



**This is a beautiful mature bull with long, thick ivory, probably in the sixty-pound class. In a hunting area, this bull would be long gone, but he's in a national park, and he clearly knows Carter represents no threat.**

## Elephant Whisperer

lated with elephants, and he understands the imperative to hunt them. When an elephant is to be taken, Ivan Carter's real specialty is getting close. In a herd, whether a bull herd or a cow herd, the hardest part is isolating the intended target. When we were trying to isolate my tuskless elephant, we spent many tense minutes very close to the herd but took no unusual chances. In any case, we had the rifles, so it wasn't we who were in danger; the great risk lay in taking an elephant we didn't want to shoot, and Carter was exceptionally careful to make sure this didn't happen.

Once a shootable elephant is identified, in a situation where a shot can be made, all bets are off and Carter likes to get close. Another hunter, Jim Hall, also had a tuskless permit, and he took his early in the hunt—frontally, at perhaps eight yards. It took more time to find me a tuskless elephant, and more time

yet to find Hall a good bull. Before these things happened we got very close to quite a few elephants. To define that, Carter considers much beyond ten yards a long shot on elephant!

This does indeed sound insane. Carter and I talked about it quite a bit (before, during and after) in various practical applications. There are three reasons why, once an elephant has been selected, he likes to get very close. First, he genuinely loves elephants, and he wants them taken cleanly, preferably with a brain shot so the elephant is dead before it hears the report of the rifle. A brain shot must be very precise, and a frontal brain shot is truly one of the most difficult shots in the hunting world. Carter believes the only way to do it effectively is to get very, very close. Second, recognizing that the brain shot is difficult, sometimes it's going to be screwed up. The farther away you are, the more difficult an instantaneous follow-up becomes and the greater the



**It takes incredible nerve to stand your ground when a seven-ton animal is hurtling toward you at just a few yards. It also takes a lot of experience. Carter knows this bull is just demonstrating.**

chance for a lost elephant. The closer you are, the better your chances to correct an initial error.

Finally, Carter is one of relatively few professional hunters who truly understands that his primary service to his clients isn't just showing them good tro-