

## Why Nature & Wildlife Photography?

### Foreword:

Unlike our forefathers, who worked and lived with nature, our experiences with the outdoors are primarily vicarious. It is illusory- but a fleeting moment. And since we don't spend a great deal of time outside, we are somewhat removed from Nature. As our technology advances and the enjoyment of life's simple pleasures shrinks, still-life cameras, and motion picture cameras take us outdoors with vivid, compelling, and intensely encompassing images and sounds. For deep within us, ancient and primordial sensations reside. By connecting our 'natural' selves with Wildlife; pictures and movies keep us in touch with this Truth. They enrich our lives beyond words.

### INTRODUCTION:

#### Field of Dreams-

You could probably fill a warehouse with all the information, materials, and basic photography equipment for nature and wildlife photography. For this reason, we have synthesized the most important aspects to this field in a concise manner. In doing so, we visited many photo and camera web-sites and sources. After we discuss the main topics, we provide you with colorful photographs, and links to the major sources for camera reviews, nature photography, wildlife photography, and photographic supplies & equipment."

**This article is organized into 14 Topic Headings. The 14 Topic Headings are:** **1) [Top 6 Camera Reviews](#), 2) [43 Expert Tips for Shooting Outdoors](#), 3) [Six Tips for Buying & Using A Digital Camera](#), 4) [Nature & Wildlife Photography Workshops](#), 5) [Top 7 Colleges & Schools for Outdoor, Nature, & Wildlife Photography Classes](#), 6) [Most Popular Nature Photography Locations](#), 7) [National Nature Photography Contests](#). 8) [Top 7 Nature & Wildlife Photographers](#), 9) [Major Styles of Nature Photography](#), 10) [Occasions when a "Photo Opportunity" occurs](#), 11) [Selling Your Photos On-line](#), 12) [Related Product Categories](#), 13) [References, Resources](#), and 14) [Endnotes](#).**

(We've also added award winning photos to the right margin of pages 1 and 2 for your enjoyment.)

Due to the length of this article, our web-site displays just the first 2 pages of the full article. You can download the entire article, as a [.pdf document](#) by clicking

on the Acrobat graphic to the left. Thank you. We wish you luck in your photographic endeavors.

### **1. Camera Reviews-**

A. Top 6 Outdoor & Nature Photography Cameras Manufacturers - both film & digital cameras:

**1. Canon-- Four models are worth mentioning: a) the new 2007 PowerShot Pro TX-1 Digital Camera<sup>i</sup> or b) the Rebel K-2 film camera, c) the EOS 50-D Digital SLR Camera, (\$1,399) or d) the PowerShot SX-110 IS.** The predecessor of the **SX-110 IS** is the **Canon PowerShot A590 IS Digital Camera**. See distributor's link at: <http://news.compusa.com/for-indoor-and-outdoor-use-canon-powershot-a590-is-digital-camera/820/>)

2. For film cameras, try the **Canon EOS IV, 35 mm camera**. (Price: \$2,900). A new addition to the celebrated Canon EOS System, which includes several significant innovations in durability, performance, and customization, targeted for a new market. **A reader's review is as follows:** "The IV is simply the best 35mm film camera ever made - at current 2<sup>nd</sup> hand prices; it will outperform any digital camera. The build quality is tough and durable; this machine will work anywhere in any climate - your only worry will be durability of the film in the most extreme conditions. The ergonomics are fantastic - it simply operates as an extension of your hand. The photo quality is 2<sup>nd</sup> to none - while it takes some getting used to, once you get the knack, you can run the camera in manual mode on auto pilot - it is the 'true thinking man's' camera. Don't forget the custom functions - you use them once and it makes the camera much more easy to use. I have taken my IV all over the world and I have absolutely no regrets." [Mfr.s Link is: Canon EOS IV at CanonUSA.Com](#)

### **3. The New Sony A-300 & the A-350<sup>ii</sup>:**

The A-350 lets you capture breathtakingly beautiful photos, rich in color and image detail. An array of advanced features assures maximum image quality with optimum ease.

Both of the newer D-SLRs, [the A-350 and A-300](#), offer simple operation and amazing versatility.

