**Title:** A trifold approach to quantify the effect of a common olfactory lure on the detection probability of urban mammals during camera trapping

**Short title:** lures on camera traps

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# Abstract

# Introduction

Humans have trapped mammals for millennia. While the motivations for mammal trapping are varied, our predecessor’s trials and tribulations have distilled much wisdom to beguile wildlife into snares, leg-hold traps, or cages. One suggested technique to bolster trap efficacy is to use lures or bait. The motivation for such an approach stems from the notion that lures or bait will engage a species sense of smell, sight or hearing and therefore increase the chance a target species investigates a trap and is caught (as reviewed by Schlexer 2008). The overall success of a trapping operation may well depend on the type of lures or baits used, and a plethora of commercially available lures and baits exist for live-trapping purposes (Schemnitz 2005, Schlexer 2008).

Instead of live trapping, motion-triggered camera traps (hereafter camera traps) have become an important alternative for research (O’Connel et al. 2010). Camera traps allow researchers to passively sample multiple locations simultaneously and do not require the physical restraint of an organism, thereby eliminating the chances of trap-mortality or injury. Further, camera traps can be used to answer many ecological questions about the distribution and abundance of wildlife (Bailey et al. 2014). Yet, for an animal to be caught (i.e., photographed) it must move in front of a deployed camera trap, and camera trapping surveys must therefore look for ways to increase species detectability via study design (O’Connel et al. 2010, Hofmeester et al. 2019). As a result, both lures and bait have been suggested as ways to increase the likelihood of detecting species that occupy an area of interest (Long et al. 2008). However, the reasoning behind the use of lures or bait is mostly grounded in custom rather than quantifiable effectiveness (Schlexer 2008).

Studies that have quantified the effect of lure or bait typically compare detection probability across sites that either do or do not have lure in view of a camera trap (Garrote et al. 2012, Bischof et al. 2014, Rocha et al. 2016, Suárez-Tangil & Rodríguez 2017). It is difficult to estimate a lure effect with such a study design because a species abundance likely varies between locations, which influences detectability (McCarthy et al. 2013). Furthermore, lure may influence species detectability in a variety of ways, which to date has been little discussed (Bischof et al. 2014). While most studies compare the number of days a species was detected in the presence or absence of lure to determine its effect, this is not likely the only metric that should be used. For example, lure could reduce the amount of time it takes to detect a species (Bischof et al. 2014), or simply increase the amount of time an organism spends in front of a camera trap thereby increasing the number of photos taken (Rocha et al. 2016).

