

"THE Elusive Felines" How to call them!

Just like calling Jackal, to be successful we must know what sounds to play at the times of the year to match his cycle like this - see here (http://www.africanpredator.com/cycle_of_jackal.htm) for instance using a jackal challenge during mating season in May – July, but not to much so the previous years year old jackal will not get to scared to approach, tactics like this will help on a hunt, like for cats - to play his favorite sounds, setting up near cover and also using correct moon times will yield success.



The aim of this article is to provide some useful tips for targeting those elusive felines, namely the problematic Rooikat and Groukat.

South Africa is the home to various stock killers, but to the general sheep farmer the Rooikat/ Lynx is a predator shown no mercy, it is a savage killer who often just kills for fun, and now and again also eats on its victim.

I met a farmer who lost 53 lambs in one night to a lynx, we are talking huge loses.

In the early 1900's it was said that jackals kill over 300,000 sheep a year, if the truth be told then a cat as the lynx will kill more than that, why?- well they don't kill only to eat as a jackal, but as for sports as well, and sheep stand around looking so the cat can easily kill 7-8 lambs in an area in one night, if cats are teaching kittens to hunt farmers will lose more.

This is a look into the hunting of these two elusive felines and ways and tips on how to be a successful hunter. To understand a cat is the key needed to be able to achieve better results. I for one enjoy calling cats more than dogs (jackal). I find them a real challenge, and not as easily brought into the call as a dog. Dogs are more predictable than cats. I once met a hunter who hunted for over 10 years and never called in a cat, it can be many factors that made that possible, here is advice and tips that can possibly bring better results and help you.

When hunting a predator a successful outcome depends on many things, location, weather, moon, sounds, personal camouflage and more importantly insight into that specific animal's world. To learn about your quarry will turn the cards in your favour.



Well, a good starting point is to look at the animal himself, the cat is a complex individual and a master of being extremely unpredictable, they cannot be figured out and this is what sets them apart from jackals. The cat's breeding cycle is not the same every year, sometimes in Feb and then in Sept, I know as I have trapped in cages many cats at the same farm, and have got kittens in all different months, so that's a fact on breeding. The huge problem farmers have is that when kittens are getting older the mother teaches them to hunt, and then you really lose far more lambs etc. The cat has FANTASTIC eye sight and hearing, but they don't have good peripheral vision. The greatest thing on cats is they like cover are opportunistic and will challenge anything they think they can handle.

HUNTING & TIPS

On courses I always stress a few points, as many hunters make big mistakes and they are not aware they are actually doing it. It is a fact that if you are a caller, you will hardly ever call in a cat on a moon filled evening, cats see to well, so for best results utilize a dark night. The best weather for a good cat hunt is a pitch dark night, a tiny wind, overcast with rain threatening, or call after rain on a dark overcast sky. I called my biggest cat in after 10 days of rain; she was 60, 2 pounds. Locations are near a recently killed lamb or a lamb partially covered by grass by the cat, this is a telltale sign that the cat will return or look for tracks. Cats walk around at night, cover distances and cross



open plains, but they are lovers of cover, so try a calling stand near trees and brush cover, near a dam or river bed, koppies that house dassie and OFFER other cover. Seek fresh tracks at water holes, cats love drinking water. Location is vital for cats, never stand on a dust or sand road or cattle path, have you ever seen how a house cat is extremely aware of new additions in your home? Well, a wildcat is the same, he knows the farm, suddenly he sees a big dark object on the road, he will avoid you like the plague, so park off the road not on it. I gave a course at Sutherland and hunted near a broken bridge, found a cattle path with fresh cat tracks and made a set, but parked away from that path about 10 yards and I called in the cat after 43 minutes, used a Lohman P-1 Circe call and a Feather & Fur squeaker to start the hunt. This was a pitch dark night, so dark I could not see my hand in front of my face, with overcast weather and a slight wind.

Never, never park in a sheep camp and position yourself about 100-200 metres from a jackal proof fence line, if you are doing this stop as you are basically your own worst enemy, when you are calling and a cat or jackal approaches they cannot get to you because of the fence line, yes it's a simple thing, BUT you will be surprised how many guys make this mistake. Stand on the fence line so you can call two camps. Better still; stand on a corner to get better vision.

When calling from a truck, don't worry about wind, these two cats in question cannot smell you, a Rooikat/ Lynx and Groukat are pretty stupid animals, that's why they are easily trapped in cages. They are no rocket scientists so wind is of no importance. BUT they can spot and hear you easily, so don't move around much, keep dead quiet and don't talk at all. Remember cats are not jackals that bark, cats are elusive, they can come up to your truck and be gone and you won't even know they were around. Again cats take long to get to your position, many cats are called in but, many callers blow their chances as they give up too soon. Always stay at a cat hunt and call for at least 50 minutes to an hour, cats travel much further to get to a call as they can hear so much better than a jackal. They also come in very slow so this also makes them take a lot longer. Remember that cat's eyes are sensitive, don't put the cat in the centre of the light beam, the cat will blink fast and could scare the cat away.