The **A-350** features the first-ever 14.2-megapixel image sensor. At 14.2-

megapixel resolution, it is the highest resolution possible in a D-SLR. So, in addition to the best-in-class resolution of a 14.2-megapixel (effective) **CCD sensor** it also has the powerful performance of Sony's exclusive **BIONZ™** image processing engine. Image stabilization is built right into the camera body with **Super SteadyShot™**. Sony's revolutionary new **Quick AF Live-View™** allows you to quickly frame your subject in the LCD monitor. So, you can shoot without even using the optical viewfinder, just like you can with a compact digital camera. And for the first time ever on a digital SLR, it delivers a top-notch image without sacrificing the accuracy of typical **SLR-class TTL (Through-The-Lens) auto focusing**.

The otherwise identical **A-300** features a 10.2-megapixel **CCD sensor**. Like all Sony D-SLRs, both of these new models can use a wide range of **Sony™**, **Zeiss™**, and **Minolta™ Maxxum** lenses. Manufacturer's Link is: [Sony A-350 Digital at SonyUSA.Net](http://SonyUSA.Net)

4. **Nikon- Nikon CoolPIX Hunting Camera System**, which includes either the **CoolPIX L6**, or the **SLR Digital CoolPIX S600**, and/or the legendary **F6 Autofocus film camera** (\$2,810.00\* for body only), and lastly, the **Nikon D-60** with many special outdoor shooting capabilities. The manufacturer's link is: [Nikon D-60 from NikonUSA.Com](http://NikonUSA.Com)

5. **Olympus -Olympus Stylus 720-SW<sup>iii</sup>**, (Old Model), or the **Olympus D-550** (Old Model), and newer **Model SLR E-3 Digital Camera** (\$1,600 for Body), or the **EvoIT™ E-500 Digital SLR** which has special outdoor features. Manufacturer's link is: [EvoIT E-500 from OlympusAmerica.Com](http://OlympusAmerica.Com)

[Pentax Optio Wpi](#), the Pentax Optio W-20, or the Pentax K-20D<sup>iv</sup>. **Main benefits of the K-20D are: an excellent choice for outdoor photography, rugged, dustproof and weather-resistant construction, a built-in sensor-shift Shake Reduction system™ that works with all lenses, an effective dust-control system, a high-performance Pentax PRIME™ imaging engine; 3 fps shooting and more. The Pentax K-200D features 10.2 megapixels resolution. This D-SLR has many of the advancements that are incorporated in the PENTAX K-20D, including a 2.7 inch LCD monitor. It also features Custom Image™ Functions for perfect control over how images are developed, and an Expanded Dynamic™ Range function. The K-200D also comes with Shake-Reduction. Both the K-20D and the K-200D are compatible with any PENTAX lens ever produced. The PENTAX K-200D offers: a higher quality image**

sensor with the sophisticated PRIME (PENTAX Real Image Engine), a user-friendly Dust Removal system including the new Dust-Alert™ feature, 11-point SAFOX VIII auto-focus system, sophisticated 16-segment multi-pattern metering; and auto-sensitivity control up to ISO 1600. The PENTAX K-200D also comes with a weather and dust resistant body. [Mfr.s Link is: Pentax K-200D at PentaxSLR.Com](#)

7. For an Innovative Camera Design go to the GearJunkie for his review of the [Digital GoPro Hero 3](#).

## **2. Top 43 expert tips or skills for wildlife, nature, scenics, and landscape photos-**

### **A. Overview-**

Becoming a good photographer takes time. It sometimes takes years to master all of the facets of photography. Taking great photos requires a level of intensity that at times is exhausting. Professional photographers are like high speed computers, analyzing all of the factors-lighting, scenery, composition, etc., all at once, in order to make that "great shot." Many professional photographers become obsessed in and by their work, choosing a style or method of setting up the shot and the processing of the images. This sometimes takes days or even weeks for him or her to complete. Above all, taking great photos involves the intensity of seeing Life, as if it was for the first time. If you are a beginner or an amateur photographer, you may want to perfect your skill in just one area of photography, such as lighting or composition. Once that skill becomes "second-nature," you can then concentrate on another area of photography.

