

Rattling Whitetail

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Preface

We are glad that you have decided to download the “Rattling Whitetails”, and want you to know that we have included every thing we think you could possibly need to become an expert rattler of whitetail deer. The book contains all the information you will need to know : when and where to rattle, what you will need and the specific rattling techniques that are tried and proven to bring you success. It is our hope that you will use these tools to put the “hunt” back into your deer hunting. We know that with your success rattling, you will find your hunts more exciting and rewarding, and won’t go to your stand without your horns.



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About the Authors

This e-book is a culmination of the work of Jim ‘rattlemaster’ Carpenter and Tom Tann aka “Bigbucktom” in their efforts to promote rattling and to educate hunters and non hunters about whitetail deer rattling. They want to share with every hunter the opportunity to experience the adrenalin rush of an angry buck charging in ready to fight, or the satisfaction that will come by calling a buck back out of the woods for a second chance. It is a how-to book that will provide the reader everything necessary. The reader that follows the techniques is sure to rattle-in his whitetail buck.

Jim “rattlemaster” Carpenter

Jim “rattlemaster” Carpenter is the dean of whitetail rattlers. He has been rattling whitetail deer for over forty years and during this time rattled-in over 1,500 bucks. Growing up in the heart of the Wild Horse Desert in the small South Texas town of Freer, he started rattling at an early age. In his earlier years, hunting deer was more than a sport; it was a primary means of putting meat on the table. Successful hunting had a different meaning than the trophy hunts of today. Rattling was a necessary skill that his dad taught him at a early age. Jim has continued to hunt, guide and rattle bucks since those early years, and today still guides selected clientele in search of their elusive trophy buck.

In 1999 Jim formed [Rattlemasters of Texas](#) as a response to the interest that many of the hunters expressed in learning to rattle. He wanted to share the joy and satisfaction that rattling provides by educating and promoting rattling to hunters and non hunters alike. Since that time Jim and Rattlemasters have conducted, seminars on rattling, rattling tournaments, national video rattling contests, and sponsored youth outings teaching kids to rattle. Jim has written numerous articles on rattling and has produced a video to help hunters understand whitetail rattling.



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Tom Tann, aka "bigbucktom"

Tom Tann, aka [Bigbucktom](#) grew up Mississippi and has hunted whitetail deer for over

50 years. In his earlier years his whitetail hunting education did not include rattling as most whitetails were hunted with dogs or still hunted. After moving to Texas, Tom, not being fond of hunting over bait, committed to learning to rattle and has now become an accomplished rattler. His love for rattling caused him to experiment with various types of rattles. These

experiments led him to develop and produce the [Big Buck 4n2 Rattling Antler](#). A synthetic rattling antler that puts an two sets of antlers per side giving the hunter four antlers in one set of rattling antlers. "Twice the Rattling" says Texas Trophy Hunters. With the 4n2s he and his teammate Mickey Coker rattled-in over 130 bucks on their way to winning the 2009-10 [National Whitetail Rattling Championship](#). Tom is passionate in his love of rattling and has written and produced numerous articles and videos on rattling.



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Chapter 1 “The First Step is Hard”

You Gotta Believe

Out West we say “The Two-Step is easy but the first step is hard.” That is true for most endeavors we try. Getting started seems to be the fatal stumbling block to success and the cause of most failures, including rattling bucks. Hunters are often more focused on killing a deer than learning how to hunt them. You however, are not one of those or you wouldn't be reading this e-book on your way to becoming an expert rattler: so lets get to the nuts and bolts of becoming good at rattling deer.

The hardest and most important part of becoming a successful rattler is buying-into the fact that rattling is an effective way of calling bucks, and that by rattling you are going to see more bucks and have more success hunting. This is not as easy as it may sound as there is a mountain of negative and erroneous information being passed around via internet forums and articles. I know you have read as reasons for not rattling: that “Rattling doesn't work where I hunt; and “I tried rattling and it either scared the bucks off, or they ignored me.”

Consider this: Have you ever thrown a fishing lure at a big bass and had him swim away or stay put and ignore the lure? Did that convince you to stop using that lure because it would not work on the bass in your pond? If that is the approach you adopt, then you'll miss out on a lot of bucks and bass.

The fact is that if you rattle you will have times when both of these things occur, but that doesn't mean you should give up. If you commit to it; rattling will be the most productive and enjoyable part of your deer hunts; We guarantee it!

The Proof is in the Pudding

For many years the efficacy of rattling was legitimately in question as it was based solely on the opinions of the hunters who had tried it. With no documented evidence available, hunters had very little reason to accept rattling as a tried and true method of attracting bucks. These doubts were put to bed when game biologist,



Jim presenting rattling trophy to Tom

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Dr Mickey Hellickson, issued his report on a three year study he completed in which he studied the effect rattling had on whitetail bucks. The study was conducted at the Welder Wildlife Foundation Refuge, and confirmed what many hunters had been reporting: that rattling is a very effective way of calling in whitetail bucks.

During the study observers were placed in elevated towers to better follow the movements of the bucks while the rattlers remained on the ground. The findings were that during the sessions 101 of 171 bucks responded by coming to the rattling. This was a success rate of 65%! This should have been enough to have rattling horns in every deer hunters pack. Why is it that even with proof there are still many hunters who doubt that the bucks in their area will respond to rattling? It makes you



wonder if the whitetails in some states have worked out a more civil, less violent, way of determining breeding dominance. Maybe in some state the bucks hold foot races, and in other states they draw straws.

