



de Lima wrote that Lord Derby eland was already difficult to collect 'back then.' "I would say that the bongo, once his habitat was located, is an easier trophy for the hunter to collect than the Lord Derby eland." After smoking his last cigarette, de Lima took his near the Aouk River.

A Failed Hunt in French Equatorial African for Western Greater Kudu from *In the Company of Adventure* by Jorge Alves de Lima

Already more than 50 years ago, collecting western greater kudu in one of the most inhospitable areas of Africa was not easy. Luckily today, each year a few determined hunters add this rare and beautiful species to their trophy room. Here is de Lima's story of his unfulfilled quest.

Before traveling north, my hunting vehicle nicknamed Yellow Fever broke down and I was forced to spend four days on the Chari and Aouk rivers returning to town for spare parts and a mechanic. En route the canoe was overturned by a rogue hippo, causing me to lose more equipment. The mechanic and I had to hitch another ride back to the truck but once on the spot, the vehicle was promptly repaired. After that we headed to new hunting grounds in search of (western greater) kudu. These areas were almost devoid of water but had rugged hills in desert-like stretches with only

scattered vegetation. It was a hot day when we departed and we drove over flat, bare soil, boring plains with only the occasional hill breaking the monotony. The countryside was anything but inviting and I wanted to turn the vehicle around and head south to greener growth. We saw almost no game in spite of the fact that I took every opportunity to explore the country.

The town of Amdam was only a small settlement, really more an outpost, where only two white traders had a shop and a dispensary. The area had a reputation for being good lion country, the lion feeding on cattle as they changed feeding grounds. This place was so desolate we almost felt imprisoned. Information as to whereabouts of kudu was vague. The locals were Islamic, spoke no Sango and the little information we did get came through our driver who served as interpreter. It seemed we had only two options. Either move west to Melfi, a region I heard had good kudu or drive east near the Tchad border with Anglo Egyptian Sudan, to one of the most inhospitable places in Africa, Goz Beida. The advantage of the second option—it was half the driving distance. It was also more likely that in the French region we could obtain better information regarding kudu hunting. I wanted to avoid as much as possible

Hunting Stories of Yesteryear — Western Greater Kudu

Although de Lima was not successful in collecting western greater kudu almost 60 years ago, today, in north-western C.A.R., in the area known as Bahr Aouk Ouandja Vakaga, each year three to four hunters are granted permits to hunt this relatively rare species. "On a 14-day safari, a hunter can expect a 95% chance of success; average trophy size is 50 inches, and our biggest trophy, taken in February 2004 by hunter Gary Groves, measured 57 inches x 55-1/2 inches," writes Jean-Pierre Bernon of Club Faune. Hunting is from February to May.



having to climb the rocky hills.

We selected the second option and learned that in Goz Beida there was only one supply store, owned by an Arab, and no Europeans. We were told to bring our own supply of drinking water. The game obtained water from wells dug in the sand and it was not fit for humans. At this juncture we asked ourselves whether this was worth taking such a miserable and uncomfortable trip without better planning. Already I was cursing myself. Where water did exist the kudu descended in the early evenings or



Although leopard hunting was closed in C.A.R. for many years (re-opening in 1988), 'back then,' de Lima's client, Doca, killed this very old female that had been caught in a trap that she dragged high into a tree. "She was a typical village leopard, having fed mostly on livestock," writes de Lima.

during the night to drink and feed on the plants. They also drank from depressions in rocks that collected water, usually in shady places that were hard to locate. Prior to that time I had never seen a kudu in its native environment but knew it was a very elusive animal and too intelligent to be caught off guard.

At last we camped near Goz Beida in a spot with two large mountains on either side of the road, a pass running between them. We threw the canvas from the lorry over ourselves and that was camp. The water was even worse than we were told or imagined. It was thick and gray and before drinking it had to be filtered. We had no refrigerator and to drink that warm, thick liquid and think of it as water was almost intolerable.

