

Baited Trail Camera Quick Start Guide

Maine Golden Eagle Study



Motion-activated trail cameras set up with a supplied food source are effective tools to detect golden eagles that may otherwise not be observed. Setting a baited trail camera is the best way to be involved in the full scope of this community science project and creates an excellent opportunity to learn about golden eagles and other wildlife along the way. Anyone who currently monitors trail cameras, such as hunters or photographers, is welcome to join. Those interested in trying it for the first time or collaborating with friends, family, organizations, or school groups are also encouraged to participate! This quick start guide will give you a sense of what setting a baited trail camera would be like. If you choose to participate, please be sure to review the complete **Maine Golden Eagle Study Trail Camera Protocol**.



Camera Settings and Testing

Test the camera before placing it in the field to ensure it's working and displays the correct date and time. Set the camera to take **motion-activated** photos **24 hours/day, 7 days/week**, using a **1-minute delay**. Take a test photo on the first day you set up your site. Having two SD cards per camera will make photo sharing easier.

Site Selection

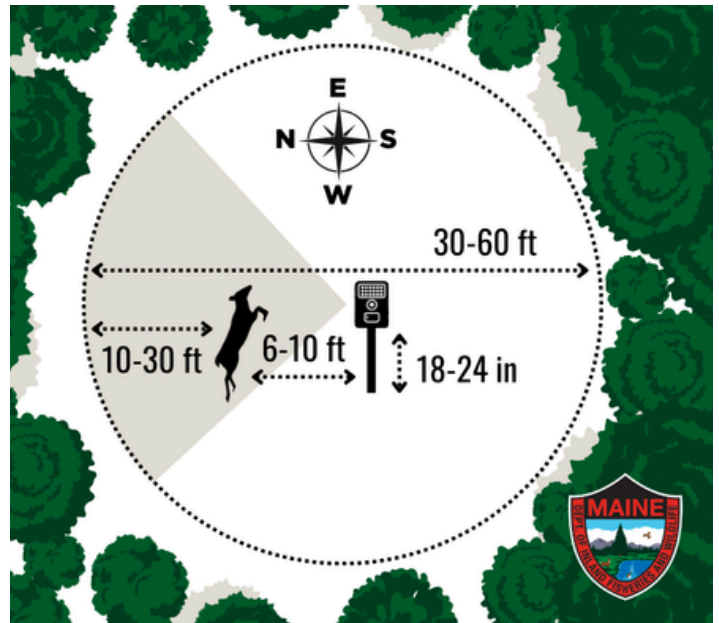
Choose a site on your own land or where you have written permission to regularly access, bait, and maintain a trail camera. You need a site that is readily accessible for regular bait maintenance but not disturbed by people or pets. Look for a **small forest opening, 30-60 feet across with adjacent large trees** and (optionally) at a higher elevation than the surrounding area. A two-track will work if it's not often used.

Obtaining Bait

You'll need a steady supply of bait to maintain a site. **Bait must be lead-free** (not harvested or dispatched with lead ammunition). **Deer and beaver work best**, including roadkill. Avoid small animals, birds, predators, farm animals that may have been exposed to chemicals or disease, and meat processing remnants that may not be lead-free.

Site Setup

- Place bait 10-30 ft from the forest edge, but not in the center of the clearing.
- Secure the bait with wire and stakes
- Mount the camera on a post 6 to 10 ft from the bait, 18-24" above the ground or snow.
- Face the camera north
- Remove vegetation that may trigger the camera.
- Mark your camera with your contact information.



Site Maintenance

- **Maintain bait continuously from January through March.** Establishing a site sooner can help ensure it is running smoothly by January.
- **Regularly check camera battery life, date, and time.** Swap out memory cards as needed.

Review Photos

Review all photos captured and make note of any images you suspect show a golden eagle. Tips for identification can be found at mefishwildlife.com/goldeneaglestudy.

DO NOT DELETE ANY PICTURES!

Share All Photos

- Copy **all** photos from the camera to a folder on your computer hard drive, even those without eagles present.
- Fill out the **Volunteer Signup Form** at mefishwildlife.com/goldeneaglestudy to receive an email with a link to register your site.
- Once your site information is reviewed, you will receive an email with a link to start sharing complete batches of trail camera photos.



Photo by Laura Zamfirescu

Please carefully review the complete detailed **Golden Eagle Study Trail Camera Protocol** before establishing a site and/or joining the study.