British gun is, however, in my opinion a big no-no. Sharp-pointed chequering on an old double is almost always an indication of a refinishing job and, as it is not an alteration that is period original, is something that subtracts

from the rifle's value in my opinion. Ditto for modern recoil pads on vintage British doubles. Recoil pads can and do perish over time, but the only proper replacement is a new pad that resembles the old one, not some invention that claims, contrary to the laws of physics, it can lessen felt recoil by some magical percentage.

The last potential pitfall that I would like to touch on is often also the hardest to detect, but unfortunately also potentially the most important: the unskilled gunsmith! People who really understand the complexities of double rifles are thinly spread everywhere, and those that can fix them when things go wrong are even scarcer. I have seen a few real shockers in my time, even to the extent that rifles with relatively minor defects (or even no defects at all) ended up completely ruined.

Perhaps the biggest shocker in recent times was the brand-new rifle that turned out to be too thick through the pistol grip for the owner, who had relatively small hands. Instead of slimming down the stock (which would also have entailed refinishing the buttstock and rechequering it) and opening up the angle of the grip, the gunsmith (and in this instance I use that term very loosely) decided to heat up the triggers and bend them further back in the trigger guard so that they could be reached more easily, not realising that the triggers on a double rifle are actually an integral part of the mechanics and not something that could be adjusted like an after-market trigger on a Mauser or Remington bolt-action rifle.

After the "modification" the owner naturally wanted to try his now "fixed" double, and unfortunately picked a big-bore shooting competition where cameras were rolling for the occasion. The result was, to put it mildly, nothing short of spectacular, and for all the wrong reasons. As the beeper went off, the shooter picked the rifle up and slammed it shut in one movement. As the action closed, both barrels discharged



Superficially, this nice old boxlock ejector by WJ Jeffery & Co dating from 1904 and chambered for the .450/400 (3") NE ticks all the boxes. It will still be prudent to have the rifle inspected by a knowledgeable gunsmith before buying it, however. Test-firing the rifle would be even better.

simultaneously, and the rifle was almost wrenched out of the flabbergasted shooter's hands in dramatic fashion. By a stroke of luck, the barrels were pointed downrange when the incident occurred, or things may have taken a very serious turn for the even worse.

The incident described above just illustrated again why double rifles have a unique temperament. Only those people who really know what they are doing should be entrusted with working on them, and if you are the unwary buyer, caveat emptor. Steer clear of

rifles that show evidence of extensive modification or are ramshackle enough to require extensive gunsmithing. Where possible, buy from a trustworthy dealer or individual, and insist on a pre-buy inspection by someone who knows what he's looking at. Test firing the rifle beforehand is another great idea, even if it means paying for the ammunition.

When things turn out well, though, few things are as satisfying as owning a nice double rifle in a caliber steeped in hunting lore and tradition. It is truly joyful and satisfying! 🦋

Hard or Soft?

All that's old may or may not be new again, but it seems that old controversies never die.

The Swift A-Frame, with its solid partition to prevent excess expansion, combines the virtues of an expanding bullet with the weight retention and deep penetration of a solid. In any questionable situation where mono-metal solids are not desired, it is a good alternative.



The latest concerns the possible damage done to the barrels of a double rifle by using so-called “mono metal” solids. The theory goes that since hard metals like brass cannot compress like a jacketed bullet with a lead core, the thin steel of the rifle barrel is pushed outward, to the point that you can see the rifling “imprinted” on the exterior of the barrel.

This by itself might be curious but not life-threatening. Now, however, users are reporting stress damage to the solder holding the barrels together, with resulting loss of accuracy. I would think loss of accuracy at that point would be the least of your worries.

Much of the debate has been taking place on internet forums devoted to double rifles and

African hunting, which means one should not believe a word unless supported by three independent sources. I’m not saying it hasn’t happened, only that I tend not to wholeheartedly believe someone who signs himself “bwana mkubwa.”

I apologize if you think I’m taking this too lightly, but drawing on my memories of covering this stuff for the better part of 35 years, and watching as things came and went, it’s hard to treat it like the end of the world.

But let’s go back to 1993, when I made a trip to London to visit Holland & Holland. At the time, Col. Art Alphin’s A-Square Company was firing on all cylinders, producing bolt-action rifles built on P-17 actions, and making brass, bullets, and loaded ammunition. One of A-Square’s best-known products was its “Monolithic” solid. (Alphin registered that name, and was suitably enraged when people started using it to describe any bullet made of a single copper alloy.)

Already, the big double-rifle makers were warning about using these bullets in a double, and Alphin—

true to form—went on the warpath defending his baby.

In London, I spent a couple of hours with David Winks, a director of H&H who had just retired as production manager. He was also a barrel regulator and knew doubles inside out. His view was, I thought then, eminently practical: Monolithics may or may not damage a barrel, but since there are alternatives available, why risk it?

And, at the time, there were excellent alternatives, including the Woodleigh solid and Jack Carter’s Trophy Bonded Sledgehammer. The problem, of course, was getting a load to duplicate the one used to regulate barrels, but that was another issue. The Woodleigh was designed to replicate the bullets used in Kynoch ammunition from years past, so it would be the logical choice as long as you could get your hands on some.

In the 30 years since 1993, a lot has changed. A-Square and its “Monolithic” solid are long gone, but more and more bullet makers have embraced the monolithic principle, making solids from brass, bronze, or what have you. At the same time, the number of traditional jacketed solids has declined.

For example, way back when, there were Trophy Bonded Sledgehammers, but Federal discontinued them when they acquired Trophy Bonded. Speer used to produce a wonderful solid with tungsten cores. Federal discontinued those as well, because they were expensive to make. I’m not sure I would have put one of those through a double rifle anyway, but they were fantastic in a .450 bolt gun.

The fire that destroyed the Woodleigh factory disrupted everything. Kynamco, which purports to duplicate all the old Kynoch loads in factory ammunition, at one time loaded only Woodleigh bullets, since

they were designed to duplicate the originals. All well and good, until they couldn’t get them anymore. A quick glance at the Kynamco website does not show what bullets they are loading now. That would be good to know.

There is also the question of new doubles versus old. Will a Krieghoff in .500 NE handle modern bullets better than a H&H made in 1905? Not being a metallurgist, I don’t want to make any firm statements, but my hunch is yes, it would. Still, Krieghoff is one of the makers quoted as warning against the use of mono-metal solids.

