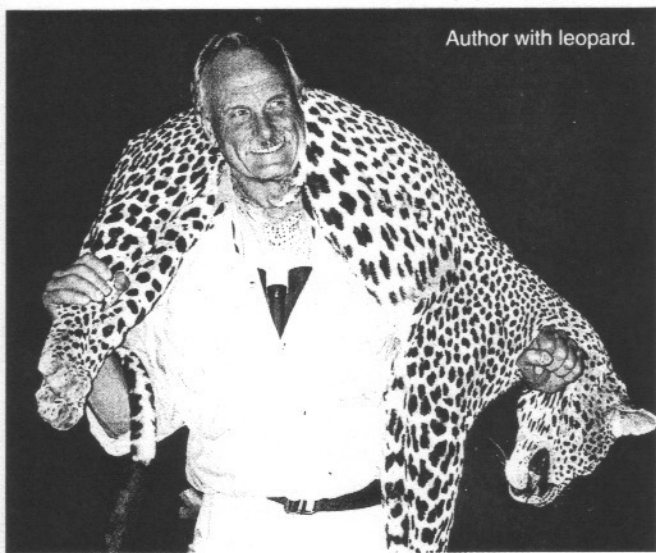


Author with Nyasaland wildebeest.

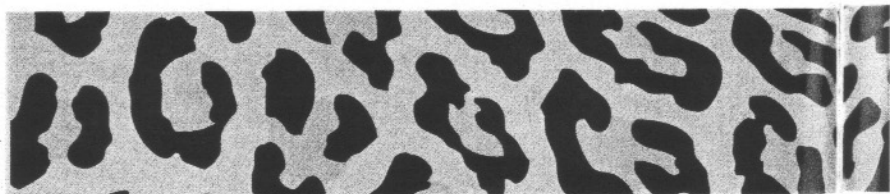
HATARI



Author with leopard.

SAFARI

BY WAYNE F. MANIS



The wheels of the plane had scarcely touched the ground when through the window I saw a white Toyota Land Cruiser minus roof, windows and doors racing down the remote airstrip, leaving a cloud of dust in its wake.

The engines were still running as professional hunter Phil Lozano jumped from the vehicle hurriedly and signed the pilot to cut the props, making the gesture with his arms as elephant tusks. To the pilot he was saying "tembo," which is Swahili for elephant.

As we were making the approach to this remote airstrip in the southernmost portion of the Selous Game Reserve, I saw a large elephant standing in a sand river next to dense jungle just west of the Luego River in game management unit LU-3. I knew the elephant was large but it would take the next several weeks of hunting to truly appreciate this trophy elephant.

Phil Lozano knew the elephant was a mature bull exceeding the Tanzanian minimum requirements of 175 cm in length or 50 pounds in weight per tusk. As I exited the plane with my good friend Tom Norris, Phil greeted us briefly. He appeared excited. He was. "Hurry," he said. "Get your gun out of the case and let's go. If we hurry, you may bag your most difficult trophy of your 21-day safari on the first day."

It wasn't going to happen! We raced away in the vehicle with Phil driving, me in the passenger seat and Tom in the elevated safari seat, sitting high above the vehicle with two

trackers and a Tanzanian game scout. When we reached the sand river we observed the huge track of the tembo, which eventually disappeared into the dense jungle of the bush. I soon learned that big as they are, it's difficult to track elephants in the bush. They disappear before your eyes as they move quietly through the dense foliage at a surprisingly fast pace.

This tembo was gone and despite an intense search through the bush for more than an hour, no trace of his whereabouts was found. The next two weeks of intense hunting would produce many elephants over an 80-mile range. Over 70 bulls would be closely observed. Most would be found to have tusks too small to qualify or too badly mismatched to be considered a good trophy. Little did we know that eventually we would come full circle and return to the vicinity of the sand river for our final encounter with a bad-tempered rogue tembo.

Our camp was located along the Luego River about a one-day drive from the small village of Mahengue. It was a very clean, comfortable and well-shaded tented encampment with all tents and the dining area facing the river on a bluff, which provided protection from the many hippos as they exited the river.

Lozano's company, Tanzania Trophy Expeditions, specializes in traditional old-style European tented safaris. Though you have the option of wearing a tux to dinner if you choose, that's where any appearance of formality ends. Wake-up call came anywhere from 3:30 a.m. to 5 a.m.,