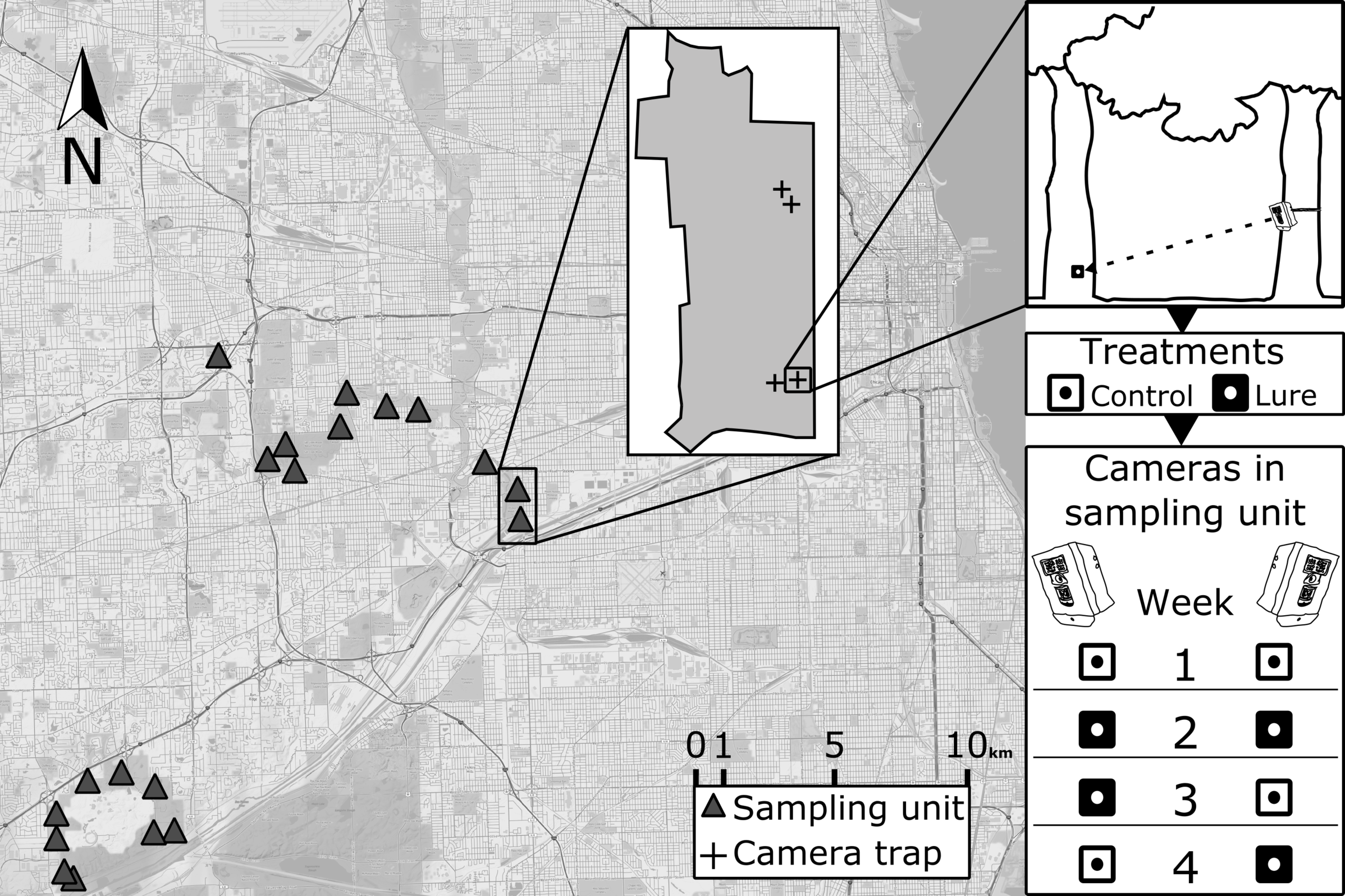
In this paper we use a trifold approach to quantify the effect of a common olfactory lure on a suite of mammalian species in natural areas throughout Chicago, Illinois, USA. Our study design differs from others in that we deploy two camera traps per sampling unit, spaced apart by 100 m, over a 28-day period to experimentally assess if lure can modify the species detectability both within and between sites. To do so, we changed lure treatments every 7 days by placing either a lure or a non-lure control in view of each camera following a full factorial design. This arrangement allowed us to quantify if lure increases the chances of detecting a species as they may be drawn more often to a camera that has lure relative to a nearby camera that does not. To more fully explore how lure many influence species detectability, we sought to answer these three questions:

1. Does lure increase the number of days a species is detected?
2. Does lure decrease the amount of time to first detection?
3. Does lure increase the number of photographs of a species?

# Methods

## Study area and site selection

## This study was conducted in northeastern Illinois within the Chicago metropolitan area (hereafter Chicagoland). The third largest metropolitan area in the United States, Chicagoland contains an estimated 9.5 million residents, 28% of which live within the city of Chicago itself (U.S. Census, 2013a). For this study we randomly selected 20 locations within forest preserves southwest of downtown Chicago in DuPage and Cook County. These locations (hereafter sampling units) were a minimum of 1 km apart from one another, and therefore a sufficiently large forest preserve could host multiple sampling units (Figure 1). Chicagoland forest preserves were selected instead of other types of urban green space (e.g., city parks) because they have the greatest mammalian species richness and highest occupancy rates of common mammals (Gallo et al. 2017). Therefore, Chicagoland forest preserves likely represent the ideal green space to quantify the effect of lure on mammal detection probability as many species are likely present.



**Figure 1.** A total of 20 sampling units were selected inside forest preserves to the southwest of downtown Chicago, Illinois. Each sampling unit consisted of two camera traps separated by 100 m. During each week of the 4-week study a different combination of lure or non-lure control was placed in view of the two camera traps within a sampling unit.