Our first two or three hunting days were blank. The silhouettes of mountains by camp appeared to melt as the sun grew hotter. The empty landscape, stripped of any game seemed to take away our enthusiasm and test the patience of even the most self disciplined sportsman. We circled the base of the mountain looking for tracks. When we found them, they were unimpressive, perhaps of young cows and bulls. At this stage of the safari my uncle had

already lost more than 30 pounds and seemed to be getting thinner each day. Being out in the heat after ten in the morning was like being in a Turkish bath. However, Anesio remained stoic and never complained. As well he was stubborn and would never give in. In this sense I admired his will power and willingness to make any sacrifice necessary to attain his goals. I felt sorry that he had to exceed his physical capability and wore himself out, sometimes to the point of physically endangering himself.

One morning I tried to climb a cliff in order to descend the other side into a small valley where I thought kudu might be wandering. Being averse to heights I came down and returned to camp. A most extraordinary thing happened: I came upon a rhino track! As rain had fallen the previous evening his tracks were perfectly imprinted in the soft, wet sand and they were the size of a small elephant. I was assured and reassured by the man with me that rhino were rare in the area but from time to time they were spotted. Since the track seemed twice the size of any black rhino I had ever seen, it seemed this would be a white rhino, then very rare anywhere in Africa.

Finding this track was like discovering a gold nugget in the desert. I was radiant. Immediately on arriving back in camp I shared this news. Ironically today the roles of black and white rhino are reversed, with the white being common and the black almost on the verge of extinction. This particular animal was likely the Burchell's rhino, common in the Anglo Egyptian Sudan a century ago. Admittedly only half the people that I told about it ever believed me.

To anyone approaching, the sight of our camp was almost disgraceful. The conditions in which we carried on the quest for kudu—the heat, poor food and horrid water—became so intolerable that we finally agreed to settle on a date when we would leave, no matter what the results. We continued hunting separately so as to cover more territory but the total lack of success continued. Meanwhile I tried to convince myself that at least one kudu could be brought to bag. There were only two days remaining.

Since we were all hunting alone, I elected to adopt a new hunting strategy. I would leave camp at first light, taking food and water to last the entire day. I would take up a post on a slope from which I could watch an entire area where kudu had to traverse. The next day, with cooler weather and darkness still covering the sky, my local guide and I quickly climbed to a spot where we could keep our vigil until late afternoon. I positioned myself comfortably in a place protected by rocks and with field glasses resting on my thighs tried to take a nap, hoping my companion would remain on the

alert. I couldn't sleep; besides, four eyes were better than two and I had the binoculars. After hours of patient watching I finally saw my first kudu moving up a hill right in front of us. I examined him through the field glasses and felt he carried decent horns. He moved forward a short distance towards a shady tree and there he halted.

If I expected to get a shot I could not sit the entire day and wait. I would have to go down to the bottom, and that is exactly what I began to do. After nearly an hour of cautious descent I arrived near the bottom and stopped for a much needed rest. We had marked the place under the tree where the kudu sheltered himself from the blazing sun and we opted for a stalk from above rather than to track on the bottom. So up a small gentle slope we went until we could identify the tree under which the kudu was resting. I knew he was there and that I was right on top of him but it was an impossible position from which to get a good shot. We had to stalk sideways.

This hunt was doomed to be utterly frustrating for the kudu got our scent and started his flight at great speed, horns straight back. In desperation I fired three shots but they were all clean misses, no familiar sound of a bullet hitting home. Although the wind betrayed us at the last minute and although the stalk had been perfectly executed, I could not stop calling myself bad names. We ran to another vantage point where we saw the kudu still running and again more useless shots were fired. We started to trail but after 100 yards it was obvious from the sharp hoof prints cutting deep into the ground that he was going at speed and there were no signs of blood. It was dark when we got back to camp and the sky suddenly became overcast with thick fast-moving clouds coming from the north.

There remained one more day to try our luck but it seemed wiser to terminate the kudu hunting. These days had been very trying on all concerned and we lacked motivation. Even Anesio, who always waited until the last minute, stood up and announced his surrender. To many this kudu hunt could be labeled as a catastrophe, a fiasco but in the end we chalked it up as just another one of those things. The trip back to Fort Archambault would commence the next day as soon as loading and packing was finished.