### **B. Here are our 43 Tips-**

#### **1. Introduction- Basic or General Rules-**

It doesn't matter if you are shooting a digital point and shoot or a film point and shoot camera, the tips below will work for both kinds of cameras.

**Hold It Steady-** The problem with most photographs is that they are blurry. Avoid "camera shake" by holding the camera steady. Use both hands, resting your elbows on your chest or close to your body, or even use a wall for support. Brace yourself; perhaps hold your camera with both hands. Lean against something, use a tripod. Relax and don't tense up.

**Body position-** While shooting it is advisable to hold your breathe and squeeze the shutter gently rather than pressing it with a jerky motion. Keep your arms

against your sides; your elbows shouldn't be sticking out. All the above will help you in preventing camera shakes that produce blurred pictures.

## 2. Setting Up the Shot/ Photo Composition-

### Balancing the Elements-

There are four main concepts to keep in mind when composing the scene artistically- a) Perspective & Proportion, b) Depth & Distance, c) Subject Matter, and d) Timing, Lighting & Zoom.

**Below are the details regarding these 4 photo elements:**

### A. PERSPECTIVE & PROPORTION

**Perspective-Choose whether to shoot vertically or horizontally-** A common feature found among many amateur photographers is that they seem to use their camera in only one way. Most often, the horizontal plane is used. But many pictures would look attractive if they are shot by turning the camera in a different direction. So, consider whether the subject would look most attractive; if photographed horizontally or vertically.

**Try a couple different angles & then find the Best Camera Angle** –Tilt the camera a little bit, shoot from a high vantage point, get down really-low, and shoot some vertical frames; and then maybe a couple of horizontal frames. Factors to consider are: the size of your primary subject, surrounding points of interest, the terrain, and the direction the light is coming from. Paying attention to these factors will help you choose what angle is the best for your photo.

**Camera Orientation** is an easy and effective compositional tool. A vertical format enhances height; hence use it to shoot subjects like canyons, cliffs. A horizontal format enhances the width, so use it to shoot large stretch of water, vast open fields, or deserts.

Which way you hold the camera affects what is emphasized in your shot. For tall things (redwoods, waterfalls), a vertical format will emphasize height. For example, use a horizontal camera angle to show the dramatic sweep of the mountains.

**Consider your viewpoint or vantage point-** Don't assume that your eye level or the first place you see your subject from is the best viewpoint. Taking a few steps left or right, going down on one knee or standing on a step can make a significant difference.

**Position the Horizon-** Where you place the horizon in your shot affects what is emphasized. To show the land, use a high horizon. To show the sky, use a low



horizon.

**Use Proportion-** The beauty of an image is often in its proportions.

**(Rule of Thirds)** – Make use of “Rule of 3rds.” When first setting up the shot and “framing” the photo, start with the rule of thirds which teaches that the main elements of a composition should be placed at points one-third of the way from the sides of the frame. Imagine a tick-tack-toe grid on your view finder or a 3 X 3 grid. If possible, do not place the main subject in the center of the frame. Place the key element(s) at the intersections of the 3 X 3 grid. Place your Main Subject in the third of the grid either from the lower left or bottom right, etc. For horizons, place the horizon along the lower or upper horizontal line, never in the center of the frame. Some say that the most powerful location is at the lower right intersection point.

### **B) DEPTH & DISTANCE-**

**Add Depth** - Depth is an important quality of good photographs. In other words, good photographs include a sharp and unmistakable image of the object in the foreground, and an interesting visible background. So, both the foreground and the background of a picture must be planned or visualized. Great photographs tell the viewer that they're not looking at a flat 2-dimensional photo, but through a window into a three-dimensional world. If your primary subject is a distant mountain, by including a swatch of trees in the foreground, the overall photo will have the proper presentation. A wide-angle lens can exaggerate this perspective.

