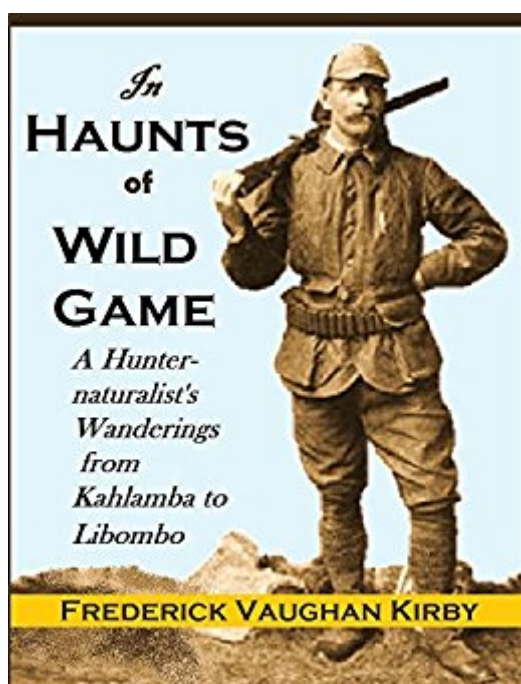


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In Haunts Of Wild Game: A Hunter-naturalist's Wanderings From Kahlamba To Libombo (1896)



Synopsis

Frederick Vaughan Kirby was a traveler, big game hunter, and collector of natural history specimens. who fought in the Anglo-Boer War and later became superintendent of the Transvaal Museum's zoological gardens. This book takes place in Eastern Transvaal, Africa, in 1884. In this particular big-game hunting adventure, Mr. Kirby was joined by Swazis, Muntumuni and to two brave native hunters, May and Stuurman, his big hunting horse "Moscow" and his powerful hound "Rover" (A dog that would bring a wounded lion to bay, and was not afraid to tackle by himself a leopard or a wild boar.) The book is divided into two parts, "Krantz and Kloof" and "The Bush-veldt," which are again subdivided into chapters dealing each chiefly, though not solely, with the pursuit of one kind of game. The book also covers the scenery, the flora, the vegetation, the distribution of the game. The first part of the book records Mr. Kirby's experiences in the pursuit of game in the hills and foothills, the second the pursuit of the larger fauna of the "bush-veldt," or Low Country, as it is variously termed. The book is, in fact, not only a very full and vivid account of a thorough sportsman's adventures with African wild game, but also a complete guide to the district in question; while the chapter on the choice of rifles is exhaustive, and eminently fair and practical. Mr. Kirby is a sportsman as distinguished from a mere indiscriminate gunner. In this liking for downright hand-to-hand fighting he reminds us of the greatest sportsman of our time, the late Sir Samuel Baker. What Sir Samuel really enjoyed was a tussle with wild beasts in which his great strength and courage, as well as his skill, were tried to the uttermost. Thus he delighted in trying feats like that of the decapitation of a charging young rhinoceros with an Arab sword, a feat which to any one else but himself would have been impossible. Mr. Kirby emulates, of course at a very long distance, the achievements of the great hunter. Mr. Kirby devotes many pages to the African hill leopard, of whose great daring he has a high opinion. Again and again he was charged by leopards, and finally a wounded leopardess caught him his cartridges having missed fire and mauled him severely. The situation as the leopardess advanced on him, and missfire followed missfire, is graphically described. Mr. Kirby's chief achievements, his most thrilling experiences, were undoubtedly with lions his adventures surpassing any recorded adventure with lions of Mr. Selous. Mr. Kirby is inferior to Mr. Selous as a naturalist, but superior as a writer.

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(continued)XXIII. Lion-hunting (continued)XXIV. SELECTION OF RIFLES, AND HINTS USEFUL
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Customer Reviews

I encourage all sportsmen and naturalists to add this volume to their collection of historic African narratives...stunning adventures most of us can only imagine!!

I was pleasantly surprised by this book because I did not expect to enjoy it so much. It is a long

book; 567 pages, and that appeals to me, but with no elephant hunting in it I was a bit skeptical. However, the author was a great story teller, painting excellent word pictures of the many hunts he related. My favorite section was the 120 plus pages he devoted to leopard hunting. He was unique for his time in that he intentionally pursued leopards as a priority instead of just taking them when the opportunity offered itself. Also, his 100 or so pages on lion hunting was really good; for me that is unusual because many lion hunting stories bore me a bit. He also covered hunting most of the antelope, buffalo, bush pigs and giraffe; it was his writing ability that makes these so interesting. This book deserves to be considered near the forefront of African hunting literature just behind Selous, Neumann, Bell, Sutherland, and maybe a couple others.

This has some of the best writing and descriptions of sport in Krantz and Kloof (South African steep rock walls and canyons). Taking place in the late 1800s in Natal and Zululand, this book is especially good on the Leopard. In 1911 Frederick Vaughan Kirby was appointed Chief Game Conservator of Umfolozi Game Reserve, which was founded as a refuge for the rare southern white rhino.

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