## Experimental design

Each sampling unit consisted of two Bushnell motion-triggered infrared Trophy Cameras (hereafter camera traps). After placing the first camera trap, we walked 100 m in a random direction to set the second camera trap. Camera traps were not placed along evident game trails. For settings, camera traps were put on normal sensitivity to take a single photo with a 30 second delay between capture events so long as it was being triggered (for full specifications see supplemental material). Camera traps were placed inside a metal security box, strapped to a tree 130 cm from the ground, and then cable locked. Following this, camera traps were angled at a downward trajectory with sticks towards a given experimental treatment, which was located roughly 2.5 – 5.8 m from the camera trap.

We had two treatments for this study, a lure treatment and a non-lure control. For the lure treatment, we used a white 2.5 cm plaster disk impregnated with a synthetic fatty acid scent (FAS; Pocatello, YEAR), which is a commonly used olfactory lure advertised to increase the detectability of mesocarnivores, especially coyote (REFS). The non-lure control was a piece of white cardstock cut to an identical size as the FAS disk. Treatments were contained within a 7.5 cm x 7.5 cm mesh pouch and nailed to a tree approximately 30 cm from the ground (Figure 1). The non-lure cardstock and mesh control was used to account for the placement of a novel object in view of a camera when using lure (i.e., a visual control).

For this study, camera traps were deployed for 28 consecutive days between August 27, 2018 and September 25, 2018. This 28-day season was divided into four-week long sessions. For each sampling unit of two cameras treatments were changed every week following a full factorial design (Figure 1). Briefly, for camera traps A and B in a sampling unit, both received non-lure controls on week 1 which were exchanged for lured pouches on week 2. On week 3, camera trap A received a new lure pouch while camera trap B was given a non-lure control. The opposite occurred for week 4: camera trap A received a non-lure control while camera trap B received a lure pouch (Figure 1). Memory cards were replaced every week. Batteries were replaced on all camera traps at the beginning of week 3 (or as needed otherwise). To ensure accurate species identification in an image, pictures were identified two times by separate individuals (GB and MF). If there was disagreement between identifications on a given image, the photo was assessed a third time to determine the correct identification. The date and time for each image was programmatically collected from its exchangeable image file format (exif) metadata.

## Statistical analysis

We fit three separate hierarchical occupancy models to all species with sufficient data. For simplicity, we explain these models for a single species. In the three models, we assume the occupancy status of a species does not change over the 28-day sampling period and that the probability of occupancy does not vary between sites. Thus, the probability of occupancy, *ψ*, at *s* in 1,…,*S* sites is the following Bernoulli process:

where *zs* is a random binary variable that represents the occupancy status of a species. If the species is present *zs* takes the value of 1 and is otherwise 0. Such a model is no different than the latent state of an intercept-only occupancy model, which we assume is adequate given the proximity of and similarity between natural areas sampled in this study.

### Observation model 1: Does lure increase the number of days a species is detected?

Our first model assumes that days within a sampling week are repeat surveys in which a species may be detected given its presence. This is the most traditional formulation of a hierarchical occupancy model (Kery and Royle 2016). For each of the two *c* cameras deployed at a site and *k* in 1,…,4 weeks of sampling we can model the effect of lure as the following Binomial process:

Where *ys,k,c* is the number of days a species was detected at site *s* on week *k* at camera *c*, *js,k*is the number of days sampled at site *s* on week *k*, and *ps,k,c* is the probability of detecting a species given its presence (i.e., *zs* = 1). We incorporate the presence of lure on species detectabilityvia the logit-link function:

Here, is the log odds a species is detected without lure, is the log odds difference in detection given the presence of lure, is an indicator variable which takes the value 1 when lure is present at a camera, and is a site-level random effect to account for variability that may exist between sampling locations not attributed to lure (e.g., abundance).

