

# Turning Crow Calls

## -The Latta Method-

This tutorial will cover how to make a crow call using the molded reeds sets we sell and how to modify them to make a much better end product for you and your customers if you sell them.

This method of seating the Crow Call Reed Kits was developed by Jerry Latta of Hawk's Feather Calls

Stop by and visit Jerry's web site for some beautiful calls and a wild selection of Bottle Stoppers for you wine connoisseurs.

<http://www.hawksfeathercustompredatorcalls.com/Welcome.html>

To get started, we will need the following:

A chuck with step or pin jaws

5/8" drill bit

3 to 3 1/2" turning blank

2 SAE 013 O rings

and a Crow Call Reed Kit



For this project, I am going to use a blank of Blackwood.

The first step is to find the center of our blank and then drill it out.



Once drilled, we will put it on a 5/8" mandral on the lathe. If you do not have a 5/8" mandral, you can turn spacers that will fit over your mandral and they will work just fine.



Now it's time to make some chips! Remember, this is your call, so have fun and turn it to a shape that you like. There are no hard and fast rules here – just DO IT!

Here's a tip that might help you put a bell shape in the end of your calls.

Take a 1/2" bolt and cut the head off and chuck it up in your drill press. Wrap the bolt with masking tape or athletic tape so you can slide the barrel of your call on snugly.



Using a piece of sand paper, sand the inside of the barrel until you get the desired shape. I start with 60 grit and go up to 800 on my bells.

As you can see



It works quite well and doesn't take much time at all.

Now go ahead and finish your call, both inside and out.

It is very important before we get to seating the reed kit that if you are going to sand and finish the inside of the call, that you do it now.

Don't worry about buffing it out just yet, but you do need to have the barrel finished.



Our barrel is ready to go now.

Now we need to get out our reed kit and the O rings as well as some black electricians tape, and we need to set up our lathe for the next step. Here is where the chuck comes in, You also will need your original live center that

came with your lathe and a knock out bar.

Take a look at your live center (the one that goes in the tail stock and turns)

You will see that it has a Point in it that allows you to center wood up for turning.



Take your knock out bar, and insert it in the end of the live center and gently tap until the point pops out.

These are meant to be removable so you are not messing anything up. Don't lose the center point though!



The inside of the live center has a slight taper to it, and we are going to use that to support out reed kit when we turn it down to size in the next step

Assemble your reed kit without the reed in it, and test fit it to your call. Remember that you drilled a 5/8" bore to start with. The Reed Kit is actually a MT 2 Taper so it will not fit in the call very far, maybe 1/4" to 1/2" inch. Do NOT force it.



Looks kind of funny like that, but we are going to fix it right up.

Remove the reed kit from the call and find your electrical tape and tape the mouth piece portion of the reed kit.



This will protect the reed kit from the jaws of your chuck.

Insert the reed kit into your chuck and close the jaws down snug. Not too tight, we are going to take very light cuts so just snug will work fine.



5/8".

I start my cut at the very end of the reed kit closest to the mouth piece. I want to leave a "lip" of about 1/16 to 1/8" here when I start to cut the taper down. This will keep the reed kit from ever sliding down inside the call.



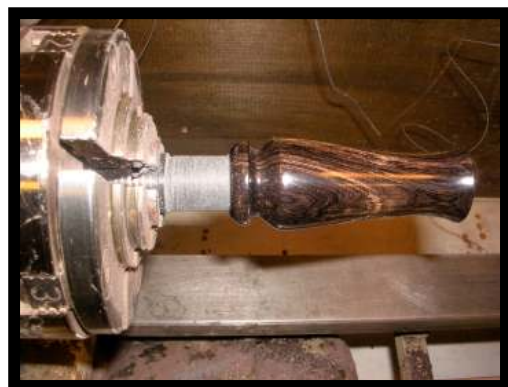
Next, take your live center without the center point and put it in the tail stock of your lathe and bring the tail stock up to steady the reed kit.

The red arrow shows the lip I left on this kit. Then, with a small skew or flat scraper, start turning the taper out of the reed kit.



Go slow and stop to test fit often. We are looking for a good smooth snug fit, but NEVER force the barrel onto the reed kit as you will break your barrel.

You're going to have to be careful here as your tool rest will not allow you to get very close to your work. So keep the speed DOWN and hold your tool firmly.



All we are going to do is take the taper out of the reed kit and make it a straight

Once you have the barrel just able to slide snugly on the reed kit, switch to

sand paper and smooth things out. You want to leave a nice finish here as the reed kit will be removable. I normally sand down to 600 grit. It is also a good idea to round over the very end of the reed kit so it slides in the barrel easier.



Perfect fit! And you can see the lip and how it stops the reed kit from sliding inside the barrel.



Slide the barrel off the reed kit and find your two SAE 013 O rings. These are the standard O ring we use on a 5/8" tennon which our reed kit now is. They measure 9/16" Outside diameter and are 1/16" wide and thick.

Bring the tail stock back up to support the reed kit, and using a small parting too, cut an O ring groove no more than 3/4" from the end of the reed kit.



Go slow and take light cuts. Test fit often. You can always take a little more off, but putting it back on, well, that never works.



You do not want to have to force your barrel over the O rings. When you are done, the O ring will be almost flush to the reed kit. So again, go slow, test fit often and take very light cuts the closer you get to where you should be.



If you look at the mouth end of the Reed Kit, you will see that it is pretty nasty, with mold marks and scratches on it.



This is what it will look like.

Cut another O ring groove in the reed kit about  $\frac{3}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch down from the mouth piece and test fit again until you have a good snug and secure fit to your barrel. Remember, slow light cuts are the key.

I am always amazed that a call maker would never think of not finishing a mouth piece on one of his calls, but will leave a crow or other reed kit unfinished.

Once you have the reed kit fit to the barrel, we are almost done. Just a couple more things to do to set your call apart from the rest.

We are going to use the chuck as a vice, nothing more. Just a way to hold the reed kit so we can pretty it up some.

Take the reed kit out of the chuck and remove the tape. Remove the O rings and wrap the end you cut the grooves in with more electrical tape.

Start with about 180 grit sand paper and sand the mouth piece to about 600 grit.



Now, put the reed kit back in the chuck so you can work on the mouth piece.

You will have a much better looking product and it shows that you care about what you are doing.

Once sanded, buff it out on your buffing wheel and assemble the kit with the reed and the O rings.



Looks better now!

Then slide the reed kit into your barrel and you are done. Buff the call out and go hunting!



This method of seating Crow Call Reed Kits is by far better than using a MT 2 Reamer. With the lip on the reed kit, a customer can NEVER push the reed assembly so far into the call that he splits the barrel. And, if the wood contracts and expands with the weather, the O rings provide an extra measure of security.

It also makes you look like a more knowledgeable call maker and that you have put some time and thought into your work.

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