

The Management of Sport



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Pierre Vernet.

Above; A sport hunter squatting with a friend on a desert elephant after a long chase.

Story by Richard Lamprey

"As I surmounted one of the numerous small knolls, I saw herd after herd of buffalo and zebra, giraffe and antelope, which sent the blood coursing through my veins in the excitement of the moment . . . Here at last was the hunter's paradise! . . . Where is the nobleman's park that can match this scene?"

Comment on the Ugalla area of western Tanzania in 1871, in *How I found Dr. Livingstone* by Henry Morton Stanley.

Introduction

In December 1994 three large bull elephants that are normally resident in Kenya's Amboseli National Park were shot over the border in Tanzania by sport hunters. This event has caused outrage in Kenya, firstly because these bull elephants had been studied for 25 years in the longest-running elephant research programme ever conducted, and secondly

because these old bulls with large tusks were in a sense living 'museum pieces' with a great tourism value to Kenya. As a result of the shooting, conservation and media bodies have been jolted into a sudden awareness of Tanzania's hunting industry.

Tanzania is regarded by sport hunters as offering the finest hunting in Africa, and some 7,000 animals are shot annually on licence. 'Tourist hunting' (as it is now known) has become an industry in Tanzania, with over 40 hunting companies selling safaris to some 600 visiting hunters each year. Today wealthy families from Europe and America may spend over US \$100,000 annually on their hunting safaris in Tanzania, and the industry has an annual turnover of over US \$20 million, of which US \$6 million accrues directly to the Tanzania Government. From 1991-94 I was privileged to work for Tanzania's Wildlife Division

(Department of Wildlife) as a Technical Advisor in the Planning and Assessment for Wildlife Management (PAWM) project funded by USAID and implemented by AWF and WWF. In this article I aim to clarify how tourist hunting, particularly of elephants, is conducted in Tanzania, and to suggest ways in which the management of hunting might be improved.

The History of Hunting in Tanzania

The regulations for hunting in Tanzania have evolved over the last 70 years. In the 1920s when wildlife was plentiful, the sport hunter was given a generous quota on his annual licence, comprising 268 animals of 39 species (including two rhinos), which he could shoot in any area except for the game reserves. The 1921 Game Preservation Ordinance prohibited hunters from chasing game from vehicles or aircraft, and (reflecting the 'wild west' spirit of the time) stated that

Hunting in Tanzania

"no person traveling by train or public passenger boat shall fire at any game even when such train or steamer is stationary, and whether he is actually on the train or steamer". However, sport hunting proved difficult to control, and in 1929 the Game Warden of Tanganyika reported that "excessive numbers of elephant licences have been taken out, very largely by men with no sportsman-like feeling or training and out for gain pure and simple. These are men who have the tusks sent in as found ivory if they find them to be underweight; who have left a disabled elephant standing un-killed on deciding the tusks were too small, who even in one instance put out a wounded elephant's eyes, so it is said, at close range with a .22 to ensure its not running away while ammunition was brought for the heavier rifle . . . Our tuskers are becoming reduced at a rapid rate". Much was achieved by the elite East African Professional Hunters Association in the 1930s and 40s in improving the standards of training and codes of conduct for professional hunters in East Africa.

Hunting declined during the Second World War, but in the late 1940s, as economies recovered and travel became easier, the number of hunting parties to East Africa increased rapidly. With a staff of just the Game Warden, four Game Rangers and 33 Game Scouts in 1951, the Tanganyika Game Department was hard pressed to cope, and two important measures were introduced to control hunting. The first was to make hunting more expensive by attaching a fee to each animal shot. The second was to increase the number of 'game controlled areas' (GCAs), where hunting was either totally prohibited, or allowed only on a special request basis. During the 1950s some 90 GCAs were declared, some to preserve good wildlife areas, like the vast 9,000 square kilometre Nyonga GCA in western Tanzania, others consisting

merely of a no-hunting zone around a dam to protect wildfowl. In addition to the GCAs, large areas of tsetse-infested *miombo* woodland in western Tanzania were declared as forest reserves in the 1950s to protect timber resources (and also to prevent resettlement of sleeping sickness areas).

