



## Game Calls That Work

Good spring rains and promising field reports lead me to speculate: This may be the best deer season we have had in a very long time. So what are you waiting for? Get serious this season and bag that wall hanger of a lifetime!

I am often asked: Beyond shooting true and scouting hard, what factors contribute to a successful trophy deer hunt? A banker friend once told me: "I am not a better hunter than the rest; I can just afford to hunt where there are lots of trophy animals." Certainly, selecting a locale where there are good animals—like the Hill Country—often makes a great hunter out of a mediocre one.

Make sure your equipment—and its operator—is fine-tuned. When it comes to shooting—a rifle or a bow—practice, practice, practice... Beyond that, luck often plays a role in success. So too, product. I rarely endorse hunting gear, unless it's phenomenal. And I never endorse anything that doesn't work as advertised. So when I discover a tool of the huntin' trade that is really effective, as in gangbusters, I feel it's my duty to share it with other hunters.

So I will.

Certainly, some gadgets catch more hunters than wild game, but that cannot be said of a game call I have used with uncanny success—the Hands-free Grunt Call by Knight & Hale.

We all learn by trial and error—such is true of game calls. I've used them, and I've pitched 'em when they haven't performed. Bow hunting bucks in south-central Kansas several years ago, perched between spindly hackberry trees, I tried Knight & Hale's hands-free call. I like this call because it comes with a lanyard that I can easily hang around my neck. When I 'lip' this lightweight device and gently inhale, it makes sounds that literally drive rutting bucks wild.

As I write this column, I am sitting down, looking outside the window with my

grunt call hanging from my lip like one of Bogart's smokes in an old Hollywood flick. And as I type, I can see I am driving Bubba, my recently turned 7-year-old Blue Heeler lying at my feet, nuts.

Note to Self: Bucks love this game call; Australian Cattle Dogs do not!

The first buck I lured in was over 150 yards away, walking diagonally away from me in a harvested milo field near Winfield. When the buck heard the call, he stopped dead in his tracks, turned and ran toward me, slamming on the brakes 20 yards shy of the tree I was seated in.



Editor's Note: Bucks don't climb trees. When you call in an animal to shooting range, STOP CALLING. Keep it up and your buck will spook. That deer wasn't the one I wanted, but the next day I called in a nice 10-point to 45 yards and harvested it with my BowTech bow. I double-lunged that buck and went home with his trophy rack, all that delicious venison—and another tried and true game call.

I have successfully used my Knight call on south Texas, west Texas and Hill Country may grande bucks as well as Kansas bruisers. I haven't used it farther afield, so I won't swear that this game call works on Iowa or Oklahoma bucks, but I wager to say it will. Unless Iowa and Oklahoma bucks speak a different language.

Most hunters are eager to share their success tips with others. So if you have a great story you'd like to share, give me a call (Ph. 432-296-8813) or drop me an email (stains1767@gmail.com; ).