

Southern Sudan Treks.

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I have two trips to my credit in the Southern Sudan. The first was a short one. I arrived at Shambe on the 8/2/37 and left Shambe for Khartoum on the 30/2/37.

The main object was to try to collect a warrantable specimen of Giant Eland. In addition, if there was time, I hoped to collect a specimen each of Nile Lechwe, White Sand Kob, and Tiang.

I proceeded from Shambe to Wau, whence the District Commissioner, who had very kindly made enquiries in advance, sent me to a place on the Wau-Tonj motor road about twenty odd miles from Wau, where Giant Eland had been located.

I went out on the day of my arrival there and found the fresh spoor of three bulls, two of whom were juveniles and one adult. After following from about eight a.m. until one p.m., we came up with the adult bull, the other two had separated from him, some time before, but, as seems to be their habit, this animal had been circling about and was on our left lying down, and he became aware of us and bolted without giving me a shot. The forest in that area at that time of year is dry, open in some places and thick in others, and covered in many places with fallen pods which are dry and crackle underfoot. Knowing the alertness of these beasts I left him for that day.

The next day, we tried to find his spoor, but, instead came upon the spoor of a herd with, judging by his spoor and a later glimpse of him, only a very moderate bull in charge. We followed the herd for some distance and I was interested to see the way they broke off big branches to get at the tender shoots. There were many Honey Guides (*Indicator*) in this area and eventually just as the spoor was getting really warm, one of these guides started twittering at us. Almost immediately, the herd broke some distance away. I only caught a glimpse of the bull. I asked the guides if these animals would bolt on hearing a Honey Guide and they said that they would. I therefore took two extra men with me next day, so that when a Honey Guide started twittering when we were on a hot spoor, the rest of us would keep still while one man drew the bird off in the opposite direction to that taken by the spoor.

On the third day, we decided to make for some water in the hopes of finding the spoor of the big bull of the first day. Before reaching the pool, we found the morning's spoor of one big and two smaller bulls, which I judged to be the same ones followed on the first day. We followed very cautiously, as it was rather a thick part of the forest and the ground was carpeted with dry, crackling pods. In about two hours we came upon the three in a thickish place on the edge of some old cultivation, and I collected the big one as he started to trot away, at about thirty yards range. He was a nice adult bull, beautifully coloured, but not old. I had lost my tape, but Major Richards, District Commissioner Tonj, measured his horns which were 38 inches, though not very thick.

I picked up a nice Kob and a fair Tiang at Wan Allel, Tonj District, and collected a Nile Lechwe at Wau, Tonj District. The latter though not difficult, did give a hunt in the long grass and swamp, unlike those at Lake Nyibor which are like sheep.

The headskins and skulls of the above specimens were preserved and the heads mounted.

The second trip to the Southern Sudan was from 23/2/51 to 5/5/51. Its object was to secure entire skins and skeletons of an adult male White Rhinoceros, and adult male Giant Eland, an adult male Nile Lechwe, and if there was time an adult male Situtunga. There was no time to hunt the last of these.

I started off for Kajo Kaji in the Yei District to try to collect the White Rhino and the Giant Eland. During the twenty days in which I hunted White Rhino, I saw fifteen different animals. None of these carried long horns, though one big cow had horns of fair length. The hunting, though not requiring any particular skill, was not so easy as I had anticipated. On many occasions the animals went a long distance before lying up, The wind was strong and shifting, the bush was thickish in parts, and, although, once located with the wind right, it was a simple matter to approach the beasts, and although, when merely suspicious, they tended to dither about a good deal before making up their minds to clear off, when they did realise that man was near they cleared off and kept going. I was interested in seeing females accompanied by one fair sized calf and one very small one on two occasions, whereas I do not remember seeing a Black Rhino accompanied by more than one calf.

My problem was to deal with the skin, so that it was necessary to kill the Rhino early in the day and sufficiently near water or camp to be able to transport the skin back to the camp or to the nearest water, to which the camp would have to be shifted, in sufficient

time to be able to dig out the bone under the horns, turn the lips, nose, ears and eyelids, skin out the fat to the nails, and pare down the skin to under a quarter of an inch before it went bad.