In 1959 the national parks and Ngorongoro were both given their own laws and Boards of Trustees (both be-

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came parastatal authorities in the 1970s, as TANAPA and NCAA respectively). By 1960, national parks and game reserves covered 13% of Tanganyika, the forest reserves a further 14%, and the GCAs (many of which overlapped with forest reserves) covered 8%. However, GCAs have little conservation meaning today, because there is no restriction on settlement within them. With ever increasing demands for land, they have become settled, and in many (such as the GCA in which Kilimanjaro International Airport is located) the wildlife has disappeared altogether.

In the years following Independence in 1961, the Game Department opened up the GCAs to regular hunting to increase earnings from wildlife. In 1965, for the first time, tourist hunting was permitted in the game reserves, starting with the vast Selous Game Reserve, which was divided into 47 hunting blocks. However, the political changes that took place in Tanzania in the early 1970s provided opportunities for great abuses in game management, forcing the Director of Wildlife to completely ban sport hunting in 1973. That year 75 game officers, representing almost the entire senior staff, were transferred out of the Wildlife Division. Tourist hunting was reopened in 1978 under the control of the Tanzania Wildlife Corporation (TAWICO), a gov-

ernment parastatal. Hunting was conducted in fewer areas than today, since in Tanzania's dire economic climate in the early 1980s it was difficult for outfitters to operate in the remote hunting blocks. Few hunting records survive from the TAWICO era.

By the mid-1980s wildlife conservation in Tanzania was in disarray. Poaching for ivory decimated the elephant population and rhinos all but disappeared. In

1988/89 the Tanzania Government launched a massive anti-poaching operation ('Operation Uhai') as a joint exercise between the Wildlife Division, TANAPA, the po-

lice and the army. As a result of this action, and the coincident CITES ivory trade ban, poaching in Tanzania was reduced to low levels. In 1988, to bring new transparency to the hunting industry, the management of hunting was removed from TAWICO and placed once again with the Wildlife Division.

Regulation of Tourist Hunting

Under Tanzania's Wildlife Conservation Act of 1974, the Director of Wildlife is empowered to issue hunting licences for any area (except national parks). The management of hunting can be summarized as follows:

1. There are some 105 hunting blocks in Tanzania, located in game reserves, GCAs and 'open areas'. These blocks are allocated by the Wildlife Division to hunting companies ('outfitters') on a five-year basis, with an annual 'performance' review. Starting in 1993, the outfitter must pay to the Wildlife Division an annual concession of US \$7,500 for each block it holds.

2. The Wildlife Division issues the outfitter with a list of animals which may be shot in the block (the 'quota'). The visiting hunter, as a client of the outfitter, will take out a Game Hunting Permit from the Wildlife Division to hunt some of the animals on the block quota.

3. At the end of his safari, the visiting hunter pays to the Wildlife Division the



Elephants passing a jungle road in Tanzania (Manyara).

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Game Fee for each animal he has shot (for example, US \$2000 for a lion), a daily 'Conservation Fee' of US \$100/day for the duration of his safari, and a number of other minor fees. The greater proportion of all hunting fees is deposited in a Government fund, the Tanzania Wildlife Protection Fund (TWPf), to be used by the Wildlife Division for conservation projects. The remaining proportion of hunting fees is passed by the Wildlife Division to the Treasury

4. Hunting safaris are organized on a 7-day, 14-day, 16-day or 21-day duration. Some species (for example elephant) may only be shot on a 21-day safari. The hunting season extends from 1st July to 31st December, but it has been unofficially extended to 31st March.

5. The biggest fee the hunter must pay is the 'Daily Rate' to the hunting outfitter. This fee, usually paid overseas, varies according to the hunting company, and the level of service provided, but it is typically US \$700-1,100/day.

Tourist hunting is lucrative. With a camp, vehicles and camp staff, an average outfitter with 20 hunting clients may earn US \$400,000 in a year. If a client gets the trophies he wants, it is likely that he will return to hunt again, or will spread the word at the January 'Game Fairs' in America and Europe where hunting expeditions worldwide are sold. The main

requirement for success in Tanzania's hunting industry is to acquire a good hunting block. However, more outfitters, particularly from South Africa and Zimbabwe, are becoming established in Tanzania, and they are chasing the same 105 blocks. The number of outfitters in Tanzania has increased from 9 in 1984, to 21 in 1991 and 41 in 1994. To accommodate new hunting companies, the Wildlife Division is dividing hunting blocks into smaller units, with the same original quotas being applied to each new subdivision. The scientific basis of these quotas is now obscure, but the Wildlife Division makes it a requirement that outfitters should shoot 40% of the overall value of the quota in order to retain the block for the following season.

