

Text and photos by *NAH* Managing Editor Dave Maas  
Strategically place three scouting cameras on a half-mile of eastern South Dakota river-bottom and what do you get? A photo album filled with tall-tined whitetails and hope for next deer season.



PixController's DigitalEye infrared camera won't alert deer with a white flash at night, but it produces daytime photos with a pinkish hue. In November 2006, a DigitalEye snapped these images of a 5x4 rutting buck only 5 hours before Jodi killed him.

### Closing The Deal

While it's nice to have great photos of deer that use our property, our ultimate goal is to put one of the bucks we've captured on film in the freezer. There's something special about getting to know a buck with the aid of a scouting camera—where he beds, feeds, rubs, scrapes and travels—and then getting a chance to take a shot at the real deal.

Jodi has been fortunate to have pulled this off three times since we began using scouting cameras a few years ago. In 2003 there was the barbed-wire buck I mentioned previously, then in 2004 a fine 5x5 buck with a narrow spread she'd missed the season before, and in 2006 a big-bodied 5x4 buck with a sticker point off his right antler's longest tine.

In the latter case, I'd spotted the 5x4 at about 100 yards chasing a doe off and on for more than 30 minutes. The doe finally tired of the chase and bedded on a ridge at 10:00 a.m., and he bedded about 10 yards away from her. I believed that much of

this chasing had been in front of our DigitalEye scouting camera, so I was hopeful we'd have some good photos of the buck.

I was able to slip out of the area at 10:45 a.m. without alerting either deer—I was frozen to the bone and hungry! As luck would have it, Jodi guessed right on afternoon treestand locations and arrowed the same buck at 3:20 p.m. He was still aggressively pursuing the doe as they passed Jodi's treestand.

We changed the memory card on the DigitalEye a few days later, and sure enough we had a handful of great photos of the 5x4 chasing the doe. And as a bonus, our Cuddeback cameras had captured his visits to a scrape a few weeks earlier. Thanks to our scouting cameras, we knew this buck, and gripping his antlers was so much sweeter because of it. 📷

## SCOUTING CAMERA FIELD REPORT

SPEND ENOUGH TIME IN THE WOODS WITH VARIOUS brands of scouting cameras and you'll soon learn that each one has its strengths. Based on my field-testing, here's how the Cuddeback NoFlash and PixController DigitalEye infrared cameras stack up.

**CUDDEBACK NOFLASH INFRARED:** The NoFlash has a 1.5- to 2-second initial trigger time, which is probably the fastest of all scouting cameras, and this allows you to capture an image of a deer walking quickly down a game trail. Unfortunately, it takes approximately 1 minute to save that image before the camera is ready to shoot another photo. In the field, this means that if a rutting buck is following a hot doe, you'll probably get a photo of the doe, but not the buck. The NoFlash shoots brilliant color photos during the day and black-and-white photos after dark.

**PIXCONTROLLER DIGITALEYE INFRARED:**

With an initial trigger time of 3-4 seconds, the DigitalEye can miss the first deer coming down a trail (assuming the camera is positioned perpendicular to the trail). The good news is it takes only 10 seconds or so to save that image. And once the camera has taken this initial image and saved it, it'll trigger almost instantaneously (1/10 second). The DigitalEye infrared doesn't use a white flash, but takes pinkish-colored photos both day and night; a standard white-flash model is also available (color daytime photos, flash nighttime photos).

Knowing each camera's strengths allows me to position them in the best places for obtaining great photos. For example, I typically use the Cuddeback to monitor a deer trail or funnel, a place where solo bucks often pass through quickly. I place the DigitalEye overlooking a scrape, a spot where bucks will pause for at least a few seconds. If I'm lucky and a buck works the scrape for 15-30 seconds, the DigitalEye will capture numerous photos of him.—DAVE MAAS



For more information on Cuddeback ((715) 762-2260) and PixController ((724) 733-0970) digital scouting cameras, visit [HuntingClub.com](http://HuntingClub.com) and click "Web Links."

