



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 13, 2010

---

Contact: Steve Wagner, Blue Heron Communications, 800-654-3766 or [steve@blueheroncomm.com](mailto:steve@blueheroncomm.com)

---

### **World Champion Elk Caller: 5 Tips for Better Hunting**

MISSOULA, Mont.—For elk hunters who'd like to be better elk callers, there are few mentors more qualified today than Joel Turner, reigning and two-time champion of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation/Leupold World Elk Calling Championships.

Turner, 33, of Eatonville, Wash., won his second world title in three years at the March event held as part of RMEF's Annual Elk Camp & Hunting, Fishing and Outdoor Expo.

A police officer and state firearms instructor by trade, Turner also is a devout elk nut, bowhunter, guide, naturalist and call maker. He's spent the past several years developing an elk calling philosophy and hunting system—some of it based on tactical theory—that has consistently produced bulls in multiple states.

Turner shared the following five tips for better elk calling and hunting:

#### **1. Call to an Instinct, Not an Attitude**

“A common elk-hunting strategy is covering ground and bugling until you find a bull in the right frame of mind to come charging in. But those bulls can be hard to find. Most often, when challenged by rival, a bull's first instinct is to retreat. Keep in mind that we're mammals, too, and our own natural reactions often mirror those of elk. If you arrive at the mall with your wife or girlfriend, and some guy yells at you from across the parking lot with a clear intent to start trouble, your probable reaction is to get back in your car and leave. Same for elk. It's OK to bugle to locate elk from a distance, but afterward, rely on calls that trigger their breeding, rather than their escape, instincts.”

#### **2. Mimic a Breeding Scene**

“All mammals are drawn to the sounds of breeding. Morals conflict with that instinct in humans but elk aren't burdened that way. When a bull hears those sounds, it wants to attend the event! To mimic breeding elk, get tapes or attend a calling competition and learn to make four specific calls: 1.) estrus cow call, which is a long, whining cow call, 2.) estrus cow scream, a loud mew made through sputtering lips, 3.) tending bull bugle, which is a soft moan made through a tube, and 4.) glunking, the sharp hiccoughing sound of a bull. Glunking can be replicated by popping your palm over the end of a tube, or by voicing “uck” over a diaphragm. When I'm hunting, I add huffing and heavy breathing through a tube, breaking limbs and scraping the ground. Volume doesn't matter. It's OK to get loud. You can hear a bull's attitude change with these sounds. They typically get frustrated and begin bugling constantly. Sometimes they run to the scene. If not, keep calling while your buddy sneaks in and shoots the preoccupied bull.”

### **3. Anticipate the Hang-up Spot**

“An approaching bull will nearly always stop as soon as it can see your calling location. Once he can see where the elk sounds were coming from, but no actual elk, he probably won’t come any closer. Hunters can use this natural elk behavior to their advantage. Don’t call unless your setup, in relation to this hang-up spot, is correct (never call when elk are in plain view of your location). I like to shadow a herd until the terrain is favorable for calling. One of my favorite situations is when the elk are on a bench above or below me, and the bull has to walk to the edge to look over and see my calling location. That’s the hang-up spot, and I try to set up within 20 yards of it. When antlers appear as the bull nears the lip, draw your bow. You have only a couple of seconds until he’s positioned to see you!”

### **4. Wait for the Parade**

“Eight out of 10 times, when a bull arrives at the hang-up spot, he’ll spend a few seconds looking for the cow. If he doesn’t see it, he’ll parade a few steps to one side and then the other. Still no cow, he’s outa here. But this parading instinct is your chance to stop the bull when it presents a clear, broadside shot. Most turkey hunters are familiar with ‘putting’ to stop a gobbler in shooting position. The same theory works with elk. Give a loud cow call to stop the bull—and be ready to release your arrow.”

### **5. Measure Your Breathing**

“Through my law enforcement training, I’ve learned that tactical situations and elk-calling situations can cause very similar physical and mental reactions in humans. Adrenaline causes spikes in our pulse and respiratory rates. The mind goes from logical thinking to experiential thinking, which is based entirely on previous experience or training. But no training can replicate a bull screaming and slobbering and coming to your call. Even an experienced hunter can get so charged up they’re unable to function. It’s important to keep your mind in logic mode, which is associated with a pulse rate of 100-140 beats per minute. Control your pulse by controlling your breathing. Do this: Breathe in through your nose while counting to four (about 2.5 seconds), hold it for a four-count, then exhale through your mouth while counting to four. Repeat until you feel yourself calming down. Now you’re ready to make your next call.”

In the RMEF/Leupold World Elk Calling Championships, amateur callers have 30 seconds to mimic cow and bull sounds. Professional competitors like Turner are required to make specific calls including standard bugles and cow calls as well as breeding calls. Judges score each competitor anonymously. Winners in the six divisions of competition receive prizes and cash ranging from \$500 to \$2,500.

The 2011 competition is slated for March 3-6 in Reno, Nev.

The event helps raise awareness of RMEF elk, habitat and conservation initiatives.

### **About the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation:**

Snowy peaks, dark timber basins and grassy meadows. RMEF is leading an elk country initiative that has conserved or enhanced habitat on over 5.8 million acres—a land area equivalent to a swath three miles wide and stretching along the entire Continental Divide from Canada to Mexico. RMEF also works to open, secure and improve public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation. Get involved at [www.rmef.org](http://www.rmef.org) or 800-CALL ELK.