In my opinion, as a general rule, any owner of any double should take the advice of the riflemaker, not the word of the bullet manufacturer. If the maker is no longer in business—say you have a John Wilkes or an Army & Navy—then ask one of the English makers that are still around, like H&H, Rigby, or Westley Richards.

A final note: In 2004, I did some extensive bullet testing, including carting duplicate loads to Africa and shooting Cape buffalo with them, then digging them out and comparing with performance in a penetration box. One I tried, just out of curiosity, was a hard-lead solid in a .500 Nitro Express. On a Cape buffalo, shot behind the shoulder at close range, that 570-grain bullet penetrated right through to the other side—about 36 inches, as I recall. It was practically un-deformed.

It seems to me that in an older rifle, where suitable modern solids cannot be found, the answer might be a hard cast bullet. The only thing I’d be leery of is hunting elephants with it.

Alternatively, a bullet like the Swift A-Frame with a solid partition performs much the way the Trophy Bonded “solid shank” Bear Claws worked, combining the best qualities of a soft and a solid. ♣

But They're So **UN-BRITISH!**

By Wayne van Zwoll

How much does a sub-continent owe London's most celebrated cottage industry?



This Rigby double shows the handwork, grace of form and big chambers that made such rifles iconic.

My father was a linguist. He taught German and Russian at university. To my enduring shame, I never learned either. German would have been exceedingly useful, as it so heavily influenced Afrikaans. Also, I've come to like the mountains and rural villages of central Europe as well as the vast landscapes of southern Africa.

No matter that German words are half again as long as necessary, or that speaking German makes anyone look

and sound angry, were I able to reel in a few decades already off the spool, I'd apply myself to German. African history too. And astronomy. What wonders, the stars! And how they humble us!

But the hourglass can't suck up sand.

Like any young man enamored with firearms and big game, I read everything available on hunting in British East Africa. The big black-powder cartridges of the 19th century, and the spur-hammered double rifles that fired them, enchanted me – as did the Sharps “buffalo guns” and Winchester lever-actions of my home country's frontier West.

South Africa's Boer Wars and the Spanish-American War waged across the Atlantic marked a sea change in military rifles and ammunition. Smokeless powder replaced black, and the single-shot breech-loader gave way to repeaters. Something was lost in that transition. Call it romance. The efficiency of the machine gun that bloodied Europe between trenches in World War I was evident to a less macabre degree in hunting arms. The age-darkened walnut and wear-silvered barrels of big-bore doubles built before the age of automobiles held visions of a time forever gone.

I'm past that now. Well shy of embracing Tik Tok and battery-powered trucks, I've completed a mental leap to smokeless powder. Paul Mauser helped me along, with his marvelous 1898 bolt-action rifle – hailed this year, its 125th, by a limited run of embellished sporters.

Accepting hammerless Nitro-proofed rifles as worthy big-bores, I found to my dismay they were even more costly than their forebears. Professional counseling put me at peace with dizzying price spirals, yet to abate. Then, over a Namibian campfire, Mike pulled me firmly from the abyss.

“Why don't you hunt with my .470 tomorrow?”

What! Surely he wouldn't trust that

valuable Heym double to a hunter he barely knew!

“Honestly, I'm finished with it. It's idle the rest of the week. I have soft nose ammo to spare.”

My, “Aw, shucks, I couldn't” charade was perilously close to ending our chat when he brought out the case, drew the lovely rifle from it and handed it across. He couldn't have pried it back.

Next day, hunting in tall grass fringing thorn on a dry watercourse, I caught a wink of movement. A kudu bull took form in the shadows opposite, back-lit black behind a screen of wait-a-bit. Sinking to a crouch, I watched as he browsed. The air was still. A few steps would bring me to open-sight range. But kudu are always switched on. Checking the breech and wiping my palms dry on my shirt, I crept forward. A grey lourie squawked. I stopped, face averted, lest looking into the animal's eyes at such a short distance would alert it. A twig-snap got my attention. But the kudu was

Nitro Express classics, L-R: .450, .470, .500. The .470, by Lang in 1907, was famously used by Ruark





Custom gunmakers like Mausers. This .450 Watts was built for Jack O'Connor. He used it on safari.

still there, quartering slightly off. He had dismissed the “go-away bird,” at least for the moment, and returned to eating. I thumbed the tang. The click was soft. A step further and I rose, .470 to cheek.

The kudu looked up. The bead quivered to a near-stop. At the blast the bull fell and did not move.

The .470 is arguably the most successful of traditional British “Express” cartridges. It came after the British Army had adopted the .303 in a Lee-Enfield repeating rifle, a follow-up to the .577/450 black-powder round in the Martini-Henry single-shot. A subsequent edict had made .450-bore game cartridges impractical. Fearful that restless colonies from Burma and Ceylon to India and the Sudan might grab up old Martinis to challenge the empire, Great Britain banned the import of .450 rifles to these lands. The rule may have taken effect as early as 1905, but was surely on the books by 1907. It spurred development of replacements for .450s. Of course, no dangerous-game cartridge was suited to a Martini-Henry infantry rifle, so the rule was absurd. But it was responsible, at least in part, for the .470, designed by Joseph Lang and introduced in

1907. Rather than adhere to the prevailing custom of British gunmakers to keep cartridges proprietary, Lang released his .470 to the trade. Anyone could chamber for it. Rigby’s decision to adopt it instead of fashioning its own new cartridge assured its success. After Robert Ruark used the .470 on safari and wrote of it in “Horn of the Hunter” (1954), it made the leap from hunting cartridge to romantic icon.

I was mighty pleased for the chance

Not held as a proprietary round, the .470 was widely chambered. Still is. Modern loads have followed.

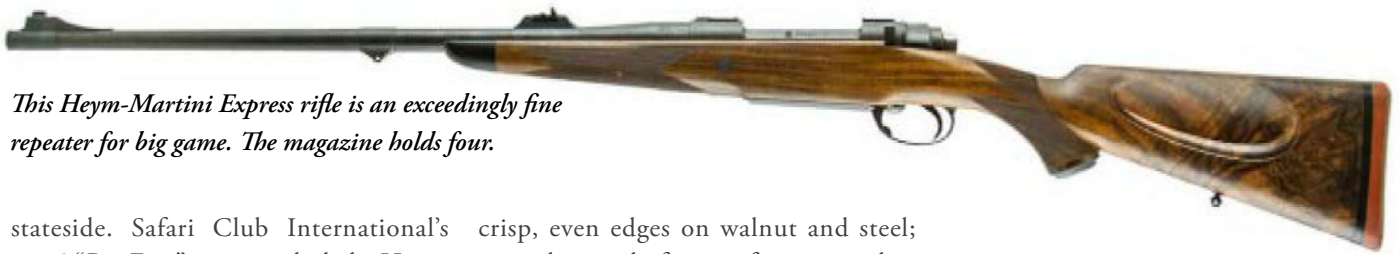


to hunt with a classic British Express rifle.

