Dingo Destruction 2—Some Hints on Shooting

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WILD DOG DESTRUCTION

2—SOME HINTS ON SHOOTING
By A. G. MOORE, Vermin Control Officer.

These articles have been written to assist professional and amateur doggers, as well as farmers, to destroy dingoes or wild dogs (the term “wild dogs” is generally used to include both dingoes and domestic dogs which are running wild). The information given has been gathered from extensive experience in most of the areas of the State to the south of the Transcontinental railway line.

To achieve any worthwhile degree of success in wild dog shooting, it is essential that the hunter should have a thorough understanding of the habits of these animals.

Wild dogs are seldom seen on the move in the daytime as they hunt and prowl at night. While it is dark they often work into the fringe of settlement and beyond, attracted by the scent of sheep. Usually the bitch will scratch her way under the fence surrounding a sheep paddock while a dog will jump over the top, and after the resulting orgy of killing and wounding they will return to their haunts to sleep during daylight. Shooting is often difficult when the wild dogs are attacking sheep, as their visits may be only once or twice a week. This is usually a good indication that they are travelling for many miles to kill. When their visits are more frequent it may be assumed that they are living closer. If not disturbed they will often make their headquarters in the paddocks if there is sufficient cover.

HOT WEATHER
During daytime in hot summer weather, wild dogs may be found lying around near watering places such as springs, creeks, rivers, lakes and swamps. If many of their tracks are found along pads or roads leading to these places, there is every chance that the animals will be nearby. They may be lying in the shade under bunches of rushes, scrub, fallen tree tops, rocks or in caves. As sometimes they keep close to the water while on other occasions they may be ten or twenty chains away, a very careful inspection of the area is necessary if results are to be obtained.

COOL WEATHER
As the late winter, spring and early summer are the times when pups are growing up, this is a favourable time for shooting in the breeding areas and the best opportunities occur in the late spring when the wild dogs are about half-grown. Unless they have been forced to move in search of food or water the half-grown pups will be found close to where they were born.

While they are still inexperienced it may be possible to shoot a number of young dogs before they are aware of their danger. Often in their ignorance they will rush to where a shot dog has howled and on smelling the blood will attack and attempt to eat the wounded or dead animal, thus offering a good opportunity for further shooting.

In cool weather, the sunny side of shelter is where wild dogs will usually be found and if a number of tracks, particularly small tracks, are seen, a careful search should be made in the vicinity. An alert hunter will listen for the squeaks of pups or the noise of the flies which swarm about them.

If the weather is cold and the pups are still very young they will keep close to their mother. If discovered they will move off so quickly that only a running shot is possible.

PRECAUTIONS IN HUNTING
Scent.
Like all bush animals, wild dogs have a very keen sense of smell and this is the chief means of their protection. Hunters must always move into the wind to prevent any human scent from being carried down the direction in which they are moving. Wild dogs may see and hear hunters without being frightened but once they scent human beings they will move away.

Hearing.
Great care should be taken to avoid making any noise in moving, as wild dogs have well-developed hearing. The wearing of woollen
clothes and rubber boots or rubber soles is recommended, especially in stony country.

Sight.
A wild dog's eyesight is particularly good, so hunters will be well advised to pay attention to the colour of their clothes. Uniform clothing preferably in dark grey or brown has been found advantageous.

OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS
Likely Localities where Wild Dogs on the Move may be Shot.
If the wild dogs are killing sheep it is important to find the routine and route being used in travelling to and from the paddocks. Once these points have been established a watch may be kept on the route in the early morning or late evening.

Carcasses or rabbit-infested localities should be watched in the early morning or late evening.

Imitating Wild Dog Howls.
Wild dogs will often howl in going to or from a kill. If they are heard the hunter should place himself in a suitable place where there is a clear view of the surrounding area. A howl as close to that heard should then be given. The sound should not be overloud but only sufficient for the wild dog to hear faintly. The closer the animal the fainter the howl and this point is of great importance.

An imitation of a dog whining is most effective for stopping a wild dog at close range.
When pups are in a den they may often be called out in the evening by imitations of a dog howling. Human scent will render this trick ineffective.

Use of a Decoy.
A small dog may be trained for decoying wild dogs when shooting. It must be taught not to bark as the noise will frighten the quarry.

Wild dogs will endeavour to attack small dogs which, of course, will run to their masters for protection, thus leading the wild dogs to the hunters. In one instance five wild dogs were shot in one day by this ruse.

Necessity for Alertness.
Hunters must always be alert and be prepared for wild dogs which may be sighted for only a brief glimpse while they are running away.

In most cases wild dogs will lie low to allow the hunters to pass by without discovering them, so a careful watch should be maintained on all likely hiding places.

Where there are several wild dogs together, if the hunter is quick enough he may shoot one before they are disturbed and obtain others on the run. For this reason, if one wild dog is sighted every care should be taken to ascertain if there are others nearby.

Chance shots should not be taken and every shot should be aimed to kill.

GENERAL
Hunters and trappers should never visit wild dog infested areas without carrying reliable and high-powered rifles. To obtain the best results when shooting, the inspection should be planned carefully, taking into consideration wind direction, colour of clothes and making as little noise as possible when moving.

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