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# An Interview with Eric Steinmetz Inventor of the 4-Play Turkey Call



Eric Steinmetz started building calls for himself in 2002. As an avid hunter, he was inspired to make calls that would help him entice a big gobbler into range. Doing so, Eric noticed that along with the creativity he enjoyed while making the calls, it also increased his enjoyment of hunting. His passion soon turned into an obsession and he found himself spending much of his day thinking about turkey calls and how he could make them so they would be more effective. In the evening, and sometimes long into the night, he would work on his calls. His "day-job" required him to travel, and so he spent his time on the road thinking about all things turkey. Eric says: "I would always have whatever call I was working on with me, and if I saw any turkeys while driving I would stop and see if I could call them in. The traveling also got me access to some great hunting properties that were owned by our customers who would generously agree to let me hunt there come spring time" It's easy to see the passion Eric has for turkey hunting as he lights up recounting his experiences in and around the sport.

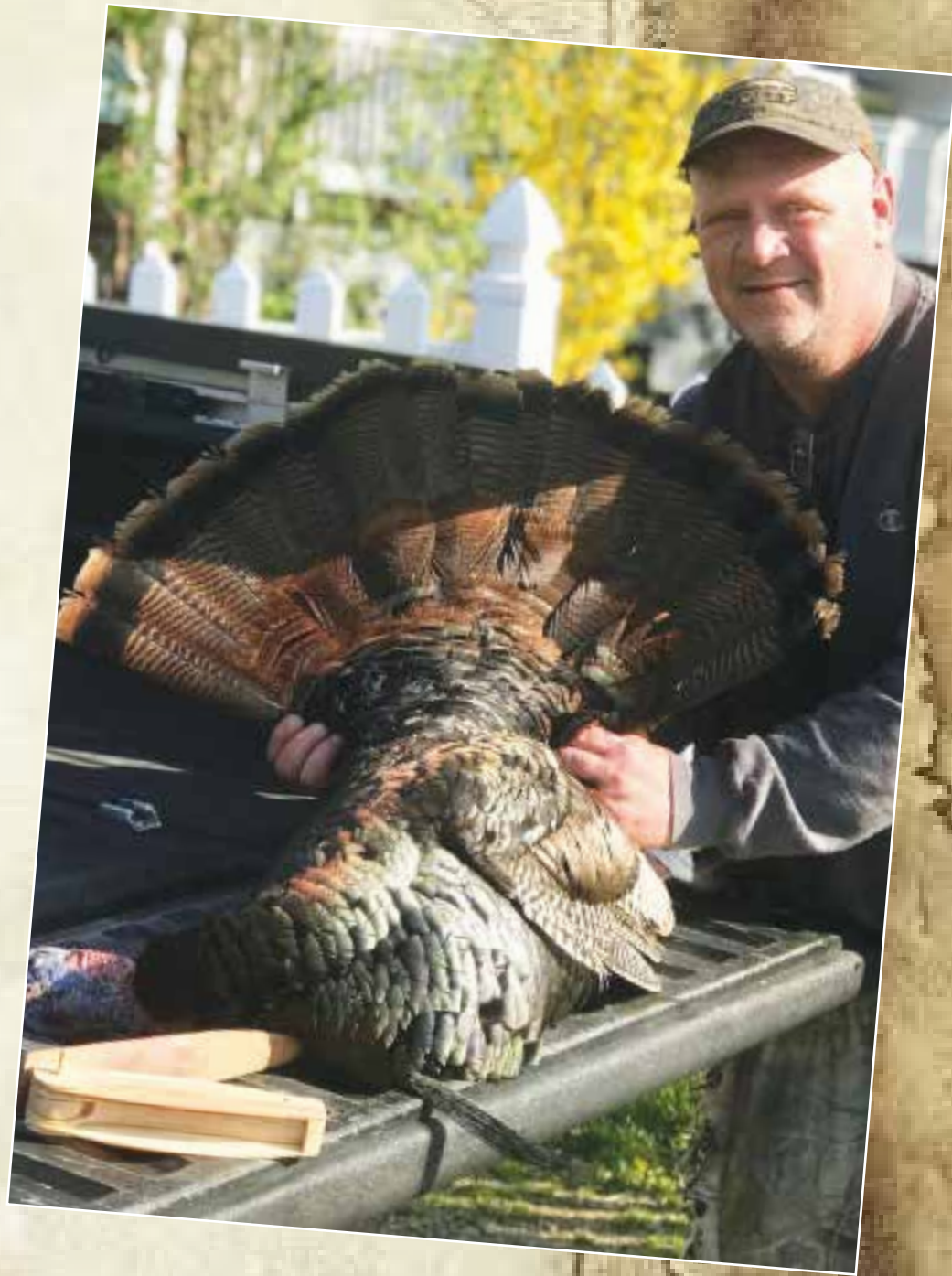
A co-worker asked him if he had ever sold any of his calls to other people. Eric remembers "I told him that I had never considered it and that I was only trying to build them to make myself a better hunter". But an idea had been born. Eric, along with his friend at work, began making calls together and selling them locally to fellow hunters. While Eric and his friend found many interested customers Eric had bigger plans. "I began thinking that it would be really helpful to me, and other hunters, if I could come up with a box call that was a little more versatile than a standard box call. I had experienced what so many other hunters have, of a bird hanging up just out of range and being forced to try to pick up another call only to spook him away". It was at this time that Eric began to formulate first a plan then a crude prototype of what would eventually become the 4-Play turkey call. After trying it out for himself in the woods Eric determined that it in fact worked and worked well. "I was so excited that my invention actually worked and birds really responded to it" Eric says.