“Wait a minute!” you say. “The cartridge is British. Heym doesn’t sound British!”

Indeed. The brand dates to 1865, when Fredrich Wilhelm Heym built a factory in Suhl, Germany. In 1891 he manufactured a three-barreled rifle, the company’s first hammerless drilling. By 1912 Adolf Heym had taken the reins and shifted export focus from Russia to the U.S. On the heels of WW I, under August Heym, the company’s double rifles, drillings and combination guns included some with the strong Anson & Deeley boxlock action patented in 1876 by two gunmakers at Westley-Richards. After WW II Heym made a fresh start in Osthem, West Germany, with products as disparate as spinning wheels, slide rules and cuckoo clocks. A new factory in Munnstadt, Lower Franconia, put Heym back in the business of gunmaking, with 4.5mm air rifles and pistols. By 1963, another move in that town returned firearms to the product line – repeaters as well as over/under rifles, doubles and drillings.

The company stayed in the family after the death of Rolf Heym in 1972, and increased marketing efforts



This Heym-Martini Express rifle is an exceedingly fine repeater for big game. The magazine holds four.

stateside. Safari Club International's 1985 "Big Five" series included a Heym double in .375. Six years later the company brought to SCI's convention the first-ever bolt rifle in .600 Nitro Express. It drew orders for several more at \$10,000 each. In 1988 Oskar Zurfloh of Zurich assumed Heym's management. Within four years the company went to Jurgen Neirich of Munich. Tom Turpin, a custom rifle enthusiast in the U.S., urged Heym to offer a dangerous-game rifle in the British vein. But derailed by other projects, it filed for bankruptcy in 1997. Heym Waffenfabrik GmbH, Ltd re-emerged under Thomas Wolkman.

A pair of rifles best represents Heym now. The Model 88B I used derived from a 1986 rifle with an A&D action, double triggers. The current version is more attractive and shootable than its forebear, with a trimmer stock pleasingly open at the grip. The rear sight, on a rib machined for claw scope mounts, has a folding 100-meter leaf on a standing V, properly fixed for a 50-meter zero. The safety, praise be, is not automatic. Chamberings run from 9.3x74 to .577 NE in three action sizes. Beautifully balanced, and proportioned to mitigate recoil, this agile double feels lighter than it is and has a nose for the target.

Heym's flagship bolt rifle supersedes the straight-pull SR 30 of 1998 and the SR 21, a three-lug turn-bolt with a detachable box for the European market. Its Heym-Martini Express moniker credits ace Canadian gunmaker Ralf Martini, who contributed much to its present form.

I met Ralf years ago at a Dallas Safari Club convention. The rifle on his table was not ornate; but it had clean lines, a fetching combination of grace and utility. It bore scrutiny well, too:

crisp, even edges on walnut and steel; smooth, ripple-free surfaces; seamless stock-to-metal fit; perfect checkering – all was impeccable. I picked it up. No seesawing; this rifle leveled itself. Its sights went instantly where I looked. It held and swung obediently, an extension of my arm.

As Ralf told me how it was built, a customer also tending the table broke in, suggesting I borrow his Martini-built .300 H&H. "Uh...." I was slack-jawed. Who offers to loan a costly rifle to a stranger?

Months later I'd be afield with that rifle, lusting for one just like it!

The action of the Heym-Martini Express rifle is based on that of the twin-lug 98 Magnum Mauser – with a slightly larger bolt and beefier lugs. It doesn't have or need the Mauser's third lug. The long non-rotating (controlled-feed) extractor pulls empties over a fixed-blade ejector. Heym installed the fine three-position safety of Winchester's Model 70. The internal box holds four powerful cartridges, one

more than most dangerous-game rifles. Hammer-forged barrels are bored to .375 H&H, .404 Jeffery, .458 Lott and .416 and .450 Rigby. Iron sights comprise a fixed rear with a folding leaf, per the 88B double, and a bead front on a ramp banded and soldered to the barrel. (The banded front swivel stud is soldered in place too.) For scope mounting, the double-square-bridge receiver is grooved to accept EAW and Talley rings.

Ralf Martini's talent is obvious in the stock. Properly straight at the comb, with an open grip that allows the hand to find its own comfortable place behind the trigger, it has a relatively short forend, after the fashion of British Express rifles between the World Wars. Still, there's plenty of wood for long-armed shooters like me. Front and rear, gripping surfaces have no extra bulk. Cleanly checkered in conservative point patterns, they're of just the right shape and diameter to feel nimble, but

Wayne's first rifle was a British SMLE in .303. Crude but reliable, with an enviable record in Africa.





Increasingly hunters favor scoped bolt rifles chambered for U.S. cartridges, .30-06 to 6.5 Creedmoor.

help you guide the rifle and control it in recoil. Generous comb fluting lets your trigger hand relax behind the tang.

The Heym-Martini Express rifle weighs 9 to 10.5 pounds, depending mainly on barrel contour.

This bolt-action seems to me a stellar example of what the British called a magazine rifle when doubles held sway for dangerous beasts. Now, excepting “stunt” cartridges like the .700 NE, there’s as much power to tap in the best turn-bolts. Like Heym’s!

My two dozen hunting trips to southern Africa have blessed me with fine animals and memories. Oddly enough, I’ve only once used a British rifle – a Holland & Holland bolt-action. This iron-sighted .375, loaned graciously by Andrew Pringle, was one of just three rifles firing a British cartridge! (Rigby’s .275, which has also served me, got its first bleeding in Mauser rifles as the 7x57)

I’ve nothing against the Brits. In fact, my first centerfire rifle was a war-

surplus Short Magazine Lee Enfield in .303 British. Despite its crude components, hurry-up manufacture and hard military life, that tired SMLE never failed to feed, fire, extract or eject. It is the only bolt-action I’ve seen that would cycle a stack of empty cases lickety-split without a jam! A wonderful rifle, and a most versatile cartridge!