### Observation model 2: Does lure decrease the amount of time to first detection?

Instead of increasing the number of days a species investigates a camera, lure may decrease the amount of time it takes to detect them for the first time (Bischof et al. 2014). To quantify this effect, we instead treat data collection as a continuous time process. Let the response variable of this model, , be the continuous number of days to first detection (i.e., the amount of time it takes each week to collect the first image of a species per camera). If a species is present at a site but not detected after 7 days when treatments are changed there is uncertainty about how long it would take for the species to be photographed. To account for this, we model as a censored exponential random variable. Let *Tmax* be the maximum amount of time a lure treatment is placed in front of a camera trap (i.e., *Tmax* = 7 days). Following Kery and Royle (2016), the continuous time-to-detection observation model is

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Here, is an indicator function which takes the value 1 if a species is present but not detected in a given week at a camera trap. With this specification equals 1 if a species is present but went undetected or if they were not present (i.e., *zs* = 0). When this occurs, . Otherwise, equals 0 and we sample from the Exponential distribution to estimate the inverse scale parameter from the right-censored data. To estimate the effect of lure on this rate we employ the log-link function

We use a similar parameterization to the linear predictor of the first observation model, except the coefficients in this model are on the log scale. Further, these coefficients estimate the expected time between detection events in the presence or absence of a lure, all while controlling for variability between sites not attributed to lure via the site-level random effect .

### Observation model 3: Does lure increase the number of photographs of a species?

Finally, lure may increase the number of photographs taken of a species if it increases the amount of time they spend in view of a camera. This may be advantageous if a study species can be identified to an individual level by their markings, such as a leopard’s spots, which is easier to do with multiple images (Rocha et al. 2016). Here, let be the number of images collected of a species as site *s*, week *k*, and camera *c*. We can model the number of images collected as the following Poisson process

where and are the same as before while is a rate parameter which estimates the average number of photos expected per day given a species presence. Like model 2, is used to control for the observational treatment window length, but functions more as an offset term within this model. To incorporate the effect of lure we again use the log-link, as we did with model 2:

### Specification of priors and model fitting

We took a Bayesian approach to estimate the parameters of our models. For all models, we used an uninformative Beta(1,1) prior for the probability of occupancy, *ψ*. For the observational process of each model, the choice of priors depended on the link function. For model 1, which uses the logit-link, we followed the suggestions of Gelman et al (2008) and gave the intercept, *a0*, a Cauchy(0, 10) prior while the lure effect parameter (*a1*) received a Cauchy(0, 2.5) prior. For models 2 and 3, the log-link intercept and lure effect parameters received uninformative Normal(0, 10000) priors. Finally, random effects from all models were drawn from Normal(0, σ) distributions where σ ~ Gamma(0.001, 0.001).

Models were executed in JAGS version 4.3.0 (Plummer 2003) through program R version 3.5.2 (R Core Team 2018) via the runjags package (Denwood, 2016). Following a 1,000 step adaptation phase models had a burn-in period of 50,000 steps. After the burn-in, parameters were sampled a total of 300,000 times across 6 chains. MCMC chains were thinned by 5. Model convergence was assessed by visually inspecting trace plots and ensuring that Gelman-Rubin diagnostics for each parameter were < 1.10 (Gelman et al. 2014). Significance of the estimated regression coefficients was calculated by assessing if 95% credible intervals did not overlap 0.

# Results

Over the course of this study 1,110 functional camera days out of a possible total of 1,120 (28 days \* 40 cameras) were collected. In this period a total of 6,110 images were collected of 12 different species. Eight species had enough data to fit the three models: coyote (*Canis latrans*), eastern chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*), eastern cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*, hereafter opossum), and white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). The remaining four species that had insufficient data were the American mink (*Neovison vison*), long-tailed weasel (*Mustela frenata*), southern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys volans*), and striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*). Eastern gray squirrel were photographed the most over the survey, totaling 1,917 pictures across all 20 sampling units. Of the species that could be analyzed, eastern cottontail rabbit were detected the least, totaling 72 pictures across 9 of the 20 sampled sites.

