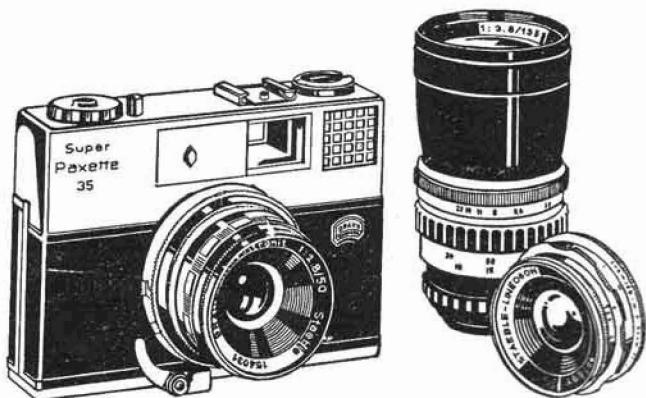




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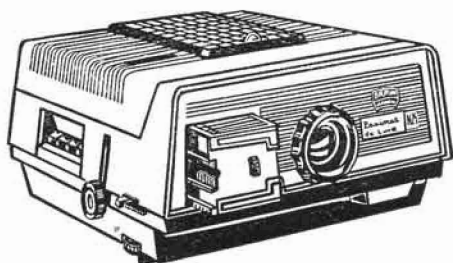
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HUNTING WITHC

SINCE HIS EARLIEST APPEARANCE on earth, Man has been a hunter. For the first half-million years or so of his existence, his survival depended on killing other creatures for food. The hunting instinct remained with him when he took to agriculture and a settled existence, leading to the growth of communities and eventually to life in cities — civilization.

So strong is the hunting instinct that it has survived 5,000 years of civilization. The pursuit of animals and birds as a sport remains as popular as ever in the second half of the twentieth century.

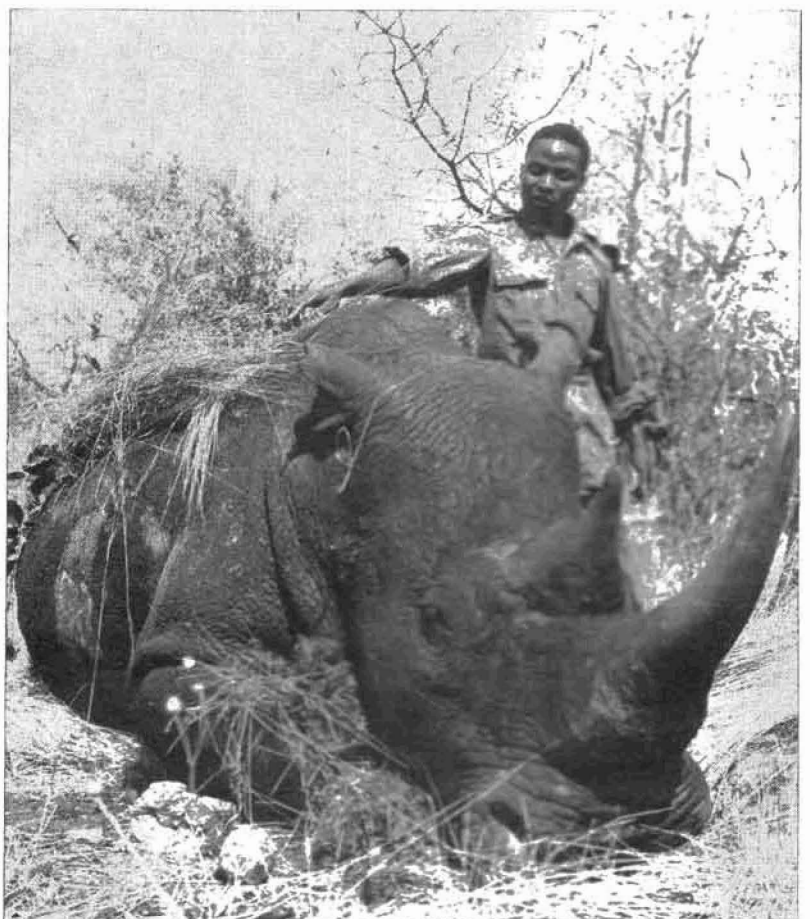
The hunting instinct is still with us — but the means of satisfying it grows less every year. Man, the most ruthless of predators, became the most dangerous when he invented gunpowder.