But the Germans, whose influence shaped Namibia and South Africa, get my vote for “best bolt-action rifles and cartridges.” The Mauser action of 1898 was so good – strong, smooth, reliable – that it is still manufactured to serve custom rifle-makers and enthusiasts who prefer it to all others. Notably, the Mauser factory in Isny, Germany, also supplies Rigby with actions for its exquisite magazine rifles. That relationship dates to when Bell was collecting ivory!

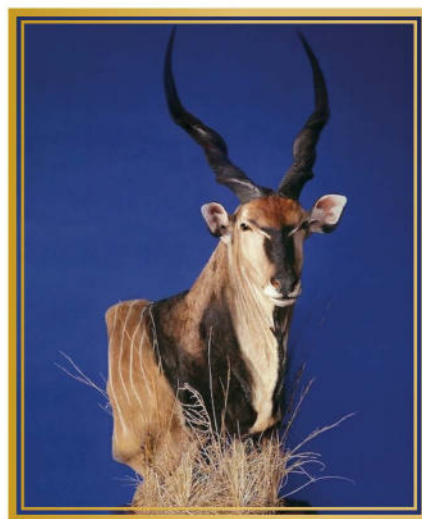
Several U.S. cartridges have taken Africa’s animals for me and for hunters I’ve joined on hunts. The .270 and .30-06 are perennial favorites, as

they’ve long been stateside. The drift to magnums, started by Roy Weatherby in the 1940s and nudged along by the belted 7mm Remington and .300 Winchester of the ‘60s, is now fueled by rimless “long-range” hotrods. Professional hunters shrug: “We prefer lethal hits up close to shots bungled far away.” The gentle 6.5 Creedmoor is easy to shoot well, and factory ammo is accurate and deadly. Ammunition makers tell me the .308 (7.62 NATO) tops sales charts in Africa. Surely it benefits from chambering in military rifles. But ballistically it differs little from the .303 British and the .318 Westley-Richards popular in safari camps soon after the dawn of smokeless powder.

My favorites? The 8x57 JS in a ‘98 Mauser action is darned near a perfect marriage. Save for big, thick-skinned beasts, no animal can long survive a well-placed 200-grain 8mm bullet leaving at 2,400 fps.

Mauser’s original 8x57 (or 7.9x57) was the “J” or “I” infantry round hurling .318-diameter bullets. The improved JS cartridge, launching a .323 bullet faster, came in 1905. So did the 9.3x62, a sporting round developed by Otto Bock of Berlin. I’ve used the “nine-three” extensively, in North America and Africa, in my CZ 550 rifle and in Jamy Traut’s iron-sighted 98 Mauser. With a 250-grain Swift A-Frame at 2,500 fps, or a 286-grain Norma Oryx at 2,400, it’s a match for the heaviest thin-skinned game, moose to eland. Solids from the 9.3x62 have taken buffalo for me.

The British opened East African game fields. Doubles and repeaters from London shops defined what people expected of safari rifles long thereafter. “Express Rifle” and “Nitro Express” are Brit-speak, dating to Purdeys of the mid-19th century. Still, rifles and loads from central Europe have earned the favor of legions of hunters for whom practicality trumps the romance of times long past. 🦋



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A full-page background image showing a sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm orange and yellow glow. In the foreground, a Mokoro (dugout canoe) is visible on the water, with a person inside. The water is dark and reflects the sunset light.

Patrol: Anti-Poaching in Action.

By Zig Mackintosh

African Hunting Gazette readers who have hunted Africa will know of the tremendous pressures on the continent's wilderness areas. They will also likely know that there are more wilderness areas outside of formally protected areas in Africa, many of which are hunting concessions. Consider these African countries where sustainable-use safari hunting is a part of the conservation strategy.

Mokoros in the sunset: Mokoros, or dugout canoes, are used for transporting poached animals on the Zambezi River.



Kudu crossing: Two kudu bulls cross the Turgwe River in the Save Valley Conservancy.

Zambia's Protected Areas cover over 77,000 sq. miles or 30% of the country's total landmass in 19 National Parks and 36 Game Management Areas. Namibia currently has over 50% of its land under formally recognized wildlife management, including its entire coastline. The country has more wildlife than ever in the past 150 years, and the national wildlife herd stands at around three million animals. Private game ranches and wildlife conservancies in South Africa cover 50 million acres, more than five times the size of the country's national park system. Zimbabwe has 25 100 sq. miles dedicated to safari hunting outside formally protected areas. Ninety-four thousand seven hundred sq. miles of Botswana (over 37%) is committed to wildlife conservation, with 17% designated as protected

Lion in Gin Trap: The horrific results of poaching with gin traps.



national parks and game reserves. Mozambique has over 31 750 sq. miles of hunting wilderness. Over 40% of Tanzania is under some form of wildlife management. There are 140 hunting concessions covering 96 500 sq. miles.

A report by lion researcher Dr Peter Lindsey et al. in 2006 estimated the total area of sub-Saharan Africa devoted to safari hunting at least 540 000 sq. miles. By contrast, England's total land area is 50 300 sq. miles.

In the past, the respective governments financed and protected these hunting concessions. But, as the money dried up, the safari operators had to step up and provide most of the funding and manpower for anti-poaching work. While professional hunters and operators have a passion for the wilderness, at the end of the day,

