

A review of camera trapping for conservation behaviour research

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Remote Sensing in Ecology and Conservation

DOI:
[/10.1002/rse2.48](https://doi.org/10.1002/rse2.48)

Published: 01/09/2017

Peer reviewed version

[Cyswllt i'r cyhoeddiad / Link to publication](#)

Dyfyniad o'r fersiwn a gyhoeddwyd / Citation for published version (APA):

Caravaggi, A., Banks, P. B., Burton, A. C., Finlay, C. M. V., Haswell, P., Hayward, M., Rowcliffe, J. M., & Wood, M. D. (2017). A review of camera trapping for conservation behaviour research. *Remote Sensing in Ecology and Conservation*, 3(3), 109-122. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rse2.48>

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1 Review

2 **A review of camera trapping for conservation behaviour research**

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20 **Running title:** Camera traps and conservation behaviour

21

22 **Word count**

23 **Abstract:** 211

24 **Main text:** 4,297

25 **Acknowledgments:** 95

26 **References:** 3,678

27 **Tables:** 556

28 **Figures:** 113

29

30 **Tables:** 2

31

32 **Figures:** 1

33

34

35 **Abstract**

36 An understanding of animal behaviour is important if conservation initiatives are to be
37 effective. However, quantifying the behaviour of wild animals presents significant challenges.
38 Remote-sensing camera traps are becoming increasingly popular survey instruments that have
39 been used to non-invasively study a variety of animal behaviours, yielding key insights into
40 behavioural repertoires. They are well-suited to ethological studies and provide considerable
41 opportunities for generating conservation-relevant behavioural data if novel and robust
42 methodological and analytical solutions can be developed. This paper reviews the current state
43 of camera-trap-based ethological studies, describes new and emerging directions in camera-
44 based conservation behaviour, and highlights a number of limitations and considerations of
45 particular relevance for camera-based studies. Three promising areas of study are discussed: i)
46 documenting anthropogenic impacts on behaviour; ii) incorporating behavioural responses into
47 management planning; and iii) using behavioural indicators such as giving up densities and
48 daily activity patterns. We emphasise the importance of reporting methodological details,
49 utilising emerging camera trap metadata standards and central data repositories for facilitating
50 reproducibility, comparison and synthesis across studies. Behavioural studies using camera
51 traps are in their infancy; the full potential of the technology is as yet unrealised. Researchers
52 are encouraged to embrace conservation-driven hypotheses in order to meet future challenges
53 and improve the efficacy of conservation and management processes.

54
55 **Key words:** Ethology, remote sensing, anthropogenic impacts, behavioural indicators,
56 monitoring, management
57

58 **Introduction**

59 Animal behaviour is an important component of conservation biology (Berger-Tal et al. 2011),
60 and, hence, is of considerable interest to researchers and wildlife managers (Caro and Durant
61 1995). For example, behavioural studies can increase our understanding of species' habitat
62 requirements (Pienkowski 1979), reproductive behaviour (Cant 2000) and dispersal or
63 migration (Doerr et al. 2011), and elucidate impacts of habitat fragmentation (Merckx and Van
64 Dyck 2007) or climate change (Moller 2004). Animal behaviour can also be a useful
65 monitoring tool, with individual and group-level responses used to evaluate the impacts of
66 management (Morehouse et al. 2016). It is important, therefore, to incorporate behaviour into
67 conservation planning; its omission limits efficacy of conservation actions and could lead to
68 failure (Berger-Tal et al. 2011). The confluence of conservation biology and ethology has come
69 to be known as 'conservation behaviour', wherein conservation problems are addressed by the
70 application of behavioural research (Blumstein and Fernández-Juricic 2004; Berger-Tal et al.
71 2011).

72 Quantifying the behaviour of wild animals presents significant challenges. Direct
73 observation of animals can allow the evaluation of individual responses to environmental
74 stimuli. Such studies may be weakened, however, by the influence of the human observer on
75 focal animals (Nowak et al. 2014) and limited by small sample size and logistical constraints
76 (Bridges and Noss 2011). Furthermore, only a limited number of species and habitats are
77 amenable to direct, field-based observations (e.g. larger species and those that can be
78 habituated; and in open and accessible habitats). Many of these have already been the focus of
79 direct behavioural research (Schaller 1967; Kruuk 1972; Caro 1994) or may be atypical of more
80 common habitats and can lead to inconsistent results (Laurenson 1994 vs Mills and Mills 2014).
81 In cases where focal animal(s) cannot easily be directly observed, the vast majority of field-
82 based behavioural studies have used radio (VHF) or satellite (GPS) telemetry, activity sensors

83 and/or biologgers (e.g. Lewis et al. 2002; Grignolio et al. 2004; Shamoun-Baranes et al. 2012;
84 Bouten et al. 2013). The advantages and disadvantages of these methods, which are currently
85 the gold-standards for obtaining spatio-temporal behavioural data, are summarised in Table 1,
86 highlighting that while these devices can provide powerful insights, they also have significant
87 logistical and inferential limitations. Consequently, the suite of species that have had their
88 behaviour quantified is biased and limited. New methods of obtaining behavioural data are,
89 therefore, urgently required.

