

Tips For Calling Predators In The East

First off, the reason I wrote down some of these tips is many Eastern callers have emailed me about having problems calling coyotes with the FOXPRO. I use both the FOXPRO and hand calls, and the reason they are having trouble is NOT the FOXPRO.

People buy the e-caller, and expect it to automatically call dogs. No matter what. For many new Eastern hunters, this is their first experience calling period, as they purchased the FP, and started calling with no experience. They read the success stories people are having with the FP, and think its a guarantee. They have little or no predator hunting experience to draw from.

Believe it or not, it's not as easy as putting the FOXPRO out in a field and turning it on!

Hunters still must have a good grasp on calling and hunting technique to even stand a chance of shooting a coyote around here. If you call and shoot 15 coyotes a year here in New England, you're a very good caller indeed. New callers must expect to call a handful of coyotes only the first few years until they fine tune their skills.

Now that we've established what this is about, let's move right along to the tips and techniques...

1. Fields

Its no secret to New Englanders that the Eastern coyote does not like to show himself often in fields in the daytime, so alot of the videos we watch from out West really don't apply to us. Its the biggest reason so many Eastern hunters try coyote hunting and struggle needlessly. They simply try to hunt like a Western hunter, and in doing so limit themselves to a few call-ins a year.

Coyotes are found in fields often at night in the East, but rarely in these fields in daytime. During daylight hours, coyotes and bobcats will respond much more readily if you are in the woods surrounding the fields.

I will position the FOXPRO at the field edge, with the speaker pointed into the woods. I will then walk approx 75 yards into the woods downwind of the caller. Keep the caller in sight, and make sure to have some shooting lanes. Start the caller on medium with the sound of your choice, but only let it play for 45 seconds or so. Wait, listen. and look. Coyotes will travel just inside the woodline looking out. When he tries to downwind the sound you will have an easy shot.

Every 3 minutes or so repeat sequence, until you hit the 15 minute mark. You may feel free to call as many times as you would like, but in 25 years of calling I can count on one hand the responses I've gotten after 15 minutes.

2. In The Woods

I love to hunt in the woods, and use the FOXPRO to my advantage there. Remember Eastern coyotes live in the woods, and that is your best shot on harvesting one in daytime hours. The FOXPRO has opened up a whole new world of opportunity. I'll give an example of a couple ways I've killed coyotes in the woods - they may give you some ideas.

Get creative, and think it out.

I hunt a wooded area with a good size brook running through it. The brook is down in a small gorge, and I set up by walking down the nearside and placing the caller on the far bank. I return to the nearside bank, and take cover in a blowdown for cover and comfort. Again the caller is upwind, about 60 yards across the little valley. Just past the caller the woods get really thick, and often have predators holed up in there. I again point the caller toward me, and start a short loud rabbit sequence. With the extra sound of the brook, I'm not shy about cranking it up. The coyote I shot there trotted down the farside edge of the brook, and as he approached I hit the caller again for only a second or two. That kept him coming for an easy shot.

Another example - I was hunting an abandoned apple orchard, and had seen a lot of coyote signs on the cart road leading in. I knew this orchard had an old cart road at all 4 corners, so I placed the FOXPRO out in an old apple tree 50 yards upwind of me. I was positioned on the downwind side of the orchard sitting at the base of a tree. I hit the FOXPRO for about 45 seconds with a fawn in distress. The caller was barely turned off, and I see a large coyote bombing in. He is coming hard, I got rattled, shot and missed.

Can't win 'em all, but understanding the set-up is the important part. Use your remote capability in your area to your advantage. Think about all those places you were winded by coyotes, as it will give you a better chance of getting a shot off before they bust you.

3. Tree stands

Eastern hunters are no strangers to the deer treestand, and can be one of your best friends after deer season is over!!!!

This year leave all your stands out after deer season, and call some predators out of them. This will give you a great field of view, as well as help get your scent up off the ground. I simply place my FOXPRO at a good spot that will offer good shooting. Once again hit the caller fairly loud and short. How come all this loud and short calling stuff? A rabbit caught by a predator is very loud and anything but soft. Medium volume on the FOXPRO will do the trick. Our woods are also very thick, so louder sounds travel well, and get 'em coming.

If you use broken calling most times you see the coyote approach, and he is coming in the "Hunt Mode". He is looking for the sound, and will be an easy standing target. If you need to coax him, or move him for a shot between trees or brush, a simple one to two second burst of your chosen sound will work. Be patient and make a good shot!

4. Night Calling

Night calling in the East offers coyote and bobcat hunters a chance at the animals when they are roaming with much less caution than in the daytime. Even in the East where coyote densities are low, you will probably get a response from a 'yote or cat if you hunt wisely all night!!!

The FOXPRO will help you get easier, closer shots at night if used remotely. Generally, I have had more call-ins night hunting, but the limitations my state places on me with the regards to lights and calibers, have also limited my opportunities. I cannot use a light in my home state of Massachusetts, so my night hunting is only done on a bright moonlit night with snow cover, so I can get a good look at the approaching animal through my scope.

