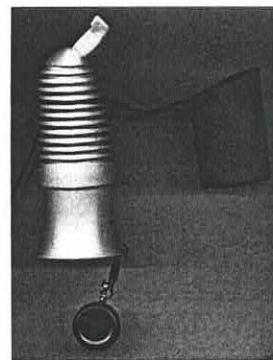
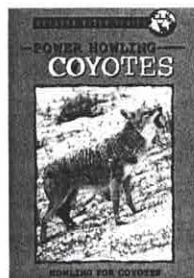


in the field

#1

Ralph M. Lermayer

ELK Inc.



I'm sure the earliest primitive hunters figured out that game would respond to certain sounds, even come to them. Turkey and duck calls have been found that date back hundreds of years, and I'm sure more than a few critters have met their demise by a hunter simply blowing air past a taut blade of grass or reed. It's been done for centuries, but only in the last few decades have we begun to study the art, comprehend what message we're sending, develop our range of sounds, and expand our calling vocabulary to actually communicate with wildlife rather than just make sounds that may or may not be appropriate.

We know a lot today, and most of what we know can be credited to the efforts of the sports' pioneers. People who spent countless hours in the field, trying techniques no others tried, studying animal reactions and constantly experimenting, failing and experimenting again until they began to get it right. These dedicated die-hards spent the time — not to kill, but to learn.

We predator hunters are fortunate today. One of the keenest, most observant and dedicated of these pioneers, Don Laubach, is such a man, and not only is he on a never-ending quest to learn more, he eagerly shares all he knows.

Most elk hunters can recall when calling elk meant bugling. Bulls eager for a fight would often answer, but not always come. Smaller bulls often respond but keep their distance. Don pioneered and offered the first cow elk call, and calling elk forever changed. Bulls may not want to fight, but they are always looking for love.

Setting up for coyote in a likely looking location is effective about half the time. Set up where you're absolutely sure a coyote is near, and your odds soar. Portable sirens, properly used, will tell you without a doubt if a coyote is near — another deadly ELK, Inc. innovation based on Don's observation. They now offer two sirens — small & large —

that literally "shock" a pack or loner into revealing their location. No more time wasted calling where the coyotes aren't!

Can we call mule deer? Absolutely. Antelope? Beyond a doubt. Not only does ELK, Inc. offer the right call, but they back it up with instructional videos showing exactly how.

Interested in the fast growing technique of using your pet dog to up the odds when calling coyotes? No experimentation necessary. Not only has Don spent years perfecting the technique, but he's now breeding dogs solely for that purpose, and offers both a video and a well written book on their training and use.

About a month ago I stopped to visit ELK, Inc. in Gardiner, Montana, while on my way to northern Canada to call wolves. When I returned, Don wanted to know every nuance of what I experienced and learned. In February, he's off to the same area to learn more. Why? Because he's the kind who just has to know, to learn and to perfect. Luckily for us, he's as good an instructor as he is a hunter, providing products and video, sharing his expertise with those of us who don't have months to spend in the wild.

We are fast learning that the standard rodent in distress call may not be the best choice for all situations. Howlers, yelpers and pup in distress sounds will work when others won't. Perfecting

those sounds and then offering an easy to use call that will get the job done is what ELK, Inc. is all about.

From elk to fox and deer anywhere, Don has learned the language. His books and videos on every facet of game calling are as good as they get, instructive and easy to understand. Their calls are second to none, proven and perfected after much trial and error in the field, by those that know.

Serious hunters will have a host of ELK, Inc. books and videos on the shelf, and in their pack you're sure to find proven, easy to use calls from ELK, Inc. It doesn't get any better. Check out their website at www.elkinc.com and get on the mailing list for their catalog. You won't ever want to be without one. 🐾

For More Information

ELK, Inc.
(800) 272-4355
www.elkinc.com

 MORE @ www.predatorxtreme.com

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Elk expert talks at MORE show

In the world of elk hunting, few hunters have compiled the record of Don Laubach.

Laubach, of Gardiner, took 13 elk in 13 years with a bow and has shot countless others with a rifle over an elk hunting career that has spanned nearly four decades.

He broke into national prominence when he developed the Cow Talk call which imitates the sounds of cows and calves and has been an effective tool for the elk hunter during the bow season, gun season and even the late hunts.