All over the world animal and bird species which had survived thousands of years of hunting by men using bows, spears and traps were exterminated by fire-

arms in the course of a few years.

Only 140 years ago, the American bison of the western prairies numbered about *sixty million head*. In the 1860's the building of railways brought swarms of land-hungry settlers to the West, and railway construction gangs were fed on bison meat. Within 30 years the great herds had vanished.

At the turn of the century a group of naturalists met in New York to form the American Bison Society.



DOCILE, under the influence of the drugs, the Ajia Sanctuary rhino is covered with dry grass to help him reduce dehydration. (See account on previous page). Anthony Lavers suggests that, if hunting of rare species must continue, drug-darting should satisfy Man's aggressiveness and would keep valuable species for posterity.

UT SLAUGHTER

Drug-darting techniques might provide all the thrills of hunting—without harming the animals, suggests

ANTHONY LAVERS

They wished to preserve this splendid beast — and they were very nearly too late. In the whole of the West, they found less than 200 pathetic survivors.

These were rounded up and established in sanctuaries. Similar action was taken in Canada. Today the bison number about 30,000, and are no longer in danger of dying out.

Other animals were less fortunate. The aurochs, a species of wild ox, died out completely in Europe in the sixteenth century. The quagga vanished in South Africa. In South-East Asia, two formerly common species of rhino are now decimated, perhaps beyond hope of recovery, and the orang-outang — a perfectly harmless and highly intelligent species of ape — is rapidly being hunted out of existence in Indonesia.

Hundreds of smaller species of animals have vanished completely, and international wild life authorities list more than 30 species in danger of extermination.

Yet, paradoxically, hunting has preserved many animals. Europe's game birds and deer would have disappeared centuries ago if special hunting preserves had not been established for them.

Hunting, the sport of the wealthy, ensured that these species survived, and so detailed a knowledge of their breeding and feeding habits was collected by gamekeepers that in some countries game has actually multiplied.

In West Germany, for instance, controlled hunting enables some 250,000 deer to be killed each year without any threat to their survival as a species.

Communist countries are among the most advanced in game preservation. In Russia, the *saiga* antelope — an animal very like the East African duiker — was reduced to a few hundred head after the First World War. In Russia, game poaching is a crime against the State, and as such

carries heavy sentences. The Soviet authorities protected the *saiga* until it now numbers more than two million head, and some 300,000 are killed every year to provide Russians with an excellent alternative to beef and mutton.

The Poles have done wonders with the breeding of European bison (only about 20 remained in the world in 1919) and the Czechs and Yugoslavs also take game preservation seriously. Communist China has established many sanctuaries and is doing its best to protect the last survivors of such rare species as the giant panda, the wild horse and the wild camel.

In Communist countries, game laws are enforced with such severity that infringements are just not worthwhile. In more democratic climates, the penalties for poaching are much less stringent and the profits can be enormous.

East Africa's independent governments have done a great deal more for wildlife than their colonial predecessors. Tanzania's record in the establishment of new sanctuaries is unequalled by any country in the world, and Kenya's national parks are among the best and most efficiently administered in Africa. Uganda has made similarly commendable progress.

Yet the danger to East Africa's wildlife is still great. The areas open to hunting are visited by a constantly increasing number of sportsmen. They bring money vital to the development of the three nations. But, as the number of sportsmen increases, the number of animals available to them becomes steadily smaller.

Hunting for sport is necessary because it brings money to East Africa and, while the game remains a source of revenue, it will be protected. But revenue from hunting is limited by the number of available animals. It cannot grow larger, and will probably grow smaller, if present trends continue.

IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE which will enable hunting to be increased without reducing our game stocks to the danger level?

I believe there is — that the answer lies in the technique of capturing animals by injecting them with anaesthetic drugs. Evolved during the past decade, it has been used successfully in many countries, including East Africa, by game wardens transferring threatened animals to places of safety.

The method is simple. Darts containing anaesthetics are fired either from air rifles or instruments resembling crossbows. The shooting is done at close range and involves careful stalking of the animal.

Immediately the drug has been injected by the dart, the animal begins to totter, and soon it becomes unconscious.

The time needed for the anaesthetic to take effect varies according to the animal. Mr. Ellis Monks, the Nairobi chemist, is one of the most experienced people in the use of the drug-darting technique on East African game.

A leopard he anaesthetized recently took only four minutes to become unconscious. A large bull giraffe remained conscious for 15 minutes before it collapsed. Other animals such as rhino are even more susceptible to the drugs.

