

Stalking the Nile Crocodile

By Lynn Rogers

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PH Ian Gibson, with Lynn and Charles Rogers and Lynn's Nile Crocodile, Maputo Gorge, [Zambezi River, Zimbabwe](#), August 6, 2012.
http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/Hunting/Stalking_the_Nile_Crocodile.pdf

SEE ALSO THIS EULOGY FOR IAN 'GIBBO' GIBSON:

“Ian Gibson: A Life Lived and Remembered”, By Dave Fulson,
Game Trails, Dallas Safari Club, Summer 2015.

http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/Hunting/IanGibson_LifeRemembered_byDaveFulson_DSCGameTrails2015.pdf

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In August 2012, my husband Charlie and I were back in Africa – this time hunting dangerous game with [Chifuti Safaris](#) in [Zimbabwe](#). We hunted out of [Mwanja camp](#) on the [Zambezi River](#) in the vast ‘Chewore North’ wilderness – going after [Cape Buffalo](#) (Charlie), [Nile Crocodile](#) (Lynn) and plains game.

Our professional hunter Ian Gibson guided us onto excellent trophies, and we’ll always treasure memories of this amazing adventure. Our safari was videoed by Doug King of [Safari Classics Productions](#) –producers of the program [Tracks Across Africa](#) for the [Outdoor Channel](#) – and his wonderful footage was edited into a 1½ hour DVD of our hunts. In another exciting development, the stalk of the Nile crocodile is featured as one of the hunts in [Ivan Carter’s](#) late-2012 DVD [“The Dark Continent”](#).

We’ll be writing more about the overall safari later on. Meantime, I’ve compiled a short report on the crocodile hunt, including some photos from the baiting and the exciting final stalk, as follows:

By a stroke of luck shortly after our arrival, a dead hippo snagged in a downed-tree in the river right in front of camp – just in time to use as croc-bait. We floated the carcass downriver, and chained it to a rock in the ‘whirlpool’ area where the river narrows on entering [Mupata Gorge](#). Ian hoped to lure large crocs to gorge on the meat and then lie in the sun on nearby beaches, where we could stalk them several days later.

Sure enough, on boating back down the river two days later, we spotted a big one on one of the beaches. We made a series of stalks on the croc, creeping up sand dunes to spot it on the beaches ahead. Crocs have amazingly keen senses of sight, hearing, smell and ground vibrations. In areas where they are on quota and can be hunted, the big ones are extremely wary, exploiting their senses to the hilt. This one kept busting us, slipping into the water whenever we closed under 150-200 yards or so. We never got a shot.

Fortunately, Ian spotted another big croc on a beach downriver, and we began an incredibly exciting stalk. This involved scrambling onto heights above the river, from where, concealed by trees and brush, we managed to quietly slither-down a steep slope, and out onto a rock outcrop that loomed above the beach – where less than 70 yards away the croc lay dozing in the sun, close enough for a precision brain shot.

Moving slowly and ever so carefully, we somehow managed to pull this off without alerting the croc, which finally came into view as I rose up and tilted my bipod-mounted rifle downwards, into battery.

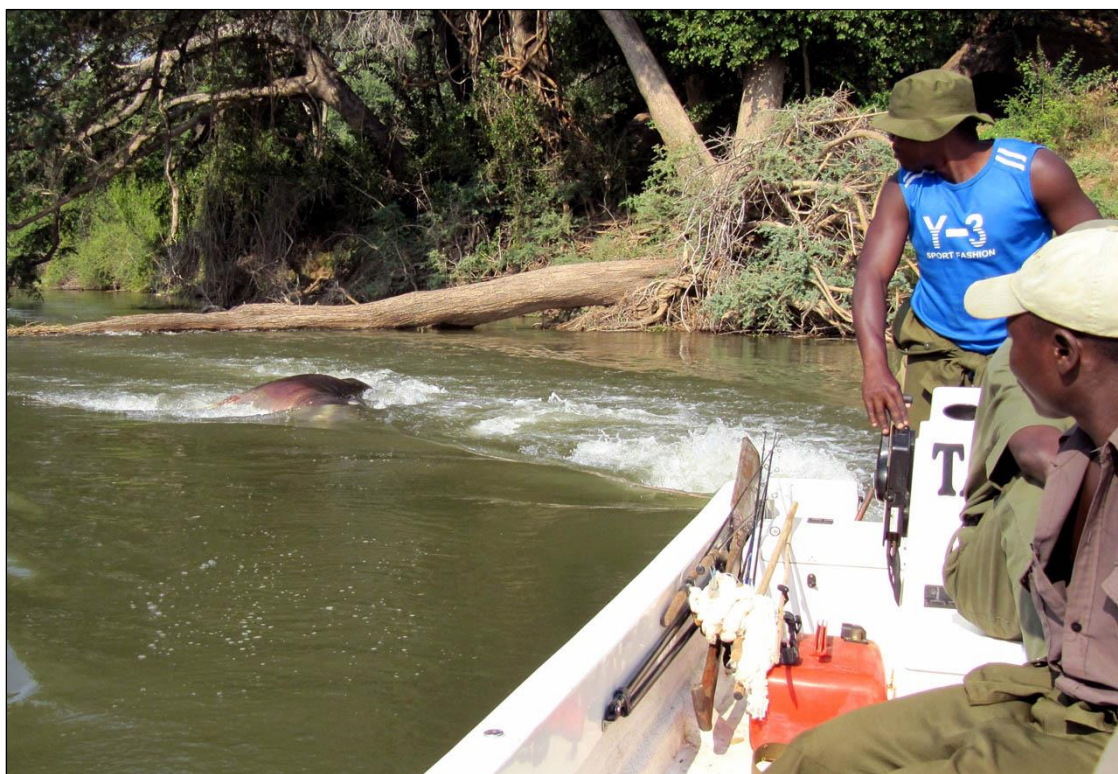
The croc was angling somewhat away, so I placed the cross-hairs carefully on the near upper-rear-corner of its head, visualizing how the bullet (from above) would go downwards and forward to pass through its golf-ball-sized brain (I’d practiced such anatomy visualizations under Ian’s tutelage, using a croc’s skull).