Sound ridiculous? So does the idea that not all bucks fight for breeding dominance. *Odocoileus virginianus* (Whitetail deer) have the same natural instincts and fight for breeding dominance no matter where they reside. The hunter that doubts this is going to miss out on a lot of bucks he would otherwise see had he used his noggin and accepted that rattling works.

Don't let unrealistic expectations stop you. A hunter that doesn't know what to expect will often question whether the bucks he sees are due to rattling or merely there by chance. You can read this on many of the hunting forums on the internet. They will say that they tried rattling and saw bucks, but were not sure they could associate this with their rattling. Only in the cases where the bucks storm in are they convinced that their rattling worked. Whitetail bucks are unpredictable and act differently at different times to the same stimulus; this is what makes it fun. Remember If you are hunting, successful rattling means causing a deer to present himself when he would have otherwise remained hidden were it not for the rattling. If you doubt the effectiveness of your rattling, try experimenting by counting the number of bucks you see on the days you

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rattle vs. the number you see on the days you don't. There is no question that you will see more bucks when you rattle.

Hunters stories on becoming Rattlers

My Story

To help you buy in I will tell you that I know rattling works from personal experience.

My journey to becoming a deer rattler was not a smooth one. I, like most deer hunters, had heard about rattling but doubted its effectiveness, and after unsuccessfully trying it a few times, went back to my old ways. I don't remember exactly when it was but after watching a video where the hunter rattled in a big buck I decided that I was going to learn to rattle bucks no matter how long it took; after all, it couldn't be that hard. I started with a how-to rattle video and then read a few articles and headed for the woods. Funny



thing is; once I committed to rattling, it didn't take long until I rattled in my first. He was the biggest ten point I had ever seen in the wild. He came storming in to within 10 yards of me and stood there staring at me; hunkered down and frozen under a mesquite tree hoping he would let me out without a fight. He stood there drooling and pawing the ground for so long I truly feared I would be attacked. I finally decided to risk moving to see if I could run him off. With a big clash of the horns I exposed myself and the buck bolted. Gracias a Dios! Wow! what a adrenalin rush! After that' I was hooked, and have been rattling ever since.

Last year my lifelong friend and camera man, Mickey Coker, and I rattled in over 150 bucks on the road to winning Rattlemasters' National Video Rattling Contest. We rattled on ranches that had given us permission as long as we didn't interfere with their paying hunters; so while the paying hunters sat in their blinds overlooking feeders, Mickey and I were rattling in the places they didn't want to hunt, and everyday we saw more and bigger bucks than the paying customers saw from their blinds.

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Frank

I have hunted deer in the past but am now primarily a fisherman. When my friend gave me a set of your [4n2s](#)

I decided to give them a try. I knew very little about rattling, only that I had seen it on a number of hunting shows I had watched. The first time I rattled the horns, I waited a few minutes and then rattled them again.

Nothing was happening so after about twenty minutes I decided to give it up, but before I could get to my feet an eight point buck came running in to check out the rattling. (you can see him in the picture)



He came to within 10 yards of me before turning and running back to the woods. That was pretty exciting. I continued to rattle and the next visitor was a javelina that came way to close for my comfort. I decided to change locations and try again. At the second location it took about the same amount of for the deer to come in and this time it was a ten point. I am hooked and plan to take a license and a gun with me the next time.

Eric

Tom, I wanted to let you know that when I got home from hunting whitetails in upstate NY last thursday my 4n2s had arrived. Never having rattled before I watched your video and did a little practicing. Friday after work I went to my tree stand not knowing what to expect. I guess you never know till you try. I began to rattle and scrape as you showed in the video. After about a minute I hung the



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[4n2s](#) up and waited and in about 4 or 5 minutes a six point came trotting in to within 10 feet. I couldn't believe it , I rattled a deer on my first try!

Dewitt Deweese,



answered our request that he field test the 4n2s for us with " I really don't do much, rattling it just doesn't seem to work here, but I'll give them a try."

Although not a professional hunter Dewitt is an accomplished hunter and as knowledgeable in whitetail deer hunting as anyone that hunts them. On youth weekend at his deer camp last year(2009) he rattled in eight bucks on the way to his daughter Demi getting her first buck. You can see for yourself in the [video](#) on our website he has changed his opinion of the effectiveness of rattling in his area and is now a born again rattler.

Big Daddy

I remember the first time I ever rattled-in a deer . It was in the 1979 season some 31 years ago. San Antonio was my home. I was a member of the original "American Sportsman's Club" and had an opportunity to book a three day hunt on the famous Callaghan Ranch. Wow! This was the first time I had ever been able to hunt on a big trophy ranch that had minimum point and spread requirements. Boy was I excited! The fact is, all my hunting buddies and I had always hunted deer for food, and never gave much thought to the meaning of "trophy deer". If it had horns we converted it to polish sausage and deer jerky. I was so excited that I decided to take the biggest deer rack I had ever harvested (an eight pointer about 15" wide) and make me some "rattling horns" and rattle me in a trophy like I had seen in my mind and heard from others around South Texas. There were no TV hunting shows in those