90 Camera traps (i.e. cameras that are remotely activated via an active or passive sensor;
91 hereafter referred to as CTs) offer a reliable, minimally-invasive, visual means of surveying
92 wildlife that substantially reduces survey effort. CTs are increasingly popular in ecological
93 studies (Burton et al. 2015; Rovero and Zimmermann 2016) and provide a wealth of
94 information that is often of considerable conservation value (e.g. Ng et al. 2004; Di Bitetti et
95 al. 2006; Caravaggi et al. 2016). Continued technological improvements and decreasing
96 equipment costs (Tobler et al. 2008a), combined with their demonstrated versatility (Rovero et
97 al. 2013), mean that CTs will only continue to grow in popularity. CT data take the form of a
98 still image or video of an individual or a group of individuals, of one or more species, which
99 have been detected within the camera and location-specific zone of detection. These images
100 can be linked with additional information, including the date, time and location at which the
101 image was recorded. CT surveys have been effectively used to quantify species diversity
102 (Tobler et al. 2008b), relative abundance (Carbone et al. 2001; Villette et al. 2017) and
103 population parameters (Karanth et al. 2006; Rowcliffe et al. 2008), demonstrate site occupancy
104 of rare or cryptic species (Linkie et al. 2007) and describe species replacement processes
105 (Caravaggi et al. 2016). CTs have also been used in behavioural studies (Bridges and Noss
106 2011; Maffei et al. 2005). In a recent review of 266 CT studies, Burton et al. (2015)

107 characterized one-third as addressing behavioural questions (e.g. activity patterns, diet; Table
108 2).

109 In this paper, we review some of the recent literature on animal behaviour as elucidated
110 by camera trapping studies. We then describe a number of common issues encountered by
111 researchers undertaking such surveys and, finally, suggest future avenues of research that may
112 be of considerable benefit to conservation initiatives. This review serves as a point of reference
113 for researchers and practitioners undertaking conservation-oriented CT surveys of animal
114 behaviour.

115

116 **Current applications of camera traps to animal behaviour**

117 CTs are well-suited to ethological studies, providing increasing opportunities to
118 undertake extensive and detailed sampling of wild animal behavioural repertoires (see Fig. 1
119 and Table 2 for examples). The nature of the technology confers a number of important
120 benefits. For example, CTs facilitate detailed studies of behaviours in species that were
121 previously considered too small or elusive to be reliably observed in the field. CTs have been
122 used to understand burrowing behaviour in <40g northern hopping-mice (*Notomys aquilo*;
123 Diete et al. 2014) and olfactory communication in native and introduced <120g rats (*Rattus*
124 sp.; Heavener et al. 2014). The use of CTs may also lead to a reduction in observer bias as,
125 while a human observer is required to review collected images and assign individual and/or
126 species identities and behaviours, cameras allow independent verification and recurrent
127 analysis of observations. This is in contrast to conventional field methods for documenting
128 behaviour, where it is rarely possible for another scientist to independently verify observational
129 data.

130 Many types of animal behaviours have been studied with CTs (Table 2), including
131 foraging (Otani 2001), daily activity patterns (Tan et al. 2013), scent marking (Delgado-V. et
132 al. 2011), movement (Ford et al. 2009), livestock depredation (Bauer et al. 2005), and use of a
133 variety of habitat features including dens/burrows (Clapham et al. 2014), urban habitats (Marks
134 and Duncan 2009), corridors (LaPoint et al. 2013) and waterholes (Hayward and Hayward
135 2012). CT studies have often yielded key behavioural insights that may otherwise have
136 remained unknown, many of which could be important to conservation processes. For example,
137 studies investigating the efficacy of highway crossings in Banff National Park, Canada,
138 described the effectiveness of under- and over-passes, an expensive and controversial means
139 of impact mitigation (Clevenger and Waltho 2000; Ford et al. 2009), which is now being
140 duplicated in other parts of the world. Picman and Schriml (1994) observed the predators of
141 quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) nests in a variety of habitats, elucidating temporal variation and
142 relative importance of each predatory species. The application of this method to the study of
143 threatened avifauna has clear conservation benefits via the identification of direct impacts on
144 egg success and the development of appropriate mitigation and monitoring techniques.
145 Similarly, cameras provide more accurate post-hibernation den-emergence estimates for
146 American black bears (*Ursus americanus*) than conventional methods, i.e. den visits and radio
147 telemetry (Bridges et al. 2004). Long-term monitoring of emergence relative to climate may
148 yield important insights into the effects of climate change on black bears and other hibernating
149 species (*sensu* Bridges and Noss 2011).

