

**First Coyote**  
**by Darryl Williams**  
**photo by John Hunter**

This story started in the summer of 2003 when I met John Hunter. While walking his dog past my house he notice my Jeep license plate, HNTNJEP, and realized he finally had a neighbor who was also a hunter. John and I talked about hunting, he talked about PCOC, invited me to a meeting, and we made plans to go shooting off Hodge Road. John brought a 22-250 for me to shoot and I later bought the gun. All we needed to do now was plan a coyote hunt. Although we did make a deer hunting trip that fall, our work and personal life schedules didn't allow a coyote hunt until December 27<sup>th</sup> of 2004.

I should say that although I have never hunted coyotes, I am a pretty experienced hunter. I started hunting small game with my Dad when I was 6 years old and have been fortunate to hunt White-Tailed Deer, Mule Deer, Black-Tailed Deer, Black Bear, Elk, Antelope, Hogs, Exotic Game, Turkeys, Water Fowl, Dove, and Pheasant. I have hunted with hand guns, rifles, shotguns, black powder, and archery gear and have hunted in Connecticut, Virginia, Florida, California, Texas, Idaho, Colorado, Washington, and Japan. This coyote hunting seemed like a lot of fun and another opportunity to get out in the field.

We started our hunt off Hodge Road where John had a hunch that the area, although frequented by shooters and dirt bike riders, didn't get much hunting pressure. After three dry stands, we set up with a large rock formation to our backs overlooking a promising valley. At 10 minutes into the calling, a coyote appeared to my left rounding the rocks at about 20 yards. As soon as he saw the decoy, his ears perked up and he made a bee line for the call. He ran past me at about 10 feet, and as soon as he passed, I started trying to "get on him". That dog ran straight for the call and actually stuck his nose in the speaker as if to say, "I know there's a rabbit in here".

After realizing Mr. Bunny wasn't home he ran up hill and I took a shot and missed. He turned back toward me and "put it in second gear". John got off a shot and "he shifted to third". As he passed at about 50 yards I took an off hand shot and dropped him. As he lay there thrashing around, I attempted to chamber another round and couldn't get the bolt to close. My Butler Creek scope cover had shifted and the red release button prevented the bolt from closing. **LESSON #1 - DON'T USE SCOPE COVERS WHEN THE ACTION CAN BE FAST AND FURIOUS.** While I was fussing with my gun the coyote ran off. John and I blood trailed him for about 150 yards, but the trail ran out without recovering the dog. After a couple more dry stands we took off for Cima.

We got to Cima in time for a couple of stands before dark, but nothing came to the call. After dinner, we night hunted until around 10:30. We did call in one Bobcat, but unfortunately didn't have any tags. **LESSON #2 - ALWAYS CARRY BOBCAT TAGS DURING BOBCAT SEASON.**

The next morning we got started at first light. We made two dry stands and then set up over a big wash. I opted to use my Harris Bi-pod instead of my shooting sticks. Yep, you guessed it...**LESSON #3 - BI-PODS ARE DIFFICULT TO USE ON A MOVING TARGET.** After about 10 minutes of John's mouth calling, a coyote appeared at about 100 yards running straight in. I was unable to stay on him with the bi-pod and after he turned up the wash toward John, I gave up and stood for an off-hand shot. The coyote turned his head to look at me, but continued running straight to John. John must have been wondering why I was waiting, but after the coyote ran up the bank and passed him, I dropped him at about 50 yards. I must have looked pretty silly shooting off hand with my bi-pod fully extended, but I guess a guy has to improvise.



We tried two more stands, but the wind really began to howl and it started raining, so we packed it in.

The hunt was great, I learned at least three valuable lessons, and I can't wait to try again. I would like to thank John for taking me out on my first coyote hunt. As most of you already know, John is a very patient teacher and I think he gets as much satisfaction out of calling in a coyote for someone as he does shooting one himself.