It took four days to reach Fort Archambault and we went to the only decent lodging in town, a hotel owned by Monsieur Guerin. The safari business at that time was fledgling but already Guerin's establishment was closely linked to the hunting industry. Yellow Fever behaved heroically on this trip. 🐾



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Along the Rovuma River in Mozambique, de Lima killed this black rhino with a 220-grain soft nose bullet from a .30-06 in his forehead. It dropped him in his tracks.

In the Company of Adventure

by Jorge Alves de Lima

Reviewed by Brooke ChilversLubin

Compared with today's Africa, when safari companies battle for sufficient quota on everything from lesser kudu to lion to operate without leading clients on quests for sable when they're none left on quota, it seems unimaginable that only 60 years ago, a determined and emotionally self-sufficient hunter could make a living from harvesting ivory, lion, leopard and crocodile to sell to Indian merchants, Hemingway-imitating tourists in Nairobi, and Paris designers.

Jorge 'George' Alves de Lima of Brazil was just that sort of man. "The association with other Europeans was not a basic necessity, being alone never made me bored or lonesome," he writes in *In the Company of Adventure*, his 325-page account of his months, and sometimes years, between 1948 to 1969, hunting in remote places in eight countries from French Equatorial Africa to Barotesland (the most westerly section of Northern Rhodesia). In the early 1950s, 400 kg of ivory, worth about \$5,400, could keep him going in his frill-less bush life, for over a year.

It is rare to find a book in English that depicts so thoroughly the great elephant hunting grounds in the Zémio-Djéma-Obo triangle in south-eastern C.A.R. in 1948, as well as his incursions into the fringes of the Belgian Congo just over the M'bomou River, the Bahr al-Ghazal region of Anglo-Egyptian-Sudan, then south-west into Pygmy country as far as Ouessou in Congo-Brazzaville, and north into Chad.

Arriving in tiny Bangui from London, with a .375 H&H, a 450/400 Jeffery, and two .30-

06s, after a two-month 'apprenticeship' hunting elephant with a French PH, he began (tentless and with no vehicle of his own) hitchhiking, walking, or nursing decrepit borrowed vehicles, to hunt his way across a country that is still among Africa's most isolated today. "I knew little about what to expect, and worried not at all about the future, the trademark of my wandering soul," he writes. "I loved this country at first sight. Its primitive nature appealed to me. It was Africa untouched."

He hunted lion, leopard, savannah and forest buffalo, bongo and Lord Derby eland; and with each tusker, he gained more knowledge about elephant ways. Like humans, they "sometimes act in strange ways, changing habits for no obvious reason." He cut his teeth as a PH by guiding his temperamental wealthy uncle Anesio, who sank into fits of depression whenever de Lima's brother, Doca, took a better trophy. He learned, too, "that sporting hunting has two faces, that failure and success are partners."

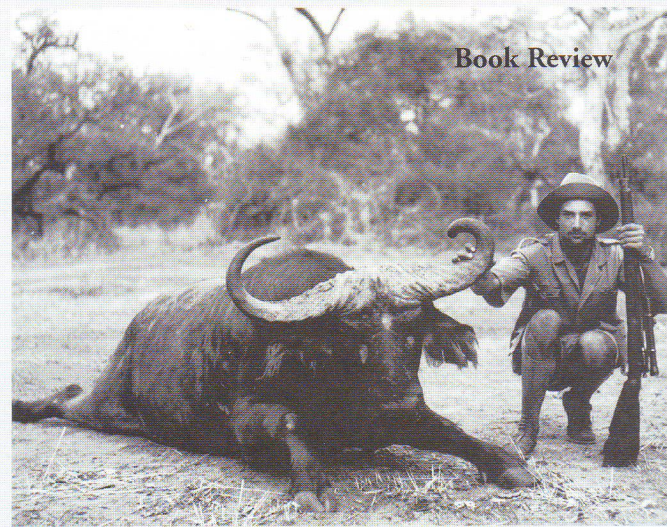
Whether in Mozambique or Angola, de Lima seems to have selected the blankest spaces



