

moment has passed and there is an occasion to contemplate the turn of events in hindsight - something we would do on numerous occasions for the remainder of the safari.

We had no scale in camp with which to weigh the tusks, but the measurement of each tusk proved to be well over the minimum in length. The tusks were over six feet long and greater in circumference than most we had viewed. By math formula calculation taking circumference x length less 14 percent, they would calculate to about 70 pounds. Regardless of their eventual weight, they were nice, evenly matched tusks just seven centimeters different in length. I will greatly appreciate them in my trophy room.

Throughout the remaining days of our safari, we continued to search for sable. Although they had been seen regularly in previous months, we were not destined to see a single sable. We also had not encountered a lion in our hunting block of LU3. Our baits had all been unsuccessful.

In the morning of the 17th day of my 21-day safari, I awoke at 4:30 with a start. I sat up on my bed as a lion roared loudly near the camp. I walked outside and in the darkness I estimated the lion at not more than 500 yards north across the sand wash. My spirits were lifted. The trackers found the lion tracks at the river and tracked it toward a small mountain near the remote airstrip.

We moved existing baits and on Day 18 we searched in vain for more buffalo as I had two more on my license and we needed bait. Darkness caught us about 30 minutes from camp. We were tired and the crew was silent. Lozano was driving and I was in the passenger seat on the left side of the Land Cruiser. Tom, the chief tracker and the game scout were on the elevated seat, and tracker Mozelli and mechanic Peter were standing in the truck bed. There was a full moon and the open landscape outside the bush was fully visible without aid of artificial light. The vehicle, you will remember, has no doors, windshield or top, and you are very much exposed to brush, which constantly jabs and slaps at you, as you drive along the primitive trails. We had just passed through a steep, narrow and deep ditch when the trail flattened out and turned to the left toward the river. I looked to the left

and could see clearly through an opening a flat, rocky terrace bleeding into a river highlighted by the reflection of the moon above. The water was only 50 or 60 yards immediately to the left. I was taking in the beauty of the scenery when it happened!

Suddenly a huge, blond-maned lion sprang from the ground toward my door. Its huge head was nearly in my lap when Tom yelled, "Lion! Lion!" The tracker and game scout shouted, "Simba! Simba!" Lozano looked at the lion and allowed the vehicle to continue forward. The lion had turned to the right and I looked down at its back, which seemed incredibly wide and quite long. For a moment I thought the lion was destined to be run into by the back wheel. Lozano stopped the vehicle. I jumped out with Today, our tracker. Today held a light into the bush and there, not more than 20 yards ahead, were the eyes of simba shining in the light as he stood his ground facing me.

I placed the crosshairs of my scope directly between its eyes. The lion did not charge and I did not fire. This was not the way I wanted to take my lion. In a moment the eyes were gone, and I stood in the darkness, listening and wondering if it had moved to another spot in the bush, concealed and safe from the light . . . waiting and watching me. It was surely confused, as this was quite possibly its very first encounter with a vehicle and with a human being.

That night the lion roared again, along with another lion farther to the southwest of camp. Our bait was no longer fresh and on the night of the 20th day of our safari, the lion visited our bait. It raked it with its powerful claws while it held the bait and took a bite. It did not suit the lion's taste. The lion left, never to return.

Perhaps in retrospect it's best I didn't get the lion or the sable and that I left the hippo in the water, for I have taken from the Selous great trophies, perhaps even the greatest trophy in the tembo. I have forever the memory of the lion. I could have literally touched him as he ran past me, and I have good and ample cause to return to the Selous and once again hunt the great lion, the magnificent sable and the enormous hippo I left behind.

I regard this adventure, this safari, as special. I call it my Hatari Safari. For those who have hunted East Africa, they know that Hatari in Swahili is the word for "danger." I didn't plan it to be dangerous - it just turned out that way. 🐾