

Lesson 3: Camera Capture Caper

Objectives:

- Using information from habitat audits to develop a plan for data collection
- Deploy NCCC camera and understand important aspects of camera trap location

Timing and Implementation: 60 minutes. Outdoor lesson while deploying camera.

Materials:

- Camera trap and accessories
- NCCC [Data Sheet](#) (one for the real camera trap, students may use others for their faux cameras)
- Student faux cameras (if they completed homework option)

Introduction and Background:

Students begin data collection to learn more about mammals within their schoolyard habitat. The deployment of faux cameras serves to engage students during real camera deployment (as it is difficult to engage students around one camera trap) or serves as an opportunity for students to deploy a camera if the camera cannot be set on school grounds. Teachers are encouraged to deploy the real camera traps with students. If you are not able to bring students to the deployment site, consider searching for your GPS coordinates in Google Maps and explore the habitat through the satellite view prior to faux camera deployment so students can see where the real camera is located. It may be necessary to solicit parents to accompany small groups as both real and faux cameras are deployed.

If you need to refresh your memory on camera trap set up, you can view the [training materials here](#). Teachers may want to review this video for students going outside: [eMammal Academy - Field Activities](#)

Procedure:

1. Students bring faux cameras to class. Teacher reviews Camera Design Challenge assignment.
2. Start a discussion that reinforces concepts and takeaways from the habitat audit.
 - *What makes a good or poor location for camera traps?*
 - *Why is it important to set camera traps up correctly?*
3. Deploy real and faux cameras around the school yard according to NCCC protocols and schedules. Complete a [data sheet](#) for the real camera trap.
4. Leave the cameras deployed for three weeks and DO NOT go out to check on cameras during this period.
 - *Why not? **Visiting the camera trap frequently may cause animals to avoid the camera trap because of human scent or activity.***

5. Outside or back inside discuss what data the camera is collecting and review the importance of protocols to ensure repeatability and reproducibility.
 - *Why is it important to have protocols that everyone follows for data collection? Ensures repeatability and reproducibility of results and limits biases and errors in conducting experiments and/or collecting data from person to person.*
 - *What next steps might be involved in the mammal monitoring process we have started? Check camera(s) regularly, download photos, identify species captured in the photos, etc.*

Evaluation/Extension Option:

- Homework Option: Mammalian Monitoring Methods
 - In this assignment, students create a video to share with another class interested in deploying cameras. The video can be creative as students like but should include important steps involved in camera trap deployment, and why it is important to have a monitoring protocol (touching on reproducibility and repeatability).

