

Trail Cameras

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Overview

In the early 1990's, researchers began using trail cameras to study elusive rain forest animals. Since then, researchers have used automatically triggered trail cameras to learn more about wildlife species along with estimating wildlife populations. Today, livestock



producers can use this tool to obtain information on local predators and even potentially identify problem animals. This can be an effective tool, because images captured can provide information on specific predators impacting livestock producers in areas with multiple predators present (e.g. bears, mountain lions and wolves). It is also affective in areas where scavengers may make depredation determinations difficult. Additionally, trail cameras can be left in the field continuously and cause little to no disturbance to wildlife.

Selecting a Trail Camera

Trail cameras come with many options that determine price, with basic cameras costing less than \$50. Some features to consider when purchasing a trail camera to track predators on livestock operations include:

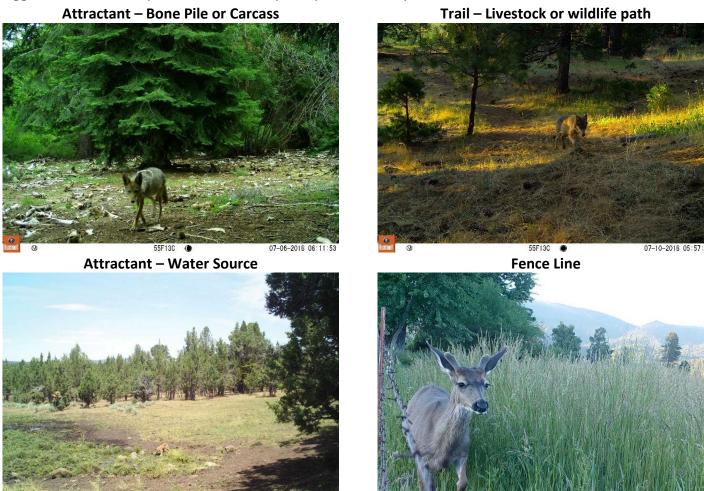
Night Vision	Infrared Flash	Memory Card	Video	Sound	Remote	LED/LCD
			Mode		Transfer	viewscreen
Yes	Yes	Yes	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
Many	This is an	This allows you to	This will	This will	You will need	Allows you
predators are	essential	invest in larger cards	require	require a	<u>cell service</u>	to view
active at night,	feature. When	that store more	a larger	larger	for this	images on
so you want to	images are	images and/or	storage	storage	feature to	trail
be able to	taken at night	videos. If you	card to	card to	send images	camera
capture	there is no	purchase extra cards,	capture	capture	from the trail	versus
images when	visible flash	you can exchange	more	video	camera to	viewing on
they are	that will scare	cards without	data.	with	your smart	computer
active.	away animals.	removing cameras.		sound.	phone.	later.

Additional options when selecting a trail camera to capture images on a livestock operation include:

Detection Range	Trigger Speed	Recovery Speed	Megapixels (MP)	
The distance a camera will	Time it takes between	Time needed between	Image quality. Anything	
detect movement. Important	animal movement and	images captured. A	above 10MP will provide	
consideration when placing	image taken. To	faster recovery speed	you with good images to	
camera on reliable structures	capture predators on	will allow more	identify predators. Larger	
(e.g. tree, fence) and distance	the move, a lower	images of animals	megapixels allow you to	
from key areas (e.g. water	trigger speed is	while in the camera	zoom in with better	
source, attractants, trail)	preferred.	detection zone.	clarity.	

Placement of Trail Cameras

The effectiveness of trail cameras is highly linked to placement, in order to capture images. Mount the camera on a solid post or tree that is not affected by wind or animal contact. If possible, find a location that is inconspicuous to deter animals from rubbing on it and/or people from stealing. Try to avoid pointing the camera directly east or west resulting in glare at sunrise and sunset. Remove tall grass and branches directly in front of the camera. If you question whether a tree branch or piece of grass will trigger the camera, remove it. Suggested locations to place cameras to capture predators on your ranch include:



Challenges

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Trail cameras can come with frustration when setting them up and disappointment when checking images to only find out a cow licked the camera and you did not capture any pictures for the past 5 days since the angle was pointed down. Vegetation (e.g. weeds or tree limbs) can also trigger the camera, capturing hundreds of pointless images. However, these trivial challenges don't overshadow the opportunity to know more about the presence of predators in your operation.

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Final Thoughts

The success of utilizing trail cameras to learn more about predators on your livestock operation requires patience in setting up cameras, attention to details when placing cameras in the field, and time devoted to checking images. As with any tool, success is dependent on operation-specific conditions.

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