



VITAL SHOTS ON THE ELEPHANT

Plate 1

THE DANGER SIGNAL, EARS PRICKED, TRUNK ALERT.
THE TWO FRONTAL SHOTS HAVE BEEN ROUGHLY SHOWN BY RINGS DRAWN ON THE PHOTOGRAPH.

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VOLUME XIV

BIG GAME SHOOTING IN AFRICA

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With one hundred & fifty
ILLUSTRATIONS



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LONDON
Seeley, Service & Co. Ltd.
196 Shaftesbury Avenue

1932

3687

When the Elephant moved we went up the bank, round the bush, and there was our bull, rubbing his tusks in a huge ant-heap within twenty yards of us. It was an easy shot and I put two bullets into his offside shoulder. He went off at high speed downstream, and, having gone about one hundred yards turned to face us, but shortly collapsed and died. Each tusk weighed 47 lbs. And so my last Elephant in Africa.

The story of two Hippo is of interest because they are not always easy to get, nor always good trophies. I was on local leave in that vastly interesting region on the extreme western boundary of the northern province of Tanganyika Territory, where the alkaline lakes are predominant features. We were camped on the banks of a stream flowing to the eastern shore of the largest alkaline lake in the area, Eyassi, quite fifty miles long. It is in desolate, tsetse-fly stricken country, well watered and full of game.

I did not imagine I should get two Hippo so easily. I left camp, still being pitched, and went into the long grass regions near by, but did not expect to shoot anything, as the sun was then well up in the heavens. We got to a Hippo run, and, while standing there, a big bull Hippo came up the run towards us. I waited until he was almost alongside us, when I put a shot into his brain and that Hippo was mine.

I then returned to camp, close by, and, while waiting for lunch and while the carriers were out collecting wood for fires, one porter disturbed two Hippo, which came blundering past our camp on the far side of the stream, which was deep and narrow. I just managed to cross the stream and up the far side bank, when the Hippo appeared in the wide open space at a gallop. We made no mistake and the Hippo went down a little further on.

It was a curious region, very undisturbed, for we saw Rhinoceros in the broad open plain feeding with other game. It is just as well that some places are difficult of access as this part is.

PART TEN

NYASALAND

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL

By RODNEY C. WOOD

Game Warden

pp 315-320

NYASALAND to-day is emphatically a country where quality of trophy, rather than quantity, should be the aim of the hunter. Its animals most worthy of the attention of the true sportsman are most often found in thick bush country or jungle-patches, and their successful hunting will tax all his bushcraft and hunting-lore. Therein lies its charm.

It is poor sport to find animals in hundreds on an open plain, and perhaps after the expenditure of much ammunition at long range, to succeed in bagging a passable trophy of some common Antelope. In Nyasaland, with its dense population, animals really worth hunting can be wary in the extreme; thus the worth of a good trophy when brought to bag, is correspondingly enhanced.

The larger animals are: Elephant, Rhinoceros, Hippopotamus, Buffalo, Nyasaland Gnu, Eland, Kudu, Roan, Sable, Waterbuck, Lichenstein's Hartebeest, Nyala, Impala, Puku, Bushbuck, Reedbuck, Cape Duiker, Nyasa Blue Duiker, Red Duiker, Oribi, Sharpe's Steinbuck, Livingstone's Suni, Klipspringer, Burchell's Zebra, Wart-hog, Bush Pig, Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, Serval, Civet, and other small Cats, Spotted Hyena, Hunting Dog, and Jackal.

Elephant do not run large, very few tuskers now being found over even forty pounds per tusk. During the last few years it has been necessary to institute measures to endeavour to confine all Elephant to certain areas or Game Reserves, so as to give protection to the vast native cultivation of the Protectorate. Results are beginning to show that this may be possible, but there are still many bands of wanderers, mostly cows and calves, sometimes young bulls or even some lone large tusker, that roam over large areas of the country. The visitor is therefore well advised to take out a licence to kill one Elephant (costing only £10), over and above the ordinary game licence, so that he can hunt one of these big tuskers, if met with. The licence fee is refunded if no shot is fired at any Elephant during the time of its validity.

Rhinoceros are very scarce in most districts, though still to be found in several of the more remote parts of the country, such as in the Dowa and Kota-Kota districts. They are protected, but one may be obtained on a

visitor's full licence or on a special licence, the latter costing £10 but issued only on certain conditions.

Hippopotamus are numerous in Lake Nyasa, but usually their hunting is very difficult owing to their predilection for dense reedbeds in which they hide themselves throughout the day. On moonlight nights they may often be seen among the lake-shore rice gardens or other cultivation near by. They are also found sparingly in the larger rivers.

Of the Antelopes and other animals certain species are very local in distribution, but if time is no object to the hunter, he can be certain of obtaining heads of nearly all. A few notes on some of the more interesting may not be amiss.

