



Using Video for Conservation: Trail Cameras

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Choosing your camera:

- I use Browning trail cameras with SD cards (other brands are good, too)
 - Sensitivity and reliability
 - Short trigger delay
 - Excellent video and sound quality
 - Not too expensive (relatively)
 - Great customer service
- No-glow IR (infrared) flash (preferred) versus low-glow IR flash
- Trailcampro.com, Amazon, B&H Photo, others; Trailcampro.com has helpful reviews of cameras



Some pointers for setting up your camera:

- Mount it low (12" to 18" off ground), avoid south-facing (sun glare)
- Trim back vegetation or it will trigger your camera non-stop
- Look for animal signs (scat, trails, scent-marking scrapes, etc.)
- Point the camera in line with or diagonally down a wildlife (or human) trail, not across it
- Place near a water source if possible, especially crossings (beware of triggers from moving water)
- Scan through every video to the end (even squirrels), just in case
- Use a security box and cable lock
- Use decent SD cards
 - UHS Class Speed 3, Speed Class 10
 - Capacity big enough for videos (32 – 128 GB depending on how often you swap cards, make sure the capacity is compatible with the camera!)
 - Two SD cards per camera with waterproof case
 - Format the SD card in the camera and use in the same camera each time
- Batteries
 - Energizer Ultimate Lithium (they really do last longer)
 - External, solar, rechargeable 12-V batteries (much greener)



- Book [Camera Trapping Guide: Tracks, Sign, and Behavior of Eastern Wildlife](#) by Janet Pesaturo is THE book on camera trapping--available on Amazon.
- Janet's FaceBook group: **Trail Camera Photos and Videos**

Be respectful of people's privacy--do not hide or position cameras where people have an expectation of privacy (e.g., pointed at someone else's house). My cameras are on trails on private property. My neighbors know they're there and ignore them or give them a friendly wave as they walk by.

How does this help with conservation?

- Shows the presence of beautiful, interesting, and entertaining wildlife in our local habitats to build support for protecting those habitats
- Makes people curious about what is living in or passing through their own back yards, and potentially turn folks who didn't really interact with nature into enthusiasts and stewards
- Helps people to be more comfortable with the wildlife going about their lives around them (e.g., prevent freakouts about fisher, coyote, and bobcat sightings)