**Distracting Depth of Field<sup>v</sup>**- Sometimes, when you set your camera to automatic, the camera's auto-adjust doesn't compute or “see” the background correctly. To get the best results, you need to make the background adjustments. If you take your photos on a small aperture setting, the camera's lens increases the depth of field around the subject, and the background becomes a blurry distraction. It is better to set the widest aperture setting you can. This narrows the depth of field, concentrating the focus on the animal or nature scene. This will also allow a faster shutter speed, which helps to freeze a moving subject.

**Take the Camera off Full-Automatic** – Use your camera's different shooting modes such as landscape, outdoors, night, sports, etc. Your camera will still adjust the settings for you but now they will be biased towards the type of shooting you're doing.

### **C). SUBJECT MATTER-**

#### **Compose Creatively & Try to Balance the Elements of the Photo-**

When you are photographing the sights of your outdoor venture, use your analytical skills and your creative skills in composing the photo. This means purposely planning how you organize the various elements in each photo in a new or different way.

Two of the biggest concerns in photography is either not getting close enough to the subject; or getting too close to the subject. For example, if you are photographing a giraffe, and you think the giraffe's nose is a great thing to shoot, just having the nostrils in the photo won't give your viewers the information they need to understand the photo. The best photos give just the right amount of information about the subject, clearly and sharply, to make the photo both interesting and intriguing.

#### **Close-Up or Back Away?**

##### **Single-Subject Shots**

**Not Getting Close Enough to the Subject is a Major Problem**, especially when you center your subject but even when you off-center it, moving in close will make a big difference. The simple fact is the audiences are always more impressed when the subject is huge and impossible to miss. Therefore, you want your subject to almost fill the entire frame. Say, you are photographing a swan, but you don't have a lakeshore (or its equivalent supporting element) in the background. In this case, you will want to instead move in as close as you can. Causing the entire frame to be mostly filled with the "Main Subject" will inevitably result in a photo that has true impact on your viewer.

**Move in close enough to remove any clutter from the picture.** For example, you may see an owl in the trees, but your photo turns out to be all trees and no owl. In wildlife photography, the 'less is more' approach is often best. Ask yourself what is important for your photo, and eliminate everything else. If you look at most wildlife shots, they don't show the animal's whole body so you don't need to either. Move in close; fill the frame with just the face. Give your shot some impact. Use a zoom to crop the image tighter. So, in other words get as close as possible to the subject, and/or zoom in with your largest lens. This will eliminate the distraction of the background and the viewer's attention will be entirely on the subject itself.

**But on the Other Hand, Getting Too Close To The Subject Is An Issue.**

When the opportunity arises to get a good close-up, some people go a little too far. A good wildlife photo needs a little space around the subject; otherwise, your composition can look cramped, with the animal squashed into a space where it doesn't quite fit. In these situations, try zooming back just a little, to allow a little 'headroom' around the animal. There should be at least a small amount of space above the head, and on each side. If the animal is facing to one side, adjust your composition so that there is a little more space in front of the subject than behind it. That way the animal will be looking into the picture, not at the edge of the frame.

**Frame the Subject & Fill the Frame**, with your subject so that there is no doubt in the viewer's mind what the picture is about. If you are taking a picture of an animal or a plant, zoom in until only the animal's face or the leafy texture of the plant will fit in the view finder. If you have to explain that the grey blob in your photo is an elephant then the picture has failed.

**Position Your Subject**- If possible; position your subject to either look directly at the camera or look slightly above the camera, or slightly to the side. The idea is to capture an expression on the face of your subject and not to do a "mug shoot."

**Align your Subjects** properly with the use of the correct lens. Avoid keeping the point of interest in the picture around the frame edge.

**Off-Center Your Main Subject**- If you think of the cliché, 'each picture tells a story', then the relationship of your main subject to nearby objects is clearer. A good photo illustrates that relationship. For this reason, you want to include more than just one subject in the photo. One of the best ways to show how the objects in the photo relate is by off-centering subject #1 either to the left or right; other subjects or objects fill in or support the Main Subject in a complimentary way. In other words, instead of a single Main Subject centered-in-the-scene; with a lot of dead space around it; either move the subject or move the camera until the subject is off to the side. This relationship works especially well if you can balance your main subject with something in the background, on the opposite side of the picture. For example, if you are photographing a tropical plant, put it on the right with the remainder of the garden (or an equivalent supporting element) blurred softly in the background on the left. This will result in a photo that both records the plant in all its beauty and does so in an artistic, creative way.

