



Do as I say not as I do! The loose end of the strap should be tied up so it doesn't flap in the wind and spook animals

# BUSHNELL CORE DS

WRITTEN BY ~ LUKE CARE

**Bushnell is a familiar and trusted optic brand to any Kiwi who hasn't been living in a cave**  
**That same company integrity can be extended to their trail camera range, which began decades ago.**

When Nic Burgess from Ampro let us know there was a new kid on the block for the Bushnell series I was very excited to test it. Trail cameras are a powerful tool for scouting, particularly in

bush hunting areas. When I think of trail cameras my first thoughts go to huge Sika stags ghosting through trails in the kanuka, tantalising and teasing hunters for years.

## PHYSICAL

The whole unit comes in at 309 grams without batteries or strap. If you're planning on leaving it in the bush for extended periods of time or carrying a great distance and counting grams then use lithium batteries to save weight and ensure longevity. They are pricey but infinitely better than alkalines. If it's local stuff and you're checking it regularly alkalines will be fine.

The bottom half of the weather cover swings out to show the simple controls and screen. It has a front facing colour LCD screen for easy checking. It is on the smaller side, I completely missed one stag even after taking it off the tree to look carefully, but it's good for flicking through

and great for saving battery. It also has live view which is a lifesaver for making sure the camera is pointing exactly where it needs to.

It is waterproof and seems very robust but has a two year warranty, just in case. The latch is large and easy to use and closes with a positive snap. It also comes with a very grumpy webbing tree strap, you can really lean on it and get the camera fixed firmly and steadily.

## FUNCTION

**The key point of this camera is the dual sensor arrangement.** One is optimised for day, the other for night. The night time sensor in particular is excellent, providing some of the sharpest, brightest and clearest trail camera photos I've seen.

The other key point is the massive 30 megapixel resolution. These are interpolated images though, which means the camera 'fills in' additional pixels to create a more detailed image from a smaller sensor, likely around 5-8 megapixels (MP). The technology here does an absolutely superb job, the photos are spectacular. You can select between 3, 8 and 30MP images, if you're

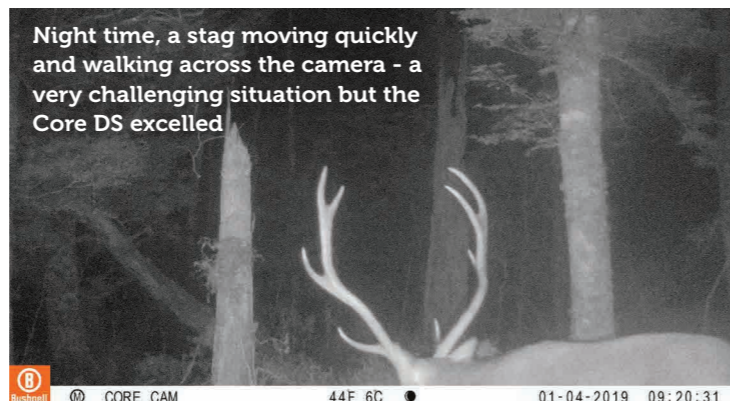
looking to maximise card space then opt for the 8MP.

The card slot is limited to 32gb, which at first glance doesn't sound like a lot but if you set the images to 8mp (likely the closest to native resolution anyway) you could store 4,000+ photos. If you were checking it regularly and wanted the top notch interpolated 30MP images you'd still fit over 1,000. The battery slot fits 6 AA batteries and Bushnell claim a one year battery life when using lithiums - I'm going to have to hang on to it just a little longer to test that out .... thanks Nic!

