

Dixie Slugs

Dangerous Game and the Single Shot



Dangerous Game? Just what is it? What is the difference between Dangerous Game and Non-Dangerous game? These are interesting questions and I will address them here.

First of all, dangerous game is an animal the can do serious bodily harm, no matter its size! If one stops and thinks, all will agree that the animal in question is not dangerous game until it is very near, say within twenty-five yards. Until it is within that distance it is only Potentially Dangerous Game. We will discuss the twenty-five yard factor later. One thing is certain, whatever the animal, it must be stopped cold within twenty-five yards. It may come as a surprise to many, but most of the loads that are pushed today as Dangerous Game Loads will get you in deep trouble! I will explain why later in this write up.

Examples of Dangerous Game

As I said before, all dangerous game is not large game. The true wild boar hog is a fine example. Wild hogs have spread throughout most of the country and have picked up some genes along the way from some rather large hogs. I saw a young man that had 110 stitches inside of his leg from a small wild boar. There is also a mistake that a wild sow will not put you down if her pigs close by.

Generally when we speak of dangerous game, the big bears come to mind. I consider them on the upper end and the load to put them down quickly has to be specialized! After a great deal of gut-pile analysis Big Game Hunter Peter Thornily developed a factor calculation based on the size of the animal: Factor 45-Antelope, Factor 50-Deer, Factor 100-Black Bear (350 to 500 pounds), Factor 120 – Elk, Moose, Kudu, Zebra, Large African Safari Plains Game, Factor 150 – Lion, Leopard, Grizzly, Brown Bear, and Factor 250 – Hippo, Rhino, Cape Buff, Elephant

Having hunted true wild boar hogs in the USA and abroad, I have no doubt that they should carry at least a Factor 150! If you value you life and limbs, I suggest you take that thought very serious.

There is a tremendous difference in a wild hog that weighs 100 pounds and one that has reached 400 pounds! By the time he has reached 300 pounds, he has a very thick pliable shoulder shield and long tusks.



Bullets for Dangerous Game

There is a great deal of confusion today concerning what comprises of a bullet for dangerous game. Many of the jacketed bullets will fragment at twenty-five yards, where they would perform correct at longer ranges. We only need to return to what the British hunter favored in Africa and India.

The Brits found that a hard cast, treated for hardness, heavy bullet, at reasonable velocity was best! What worked then, still works today! The Paradox loads were used in firearms that were smoothbore, except the last few inches that were rifled. The Greener loads were for a fully rifled barrel. Energy figures are not the only factor to take into consideration. The most important factor is how the bullet uses this energy. A jacketed bullet, while expanding, loses penetration. Although this is excellent for tissue damage on thin skin game, it can be disastrous on thick skin dangerous game. When a bullet is already has a diameter of .625" to .730", there is no need for expansion. This is where the ultra bores shine. These diameters, combined with a hard cast lead alloy, heat treated, bullet will drive deep.

There is a critical balance between the bullet's weight, its hardness, and controllable recoil. While there are .45 to .50 calibers, that may qualify, it's best to stay with proven loads in 20 bore (.625") and 12 bore (.730"). Contrary to many reasons, the best loads today are put up in plastic hulls, rather than brass. As for as the ballistics, the brass hulls are purely cosmetic. They have very thin sidewalls and do not adapt well to the diameter of today's slug/bullets. Another problem showing up today is factory slug loads advertised as Dangerous Game Loads. If they are soft swaged lead, they will not perform and can get the shooter/hunter in serious trouble.

To better understand why these are touted as dangerous game loads, we need to follow the development of slug loads. In the late 1800's, there was a development of slugs designed for smoothbore guns. In Europe, the Brenneke design came into being. In the USA there was a transition from the old round ball load to the Foster type. All went well until rifled barrels for shotguns started showing up on the American market. We then saw a line of sabot loads showing up, primarily in shotgun-only states. While these sabot rounds, loaded with jacketed bullets, are well and good for thin skin game.....they will fail on dangerous game too many times!

On the other hand, we see nothing more than compromise designs called dangerous game slugs for smoothbore and rifled barrels. While these are accurate enough, they are still soft swaged lead! They are totally unlike what was proven to be the best designs by the British in the Ultra bores. In the final analysis, it is up to the shooter/hunter to decide just what he is going to use! Below is the tests done by John Linebaugh/Todd Corder in Cody, using Dixie Slugs in the famous/infamous "Bone Box". You may judge for yourself!