150 The majority of ethological CT studies conducted thus far have been primarily
151 curiosity-driven, rather than being motivated by applied conservation-focussed hypotheses.
152 This is not to say that a large number of these studies do not have conservation value. On the
153 contrary, the conservation relevance of the data is often explicitly discussed. It is apparent,
154 however, that there is an increasing need for conservation-driven studies. CTs are among the

155 most promising and flexible tools available and we are only beginning to explore their
156 potential.

157

158 **Emerging directions in camera-based conservation behaviour**

159 The growth in popularity and application of CT surveys and novel solutions to non-behavioural
160 questions of animal ecology (e.g. Rowcliffe et al. 2008; Martin et al. 2015; Bowler et al. 2016)
161 suggests that creative methodological and analytical solutions will be increasingly used to
162 investigate animal behaviours. If these novel studies are to be developed, it is important that
163 researchers strive for true experimental designs focussed on conservation behaviour. A
164 particular strength of CT surveys is the potential for multiple studies to be carried out
165 concurrently (e.g. estimation of focal species population density and the species richness of the
166 surveyed area). Thus, behaviour can be recorded alongside other important parameters, thereby
167 facilitating insight into processes such as density-dependent behaviours and responses to
168 climate change. New approaches are also being developed to move beyond correlational
169 approaches and incorporate CTs into manipulative experiments, such as measuring animal
170 behavioural responses to introduced stimuli (e.g. predator calls; Suraci et al. 2016).

171 Berger-Tal et al. (2011) described three ways in which behavioural research can be of
172 conservation benefit: i) identifying the impact of anthropogenic environmental changes on
173 behaviour; ii) considering behavioural aspects of conservation initiatives ('behaviour-based
174 management'); and iii) identifying behavioural indicators which are suggestive of changes in
175 populations or the environment. We use this framework as a basis for our recommendations,
176 below.

177

178 *Anthropogenic impacts*

179

180 An important area of conservation research lies in understanding the influence of
181 anthropogenic stressors on animal behaviours and predicting the resulting population-level
182 responses in order to inform management practices. Stressors such as habitat fragmentation,
183 disturbance, the creation of ecological traps and the introduction of non-native species can have
184 significant effects on behaviour (Robertson and Hutto 2006) and, hence, fitness (Berger-Tal et
185 al. 2011). For example, animals may exhibit increasing wariness in areas of greater disturbance
186 (Stewart et al. 2016) and may change their daily activity patterns in close proximity to human
187 populations (Carter et al. 2012). While anthropogenic impacts are generally negative, some
188 species show benefits such as increased occupancy in fragmented landscapes (Fleschutz et al.
189 2016), or using human activity to evade apex predators (Muhly et al. 2011; Steyaert et al. 2016).
190 Impacts on one species may also have spillover effects on the wider ecological community
191 (Wright et al. 2010; Clinchy et al. 2016).

192 Habitat fragmentation, the division of large, connected habitats into small, isolated
193 fragments separated by dissimilar habitats, is a major conservation issue (Haddad et al. 2015).
194 Fragmentation has a wide range of potential impacts on species and ecosystems (e.g. via edge
195 effects, patch size, shape and complexity and distance from other patches; Fahrig 2003), and
196 these impacts may be mediated through effects on animal behaviour. CTs provide new
197 opportunities for documenting behavioural responses to fragmentation. For example, the
198 activity patterns of nine-banded armadillos (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) varied in association with
199 forest patch size, among other factors, while patch time-since-isolation was predictive of agouti
200 (*Dasyprocta leporina*) activity (Norris et al. 2010).

201 The disruption of dispersal behaviour can lead to the endangerment and potential
202 extinction of isolated populations by various mechanisms, including changes to genetic
203 diversity and structure (Keyghobadi 2007), stochastic threats (Fischer and Lindenmayer 2007)

204 and long-term displacement effects (Ewers and Didham 2005). Using CTs to document
205 dispersal behaviour can improve understanding of responses to movement disruption
206 (Blumstein and Fernández-Juricic 2004) and inform design and implementation of mitigation
207 measures that encourage dispersal. Aimed at species with individually-identifiable markings
208 or tags, individual-level analysis is potentially possible, although inferences about dispersal
209 can also be drawn without individual identification. For examples, cameras are well suited to
210 quantifying use of presumed dispersal routes or movement corridors, including mitigations
211 designed to promote connectivity (e.g. highway crossings; Clevenger and Waltho 2005; Ford
212 et al. 2009). CTs can also be used to identify colonization of new habitat patches (including
213 range expansions or species invasions) and parameterize landscape connectivity models
214 (Brodie et al. 2015).

215 No studies have integrated environmental sensors into CT studies investigating
216 anthropogenic impacts on behaviour, and we believe this is a promising area for future
217 development. Local temperature, precipitation and humidity can readily be recorded, and
218 phenocams can be used to document vegetation and environmental changes (Brown et al.
219 2016). Collecting such information alongside CT-based behavioural data will allow us to
220 increase our understanding of how animals respond to changing conditions at both large
221 (population) and small (localities within home ranges) spatial scales. This is particularly
222 important given the rapid changes that are predicted to occur under climate change.