If you live in a no light state use EXTREME caution, as there are non-target animals that will respond such as house cats and house dogs. Take care, as you don't want to shoot a deer, or calf. Trust me, you do not want that kind of trouble. I have hunted out of state, with my favorite state to night call being Maine. Lights, rifles, all night long. Nice!! My neighbors in New York are allowed lights also, and I hunt NY whenever I get a chance. I prefer to hunt with the light, but if it comes to hunting or not I'll be out there either way. Lots of coyotes in both NY, and Maine!

Scout your night hunting areas in the daytime, and plan where you will set up in regards to cover and wind. Study the area, and remember both coyotes and bobcats will enter these open areas on deer runs and tractor roads almost every time. Try to make a mental note of where these probable entry routes are, and keep a good watch on them when you actually hunt. Plan an easy and quiet access route. If you take the time to plan well, your odds go up dramatically.

Methods I use as far as stand selection is exactly the same - light or no light. You will be able to coax those stubborn 'yotes out into the open fairly easily at night, but you must night, and find a place to sit with a backdrop such as an old fence line, stone wall or any other structure to break up your night time silhouette. Use that snow camo even at night once the snow flies. I like to hunt small cut corn or tobacco fields at night. Slip in and allow yourself a lot of room to shoot downwind, as the coyotes will eventually wrap around that way.

Bobcats seem to pay little mind to wind, or human smell in general. Cats have a good sense of smell, but I'm not sure they can make the mental leap between our scent, and danger. Not so with the coyote, one whiff, and he's out of there!!

Here is my technique with a light, as I want to see the animal's eyes shine, I need him to look my way. I place the FOXPRO out at about 60 yards, and prefer the call to be set crosswind. I will begin with a handcall, loud, and call until I get eyes close, then switch over to the FOXPRO. This gets him going to the e-caller, and gives me a little wiggle room with my light and gun movement. I call almost constantly at night, whereas in the daylight hours I tend to call a broken series. I just let the FOXPRO go at low volume once he's coming in, and keep the lower halo of my light on the animal. As he heads towards the FOXPRO sound I will shoot first chance I have when he gets in range.

With no light, I set up with the FOXPRO upwind about 50- 60 yards, and just turn it on with my call of choice. I use a decoy at night also, as I find this has increased my success. Since I am hunting with no light, I only hunt once the snow flies on moon lit nights to have any chance of scoring at all. I'm hoping to get the coyote to come close enough that I can get a solid identification, and an easy shot. A glowing crosshair scope, or illuminated scope reticle is a very big plus. Remember 'yotes and even cats catch movements at night so EASE into each move you make, and camo is a good idea.

Have fun, and be safe. I recommend a partner at night when possible as it makes things so much easier. If there is any doubt AT ALL to your target or backstop at night, DO NOT pull the trigger. Play it safe, and come back on another day.

Other quick tips

- Scout for coyote signs a lot. It's as important to success as say, deer scouting. Plan your set-ups and entrance routes well in advance. You will tailor and fine tune your areas through your experiences.

- I like the speaker facing me - that way I have a good idea of how loud it really is.
- Get a coaxer sound like the vole on your FOXPRO, and use it to get the animal to commit when he is close. It sounds and works like a lipsqueek. Although my caller is not equipped with it, the Randy Anderson "Kiss of Death" sounds great.
- Try to enter the area you plan to hunt with the wind in your face, as not to blow your scent to the areas you are about to hunt.
- This one goes against conventional wisdom!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Don't be afraid to get aggressive with the volume when hunting coyotes. Coyotes are responding to an animal sound they hear all the time. A dying rabbit or an injured fawn is quite loud. I have heard an actual rabbit caught by a predator many times while bowhunting over the years. I imitate that sound and volume level when calling.
- Try different sounds from day to day. One day a rabbit, next day a fawn, then kitten in distress etc. Don't get in a rut. You have a bunch of sounds - use them.
- Bobcats like rabbit calls in the East, and will respond quicker and more aggressively than their Western cousins. Speaking of bobcats, they love to see a decoy, and I have had good luck with them stalking my Predator supreme. Woodpecker and flicker sounds have also called cats on my FOXPRO.
- You don't have to give up your time proven hand calls. Use them with the FOXPRO, or by themselves as the situation dictates. I have a howler, and start many of my coyote stands with 2 or 3 lone howls. The FOXPRO is an added tool, and you are not required to turn in all your cool handcalls once you purchase one!!
- Don't become discouraged!! The coyote population in the East is small compared to many Western states, and it's not unusual to go 10 stands between call-ins once you know what you are doing. When you are just learning if you call 3 or 4 your first year you done good!!
- Use enough gun. Coyotes are pretty tough, and can take a lot of lead. Our Eastern forest lends itself to quick shooting at odd angles, so when not restricted by law use a centerfire rifle.
- When the temps go down, try to schedule a day off work so you can hunt all day. I will get coyotes to respond in the woods all day long in February.
- Have fun. Win, lose or draw, predator hunting is hard to beat.

My Favorite Sounds In The East

- Fawn in Distress
- Jack rabbit (we don't have 'em, but yotes don't know that)
- Kitten
- Rabbit distress #1 and #2
- Baby rabbit
- Fox pup
- Canine pup in distress
- Woodpecker
- Flicker

My Favorite Night Sounds

- Rabbit #1
- Jackrabbit in distress
- Fox in distress
- Woodpecker distress

Anonymous