

V. Personal Legacy

A dedicated family man and naturalist, Jeff views his work as a way of "transforming natural raw elements into functional works of art." His archive serves as a testament to the hunter-artist who finds as much joy in the success of others using his calls as he does in the creation of the piece itself.

Technical Addendum: Materials and Methodology

Craftsman: Jeff D'Agostino

Specialization: Osteological and Botanical Yelpers

I. Material Sourcing and Preparation (Osteology)

The foundation of the D'Agostino yelper is the wild turkey wingbone, the **radius, ulna, and humerus**.

- **Cleaning & Degreasing:** To ensure archival stability, bones undergo a rigorous multi-stage cleaning process. This involves the removal of all organic marrow and connective tissue, followed by a controlled degreasing phase to prevent future discoloration or structural degradation.
- **Sun-Bleaching:** Bones are naturally sun-bleached to achieve a clean, neutral white canvas.
- **Acoustic Assembly:** The bones are fitted together using traditional methods. The joints are sealed to be airtight, ensuring that the suction-style "yelp" is consistent and resonant.

II. Botanical and Composite Elements

In addition to bone, D'Agostino utilizes a variety of natural substrates to expand the tonal range and aesthetic profile of his instruments:

- **River Cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*):** Harvested and cured to provide a mellow, woody resonance often associated with early 20th-century callmaking.
- **Bovine Horn and Antler:** Used primarily for ferrules, mouthpieces, and bells. These materials are selected for their density, which provides a sharp, clear "cut" to the call's voice.

III. Illustrative Techniques: The Transition from Scrimshaw

A defining characteristic of D'Agostino's late-period work (2022–Present) is the shift from traditional scrimshaw to a **multimedia infusion process**.

1. **Surface Preparation:** The bone surface is polished to a high-grit finish to close the pores and create a smooth field for fine-line work.
2. **Pencil and Ink Rendering:** Using archival-quality ink and graphite, intricate wildlife scenes are hand-drawn directly onto the bone. This allows for a level of detail—such as individual feather barbs and anatomical shadowing—that exceeds the capabilities of traditional scratching.
3. **Color Infusion:** Pigments are strategically infused into the design to provide realistic tonality. This method ensures the color remains vibrant and does not sit "on top" of the bone but becomes part of the material itself.

4. **Sealant and Preservation:** Each call is finished with a protective coating that shields the artwork from the oils of the hand and environmental moisture, ensuring the piece remains field-ready while preserving its museum-quality appearance.

IV. Tuning and Calibration

The most critical phase is the **Acoustic Calibration**. Every call is hand-tuned to ensure a full "turkey vocabulary," including the yelp, cluck, and purr. D'Agostino treats the tuning phase with clinical precision, adjusting the length and diameter of the air channel to yield the specific frequency and "break" required for professional field use.

Legacy Statement: Jeff D'Agostino

My contribution to the history of American wild turkey hunting is rooted in the preservation of the **functional artifact**. I wish to be remembered as a craftsman who honored the primitive origins of the wingbone and yelper while elevating their aesthetic potential to the level of fine wildlife art. My work is intended to serve as a bridge between the deep-rooted traditions of the past and the evolving standards of contemporary craftsmanship.

Ultimately, I hope my legacy is found in the endurance of these instruments—not merely as silent pieces in a collection, but as vibrant, "living" tools that continue to echo the voice of the wild turkey. I strive for my work to be recognized as a testament to the belief that the tools of the woodsman should be as timeless, soulful, and enduring as the wilderness they represent.