How Elephant

Hunting is Conducted in Tanzania

In East Africa in the 19th century the intensive ivory trade that ran parallel with the slave trade decimated the region's elephant population. In south-eastern Tanzania for example, elephants were almost unknown in the early part of the 20th century. In the 1920s, with hunting pressure reduced, the increasing elephant population was brought into close contact with a more widely-dispersed human population, and crop-raiding rapidly became a serious problem. By the 1930s some 2,000 elephants

were being shot 'on control' annually in south-eastern Tanzania by the Game Department. Crop-raiding has remained a problem in south-eastern Tanzania, and to this day 1,000-1,500 elephants are shot annually on control, mostly around the Selous Game Reserve.

By the 1960s the elephant population of south-eastern Tanzania had increased to about 150,000. The number of elephants shot on licence throughout Tanzania increased from some 470 per annum in 1961-65 to 2,300 per annum in 1971-73. When the Selous, at 45,000 square kilometres Africa's largest protected area, was opened to tourist hunting in 1965 it became the preferred area for elephant hunting, with 200 elephants on the quota and average trophy tusks of 30.6 kilogrammes being obtained. An innovative and successful revenue-retention programme was started by the Selous warden Brian Nicholson, in which the earnings from tourist hunting were used to manage the reserve. However, after the 1973 hunting ban, the Selous virtually collapsed since it could not earn money from tourist hunting, and there were no vigilant outfitters in the reserve to report poachers. When the price of ivory increased from Shs 44/= per kilogramme in 1966 to Shs 315/= per kilogramme in 1973, elephant poaching became very profitable, and in the ensuing slaughter the Selous' elephant population was reduced from 110,000 in 1976 to 31,000 in 1989.

In the ten years following the lifting of the hunting ban in 1978, the Selous GR again became the focus of licenced elephant hunting, under the general supervision of TAWICO. During the mid-1980s some 70-90 elephants per year were shot in the reserve, most by clients of a hunting consortium that retains a virtual monopoly on elephant hunting in Tanzania. What was probably Africa's last 100-pounder was shot in the Selous in 1986, but by 1987 it became clear that under the enormous impact of poaching, the reserve had virtually no large elephants remaining. Average trophy tusk weights declined from 23.9 kilogrammes in 1985 to just 11.1 kilogrammes in 1989, indicating the massive impact of elephant poaching at the time. When the Wildlife Division took over the management of hunting from TAWICO in 1988, it placed 198 elephants on the Selous GR quotas

(the same number as on the Selous' 1960s quotas), and 128 on the quotas for other areas (particularly the Tabora and Lake Rukwa areas).

At CITES in 1989 the African elephant was uplisted to Appendix 1, meaning that no international trade in ivory was permitted (Tanzania was a major proponent of this move). However, under CITES Resolution 2.11, Tanzania could apply to CITES for an elephant sport hunting quota if it was agreed that this legal offtake was not detrimental to the species in the wild. Tanzania modified its regulations for hunting elephants in 1989, and the rules for elephant hunting are now as follows:

- Under the CITES quota, 50 elephants a year may be shot on licence in Tanzania.

- A tourist hunter may, at no charge, apply to shoot an elephant on his Game Hunting Permit. In general, this licence is only granted against the 50 elephants on the CITES quota, but in practice more licences than this are granted on the basis that not all hunters will be successful in finding an elephant that meets the mini-

mum tusk criteria.

- A hunter may only shoot an elephant if his safari is 21 days or longer.

- Only bull elephants with tusks heavier than 25 kilogrammes (each), or longer than 1.75 metres, may be shot.

- When the elephant has been shot, the hunter pays the elephant Game Fee of US \$4,000.

