

Real-Time Drone Data Collection for Improved Wildlife Management using a Combination of Radio-Telemetry and Thermal Sensor Technology

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Drones are quickly becoming a popular and valuable tool for wildlife researchers across the United States and globally. With an increasingly wide range of drone platforms and onboard sensors readily available, wildlife managers can now collect data on multiple individuals simultaneously and in real-time to directly inform actions or management decisions on the ground. This includes both radio-telemetry sensors and thermal cameras. These complementary sensors provide unique combinations of data to enable more time and effort to be directed towards managing target animals across broad landscapes, rather than searching for them inefficiently from on the ground. Such tools provide wildlife biologists with valuable real-time data for preventative measures in human-wildlife conflict areas, conservation action for endangered species as well as improving the effectiveness of invasive species control. Here we provide examples of wildlife management projects in the United States and Australia that have successfully used these sensors to provide unique insights into wildlife movements and enhance management.