



## IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

### **November 2025 Commission Meeting**

**Agenda Item:** Summary of Western States Transmitting  
Trail-camera Regulations

**Presented by:** Ellary TuckerWilliams

**Position/Title:** Legislative and Community Engagement Coordinator

**Agenda Item No.:** 5

**Supervisor Approval:** SR

### **Background:**

Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) has traditionally managed game species with a focus on providing greater hunter opportunity, including a higher number of available tags and longer seasons. Some members of Idaho's outdoor sporting community have begun to express concerns related to the advancement of hunting technology and the potential erosion of fair chase ethics. However, IDFG also acknowledges that other members of Idaho's outdoor sporting community do not share those same concerns.

Recognizing the widely varying opinions on the matter amongst Idaho's outdoor sporting community, the Idaho Fish and Game Commission (Commission) directed IDFG to organize and facilitate a working group to delve into this complex issue. The purpose of the Hunting and Advanced Technology (HAT) Working Group was to assess public perspectives on what is and is not considered "fair" technology to use in the pursuit of game and develop recommendations to the Commission that strike an appropriate balance between the use of hunting technology and fair chase ethic.

After months of HAT Working Group meetings, a statewide survey, and multiple public comment opportunities, IDFG presented to the Commission on the results of the HAT Working Group, including their formal consensus package recommendations and draft recommendations that did not reach consensus. The Commission voted to move forward with the rulemaking process for the consensus package, and the draft recommendations that were a single vote short of consensus. The non-consensus draft recommendations included a time-certain prohibition on the use of transmitting trail cameras for the purpose of hunting big game ungulates.

Due to the public being split nearly 50/50 on their support for transmitting trail cameras, the Commission requested that IDFG provide additional information on whether other states have addressed the use of trail cameras for hunting purposes. Below you will find a summary of different western state statutes and regulations pertaining to the use of trail cameras.

State	General Trail Camera Restrictions	Transmitting Trail Camera Restrictions	No Trail Camera Restrictions
Alaska		X	
Arizona	X		



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Colorado		X	
Montana		X	
Nevada	X	X	
New Mexico		X	
Oregon			X
Utah	X		
Washington			X
Wyoming		X	

### ALASKA

A person may not take any big game by:

Using a pit, fire, laser sight (excluding rangefinders), electronically-enhanced night vision, any forward looking infrared device, any device that has been airborne, controlled remotely, or communicates wirelessly, and used to spot or locate game with the use of a camera or video device, any camera or other sensory device that can send messages through wireless communication, artificial salt lick, explosive, expanding gas arrow, bomb, smoke, or chemicals (excluding scent lures), EXCEPT:

- Electronic calls may be used for all game animals except moose;
- Scent lures, without urine from the deer (Cervidae) family, may be used for ungulates, and for bears ONLY under a black bear baiting permit

### ARIZONA

“Trail Camera” means any device that is not held or manually operated by a person and is used to capture images, video, or location, time, or date data of wildlife.

A person shall not place, maintain, or use a trail camera, or images, video, to include location, time, or data from a trail camera, for the purpose of taking or aiding in the take of wildlife or locating wildlife for the purpose of taking or aiding in the take of wildlife.

A person shall not use images of wildlife produced or transmitted from a satellite or other device that orbits the earth for the purpose of:

- Taking or aiding in the take of wildlife, or
- Locating wildlife for the purpose of taking or aiding in the take of wildlife.
- This subsection does not prohibit the use of mapping systems or program

### COLORADO

#### Live-Action Game Cameras

No person shall use a live-action camera to locate, surveil, or aid or assist in any attempt to locate or surveil any game wildlife for the purpose of taking or attempting to take said wildlife during the same day or following day.



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“Live-Action Game Camera” means any device capable of recording and transmitting photographic or video data wirelessly to a remote device, such as a computer or smart phone. “Live-action game camera” does not include game cameras that merely record photographic or video data and store such data for later use, as long as the device cannot transmit data wirelessly.

### MONTANA

#### Motion-Tracking Devices

It is unlawful for a person, while hunting, to use any electronic motion-tracking device or mechanism that is designed to track the motion of a game animal and relay information on the animal’s movement to the hunter.

Motion tracking devices are defined by F&W Commission as remote operated camera or video devices capable of transmitting real time information, pictures, or videos; seismic devices; thermal imaging devices; and satellite and radio telemetry devices. A radio-tracking collar attached to a dog that is used by a hunter engaged in lawful hunting activities is not considered an unlawful motion-tracking device.

### NEVADA

Use of trail camera or similar device: Restrictions; exceptions.

1. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2, a person shall not place, maintain or use a trail camera or similar device:
  - a. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (b), at any time during the period beginning August 1 and ending December 31 of each year.
  - b. At any time during the period beginning July 1 and ending December 31 of each year if the trail camera or similar device transmits, or is capable of transmitting, images, video or location data of wildlife.
  - c. At any time if the placement, maintenance or use of the trail camera or similar device prevents wildlife from accessing, or alters the manner in which wildlife accesses, a spring, water source or artificial basin which is used by wildlife and collects, or is designed and constructed to collect, water.
2. The provisions of subsection 1 do not apply to:
  - a. A person who is acting within the scope of his or her official duties, has clearly marked each trail camera or similar device to be used to indicate ownership and is:
    - i. An employee or authorized agent of this State;
    - ii. An employee or authorized agent of a municipal or county government of this State; or



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- iii. An employee or authorized agent of the Federal Government.
  - b. A person who places, maintains or uses the trail camera or similar device with approval from the Department.
  - c. A person who places, maintains, or uses a trail camera or similar device on private property with the permission of the landowner.
  - d. A person who places, maintains or uses a trail camera or similar device to monitor the use by livestock of any water source described in paragraph (c) of subsection 1 if the owner of the trail camera or similar device is the holder of a permit to appropriate water issued by the State Engineer for the purpose of watering livestock.
3. As used in this section, “trail camera or similar device” means any device which is not held or manually operated by a person and is used to capture images, video or location data of wildlife using heat or motion to trigger the device.

### NEW MEXICO

Cellular or Satellite Camera: Any remote camera which transmits or is capable of transmitting images or video wirelessly via a cellular, Wi-Fi or satellite connection. It is illegal to use any cellular, Wi-Fi or satellite camera for the purpose of hunting or scouting remotely for any big game animal.

### OREGON

No restrictions on the use of trail/game cameras

### UTAH

23A-5-307. Use of a computer or other device to remotely hunt wildlife prohibited -- Trail cameras -- Criminal penalty.

1. As used in this section, "trail camera" means a device that is not held or manually operated by a person and is capable of capturing images, video, or location data of wildlife using heat or motion to trigger the device.
2. A person may not use a computer or other device to remotely control the aiming and discharge of a firearm or other weapon for hunting an animal.
3. A person who violates Subsection (2) is guilty of a class A misdemeanor.
  - a. A trail camera using internal data storage and not capable of transmitting data is permitted for use on private lands for the purposes of taking protected wildlife.
  - b. A trail camera may not be used to take wildlife on public land during the period beginning on July 31 and ending on December 31.
  - c. A trail camera is prohibited on public land during the period beginning on July 31 and ending on December 31, except for use by:
    - i. the division for monitoring or research;



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- ii. a land management agency in the course of the land management agency's regular duties;
- iii. any of the following conducting research in conjunction with the division:
  - 1. a non-governmental organization;
  - 2. an educational institution; or
  - 3. other person;
- iv. monitoring active agricultural operations including the take of a bear or cougar that is causing livestock depredation; or
- v. a municipality participating in a program addressing urban deer.
- d. In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, the Wildlife Board may make rules regulating the use of trail cameras.
- e. A person who violates rules made by the Wildlife Board under this Subsection (5) is subject to the penalty provided in Section 23A-5-301.

### WASHINGTON

No restrictions on the use of trail/game cameras

### WYOMING

The commission is directed and empowered:

To adopt rules regulating, limiting or prohibiting the use of hunting technologies and the selling of wildlife geographic locations. "Hunting technologies" shall be limited to those technologies specified in subparagraphs (A) through (C) of this paragraph. No rule adopted pursuant to this paragraph shall apply to the taking of predatory animals as defined in W.S. 23-1-101(a) or to the use of hunting technologies by USDA APHIS wildlife damage management personnel when acting in their official capacity. Nothing in this paragraph shall be interpreted to limit any other authority of the commission provided in this act to regulate the taking of wildlife. Before promulgating any rule under this paragraph, the commission shall submit the proposed rule in writing to the joint travel, recreation, wildlife and cultural resources interim committee and appear before the committee upon request. Rules promulgated under this paragraph shall only apply to:

- 1. Thermal or infrared imaging or other imaging outside the normal visible light spectrum;
- 2. Real time video photography equipment or video imaging viewable remotely; or
- 3. The selling of wildlife geographic locations.

### Public Involvement Process:

The public has been heavily engaged on the issue of trail cameras, including a statewide survey, HAT Working Group, public comments submitted to the HAT Working Group during deliberations, Commission meetings, direct engagement with IDFG staff, and the rulemaking process.



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**Justification:**

At the request of the Commission

**Staff Recommendation:**

Informational only

**Suggested Motion:**

N/A