With the introduction of these regulations, the number of elephants shot on licence in Tanzania dropped from 50 in 1989 to 15 in 1990. In the 1992/93 hunting season the number had climbed to 18 (15 of which were shot in the Selous). However, these new rules have also released elephant hunting from set block quotas. Thus, if a tourist hunter in any block in Tanzania sees an elephant with large tusks, and he does not have an elephant on his permit, he may hurriedly apply for one at the nearest Wildlife Division hunting office (Arusha or Dar es Salaam). If this request can be accommodated within the CITES quota, and the elephant has not moved off (it will have been followed), he may then shoot it. This is likely to have been the case with

the Amboseli elephants, and other elephants that cross the border from Kenya to Tanzania may also suffer the same fate.

For the elephants shot on licence in Selous GR over 1988-1992, 48% of the tusks were destined for Spain, 25% for America and 15% for France. The Selous GR remains a popular destination for elephant hunters. Of the 80 elephant licences issued in the 1992/93 hunting season, 60 were for the Selous GR. However, elephant hunting generates just 2% of the annual hunting revenue for Tanzania, compared to 12% each for lion, leopard and buffalo. A number of arguments have been put forward in support of elephant hunting in Tanzania. Firstly, the number of elephants shot on licence is very small. The 15 elephants shot in the Selous in 1992 were taken out of an elephant population of 30,000, and thus the impact will be minimal. For example in Zimbabwe, which has not suffered great elephant poaching pressure, rates of offtake have been higher, but these rates appear to be sustainable since trophy tusk weights have remained

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constant at 18-20 kilogrammes over the period 1987-1992. Secondly, against the 1,000-1,500 elephants that are shot annually on control in Tanzania, mostly comprising cow-calf groups in areas adjacent to the Selous, the impact of licensed elephant hunting is deemed to be negligible. Thirdly, elephant hunting generates greatly-needed foreign exchange for Tanzania.

In opposition to elephant hunting it is argued that it is relatively early days since the ivory ban, and analyses based on the reproductive biology of elephants indicate that elephant populations that have been subjected to heavy poaching are extremely sensitive to the offtake of mature males, and may go into a further decline. It is also argued that the tourism value of the very few large bull elephants remaining in East Africa far exceeds the revenue that would be generated if they were shot on licence.

Whatever the answer may be, a number of improvements need to be made in the way that elephant hunting is managed. Firstly, elephants should only be hunted in areas where elephant populations have been well surveyed and found to be capable of sustaining a limited offtake. The last survey to be conducted of Longido GCA, the area in which the Amboseli elephants were shot, was in 1980. In the Selous GR, regular census flights (the most recent in 1994) have indicated that the elephant population is large, but recent trends have been difficult to determine since the census results have been highly variable. Secondly, the impact of hunting needs to be determined by monitoring trophy tusk weights and population age-structures. This has not yet been adopted as standard practice. Thirdly, given that the border areas adjoining Kenya's national parks are preferred hunting areas, Tanzania must come to an agreement with Kenya over the rights to wildlife in general, and elephants in particular, along its common border.

Tanzania has a draft *Policy for the Management of the African Elephant*, prepared by the PAWM project, which addresses some of these issues. This policy, awaiting approval by the Ministry of Tourism, Natural Resources and Environment, states that "... utilization of elephants for limited tourist hunting inside game reserves will be permitted

where monitoring has shown that the age and population structure permit this activity". The policy goes on to say that "Tanzania will also maintain co-operation with its neighbours to ensure recovery of elephant populations that cross international borders, such as those . . . between Kilimanjaro National Park and Amboseli in Kenya". The adoption and implementation of this Policy will go a long way to ensuring that elephant hunting in Tanzania is properly managed, and that it accords with the conservation

'... outfitters argue that many clients are too unfit to walk the required 200 metres from the vehicle and hunting within 500 metres of permanent water . . . is also illegal'

objectives of neighbouring countries with which Tanzania shares elephant populations.

The Future of Tourist Hunting in Tanzania

In central and southern Tanzania there exists a number of national parks, game reserves and GCAs that are very far from the famous 'northern circuit' of Serengeti and Ngorongoro. Many of these protected areas are comprised of *miombo* woodland, which has a good game population, but is infested with tsetse-flies and offers no open aspect for game-viewing. Roads into these areas are often impassable for months. As the demand for land grows, there is increasing pressure from the Government that these wildlife areas should either earn their keep, or be 'degazetted' to make way for settlement. Unless game-viewing tourism in these areas increases, the only option available for the game reserves and GCAs is tourist hunting. The point is illustrated by Katavi National Park in south-western Tanzania, which in 1992 earned just US \$4,700 from 393 resident and 56 overseas game-viewing tourists (against a management expenditure of US \$121,000), whilst in the GCAs around Katavi (which are now being incorporated into a new game reserve) 13 tourist hunters paid US \$113,000 in hunting fees to the Government.