### **Multiple Subjects or Points of Interest**

**Points of Interest-** Don't have too many points of interest in the photo. Try and keep only one central theme of interest. Having too many interest points distracts the viewer's eyes. The photo ultimately loses its focus or impact.

**Check the background-** Look at the space around and behind your subject and make sure nothing overpowers it in color, shape, or size. Because too many background images can be distracting, make sure that the background of your photo doesn't struggle for a lot of attention. Most of the time, photographers pay too much attention to the main subject of the photo without giving enough thought as to what is going on in the background. Oftentimes the background greatly influences the presentation of the main subject.

**Search for Details or Unusual Perspective-** It's always tempting to use a wide-angle lens and get everything in the picture. However, this can be too much, and you may lose the impact of the photograph. Instead, zoom in with a longer lens and find some representative detail. A shot of an entire sequoia tree just looks like a big tree. But a shot of just the tree's wide base, with a person for scale, is a little more powerful.

**"Find," "choose" or "strategically place" Supporting Objects** - Photographs solely of landscape and rocks are enjoyable to take, but after a while, they cease to be exciting to look at. This is because the eye needs some reference point to judge scale. Add a prop or something of known size to indicate the magnitude of the scenery. Include in your shots a familiar object, people passing by, or your photographer buddy, to add interest. If there isn't anything of interest or an object to give the photo some depth or perspective, put your shoe in the foreground. That should generate some comments.

**Make sure eyes are in focus-** Focus on the eyes when photographing people or wildlife. It doesn't matter if other features are out of focus; if the eyes aren't sharp, the image will fail.

**Pay attention to the subject's color-** The subject's cloth colors shouldn't be overpowering the physical presence of the subject being primarily shot. (i.e. A red jacket on a sunburned skier may blur out the details of the subject's face) While shooting scenes with too many colors, it is necessary to identify and "filter out" what needs more attention versus what doesn't.

**Look for some good patterns in nature** and lay emphasis on it. For example, look for patterns made by flora, edges of mountains, or sand on beaches. These

elements could appear amazing if you frame your subject wisely in coordination with them.

**Use Leading Lines** such as the horizon, fence-lines, trails, roads, ditches, or lines of trees to give an added depth perspective, such as looking “down the road”, “across the horizon, or “along a string of trees.” (You get the picture.)

**Close-up photos of nature, flowers, and greenery usually turn out very well.**

Some clouds are also very camera-friendly and give a sense of balance to the images.

**“Mix it Up” A Little-** You may take the greatest shots, but if they're all the same type or style, they may be dull to look at. Spice-up your collection by adding variety. Include landscapes and people shots, close up and wide angles, good weather and bad weather. The field of outdoor photography is huge- there are an innumerable number of interesting items to choose from. **Ask yourself the question: “ Is this scene or object worth remembering?” If so, shoot it!**

#### **D.TIMING, LIGHTING, FLASH, & ZOOM—**



#### **TIMING-**

**Shoot First, Ask Questions Later-** If your subject is an animal giving birth - you know that, within a split second, the scene can change. There are often just a few brief moments when that "magic moment" appears. That's why it is so important to be fully prepared to capture that moment when it happens. Of course, this means having your camera with you and the batteries fully charged... After all, you can't capture the moment if you don't have your camera with you and ready to go. However, even more than having your camera easily available, you must learn to be assertive with your picture-taking. Be ready to press that shutter button at a moment's notice, anticipating when the magic moment will happen. If you have a digital camera that suffers from a bit of a delay when taking the picture, then you will have to become even more intuitive and skilled at anticipating the moment.

#### **LIGHTING-**

##### **Where and What Kind of Light Sources Are Available:**

A photograph is all about light so always think of how the light is striking your subject. The sun is your main light source when shooting outdoors. However, it is a good idea to move around so that the main light source is behind you and to

one side. For close-ups, or when your main light source is weak, use the flash. This bi-directional lighting, when used properly, brings out color and shades, and the slight angle (side lighting) produces some shadow to indicate texture and form.