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days so we knew about rattling from articles we read in The San Antonio Express written by legendary outdoor writer Mr. Dan Klepper. When I got to the ranch , we checked in and got all the specifics: bunk assignments, hunting area details ,etc. The next morning I found a place in a small washout in the middle of a long 8' wide sendero (Sendero - Spanish for footpath). The washout was filled with buffalo grass that hit me about eye level when I knelt down and got set up. With all the thoughts of things imagined and heard about rattling running through my mind, I took those horns and whacked them together, thinking I needed to really project this sound. What happened next was amazing! In less than five seconds , out of the brush came a big angry 10 point buck. He was standing there and I was frozen with fear! This buck was starring right past me from the edge of the sendero! We could not have been 5' apart nose to nose! I could see the bristled hair standing up on the back of his head, while he was trying to find what had made that crashing antler sound. Where was the intruder? The wind was coming from behind him, so he could not smell me. To tell the truth , I was scared sh*#less that this deer was going to attack and tear me to shreds before I could grab my Winchester 7 Mag. He stood there for what seemed like a long time. then stepped out , turned, and walked ten yards down the sendero away from me. I decided to whack them again, and soon as I did , he wheeled around and looked back in my direction, again looking over my head past me. There was no way I could move to get a shot so I decided to spook him away. I never saw that trophy buck again, but when anyone mentions "horn rattling" this story jumps into my mind, just like that buck jumped into view at the edge of the sendero! This is still one of my favorite hunting memories.

In closing, let me share this about the 3 day Trophy . It was the peak rut and cold because we had had a "blue norther" blow in. During those three days I rattled, scoped and looked at a total of fifty-three different bucks. After all these years of whitetail hunting, I have never had so much excitement and seen so many bucks in my life!

Big Daddy HuntSports.com

The entire book could be filled with similar stories but hopefully by now you are convinced that rattling will work for you in what ever State you are hunting whitetails. To be sure just as in any endeavor there are places and times that rattling will be more productive for you, but you will always be better off if you have your rattling horns with you and are ready and willing to use them.

Rattle on to Chapter 2

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Chapter 2 Get Your Stuff Together

Rattling with, Bag, Gizmo, or Antlers; that is the question?



rattling bag



rattling box

The first thing to consider is what are you trying to do when you rattle, and that is to trick that wily buck into thinking he is hearing two bucks fighting and make him curious enough to come check it out. To do this you will need some sort of rattle and the type of rattle you use will make a difference. If you can tell that the the rattle does not sound like two bucks fighting, so can the bucks. Remember that when you have two bucks fighting there are four antlers in the fight and this is the sound you will be striving to make with your rattle. Practice and use the type rattle that works best for you.

Most serious rattlers prefer rattling antlers; often times referred to as rattling horns. The reason they are favored is that with rattling antlers you are going to see more bucks. This is due to the fact that antlers produce more volume allowing the sound to carry a greater distance ,covering more area. The more area you cover, the more bucks you are going to attract, and more chances for the big trophy you may be seeking. Horns are also more versatile: you can use them to bang the bushes simulating the ruckus made when two bucks are going at it, crashing through bushes or fences. You can rattle them against limbs to



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imitate the challenge bucks make imitate the challenge bucks make when calling out an adversary, and finally and most importantly , with antlers you can produce the

different types of rattling sounds that are needed to work a buck in once you have gotten his attention.. There will be more about the different types of rattling sounds in chapter 4.

What you say is what you get

Whitetail deer have their own system of communications that include every thing from



body movement to their utterances. We are talking about grunts and bleats and their value to you the rattler. It is good to carry a grunt with you; Bucks snort and grunt to show dominance , before and during a fight. You can include some grunting in with your rattling sequences, however they should be used sparingly: don't over do it. Your primary call will be the horns.

When you have the buck in range the grunt is

useful to position him or turn him. Some hunters rely heavily on grunts and bleats, believing they are better calls than antlers. From everything I've read about about all the different types of utterances of does and bucks, to properly use these calls can be like learning a foreign language. With all the work I experienced in learning Spanish; I am going to leave the expert grunting to you. Anyway this book is about rattling so we'll leave how to grunt like a pro to [another author](#).

The Wind is not your friend

All the senses of the whitetail deer are excellent, but their sense of smell is probably their best. Because of this they rely heavily on smell for their safety . To successfully rattle you will need to know the direction of the wind and the best thing for making this determination is odorless powder. Do not over look this critical factor if you want to be an expert.



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Its Better to be Heard that Seen

The object when rattling is to see the buck before he sees you and it is not an easy trick. In Dr Hellickson's study approximately 65 percent of the bucks responded to the rattling, however, the rattler only saw a third (33 percent) of the responding bucks. This may not have been due to the fact that the buck spotted the rattler first, but the need to be concealed while rattling cannot be overstated. Most bucks will come to the rattle with a certain amount of caution



circling to approach from down wind looking for the source of the rattling sounds. If the buck spots the rattler first ; the jig is up and he will be long gone.

Using good camouflage is a must ; As you know deer are color blind so you don't have to worry about the colors you are using; NOT!! As you will read in chapter three, there was a study that found that [deer can see some colors](#), and are particularly affected by UV light. You will need to be sure your camo doesn't have UV brighteners that will alert the buck to your presence. You can wash you clothes in baking soda to prevent this . To be careful use a black light to check for any remaining UV brightener in you clothes. Stay away from blue , as this is the color deer see best. Pick a camo that fits the area that you are hunting With good camo you will have opportunities unlike any you have imagined.

You can see in the "Caught Out in the Open" that the rattler and the cameraman were caught out in the open and unable to move to cover. By lowering their profile and restricting their motion they were able to call two bucks into within 40 yards.



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Aroma Therapy, not just for New-agers

We are referring to scent. Whitetails have a uncanny sense of smell and rely on it heavily . To ignore this can be a big mistake. You will need to use some sort of scent blocker to insure that you don't stink-up the woods as you enter and exit your stand. There are plenty of scent blockers on the market, be sure you use it before you leave your truck so that you leave as little scent as possible . In addition to scent blocker it is good to use a scent to possibly attract the buck. The one to use is doe in estrus pee. Lets face it; a buck that is coming to the rattling is coming because he has loving on his mind. He either wants to run intruding bucks from his turf or he thinks he might be able to steal the doe while the other bucks are focused on fighting. The theory may be right or wrong but one thing for sure, doe in estrus pee works!