## Does lure increase the number of days a species is detected?

Without lure, daily detection probability varied greatly between species (Figure 1). Coyote, for example, had a 5.77% (95% CI = 2.85 – 9.21) probability of being detected each day, which did not increase when lure was placed in front of a camera (Figure 2). Raccoon and gray squirrel had the highest daily detection probabilities without lure, which were respectively 46.09% (95% CI = 36.69 – 55.00) and 47.89% (95% CI = 36.45 – 58.49). On average, the presence of lure increased raccoon and gray squirrel detection by about 5%, but 95% credible intervals of this effect bounded zero (Figure 2). Overall, the presence of lure significantly increased the number of days two species were detected: opossum and chipmunk. Opossum detection probability increased by 8.20% (95%CI = 3.32 – 13.36) when lure was present to a total daily detection probability of 25.08% (95% CI = 18.03 – 32.46). Lure had a lesser effect on chipmunk detection probability, which increased by 4.76% (95% CI = 0.38 – 10.40). There was some indication that the presence of lure decreased the number of days white-tailed deer and eastern cottontail were detected, but this effect was not significant (Figure 2). Likewise, there was some indication that the daily detection probability of eastern cottontail and white-tailed deer decreased by about 3% given the presence of lure.



**Figure 2.** Lure had a marginal, but varying effect on the number of days species were detected. The left plot illustrates the daily probability of detecting a species when no lure was in front of a camera. The right plot illustrates how a species detection probability on the left changes given the presence of lure. Vertical solid lines are median estimates which are plotted with the posterior distribution that fell within the associated 95% credible interval.

## Does lure decrease the amount of time to first detection?

Without lure, the expected number of days to first detection ranged from 2.21 (95% CI = 1.12 – 3.69) for gray squirrel to 20.75 days (95% CI = 9.63 – 45.37) for cottontail rabbit (Figure 3). When lure was placed in view of a camera most species showed a general decreasing trend in the amount of time to first detection (i.e., they arrived earlier; Figure 3). However, credible intervals of this estimated effect bounded zero for all species except opossum. On average, the expected time to detect opossum decreased by 35.34% (95% CI = 11.13 – 55.83) to 5.57 days (95% CI = 3.73 – 7.81). There was some indication that it took longer to detect both coyote and cottontail rabbits given the presence of lure, but this effect was also not significant (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Opossum were the only species to arrive earlier if a lure was placed in front of a camera. The left plot is the expected number of days until the first photograph is taken given a species presence. The right plot is the proportional effect that lure has on the number of days until a photograph is taken, with values < 1 indicating a decrease in the amount of time to first detection. Vertical solid lines are median estimates which are plotted with the posterior distribution that fell within its associated 95% credible interval.

## Does lure increase the number of photographs of a species?

Of the three analyses, more species showed a significant change in the number of images collected given the presence of lure (Figure 4). Two species had more photos taken when lure was present: opossum and raccoon. For opossum the number of images captured increased by a factor of 2.01 (95% CI = 1.66 – 2.38), while the number of images captured of raccoon increased by a factor of 1.15 (95% CI = 1.06 – 1.26). All other species save for the cottontail rabbit had a marginal but non-significant increase in photos given the presence of lure (Figure 4). Cottontail rabbits, on the other hand, were less likely to be photographed given the presence of lure as the number of images collected decreased by a factor of 0.42 (95% CI = 0.25 – 0.62).



**Figure 4**. More images were collected of opossum and raccoon while lure was present, while cottontail rabbits were photographed less. The x-axis represents the proportional change in the number of photos taken of a species when lure was present. Values > 1 indicate that more images were taken.

# Discussion

Our trifold approach to quantify the effect of lure on urban mammals provides evidence that the presence of lure may provide, in general, a subtle increase to species to multiple species. Save for rabbits and deer, most mammals trended towards being detected on more days or earlier in time given the presence of lure, though evidence of this estimated effect is limited as 95% credible intervals often included zero. For species in which we observed an effect, opossum had the largest response to lure over all three analyses. By placing lure in view of a camera opossum were detected across more days of a survey (Fig. 2), in a shorter amount of time (Fig. 3), and the number of opossum images doubled (Fig. 4). Raccoon, the only other mesocarnivore we observed a response to the presence of lure, were photographed 15% more but did not arrive any earlier to a camera or get detected across multiple days. Together, these findings indicate that lure may provide some increase in species detectability, but the effect of lure likely varies by species and may not be as substantial as expected. As the placement of lure costs time and money, understanding when it may be beneficial to place should be carefully explored when designing a camera trapping survey.