Dixie Terminator factory load 1280 fps
36" in paper, 1st 6" paper disappeared, wound channel LARGE and funnel shaped, bullet undamaged
24" Paper w/Bone, bullet nose mashed a little. only lost 1/2 the front driving band. Retained weight approx 675gns

Dixie Express factory load 1350fps
34" in paper, wound channel showing the typical "cavity" after entry. Wound channel still LARGE, bullet undamaged
16" Paper w/Bone, bullet nose mashed to first lube groove, lost or moved all of the first driving band. Retained weight approx 675gns

Dixie Exterminator factory load
31" in paper, wound channel showing the typical "cavity" after entry. Cavity position was deeper in the stack. Wound Channel still LARGE, bullet undamaged.
14" Paper w/ Bone. bullet nose sheared to 2nd driving band. 2nd driving band missing 40% of it's diameter. Retained weight 433gns

We see here how today reintroduction of the originals combines tissue damage and deep penetration, without the bullet breaking up on the large green beef bones. This in itself is the most critical trial for a dangerous game bullet!



Here is a visual example of the great penetrating power of the reintroduction of the Greener load. The Predator II-.730"-600 gr. hard cast, heat treated, bullet at 1425'/" blasted its way through 1" of pure lead! This a very serious test to compare of maker's slug loads against! I have always worked under the idea of actual testing against these situations that will separate the real Dangerous Game Slug/Bullets from the "Gas-Bag Also Ran"! These are actual test you will never see published elsewhere. You may see some test in gelatin, but that's not enough to qualify for a Dangerous Game Slug/Bullet!

Another Interesting Test

Comparison Chart.....Dixie Slugs				
Load	Xterminator	Express	Terminator	.45-70 (modern)
Caliber	.730"	.730"	.730"	.458"
Weight	730 grs	730 grs	730 grs	400 grs
BC	.141	.141	.141	.214
MV	1400'f"	1300'f"	1200'f"	1850'f"
V25	1310'f"	1220'f"	1135'f"	1770'f"
V50	1228'f"	1152'f"	1081'f"	1692'f"
V75	1159'f"	1094'f"	1037'f"	1617'f"
V100	1101'f"	1048'f"	999'f"	1545'f"
V125	1053'f"	1009'f"	967'f"	1475'f"
V150	1013'f"	975'f"	938'f"	1410'f"
ME	3177 fpe	2739 fpe	2334 fpe	3040 fpe
E25	2780 fpe	2412 fpe	2088 fpe	2782 fpe
E50	2445 fpe	2149 fpe	1893 fpe	2543 fpe
E75	2177 fpe	1941 fpe	1742 fpe	2323 fpe
E100	1964 fpe	1780 fpe	1618 fpe	2119 fpe
E125	1797 fpe	1650 fpe	1514 fpe	1933 fpe
E150	1663 fpe	1541 fpe	1425 fpe	1765 fpe
<i>Sight-In @ 75 Yards</i>				
25	+0.92"	+1.02"	+1.24"	+0.23"
50	+1.13"	+1.33"	+1.55"	+0.49"
75	0.00"	0.00"	0.00"	0.00"
100	-2.75"	-3.13"	-3.57"	-1.30"
125	-7.28"	-8.23"	-9.27"	-3.50"
150	-13.75"	-15.41"	-17.32"	-6.71"
<i>Peter Thornily Factor:</i>				
Xterminator	@ 1400'f"(MV)=390	@ 1013'f"(V150)=282		
Express	@ 1300'f"(MV)=362	@ 975'f"(V150)=272		
Terminator	@ 1200'f"(MV)=334	@ 938'f"(V150)=261		
.45-70	@ 1850'f"(MV)=208	@ 1410'f"(V150)=158		
<i>Taylor KO Factor:</i>				
Xterminator	@ 1400'f"(MV)=107	@ 1013'f"(V150)=77		
Express	@ 1300'f"(MV)=99	@ 975'f"(V150)=74		
Terminator	@ 1200'f"(MV)=91	@ 938'f"(V150)=71		
.45-70	@ 1850'f"(MV)=48	@ 1410'f"(V150)=37		

Here we see Dixie Slugs compared to the all time favorite .45-70 Springfield.

Single Shots for Dangerous Game

Today there are really only two factory-made modern single shots that I recommend for dangerous game, and they are the Thompson-Center and NEF guns. Both are strong actions! The NEF has the advantage of the extra barrel program, which allows the hunter to buy barrels at a cheaper price. Another advantage for the NEF is its less expensive price, allowing new single shot to get into the single shot game.



Another advantage of the Thompson-Center and NEF's, is the frames are large enough for even the 12 bore. Very few other single shot frames are large enough. I have seen some large Martini actions used on custom guns. But above all, remember when you put a rifled barrel on a shotgun, you have an ultra bore rifle on a shotgun frame.....just as the Brits did over a hundred years ago.....what worked then, works now!



To Sum Up!

No one loves, and respects, the classic single shots of the past anymore than I do! It is a simple fact that their costs restrict them to those few who can afford them. We should not take the elitist attitude and look down on these new single shots. They are today's workingman's single shots. I have tried to present to you what I think, for actual experience, are the firearms and loads for Dangerous Game. In dealing with dangerous game, there are many factors to consider. One that is always overlooked is mental attitude. A great deal of soul searching should be done before one puts themselves into the life treating situation of dealing with a dangerous animal.....James @ Dixie Slugs