223

224 *Behaviour-based management*

225 Berger-Tal et al. (2011) suggested that behaviour-sensitive management and behavioural
226 modification are two key pathways through which ethology can inform active management for
227 conservation. The former considers animal behaviour in the design of reserves and corridors,

228 planning species reintroductions and translocations, and epidemiology with the goal of
229 stabilising or increasing threatened populations or controlling pest or invasive species.
230 Behavioural modification focuses on changing or preserving key behaviours within a focal
231 population. CT surveys have the potential to inform both of these areas.

232 Considering social dynamics is one important area in which CT surveys can inform
233 behaviour-sensitive management. Social species, i.e. those that interact and/or live together,
234 often exhibit complex inter-group relationships and social structure (Rowell 1966; Creel 1997;
235 Archie et al. 2006; Wolf et al. 2007; Wey et al. 2008), that are susceptible to rapid change via
236 the social displacement or death of one or more individuals. This can have severe consequences
237 for the species and/or their environment (e.g. Nyakaana et al. 2001). Social Network Analysis
238 (SNA) facilitates the study of relationships between nodes (i.e. individuals), within networks
239 (i.e. social groups; Sueur et al. 2011). The methodology is increasingly used to study animal
240 behaviour (Lusseau et al. 2006; Whitehead 2008; Voelkl and Kasper 2009; Jacoby and
241 Freeman 2016). Examples of SNA demonstrating a direct benefit to conservation, however, are
242 few. SNA studies are limited in that they require the reliable identification of individuals and,
243 hence, are only applicable with CTs where animals exhibit individual characteristics or
244 markings, or where marks (e.g. tags) can be attached. However, placing cameras in areas
245 frequented by social groups such as feeding or resting sites, and with a sufficient number of
246 units, could yield a considerable amount of important data for behaviour-sensitive
247 management. Such site-specific studies have some limitations and incur biases that require
248 evaluation. For example, individuals may not be equally detectable, or full groups may not be
249 observed. Furthermore, it would be difficult to account for behaviours and social interactions
250 which occur while away from the focal site. However, SNA analyses do not require constant
251 observation of all group members to be effective (see Jacoby and Freeman 2016). Assessing

252 potential bias with calibration by direct observation or other methods and placing observations
253 in appropriate contexts is therefore important.

254 SNA has the potential to increase our understanding of disease or pathogen
255 transmission and individual or group vulnerability (Krause et al. 2007), an issue of particular
256 relevance to the conservation of species which are susceptible to outbreaks (e.g. Hamede et al.
257 2009). SNA studies have demonstrated that the removal of certain individuals (e.g. via hunting)
258 can have a considerable effect on the stability of the social network (e.g. Flack et al. 2006),
259 thus demonstrating their potential utility in elucidating the impacts of the bushmeat trade on
260 inter- and intra-group dynamics in primates, for example. Furthermore, SNA has implications
261 for reintroduction programmes, where the (re)construction of cohesive social structures in a
262 captive setting would be necessary for the return of the focal species to the wild (Abell et al.
263 2013). Studies of the relationships between individuals, therefore, can help us to understand
264 how social behaviour is influenced by a variety of factors and, hence, provide an additional
265 means by which practitioners can build an evidence base to address conservation questions.

266 CTs can also be applied to studies of behavioural modification. For example, Davies et
267 al. (2016) investigated responses of African herbivores to changes in predation risk resulting
268 from recently-reintroduced lions. Cameras could also be used to monitor animal responses to
269 conflict mitigation measures such as the use of bees or chilli to deter crop-raiding elephants
270 (Karidozo and Osborn 2015; Ngama et al. 2016).

271

272 *Behavioural indicators*

273 The ways in which animals adapt their foraging behaviour in human-impacted environments
274 have important implications for their abilities to adapt and persist under increasing pressures.
275 Behavioural indicators can be used to assess the state of animals and the environments they

276 inhabit, highlighting important conservation issues such as population decline or habitat
277 degradation, or being used to monitor the efficacy of management (Berger-Tal et al. 2011).
278 Behaviour effectively acts as an early-warning system, indicating changes to processes before
279 they are evident through, for example, population decline.

280 The giving up density (GUD; i.e. the amount of food left behind from a known starting
281 quantity; Brown 1988) is one such behavioural indicator that has been used to study predation
282 risk (Orrock 2004; Severud et al. 2011), energetic costs (Nolet et al. 2006), forager state and
283 forage quality (Hayward et al. 2015), plant toxins (Emerson and Brown 2015), competition
284 (Brown et al. 1997) and predator-prey dynamics (Andruskiw et al. 2008). It is also central to
285 describing the “landscape of fear” (i.e. relative levels of predation risk within an area of use)
286 of an animal and its habitat preferences, which are direct behavioural indicators with significant
287 conservation implications (Kotler et al. 2016). CTs offer a relatively reliable way of using the
288 GUD technique to ask more in-depth questions of conservation relevance. For example, CTs
289 have been used to calculate GUDs for multiple species (Lerman et al. 2012), examine (Mella
290 et al. 2015), and differentiate individual versus group foraging habits (Carthey and Banks
291 2015). These observations can then be used to inform the development of hypotheses relating
292 to the broader effects of local food and predator abundance, predation pressure and inter- and
293 intra-specific competition. With advancements in CT technology and creative experimental
294 design, a wealth of conservation-focussed GUD applications are now possible.

