

Love My Decoy
by Robin Klemme

I've talked in the past of how much I enjoy using a decoy. This year proved its worthiness again. On November 17th I was perched in my tree where deer pass through from big timber to big timber. This area is terrible in October as I have sat there all day in past years and never seen a doe more less a buck at times. But come rut time the bucks pass through this thinly 150 yard long timber stretch and with my decoy in the open pasture it makes it very visible to them.

Before first light I could hear a deer under twenty yards behind me moving east to west but I couldn't see it. It was just legal shooting time but a heavy overcast was prolonging shooting light. Within less than a minute, a second deer was moving through, on the same course. At eighteen yards I could see parts of a figure of a deer. I could see antlers, but not their size. So I watched as the deer exited to the west, onto the neighbors' property, following the exact spot over the the fence the first deer cleared.

Rut is on! Within 4 minutes or so I turned to look behind me and there was a buck with his nose to the ground, traveling the outside edge of the tree line. At first he was heading west hard but he backed up and dove into the tree line towards me. He was smelling the earlier path of the doe. He too walked through at 18 yards, but still to dark to make out how big his antlers were, so I let him walk. He reached the fence where the two previous deer jumped and I assumed he was doing the same. I just that quick hung my bow back on its hanger, as I looked his way he had turned around, spotted my decoy out in front of me and came trotting in. I could see plenty of antlers as he comes down the treeline ready to fight.

I draw my bow at sixteen yards, I've got the buck dead to rights as he's focused on the decoy. I draw but can't see enough light through my peep. I look around it, hold it out in front of me, back to my eye,(no go). The buck walks sideways towards the decoy, as he clears the overhanging branches, hes at twelve yards. I've got a open shot, I can now see my pins through the peep and just that quick the arrow is gone. The buck bolts pass the decoy as hard as he can go, up-hill, in the open pasture. At the top of the hill he stops and hunches up, (O no that means too far back). The arrow went clean through and was sticking in the ground.

I watched the buck slowly walk another 100 yards and enter the neighbors' property into big timber. I waited four hours before looking for blood where I last seen the deer enter the trees. I found blood but tracking would be difficult. With one step at a time I proceeded through the timber as visibility with all the oak leaves was good. A three hour tracking job covering 200 yards up hill led the buck out of the timber into the next drainage.



I decided to leave the deer over night to not jump him. I get along with the neighbors as they bowhunt as well and asked them to check down by their pond the next day. I felt this deer was going to walk his way to water with that type of hit.

The next morning I moved through the valley, favoring a westerly direction, as there is a creek over the hill. I walked the creek to the north than to the south and back to the top of the hill. This was four hours of hiking with no luck.

Exhausted and frustrated at the shot I made I decided to press on to the next valley to the south. Before I entered the timber, my phone rings, its the neighbor, they were at the pond on his property and found

my buck dead in the open pasture. The deer had not made it to the water and looked as if he died while walking. Over all I would guess the buck traveled some 500 yards.

Determined tracking played a role in finding this deer but ultimately using the decoy produced this deer for the taking. I had a few deer a week before pay no attention to my decoy but this buck was leaving the area when he turned and spotted it and came back to bow range producing a successful season.

I always put the decoy in the open where deer can see it. I know that movement is key, so I hang two squares of toilet paper from dental floss under the tail. Always put your decoy where you want to shoot. I use carry lite decoys and stash them by my trees under burlap and limbs.

If you still haven't tried a decoy, I encourage you to do so as it has beyond question produced several of my bucks over the years.