

Techniques

DeMers draw station system

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Purpose

THIS REMOTE SPOTLIGHTING system is designed to provide lighting at night for a draw station or a kill site of a predator (e.g., lion, bear, wolf, or coyote) for spotlighting purposes. It becomes particularly useful where there are restrictions on other control tools, and it allows the animal to be identified before being captured or killed.

Benefits

This spotlighting system allows wildlife biologists to determine which animal is killing livestock and allows biologists to then solve the problem quickly and safely themselves by separating them up to several hundred yards from the draw station (depending upon the capabilities of sharpshooter's skills and equipment). When predators make a kill, there are usually challenges in setting equipment, such as other livestock in the same pasture, guard dogs, equipment restrictions, or areas of high numbers of nontarget animals. This system allows specialists to wait for the predator to return to the kill site, identify it, and resolve the conflict.

Procedures

Because most predators return to the kill-site the first night, this system can be used to quickly resolve a conflict with the target animal. Depredation should be fresh, which greatly increases the likelihood of the offending animal returning that night. A wireless infrared motion detector (Figure 1a) is placed 25 to 30 yards from the kill site or bait station.

Multiple detectors can be used when there are multiple kills or bait stations, or when the terrain requires multiple sensors. The radio-activated remote lights (Figure 1b) are set on tripods approximately 45 m from the kills or baits. The light and wireless receiver are powered by a 12-volt battery, such as a cordless drill battery. When the wireless sensors are triggered by

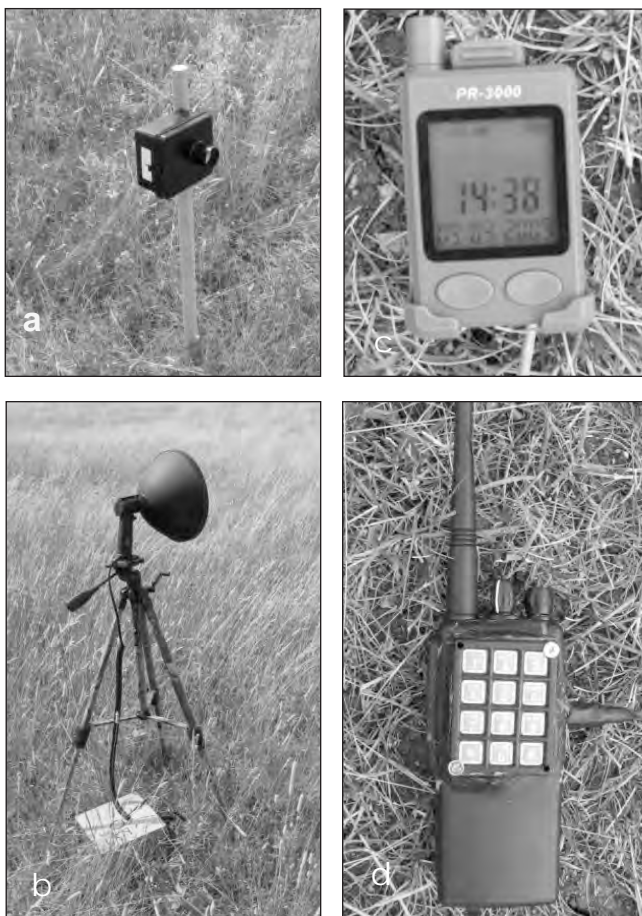


Figure 1. (a) Infrared motion detector (upper left); (b) receiver (grey box) and spotlight (lower left); (c) portable receiver, triggered by IR detector, indicating presence of animal on kill-site (upper right); (d) radio transmitter to turn on spotlights (lower right).

an animal at the draw station, the portable receiver (Figure 1c) will notify specialists by beeping or by vibrating. The remote lights can then be turned on with a radio-operated remote transmitter (Figure 1d) to light up the area with spotlights mounted on tripods. The animal will be illuminated, allowing specialists to identify and shoot it. Specialists may sit 91 to 365 m line-of-sight to the kill site(s) or draw station(s). This allows specialists to conceal their location from the target animal. It also allows them to monitor the area better from the comfort of their truck,

camper, or tent while waiting for the predator to return. This system can also be used with regular spotlights from the specialists' location, eliminating the need for the radio-operated system, which increases the cost of the overall system. It can also be used with night vision and infrared technologies.



STEVE DEMERS was raised on a ranch in south central Montana and spent many years trapping and hunting. His career with USDA/ Wildlife Services (WS) began in 1983. His work district includes 3 counties in the Great Falls area. Coyotes, mountain lions, black bears, grizzly bears, and wolves are some of the species he helped control. He has spent countless hours and a great deal of personal resources on research and development of wildlife control methods. With the reintroduction of wolves and the expanding range of grizzly bears (both classified as threatend or endangered), control methods are being more restricted. The draw station system explained in this article might be 1 way to improve WS's control program.