

# Ethical jackal and caracal control

Plan your set-up well beforehand, learn the sounds that work for calling, and when in doubt about your predator, don't shoot.



## BY GARY LAUBSCHER

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I maintain a detailed chart of the farms on which I operate; it contains the dates, areas, times and sounds used. This provides me with a full history of the area, guiding me on what I can expect on subsequent visits. Experience plays a major role in predator control. Here are some of the benefits of that experience.

### IDENTIFICATION

When in doubt, *don't shoot*. You can call in more animals than you can shoot, as curiosity will bring them in. Caracals tend to approach more slowly and are closer to the ground than jackal. Also, they often vanish from sight and resurface 30m away. Sometimes they turn around and look the other way, or blink slowly; if they blink fast, it means that your light is too bright, so dim it.

Cats typically run in a straight line and wiggle as they move, causing their eyes to flicker in the light. Jackals trot show-horse style, run in at angles, and don't stop for long. Bat-eared foxes, which are not a threat to livestock, appear in a pack of three to four, and are seldom alone.

Eyes that look catlike under the bushes usually belong to buck.

### SOUNDS

Avoid mass-produced CDs copied by hunters and circulated; most jackals have heard these sounds and using them will reduce your chances of success when calling. Avoid sounds that other people use in your area and are distorted or of poor quality. Don't be taken in by someone telling you, "Play this. It works every time!" Trust me, no such sound exists; if it did, jackal would be extinct by now. A hand-caller often works better, because no two people blowing a caller will sound the same.

### HUNTING SET-UP

I can recommend the following; it has worked well for me over the years. In an active spot with tracks, dead carrion and other signs of predators, identify the standing spots in the direction of the wind. At the final spot, turn and face into the wind, and that spot now becomes the first spot you will stand at. Moving back to your other spots *into*

the wind is key, otherwise jackal may smell you before you start calling!

Remember, it is crucial to arrive at your first spot early and set up; the first spot is the most important one. Get to this area at least an hour before dark. Cover the truck well, prepare the equipment, load your rifle, open the bolt, test your lights, and wait for nightfall. Before you start calling, scan with normal binoculars for passing predators, especially after sundown, as predators are already active. Place the two callers, and start to call when it is pitch dark. I use food sounds for five seconds, wait a minute, then start again. After 10 minutes I make use of a jackal vocal sound – barking three or four times – to add realism to the mix. Don't use the barking sound again for at least 20 minutes; 'overcalling' the barks is unnatural.

Ideally, you want the jackal to approach and be positioned in such a way that it is situated between the food sound and you; this way it cannot get wind of you. Many jackals don't get the wind correct with two calls; using two callers creates more confusion.

The larger the distance between you and the food-caller, the greater the chance that the jackal won't get wind of you and it will run in between you and the caller.

After an hour, move on to another spot.

Finally, place open bottles of jackal-gland lure behind the truck, downwind. Where possible, hang a freshly killed jackal on your bakkie; it helps when calling.

The more effort you put into a set-up, the more successful you are likely to be.

### USEFUL TIPS

- Use red filters over your bakkie's lights; this will allow you to get closer to wild animals.
- Cover the vehicle with camouflage cloth. Never use black; this looks unnatural.
- Cats are best called on a moonless night, and jackals at a crescent moon. The week before and after new moon is therefore best.
- I sometimes use a hand-call on the bakkie and an electronic barker in the field. Variation is key – and plenty of patience. So don't give up too fast! ■ FW

