

**Aims:**

Set up a trail camera to capture photos of some elusive wildlife

You will need:

- A trail camera
- Padlock & chain (from a hardware store)

Discussion:

Many animals are shy, avoid humans, nocturnal or particularly active at dusk and dawn - not times when most of us are out – and so difficult to see out and about. So, how could we find out what animals are in our local environment?

Well we can look for signs of animals being around (see activity 6.6). Or we could set a motion activated camera out in woods, garden, or riverbank and see if we can capture photos or video of animals that live close by.

Instructions:

1. Familiarise yourself with the camera menu before you go out and set up the options - are you going to take still photos or video?
2. Head out into the woods (or other likely local location) and site your camera. Here's some helpful hints as where to put it:
 - Somewhere where people don't commonly go – remember animals will often avoid people and we're trying to capture photos of animals not people!
 - Try and find an animal trail – a wee path that looks like an animal might use it. If you find one then try to set the camera at an angle of roughly 45° to the path i.e. not looking directly down or straight across it.
 - You could set up a bait station on a log or large rock and point the camera at this. Baits like bird seed, nuts or peanut butter can encourage animals to visit.
 - Set the camera at the appropriate distance from the path/bait station (most cameras have a focal distance of about 1-1.5m)
 - You should set the camera at the best height depending on what you are trying to photograph - ideally roughly at the animal's eye height.
 - Attach your camera securely to a fixed object like a tree or fence post and use a chain and small padlock to secure it.
3. Make sure you have no grass or branches in front of the camera that will blow in the wind and trigger the camera or hide your view of the animal. Press the on button and retreat.
4. Leave the camera for a few days at least before checking it. Be patient!

Handy notes:

Don't disturb wildlife in your attempts to photograph them!

Keep clear of nests and burrows wherever possible.

Have a look at some of the [wildlife footage](#) that the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative filmed.

If you have footage you'd like to share then send it to us and we'll use it on our website and social media. You can email it to: sisi@nature.scot

Do more:

Make your own wildlife documentary! Have a go at video editing and join different bits of footage together and record a voice over describing the animals and what they are doing.