



# Make Your Trophy Photos Memorable

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It's amazing to see how photographing trophies has progressed over the past 70 years. Back then, cameras were different, hunters were different, and the times surely were different. I enjoy seeing some of the old photos from the 1930s and 1940s. Back then, there was no concept of field photos, because the cameras were much different than today's compact cameras. In the early days, cameras were large, heavy objects—too big to move easily—so most of the photos taken were on vehicles, horses, or at homes and hunting camps.

Hunting is a pastime. It's a way to bring friends and families together to share the enjoyment of the great outdoors. It's a special fraternity. All hunting trips can provide memories that last a lifetime. Why not take quality field photos to capture those memories forever? It's a chance to return to that place and time and re-live those experiences.

When taking these photos, we must keep in mind that hunting is not held in the same regard by all, as it was several years ago. In today's world, there are many anti-hunting groups and people who are looking for ways to condemn our hunting heritage. Some of the blame for their disdain of hunting lies in the perception of hunting they get from what they view as offensive images of dead animals. Therefore, we must be better hunters and help champion the hunting industry. One way to do that is by taking quality field photos.

First, let's discuss the gear you need to take some great photos. To begin, you obviously need a good camera. Today's are easy to use and many are digital, so you can review your photos in the field and delete



*Richard Schunke harvested this twelve point buck just a few miles from Goldthwaite on the Casa Delapidato Ranch a few seasons ago. Richard took the buck with his .308 rifle at 187 yards. The buck scores 139-6/8 inches at Mills County General Store. Photo by Steven Bridges*

the ones you don't want, so you get the right photos the first time. Some use expensive cameras like a Canon EOS or similar camera. Even disposable cameras can take a good photo. When you are on long backpacking hunts, take a simple camera that fits easily in your pack.

Consider one with a timer, in case you are by yourself with the trophy of a lifetime.

Take plenty of film if you don't use a digital camera. A tripod might help in uncertain situations as well. I also like to carry in my truck or pack some paper towels, water, or baby

wipes to use for cleaning blood and dirt. On that topic, let's move into setting up the field photo.

First, take the photo in the field and area where you are hunting. Truck bed and ATV photos are undesirable. There are many different poses you can use, but one I always like is the animal presented in a respectful position. Tuck the animal's legs under its body. Clean the animal so no blood or wounds are visible. Remove the tongue or place it deep in the mouth so it is not hanging out.

Make sure there is no brush or objects in the way. Have the area clean of trash, hunting items, drinks, etc. Decide if you want your bow or firearm in the photo and present it properly. Many favorite shots from quality photographers use the sky as a backdrop. Position the animal on a small hill with the sky as a background.

Remember that too much scenery in the background may distract the viewer from the focal point—the animal. If possible, take some photos with yourself behind and beside the trophy; that way you are not blocking the antlers. Try taking your photos in mid-morning or early afternoon. Make sure you have ample light. Also, make sure to always use your flash. Even with great lighting, there always are shadows that might distract from the picture. Flash will fill those areas and make the colors in the photo brighter. Finally, take your time. When taking that photo of a lifetime, make sure to take plenty of them. You can never have too many photos of your trip. Use different positions and perspectives to get all aspects of the hunt and the animal to be sure to capture the memories you're after.