### **What kind of Day, or What time of Day to Shoot?**

We all love to get out and about on sunny days, but these are not necessarily the best conditions for a good photo. Noon is the worst time to take photographs, as the light is harsh and very bright. Shooting in the middle of the day, under a blinding sun, tends to wash out the details in a picture. The hot sunlight produces shadows where you may not want them- in particular across the face of the subject. It makes people squint and casts dark shadows on the people or objects you're photographing. So, when the light is shining directly from above, most of the face and the entire underside of the subject is lost in dark shadow. The solution? If it is a sunny day, take your photos early in the morning or late in the afternoon, when the sun is at a lower angle. You will also find that the light in early morning or early evening has lower contrast and warmer colors, which adds character to the whole photo. For outdoor shots, early morning and evening are the best times to get great natural light. Try to use available light and no flash as much as possible. Flash shots often look harsh & grainy.

**Shooting on a partly-sunny day, when there are a few big clouds** in the sky, is a good day-time option, as it gives photographers various shades and hues of color, which can be picked up by the camera. **Partly cloudy days** (when there are more clouds than sun), is another good day-time option. The light is even and the contrast is low. The diffused light of a cloudy day can work better for some subjects because it reduces almost all of the glare and heavy shadows of bright days.

**Shoot during the "Golden Hour" Is Best<sup>vi</sup>**- The first hour immediately after sunrise and the hour prior to sunset (even a good 15 minutes after sunset) are commonly known as the "Golden Hour" for photographing landscapes or subjects outdoors. During the "Golden Hour," the light from the sun hits the earth at a low angle, making your pictures pop with beautiful, warm colors. Keep your camera steady in low-light situations like this, and take lots of pictures; the light changes dramatically over the course of just a few minutes. Sunrise or during Sunset presents the best light for producing stunning photographs. Sunrise light is warm, soft, and provides more pale tones, while sunset is a little harder & cooler,

providing deeper tones.

**It is Important to Remember that Light Changes Throughout the Day-** The color, quality, and direction of light change throughout the day. Pay attention to how the light is falling on your subject and select a shooting position that makes the most of the natural light. This will enhance your subject. This can sometimes mean having to wait or returning at another time when the light is better.

**Don't Eat Yellow Snow; Don't Photograph Blue Snow<sup>vii</sup>** - If you go out photographing snowy outdoor scenes, most camera meters will be fooled into underexposing your picture. Instead of nice, bright white snow, a bluish cast will give your snow scene an extra cold feel (and an unnatural look). To solve this problem adjust your exposure time by 1 or 2 stops.

**Look for Reflections or Shadows-** One the quickest and easiest ways to add an artistic touch to your outdoor photos is to focus on capturing reflections rather than the object itself. Simply keep an eye out for interesting splashes of color, reflected from the receding rays of the sun, or the moon and the stars. **Rainy days are good days to look for reflections.** A soft rain falling on a lake, the mist rising over the horizon- these are the kind of photos that suggest the essence of the nature without being direct and explicit. You can also look for interesting shadows and other graphic elements. Or you can include out of focus trees, to give your photo an evocative, unique background.

### **FLASH-**

**Flash-** The flash, when not used outdoors during bright daytime, may result in photos with dark and featureless faces. This happens because your subject is standing between you and the sun, which is a very bright source of light. So, when the camera meters the exposure, it decides that it has to make the scene darker in order to be correctly exposed. This results in your subject's faces being dark and almost impossible to differentiate<sup>viii</sup>. On bright days, when you are shooting outside, use the flash to fill in animal's faces or to highlight the texture of plant leaves. If the subject is backlit by the sun or another light source, use the flash to prevent the photo from being a "silhouette" or with the details "blacked out."

Flash need not be relegated to indoor, night photography. Flash can be a big help when it comes to shooting outdoors during the day. Even in bright sunlight, forcing your flash to fire can often mean the difference between a so-so snapshot and an eye-grabbing masterpiece. This "bright-day-flash" will fill in the shadows and even-out harsh contrasts.