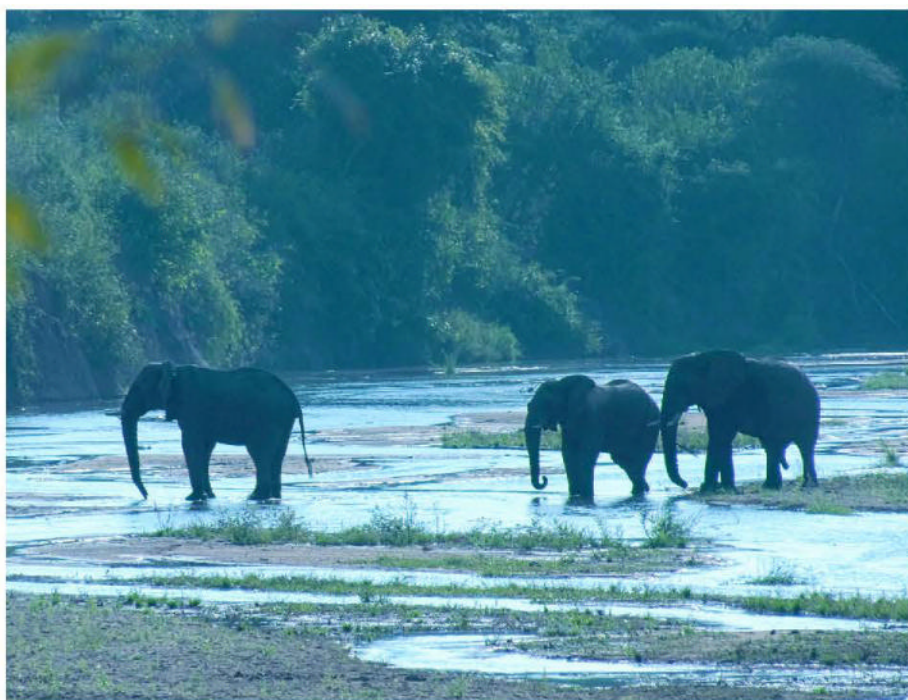
safari hunting is a business, and without turning a profit, they can't survive. Central to profitability is hunting iconic species such as the Big Five. As foreign legislation turns the screws on banning the importation of trophies, the viability of safari operations is seriously compromised.

There are many forms of poaching in Africa, bushmeat, both subsistence and commercial, timber, fish, pangolin, ivory, rhino horn and even succulents. As human populations grow, pressure on natural resources becomes more intense, and the work to protect wild places becomes more demanding. Hunting safari operations across the continent are on the frontline of this battle.

Patrol: Anti-Poaching in Action is a fortnightly newsletter highlighting the anti-poaching work of safari hunting operations across Africa. The newsletter comprises short documentaries, written articles, and photo essays. The goal is not to glamorize anti-poaching work but to show the "behind the scenes" grind in this relentless battle. Revealing the unheralded work of these operations is imperative to highlight their significant contribution to conservation in Africa.

In the first few editions of Patrol, we have reported on diverse aspects of anti-poaching across Africa.

- Adam Clements Safaris operates in the Moyowosi Game Reserve in western Tanzania. The company has spent much time and money on anti-poaching operations in the area.
- The Save Valley Conservancy in Zimbabwe rose from the ashes of a terrible drought in the early 1990s. Wildlife replaced cattle but with the changeover came the inevitable problem of poaching.
- In 2020 the Isibaya leopard conservation project was launched by
- a group of concerned conservationists. Their stock replacement program aims to protect the leopards of Mangwe, located in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe.
- Kieth Sparks is the director of the Take Action Dog Unit, which takes a very different approach to the normal operations of a K-9 unit.
- The 2500-kilometer-long Zambezi River, Africa's fourth largest, forms the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. Wherever high concentrations of wildlife occur, poachers are inevitably attracted, and international boundaries complicate things. Director of Guides Against Poaching (GAP) John Laing and professional hunter Guy Venter discuss the poaching issues in this area.
- The horrific realities of poaching with gin traps are revealed.
- Gambling poaching with taxis and dogs is a serious issue in South Africa.



Elephants in River: Three elephant bulls drinking in the cool of the evening.

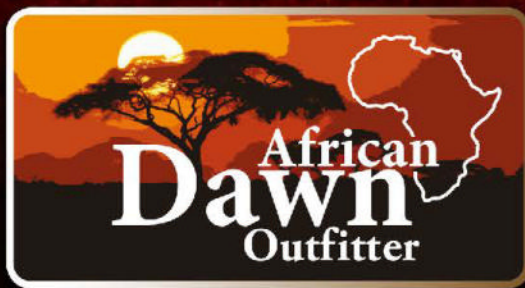
- Honey poaching in Tanzania is having a significant impact on the environment.

In future editions of Patrol, we will travel to Mozambique, Zambia, Uganda and Cameroon to report on the poaching issues in these countries. 🦋

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www.byseewah.com

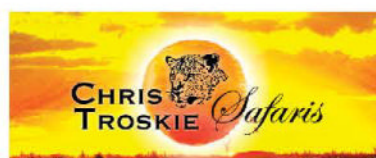


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Jofie, of Jofie Lamprecht Safaris - a highly versatile and well-connected company - offers professional, personalized hunting, photographic and ethnographic safaris in his native Namibia, Southern Africa's Okavango and Caprivi areas, and in northern India's tiger habitat. Whether for a single client willing to work hard for the conservation trophy of a lifetime, a couple on honeymoon wishing to experience the African bush, or a family looking for adventures and memories, is what he and his wife Maryke and their veteran staff can provide. www.jofielamprecht.com



Johan Calitz Hunting Safaris started business in 1987 and in 2014 was privileged to be entrusted with the management of the NG41 Mababe Community hunting concession in northern Botswana. From 2003, Calitz Safaris elephant trophies consistently featured between two and three of the five biggest elephant taken in Botswana

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www.johancalitzsafaris.com



John Sharp is one of the most experienced big-game hunters operating in Southern Africa today. While adhering to the strict ethics of fair chase, John epitomises the authentic 'Great White Hunter' of legend. A pilot, a crack shot and an excellent host, John puts the client at the centre of everything he does.

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www.johnsharpsafaris.com



Kantanta
Hunting Safaris

The name Kantanta derives from Tonga, an indigenous Zambian language, that means "Big Black Sable Antelope." Daniele Ventriglia initially started his hunting experience in Zambia in 1990, and Valerio Ventriglia followed a few years later in the Kafue region in Zambia. The company was initially established in Zambia in the year 2010. Because we wanted to expand and continue contributing in preserving wildlife, we later on moved the business to Tanzania in the year 2013, because of the closure of big-game hunting in Zambia. We invite all hunters interested in hunting big game in Tanzania and Zambia to contact us for further information on our hunting destinations and available species. We would like to thank all our clients and clients-to-be for helping us to improve on our services year after year.

www.kantantahuntingsafaris.com



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Keibeb Safaris, founded by Steph Marais in 2006, offers exceptional trophy hunting, luxurious accommodation and uniquely Namibian hospitality. Our private hunting area of 12 square miles

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Contact Steph Marais info@keibeb.na

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Mail: philip@khomas-highland-hunting.com



Uganda is home to one of Africa's highest mountain ranges, the source of the Nile, and the largest

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www.lodgelakealbert.com



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www.mayoldiri.com



I was fortunate to be raised in a farming community, and have been exposed to wildlife and hunting my whole life.