295 A key strength of CTs lies in collecting data on multiple species, either as bycatch in a
296 focal study, or as part of a specific multi-taxa investigation. Accordingly, there has been an
297 increasing focus on assessing species interactions and niche partitioning via comparisons of
298 co-occurrence and activity patterns (de Almeida Jacomo et al. 2004; Kukielka et al. 2013;
299 Farris et al. 2014; Wang et al. 2015; Bu et al. 2016; Cusack et al. 2016; Sweitzer and Furnas
300 2016). Animal activity patterns are shaped by a number of factors, including foraging

301 efficiency (Lode 1995), predator/prey activity (Middleton et al. 2013), photoperiodism
302 (McElhinny et al. 1997), and competition (Rychlik 2005). Conservation-focussed studies using
303 these methodologies, however, are scarce. Changes in the way species interact and use the
304 landscape may be indicative of responses to changing environmental pressures and, hence, can
305 direct development of early conservation strategies. For example, brown bears (*Ursus arctos*;
306 Ordiz et al. 2013) altered their movement patterns and wolverines (*Gulo gulo*; Stewart et al.
307 2016) behaved differently when faced with human disturbance, potentially impacting their
308 ecosystem roles and, hence, associated species and habitats. Disturbance of the activity patterns
309 of one or more species in a dynamic interaction, particularly ecological competitors or
310 predators and prey, can therefore be interpreted as indicative of environmental changes and,
311 hence, suggest additional lines of enquiry and highlight areas of conservation concern.

312

313 *Scaling-up*

314 Cameras can be used to monitor large-scale biodiversity conservation processes (O'Brien et al.
315 2010; Ahumada et al. 2013) and investigate animal behaviour on a landscape scale. Scaling-up
316 CT networks would provide stronger, larger-scale inferences on spatio-temporal variation in
317 behaviours (Steenweg et al. 2016). Studies conducted on a broader scale have inherent
318 limitations, however, that are not necessarily considerations for more localised investigations.
319 The trade-off between the scale of investigation and camera array density has spatio-temporal
320 implications which must be considered when designing a study, formulating hypotheses and
321 deriving inferences from resultant data. Broad-scale studies are also ostensibly limited by the
322 number of researchers available to place and check cameras and process data. The recruitment
323 of volunteers (i.e. citizen scientists), however, offers a means of expanding the scope of
324 research (Cohn 2008), greatly expanding spatial coverage and delivering a wealth of temporally

325 comparable data (McShea et al. 2016). Emerging large-scale camera monitoring initiatives,
326 such as Snapshot Serengeti (www.snapshotserengeti.org; Swanson et al. 2015) and Wildcam
327 Gorongosa (www.wildcamgorongosa.org) demonstrate the benefits of this approach. CT
328 projects utilising citizen science have the potential to deliver a substantial amount of
329 behavioural data (McShea et al. 2016) and inform conservation processes. However, few large-
330 scale studies utilising citizen science involve behavioural analyses. CT video data can produce
331 vast amounts of video footage but the extraction of key behavioural data from video footage is
332 time consuming, imposing a major obstacle. Crowdsourcing video interpretations can
333 overcome this limitation, however, and the use of robust ethograms, simple training regimes
334 and blinding of observers to treatments can assuage concerns about the reliability of citizen
335 science interpretations (e.g. Carthey 2013).

336 Synthesising across projects offers another means of conducting broader analyses
337 (Steenweg et al. 2016). We recommend that researchers embrace emerging CT metadata
338 standards and associated opportunities to use common data repositories such as Wildlife
339 Insights (www.wildlifeinsights.org; Forrester et al. 2016), thus increasing the potential for the
340 synthesis of inferences across large scales. The value of current data repositories is reduced,
341 however, by their reliance on static images and omission of video. While it is possible to derive
342 important behavioural data from still images, videos are undoubtedly more informative and an
343 important future direction for CT-based behavioural research. Expenses notwithstanding, it is
344 in the interests of conservation behaviour researchers to establish a digital repository for video
345 data.

