

Review **BUSHNELL CORE DS30MP Trail Cam**

By James Morris



I'VE HAD AN OLD BUSHNELL GAME CAMERA FOR NEARLY SIX YEARS AND HAVE STUDIED MANY HUNDREDS OF PHOTOS TAKEN BY IT; sometimes I've left it out for six months at a time. I cannot fault it, so when I was approached to trial a new model, I jumped at the chance.

FEATURES

The Bushnell Core DS trail camera doesn't appear too different to the older Bushnell models from the outside - it's reasonably compact at 15cm x 10cm x 7cm, is a camouflaged green and the display screen is hidden behind a fold-out plastic facing.

SCREEN

The display screen is only 4cm x 4cm but it's big enough to view exactly where the camera is facing or to flick through your photos at the other end if you're too impatient to wait to get back to a PC; you can also zoom in on the photos, which is a helpful feature.

SETTINGS

Below the display screen there's a switch to choose 'on', 'setup' or 'off'. The settings all show up on the display screen when you enter the set-up mode; using the buttons to the right of the switch to navigate through the settings is

easy and self-explanatory. After an incident of not looking at the instructions (before I flew my drone for the first time) which ended in me climbing a big tree and worst of all dealing to my hurt pride when my wife pointed out to me that I should always read the instructions, I've become a little bit better at doing my homework. Unlike the drone, this camera is easy to get working how you'd like it to without having to learn too much.

MODES

There's both a camera and a video mode, with the camera mode being able to go as high as 30 megapixels (MP). The research I did assured me that 8MP was the right setting to use; I tried both 8MP and 30MP, but for the purpose of having a usable picture, there wasn't a heap of difference in appearance between them. Photos at 30MP are nearly 11 megabytes (MB) in size whereas the 8MP photos are only



3.5MB - so if you have a small memory card, it won't take too many photos to fill it up if you use the 30MP setting. The video mode is excellent quality; I didn't have it set to record videos too much out in the field since I cannot publish a video here, but I did have a bit of a play. Recording at 1920 X 1080 at 60fps, it's high quality and includes sound. The files are quite large, as is to be expected - a 10-second clip uses 39MB of space.

SENSORS

The Core DS has two image sensors - one for daytime colour photos and the other for night infrared photos. There are four infrared LEDs for the night-time flash which has a 30-metre range. The night pictures are significantly better than the ones taken by my old Bushnell camera - they're clearer and have good contrast; the daytime pictures are also well improved on the older model.

The sensor beam angle is 34° and has a range of 35m - the same range that the infrared LEDs work to.

POWER

The unit takes six AA alkaline batteries in a cartridge, which clips into the bottom of the unit; I used one set of batteries during the months I was using it - the claim is that a set of lithium batteries will last a full 12 months if it's taking fewer than 70 photos a day. A battery cable, which plugs into the bottom of the camera, allows you to use an external 6-volt battery, which would allow the camera to be deployed for an extremely long time; or for infinite use, a Bushnell solar panel can be connected!

TESTING

When I set the cameras up in the field, I was careful to have them facing away from the sun to get best photo exposure results and made sure no nearby branches obstructed the field of view. The first place I had one set up was on a farmer's property where I knew a few deer popped out of the bush. I set the camera

for 8MP and three photos per trigger; I tied it to a fence post and pointed it at the manuka 25m away, then left it for a couple of weeks in October. I was most impressed when I picked it up; I had some photos of a few different deer including a few of a stag that had plenty of velvet on for October!

The second place I took the camera was to DoC land that held a few deer near a road I knew I'd be passing a few times. I was a bit nervous about where to put it - I didn't want to come back to find someone else had claimed it as their own. I've had one game camera stolen already, so I'm wary about where I put them up. I certainly prefer the more camouflaged cameras to the solid colour ones.

I first put it on a game trail well off the beaten track, attached to a tree on a natural corner of the trail, pointing uphill; I set the camera to 30MP and a three-shot trigger. It was early November, and I only left it there for a week before I was heading past again and found the camera had picked up a pair of stags and a yearling spiker.

I then decided to move it onto a nice wee grassy clearing a few minutes further up the creek; the clearing was in a spot unlikely to see too many people with it being away from the main creek, yet it was only ten minutes' walk from a main road - it certainly had a good spring picking. I chose a tree on the edge of the clearing and pointed the camera at a likely ►

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TOP LEFT:

GAME TRAIL PICTURES

ARE OFTEN OF

TRANSIENT ANIMALS

ONLY. This stag stood in

front of the camera and

licked his back.

TOP RIGHT:

NOTE THE SUPPLEJACK

around this stag's velvet!

BELOW:

A SNEAKY SOW - living

closer to the road than most

people would ever realise.



ABOVE:

THE BUSHNELL DS CORE DS30MP TRAIL CAM in situ with the screen cover open.



LEFT:

VELVETING STAGS know where to find that good feed in the spring!

RIGHT:

I'D LIKE TO SEE HOW THIS FELLA GREW OUT! It was 25 yards to the manuka bush from the camera, which worked well at night.

path to spot an animal passing through or feeding. The clearing is only 20m long, so I had no problems getting triggers when I walked around its perimeter to check the camera would catch everything. I left it on 30MP and three-shot triggers then disappeared and didn't find myself driving back past again until near Christmas!

I had a quick look at the photos on the small screen when I picked it up but couldn't wait to get it home and put the SD card into my PC for a better looksie. I wasn't disappointed. The camera had been left for five weeks and had caught hundreds of photos of animals. Plenty of curious possums had poked their whiskers into the lens, but I also had a hare, a few different species of birds, pigs and plenty of deer. I'd managed to catch the same stag I'd caught earlier on the game trail as well as a couple of

different young stags - but unfortunately, no big old stonker. The 30MP pics didn't appear to be much clearer, but they certainly took up a lot more space on the SD card.

CONCLUSION

Trail cameras are a great way of seeing what's about in your favourite hunting area and determining the time of day and season animals are visiting. I've always thoroughly enjoyed using game cams - the Core DS is certainly a step up from my older ones. It's very straightforward to use and takes a good photo - day or night. I like the camouflaged case, the simplicity of the menu and the options - which aren't too many and are all useful. I'll add one of these to my collection - you can never have too many game cameras... just make a point of keeping details of where you put them! ■

RRP \$579.99

MORE INFO e.ampro.co.nz

FEATURES

- Field scan mode - 2x time lapse with live trigger still active so action between the lapse photos isn't missed. Useful for recording a wide range of subjects/events, including game, weather, plants, or even construction site development.
- Custom modes of operation.
- Multi-shot: 1-6 pictures per triggering. Programmable trigger interval: 0.6 seconds to 60 minutes.
- Trigger speed less than 1/2 second (which is very fast).
- 38° field of view; f/2.8 aperture.
- ID stamps on photos - including time, date, camera name and temperature.
- 1080p HD video with audio (video length/resolution adjustable).
- Operates on 6x AA batteries.
- External power port allows the connection of a 6V power source.
- SD or SDHC memory card up to 32GB.
- A hinged door on the side of the unit - this protects the SD card, on/off switch and all the buttons, seals well and stops moisture getting in.

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HORIZONTAL**