I set the trigger and touched-off my superbly-accurate [9.3x62 CZ550](#). It was a well-centered brain shot: the croc quivered slightly, and then was still. It was one of those shots of a lifetime, one I’d dreamed-of ever since reading about the challenges of crocodile hunting in [Kevin Robertson’s](#) book [The Perfect Shot](#). This croc measured 13’ 3-1/2”, and will make a stunning addition to our trophy-room!

By a stroke of luck shortly shortly after our arrival, a dead hippo snagged in a downed-tree right in front of camp – just in time to use as croc-bait!



Here we begin towing it upstream and away from the tree, then turn and head downriver.



We pulled into an eddy down in Maputo Gorge, and drifted the hippo towards some rocks.



The trackers chained it to the rocks, while Charlie marked the spot on his GPS.
We'll return two days later to look for big crocs.



Two days later Charlie and I, along with PH Ian Gibson of [Chifuti Safaris](#) and our trackers and game scout, head back down the [Zambezi River](#) to hunt croc.



Charlie and Ian scan beaches on down the river, looking for big crocs.



Ian and I begin a series of stalks from beach to beach, stalks that failed due to the ultra-keen senses of a big croc we were after, which somehow busted us.



Here Ian and I begin scrambling up onto heights above a beach where he'd spotted another big croc.



Ian and I quietly creep across the upper slope, hidden in a defilade from the beach below. We're heading for a position up above the green tree, seen towards the left ahead.



Here we begin our descent towards a rock-outcrop that concealed us from the beach.



Ever so carefully, inch by inch, we quietly slither down the steep slope.



Ian moves silently on down the slope. I watch closely, to figure out how I'll do it.



Here I slither down behind Ian (note the smooth path worn in the dirt).



Nearing the ledge, I pass my rifle to Ian. As he quietly positions it on the outcrop, I slowly slip towards the right, and out onto the rock.



Moving into position, I slowly begin to rise,
rotating the rifle barrel downwards over the bipod as my head come up.



Though almost in position, I still don't see the crocodile – all the while hoping my wide-brimmed hat shades my face enough to avoid signaling my presence.



Now's the moment, and it's one of those shots of a lifetime. In the 'zone' on adrenaline, I calmly steady my rifle, figure the angles, place the cross-hairs, and take the shot.



The [286gr Nosler Partition bullet](#) passed well-centered through the croc's brain. It never moved. [The slightest miss, the croc would have hurtled into the fast-flowing river, never to be seen again.]



Lynn with her trusty [9.3x62 CZ550 Safari Express Rifle](#) and her Nile Crocodile!



Chifuti PH Ian Gibson, Lynn Rogers and Charles Rogers, with Lynn's Nile Crocodile!



Note: In this upwards-looking wide-angle photo, you can see the rock-outcrop high above the beach from where Lynn took the shot. It's just to the right of the green-topped tree at the upper-left (up from the croc's neck). The contour of the slope above the beach enabled Ian and Lynn to remain unseen while moving across higher up. They then slithered down the slope and out onto the outcrop, using that rock for cover.

Another photo of Lynn's Nile Crocodile



The end of a great hunt!

