

What is a trail camera, it's functionalities and why you should buy one!

What is a trail camera?

Trail cameras (or trail cams) are small, rugged cameras that are usually placed in specific spots to capture images and videos of immediate surroundings, usually for research and specifically for wildlife research and security concerns. It is also (secondarily, but just as efficiently) used for hunting, trekking, camping and much more.

Understanding how to use a trail camera is pretty straightforward. Modern trail cameras require a sim card to be inserted with a micro SD card. The sim card transmits the data (both video and photo) collected in the camera directly to your phone, while the SD card is used to collect the data that is transmitted. Some trail cameras also have the option of [encrypting the data that is being sent](#) from the camera to the phone.

In order to automatically trigger the shutter to either take photos or videos, the trail camera has a built-in heat sensor that automatically senses if there is a person/animal in the vicinity. This means that every time there is something near the camera, depending on what function it has been set for, it'll take photos or videos of the surroundings. These cameras are also extremely durable, being able to survive in the heat, rain, dust and other extreme conditions that most cameras can't handle (this varies from model to model). This means that trail cameras can be used throughout the year without hassles.

This wasn't very easy back in the day when trail cameras used film rolls and cameras were either wildly inconsistent or not durable. Advancements over the decades and the streamlining of several features have allowed trail cameras to become a convenient product for people who use it.

The initial purpose of the development of trail cameras was to [better facilitate research for whitetail deer sightings](#) by a couple of graduate students studying wildlife. They wanted to have accurate data of the deer when sighted and needed in-depth details about their fur, behaviorisms and other important details. This set the stage for further developments in trail cameras, with digital trail cameras being slowly adopted in the beginning of the 90s, becoming the norm in the mid-90s because of falling prices.

Functions

Most of the trail cameras that you might see have long battery life ([up to 10 months in certain cases](#)), convenient storage via micro SD and wireless capabilities to transfer data seamlessly to other devices. This has proved to be very beneficial to hunters, wildlife enthusiasts and people who use trail cameras for security purposes and in areas far from home. However, several trail camera reviews seem to indicate that there's a possibility of spotty connectivity, with the transfer of information being seamless only when there is solid connectivity in the area. When used in isolated locations far from mobile towers, this may prove to be an issue.

Overall, however, the positives far outweigh the negatives. Take a look at its use for security. Many people use trail cameras for security, and if you live in a place where there are a lot of trees and greenery, it won't be hard to hide one if you use camo tape or place it carefully. That and the small size of the camera makes it inconspicuous and difficult to find. This means that people with nefarious intentions will not realize that they're being recorded (or photographed).

Trail cameras are also used to [capture images and videos of cars and their license plates late at night](#) or even footage of four-legged intruders who ruffle through personal belongings and the trash, leaving the porch/lawn as a mess.

The image quality is usually pretty good too. However, manufacturers have been known to artificially (or rather, digitally) enhance the number of pixels that are captured. So while a trail camera may advertise that it has 16 megapixels (which it technically does), footage can look grainy and blurry. However, this seems to be a common issue with most cameras available, and it makes sense too considering the fact that these cameras are so tiny.

Why should you buy a trail camera?

If you're a trekker, camper, wildlife photographer/researcher or a hunter, trail cameras are extremely beneficial for use in situations where a thorough understanding of the environment is necessary (especially for campers and trekkers).

If you feel unsafe in your home or if you feel there's something amiss or mysterious going on in your property or the surroundings, trail cameras can be a prudent (and small) investment to better secure yourself. Trail cameras that are currently available in the market are advanced, durable and have become (more or less) a one time set up, with battery life stretching for months and information is transmitted automatically. Hence, surveilling your surroundings all year round is a possibility, and if that's something that is important to you, buying one should be a priority.