Eventually it was decided to collect the largest bodied bull, an old animal with a short horn of 25 inches with a girth of 26 inches, which had been examined before.

On being hit with a heart shot, he went for about two hundred yards at a heavy gallop and fell. He was accompanied by a cow, a calf and a sub-adult buffalo bull, all of which cleared off at the shot.

Twenty-five men had been held ready in camp every day to deal with this situation. They were hastily summoned, the animal was skinned, and the skin transported to the motor road, thence by lorry to camp. The bones were brought in later. The work of skinning, paring down the skin, and salting it was carried on non-stop for all that day, all that night, and all the next day until by dusk the back of the work was broken. A large shelter had been built in advance with a raised grill on which to stretch the skin. Everyone had laughed at me for building such a big one. It proved to be barely big enough. By the end of the third day, the skin was quite dry and preserved.

The next job was the Giant Eland. Porters were procured with some difficulty and we spent eighteen days looking for them. A very small herd was found consisting of two big cows, each accompanied by a calf and a few half grown animals. No bull was found although rain had fallen and spoor was easy to see. We combed out the area as well as we could but decided that there were no other Eland in that particular area. Rinderpest had been through shortly before, which had killed off many animals. If there were more Eland, we never found out where they were.

We then returned to Juba and thence went to Lake Nyibor to try to collect the Nile Lechwe in as short a time as possible and then spend the remainder of the trip looking for Eland.

The Lechwe was duly collected in one day. It was like shooting a sheep. It was a nice male with horns of $29\frac{1}{4}$ inches. No doubt a better head could have been collected had we had time to spend longer on the job, but he was a nice big male which was suitable for the Museum.

After trying in vain at two different places, Eland were at last located near Jogs Water Hole, North Amadi District. There was a solitary cow with a calf, and a herd of five bulls. Then we got down to it. We followed the spoor of the bull herd until it turned down wind, where we left it. That night the rain fell and it took several

days to locate it again. Then we kept finding spoor of the day before, but the herd wandered backwards and forwards, covering so much ground that we could not come up with fresh spoor. Then we found out where they had been chased by a lioness and had cleared off a long way. I noticed that, when the others lay down, the spoor of the biggest bull showed that he spent most of his time standing on guard. They were feeding on fruit, the name of which I have forgotten, which was falling at that time of year

At last, after twelve days hunting, we found fresh spoor and came up with the herd quite easily. I managed to get a shot into the big bull as he moved off, followed by two more shots before he got out of sight. These disabled him but we had to follow him up and finish him off. This was on the 30/4/51. He proved to be a very old bull with worn down horns of 36 inches in length and just over 13 inches in girth. He was grey all over just like a greater Kudu and no trace of a black band on his neck. The skin on the back of the neck proved to be thicker than that of the White Rhino. He had a great circular scar in the middle of his forehead. His dewlap was very large.

As far as my small experience goes, the Giant Eland offers a greater test of actual hunting than any animal I have hunted in the Sudan.

The humid heat in April was very trying.

Of other animals seen on the trip, the buffalo in the Kajo Kaji area were very numerous and quite remarkably tame. They were similar to the "Marginal forest species" found in the Eastern Congo where black and red individuals occur. Hartebeeste were frequent in the Kajo Kaji area, and in north Amadi District and near Wau. Giraffe were seen near Wau, and in north Amadi District and their spoor was seen just north of Juba. Waterbuck, Reedbuck, Tiang and Kob were seen in suitable areas. Warthog and Duiker were seen almost everywhere. Colobus was seen near Kajo Kaji. Lion and Leopard were heard and their spoor seen. The bird life was fine, and, at Lake Nyibor, wonderful. An interesting burrowing snake, the blotched centipede eater (*Aparallactus Lunulatus* Sub-species), was collected near Juba.

By the courtesy of the Assistant Game Warden, Juba, I was assisted by two of his Game Scouts. Their courtesy, willingness and untiring energy did much to make the trip a success.