You can't shoot what you can't see

Rattling bucks is an intuitive art that requires you to read and interpret the actions of the buck while rattling him in. It is not unusual to work a buck in from several hundred yards, therefore the use of binoculars is invaluable. With binoculars you can watch how the buck is reacting to your rattling and make the appropriate adjustments necessary to maintain his attention and work him to you. Without binoculars this will be impossible



There is no place like Home



You may not always be rattling on familiar turf . If you are a serious rattler you will be walking from place to place while rattling. In situations like these it is easy to get caught up in the excitement of rattling bucks and find yourself disoriented. With a compass or GPS you can avoid walking in circles and feel confident of getting back to your truck. The alternative can be disconcerting!

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Keep those Palmolive Hands

Rattling without gloves will leave your hands looking like they have been in a cat fight, and feeling worse. Banging bushes and scraping limbs expose your hands to thorns and snags so use gloves and you'll be able to wash your hands without pain when you get home. The best gloves to use are ones that offer you protection from thorns while allowing you to have a good feel for your horns. Remember they need to be camouflaged or dirty enough that they don't stand out and give you away.



Gloves are a must

Shine a light on me

If the bucks are responding well to your rattling it is certain that you won't quit until darkness stops you. This won't be a problem if you have a good dependable flashlight with you. Walking out of strange woods at night can be a chore.

Safety First

Whenever you go to the woods it is a good idea to take along a first aid kit. You never know what you may encounter so have the basics with you to handle stings, cuts, etc. If possible always go with a buddy and when this can't be done be sure you tell someone where you will be going and what time you expect your return. These are things that seem a little burdensome but their importance can never be underestimated.

And on and on

The items listed are ones that are absolutely necessities for rattling. Many of these are probably on your check-list, but have been included them here to be sure they are not overlooked. If you would like a complete checklist for your deer hunting preparation you can find one in [Terry Townsend's "American Whitetail , Deer Hunting Tips and Resources"](#) . An excellent book!



Now that you've got your gear together ,lets move to Chapter 3

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Chapter 3 What, When, and Where

What- The Whitetail Buck

Knowing about the habits of the whitetail can and will improve your success rattling them. A good way to learn these habits is by reading books and watching videos. There is a wealth of material available and with the internet: much of it is free. If you want to find a single source for this information I can again recommend [Terry Townsend's "American Whitetail"](#) It is probably the best and most comprehensive book I have seen on Whitetail Deer hunting.

Whitetail bucks are habitual animals and can live their entire life in a very small home area. This area may vary but usually not much more than a square mile. As bucks age their home areas diminish in size. During the rut bucks increase their range and often leave their home

area in search of does in heat. Because they rely on their speed to escape their predators they live in a heightened state of readiness. Possessing a keen sense of hearing and smell they are always vigilant and prepared to bolt at the first sign of danger. They have for many years, thought to be color blind, seeing everything in grey. This misnomer has been disproven by a [University of Georgia D.B. School of Forest Resources study](#) in which they found that a deer's vision is dichromatic (two color) and limited to mid range of the spectrum between blue and yellow, and that they are very sensitive to UV brightness. Anything that reflects UV rays will appear bright against a dull background. As creatures of habit they utilize a system of trails to allow them to move undetected from place to place and as a clear escape route when in danger. They have a complex system of communication that is used among other things: to warn of danger, to mark their territory, and to advise intruders that they are not welcome. These may include body posture, vocalization, leaving their scent, pawing and stomping the ground and of course the flag"the whitetail.



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Buck browsing

They are browsers and just like we do , they have their favorite foods. Some favorites are: acorns , some fruits, legumes, corn and other crops that farmers plant in their fields. Their diets vary from place to place depending on the bounty their location provides. Knowing as much as possible about the area you are hunting and your prey is important to your success.

When --- Deer Season and more

Why “deer season and more” when everyone knows that you can only rattle in bucks during the rut? Because; the prior sentence is incorrect. Sure the rutting season is the best and most productive time to rattle bucks , but I have seen them rattled-in starting long before the rut and continuing long after the peak rut has ended.

After losing their velvet and prior to the rut, the bucks in their bachelor groups begin to spar . Rattling during this time will often bring in a curious young buck; although unlikely, a mature buck may also respond.

The pre rut or early rut is an excellent time to rattle: there are fewer does coming into estrus thereby creating a shortage for the horny bucks; the bucks are beginning to battle to establish the order of dominance, and the laws of supply and demand come into play creating more competition among the bucks for the available does. The bucks during this period will typically be less aggressive but curious and respond to rattling well.

As the peak rut arrives the majority of the does come into estrus and the bucks become more aggressive. Bucks during this period behave much like the late great James Dean, “Live hard , die young, and have a good looking corpse”. It is at this time while

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their testosterone is raging, that bucks throw caution to the wind while chasing the does that are receptive to their advances. Plan to hunt all day, because bucks are horny animals and will be on the move non-stop looking for does. Bucks at this time may storm in looking for a fight to establish breeding dominance or to check and see if there is a doe that can be stolen while the other suitors are fighting it out. There are plenty of articles written by hunters that say that rattling during peak rut is unproductive because you can't pull a buck off a hot doe. Sure there will be bucks that are trailing a hot doe that no amount of rattling will faze,



Buck on a Doe

but all the bucks will not necessarily have the same good fortune of having a hot doe in their sights, and these less fortunate ones can be particularly vulnerable to rattling. In fact Dr Hellickson's study found that the peak rut was the most productive time to rattle which doesn't surprise me; more bucks on the move mean more to rattle-in. In any event there is no downside to rattling and it will work for you.

