

# The Sports Afield Book of Hunting and Shooting Records and Facts

Astonishing Accomplishments and Fascinating Facts  
from the World of Hunting and Shooting

by  
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with contributions by  
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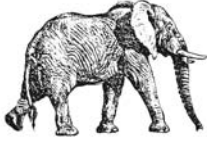
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## Chapter 1



# Elephants, Rhinos, and Hippos

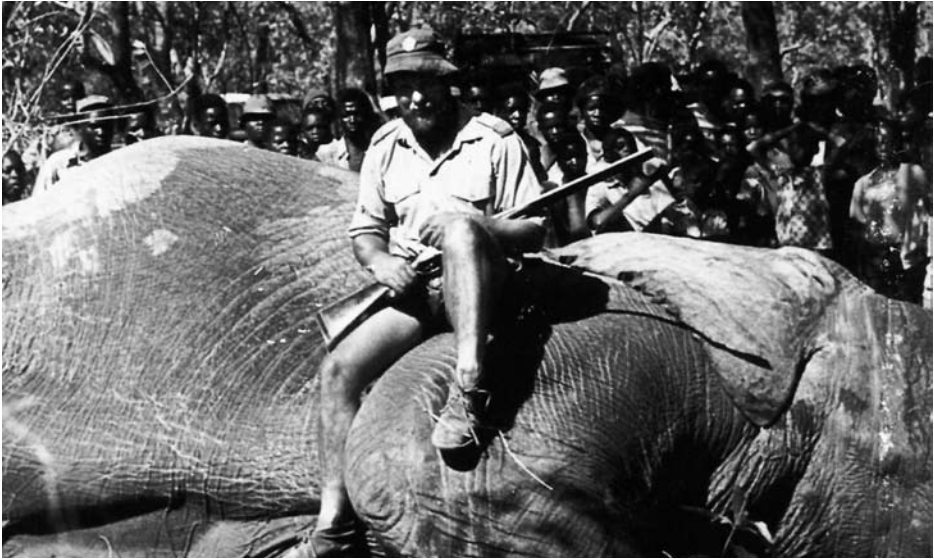
### Largest Elephant

The largest known specimen of an African savanna elephant was killed in 1955 in Angola by the Spanish-Hungarian hunter José Fenykövi. It had a shoulder height of 13 feet, 1 inch, and is estimated to have weighed around 24,000 pounds—twice the weight of an average male elephant—giving the phrase “big-game hunting” an entirely new dimension. The elephant is mounted and displayed in the hall of The Smithsonian Institution in Washington.



*Hunter José Fenykövi sitting on the largest-bodied elephant ever recorded.*

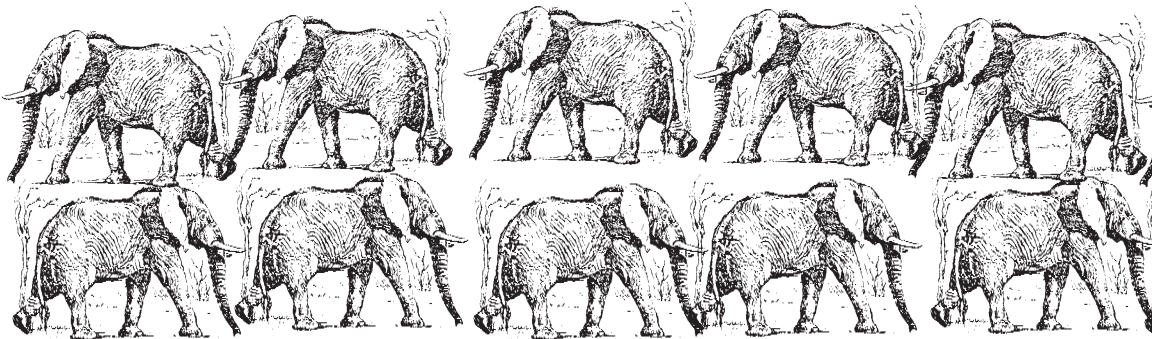
## The Sports Afield Book of Hunting and Shooting Records and Facts



*Mike LaGrange is probably the hunter who has killed the most African elephants.*

### Most Elephants

Mike LaGrange (b. 1949) was for a number of years in the 1970s and 1980s employed as a control officer for Zimbabwe's Parks and Wildlife Management Authority. One of his tasks was to reduce the elephant population in areas where their numbers exceeded the biological carrying capacity. During his career, LaGrange probably killed more elephants than anyone else—more than 6,000 in total. He operated with a team of assistants who used radios and automatic rifles in order to eradicate entire family groups of elephants, as experience has shown that this is the best way of reducing their numbers without upsetting the herd's important social structures.