## **ZOOM-**

**Use the Correct Zoom** –Using proper zoom and taking close-ups photos of some subjects is also important. One of the biggest mistakes that many photographers make is having too much space above the head, left and right sides of the subject. This usually affects the quality of the photo; zooming in a little bit closer to focus on the subject and eliminating all unwanted parts of the picture, could improve this.

Point-and-Shoot cameras have two types of zooms, optical and digital. Don't use digital as it lowers the quality of the image. You can always zoom in more once you get the image in your computer. Optical zooming will result in better images.



## **3. BE PREPARED & OTHER TIPS-**

**Plan Ahead: Charge Batteries and Clear Cards or Buy Film**<sup>ix</sup>-The

last thing you want to have happen is to get all set up for the big picture and then you realize you forgot to charge the battery. In addition to making sure your batteries are charged (or you have replacements on hand), you will also want to make sure you have a place for your potential images to be recorded. If you shoot digital, offload and archive your images so you can free up space on your flash memory card. If you use a conventional, film-based camera, be sure you have an extra roll or two of film on hand. Either way, being prepared will make those once-in-a-lifetime moments that much easier to capture.

**Research your destination before departure-** Spend some time researching your destination before departure. A little preparation is all it takes to avoid turning up at a place the day after a weekly market or annual festival and being told how wonderful it was.

**Know your equipment-** Ensure you're completely comfortable with your kit. Many photo opportunities don't repeat themselves and missing the moment because you're trying to figure out how the camera works is frustrating and avoidable.

**[How to Take Great Pictures: The Basics](#)**

[\(You can get the whole article at Shutterfly.Com by clicking & downloading here\)](#)

#### 4. FINAL POINTS TO TAKING GREAT PHOTOS<sup>x</sup>-

**Take Pictures<sup>xi</sup>** – That’s right, take pictures. Lots of them, get to know your camera. Give yourself assignments to photograph one subject (like street signs) or one area (your backyard). Get out, do it, and have fun!

**Above all, it is a matter of patience.** You need to spend as much time as possible with your “subject,” and take a lot of photos. Expect most of them to be rubbish, but take delight in the good ones because they are hard to come by. In particular, watch the behavior and movements of the wildlife you are shooting. Try to anticipate what their next move might be and prepare the camera and yourself for the shot. The trick is to try to catch the moment that expresses something unique to set your photo apart from millions of others. You won’t get that perfect shot every time, but when you do it is a moment to treasure.

**Bad Timing is always an Issue.** Animals move, they blink, they turn their heads, they flap their wings; sometimes it seems they are on a mission to foil your best attempts at a good photo. In every wildlife encounter, there are a thousand opportunities to take a bad photo, and maybe one or two opportunities to take a good photo. A nature photographer learns to be ready for that perfect moment.

#### 3. Six Tips for Buying & Using a Digital Camera<sup>xii</sup> -

##### Image Pixel Resolution-

One of the first things to decide when choosing a digital camera is how many megapixels you should have. This is important because it determines how large you can print an image and still maintain good quality. Generally speaking, the more megapixels your camera has, the larger the print. 7 megapixels is a good starting point for an entry-level-digital camera. You should expect excellent prints at 4 X 6 and even as large as 8 X 10<sup>xiii</sup>.

##### Digital SLR or Point-and-Shoot Camera?

The next important thing when buying a camera is which type to get. A Digital SLR (Single Lens Reflex) camera is expensive, but if you are looking for a high-resolution camera with excellent picture quality, SLR cameras are the way to go. This would be the digital equivalent of a 35 mm SLR film camera. If you are familiar with 35 mm SLR film cameras, you will find many of the same features on a Digital SLR. One of the most popular features of a Digital SLR is the ability to change lenses (i.e.- close-up lens, wide-angle, zoom, telescopic, pancake

lens).

