

The importance of utilizing Trail Cameras

Trail cameras have become a necessary tool for most deer managers and many deer hunters. Let me explain the three primary uses of trail cameras. Even though I am focused on deer you can use these methods on other animals as well.

1. Deer population surveys.
2. Deer patterning.
3. Security (Catching poachers and trespassers)

Let me now go into more detail;

Deer population surveys:

Because we are deer managers as well as deer hunters this process is the most important process for us. Being able to estimate our Fawn Recruitment Rate, Doe to Buck Ratio and how many individual Bucks we got pictures of is very important in educating us on the dynamics of the deer population in our immediate area. Please read my article ***“Knowing your Fawn Recruitment Rate is Important”*** where I explain the importance of knowing your Fawn Recruitment Rate. Also read my article ***“Why and how to manipulate your Doe to Buck ratio”*** where I explain the importance of knowing and possibly even manipulating your Doe to Buck ratio based on your own specific situation. (Your own recruitment rate, mortality rates, deer density etc.) Also, sorting through all of our pictures and determining the number of different Bucks is an important part of our survey. Being able to estimate how many different Bucks we got pictures of gives us something to compare season to season. We do a four week survey with our cameras. We place them at our feeders for two weeks and then we put the cameras on a field or food plot with corn in front of them for the other two weeks. (Placing corn is legal where we hunt) We like to do this with our cameras because we have determined that a small percentage of our deer avoid our feeders. By moving the cameras to a field we usually see a few different deer that do not go to our feeders. I have other articles where I cover the survey process in more detail.

Utilizing our software you can see in the example below how easy it is to track all of this information season by season.



deermanage.com

What Do You Want To Do ?

- Back To Welcome
- Property Description
- Section Descriptions
- Hunter Names

- Deer Sightings
- Deer Sightings Statistics
- Deer Harvested
- Deer Harvested Statistics
- Sightings & Harvest By Year

Home

testdeermanage

LogOut ?

- Enter Individual Bucks Counted
- Antler Statistics By Age
- Trail Camera Survey Counts
- Population & Harvest Estimate

Technical Support: [Contact Us](#)

Macon County Tract
Deer Sightings & Harvests By Year

[Print Report](#)

	Prior Years	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
# of Hunts	622	144	153	166	159	127	147	168	188	155	163	188	255	202	242	242	
# of Does	621	152	198	162	141	125	163	208	226	313	274	278	411	362	387	328	
# of Fawns	383	101	148	89	94	76	157	179	167	265	204	258	359	343	300	281	
# of Bucks	387	129	135	145	104	90	79	169	215	168	232	255	240	285	294	230	
Total # of Deer	1391	382	481	396	339	291	399	556	608	746	710	791	1010	990	981	839	
Avg.Does Per Hunt	1.00	1.06	1.29	.98	.89	.98	1.11	1.24	1.20	2.02	1.68	1.48	1.61	1.79	1.60	1.36	
Avg.Fawns Per Hunt	.62	.70	.97	.54	.59	.60	1.07	1.07	.89	1.71	1.25	1.37	1.41	1.70	1.24	1.16	
Avg.Bucks Per Hunt	.62	.90	.88	.87	.65	.71	.54	1.01	1.14	1.08	1.42	1.36	.94	1.41	1.21	.95	
Avg.Deer Per Hunt	2.24	2.65	3.14	2.39	2.13	2.29	2.71	3.31	3.23	4.81	4.36	4.21	3.96	4.90	4.05	3.47	
Recruitment Rate	.617	.664	.747	.549	.667	.608	.963	.861	.739	.847	.745	.928	.873	.948	.775	.857	
Doe : Buck Ratio	1.60:1	1.18:1	1.47:1	1.12:1	1.36:1	1.39:1	2.06:1	1.23:1	1.05:1	1.86:1	1.18:1	1.09:1	1.71:1	1.27:1	1.32:1	1.43:1	
Diff.Bucks Counted										45	51	45	54	58	60	70	56

The above sightings information was acquired through observation counts but camera counts will work just as well if not better. As a matter of fact most properties prefer to do a camera survey and just enter those counts into the software. I definitely recommend that everyone do a camera survey and keep track of those counts season to season. Even if I was just hunting 50 acres I would still track the information above just so I had something to compare season by season. Since we are not under a high fence we can see the effects if any our neighbors are having on our deer population. One thing we were able to determine is that our neighbors aren't shooting enough Does so we are able to compensate for that. We can also see if we are getting our Buck population reduced since we are trying to reduce it. Last but not least is watching our recruitment rate. Many areas are experiencing higher fawn mortality rates because of predators. Even though we have had an increase in our coyote population it has not hurt us yet but it's important that we keep an eye on it.

Deer patterning:

Many deer hunters like to place trail cameras out in the woods, on food plots or on agricultural fields so they can try to pattern the deer or possibly a specific deer. The camera may be placed on a rub line, over a scrape, near a bedding area or just a heavily used trail. The possibilities are endless. Some hunters have very limited hunting time available so if they can use a trail camera to help pattern a deer then it just might provide them the advantage they need to harvest this deer. Other hunters just like to use the camera as a scouting tool. Believe it or not I'm a little old fashioned when it comes to patterning deer. Even though I use the cameras for a camera survey I don't use them to scout my

hunting spots during the season. This is just my own personal preference. I just like finding appropriate Buck sign and then setting up on the spot to see if I can catch him during hunting hours. On the other hand my nephew enjoys putting a camera out during the season over a rub or scrape line to see if he can identify and pattern this specific Buck. This is one of those things where we say "To each his own".

Security:

This third use of cameras is not only used by some hunters, it is also used by many wildlife enforcement agencies. Placing infrared cameras around various areas of your property, home, campsite, deer stands etc. just may allow you to catch someone who is poaching or trespassing. Even though we use white flash (color) cameras for our camera survey we have a few infrared cameras that we use to monitor our property. (Access points, camp, feeders etc.) This allowed us to catch a thief a few years ago and it might be something you want to consider.

In summary, trail cameras have opened up a whole new world to deer management, scouting and security monitoring. I have heard so many hunters say that they don't have any big Bucks on their property and then they're shocked when they look at their trail camera pictures and sure enough there is a couple of big Bucks. You will learn a lot from the pictures from your property or area. For example, how many daytime pictures are you getting versus nighttime pictures and how many different Bucks are you getting pictures of. If you're using your cameras strictly for scouting then you may want to consider taking another step towards monitoring your deer population on your property or in your area. If you can educate yourself on the dynamics of the deer population on your property or in your area then you can then follow the changes from season to season. Know with certainty if there are any significant changes to your fawn recruitment rate, your Doe to Buck ratio or your Buck count.