The Nyasaland Gnu is now very rare indeed, being only found occasionally in one small locality by Lake Chilwa on the borders of Portuguese East Africa, from where they undoubtedly come over. Probably none are actually resident within our borders throughout the year. This animal may now only be shot on a Governor's licence, granted solely for scientific purposes.

Lion and Leopard are very numerous, and even in quite settled and civilised districts are common. The former are great wanderers, ranging in and out of large areas, doing little harm to man or domesticated animals where game is plentiful, but often becoming a terrible scourge where wild game is scarce and they are forced to raid cattle or even turn man-eaters. Hardly a year passes without man-eating breaking out in one district or another, so Lion have to be classed as vermin in a thickly populated country such as this, and may be shot without licence. Leopard generally stay where there are hills and mountains. Although they sometimes do damage to calves not properly tended and to native goats, thus bringing upon themselves the execration of the community, it is probable that in reality they do much more good than harm, as their favourite foods are Baboons, Monkeys, and Bush Pig, all of which are a scourge of cultivation throughout the country. The records of them attacking man are very few, and in such cases it is always subsequently shown that they were molested first in some way. Although they are still classed as vermin, it is the writer's opinion that they are definitely beneficial, and the person who kills and traps them on all occasions (actually in almost all cases for the sake of their skins, although one is generally told that it was done for the sake of the local natives!), is doing a serious harm to the production of crops in that locality.

The Cheetah has so far only been found in the Central Province of Angoniland. Even there it is seldom seen, but may be more numerous than is believed at present, as it is nearly always confused with the Leopard by the natives, and called by the same name. Its true local native name is "kakwio" (Chichewa dialect). This part of the country is characterized by the open rolling plains, with large "dambos" or vleis and scrubby bush, which suit its methods of hunting by sight, whereas in the thick forests it is never found.

Spotted Hyena run very large, the writer having obtained one male near Chiromo weighing 172 pounds. In certain places, such as the south-eastern side of Lake Nyasa among others, they sometimes attack natives who are travelling and sleeping in the open, often inflicting very serious bites, and are in general far less timid than in other parts of Africa. The

writer has known one dash in among over twenty men sleeping round camp fires in close proximity to his tent, actually falling over a tent-rope twice within a few minutes, despite burning brands being thrown at it on the first occasion, and finally creating absolute pandemonium in the camp until shot at and thus frightened off.

Burchell's Zebra are nowhere very numerous though often seen in Angoniland and in the Lower River districts. They are entirely harmless to man and crops and are protected, shooting of a specimen being only permitted for scientific purposes under a Governor's licence.

Eland, Kudu, Bushbuck, and Nyala are the four animals whose horn trophies are unexcelled by any other country. Without quoting actual records of each, it may be stated that bull Eland heads are frequently found over 32 and occasionally over 34 inches. Kudu exist in numbers over 54 and frequently over 56 inches. Of Bushbuck practically all the finest known heads have come from Nyasaland, from 18 to 21 inches, and heads over 16 inches are fairly numerous, while over 14 inches are common.

Nyala stands in a class by itself. In our borders it is only known to exist in two localities, near Chiromo and near Chikwawa. In both places their numbers are very limited and Government has wisely proclaimed their breeding-haunts as Game Reserves. But animals are often found at certain seasons outside the boundaries of these reserves. One bull is allowed to be shot on a visitor's full licence, at any place outside the Game Reserves. There is therefore a reasonable chance of obtaining one provided the hunter has ample time to persevere. It becomes then a matter of sheer good hunting, unless Fate is exceptionally kind in the way of luck. The writer knows of one visitor who obtained a really good head within two or three hours of arriving on the scene of their haunts, whereas in his own case week-ends were spent regularly for two years, before the chance of making an instant kill came along. Parts of thirty-two animals had been seen up to then, but none offered the certainty of the shot that drops the animal where it stands. Then the thirty-third was found where expected, one morning at dawn, but only after experience and observation had taught the hunter the secret of one of their habits that makes the finding of one a certainty. To wound one in the jungles in which they live is to lose it in almost all cases, so the greatest care has to be taken to obtain a dead shot. The chance shot "in hopes" is simply criminal at all times, but in particular perhaps against in the case of this very rare and little-known animal. There is a most marked disparity between the sizes of the sexes, the females being hardly any bigger than a female Bushbuck, whereas the bulls are half-way in size between a Bushbuck and Kudu. With their long fringes of shaggy hair and white spots and stripes, the bulls are truly magnificent animals. The cows are chestnut-red and hornless. A good head runs between 27 and 31 inches and is the "trophy of all trophies" from this country.

(An account of Nyala hunting will be found in the next section.)

Nyasaland can be reached by train from Beira, and during the dry season, from April to November, by motor road from Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, via Tete on the Zambezi River. There is also an all-weather road from Fort Jameson in Northern Rhodesia, which runs through Fort Manning, Lilongwe, Dedze, and Ncheu to Zomba and Blantyre. In the