The technique is still new and men such as Mr. Monks are engaged in finding the exact drug dosage needed to knock out each species and size of animal *without harming it*. But they are well on their way to success.

If drug-darting can be perfected for capturing animals, why should it not also be used for big game hunting?

It would give the hunter all the thrills of stalking, all the pride of bringing down his quarry, the opportunity to record the fact with a photograph — and, as a bonus, the pleasure of knowing that the animal will continue to live in freedom after the hunt.

Virtually all the satisfaction of hunting lies in the pursuit and successful capture of the animal. Few hunters enjoy the actual killing.

Before drug-darting, the only way a hunter could bring down his quarry, measure it, feel and examine it, was by killing it first. Now we have the means to do all this, without the slaughter. Surely it is an idea worth considering?

WHEN I was a small boy of five I made my first catapult — a rather haphazard affair of rubber bands and a forked twig, propelling the hard berries of an African shrub.

For days, I pursued the mousebirds foraging among our fruit trees. I enjoyed all the thrills a big game hunter gets from tracking a fine bull elephant. And then, one morning, a

shot hit a bird on the head and it tumbled down.

As its warm body struggled feebly in my hands, all the fun of the chase evaporated. I realised I had killed a creature capable of feeling pain, something which enjoyed life as much as I did.

For many years after that, I hunted animals, until eventually I sickened of the whole business and found far more pleasure in studying and photographing them.

The pursuit and stalking of animals provides splendid excitement, but as soon as the animal has been killed the sportsman is left with a sense of futility, tinged with regret.

American author Negley Farson wrote of similar emotions, after he killed his first African lion. Nearly all experienced hunters — and especially East African game wardens to whom I have spoken — share the same feeling. Only a handful of neurotics enjoy the actual slaughter.

But drug-darting may open up a whole new vista of hunting. It would contain all the essential elements involved in normal shooting — selection of the quarry, tracking, and marksmanship.

Since the dart guns have only an effective range of about 30 yards, the sportsman would have to get close to the animal in much the same way as he approaches to within 25 yards of an elephant when using firearms.

The dart gun makes little noise. After injecting the drug, the sportsman would simply have to follow the animal cautiously until it dropped.

Animals vary considerably in their reaction to the drug. It is certain, however, that the hunter would have time to measure, examine and photograph his trophy before the effects wore off.

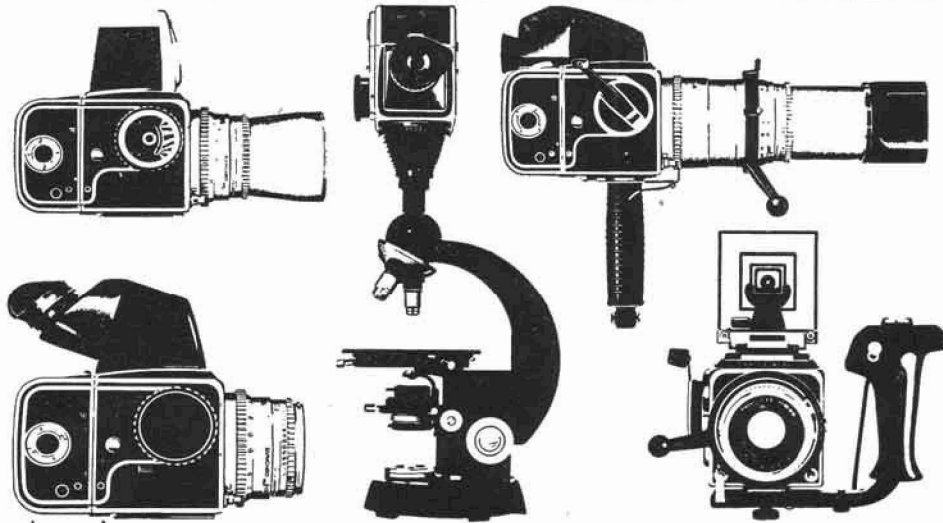
It might be slightly more dangerous to pose beside an unconscious animal than a dead one, but if so, this would simply increase the real sportsman's pleasure, because danger is an element of hunting.

ANIMALS brought down by drug-darting could be splashed with a long-wearing paint so that they would have five or six months' grace before being darted by other hunters. Special paints are available for marking animals in this way. They are used in game counts, and have been proved successful for this purpose in such areas as the Serengeti plains of Tanzania.