This is a tip that is VERY IMPORTANT. Many hunters at night place the speaker away from the trucks location about 40-50 m away, I don't know how to stress this point- except to say DON'T DO THIS! This is a very bad mistake, especially for cats, cat's come in low and slow, they look at the sound source, if your speaker is away from you then you will NEVER spot the cats eyes as the cat will be looking in the wrong direction, and you will never know you ever called in a cat. All these aspects are valid and important pointers that will reward the hunter with success.

This is yet another point that should be taken seriously as it is an important factor when calling cats, an also very likely to be one reason why many hunters call and NEVER call in cats. It's all got to do with what you wear. I am often asked why I wear camouflage at night, well it's simple. It's not because I want to be Rambo, but because it works, firstly the broken up colours help remove a dark object and make it all broken up and blurred at night, the blob being me. Then and now for a very interesting aspect- imported camo, good camo is all UV- NEUTRAL. It's made at the factory and dipped in colours with UV NEUTRAL based tints. So, when viewed at night you don't stand out, BUT if we wash these camo's in standard soaps bought on shelves we will enhance the colours as these soaps are NOT UV NEUTRAL, this will cause you to stand out like a neon blob at night, the cats will spot you VERY EASILY. So, after you buy camo NEVER wash it with soap that is not UV NEUTRAL. **SEE THIS ON OUR NEW 4 PART DVD SET! IT SHOWS THE A-Z ON HOW TO CALL WITH LIVE HUNTS!!!!**

If you wash your clothing do it inside out to save the colours, and NEVER iron the fabric as it will shine in torch and sun light. Take care to abide with these tips as believe me they work. If you have a jersey with brown, grey and green colours that's fine, but UV Neutral, also never wear black at night or camo your truck in black, nothing is black in the Karoo or wheat fields, so a predator will spot you very quickly. Don't use shiny shade cloth, it squeaks in the wind and is shiny in the red light. Wear a peak cap to break up your body outline and a mask over your face, it will hide the glare if the red light comes into contact with you or your shooters face.

SOUNDS

The felines are attracted to more squeaky sounds rather than rough sounds, although the typical rabbit sound will get results, but not better than a squeaky sound. A basic goat or fawn sound will also yield results. Cats enjoy busy sounds, they get bored easily so, keep them interested with busy sounds. I make up a squeaker call here in Cape Town, it's a killer cat call, many cats have not seen the next morning because of it. I am aware of a Cd that has lynx cat sounds on it, but I have strong reservations as to how successful it will be, as cats don't respond to lets call it second hand sounds unlike the jackal. I have used with success a woodpecker sound and they seem to get excited upon hearing the noise. I use a Foxpro and Cass Creek with built in sounds, then the next time I mix it up with my tape or Cd with different sounds. Never keep playing the same sounds on every hunt, you will wise up predators. When you start the hunt, always begin a cat hunt with a squeaky sound low pitched for about 2-3 minutes, in case a cat is close and a squeaky sounding caller will lure in a cat easily. After 3-4 minutes put more volume into your sounds and raise the pitch with busy sounds.



Remember if calling with a hand call, don't wear a glove on the hand you are calling with, it makes the sounds duller and they don't travel at night so well, hold the call with your bare hand, its vital your sounds are sharp and clear. And a final point is to remember at night your call sounds travel further than they would in the day as at night we have no heat pollution, so you don't have to blow as hard as you would in the day.



I have a sound loaded on my Foxpro, its called Luscious Lips, you can load it from FoxPro's website, it is a great call, I have called in many cats with it, also I watched one particular cat approach it from over 700 metres away, we shot him 30 metres from the Foxpro. It is amazing watching a cat come to a call.

See the photo on the left; here it is at number 09. This is my standard Foxpro FX3 sounds, as you can see I have many for the jackal cycle and a few KILLERS for cats, especially LUSCIOUS LIPS and the Riverine Rabbit. These are killer sounds.

I would personally claim that if I hunt say 10 times with that Luscious Lips sound, I will kill either Jackal or cats with it 8 out of 10 times, and that's excellent results. The Lucky bird is a good sound also, but cannot compare with that Luscious Lips.

If you want to learn how to load sounds to your Foxpro if you own one, give me a call anytime.

I use two FoxPro's most times at night especially for jackal, it confuses the jackal and my kill rate is higher!

