



Trail Cameras

Activities for Young Seabird Ambassadors

Introduction

We use camera traps (trail cameras) in order to get footage or evidence of species that it would be difficult to do by ourselves or if we were there. For example, in order to monitor the natural behaviour of Manx Shearwaters, which when on land are nocturnal, it is not practical to have someone out there observing them every night and disturbing them.

The camera works by picking up motion which activates it and starts recording. It can film in both the day and the night (using infra-red) so is great for getting footage of both diurnal and nocturnal species

Resources

- The project uses Bushnell cameras <http://bushnell.com/hunting/trail-cameras>
- They are expensive (£150 approx) but if your school has a budget for environmental science or I.T. then you may consider it useful for your class.

Instructions

- Before going out to put up the camera, make sure the batteries are fully charged and that an SD card with plenty of space is in the camera.
- Go into the setup section on the camera to do things like:
 - * Set how long you want the camera to film (30 seconds is usually good)
 - * Set how long an interval between filming and the camera being triggered again you would like (5-10 seconds is good as this means if the animal is still around you can get more footage of it.)
 - * The date and time (this is helpful to work out when things were seen, especially if you plan to go out and see them yourself)
 - * Other things such as the size and quality of the video and how sensitive the camera is can be adjusted too.
- When setting up your camera put it somewhere you know the animal goes or where it may go (for example a path or near a burrow)
- Avoid putting the camera anywhere that may disrupt the animal/get in the way of its movements.
- Strap the camera to a tree or rock and position it at a good angle (you can put sticks or a ball of grass in between the camera and what it is strapped to) – you may want to take a few test shots to make sure that it is in a good place.
- Adding a sign to your camera instructing people not to touch it may also be a good idea as people may get curious and move it out of position which can be very frustrating if you've spent a lot of time getting it just right.
- Make sure nothing is in front of the camera that may set it off (eg. A branch or plant blowing in the wind).
- Once the camera is position correctly don't forget to turn it on!

Important Information

- It is important to get permission from the landowner who owns the land that you wish to put the camera on.
- Whoever sets up the camera owns the images captured on the camera.



Back in the Classroom

- Look through the footage and make a video of what you've seen.
- Make a pie chart of how many/what species were seen.
- Play a game of 'guess the species' – this is where you can put the clips into a video/powerpoint and give the children cards to hold up or a quiz to guess what species they are seeing.



Why are the Cameras Important to the Project?

- We can use the cameras for our biosecurity checks to see if any rats are present in areas where they have potentially been sighted. This is particularly useful for seeing if there are any rats around that may not be going to our monitoring/bait stations.
- It's great to show other people the animals and success of the project

Our Footage

- Scilly shrew in an ink tunnel <https://vimeo.com/93234404>
- Manx Shearwater out of the burrow <https://vimeo.com/138402352>

What can you do for seabirds?

- Visit the website to find out about opportunities on the island to help the Seabird Recovery Project.
<http://www.ios-seabirds.org.uk/>
- Report and signs of rats on Agnes, Gugh or uninhabited islands by calling the number 01720 422153.
- Avoid disturbing seabird colonies.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Dispose of waste properly and help keep beaches clean.