346

347

348 **Relevant limitations and considerations**

349 Despite the great promise of new insights in conservation behaviour from CTs, it is important
350 to consider potential limitations. CTs are passive instruments; thus, while it is possible to
351 identify animals according to species, age-class (Clapham et al. 2014), sex (Bezerra et al. 2014)
352 or, indeed, identify individuals (Karanth et al. 2006; Zheng et al. 2016), the collection of
353 biometric, genetic and other data of interest requires the application of supplementary or
354 alternative methodologies. Furthermore, CTs are frequently considered to be non-intrusive,
355 causing little to no disturbance. However, while the sound produced by recording units is
356 largely inaudible to humans, it is frequently detected by wildlife (Meek et al. 2014a). Similarly,
357 CTs which utilise visible light (as opposed to infra-red) increase the chances of the camera
358 being detected by animals, potentially disrupting their natural behaviour (Meek et al. 2016a).

359 Camera failure, although rare, can result in the loss of large quantities of data.
360 Similarly, camera theft is becoming increasingly common (Meek et al. 2016b). It is therefore
361 necessary to balance the frequency of visits to maintain CTs with risk of data loss. To
362 accommodate this, it is advisable to build some redundancy into the study design, such as the
363 use of cameras that allow the transmission of images via Global Packet Radio Service (GRPS)
364 and/or Wi-Fi and can therefore facilitate remote data collection and inform the timing of
365 maintenance visits.

366 Detailed analysis of a target species' behavioural repertoire requires the use of video
367 footage which often exposes the technical limitations of CT equipment. Many cameras offer
368 only limited length of videos (e.g. 60 seconds), requiring the camera to be retriggered to
369 continue the capture of the behaviours and, hence, creating gaps in the observation. Some
370 cameras have a slow trigger time meaning that initial behaviours, which might be the most
371 important in terms of measuring detection of a stimulus (rather than the response), can be
372 missed. Sampling the behaviours of small species can be particularly challenging, with CTs
373 typically designed for deer-sized game species (Weerakoon et al. 2014), a problem that will

374 require novel solutions. For example, flash-illuminated images are frequently obscured by
375 overexposure when close enough to small mammals to observe behaviour clearly, whereas at
376 the correctly exposed distance, animals can be too far away to reliably identify species or
377 discern behaviours. Furthermore, understanding the reliability of camera surveys for
378 addressing multi-species objectives remains an important area of methodological research (see
379 Burton et al. 2015). Multi-taxa studies also require careful planning to ensure that CTs are
380 appropriately located and adequately spaced to maximise the chances of capturing a diverse
381 species assemblage. The choice and placement of cameras should, therefore, be dictated by the
382 objectives of the study, the ecology of the study species, the statistical sampling framework
383 and associated considerations.

384 An oft-repeated concern relates to study repeatability; specific details of study design
385 (e.g. how survey sites were chosen, use of lures) and camera protocols (e.g. camera model,
386 deployment details) are often lacking (Meek et al. 2014b; Burton et al. 2015). A number of
387 factors influence the detection of individuals (see Burton et al. 2015) and sampling details may
388 have important implications for analytical assumptions such as effective sampling area and site
389 independence (Harmsen et al. 2010; Mccoy et al. 2011; du Preez et al. 2014; Newey et al.
390 2015). Comprehensive methodological descriptions and utilisation of emerging CT metadata
391 standards (Forrester et al. 2016) are important for facilitating reproduction, comparison and
392 synthesis across studies.

393 Finally, as with any survey method, observations from CTs are incomplete and may
394 contain biases that affect inferences. As noted above, species and individuals may vary in their
395 detectability by CTs according to attributes such as body size, movement speed, curiosity and
396 wariness. Behaviours observed by CTs may also not always be representative of behaviours
397 more generally. It is thus incumbent upon researchers to remain vigilant for potential biases

398 and test CT-based inferences through comparison and calibration with more established
399 ethological methods.

400

401

402 **Conclusions**

403 CTs are rapidly increasing in popularity, and their application to conservation behaviour is
404 growing. Recent efforts to coordinate camera studies across large-scales through
405 methodological standardization and/or better reporting of methodologies and metadata will
406 facilitate broader ethological inferences on species' behavioural responses to environmental
407 change. The development and application of new techniques and analytical methods explicitly
408 focussed on anthropogenic impacts, behaviour-based management and behavioural indicators
409 would undoubtedly benefit conservation programmes. CTs are not a panacea, but they confer
410 many benefits to researchers and the diversity of possible applications is gradually being
411 realised. We hope that this paper will act as a catalyst, advancing the adoption of CT technology
412 within conservation behaviour. It is important, therefore, that potentially profitable avenues of
413 investigation are identified and pursued if we are to maximise the generation of valuable data
414 and, hence, improve the conservation outlook for the ever-increasing number of threatened or
415 endangered species.

416

417 **Acknowledgments**

418 The authors thank the journal for their encouragement and support of this review and,
419 specifically, the editor and reviewers for their valuable comments which strengthened the final
420 manuscript. Authors are ordered alphabetically by surname, except for A. Caravaggi who

421 conceived, organised and compiled the manuscript. The contribution of M.D. Wood was
422 supported by the TREE project (www.ceh.ac.uk/TREE) funded by the Natural Environment
423 Research Council (NERC), Environment Agency and Radioactive Waste Management
424 Limited. The contributions of C.M.V. Finlay were supported by the Red Squirrels United
425 project (<http://www.redsquirrelsunited.org.uk/>) funded by EU Life and Heritage Lottery Fund.