Since then, he has been featured on elk hunting videos through Eastman's Outdoor World and has co-authored the book "Elk Talk" with Billings Gazette Outdoor Editor Mark Henckel.

Laubach will talk about elk calling, elk hunting in all seasons and will be one of the judges for the elk calling competition at the MORE show.

He will talk about elk hunting in the speaker's theater at 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.



Don Laubach made cow call famous.



Don Laubach is the founder and president of E.L.K., Inc. He is the inventor and patent holder on the "Cow Talk" call and the "Larynx Bull Call" for elk and the "Antelope Talk," "Deer Talk," and "Turkey Talk" calls. With co-author Mark Henckel, his books include *Elk Talk*, *The Elk Hunter*, *Deer Talk*, and now *Elk Tactics*. Laubach also was involved in creating a number of successful videos with legendary filmmaker Gordon Eastman and has more recently begun creating videos of his own, including *Wyoming's Thunder*

Bulls, *Mule Deer Advantage*, and *Dogging Coyotes*. All are available from E.L.K., Inc., P.O. Box 85, Gardiner, MT, 59030.

Review: ELK TALK by Don Laubach & Mark Henckel

Innovation, when it comes to elk hunting, is often met with resistance harbored in tradition or experience. New methods or products must be discovered, practiced, and then proven, often by a skeptical individual who considers attempting them in the field. Tried and true tactics are seldom abandoned. New methods are rarely adopted. In the last ten years bugling has become extremely popular, tandem with the growth of archery elk hunting that began in the 60's. Many say that because of the proliferation of bugling hunters, today's elk are call-wise. They are harder to call and do most of their rutting at night. It is widely perceived that taking a mature bull is getting harder and harder each year.

A couple of years ago, word began to filter around hunters' campfires about a new calling technique called "cow talk." It was said that by imitating the sounds of a cow elk, or making herd noises, calling in a bull was more likely. The idea here was that these sounds were both intriguing and calming and would enable a hunter to bring in a bull that would not otherwise come in to a bugle. Some claimed it would even stop a bull in flight after being struck by an arrow, shot or shot at, or even startled by human scent. Since then, the commercial availability of the cow call, plus film footage and

testimonials, have proven these claims to be true. Cow talk really does work.

Don Laubach of Gardiner, Montana, is responsible for this new technique. Don has lived among the elk all his life. He takes an elk every year, hunting with a bow. He does it with a cow call he designed, combined with a technique he developed for using the call. In **ELK TALK**, this revolutionary method of call is covered in depth, with Don's hunting and calling expertise thoroughly explored by the skillful writing of outdoor writer Mark Henckel.

ELK TALK extensively covers the technique of calf, cow, and bull talk. With the information supplied in its 202 pages, plus a call, a reader should be able to have the technique mastered by this coming season. Imagine being able to lure in a bull that normally would not respond to a bugle, a bull during the general season, or calming an alarmed bull. It may sound too good to be true, but **ELK TALK** will tell you how it can be done. The reader will also find many useful bits of information that do not relate directly to calling—enough to justify the purchase of **ELK TALK**. If you come home from hunting empty-handed more than you would like to or are interested in a new dimension of the proven bugling method, **ELK TALK** is written just for you. — D. V.

ELK TALK is available through the Foundation Library.



Cow call draws elk like crazy

Inventor took bull with bow and arrow in just 40 minutes

By MARK HENCKEL
Billings Gazette

GARDINER — They say if you build a better mousetrap, the world will beat a path to your door.

Don Laubach found the same thing to be true if you build a better elk call. And the elk hunting world will find your door even if it's tucked away in Gardiner, Mont.

Laubach built the better elk call, exploring a new concept in luring in big bulls, spikes and cows by imitating the sounds that cows and calves make.

Just how effective is his new Cow Talk call?

Effective enough that it took him just five hours with a prototype in the 1985 archery season to take his bull.

Of course, that was a poor performance compared to this season.

"There were four of us out on opening morning and I got the first bull that bugled to me within a quarter-mile of where we started hunting. It took about 35 to 40 minutes of hunting in total to call two six-points within shooting range," Laubach said.

"By the sounds, there were 10 or 15 cows and five bulls, but only two bulls we got to see. We had everybody blowing cow calls and we sounded like a whole herd of elk. Then I squealed on a bull call and the six-point came to within 40 yards and gave me a broadside shot.