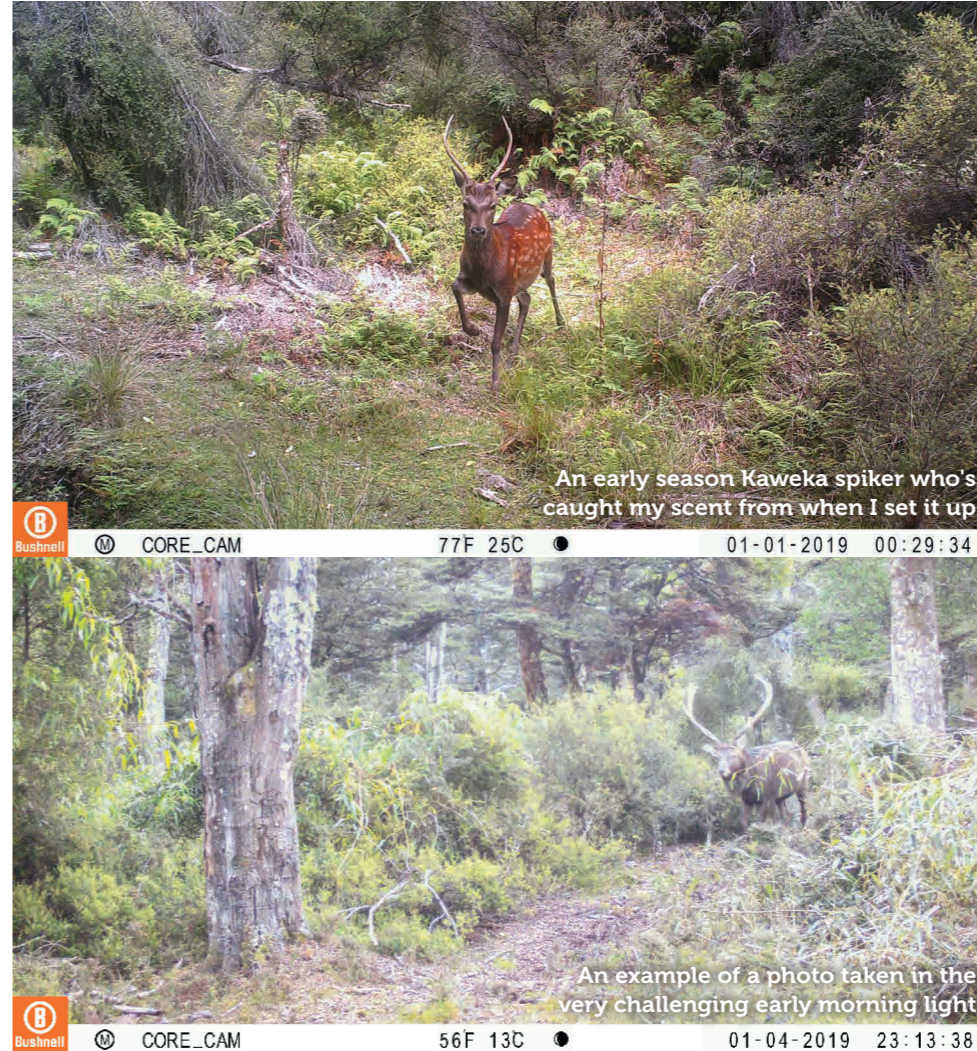
It is claimed to be a very low glow camera, 'nearly invisible to the human eye' and I can confirm that it certainly doesn't disturb animals much. I recorded an eight photo sequence of a hind in the middle of the night and not once was she looking at the camera or alarmed.

It has programmable modes for everything; stills, video, hybrid stills/video, burst, video length, intervals, PIR and the

Night time, a stag moving quickly and walking across the camera - a very challenging situation but the Core DS excelled



Bushnell CORE\_CAM 44F 6C 01-04-2019 09:20:31



An early season Kaweka spiker who's caught my scent from when I set it up

An example of a photo taken in the very challenging early morning light

trigger speed. You can even do timelapse or set times for start/stop.

I had it set for the maximum trigger speed, a speedy 0.2 seconds. This was excellent in close-quarters settings, even animals coming directly across were caught.

The sensor did well to get functional photos in the challenging half-light when animals are most active. The heavy old stag on page two is a good example of this. First thing in the morning, the sun isn't even up, most DSLRs would be

working hard to capture a crisp image of a fast-walking stag.

The video is impressive, but I didn't play around with that much. 1080p at 60fps and can even capture audio, how cool would that be for staking out rut pads!

It has a claimed 100ft+ detection range over 35 degrees of detection angle. It also did well at picking up tiny portions of deer, when I placed it poorly the first time round it still caught a nocturnal yearling mostly obscured by scrub and a good 50 yards away.

## OUTPUT

**The photo outputs are excellent.** They have good colour and resolution and handle dappled shade in bush scenes well. This is a notoriously difficult environment for photography and the Bushnell did an admirable job of curbing the bright highlights while retaining detail in the shadows, probably in part due to the interpolation we discussed earlier. There is quite heavy in-camera image sharpening but these images are meant to be functional, they aren't for an art project. The ISO noise is a little excessive in those tricky early morning/late evening situations before the night-time sensor takes over, but it's a bloody good effort for a little unit. That would be the one critique, in low light the night time sensor should be prioritised more.

Each image has a banner stamped along the bottom. It has a the time and an american date display (month/date/year) which I find infuriating but is hardly the camera's fault! **You can see I didn't set the date, still beginning from January, whoops.** It also has a dual temperature display, in both Fahrenheit and Celsius.

## IN CLOSING

**This is a top of the line unit, with fantastic image quality and a high degree of customisation available to people who want to make the most of using a trail camera.** Perhaps at the pricier end for non-cellular models, but it has the features and quality to justify it and things won't get cheaper until our dollar revives a little. If you're in the market for a quality trail camera definitely consider the Bushnell Core DS, especially if night time performance, adaptability and image quality are a focus.



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