

Hiding your presence on a jackal hunt

There are several highly effective techniques to prevent yourself from being detected by jackals. Make the effort to apply these; they'll pay off!



BY GARY LAUBSCHER

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Not all jackals use the wind correctly; many approach from other directions. Thus, using two callers at night can confuse a jackal. Most times it will get the wind wrong, thereby benefitting you. Play a food source on one caller and jackal barks on the other.

This said, many jackals have an excellent sense of smell. So the more attention you give to your hunting area, the more successful you're likely to be.

Place three or four open glass bottles of gland lure downwind about 20m apart and 30m in front of you to create a 'curtain' of jackal smell that will help hide your presence. I do this until the first jackal is shot, then use this one's glands instead.

Obtaining gland lure from the carcass is easy. First ensure that you are wearing surgical gloves; these animals can be covered in bacteria, ticks, fleas and other parasites. Then feel for the two glands slightly down from the 5 and 7 o'clock positions on the rear vent. You can push them so that they exude liquid through the vent, or puncture them with a spike or knife.

If you have shot a female jackal, the scent will be particularly effective at disguising your presence.

When not hunting, avoid leaving the bottles open in warm weather as flies will lay eggs in the liquid. At the same time, don't close the bottle too tightly; the build-up of gas could cause it to explode. Cover the top with fine mesh and leave the lid slightly loosened on the bottle.

The collection of lure you build up over the months will enable you to shoot far more jackals than before.

ALTERNATIVE LURES: SMELLY, BUT EFFECTIVE

You can also mix the gland lure with the mess a jackal makes when shot. Many defecate, so collect the faeces or remove it yourself. This is messy, of course, but will increase your success rate. When you've taken what you want from the jackal, bury the carcass.

Another trick is to collect red bait at the coast after a winter storm. This smells exactly like gland lure; use it at night or rub it on your hunting bakkie's tyres.

I also use Seagro fertiliser – not the water-based type, but the smelly, thick, brow, liquid version. It's a great cage trap lure, especially for caracal.

Here are two other valuable tips: hunt with no more than one other person; and do your best to reduce the smell emanating from your fuel tank. Clean the area around the inlet well, and make sure the cap seals properly.

TRAIL CAMERAS

The same pointers apply when setting up a trail camera to monitor movement. Cameras afford you insight into a jackal's or cat's movements, and you can plan your hunt accordingly, giving you target-specific predator removal in and near camps where predation has taken place.

CAMERAS AFFORD YOU INSIGHT INTO A PREDATOR'S MOVEMENTS

I always position my cameras at knee-height, with the laser aiming point hitting the ground 15m away. In this way any passing predator will trigger the cameras. (Make sure the sun goes down behind the camera!)

Moreover, if the camera is directed solely at the path, you only get a split second for it to fire and by then the animal has already passed the lens.

Scatter a food lure (such as old chicken) 4m from the camera and place the gland lure in various places around the rocks. Place some food between two rocks so that the animal will stick around longer trying to get at it, thereby giving you more photographs.

PERSONAL HYGIENE AND SAFETY

Use a snare loop on a rope to drag shot jackals to your bakkie; try to pick them up with a pair of pliers or tongs when you handle them. The less you touch these animals, the safer you'll be from the bacteria and parasites they harbour.

Finally, wash your hands well after handling jackals, gland lure bottles and the like. ■ FW