"It was a six-point between six and eight years-old with a 43-inch inside spread."

While he admits that no one should expect any call to work that well, in a way, it was a good thing Laubach's bull came so quickly this year. With the way his call business has grown in just five months of operation, he couldn't have spared much more time for hunting.

Between orders for his \$9.95 Cow Talk call, his \$12.95 Larynx Bull Call and an hour-long \$24.95 instructional video he worked up with Powell, Wyo., cinematographer Gordon Eastman, Laubach's Gardiner home has been a buzz of activity from early morning until midnight when the phone finally stops ringing.

"We're shipping out 700 to 800 calls a day and I'm still two weeks behind in my orders," he said.

"I've got about 200 dealers in just about every part of the U.S. where there are elk.

"We've had over 200 phone calls on the peak days. You'd

hang up the receiver and before you got your hand off of it, it was ringing again.

"One day I got nine-and-a-half pounds of mail. We had to get it in a garbage sack. All of it was orders.

"And Ralph Staton, he started the project with me, has been working hard every day. Now his wife Carol Jean's working. His daughter is working. My wife Dee is working. All my kids are working.

"I wanted to build an elk call that would be marketable and would accomplish my goals. If I had any idea it was going to go like this, I probably wouldn't have done it. I would have gotten my shovel out, dug a real big hole and buried that elk call."

Instead, his calls and the video were instantly successful.

Laubach and Eastman formed their corporation, E.L.K. Inc., got a mailing address of Box 85, Gardiner, Mont. 59030 to accept orders and got an office phone number of 848-7655. They made their debut at the Safari Club International dinner last spring and sold everything they brought to Billings.

The calls and video sold well during the summer, too, but really took off when Cody, Wyo., outdoor writer Jim Zumbo did a feature on them for the September issue of *Outdoor Life* magazine.

Since then, Laubach's life and home have undergone drastic changes.

Much of his house has become a production and packaging plant for calls. His days start early, end late and are filled with trying to catch up with back orders.

His enviable problem is that the calls, especially the cow call, are radically new and work well.

And he admits he's not exactly sure why the cow call is so effective. The "he-ow" mewing sound of the plastic, tape and rubber band creation is just something that the elk respond to.

It sounds like a cow elk, somehow reassures other elk and can even stop a running bull in its tracks.

"The biggest thing is that it doesn't scare them. It's a way of communicating with them. They are inquisitive enough that when you make this sound, they think it's another elk in there," he said.



Archery hunter/inventor Don Laubach.

"It's a sound they react to. It's almost like a 'come over here. I'm here.' I've seen cows come in at a dead run.

"One guy in Oregon called in a calf elk that still had spots on it to within eight feet of him.

And after it smelled him and ran off, he called it again and it came within 20 feet of him.

"And it thoroughly confuses bull elk. He just can't believe that there's not an elk there. They think that there's a cow there."

The surprising thing about it is that the call seems to work in all seasons, unlike the bugling bull calls that work only during the rut.

"Billy Hoppe, an outfitter up here, called in two dozen bulls after the bugling season with the cow call," Laubach said. "It works real well, especially for rifle hunting.

"If you jump some elk in the timber, when you blow that call, they'll stop. Usually during the rifle season, the guys don't give them a chance to come in. If you stop at elk at 100 or 200 yards, you're not going to give them a chance to come in. If they get a standing shot, that's all they need."

During the rutting time of the archery season, Laubach uses his cow call in combination with a bull call.

"If I've got him answering and he's doing a lot of talking, I'll use the bull call more. But if he's bugling spasmodically, I'll use the cow call more. And if he isn't answering my bull call, I'll use the cow call. The cow call works all the time," he said.

"I call a lot. I try to be as aggressive as possible. Using a cow call, that doesn't seem to disturb them."

The future of the Cow Talk call seems bright in other ways, too.

Laubach's early feedback indicates hunters experimenting with it have called in such diverse species as deer, antelope and black bear with it, too.

All that, however, has been a bonus. The real success has been with elk.

"You can do all the advertising you want, but the proof of that's when the layman or the hunter who goes out calls in an elk and gets it," Laubach said.

"I don't care what they tell you. If they can't take the call out and get an elk with it, it doesn't do you any good. I've had guys call me on the telephone and say it's the best thing that's ever happened to elk hunting. With it, a layman can go out and call like the big boys."