I completed my Hons. Degree in Nature Conservation, obtained my Professional Hunters license in 2000, and have held unrestricted licenses and hunted in six of South Africa's provinces as well as in the C.A.R., Cameroon, Namibia, Botswana, and Mozambique.

www.mikecurrieadventures.co.za



Mokore Safaris, established in 1979, with over 40 years' experience, is one of the leading safari companies in Africa. Run by the Duckworth family, situated in the world-famous Savé Valley Conservancy in the south-east Lowveld of Zimbabwe. Home to the Big Five as well as other wildlife in a great variety of terrain.

Mokore Safaris also has the privilege of hunting rights in Sengwa Research Area in north-western Zimbabwe and Coutada 9 in central Mozambique. Sole hunting rights in three of the world's top-quality game areas, with access to others, means Mokore Safaris can tailor-make almost any requested safari within Zimbabwe and Mozambique. www.mokoresafaris.com



Monterra Safaris is a privately owned, 14 000 acre game ranch in the Limpopo River Valley of South Africa. Established in the 1980s as the exclusive hunting ground of an American business owner, his passion for hunting and conservation lives on as we offer you the exclusive opportunity to make Africa your own.

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www.monterrasafaris.com



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www.namibiasafaricorporation.com



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supply and management, working with the department of National Parks and the Forestry Commission.

www.richardcookesafaris.com



Rob Lurie Safaris is a family-owned and run business offering bespoke tailor-made safaris. Rob has been in the safari industry for 26, with extensive experience of hunting and guiding in Zimbabwe, Mozambique,

Zambia, Namibia and South Africa, and plans safaris in Uganda, Benin, Cameroon, Tanzania, Mauritius and Greenland. He is currently the Chairman of the Zimbabwe Professional Guides Association (ZPGA). With RLS you will experience all that Africa has to give in ways you have dreamed of - *Come live your dreams with us!*

www.robluriesafaris.com



Originally established by Zimbabwean PH, Phillip Oosthuysen, Rolling River Safaris LLC. based in North Carolina and partnering with Rasland African Ventures, deals with reputable safari operators in southern Africa, offering exceptional fair-chase big-game and plains-game hunts on millions of acres of pristine land.

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www.sbhuntingsafaris.com



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Established in 1998 by two brothers, Jason and Clinton. Both with extensive experience in hunting dangerous and plains game throughout Africa, Stone Hunting Safaris operates in South Africa, Namibia, Ethiopia, Zambia and Tanzania. Offering top quality hunting safaris in the best areas Africa has to offer. Since 1998 Jason has spent over 250 days a year, Clinton – 200, hunting all over Africa in pursuit of top-quality trophies for their clients. They will go out of their way to ensure that all clients will have a great hunt and get the best possible trophies available.

www.stonehuntingsafaris.com



Thierry Labat Safaris is a very small, personalized company based out of Zimbabwe, but also offers hunts in multiple countries that include Cameroon, Uganda, Ethiopia, Mauritius and Mozambique. We offer personalized safaris to suit the client's budget and main targeted species. Not personally owning areas ourselves means we do not have the pressure of fulfilling quotas, but instead we make sure that we take you to the best area for your needs. Our chief goal is to ensure that the client has an enjoyable and memorable safari. TLS has an 80%+ repeat clientele base which in itself speaks volumes. Our high standard of hunting ethics is of utmost importance, not only to us, but to our industry as a whole, and we endeavor to keep those standards high. When dealing with us, our word is our bond! www.thierrylabat.com



Watts Trophy Hunting Safaris has more than two decades of experience in the hunting and safari industry. Our main camps and hunting areas consist of open savanna, acacia brush and camel thorn trees; there you will find some of the Big Five species and numerous plains game animals. To make every hunter's dream come true, we expanded our hunting expeditions to Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Uganda, and all over South Africa. The extensive variety of animal species and countries give us access to top-quality trophies and allows us to custom-make your safari, varying from the Big Five to conventional game hunts.

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numbers were burgeoning to the point of serious habitat destruction.

I spent time with various elephant biologists, and all told the same story: The major obstacle to any positive action on behalf of elephants was public misconceptions about the actual situation. No question, the situation was dire, and probably terminal in some areas. But in others, circumstances were totally different, and totally different actions were required—actions that were blocked by supposedly well-meaning people who thought they knew best.

The essential problem, I was told, lay in one fact. In the mid-1800s, when Europeans began arriving in central Africa, they found islands of people in a sea of elephants. Today, there are islands of elephants in a sea of people. That's fact number one. Fact number two is that, historically, these vast numbers of elephants moved in continuous migrations, covering thousands of miles.

Fact number three is that elephants, all their admirable qualities aside, are intensely destructive animals. They kill and uproot trees, devour vegetation, and generally devastate their environment. As long as they were migrating, this was not a problem; quite the opposite, it was an essential part of regeneration, just like periodic veld fires. Once they could no longer migrate, however, once they were confined to a particular area, the devastation became intense, not only to their detriment but to all the other animals, birds, and reptiles that called it home.

This is really an insuperable problem, since the expanding human settlements and infrastructure of Africa block migration routes, and this is almost certainly going to get worse.

Some do-gooder conservation groups look at this situation and suggest that the answer is to take elephants from

where there are too many and relocate them to areas where there are too few. This is an attractive proposition, especially when it conjures images presented in movies of a baby elephant in a sling beneath a helicopter, squealing with glee as it is transported to its new home.

First of all, where do you put them? When elephants have been eradicated from an area, it is usually for a reason. Either they threatened the human population or they were easily vulnerable to poaching. Will those people want elephants returned? Unlikely. Would they be safe from poachers? Unlikelier still.

As for relocating them in the first place, it's a massive, expensive undertaking fraught with difficulties. They need to be relocated in family groups. They need to be transported in a sedated condition, in heavy vehicles, for long distances, over bad roads, with veterinarians in constant attendance, and even then they can only be sedated for short periods. Intelligent elephants may be, but they don't seem to accept the explanation that all of this is for their own good.

Ask the average person about legal hunting, or even culls, to reduce numbers, versus relocating surplus animals, and everyone will say they should be relocated. When was the last time you saw an article in *The Economist*, *The Times*, or anywhere else, about the realities of relocation?