Overall, the decision to use lure while camera trapping will depend on the study species, lure type, study goals, and the time of year camera traps are deployed (for a review see Long et al. 2008). In our study, lure may not be necessary to detect these species because they are common and abundant throughout Chicagoland (Gallo et al. 2017). As detectability is partially a function of abundance (McCarthy et al. 2013), lure may not be as needed in studies of common species because detection probabilities are already relatively high (Figure 2). Conversely, studies that focus on rare species such as terrestrial carnivores require much more sampling effort per successful detection (MacKenzie & Royle 2005; Shannon et al. 2014). In this case, it may be more beneficial to use lure because even a marginal increase in daily detectability has a multiplicative increase on detectability throughout a survey. Mathematically, this can be seen as:

Given this data generation process it is theoretically possible to continue revisiting sites to detect any species with a detection probability > 0 so long as it is present at a site. However, this costs resources and most occupancy models assume a species occupancy status does not change at a site over a survey season. Increasing the number of repeat visits could violate this assumption if a species colonizes or leaves a site over a survey season, resulting in biased occupancy estimates (Rota et al. 2009; Otto et al. 2013). To not violate the site closure assumption it may be more beneficial to find ways to increase species detectability instead of the number of repeat visits to a site. Our results illustrate that lure increases the detectability of some species, which could make it possible to reduce the number of repeat visits to a site. However, there are other options available to increase species detectability. For example, placing multiple camera traps to monitor the occupancy status of a single site could increase the number of days sampled while keeping the overall survey season short to ensure closure (Stokeld et al. 2016).

In our study there was some evidence that eastern cottontail rabbits were detected on fewer days (Figure 2) and we did see that they were photographed 42% less given the presence of lure (Figure 4). While lure may have encouraged avoidance behavior in this species, our study design cannot separate the negative effect of lure from other potential causes. As lure increased visitation rates by some mesocarnivores, rabbits could instead be avoiding encounters with these species. Regardless of the causal pathway, it is important to consider that lure may have opposite of the intended effect for prey species (Rocha et al. 2016). Therefore, if the goals of a camera survey are to sample a wildlife community with predators and prey, it is critical to consider how this may influence the resulting data.

It is possible that we failed to observe a lure effect if our weekly visits to these locations discouraged wildlife from investigating the area. We do not believe this occurred for several reasons. First, we used nitrile gloves when placing lures and cameras to not leave our scent behind. Second, the forest preserves throughout Chicago receive an estimated 40 million recreational visits each year (FPDCC 2019). It is highly likely that the species who reside within these natural areas are accustomed to the novel smells that humans may leave behind such that our minor visits to a site had a negligible effect on the overall outcome of the study.

One comparison we did not explore was the presence of our ‘non-lure control’ to another location with nothing in view of the camera (i.e., a true control). As the camera or control we placed are novel objects, species fearful to novel stimuli may have avoided the area entirely (citations). Coyotes, for example, may be wary of camera traps (Séquin et al. 2003) and had the lowest detection probability in our study (Figure 2). Even though most urban species are bolder than their rural counterparts (Lowry et al. 2013; Breck et al. 2019), a number of steps could be taken to address the novelty of a camera trap deployment. For example, future research could deploy cameras well before a study season starts to allow wildlife to acclimate and incorporate a true control with the two treatments we used to quantify the ‘pouch effect’ from the ‘lure effect’. Regardless, our results indicate that some species are seen more often when a lure is present, and we recovered many images of species investigating the lure pouch throughout the study.

ONE MORE PARAGRAPH ON HOW WE THINK LURE MAY NOT BRING ANIMALS IN FROM THE SURROUNDING AREA.

As ecologists increasingly see the benefits in using statistical techniques that partition variability between observational and ecological processes (Patterson et al. 2008), it is important to understand how seemingly simple choices in study design may influence the resulting data.

In this paper, we used a trifold approach to quantify the effect of a common olfactory lure on detection rates of urban mammals. We further illustrate how data collected from a camera trapping survey may be summarized to use different models of the observational process. Our results show that lure may not have as beneficial of an influence as one may expect, but the choice to use lure will depend on several factors. Lure may not be as necessary if a survey is of common species. Likewise, if monitoring predators and prey is part of a study, lure may have a negative effect on the detection of some prey species. Conversely, lure may be more beneficial for rare species so long as the species is attracted to it.

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