

SHOOT or NO-SHOOT, an Unusual Elephant Hunt

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #9 —

Professional hunters tell me that judging the length and weight of the ivory on an elephant is just an educated guess, because it is so difficult to estimate the length of the tusks inside the skull and it is impossible to know the size of the root in the base of the tusks. Wildlife departments, professional hunters and clients usually have minimum requirements; so, there is always the question "shoot or no-shoot?"



The bull finished drinking and walked away.

I saw this elephant on the first day of our safari, in the middle of the afternoon. We had walked to a secluded water hole and found him drinking there all by himself. He looked like a shooter to me, but what do I know? My PH said he wasn't big enough, so I took some pictures and we left him. On day four Brenda and her PH, who had guided over a hundred elephant hunts, were at the same water hole, about the same time of day – and there he was again; but her

PH also said he wasn't a shooter.

Around the dinner table at night we had plenty of conversation about this elephant. As it happened, Brenda's PH was only there for the first seven days, after which another PH was coming in. I jokingly made the comment that when the other PH came, if that elephant was still there, he would tell Brenda to shoot.

On the eighth day, my PH had a bout with malaria, so I tagged along with Brenda and her new PH. Yes, we went to the same water hole; and yes there was the very same elephant – highly unusual. Her PH, with over 125



Our first sighting of this bull on day 1, as he drank at a water hole.

elephant to his credit, couldn't understand why two very experienced professional hunters had passed; and said to Brenda "You should shoot this elephant!"

We watched from 60 yards as the elephant finished drinking and began walking away. We parallel him, trying to get out in front and close the distance.

But quite unexpectedly, the bull turned 90 degrees and walked straight toward us.

Brenda stood in the middle of the well-worn trail with her gun at the ready, waiting for her PH to give the 'shoot' order. The elephant was 9 steps out when the order came, and he went down with one shot in the brain – and what a great trophy he was.

**“You should
shoot this
elephant!”**

Midway USA

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Brenda displays the tusks, 47 and 53 pounds; no wonder she is smiling. The longer one is just over 6 feet in length.