In its most recent article about African elephants, *The Economist* concluded that the causes of elephant poaching were poverty and bad governance and law enforcement. No kidding. Really?

In another *Economist* article several years ago, looking at the plight of elephants and rhinos in the Northern Frontier District of Kenya (the NFD, as it was known years ago), the writers concluded that the animals needed

somehow to be given economic value in order to encourage the local tribes, like the Turkana, to protect rather than poach.

Nowhere in the article did they even mention legal sport hunting as a possible means of helping to do so.

Legal hunting has been a thing of the past in Kenya since 1977. That is not going to change, and the idea that rich eco-tourists will want to visit the hostile environment of the NFD, and pay enough money to make it worthwhile, is a pipe dream. Other *Economist* articles have stressed how dangerous it is to even approach the NFD, and it's been closed to outsiders because of that, off and on, for years.

The advantages of having a legal





Elephant in the Okavango. Botswana has one of the few remaining healthy elephant populations—healthy to the point of threatening their own well-being through habitat destruction. Proper elephant management is difficult because of international opinion, made all the worse in the age of the Internet.

hunting infrastructure are well known: You have camps with armed men in them, you have regular patrols as hunting vehicles crisscross the territory, you provide permanent employment and a source of hard currency for the locals, and you give the game department more revenue with which to hire and pay game scouts.

The abolition of legal hunting in 1977, with the resulting elimination of all of these benefits in and around protected areas, was a major factor in the explosion of uninhibited poaching of elephants and rhinos in Kenya in the late '70s and '80s. There was little to stop them. Yet the hunting ban was widely applauded as a positive move toward game conservation when, in fact, it was the polar opposite.

The other advantage of having such a hunting community is that it gives it hunting a constituency, and a constituency has a voice in government. No voice in government? Then no one cares.

Would a big-game hunter pay big bucks to hunt elephants in the NFD? Probably he would, but once you start looking at all the different aspects and difficulties of such an idea, the possibility is extremely remote.

In an area where tribes depend on cattle, where grass is scarce and water scarcer, trying to convince herdsmen to value elephants and rhinos over cattle and goats is a waste of time. To my mind, probably the best use of the mountains of "save the elephant"

donations held by the big wildlife funds would be straightforward bribes to the tribesmen, along with giving modern weapons and substantial salaries to the guards, and instituting a shoot-on-sight anti-poaching policy.

The alternative is having game scouts and guards who are outgunned by the poachers, who have no qualms about shooting anyone in uniform—or anyone else for that matter.

In today's environment, the surest way to raise an outcry is to have some predominantly white organization try to tell a black government what it should do. In between the black and the white lies the grey of the elephant, at the mercy of politics, political correctness, and irrevocable change. ♣



PACHYDERMIA

The fading symbol of Africa

To the wide world, the elephant is the symbol of Africa. Hunters might hold out for the lion, and the greater kudu has it advocates, but ask the average person what animal he thinks of when you mention Africa and the answer will almost always be “the elephant.”

This fact is important when you consider the coverage given to game conservation generally by the mainstream media. The mountain nyala may be seriously endangered, or the eastern bongo, or giant sable, but mention those to the average journalist—or, more to the point, the average editor—and you will likely get nothing more than a strange look.

Every couple of years, *The Economist*, London's highly respected international news magazine, remembers the elephant and sends someone to take a look at its status. One expects high quality journalism from *The Economist*, and usually gets it. Its most recent articles on elephant are broadly excellent, but with one curious blind spot: Nowhere that I can find do they mention legal trophy hunting, either as a means of raising revenue or controlling elephant numbers. And nowhere do they credit hunting organizations such as Safari Club International for their efforts to save wildlife in general, and the elephant in particular.

The Economist's writers, who are anonymous, seem to operate under the same biases that afflict journalists everywhere. Certain subjects are taboo. Saying anything good about big-game hunting is one such. The corruption and venality of African politicians is another, especially if that politician



was somehow connected with “freedom fighting.”

For example, in the 1970s, Jomo Kenyatta's wife (one of them, at least) was acknowledged to be one of the biggest traffickers in illegal ivory in East Africa. Was this ever mentioned in *The Times* when it wrote about the massive elephant slaughter that occurred back then? Never, that I know of. Kenyatta, one of the least admirable of all the immediate post-independence leaders, was given almost saintly status, and this particular wife enjoyed the same untouchable reputation. I knew foreign correspondents in Nairobi back then who were well aware of the situation and filed stories about it, but these were invariably spiked or all references to Frau Kenyatta removed.

Twenty years ago, *Gray's Sporting Journal* dispatched me to Africa with instructions to come back with an in-depth story on the status of the African elephant, which was widely believed to be seriously endangered. Of course, it was not endangered in the least. At the time, the numbers were estimated at about 750,000 remaining—a far cry from 2.5 million, or even the 1.5 million estimated in the 1970s, but still a long way from endangered.

Certainly, in some areas, notably Kenya, numbers were down drastically due to poaching, but in other areas, like Kwando in Botswana, elephant