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Table 1. Potential advantages and disadvantages of three conventional methods commonly used to collect animal behavioural data. These are not necessarily contextual constants. For example, GPS accuracy is affected by vegetation density. Similarly, activity sensors may return detailed or simplistic data, depending on the device used. VHF = Radio telemetry tags; GPS = Global Positioning System tags; ACC = activity sensors; CT = camera traps.

Advantages	Method			
	VHF	GPS	ACC	CT
Allows independent data verification			✓	✓
Collection of biometric data during deployment	✓	✓	✓	
Combined analysis of movement and trait-based data	✓ ^{1,2}	✓	✓	✓
Detailed data ^{2,3,4*}		✓	✓	✓
Habitat associations	✓	✓		✓
Identification of specific behaviours			✓*	✓
Landscape-scale	✓	✓		✓
Low cost			✓	✓*
Low survey effort		✓*	✓*	✓*
Multi-taxa surveys				✓
Range analyses	✓	✓		✓
Disadvantages				
Bias from handling focal animal(s) ^{5,8}	✓	✓	✓	
Disturbance effects				✓*
Expensive	✓	✓		✓*
Limited sample size	✓	✓	✓	
Negative impacts on focal animal(s) during backpack/collar deployment ⁷	✓	✓	✓	
Requires ground-truthing to avoid inferential error ^{4,5,6}			✓	
Simplistic data*	✓	✓	✓ ⁹	✓
Stationary				✓
Technological failure	✓	✓	✓	✓
Triangulation/location error ⁵	✓	✓		

* Device, environment and/or species-dependent

¹ Grignolio et al. (2004)

² Lewis et al. (2002)

³ Bouten et al. (2013)

⁴ Shamoun-Baranes et al. (2012)

⁵ Bridges and Noss (2011)

⁶ Ware et al. (2015)

⁷ Barron et al. (2010)

⁸ Wilson et al. (1986)

⁹ Coulombe et al. (2006)

Table 2. Examples of behavioural observations of wildlife via camera trapping. Species are ordered chronologically following the date of corresponding references.

Behaviour	Species	References
Active period	Agouti (<i>Dasyprocta punctata</i>) and ocelot (<i>Leopardus pardalis</i>)	Suselbeek et al. 2014
	Guizhou snub-nosed monkey (<i>Rhinopithecus brelichi</i>)	Claridge et al. 2004
	Spotted-tailed quoll (<i>Dasyurus maculatus</i>)	Tan et al. 2013
Antipredator responses	Bush rat (<i>Rattus fuscipes</i>)	Carthey and Banks 2016
Bathing/wallowing	Giant anteater (<i>Myrmecophaga tridactyla</i>)	Emmons et al. 2004
Crossing roads	Bare-nosed wombats (<i>Vombatus ursinus</i>)	Crook et al. 2013
Daily activity	Clouded leopard (<i>Neofelis nebulosa</i>), golden cat (<i>Catopuma temminckii</i>), and 4 other felids	Azlan and Sharma 2006
	Tayra (<i>Eira barbara</i>)	Delgado-V. et al. 2011
	Giant otter (<i>Pteronura brasiliensis</i>)	Leuchtenberger et al. 2014
Denning	12 terrestrial mammal species	Rowcliffe et al. 2014
	American black bear (<i>Ursus americanus</i>)	Bridges et al. 2004
Foraging	Yakushima macaque (<i>Macaca fuscata yakui</i>)	Otani 2001
	Tayra (<i>Eira barbara</i>)	Delgado-V. et al. 2011
Migration	Bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>), black vulture (<i>Coragyps atratus</i>) and 5 other birds of prey	Jachowski et al. 2015
Nest predation	Predators exploiting quail (<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>) eggs	Picman and Schriml 1994
Phenological changes	Elk (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>)	Brodie et al. 2012
Positional behaviour	Bare-tailed woolly opossum (<i>Caluromys philander</i>)	Dalloz et al. 2012
Resource partitioning	Cape fox (<i>Vulpes chama</i>), caracal (<i>Caracal caracal</i>), honey badger (<i>Mellivora capensis</i>) and 9 other carnivores	Edwards et al. 2015
Response to human-animal conflict	Tiger (<i>Panthera tigris</i>) and associated prey species	Johnson et al. 2006
Scent marking	Tayra (<i>Eira barbara</i>)	Delgado-V. et al. 2011
	Eurasian lynx (<i>Lynx lynx</i>)	Vogt et al. 2014
Social behaviour	Blonde capuchin (<i>Sapajus flavius</i>)	Bezerra et al. 2014
	Giant otter (<i>Pteronura brasiliensis</i>)	Leuchtenberger et al. 2014
Temporal avoidance	Jaguar (<i>Panthera onca</i>) and puma (<i>Puma concolor</i>)	Romero-Muñoz et al. 2010
Travel speed	12 terrestrial mammal species	Rowcliffe et al. 2016
Waterhole use	15 species of ungulates, 5 birds, 3 mega-herbivores, 2 primates and 5 carnivores	Hayward and Hayward 2012

