broadheads, most heads with tapered ferrules had been mounted on the "screw-in" type broadhead adaptors. Most replaceable blade heads have this screw in type mounting system integral with the broadhead. This appears to be a weak link in the arrow / broadhead system as a large number of the adaptors bent on both soft and hard tissue hits. It appears that it would be advantageous to use a fixed broadhead taper mounting system, especially for medium and large animals.

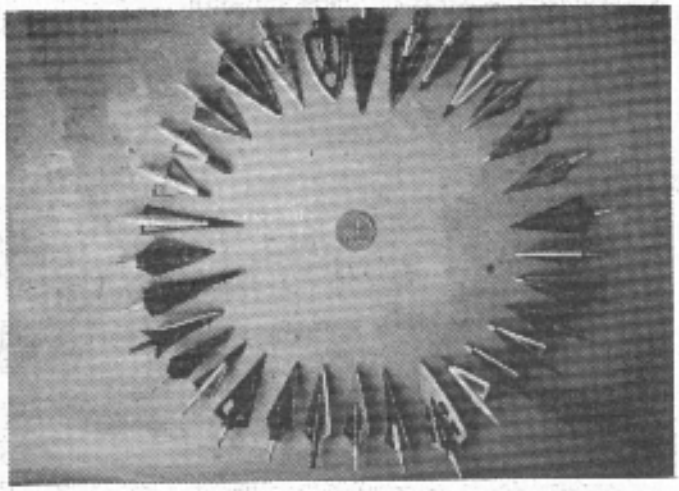
Several shots were tried with the free rotating type broadhead adaptors. Claimed benefits are truer flight (less tendency to wind plane) and deeper penetration (head can rotate freely away from a bone when one is hit). Sufficient shots were not recorded to verify or refute such claims. These adaptors appear to be at least as strong and bend resistant as conventional screw-in type adaptors (which, as noted, left something to be desired). No significant increase in penetration was apparent.

It has long been claimed that multiblade broadheads leave a better blood trail than single blade heads. There appears to be no way to quantify this factor. From field observation, it appears that the degree of blood trail is most dependent on (1) where the animal is hit and (2) was there an exit wound. In the testing, there were 77 shots with single blade broadheads and 77 shots with multiblade heads. Twenty-two point one percent of the single blade heads had total penetration while only 10.4% of the multiblade heads achieved total penetration. With the single blade more than twice as likely to leave an exit wound, and also more likely to immobilize the animal if the spine is hit, the claim of increased trailing ease with the use of multiblade broadheads appears to be ill founded. Subjectively, I can tell no difference in the degree of blood trail between single and multiblade heads given roughly equal hit locations and the absence of an exit wound. With an exit wound, the blood trail is greatly increased, especially when the shot is taken at a downward angle, such as from a tree stand.

Based on the test results, no responsible bowhunter using a multiblade head should take a shot at even a deer size animal that is facing him or is angling toward him. The chance of a hit into the non-lethal neck-shoulder area is too great. Conversely, with a heavy draw weight bow, a strong single blade broadhead, and good arrow mass this becomes an effective shot even on relatively large animals.

To this point, I have refrained from recommendations of specific broadheads, so now it is time to stick my neck out and give everyone a chop at it. How did the specific broadheads compare? Four broadheads tied for the title of "worst performance". Each head was totally destroyed on each shot — several of which did not hit any bone! They were the Kolpin 6, Razorbak 5, Bear stainless steel Super Razorhead (conversely, the old standard Razorhead performed quite well), and the Viper (which was a failure in all categories). Almost every Magnum II 4-blade broadhead shattered on impact, even on soft tissue. It is suspected that this was the result of faulty tempering (too brittle), as no such problem was encountered with the Magnum I, which is identical except for the shape of the trailing edge. The Premium I broadhead also failed in every instance where a bone was encountered, but performed well in soft tissues.

Dr. Ed Ashby with a South African bushbuck. Probably the first one taken by an American archer in South Africa.



The thirty-two types of broadheads tested.

Most of the replaceable blade type broadheads proved too fragile and gave inadequate penetration, particularly in bone. The best performer of this group in our testing was the Muzzy.

The multiblade broadheads offering the best performance were the Catclaw and the Interceptor. If one feels compelled to use a multiblade broadhead, it would be difficult to find one that outperforms the Interceptor. It may also be used as a single blade head without the bleeder blade insert. In our testing,