

Notes on the care and feeding of Lever Guns #4

Our ancestors knew something that we seem to have forgotten. A bigger stick or rock was more effective in bringing down the animals that kept their bellies full. Buffalo hunters also knew this and used a variety of large bore weapons to effectively take bison at long and short ranges.

Collectively, we all knew this until the militaries of the world decided to reduce the calibers they used in warfare to allow the soldiers to carry more ammunition. This fit the military doctrine of the day and continues to current times. Wounding an enemy soldier, rather than a quick kill, is often more effective in reducing the capabilities of the enemy force. This strategy is **not** effective for hunters.

Hunters usually don't carry more than a few rounds of ammunition. Hunters know that it isn't the amount of ammunition you carry that makes a difference. The stopping power of the caliber and the bullet and the skill of the hunter in using his weapon are the main factors in a successful hunt. The Model 89 in 500 S&W offers up to 4600 ft-lbs of stopping energy. This is more than enough for anything you may encounter, anywhere on the planet. Combined with the ½" diameter bullets, it provides an elephant capable Taylor Knock Out factor up to an incredible 65.

Taylor Knock Out factor is poorly understood and neglected in modern big game hunting. It is the concept where massive energy transfer from the bullet to the prey animal literally stuns the animal for moments. This happens even if the hit is not immediately terminal. This allows the hunter an easy opportunity for a follow up shot, if necessary. Smaller caliber bullets try to achieve this with expanding designs. They often fail to be effective, since proper expansion requires specific velocities that have very narrow parameters.

Half inch diameter, non-expanding bullets have an additional advantage over smaller caliber offerings. They rarely deflect when hitting hard objects like bone. They tend to break bone and continue on in the original direction. Smaller caliber tend to change direction, up to 45 degrees or more, when encountering hard objects. This tendency is enhanced when using expanding bullets as the expansion changes the bullet shape while reducing its spin stability. This is often observed as a ricochet outside of terminal ballistics.

The half inch diameter bullets of the Model 89 are already at the diameter of expanded .30 caliber bullets. No need to worry if your bullet will expand correctly inside the game animal. It is already there! Every game animal on the planet can be taken effectively with the 500 S&W inside of 200 yards, including elephant. Hunters have adapted the smaller calibers by using expanding bullets to get back to the necessary diameter for effective energy transfer to big game. This is unnecessary with the Model 89.

Big game drops right now when hit by the half inch diameter bullets. The energy transfer is so dramatic that the prey animal rarely takes more than a step or two before tipping over. Game animals usually fall at the place where they are hit. This is generally due to the hydrostatic shock from the large bullet surface area. This shock extends the energy transfer to several times the bullet diameter and increases the likelihood of a terminal event, even with a less than perfect shot.