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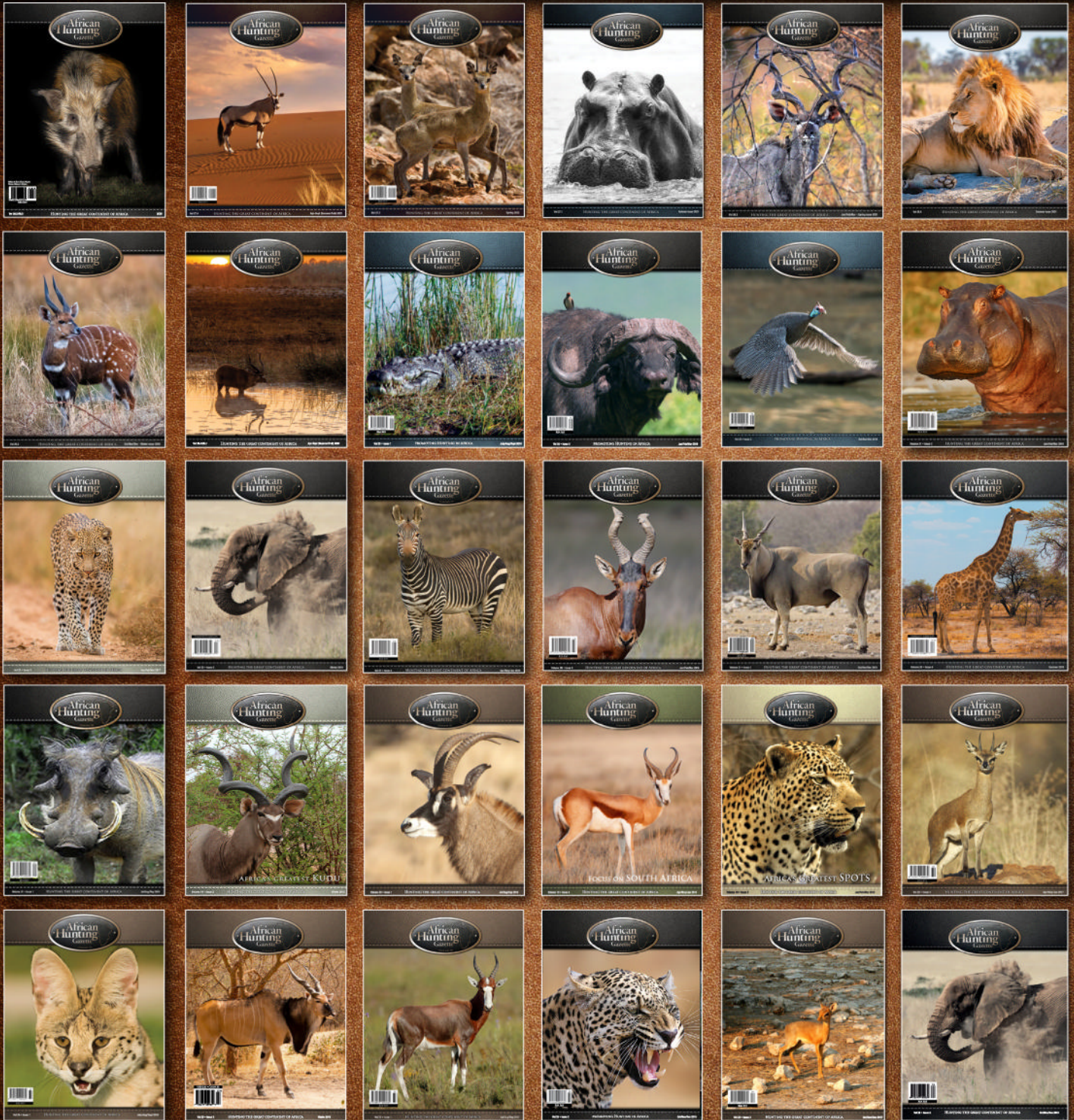


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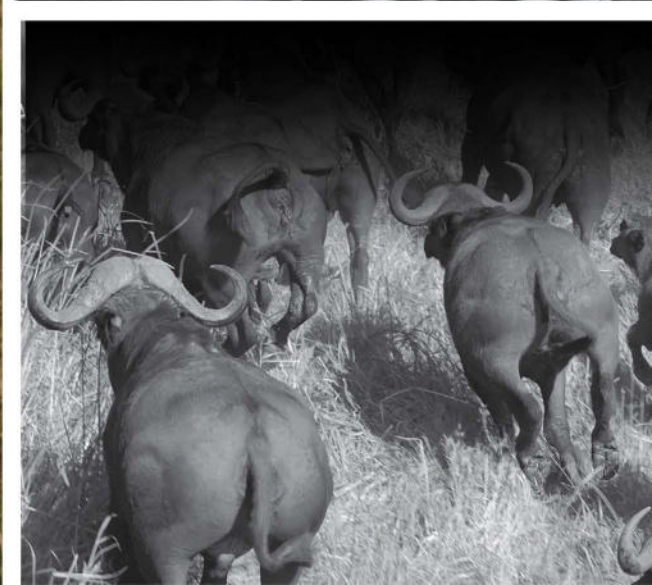


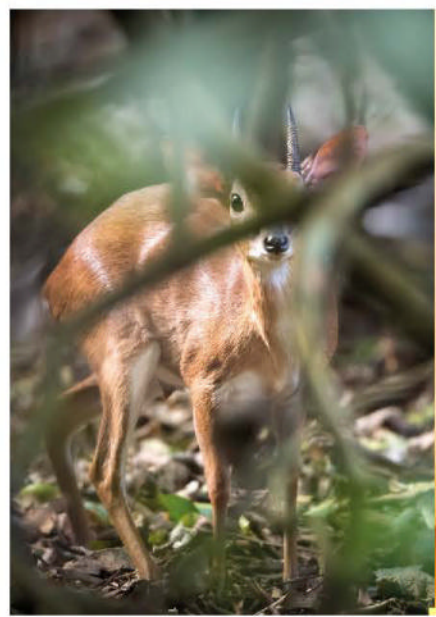
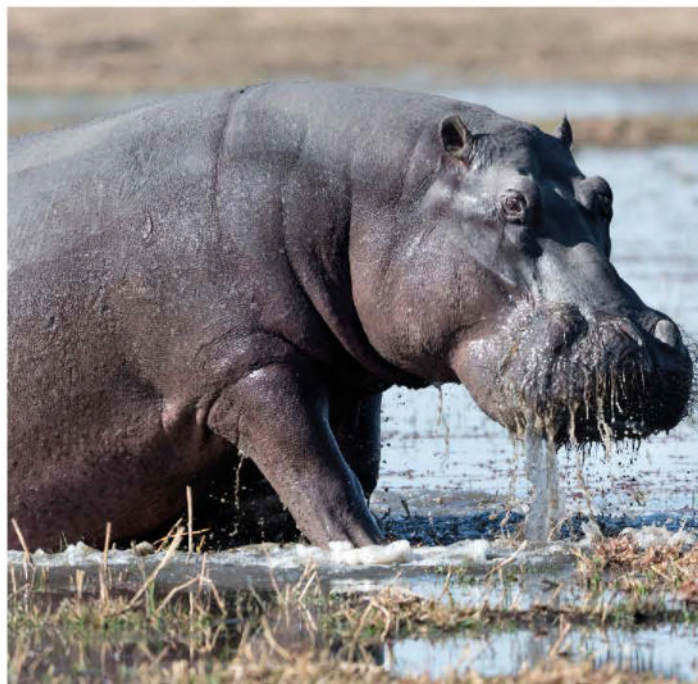
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