

# How to use equipment and position effectively

Successfully hunting jackal requires the right strategy, and the right equipment. Here are a few tips on how to make your hunt count.



## BY GARY LAUBSCHER

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In order to perform properly on a calling stand at night, you need a shooting chair that allows you to turn quietly and shoot from a still and stable platform.

Having a smaller chair that you can put in the veld is also good for drop-and-go hunting, and for when jackal bark but don't come in. In the case of drop-and-go hunting, a driver drops you off and drives to his/her position and issues the call. Your job is to merely sit and observe, without calling, using a red light to light up the area. This method effectively sets up an ambush: hearing your driver's call, the jackal thinks he/she is far away. The predator is unaware of you, and will run through the ambush area.

## POSITION SELECTION

Selecting a proper position is crucial for a good hunt. If hunting cats, the areas you select must be close to cover. Jackal, on the other hand, will move over vast open areas with little cover; however, it is a general rule that the more visibility you have with no 'dead ground', the better. Making a stand near a water spot is a good idea after a hot day, but if you want to shoot 'educated' jackal, don't just sit and wait at places where they have killed game. Don't park as far as 300m from jackal-proof fences as the animals won't be able to get near you. Use the corners of camp fences to call, and when you do, don't stand against the fence because it will create a virtual wall and will be difficult to see through. Rather stand 35m back from the fence intersection, as you can then cover a circumference around you and see through the fence lines. Try to position your bakkie so that the rear faces the position the jackal is likely to come from. The animal will then only see a small object if it looks in your direction at night. The rear of the bakkie also has fewer shiny reflectors, windows and mirrors. Do not park in the middle of the sand road; rather pull off the road.

When you are standing at the spot that you have marked out, hang a jackal you have freshly killed. Open the animal's anal glands and squeeze them to release the smell. This helps hide the human scent downwind. I have seen a jackal that crossed downwind turn and run directly to my bakkie before we could even call.

## BEST TIMES TO CALL

Between January and April is the best time to hunt jackal. June to August are quieter months, while September is soon after the breeding season, which makes it a difficult time for hunting.

A lot is happening for jackal around March/April. Year-old jackals are looking to pair up, so vocal calls will be answered. My record in the Free State in March over two nights with my two partners is 27 jackal, as well as two caracal.

If you know that young jackal are in your area, don't play many aggressive vocal sounds at night as these could chase away younger ones. Rather make use of social sounds.

For older jackal, a territorial sound is best, as well as single male and female sounds. Keep a record of your calling history on your farm to effectively plan your future strategy.

## CAREFULLY SCAN THE TERRAIN AND GET A FIX ON THE PREDATOR'S LOCATION

When you shoot a predator, mark its location, because the world looks different at night. When you walk into the bush, it's not always easy to find what you are looking for. When you use night vision, the target looks much further away than it really is, and red lights can also confuse the range.

## BE AWARE

Cats give you a lot of time when you are calling, so carefully scan the terrain and get a fix on the cat's location. Never shoot and carry on scanning without first making sure that you have a mental fix of the location where you saw the cat, as you may end up searching without finding the cat once the shoot is over.

Always listen carefully at your calling stand. Often you hear birds taking off, making agitated sounds, and so on. This may be an indication that an animal is approaching. Being aware of sounds at night while sitting on your chair could benefit you enormously. ■ FW