After the peak rut is over don't leave your rattling antlers at home. Remember, the does that did not breed during their 24hr estrus will come back into estrus every twenty-eight days until they are bred. During this post rut period you won't see as many bucks as some may be tuckered out and uninterested, but there will be some bucks up to the challenge; so take your horns. We have rattled-in bucks in a single area starting in mid November (prior to the rut) through late February, (long after the peak rut has ended.) Now before you get upset with the late February date you should know that we were not hunting, only rattling. A good thing about rattling is that you are not bound by the confines of state hunting regulations.

The rut dates for each state and in many cases different parts of the states vary. The serious hunter/rattler will pay close attention to these dates for his particular hunting area.

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Time of day

Now that we have covered the dates lets move to time of day to rattle. There seems to be a consensus among most hunting writers that the best time of the day to rattle is early morning with the second best time being late afternoon. That stands to reason, as deer are primarily nocturnal and usually come out late in the day to feed and then leave to bed down the following morning. If you are hunting during the early or peak rut you can disregard the early morning , late afternoon consensus. During this period as previously reported the bucks will not be adhering to their normal patterns. In this prime time, bucks will move all day long in search does to breed. Speaking from personal experience we have had more success rattling in mid to late mornings but have rattled them in at all times of the day , from daylight to dusk. Plan to stay all day, go prepared , most hunters go to their stands early but leave just when it is getting right to go back to camp for breakfast or lunch.

Where--- There is no substitute for Scouting

To be successful rattling there must be bucks in the area. We all have our limitations on where we can hunt. but wherever you hunt you will need to scout prior to the season to determine where the bucks are, and learn their patterns. Remember in the peak rut their patterns will not be dependable. When scouting look for all types of sign that will let you know where the bucks are. You can do this by looking for tracks, trails, scrapes, rubs, and most important, deer.



Deer Trails and Track

Rubs are used early to remove the velvet, and then later, nearer the rut, to mark their territory by leaving scent from their forehead gland on the rub. A good sign is finding lots rubs in a single area , this usually means there is a nice buck in the area. Older mature bucks will rub more often than young bucks and use larger trees to mark their turf. When you find a fresh rub on a big tree you have a good chance of seeing a big buck in the area.

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Fresh Rub



Fresh Scrape and Rub with Licking branch overhanging

Scrapes are another way a of determining that a buck is in the area. Bucks use scrapes to mark their turf. The buck will usually make a primary scrape and other smaller scrapes in what is called a scrape line. The buck makes these by pawing the ground with his hoofs thereby leaving his scent from the interdigital glands located between the cloves of their hooves: he will then pee in the scrape to mark it with scent form his tarsal gland.

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There will be a licking branch overhanging the scrape that you can identify by the chewed off tips of the branches. This is another way the buck leaves his scent and marks his turf. The scrape may be visited by other bucks and will be revisited by the dominant buck to refresh it.

Buck at a Licking Branch

When scouting look for tracks . Determining the sex of a deer by the tracks is not easy: however even-though there are some large does you generally can count on the larger deeper tracks being those of a buck. There is a lot of other information you can learn from tracks: if the deer was walking or running (a running deer track will have a wide,deep track with slide marks while a walking deer's track will be tighter and shallower); the deer's size (big deer have big deep tracks) how long ago was the track made(older tracks will have debris or other tell tell signs, while fresh tracks will be clean and sometimes have small pieces of dirt clinging to it), and of course what direction the deer was traveling. You don't have to be an expert tracker enjoy reading track and unlocking all the information they contain.



Fresh Deer Track

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Chapter 4 Getting to your Stand and Setting up

Factors in picking your place to set up

Now that you know you have bucks in the area you will need to focus on where you want to set up to rattle. Rattling from a tree stand will work, but the best place is on the ground on their turf, mano y mano! Consider these factors when selecting the place you are going to set up: concealment, field of vision and access. Always pick a place that will provide you with adequate concealment and a good field of vision that will allow you to see the buck as he approaches. A buck will normally cautiously circle around and approach from down wind side using his keen sense of smell to assess the situation. With this in mind, try to pick a place that will encourage the buck to approach from a direction other than downwind. If possible pick a place that provides you with a natural barrier to the downwind side. The final consideration is the access route you will take to your stand. Be sure you have a route that will cause the least disturbance possible when getting to your stand. Remember you will be leaving a scent trail so try to minimize the impact of this as much as possible.

Let the Dust Settle

Once you get to your stand wait a while before you start rattling. More than likely you got busted by some buck or doe on your way in so you will need to give it time to settle back down to normal. Even if you were busted by a buck, after things settle down he may come to investigate the rattling, and if not him, then the other bucks that did not detect your entry will come to investigate.

While you are waiting for the coast to clear, use this time to set up. If you are rattling from the ground, and that is highly recommended, as very few bucks fight in trees, clear a spot to kneel or sit, and make sure the area is as comfortable as possible. You don't want to be getting stuck with briars or thorns while you are trying to rattle-in a buck. If there is not adequate cover; make a brush blind to use as cover or use a pancho made using camo netting. Netting will work real well to cover you and the horns.

Don't get Busted

Once a buck hears the sound of your rattling he will be able to pinpoint the sound to within a few yards of where you are sitting so be sure there is a thicket or a scope of brush near your stand. If a buck gets near enough to the sound and cannot see the source he will often turn and be gone. With adequate cover nearby he will have to come in close to make this determination.