De Lima with the hippo he shot in Nangade Lake in Mozambique for disrupting the lake's fishermen.

on Africa's map, those without roads, villages, or white settlers. The Negomano area of north-western Mozambique, traversed by the crocodile-infested Lugenda and Rovuma rivers, he describes as inaccessible and wild country, inhospitable and full of sleeping sickness, with a rugged, broken topography covered in thick, hostile vegetation. But it was teeming with game, including black rhino that he killed with a .30-06 Springfield, with bronze and silver tip bullets, aiming through a scope, usually at the head.

The Nyasa and Cabo Delgado provinces had more than their fair share of man-eating lions for him to dispatch, especially along the coast between Palma and Mueda and near the



Both de Lima and his stubborn uncle, Anesio, shot at this C.A. savannah buffalo. The autopsy revealed that only one shot had hit home. De Lima's.

M'salu and Lurio Rivers. He saw buffalo on the beaches along the Indian Ocean that waded in the sea, and shot scores of buff for staff meat for the Sena Sugar Company; he bagged great waterbuck along the Save River, and hunted kudu and nyala.

Concession-less Africa slowly evolved into big-game safari hunting Africa, and when de Lima returned to Mozambique nine years later, it was to go into partnership in the renowned hunting company Mozambique Safariland with Baron Werner von Alvensleben and Mario de Abreu. "Never a shadow of doubt or mistrust ever marred our mutual confidence and friendship," he writes, which says a lot about de Lima as a man. He also pioneered hunting

in Angola (good lions, big leopards, sable, sitatunga, very tall elephants and black rhino) with his company Kirongozi Safaris that also operated in Tanzania.

One senses that de Lima did not suffer foolish, demanding clients easily - he favoured "hunting under canvas and not from base camps with hunting cars raising a lot of dust." When Mozambique came into vogue as a hunting destination, its safari industry grew almost beyond its capacity. "The business became a gold mine," and the poisonous concession politics we have today came into play.

But the book is much more about his memories hunting alone, when in the deepest equatorial forest he "stepped over dead sticks that gave off

Book Review

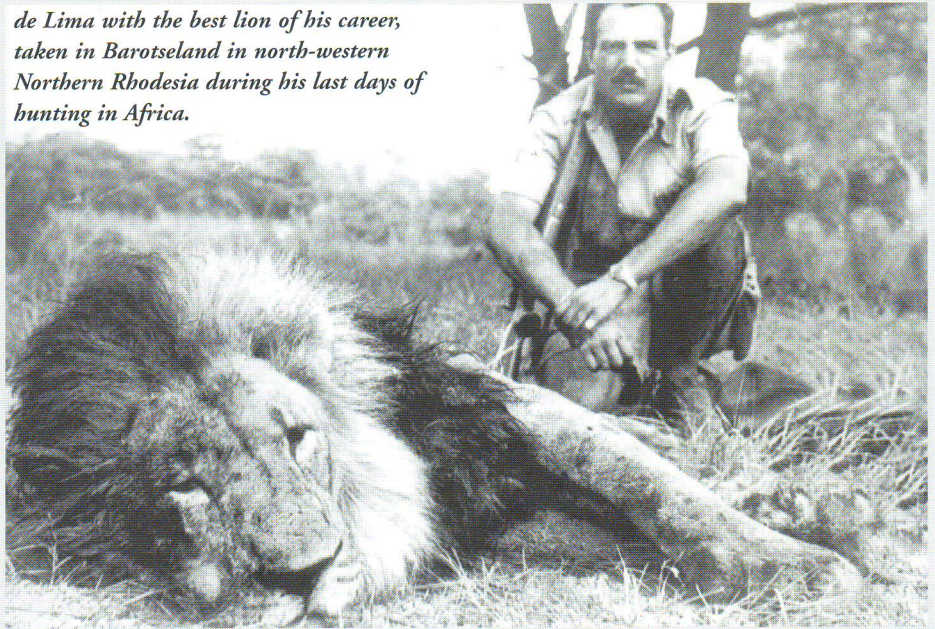
strange odors,” than it is about horn lengths, tusk weights or calibre performance. Instead, he writes: “Our return journey was joyful... I recall the long black columns of natives traversing the golden prairies of dry grass carrying panniers full of red, bloody meat on their heads. The four gleaming white tusks were almost lost among that black string of humanity. The landscape was magnificent, almost beyond description... we were overwhelmed with a sense of peace and well-being.”