For calling in South Africa I would say a Foxpro model FX3 is the best. Contact me if you would like to purchase one, we are the official promoters in South Africa and I can assist you.

OWL

I use an owl as a decoy when cat calling also, it helps bring the cat out of cover and works, until you try different styles you will never know, but to use an owl works! He comes closer thinking it is but an easy meal!



IDENTIFICATION

Typical identification of cats is fairly simple, they approach slowly, and are very low to the ground, often seeking out cover to lie low behind, and they also often come in about 5m, stop and look at you for long periods of time (typical cat). Then they move another 5m and carry out the same move again and again. Cats will also offer you the shooter many opportunities to shoot, they don't trot fast like a jackal, cats stand still for long periods of time. Another identification feature is that cats blink slowly, not like us; they open and close eyes very slowly. Never just take a chance and shoot at the eyes you THINK is a cat, I read a story about a hunter who came and called in SA, he claims to have been teaching our farmers here how to hunt. He says that he called for a while, saw eyes at 275 metres, and when looking through his 12 power scope he could see the lynx's face clearly in pitch darkness when it looked his way and he could see the black lines on the cats face. This is all impossible and this guy is a legend in his own mind, as when a cat looks at you or any animal at night, our vision is distorted as the red light makes the eyes, face and our complete vision blurred, the whole vision appears as a huge red blur because of the shining eyes, his story is full of holes, especially 275m away!.

So, unless you can see the animal clearly don't just shoot, (o'yes after that amazing claim he says he shot the animal at 275 yards at night, and it was a buck!), so much for him being able to see the animal, so much for coming to Africa to teach us. [Simply some arrogant fool](#) that writes articles to impress other countries and the readers.

LIGHTS

The subject regarding lights is of huge importance, cats are very light sensitive, they must be treated with caution, you call- the cat approaches, take your light and raise the red light into the air, just catch his eyes with the halo of the light, when he comes closer then drop the light for better identification or to shoot. NEVER put him permanently in the centre of the beam, this is one star that does not like the bright lights! Candle power is also an important aspect; I have used a 1,500-000 million candle power for over 10 years. I have never spooked a cat or made him hesitant to come closer. I don't believe in a dimmer switch, that's just another thing to master in the darkness, just raise that light. Many hunters use LIGHTFORCE lights. I would however like to have my 2 cents worth here on the subject of them, in South Africa we call at night, about 1 % of hunts are done in the day, if less. We work with lighting all the time, and (and now I will receive comment) I personally think the red filter that the Light force houses is an extremely bad design. My reason is quite simple. [READ BELOW.](#)



PHOTO AT RIGHT

I use a shooting chair we make, and my light fits it perfectly, the light I also make up, if you need swivel chairs or lights contact me directly, I can assist you with these.

Why I don't like the lens of the Light force : That lens comes to the front of the torch, and then it curves around the front of the light and goes underneath the light. This is a huge problem for me, one that many South African night hunter has. I strongly advise you to change the design for better results.

If you hunt here in South Africa for jackal (known as one of the most intelligent animals on this planet) and you put on that light at night, the light then lights up the whole truck, you and everything else, that jackal will laugh at you. BAD very BAD. Its important you fit a funnel to that lens, once you do your results will be far better, no animal will see you that easily. And a cat, with his keen eyes will spot you so easily, try it - fit a filter over that lens and you will call more cats. I make up lighting for night hunts here in SA, and they are designed for night hunts. Make no mistake the Light force light and its settings are nice but that lens- no sir, customize it!

A trick I learnt from a keen night hunter in the USA is he uses a laser pointer, if the cat is stuck out far and wont come closer he puts on a red laser pointer and the cat forgets about sounds and everything else and follows that little red dot on the ground. Try it, I used this twice so far and it does work.

Calls for Cats

"The more squeaky the better mostly!"

If you are calling with Cd's a Steenbuck in distress is great, or with an electronic caller go with a Woodpecker sound or rodent squeak, standard cottontail is also good. For those of us in the areas that are the home to the Riverine rabbit, use a cottontail sound, its like cats know that those tiny rabbits taste great! Hand calls a squeaker is good and an open reeded call that can be manipulated into squeaky distress sounds is excellent. I have called cats with a puppy squeaky distress also! (They are curious you know ;-).

Want to make a really cool cat sound on a call????? Do what we did as children when we played cops and robbers, or cowboys and Indians. Make that RRRRRRRRRR sound that we did when spraying bullets everywhere. Take that call, put your lips around the end and blow a RRRRRR RRRRRR RRRRRR into the call using your tongue pushed against your pallet, this will scatter the RRR RRR RRR and it will make like a sort of woodpecker sound. It's a good cat sound to make. Begin low pitch and after a few minutes raise it slightly. I have called in jackal also with this style of calling, its different and very mouth watering to a predator, **the more we make our sounds mouth watering the better results we will have.**

CONCLUSION & RESULTS

To the learner or complete novice I would say in order to be a successful cat hunter, know the habits, location is extremely important, know the sounds and learn to be patient, I hunted with a partner, after an half hours calling he would stand up walk around every time I lighted up, that's very bad and ruins ones chance. Learn to sit still, and abide by all the pointers I have mentioned.