Sit in the shade so that the sun doesn't reflect on something and give you up. If you are videoing you may want to try to pick a place where the sun will be to your back to avoid the glare when videoing. Also with the sun at your back it is harder for the buck to see you when the sun is low on the horizon.

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Since the bucks will be using their noses to bust you , you will need to set out three or four scent strips downwind of your stand to block your scent. This can be done by soaking 6” cloth strips in scent solution and then hanging on bushes or limbs. There are many scents on the market that will do the trick , pick one and follow the instructions. Doing this should disarm the whitetail’s radar and give you the advantage.

Not all bucks will come running in full tilt not slowing down till they get to you , most will be more cautious and stop periodically to check the wind before moving closer., If you see a buck stop and focus his attention in another direction it may be that there is another buck coming in. Always watch a buck as he comes and learn to read his actions.



If you are going to be hunting from a tree stand , apply the same strategies as used on the ground. Don’t let the comments about rattling being better from the ground slow you down. Rattling will still help you attract that buck you are seeking. The disadvantages of rattling from a tree stand may be outweighed by the advantages of hunting from a tree stand.

Terry Rattling from a Tree Stand

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Chapter 5 Rattling Strategies and Techniques

Make your Rattling Sound Like Two Bucks Fighting

The objective when rattling is to trick a buck into thinking that he is hearing two bucks in combat. That means you will need to make your rattling sounds as authentic as possible. You don't have to be perfect or even close to rattle in a buck ; but if you are going to be an expert you've gotta be better than mediocre. When two bucks fight they each bring two antlers to the fight, so you will want your rattling to sound as close as possible to that of four antlers colliding ,locking up and then grinding as they push against one another. This is why most rattlers prefer horns. While we are on this subject, I am going to recommend that you take a look at the [4n2 rattling horns](#) we make .They are made with four sets of tines putting four antlers in one set of rattling horns,making it easy for anyone to get that authentic sound needed. The extra tines will also produce "two times the rattling" - more volume - more bucks !



The three big factors in rattling sounds

Volume , tone , and cadence. We discussed volume in Chapter 2 but we will cover it again here 'cause we need some VOLUME for this e-book, Just kidding ! When rattling, the situation will dictate the volume ,tone and cadence you will want to use. These vary because no two sessions will be exactly the same, and each will require you to adjust your techniques.

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Volume-

You need to produce sufficient volume to have your sounds travel as far and reach as many bucks as possible. To maximize volume use a light grip on your horns; a tight grip will mute the sound by reducing the vibration of the antler. Visualize that when you rattle you are covering an area with a large net of sound that extends out from you 500 yards or more in every direction (360 degrees). This is the area you have put into play, so all the bucks caught in the net are yours to rattle-in.



After you complete three sequences wait 10 to 15 minutes before rattling again. Don't be impatient but if after 40 minutes nothing has happened, you can move to another location at least 500 yards away and try another session. Remember in Dr Hellickson's study the rattler only saw a third of the bucks that responded. There may be bucks watching you that you will not be able to see. If you are hunting from a tree stand or do not intend to move around, after your first sequence as described above, it is better to wait 20 to 30 minutes between each rattling sequence. Don't over do it and don't quit; just be sure to space it out.

Two can be better than one

We have talked about the whitetail's ability to pinpoint the source of the rattling sounds from great distances, its super sense of smell, and how it combines the two in developing his strategy when coming to investigate the rattling. By stationing a partner 50 yards downwind you may be able to thwart this strategy and set up an ambush. Because the buck is focusing on the source of the sound the second hunter has a good chance of going undetected. Also with a partner it is possible to increase the field of vision to 360 degrees. Even though the majority of buck will approach from downwind you can never be sure from what direction he will come. Be sure your positions allow visual contact so that you can communicate with each other when the action starts.

Be Patient

It can take a while to bring in a buck. He may be coming from a long distance or he may be cautious and approach slowly. If you see a buck approaching don't make the mistake of thinking he is alone. Often as not there will be more than one buck that will come in at the same time. We have had them come in two, three, four at a time; and one time we had nine come in. Stay put for at least 40 minutes before you move. and be on the lookout as you are leaving.

Last year after a good day of rattling, Mickey and I were walking back to the truck and decided to try one last session. We were close to a place where we had previously rattled up a big buck, but had failed to get him on video due to camera malfunction. Now being more experienced with the camera we hoped that we could fool him again and this time get his picture. We set up and rattled. We were tired and thirsty so after about

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15 or 20 minutes we looked at each other and our expressions said “we’re cooked” We gave up and started walking out of the woods. We had walked no more than 50 yards when to our dismay we saw the big ten point closely followed by a spike making a beeline for the exact place we had been rattling. Oh well , you can’t get ‘em all.

Hang ups The Timid Buck

When a buck is showing an interest but hangs up and refused to close, it may be because he is unsure or timid. When this happens, try non aggressive calling using a doe bleat. If you rattle use light sparring sounds to build his confidence.

Second time Around

Bucks that don’t bust your cover may come back for a second look. This has happened many times; a buck comes in , checks the scene and moves on only to let his curiosity get the best of him and return to the scene of the crime. Sometimes the same buck will come to the rattle several times. Whitetails are unpredictable.

Using Decoys --If rattling brings bucks in why use decoys?

Remember, Dr Hellickson’s found that the hunters only saw a third of the bucks they rattled in. This was because the deer were able to bust the hunter before the hunter saw the deer. A buck usually approaches the rattler cautiously and remains concealed while checking out the source of the rattling . If it detects the hunter, it will disappear back



into the brush, and the hunter never sees the buck. The addition of decoys provides the visual component that can increase the hunter’s odds of not getting busted, and allow him to see more of the deer he rattles in.

