

A GIANT LIZARD Crawled Between My Feet

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #7 —



So, does he look like a giant lizard to you? Notice he is sensing the air with his tongue.

We had made a nearly-perfect stalk on a pair of warthogs and were standing quietly watching them from about 40 yards distance – already having made the decision not to shoot. Even though the understory was light, they were completely unaware of our presence, and continued to feed, while I took pictures. Then, from about 30 yards off to our left was a rustling in the leaves.

It was a monitor lizard; and he began crawling in our direction. Like the warthogs, he had no idea we were there. Since my camera was already out, I directed it toward the lizard as he continued his approach.



I don't know what he was trying to figure out, but apparently he wasn't alarmed.

This was a medium-sized monitor lizard, for this part of Africa – about three feet or so in length; but it was a giant lizard to us. The PH was standing a couple of steps to my right and the trackers were slightly behind us. The lizard kept coming, stopping now and then for

whatever reason; and I kept taking pictures.

As he got quite close, he turned 90 degrees and continued crawling on a course that would take him right between my feet; ok, so what - it was a lizard, not a cobra. As his head was almost perfectly between my shoes, he must have sensed something wasn't right and he turned slightly to smell my left trouser leg. Apparently the African bush laundry soap didn't cause him undue concern, and he straightened out and crawled out the back side.

Now the dynamics would change. The trackers were just behind me. These guys were from the Maasai tribes

in northern Tanzania. While they will cheerfully lead you unnervingly close to a cape buffalo or a bull elephant, they don't have any kind of a tolerance for snakes or lizards. They scattered like a bunch of chickens; the lizard ran off, the warthogs grunted and ran; and we all had a good laugh.

“They scattered like a bunch of chickens...”

They tell me that the day's activities were quite beyond 'once-in-a-lifetime'; possibly I am the only human being to ever experience and photograph such an event. The African bush is always interesting and sometimes it delivers the completely unexpected. That's one of the reasons I keep going back.



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This was the last picture I got before the trackers came unglued.