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STARTING OUT WITH YOUR TRAIL CAMERA

Some hints and tips to help you get the best from your camera.

Trail cameras usually have a choice of still photos or video clips and the number of photos or clips per trigger. I set mine up to take 30 second video clips with one clip per trigger and have a 5 second gap between triggers. This can be done by going through the menu options. I find 30 seconds is a good length of time to record the action without filling your memory card to quick and for saving time when reviewing later.

Getting started

When turning on the camera the screen can take a couple of seconds to light up. Using the screen and arrow buttons you can work through the menu putting the time and date in and the set up you want.

E2 Ground spike

Choosing a trail camera with colour screen

If you have a choice I would go for a camera with a colour screen. The screen is ideal for re-viewing what you have taken while still out in the field or at home without needing to take the card out and put into a computer. It also helps you check you have the position right if you do a couple of test shots when setting up. If you don't have a colour screen you can get a USBa card reader for a mobile phone. With some cameras that have a colour screen the screen can also be used to take a shot or video manually by holding the camera with the cover open and using the screen as a live view monitor.
You can also use the camera as a night vision scope by holding it up in front of you and viewing the screen. The camera has a good field of view and with the infra-red lights you can see a good distance in the dark and pick up the shine from a pair of eyes at a much further distance.

The trail cameras are triggered by movement of heat (PIR) day or night with time stamp & temp.

Setting up

The cameras can be quite addictive, I've even taken the camera on holiday with me. When at the relations I set up in the garden. They live in quite an urban area, but I often capture the local foxes, hedgehogs as well as the local cats.

I place the camera at the edge of a path and looking down it so the camera would get more chance of a photo as something would be coming towards it (or going away) rather than just going across it. I use an E1/E2 small ground spikes with the camera just in the flower bed and lens about 25cm off the ground – a good level for the local fox or hedgehog. I did try putting the camera on the lawn but as the sun came up condensation from the wet grass fogged the front of the lens for a couple of hours. I found that putting the camera in the borders or a flower pot worked really well. For a hard surface we do have some mini tripods that are ideal for positioning your camera. I've built up a good record of the comings and goings of our garden hedgehog as the camera has a time stamp, temp. and moon phase along the bottom of the photo.

Hints & tips for downloading, viewing and saving

As with a normal digital camera there are many ways of downloading your photos – using camera make software or just through your windows explorer if you use a pc. You can use a separate card reader or the wire that came with your camera for your downloads and for viewing on your TV

I have a simple routine, but I'm sure there are many other ways of doing it. I use a card reader and open up in windows explorer, on mine DCIM comes up; double click. Then 100EK113 comes up; double click. Now the files are shown on screen.

To view the video clips/photos I click on the file and click on play (top left) in the windows media player. You can also double click on the file and the clip should open up automatically. This all depends on your computer and what operating system you have. As you view the clips/photos you can easily delete the ones that are clear or not of much interest. For the files you would like to keep you can click on the file number and re name it. I often put in what the clip is for example " Hedgehog 0012" where the original file number was 000012. From a download the clips/photos I want to save I copy to the computer. On my Window computer I have a file called " My Pictures" In " My Pictures" I have set up another file called "Trail camera clips" when I click on that I have more files titled Badgers, Hedgehogs, Deer. I also have one more general as Garden wildlife. Having a set up like this helps you go back and find the clips later. I also back up my video clips and photos to a separate hard drive for extra security. I'm not a real computer tech. person but saving downloads in this way does help to give me a bit of structure. I double back up onto 2 small hard drives and when I need to free up space on my computer, delete the oldest downloads.

Once a download is saved I put the SD card back into the camera and with the menu delete all the files on the card ready for the next set up.

C28 Neoprene bag & E1 Ground spike   C22 Mini tripod clamp

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