Last year after a conversation with deer decoy expert, Dan Greenwalt, We decided to add decoys to our rattling sessions. Because we change locations when we are rattling, we needed a light weight , easy to carry and set up decoy. The Tail Trick Decoys met all these requirements with an added bonus of a tail that wagged. Tail Trick has two models, a

full silhouette of either a buck or doe (depending on whether you put the horns on top) and a” booty”,(a rear view of a buck or doe browsing). Mickey and I opted for the buck and “booty” set up as we are both “booty” men.

Not knowing what to expect we started by setting the decoys out front of our normal well concealed rattling positions. This worked well; we immediately noticed that the deer were focusing on the decoys. Once they locked in on the decoys, we went to work rattling them in close. With decoys, we were definitely able to rattle the bucks closer.

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Observing that the bucks were fixating on the decoys, led us to experiment on the amount of cover necessary to rattle in the bucks. We started in open areas with only tall grass for cover. In these situations, our experience has been that: bucks seeing that the source of the rattling is an empty field will either: leave, or remain in the woods and try to call out the intruder by snorting or rattling back. The few that do happen to step out, usually remain only a few seconds before they retreat back into the woods. The addition of decoys changed this response. The bucks we rattled in this situation, left their cover and either: came in on top of us, or approached and held at a distance; none spooked back to the woods.

We continued upping the ante; using less and less cover, until we finally used only the decoys for cover. Mickey would sit behind the booty with his camera, and I would rattle from behind the buck. We were amazed that the bucks were so focused on the decoys they failed to detect us. They would circle around and approach from the front of our buck decoy (regardless of wind direction) and would not spook until they were broadside of us realizing they had been “punked”.

We tried every possible combination of decoys with and without tail motion (two bucks, buck and doe, buck and booty , etc.) Every setup attracted attention however our favorite was the two decoy (tail wagging) buck and booty.

Since you are trying to get the deer’s attention on the decoys, it is important to set your decoys in a way that the deer will see them. If there is an elevated spot that would maximize the visibility; use it. Be sure that your decoys are reasonably close to where you are rattling; you want the sound to match as close as possible to the visible stimulation. Consider the shot you want when you set up; Bucks will usually circle and approach quartering from the front of the buck decoy. Don’t leave your decoy in the same location all the time. Remember you are trying to trick them, if they learn that the decoy is an inanimate dummy they are not going to be interested.

In conclusion, If you are not using decoys we recommend that you try them . You will see more bucks and get more opportunities to call in that trophy.

Come to PaPa

This is when you spot a buck before he sees you, and you set up and work him to you. In this situation how you rattle will depend on what the buck is doing and how far he is from you . When a buck is close, say within 150 yards ,you will want to use sufficient volume for him to hear you, but not so much that it will spook him. Starting light and working up the volume, while paying close attention to the buck’s reactions.

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Once you have his attention continue to rattle intermittently as the situation dictates. Rattle just enough to keep his attention and keep him coming in. If he looks like he is losing interest or is going to leave, the lighter rattling may not be working ,so ramp it up! This is something you will intuitively develop the more bucks you rattle .After working a few bucks you will develop your own feel for the situation.

A buck over 200 yards or more away will require more volume to be sure he gets the message. Watch his reactions with your binoculars and use the same sense of feel to work him in. The only real difference is that it will require more volume at that distance. In any event starting low and amping up is the best way.

If the buck is very close when you initially see him ,or because you have worked him in ,use clicks to hold him and keep him on the line. A click, a single twist of the antler , just enough to make a sound the buck can hear. Watch his eyes closely and be sure he does not spot any movement you make . With light intermittent clicking you can hold a cautious buck's

interest . If the buck appears to be losing interest, gradually increase the intensity of the rattling to whatever it takes. You can see a good example of using the clicking technique in ["The Willacy Co Ten Point"](#) video on the website. Remember that although you are rattling "come to papa" and focusing on the buck you are trying to work in; you are also simultaneously "rattling blind" to the other bucks. So while you are working one you may be attracting others. Be on the lookout. Failure to consider this can be costly.

This happened to Mickey and me last season. We were walking to our stand to set up when we saw a nice buck about 300 yards away feeding on some acorns. The buck did not see us so we set up and tried to rattle him in. At first the buck appeared to be interested , but quickly returned to browsing. We looked at one another and decided to move on. We stood up to leave without checking 360 degrees around us, and before we took five steps we found ourselves face to face with a beautiful eight point no more



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than five yards from us. The buck froze for a second and then bolted into the brush. Maybe if we had read this book we wouldn't have been so careless. Actually we both knew better, but it is not always easy to practice what you preach.

Rattling Blind

Lets start with what has been called " rattling blind". Rattling blind is when you go to an area and set up without having any idea of the location of the bucks that you want to come to the rattle. You can start the rattling session by raking the ground and bushes with your horns and then begin a light sparring sound using a slower cadence, softer tone and shorter duration. This so that if there happens to be a buck really close, you won't startle him too much. To make this sparring sound visualize two young non-aggressive bucks with their heads down lightly banging their antlers and not really pushing one another very hard. This should last for 5 to 10 seconds then twist the horns maintaining contact as you separate them .You can see this type sparring in plenty of videos in fact, there is one on our website .We recommend that you watch videos of all types of buck fights, from sparring to full blown fights to the death. (These visual aids will help you develop your own techniques to use rattling.) Wait four or five minutes and repeat the light sparring . After the light rattling startup , step up the action to a full blown battle. This requires an initial clash and lock up followed by the pushing twisting and grinding sounds that fighting bucks make. Bang the bushes ,rake the limbs and thump the ground. The fact is that when you see a deer fight the sounds are primarily from the breaking of limbs and the banging into whatever is in the way. Make the maximum ruckus possible without being seen. If there are bushes, go hard after them with your horns. This entire process from initial clashes through the pushing sounds will take about a minute. Stop and wait for around 4or 5 minutes before repeating the sequence again.

