

Hunting by Scent

The scent trail of a quarry is entirely due to odoriferous particles left on the ground, or upon other objects which the animal has actually touched. When a dog which is downwind scents an animal, it is actually smelling the scent of odoriferous particles the animal has on its body or which it has left on an object it has touched. These odoriferous particles impart their scent to the air stream – wind, breeze and air currents – which blow against it, and after contact with them, the air then contains the scent of these particles which it carries to the dog's nose.

Hubert Maitland Budgett - *Hunting By Scent*

Scent is the essential ingredient for hunting with scent trailing hounds and gundogs for without it there can be no hunt. Success is therefore dependent on having some understanding of the nature of scent for it may be good or bad depending upon the conditions of a particular micro-habitat and the weather conditions of the day. In this chapter the word dog refers to both hound and gundog.

Perhaps the first and best research on scent, ever done in the world, was undertaken by H.M. Budgett, a former master of the Bicester and Warden Hill Foxhounds in England. His findings were published in 1933 in a fascinating book called *Hunting by Scent*. Using scientific methods, Budgett conducted exhaustive experiments in relation to scenting conditions. Although his research was conducted from the perspective of how hounds scent trail humans, plus a wide range of game animals including red deer, most of his findings are just as relevant to the modern sambar hunter, whether he stalks with or without a gun dog, or hunts with scent trailing hounds.



Below: After a long chase this young sambar stag decided to try and elude the beagle 'Fudge' - closest to the deer, the bloodhound 'Moose' beside 'Fudge', and 'Copper' behind them - by taking to the Buffalo River in Victoria's north east. To get to their present position the hounds swam from downstream, past the large rocks on the left side of the river, then circled around behind the deer. Then in typical fashion they bayed continually until the deer was harvested. Photo Shane Harris of Myrtleford, Victoria.