



Much of Carter's in-depth knowledge of elephant behavior comes from his time as a photo tourism guide, observing calm elephants up close and personal in parks where the elephants are not hunted.

< do amazing things. Last year he was guiding a hunter on an elephant safari in the Zambezi Valley, and I was along for the ride. We got onto a youngish bull in some really thick cover, and we were awfully close before we got a proper look at the ivory (or lack thereof). Carter was dead calm, rifle at ease, when he said, "He's going to charge, but it's a demonstration. He will stop right there, indicating a bush a few yards away."

Trumpeting and flapping his ears, the bull came...and stopped about where Carter said he would, then retreated a few yards, still trumpeting.

"Now he'll come again, but it's still a demonstration, and he'll stop a bit closer." This happened, and again the young bull retreated. "Okay, just stand. He will come one more time, a bit closer, and then he will leave." This happened, too, and then he was gone, leaving us looking at each other and shaking our heads.

Method Or Madness?

Was this insanity or insight? Viewed logically, what choice was there? Absent any other course of action, it's never a good idea to run from a dangerous animal in thick cover. It's a worse idea to shoot unnecessarily. Carter knew this elephant

wasn't serious. With his trumpeting and outstretched ears this wasn't hard to figure. Exactly how he predicted with perfect accuracy the exact sequence of events is beyond me, but he knew what this elephant was going to do.

Some of his peers regard him as crazy. He does indeed work closer to elephants than anyone I've ever seen, but he does it selectively with logic in his movements. In national parks, where some of

the photos that accompany this story were taken, elephant are relatively undisturbed and calm—and probably understand they are safe. Under such conditions, Carter gets very, very close. Elephants seem to know when they're in a hunting area and vulnerable, and Carter gives them a bit more space.

In herds he is more careful yet. Although he loves elephants, he is a hunter in a country grossly overpopu- >

In his mid-thirties, Carter is a typical modern Zimbabwe professional hunter, trained in a tough school and extremely competent. What sets him apart is the time and effort he has spent specializing in elephant.