Whoa come on Back!

When you see a buck that is close disappear into the brush without him seeing you, a good way to bring him back out in the open is by using a strong single click . A single clash of the antlers medium to low volume. This can be effective if you can do it before the buck gets too far away. After starting with the click and nothing happening , try your full rattling sequence. clash , lockup , push grind.

Review:

Starting a session with light rattling may avoid spooking a nearby buck.

More volume will cover more area and increase the number of bucks you will see.

Pay attention to what the buck is telling you and adjust accordingly.

Be ready for than more than one buck to come to the rattle.

When you are working a particular buck you may be attracting other bucks so check before you move.

Give them time to come in. Stay put for at least 40 minutes before changing locations.

Expect the unexpected---Don't let unrealistic expectations stop you. A hunter that doesn't know what to expect will often question whether the bucks he sees are due to rattling or merely there by chance. You can read this on many of the hunting forums on

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the internet. They will say that they tried rattling and saw bucks, but were not sure they could associate this with their rattling. Only in the cases where the bucks storm in are they convinced that their rattling worked. Whitetail bucks are unpredictable and act differently at different times to the same stimulus; this is what makes it fun. Remember if you are hunting, successful rattling means causing a deer to present himself when he would have otherwise remained hidden were it not for the rattling. If you doubt the effectiveness of your rattling, try experimenting by counting the number of bucks you see on the days you rattle vs. the number you see on the days you don't. There is no question that you will see more bucks when you rattle.

One more chapter to go

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Chapter 6 Competitive Rattling

Tournaments, and Video Competitions

[Rattlemasters of Texas](#) was formed by Jim “rattlemaster” Carpenter who provide a competition for rattlers who want to match rattling skills against other contestants. Rattlemasters offers the competitive rattler two types of competition: Rattling Tournaments and a national video rattling contest .



Jim, Steve, Jason, and Mickey at the Pettus TX Rattling Tournament

Tournaments are usually a two day affair , with the first afternoon being devoted to arriving at the ranch hosting the tournament , meeting the Rattlemaster Team , orientation , and then enjoying dinner and fellowship before bunking in for the night. The teams begin the competition at a designated hour and have all day to collect their videos. The videos are reviewed and the winners are announced at the awards cookout that is held the second evening. Prizes can range from cash to trophies depending on the tournament. These competitions were started by Jim and his Rattlemasters in 1998 and have been conducted every year since . Many of the competitors come back year

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after year to compete and enjoy the fellowship. If you can spare the time , we know you will enjoy the Tournaments , and the ranches on which they are held. To compete in the national contest the rattling team, a rattler and a cameraman must first register by joining Rattlemasters and paying their entry fee. The rules fees, and prizes are fully described on their [website](#).

The videos submitted by each team are reviewed by panel and the winners are selected. The winners are hosted as guest of honor at the annual banquet. (barbecue) presented a trophy and prizes, and then can claim the title of “National Rattling Champions” until defeated.



Competitive rattling is different

Even-though both have rattling bucks as their core objective the process and specific objective is completely different.

Competitive rattling is about numbers and quality of video. In the catch and release world of competitive rattling the important thing is how many bucks you rattle and whether you rattle them out , rattle them up, or rattle them in. All must be documented on video showing the hunter and the deer in the same video. A rattle out is when the buck responds to the rattle and steps out of the woods but doesn't move closer to the rattler. A rattle up is the same as a rattle out except the deer closes the gap between him and the rattler , and finally the rattle-in is when the buck comes all the way in to the rattler.

To take a picture you need a camera

To be successful in competitive rattling you will need to add to your equipment list a video camera. All competitive rattling is catch and release so the only trophy you will have will be the videos you capture. Don't think for a moment that this type hunting is not every bit as exciting as traditional hunting. The major difference being you can't fill the freezer with or barbecue videos. Many hunters that now rattle competitively prefer to rattle and video over traditional hunting with a weapon. The adrenalin rush and the satisfaction of rattling-in a buck is addictive .

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To capture a winning video requires skill and diligence on the part of the camera man and rattler alike. To have a successful video you must get the rattler and the buck in the same rattling sequence and in a way that clearly show that the rattler is rattling and the buck is responding. It is important for the cameraman to position himself in a way to be concealed but still have adequate clearing to be able to video the action. A single twig in his field of view can distort the focus and render the video useless.. The best shots are when the rattler and buck appear in the same frame which often requires stationing the camera up wind of the rattler. These shots are extremely difficult when there is only one camera, however a good cameraman can often turn a poorly positioned buck into a good video. Practice makes perfect.

Advantages of competitive rattling:

- Educational , learn the tricks and techniques of others
- Competition match your skills with others
- No license required , rattling is not regulated by the States
- No limit , Shoot as many bucks as you have film
- Open season, No state regulated seasons
- A Deal, no guns or ammo to buy
- More access to game
- No blood no guts no cleaning
- No taxidermy , video trophies
- More bucks
- Fellowship

But..... you can't barbecue video and if you do; you ain't gonna like it!

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That's all for now.