

# BOOKS

## Human relationship with wild animals can get complicated

*THE TROUBLE WITH LIONS*

By Jerry Haigh

The University of Alberta Press, \$34.95

**By Carmen Klassen  
of The StarPhoenix**

The phrase "go deep" can have different meanings depending on the context. The official definition is "to extend in importance or range." In Jerry Haigh's new book, *The Trouble With Lions*, the phrase brings to mind something altogether different. Whether elbow deep in a lion's throat or similarly submerged in a rhino's less attractive end while administering an enema of massive proportions, Dr. Haigh redefines going deep.

*The Trouble With Lions* explores "the complicated relationship that exists between the people, their livestock and the wildlife around them" in Africa. Covering 40 years of animal treatment, Haigh relates some of his most memorable moments as a veterinarian in Africa.

Haigh was born in Kenya and first practised veterinary medicine in Glasgow, Scotland. When the opportunity came to intern at a new veterinary school in Kenya, he jumped at it. He worked for 10 years as a vet in Africa, from 1965-75. He fell in love with the country and her people to such a degree that he would return countless times over several decades to tend to her diminishing wild animal population.

In 1975, he accepted a position at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon as a zoo and wildlife vet. From 2002-07, he took groups of veterinary students to Uganda on four-week teaching trips to study the differences in

veterinary practice between Uganda and Canada.

*The Trouble With Lions* is organized into four sections, each covering a different aspect of the wildlife/livestock/human interaction. The first section recalls his decade of full-time work in Kenya.

In the second section Haigh writes about the effect of the logging industry and the growing bushmeat trade on the wildlife population. Quoting Raymond Bonner, Haigh notes that "people were once an island in a sea of wildlife. Now wildlife survive in parks that are islands in an ocean of people."

The third section is filled with fascinating accounts of wildlife treatment

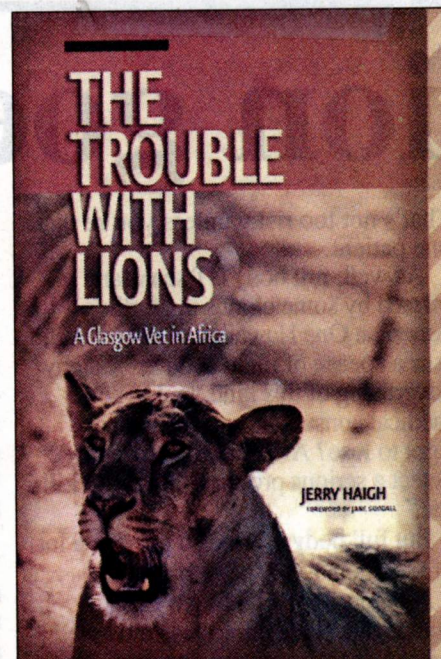


**Saskatoon veterinarian  
Jerry Haigh works on a  
tranquilized lion in Kenya**

administered while Haigh and his wife, Jo, were on sabbatical in Africa in 1997.

The last quarter of the book is dedicated to his Ugandan teaching trips from 2002-07, with the focus on the first trip and the students involved.

Haigh's writing style is informative and entertaining all in the same breath.



His stories weave animal history and legend together with his own experiences to create a vivid picture of the wildlife situation in Africa. He writes fondly of his many colleagues across the ocean, and the friendships he has formed while practising his vocation. Wildlife medical treatment is never a one-man show, and every story illustrates just how closely the entire team must work to safely treat animals of such great strength.

One of my favourite stories involves Haigh's experience of tracking an elephant to attach a radio collar. I never would have imagined that a herd of elephants could sneak through the bush so quietly as to be able to surprise an experienced tracking party.

While the title of the book may lead you to believe it is just about the king of the jungle, the cast of animal characters is quite varied. Haigh has tended to rhinos, elephants, wild dogs, hyenas, chimpanzees, cattle, and many other creatures, both large and small in the wilds of Africa. *The Trouble With Lions* gives you a closer look at the wild animals that once roamed free and plentiful across a continent, and you'll find no better guide than Dr. Jerry Haigh.