After building and testing his design, Eric thought it was a good enough idea to try to get it patented. "I went out and got a provisional patent and spent every available minute in the shop perfecting the prototype." Obtaining a full utility patent is not an easy thing to do as Eric discovered. "My design was scrutinized very thoroughly. My patent application was actually rejected a couple times before we were able to describe properly in our appeal what makes it unique enough to warrant a patent. The 4-Play's ability to strike each of its sound rails in multiple locations allowing the user to generate multiple tones off each rail is what sealed the deal for us." Eric is quick to credit his wife with helping to bring his idea to reality. "She has always been very supportive even though I push the envelope with how much time and effort I put into turkey hunting". The patent now in hand what was Eric's plan? "I had a lot of options after I was granted the patent. In fact, so many options that it was a very difficult decision of what to do. I initially attempted to make the calls myself but that proved too difficult. I was not able to make each call by hand in an identical manner that I knew hunters would expect. So after that I decided to find a company that would take my call and produce it. I had several meetings with bigger companies but never found quite the right situation. Part of my hesitancy was that this was my baby and it was very hard totally giving up control. That's when fate stepped in. A friend of mine mentioned that he knew of a small woodworking company that might be able to help. After meeting with the owner I knew I

was on the right track. They were able to make the calls in a way that was phenomenal! They produce many of the parts using a CNC router and then refine, assemble, and finish each call by hand. It was an ideal arrangement for me because I can stay involved in the production and sale of the 4-Play. In fact I still personally tune each call that goes out.”

Eric has been an active participant in call competitions across the country. “I have been quite successful with the 4-Play in competitions. I was named Outstanding Rookie of the Year at the 2017 Mid-West Turkey call competition and also took 3rd place at the 2018 Buckeye Challenge World Championship”.

The 4-Play Turkey call is truly unique in design and brings hunters a new option to help them be more successful. It provides four sound rails each made of different woods and a forward mounted wheel that allows the user to switch between sides. Always a Turkey hunter first Eric sums it up this way: “It really is a versatile call. With a little practice hunters can make an almost unlimited number of tones and pitches. I just want hunters to use it and then hopefully send us pictures of them and their Gobbler! That’s what would really make me feel successful.”



If you are interest in learning more about the 4-Play Turkey Call you can visit their website: [4PlayturkeyCall.com](http://4PlayturkeyCall.com)  
Or call them at: Cutting Edge Game Calls 610-984-4099