## Elephants, Rhinos, and Hippos

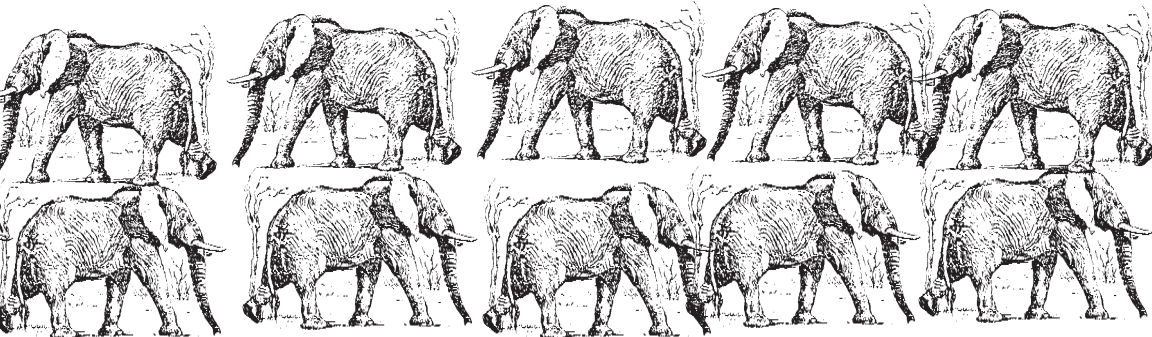
### Elephant Control

In colonial times, game-control officers in most of Africa operated more or less on their own in the vast areas they were responsible for managing. This way of culling crop-raiding elephants resembled traditional elephant hunting for sport and accordingly these officers' total bags must be put in perspective when compared with elephant culling in modern times.

The most successful of the early control officers was Roy John Dugdale Salmon (1888–1952), better known as "Samaki" Salmon, who operated in Uganda in the years between the two world wars and culled more than 4,000 elephants. His armament consisted of two bolt-action rifles from John Rigby in .416 Nitro Express and a .470 Nitro Express double rifle from William Evans. (The latter was used when tracking wounded animals in dense bush.) Like most of his colleagues, Samaki Salmon was an excellent shot. Among his many extraordinary feats were shooting 40 elephants in one day, 70 elephants in three days, and 400 elephants in one week. On one occasion he killed 12 elephants with 14 shots in less than 2 minutes. Too bad for Salmon that he wasn't paid for piece-work.



*"Samaki" Salmon (far right) during a safari with the Prince of Wales.*



## The Sports Afield Book of Hunting and Shooting Records and Facts

### White Gold

Historically no hunting "trophy" ever had the same importance as ivory. Since the earliest civilizations, this material has been precious and sought-after.

As Europeans gradually gained access to the interior of Africa, and especially when modern firearms became available at the end of the nineteenth century, the commercial trade in ivory increased exponentially. However, as the ivory hunters primarily went for large tusks, they did not damage the elephant population to nearly the same extent as today's poaching epidemic does, where animals are killed without regard to age, sex, and tusk size.

There are no records of the total amount of ivory that was exported from the Dark Continent in the heyday of the ivory trade, but in 1898



*A pile of tusks from a successful elephant hunt like this represented a market value of thousands of pounds sterling in the early twentieth century.*

alone it was 550 tons, of which almost half came from the Congo. During the years between 1880 and 1900, the import to London alone was 3,700 tons of ivory, an average of almost 400 tons per year. That means some 60,000 elephants were killed just to supply



*The consumption of ivory was enormous in the last century. This photo shows the inside of a London ivory warehouse shortly before World War I.*

## Elephants, Rhinos, and Hippos

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### Incredible but True!

**T***he heaviest set of  
elephant tusks in  
the world  
together weighed  
440 pounds!*

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the London market. In addition there were other ivory markets, with the most important situated in Antwerp, Hamburg, and Marseille.

At the time, the "conversion rate" of ivory was generally considered to be "a pound for a pound" meaning one pound sterling for each pound of ivory. The actual price, however, very much depended upon the size and quality of the tusk in question. Regardless, this meant that there was big money to be made by hunting elephants, provided you were able to find the elephants and survive the hardships of safari life in those days, which included tropical diseases and hostile natives.

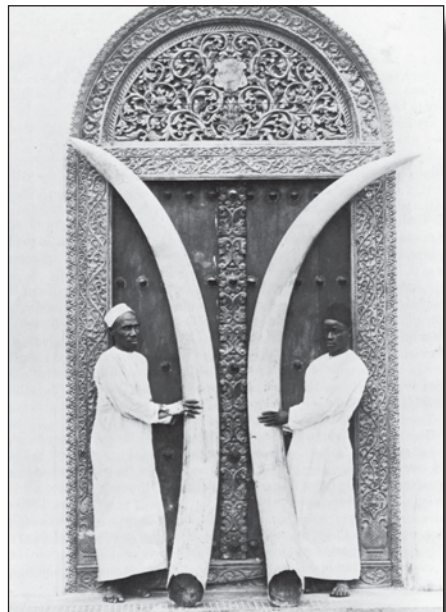
Only a very few professional ivory hunters managed to do better than break even by this way of living. Many were killed by elephants or natives and many more died penniless. Also, there is a vast difference between this occupation and elephant control or culling, where the object is to reduce the population by killing off entire herds of animals. Ivory hunters had to seek and find the largest bulls and follow their tracks over vast distances, often in vain.

### Heaviest and Longest Tusks

An elephant's tusks continue to grow throughout the animal's life, which rarely exceeds 60 years. The average annual growth is 3.5 to 4 inches, but day-to-day use and damage limits the length so the tusk will never achieve its full potential of 20 feet.

The weight of the tusk is not only related to the length but also to the circumference and size of the nerve cavity. After the age of 35, this cavity is gradually filled up with dentine and from that point on, the weight of the tusk increases more rapidly.

The heaviest set of tusks ever recorded came from an elephant killed in 1898 by a slave called Senoussi at the slopes of



*The heaviest set of elephant tusks in the world. Together these tusks weigh 440 pounds.*