

Peter Flack's Hunting The Spiral Horns: Bongo & Nyala - The Elite African Trophies

This is the fifth and final book in the five-book series covering all thirty spiral-horn species and subspecies that are recognized by Rowland Ward and SCI. Describing the two bongo subspecies and the common and mountain nyala, and all what comes with their conservation and hunting, Peter Flack's well-known ambition to produce a perfect product undoubtedly won again. This massive book is simply the best and most comprehensive book for these elusive dreams of many an African safari addict. In his foreword, our mutual friend Shane Mahoney brilliantly describes Peter Flack as "representing that remarkable amalgam that has emerged throughout the history of wildlife conservation; namely, a man who in his heart and intellect is a hunter but who is to such an extent inspired by the wild creatures he pursues that he comes to view their natural persistence as the greatest objective of his life."

In parts one to three, with ten chapters altogether, Flack covers not only the historic aspects of the discovery of the three species; he also gives tips on where to find and how to best hunt them. The scientific chapters on nyala and mountain nyala have been written by two outstanding experts. Dr Jeremy Anderson (South Africa) wrote his doctoral thesis on nyala after studying them in the field for many years and Dr Paul Evangelista, considered by his peers as the leading expert on mountain nyala. Peter Flack took it upon himself to painstakingly research the western and eastern bongo - from its first documented appearance in form of some horns and bones pieces in the halls of the British Museum, to the latest population estimates in Eastern and Western Africa; from the stories of early hunter-explorers to the tales (and brilliant photos) of modern hunter-conservationists. Biology, distribution and life history of the two bongo subspecies are intermingled with entertaining hunting stories past and present. The chapters are complemented with hunting adventures as told by Mike Prettejohn, Robin Hurt, Pemble Davis, Ross Murphy, Eric Mararv, Adam Parkison, Christophe Beau and of course Peter Flack's own quest for a monstrous and ancient western bongo. Professional hunters Christophe Morio and Rudy Lubin chip in with tips on hunting bongo in West Africa.

Jeremy Anderson describes the graceful nyala of southern Africa in his extensive chapter "From Rare to Abundant: Natural History of the Nyala", as behooves a man who spent his life studying these animals. Garry Kelly, South African Outfitter extraordinaire, and his brother John talk about hunting outstanding bulls, with young Danie Geel giving a riveting story of bowhunting one. Hans Schabel tells his story of hunting this shy antelope in Mozambique, which the well-known Mark Haldane amplifies with tips towards hunting them in this hunter's paradise. The late Anthony J. (Tony) Tomkinson lets us partake in the "Nyala Conservation And Hunting Success Story". Peter Flack's old hunting companion Peter Kennedy rounds off the chapter with an exhaustive and entertaining list of tips on how, where and when to hunt this essential Southern African antelope, and what equipment to use.

The third part of the book is dedicated to the shyest, most elusive (and most expensive) monarch of them all - the mountain nyala of Ethiopia. It is aptly introduced with a most complete article by the foremost expert on the species, Paul Evangelista. Peter Flack answers all remaining questions on

by Book Review by Gerhard R Damm

hunting methods, equipment, hunting areas, and everything else an aspiring mountain nyala hunter wanted to know. One of the stories I liked most in this book is the late Sherwin Scott's epic tale "There comes a time ...". I had read it years ago, just months before Sherwin passed to the Great Hunting Grounds Beyond, and it made a deep impression. Sherwin's adventure together with PH Jason Roussos is what hunting is all about! And there is also Gwyn Brown's mountain nyala story, in Peter Flack's words a petite, very feminine yet very experienced, passionate and determined huntress, as well as the story of Peter Treboldi's hunt!

Jason Roussos, hunter, outfitter and guide in Ethiopia who guided over 100 hunters to mountain nyala gives all final answers in his section "Mountain Nyala - Understanding Them, Hunting Them and Guiding for Them" - and, let me mention this too - his everlasting fight to protect their habitat and conserve this mighty mountain ungulate.

Flack rounds off his last book on the spiral horns with sections on clothing and equipment, a rainforest checklist, rifles and ammunition - all typically Flack, well-researched, tested and meticulous to the smallest detail. His friend and master taxidermist Rodney Kretzschmar takes care of the part on trophy care and preparation.

In his final musings over the state of wildlife, conservation and hunting in Africa I recognize the Peter Flack I have known for years. His words may sound cynical at times, but I suggest that this book, and indeed the entire series on the spiral horns, will inspire a new generation of hunters to come to Africa and put their energy and talent into saving what's left of the great African wilderness and the great game of the continent. Buy the book, read it, enjoy it ... and then do it! Africa needs you!

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