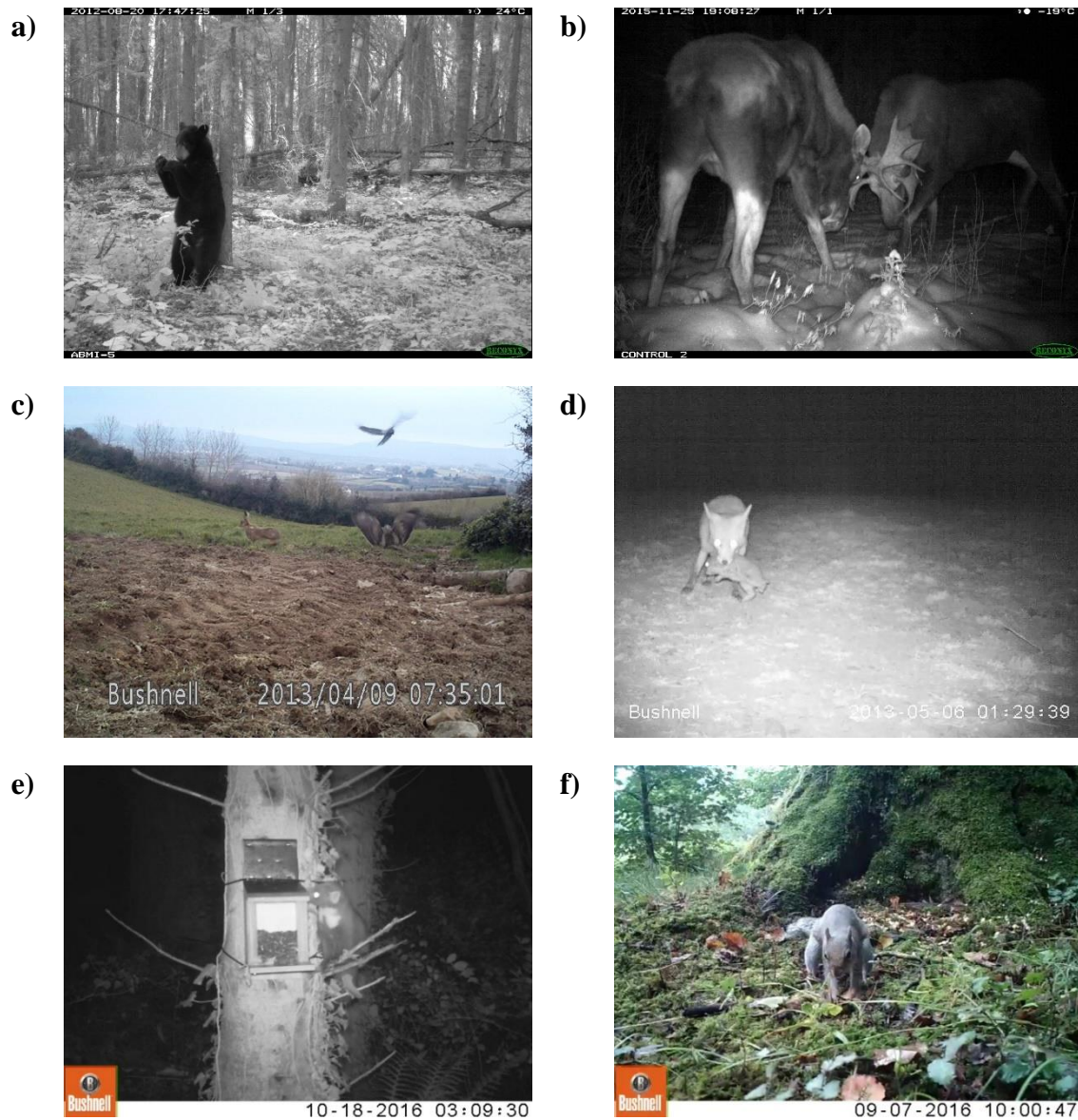


Figure 1. Examples of animal behaviour captured by camera traps: **a)** Scent marking by an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*); **b)** intraspecific competition in moose (*Alces alces*); **c)** interspecific interactions between a European hare (*Lepus europaeus*; anti-predator response), a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*; avoidance and attempted predation) and a hooded crow (*Corvus cornix*; anti-predator behaviour) captured on video (available at [10.6084/m9.figshare.4508369](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.4508369)); **d)** predation of a European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) by a red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*); **e)** investigation of a squirrel feeding station by a pine marten (*Martes martes*); **f)** nut caching by a grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). Images provided by A.C. Burton (a, b), A. Caravaggi (c, d) and C.M.V. Finlay (e, f).