

An Alternative to Castration Bands for Open Reed Predator Calls

Open reed predator calls have used Green or Orange Castration Bands for years. They are effective, cheap, and easy to use.



But they are not very aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Especially on a nicely figured wood or acrylic call.

Some call makers have turned to cork to hold their reeds in place, but cork can dry out and fail, and an aggressive caller can cause the reed to become displaced even with a new cork.

After seeing one call maker use a flat O ring to hold his reed in place, I started working on an alternative to the Castration Bands we all use. This is what I have come up with. I have tested it and it hold well, and seems to handle the weather also.

Once you have your tone board shaped, it's time to cut a reed slot and put a band on it to tune it.

I chuck up the tone board in the step jaws on my chuck.



I am going to use a 1/8" parting tool to cut the groove in my tone board that holds my band. In the past, I used a small round nosed scraper to accommodate the round castration band. For this technique though, I need a flat bottomed groove.



This tool is a Craftsman from Sears. They carry them in their on line catalog. They run about 20 bucks each and are perfect for our needs here.

When cutting the groove, I make it about 3/16" wide. So I take one cut, and then a bit more. It does not have to be perfect, but the groove needs to be 1/32 to 1/16 wider than your band is going to be.

Once cut, the groove should look like this.



We will have to make our band next.

I use 7/16 OD by 1/4 ID Neoprene Tubing from McMaster Carr. It runs \$1.09 a foot. You can also use Vacuum Tubing from an auto parts store.



Cut a piece of tubing about 1/4 to 3/8" wide.



You will find that no matter what you use, razor blades, carving knives, scissors, it is near impossible to get a clean flat cut on this tubing.

The way around this, is to use a piece of dowel, or a pencil, to hold your tubing and sand it on a disk sander.



Flip the piece of tubing around and sand both sides, working it down until the band is about 1/8" wide. The disk sander will give the edges a nice even flat side.

Next, install the reed on your tone board, and work the band up towards the groove. Slide it straight up, do not let it "roll". When you get to the end, lift the

band up and set it in place in the groove and smooth it around the groove. When finished, the band will flow with the shape of the tone board, and be a clean and neat fit. It is very secure, and will hold your reed tightly.



You can see how the band is flush with the bottom of the tone board



And the sides of the tone board.

This is a little more work, and takes a little more time, but the end result is a band that does not detract from your call



This tutorial was brought to you by

THO Game Calls

Visit us on the web at

www.thogamecalls.com

for all your call making supplies.