Since the animals would not be unduly frightened in the darting process they would not become vicious or dangerous in the same way as wounded animals do. The drug has

(Continued on page 47)

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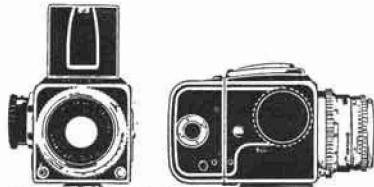
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HUNTING WITHOUT SLAUGHTER

(Continued from page 45)

no lasting effects, and it would not affect their breeding if administered only once or twice a year to each animal.

Naturally, normal shooting would continue to satisfy hunters who require trophies such as tusks and heads, and this would serve to keep big game numbers in reasonable bounds.

But far more hunters would choose the drug-darting technique once it became widely known and, with fewer animals killed, a much larger number of sportsmen could enjoy East African hunting — with good effect on Government game licence revenues.

In East Africa, the game with the greatest attraction for sportsmen are elephant, lion, rhino, buffalo and leopard, roughly in that order and antelope such as the eland, kudu, oryx, waterbuck and bongo.

At present elephants are in no danger — in some areas their numbers are an embarrassment — but the rhino is a threatened species, the leopard drastically reduced in numbers, and every year sees a decrease in the lion population available for shooting.

If rhino were taken off the huntsman's list completely, and made available only to drug-darting sportsmen when research has revealed their exact drug tolerance, the ultimate disappearance of rhino might be averted.

All the danger and excitement of lion and leopard-hunting would be available to drug-darters without the knowledge that they are contributing to the extinction of two of the

world's most beautiful animals.

A hunter would have to master the art of stalking completely before he could hope to drug-dart the swift and alert eland in open plains country; but he would have more luck with kudu, which live in thick bush, and the bongo, an uncommon antelope of mountain forest areas.

Bongo and kudu have to be stalked within fifty yards with firearms, and a dart gun could equally well be used against them.

The darting technique is constantly being improved. Mr. Monks is now able to regulate the dose for leopards so accurately that he can anaesthetize a leopard for any required time from ten minutes to six hours. Similar experience with other animals may ultimately provide the same results.

If drug-darting were perfected, it would bring hunting within reach of thousands more people than can afford it at present. In Kenya, it costs £175 to shoot the two elephants a year allowed on licence to each sportsman; but the Government could afford to reduce the licence fee greatly for hunters using darts.

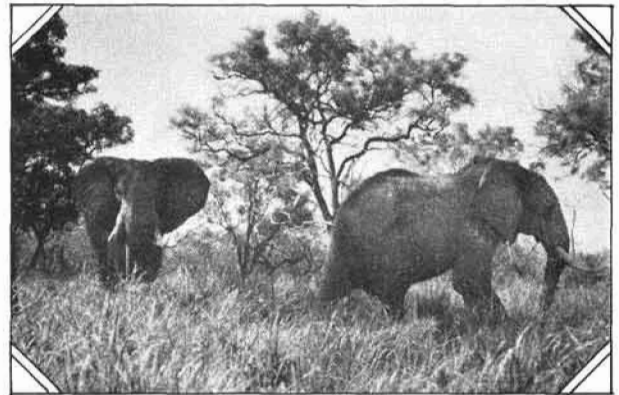
The pleasures of hunting are undeniable; the threat to the world's wild life is just as real.

If drug-darting offers a compromise between the instincts of the hunter and the need for preservation, plus the elimination of a great deal of animal suffering, surely research into this possible solution is justified?

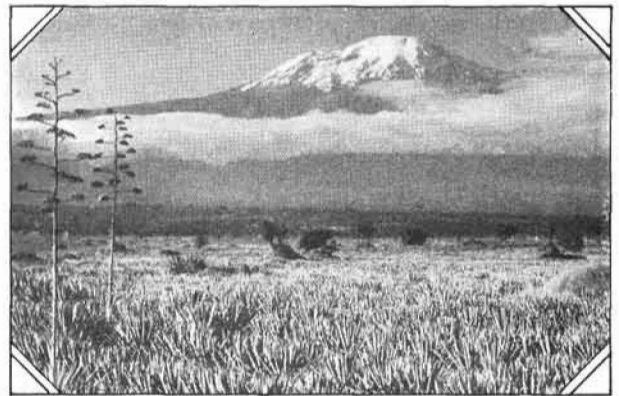
It could mean the difference between our grandchildren enjoying the thrill of hunting or being reduced to the study of stuffed skins of extinct animals in a museum.



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Elephant at Tsavo



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