I know what it takes to call a cat, I have called plenty, and the things that must be mastered are all in this article. By abiding by these simple things mentioned will increase your results.

As an alternative to controlling stock, farmers have found that by putting a male donkey or two in sheep camps keeps down predation quite a lot, the male donkey sees himself as a father figure and it does combat stock loss.

Generally a hunter who knows cats and how to call will get one cat out of very 20 hunts at the same farm. Remember you can't call something that's not around, so look for tracks etc. Results can never be definite, as we discussed many things are involved in order to call in a cat. A novice will be doing well with one cat out of every 40 hunts. But take care, many cats are called in but not spotted, learn how to use that red light and scan twice in a circular motion before putting out the light, just in case you missed his eyes first time around.

Remember a cat is always on his own mission, they don't plan for tomorrow, take their time, and are never in a rush, so MATCH him, and call for a long time. Most of the cats I called have been after 50-55 minutes, I have called in about 3 cats that came in less than 30 minutes. I would rate a cat's response time at around 45-50 minutes generally. Sometimes you get lucky, I called a cat in a light drizzle at Sutherland in 6 minutes, strange but a few callers have called cats in the rain. I guess when you are hungry you hunt!

To end here is the biggest tip of all! Call or trap near a rubbish dump on your farm, cats know rats and mice are found at dumps and they frequent these places! This is an excellent spot to call! Never forget this tip, it's a result getter.



Happy calling and have patience for the pussies! **See below for that Jackal Cycle**

Jackal Cycle – Match the calling cycle.

I decided to just put a Jackal Cycle below as a guideline to help Jackal hunters to use the correct sounds, but remember not to use too much challenge in breeding season it will scare away year old dogs.

“CYCLE OF JACKALS”

Please be advised some regions of South Africa have a slight different cycle to this, this is taken from the Western Cape & Northern Cape. Even some areas in the Northern Cape are slightly different so make sure these match your areas.

MONTH	PERIOD	SOUNDS
January	Social time	Jackal chatting sounds or food sounds
February	Social time	Jackal chatting sounds or food sound
March	Social time	Jackal chatting sounds or food sounds
April	Social time	NOW THIS DESERVES MORE INTENSE COMMENT

In April very early up to about the 12th it's still a social time, but after this towards the end of April it has a cycle change to a more aggressive period for more dominant dogs (Jackal). So, a challenge call in late April will be good. And MAY!!!! Now we are really hotting up!!! In MAY is an extremely aggressive period for a dog, so using a challenge in his area will make him crazy and he will look for you. In May you will normally shoot more males.

APRIL / MAY TYPICALLY A PAIRING UP TIME.

May	Breeding time	Challenge sounds, barking with howler
June	Breeding time	Challenge sounds, barking with howler
July	Breeding time	Challenge sounds, barking with howler
August	Breeding & Bedding time	Challenge sound, food sounds & howler

September	Puppies born in dens	Food sounds are good
October	Puppies born in dens	Food sounds. PUPPIES UNDERGROUND
November	Puppies out of dens with adults	Food sounds or puppy sounds
December	Puppies out of dens with adults	Food sounds or puppy sounds

This is an example of a cycle; your areas may differ slightly. For example in May in Sutherland Jackals are pairing up and mating, but in Bethlehem the little ones are already walking around! This gives a very good example of a cycle change.

This is a unit we now market, it's a brand new system, easily reaches out to vast ranges at night, and nice and compact. With this you don't need large batteries, as you see it here it is complete.



This was taken on a recent hunt in Namibia with an American client, with my partners I managed to call 26 jackals and this cat in 9 hours, this cat I called with a hand call, but many of the jackals fell to that Luscious Lips sound. **This hunt features on our latest 4 part DVD we have introduced into Feather & Furs range of products.**

Part of 26 Jackal called in 9 hours, in the heart of Namibia during breeding season. The calling was a total blast! Used hand calls and electronic callers.



Dont use to many Challenge calls in breeding season, you will then scare the previous years one year old jackals away, use the lonely jackal sound, it works better!

This footage is featured on our new 4 DVD set on jackal and lynx calling. It is 4 DVD's in a set - live hunts and shows how to call all these predators.

www.africanpredator.com



Namibia 2007

See our new 4
part DVD
available directly
from Gary
at 0824853885