

Do you learn something new each time you go hunting? I do.

By John Hunter

I have been thinking about this subject for some time. It seems that every time I go hunting I learn a new trick or two from one of my partners or good old Mr. Coyote. Coyotes are always teaching us something about hunting and they should; they're full time hunters themselves. Most coyotes are escape artists also. They can certainly show us a thing or two about reading the land for a good escape route. I have looked out across vast areas of land and thought to myself there's nothing out there for a coyote to hide under. Wrong, they use every bush and yucca tree to their advantage. They read the land, terrain, wind and put it all their best advantage. To the coyote all of nature offers a geographical maze. Open country is a relative term to them. Remember that while there's not a lot of obvious stuff out there—in reality, numerous details must be considered.

Preparation is important and we can always learn from it. We must blend into the background and that could mean wearing camouflage clothing. I believe light colored cammo is the best for the desert type terrain. Much of the camouflage clothing on the market today is dark (woodland patterns for back east) and can stand out against the sand and dusty brownish colors of our type of open country. Everything I read states that coyotes are colorblind, but believe it, it sure can't hurt to pay attention to the tones of the environment you're in. Yes, there are those folks out there who will say they have taken coyotes wearing nothing but blue jeans and a white T-shirt. That's true and I too have taken dogs wearing blue jeans and a T-shirt but, why not go that extra mile and do it right. Also, wearing a facemask and cammo gloves will help. Exposed skin can shine like a beacon. Camouflage your gun, shooting sticks, or any other accessories you're using.

You must be prepared to sit still once you get in place. If you think you need a cushion, than take one and use it. Make yourself as comfortable as possible. Chances are, you'll be able to sit still much longer if you're comfortable. You don't want something sticking in your rear end the entire time you're calling, so a cushion can help.

Pay attention to scent management too, but don't get rapped around the axle over it. Check the wind and the direction it's blowing. Use a cover scent if you think one is needed. I recall the last trip Don and I took. We used a cover scent and the coyote hung around for a long, long longtime. I firmly believe the only reason that dog stayed around through all the noise and movement we were making that night was because of the cover scent we used. That dog truly thought dinner was about to be served up. Well, he was right; dinner was served in the form of a 22-250 round from Don. That was his Last Supper.

What other equipment do we need? Well, as for a rifle, just about anything that you shoot well will do. One that is flat shooting in a caliber that can buck the wind is always a good choice. There are some folks (including myself) that like to shoot the .223. Others use a .222, 22-250, .243, .257 Roberts. Some folks even uses heavy barreled 25-06 (now a gun like that should be required to have wheels on it). I even heard of folks using just about any caliber you can think of to include a story about one-fellow who years ago used to use a

Winchester 30-30 lever action. A friend told me that story several times, so it must be true. Taking along a shotgun or pistol in brushy country is not a bad idea either. I have killed several dog with my trusty old Colt 1911 Gold Cup .45 and some hollow points at about 25 or 30 yards.

Having a bipod or a good set of shooting sticks are critical for open country and long shorts. You'll need them when you're away from the car or truck and are sitting in a field or by an outcropping of rocks. Harris makes a good bipod that attaches to the stock of your rifle (not overly recommended however). In my mind Stoney Point make one of the best shooting sticks I've seen but there several others on the market out there that will do the job just as well. Binoculars can really help to pickup on those critters that are coming in from a long way out or even across a bean field in TN or my home state Alabama. If you can find them nice and far out with binoculars, you'll have plenty of time to get ready and set up for your shot once there in range.

Some time back I've written articles about the use of decoys and how they can attract the coyotes attention away from you the shooter. Remember coyotes are sharp and have outstanding eyesight. They can see a mouse running at 50 yards, so decoys really can work. If you're just not sure what type of decoy to use than I would recommend keeping it simple. If you use an electronic caller with a remote capability put some kind put the decoy next to the caller or at least close to the caller. You can use something as simple as a feather on a stick just above the grass line.

Variable riflescopes seem to be the rule for the day. Most folks that I know all use variable scopes, 2.5-12, 3-9, 4-16, or even a 6x18 will work nicely. Whatever size scope you use keep it on the lowest power to start. Trust me on this; I've screwed up a very easy close in shot. Why keep it on the lowest power. Because there will be more times than not when a coyote will come zipping in close and fast. Having that wide field of view will help you pick up the dog much quicker. To high of a power and you could miss the easy "close-in" shot like I did.

When it comes to calls there are two basic types mouth blown and electronic. I'll cover that in another article because calls can take on a life of their own. There are several good ones I use quite often however and they are made by [RedHunter LLC](http://www.redhunterllc.com/). I've had great success with their call so go to their website and check out what they have to offer.
<http://www.redhunterllc.com/>

This is just some of what I've learned over the many years and thought I would pass it on to you. Learn from my many years of experience so you don't have to wait 20 years to have the same information. I hope this helps. Good luck and as I've said, learn the easy way read all you can then get out in the field and put that information to good use.