In de Lima’s thinking, trophy size is “not the only measure of a successful hunt. Certainly the emotions, the physical effort, the working as a team with trackers, the judging of the wind, and ultimately the shot are all part of the sporting battle.”

His description of success in hunting corresponds exactly with the spirit of this finely written book, which should be read a chapter at a time in that last precious hour before sleep: “Success must be based on the beauty of our memories, the marvellous and peaceful periods provided by contact with nature, the arduous work done together, and the pleasure of another man’s company.”

De Lima actually discusses himself very little, (other than a few photos of a beautiful Ignez, we know nothing really of his parents, wives,

de Lima with the best lion of his career, taken in Barotseland in north-western Northern Rhodesia during his last days of hunting in Africa.



offspring, or life after Africa) and does not open the book with the usual chapters about gun-wielding grandfathers or working his child-self up the scale of quarry. Instead, he provides, to our great pleasure, a multitude of well-targeted descriptions of Africa’s characters.

He describes Donald Ker and Sid Downey - Downey “seemed the more sympathetic. Mr. Ker looking rather somber, as if we were intruding into his business.” Jose Simões is “a born hunter of great talent capable of conducting safaris in any part of Africa.” He talks about Wally

Johnson, who counted Robert Ruark among his fans, and Alberto Araujo, the ‘dean of the White Hunters in Mozambique,’ believed to be a bastard descendent of King Don Charles of Portugal, and many, many more.

About his contact with Africans, he “remained severe in matters regarding loyalty, integrity and discipline,” but lived alongside, and often as Spartan, as his staff. He learned their languages and ways, and thus allows himself to speak forthrightly: “When natives got tired, they stopped often, turning a short journey into a

A very fine elephant taken in the Beni-Bunia region of the Belgian Congo where elephant traps proliferated and were equally dangerous to humans.



long one. When they felt like travelling, they could walk long distances in a short time. It just depended on their mood. Once I understood this, my irritation lessened.”

There is no clear timeline in the book, and I was sometimes a little confused about when de Lima was where; and although the coloured modern maps are quite good, they often failed to help me pinpoint his exact whereabouts, which would have enlivened the narrative even more. (MIAs include the Fafa River in C.A.R., Tambura in Sudan, and especially in Angola, the

former black rhino country mentioned such as Luancundo, Capembe and Candombe Rivers, as well as Lake Bezi-Bezi.)

It all came to the kind of quick and brutal end that everyone in the safari industry dreads. In 1968, his Angolan safari operation was burned to the ground and his staff murdered. “The government informed me that all hunting activities in my concession were suspended.” De Lima left Africa. Forever. “The obstacles I had to overcome to get Kirongozi Angola established in the province, besides the great investment,

turned my life into a nightmare when I suddenly found myself confronted with great material losses... Worse was the abrupt severance of all sentimental links my companions and I had for the country. All the sacrifices and worry that we had endured, from inception until the company was finally considered a success, were for naught. Everything was completely destroyed in a single day.”

The nearly 80-year-old de Lima surely has enough stories about his guiding safari clients to fill another volume. Remembering long waits for elephant, he writes: “As I write I fully comprehend why I now long for these indescribable nights... with my old friend, my battered aluminum canteen filled with tea and condensed milk, and a substantial dose of cognac mixed in to drive away hunger and the ghosts of the night.”

I hope that canteen is still with him, and that he fills it again.

In the Company of Adventure is published by Trophy Room Books in a numbered, limited edition of 1,000 signed by author.

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