

A WOUNDED LEOPARD

– Serious Problem

– LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #13 –

There is nothing in Africa quite as dreaded as a wounded Buffalo, Lion or Leopard. Nearly all of the recorded incidents of maulings or death to clients and professional hunters are attributed to following up on these three wounded animals. It is for this reason they are called ‘dangerous game’. On the other hand, a close counter with a perfectly healthy elephant can and has been equally hazardous.

Putting a killing shot into a leopard should be pretty straightforward, as the distance is typically only 25-40 yards and the client is normally sitting



Here's the leopard hunting crew. I don't deserve much of the credit for this trophy. Note the empty shells in the foreground.

– with a steady rest. However, a leopard usually comes to the bait just before dark and there is often a sense of urgency to shoot, especially if the leopard is nervous.

This leopard was nervous, switching directions on the limb, never lying down to eat and I apparently hurried

the shot, hitting him too far forward and out of the chest cavity. We found blood, but now had a wounded leopard on our hands.

Experienced professional hunters prefer to follow-up wounded leopard with a seasoned partner, not the client; because a wounded leopard almost always charges and they come so very, very fast. It is a few kill or be killed seconds, although leopard typically claw and bite everyone in the party, then run back into the bush – which ends the follow-up. A wounded leopard is a serious, serious problem, and no professional hunter looks forward to it.



This is a staged re-enactment to show the final position of the leopard, in the red circle.

We returned to the blind about 8:00 am the next morning. Brenda and I stayed with the car while our PHs and trackers started the slow, painstaking follow-up process. For me, reading a good book was the best way to pass this time.

The first shot came without notice one hour and 15 minutes later, from about 400 yards away, with 12 more shots coming so fast they could barely be counted – two Benellis at full throttle. The leopard charged from 45 yards out and died only 3 steps away – all in just over two seconds. Then came the shouts of celebration from the PHs and trackers and we knew immediately of their success.

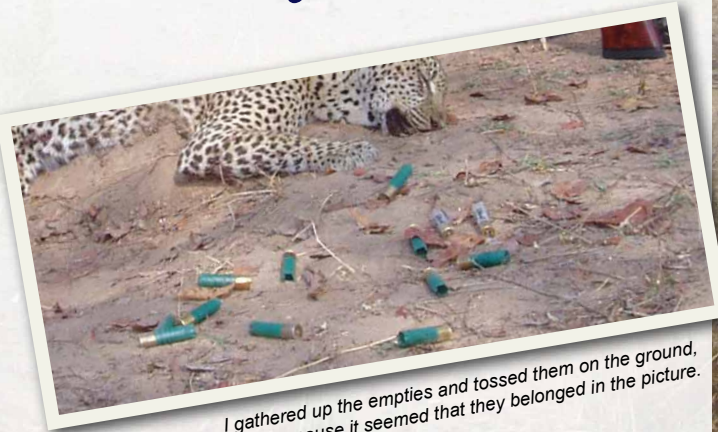
I can only imagine the adrenalin flowing through the veins of the PHs and trackers during that one hour and 15 minute follow-up, culminating in the last two seconds.

“ It is a few
kill or be killed
seconds...”



Larry Potterfield

Luwele Camp
Selous Game Reserve
Tanzania, Africa
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I gathered up the empties and tossed them on the ground, just because it seemed that they belonged in the picture.