

# Creative Calling for Coyotes

**I**N HIS WORKSHOP NEAR BISON, S.D., GRAND ELECTRIC Cooperative Sales and Service Supervisor Keith Hulm is perfecting his art.

Using antlers, mylar and a variety of tools typically associated with woodworking, Hulm carefully creates coyote calls for use in hunting the four-legged predator.

To listen to Hulm talk, the process is simple and quick.

He takes an antler, cuts it to length, drills out the center part, routes it, sands it, attaches a reed and a leather strap and – presto – a coyote call is created.

The result of Hulm's work is a call that imitates a wounded rabbit and lures curious coyotes to their demise.

And, the small reeded calling device is effective.

"I've personally had pretty good experiences with them," said Hulm.

Others have, too.

"At one contest, the team that took second pointed to me and said that my caller helped them earn their win," said Hulm.

Coyote hunting contests are pretty common in the northwestern part of the state where Hulm lives and works.

While the crafty coyote is the South Dakota state

By Brenda Kleinjan



**Above:** Keith Hulm uses a rotary tool to route out the base of an antler that will eventually become a coyote call. **Right:** Hulm displays a finished call in his workshop.

Photos by Helen Aaker/Grand Electric Cooperative





Using a drill, Hulm cores out an antler.



An antler is cut to length.



A drum sander helps shape the call's mouthpiece.

animal, it is also a nuisance. In fact, on its website, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks notes that the predator, along with prairie dogs, can be “a bane to agriculture producers.”

Coyotes are part of a group of animals that provide extended hunting opportunities in South Dakota. As such, the season to hunt coyotes in South Dakota is year-round. Both residents and non-residents need to have either a Predator/Varmint license or other hunting license.

According to the GFP book *Wild Mammals of South Dakota*, the opportunistic coyote is located throughout the state in almost every habitat. Coyotes tend to be secretive and are most active from dusk to dawn. They often rest during the day and only move when disturbed. They remain active throughout the winter.

The western half of South Dakota is where most of the hunting occurs. Western South Dakota offers rough river breaks and larger private holdings – terrain well-suited for coyote hunting.

Hulm got his start making the calls about four years ago.

“I’ve basically hunted all my life,” said Hulm, who said he’s been hunting coyotes on and off for about a dozen years.

As part of his hunting gear, Hulm had a few store-bought calls.

“I took one and said, ‘I should be able to do this.’ Lo and behold, it worked quite well,” said Hulm, who noted that he likes to build things by keeping his hands busy and brain thinking.

After examining the calls he had on hand, Hulm set about duplicating a call. And then he began fine-tuning his product.

“I’ve redesigned the mouth pieces so that it’s more fitting to the mouth,” said Hulm.

Every reed that is placed in a call is hand-cut from a sheet of mylar.

Once Hulm has selected the antler and cut it to size, it is then ground and the center hollowed out with a drill. He then forms the mouthpiece and cuts and angles every reed so that it will fit in the horn. No two are alike.

“Every reed is cut and angled uniquely. It’s based

on the angle of the horn – some angle off to one side or the other,” said Hulm.

“It doesn’t take real long before they can start making noise,” said Hulm.

But, simple noise isn’t the goal. Further tuning takes place until the sound emanating from the call will imitate a hurt or injured rabbit.

“I can make it sound like a jackrabbit or a cottontail, depending on the length of the reed,” said Hulm, noting that the cottontail call tends to be a

**“I took one and said, ‘I should be able to do this.’ Lo and behold, it worked quite well,”**

little higher pitched and easier to blow.

Hulm hand-crafts each call for the individual purchasing it.

“I get more excited and encouraged when someone calls and wants one. I can fit it for that person,” said Hulm, who doesn’t have a large stockpile of pre-made calls on hand.

He can further personalize the call with the individual’s name (if it is short), initials or brand.

His calls come in two sizes – the howler is made out of larger antlers and imitates a coyote’s howl. It measures about three or four inches long and the diameter varies with the antlers used. Smaller antlers are made into distress calls, which measure about two to three inches in length.

For more information on the distress calls, call Hulm at 605-639-9569. His work can be seen on [www.made-insouthdakota.com](http://www.made-insouthdakota.com) in the Predator Getter store.

For the most part, the popularity of the calls has come through word-of-mouth.

Eventually, he’d like to get into making waterfowl calls, but for now, he’s sticking with the tried-and-true coyote call.



Examples of the Predator Getter can be found on [www.made-insouthdakota.com](http://www.made-insouthdakota.com)

