How To Make Realistic Calls for Chase Phase Bucks

by Bill Vaznis

In that frantic period just before the peak rut, when does are running in every direction from prying noses, calling bucks away from their playing-hard-to-get girlfriends may seem like a waste of time. But in fact, the chase phase is one of the best times to talk a trophy into shooting range.

Not quite ready to breed yet, does bolt away when suitors get too close. Invariably, some bucks lose contact with the objects of their affection—and become very susceptible to your calls. Suddenly alone, they use all their senses to relocate a doe, turning your estrous bleats and contact grunts potentially deadly.

What if you don't have a grunt tube or bleat call handy? No problem. During the chase, a handful of unorthodox sound-making methods can lure these bucks.

#1 - Try tapping or scuffing the leaves with a long stick to simulate the footfalls of a doe. You don't even have to sound like a female deer; these lone bucks will react to male company, too. Another good trick is to rub a smaller, dry stick against a sapling to imitate the noise from a buck taking out his frustrations on a young tree. Where there's enough cover at ground level to keep you hidden (and where it's safe to do so) waggle the sapling's crown back and forth. A buck that sees this from a distance can hardly resist investigating.

#2 - Raking leaf litter with a stick or your hand as if making a scrape can also be very effective. I always toss the duff high into the air because the rain of debris pelting the forest floor seems to bring these bucks running. Almost any natural-sounding noise can work. Deer often snap dry branches underfoot, and I've lured bucks into range simply by breaking a few twigs.

#3 - Just stay on your toes. Immediately after making each sound, drop to one knee and get your gun or bow up. Trust me, when a wild-eyed bruiser charges your position looking for love, you'll want to either shoot or run. So be ready to shoot.

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