

Shut the gate on illegal hunting program: using Infrared Surveillance Cameras

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Introduction

Infrared Surveillance Cameras can be of great assistance to landholders and land managers in capturing evidence of trespassers, vandalism, suspected illegal hunters or other undesirable activity on properties.

Infrared Surveillance Cameras are specialised cameras that are designed to be used outdoors for long periods in order to detect and record a target species or object. They are often used by hunters to scout for game or by researchers to monitor wildlife.

They are also increasingly utilised by landholders to detect and deter illegal hunting and other types of rural crime. This Primefact helps landholders understand and use Infrared Surveillance Cameras and is part of the *Shut the gate on illegal hunting program*, a joint initiative of the DPI Game Licensing Unit and NSW Police Force.

How Infrared Surveillance Cameras work

Infrared Surveillance Cameras work by projecting an infrared beam on a target area. When this beam is broken, the camera is triggered to take an image, series of images or video footage of that area.

Images and footage are stored on memory cards that can be viewed on the camera or removed and viewed on a computer, tablet or similar. Some cameras can send images as texts or emails via a cellular network, WiFi or Bluetooth.

The information in this Primefact guides you through the basics of setting up and using Infrared Surveillance Cameras.

As with all new technology, the internet and social media sites such as YouTube can be an important source of further information.

Legalities of using Infrared Surveillance Cameras

To legally use Infrared Surveillance Cameras on properties landholders must:

1. Ensure a sign is posted at each entrance to the property warning that electronic surveillance devices may be in use.
2. Only provide images taken of people to Police or the DPI Game Licensing Unit for law enforcement purposes.

Some restrictions on using surveillance devices can also apply where employees and contractors work on properties. In these circumstances landholders should seek legal advice.



NSW Police Force

More information

For more information on the *Shut the gate on illegal hunting program* contact the DPI Game Licensing Unit on 02 6391 3750, game.licensing@dpi.nsw.gov.au or visit the DPI website www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting.

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (May 2017). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent advisor. ISSN 1832 6668

Step-by-step guide to using Infrared Surveillance Cameras

1. Choose a camera that's right for you

- A wide range of Infrared Surveillance Cameras are available online or from hunting and outdoors stores. Expect to spend between \$150 and \$1,000.
- Most cameras can take images as well as video during both the day and night.
- Be sure to get the best camera you can afford.
- Memory cards are often used to store images and footage (the same as normal digital cameras) – you may need to purchase a card with your camera.
- Cameras are generally battery operated so you may need to purchase these as well.
- Your camera should have detection speeds (how quickly a camera reacts after being triggered) between 0.5 and 1.5 seconds and a detection distance (how far out an object will trigger the camera) between 15 and 30 metres.
- To get the most out of pictures taken through the night, choose a camera that has black flash technology so the infrared beam cannot be seen at night.
- The camera should have a minimum of 10 megapixels, a backlit screen and a date/ time stamp function.
- Also consider purchasing a lock box or locking cable for your camera to act as a theft deterrent.



2. Learn how to use your camera

- Nothing is more frustrating than having spent time and money to set up a camera, only to have it fail through a lack of understanding of how it works or how and where to set it up to maximise your results.
- Read through the manufacturer's booklet carefully and set your camera up for some trial runs. Try targeting your dogs, the chooks or local wildlife in your backyard.
- Pay particular attention to the capture mode (video or still image) and the burst (how many images you want taken in a row). The most common setting is for still images on a 5-image burst to ensure you can identify a target.
- Ensure that you enable the image date/ time function.
- Always start with fresh batteries and an empty memory card. Some cameras require lithium batteries.
- Trees and fence posts are most popular mounting points. Choose the best point to conceal the camera.
- Make sure you set your camera up around 10 – 15 metres from a point of interest like a road, shed or fuel tank.

3. Setting up your camera

- Remember, your camera triggers upon movement so don't set it up where it will be constantly triggered, such as alongside trees or shrubs that blow in the wind and trip your camera unnecessarily.
- Consider when you are most likely to detect something (night, early morning and late afternoon are best) and make sure your camera is never facing into the sun or other light at these times, otherwise the image will be over exposed.
- Make sure the angle of your camera relative to its mounting point ensures the camera is pointing directly at your target.
- Conceal your camera as best you can with camo netting or vegetation.
- Consider a lock box or cable to deter theft of cameras.
- Turn the camera on, select your capture mode and make sure you arm the camera before you leave the area.
- Often it's best to trigger the camera and check the image to ensure it is working.
- Make sure you place signs at the entrances to your property alerting everyone that they may be monitored.



4. Managing images and footage

- Cameras can be checked as frequently as required. The memory card on most cameras can be accessed without having to remove the camera from its set position.
- You will need a computer with an inbuilt memory card reader or plug in card reader to view the images or footage, although some cameras may allow you to view the files on an inbuilt screen.
- It is likely that your camera will record many non-target images of wildlife, pets, family members or workers. Look for unfamiliar vehicles, people or domestic animals. These will often show up as a sequence of images.
- Incriminating images showing vehicles with number plates or the faces of suspected illegal hunters should be stored on your computer or a thumb drive, then given to Police or the DPI Game Licensing Unit. This can be done by providing an illegal hunting report through Crime Stoppers by calling **1300 333 000** or online at www.crimestoppers.com.au.
- When resetting your camera be sure to check your batteries and replace the memory card, clean of any images.