A second advantage of tourist hunt-

ing, related to the first, concerns the fact that with an annual budget of less than US \$1 million from the Government, the Wildlife Division is seriously underfunded in managing the 96,000 square kilometres of game reserves under its jurisdiction. The Selous Conservation Project funded by the German Government has helped to instigate a programme in which the Selous GR can now retain 50% of the money it earns from tourist hunting for its own management needs.

With an extra US \$400,000 in the management budget, conditions in the Selous have improved greatly as a result. There are signs that this 'revenue-retention' approach will be tried in other game reserves.

The third major benefit of tourist hunting is that in the remote areas of Tanzania hunting outfitters become the 'eyes-and-ears' of a hunting block, observing for signs of poachers who are often discouraged by a vigilant human presence in an area. In areas which are not used by hunting companies, poaching increases rapidly. Finally, tourist hunting can create major benefits for local communities, and thus provide them with an incentive to conserve their wildlife. For example, in a successful benefits scheme in Maswa Game Reserve, hunting outfitters and their clients contribute to the development of local villages that once engaged in poaching. In agreement with village councils, the funds raised by the scheme have been used to purchase tractors and milling machines. Poaching in the area has now been greatly reduced. The Wildlife Division now makes it a condition for the allocation of hunting blocks that "as a matter of policy all hunting companies should implement development projects for the areas they operate".

Despite the benefits of hunting, a number of concerns have recently been expressed in the Tanzania Parliament about the hunting industry. A Parliamentary Committee is now, according to the *Tanzania Daily News*, examining the circumstances in which former 'safe-haven' wildlife areas have been allocated as hunting blocks to outfitters owned by relatives of members of the Wildlife Division. According to the press, the Committee is also investigating the allocation of Loliondo GCA adjacent to the Serengeti National Park to a Brigadier of

the United Arab Emirates as a ten-year private hunting concession, an action which has apparently led to the extermination of all wildlife in the area. Concerns have also been expressed about the increasing number of hunting companies operating in Tanzania, and the ways in which hunting blocks are issued to these companies. A number of hunting blocks are also allocated to 'paper' companies who sub-lease their hunting blocks to other outfitters for profit. Longido GCA, in which the Amboseli elephants were shot by new Zimbabwean outfitters, was leased in this manner. Other concerns include the widespread shooting of animals from vehicles (against the law but outfitters argue that many clients are too unfit to walk the required 200 metres from the vehicle), and hunting within 500 metres of permanent water, which is also illegal.

Another issue yet to be addressed is that of 'resident hunting', which is conducted entirely separately from tourist hunting. Started in the 1960s to give Tanzanian citizens the opportunity to hunt certain species (but not elephant), resident hunting has become the domain of an urban elite of Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Tabora, Mbeya and Iringa, who have fast vehicles and high-powered rifles. Licences (much cheaper than those for tourist hunting) are issued by regional authorities, and reliable records of resident hunting cannot be compiled. However, whilst some chapters of the Hunters Association of Tanzania (the resident hunters association) are responsible in their hunting operations, eye-witness accounts of resident hunting expeditions in western Tanzania speak of indiscriminate killing of all wildlife encountered, both in the daytime and by night with spotlights. It is possible that resident hunting has a far greater negative impact on Tanzania's wildlife than tourist hunting.

It has been suggested that tourist hunting is banned again in Tanzania. This may be a wise decision in some areas, but in other areas, particularly in western Tanzania, poaching will increase rapidly as a result. Clearly, changes need to be made to quotas, and mechanisms set in place to monitor the status of wildlife populations in hunting blocks. Given the rapid increase in the number of hunting companies, the subdivision of blocks, and the complex fee structure, the industry needs to be carefully monitored, preferably using computer databases. With regard to the allocation of blocks it has been suggested that hunting outfitters openly 'bid' for hunting blocks, which would both demonstrate the true value of a block, and ensure that blocks are issued in a transparent manner. It is very encouraging that a Tourist Hunting Policy is now being prepared by the Wildlife Division that addresses these important issues. ●

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