If you are not as particular with your photography and want a simpler camera to use, you may want to consider a Point-and-Shoot Camera, which generally will cost much less. Point-and-Shoot Cameras are usually smaller and easier to use. Another advantage of the Point-and-Shoot Camera, is they usually have many automated features and pre-set shooting programs. This makes it possible for you to shoot beautiful photographs even if you don't have a lot of camera experience.

#### Memory Cards- Format, Storage Capacity & Image Compression-

After you get a camera, you must choose a good memory card for your camera. The most popular types/format of memory cards for digital cameras are **Multi-Media Card (MMC)**, **Memory-Stick (MS)**, **Smartmedia (SM)**, **Secure Digital (SD)**, **xD-Picture Card (xD)**, and **CompactFlash (CF)**. Certain cameras require certain memory card types, so make sure you ask an expert which memory card is right for the camera you have. CompactFlash cards<sup>xiv</sup> are the standard media for most all digital SLR cameras from the consumer-priced Canon Digital Rebel XTi and Nikon D70s all the way up to the \$9,000 Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II<sup>xv</sup>.

Also, make sure you get the proper memory-card storage capacity for your camera, since there are many different storage capacities. If you plan to keep the pictures stored in your camera, instead of transferring them to your computer, you will need to get a memory card with a larger storage capacity. This will allow you to save many more pictures. A card with 128MB is a low capacity card, while 16GB is very high capacity. The last point regarding memory cards is the file/image format- (i.e. jpeg or raw data). Most memory cards have the Jpeg Compression, however; check the owner's camera manual to find out the manufacturer's specifications<sup>xvi</sup>.

Transferring Photo Images- You'll have to learn how to transfer the pictures from your camera to your computer if you are planning on e-mailing them to your friends or arranging them for a calendar etc. A few digital cameras come with software packages, which enable you to transfer images.

Memory Card Reader & USB Cables- A memory-card-reader is a piece of hardware that plugs into your computer via one of the USB ports. You take the

memory card out of your camera and insert it into the card reader. The benefit of a card reader is that it is usually faster to download the pictures. Also, by using the memory card reader, it allows you to save the batteries in your camera. You can usually “power down” the camera during the transfer. Some digital cameras come with a [USB Cable](#), while other cameras do not. If you have a USB cable, this is the cable you connect the camera to the computer.

Once you have completed the download process and the pictures are on your computer, you can delete the pictures from your memory card. By emptying or erasing all of the images on your memory card, your card is essentially blank. Then you can start taking pictures with a “fresh” memory card.

#### **Backing Up Your Images-**

Finally, it is a very good idea to regularly make a backup copy of the pictures on your computer. You can either burn them to an external hard drive or perhaps a blank CD or DVD. You have invested a lot of time and effort in taking your beautiful pictures and you would not want to lose them.

#### **(3b.) “For more Info on Cameras & Photo Tips, go to”**

a. Top 10 Photography Books from Imagine123.com

Link is: <http://www.imagine123photography.com/top-10-photography-books.html>

b. Top Outdoors Camera Reviews-

1.) Shutterbug.Com- <http://www.shutterbug.com/>

2.) PhotographyReview.Com,  
<http://www.photographyreview.com/reviewscrx.aspx>

3.) Outdoor Photographer.Com,  
<http://www.outdoorphotographer.com/gear/cameras.html>

4.) **General Reference Source-**

Digital Camera Database (with 1,000s of models, accessories, and reviews)

<http://www.dpreview.com/>

#### **4. Nature Photography & Wildlife Photography Workshops-**

a) National Geographic Traveler “putting the WOW into Nature & Wildlife Photography; <http://ngtravelerseminars.com/nature.cfm>

b) Gerlach Nature Photography Seminars, one-day to multi-week workshops in Kenya, <http://www.gerlachnaturephoto.com/>

c) Mark Lissick Wildlight & Nature Photography Classes,  
[http://www.wildlightnaturephotography.com/Workshops\\_Page.htm](http://www.wildlightnaturephotography.com/Workshops_Page.htm)

d) Mountain Trail Photography Workshops,

<http://www.mtphotoworkshops.com/>

e) Collier Workshops-teaching nature photography in Colorado and Utah,  
<http://www.collierworkshops.com/>. He is currently looking for photo interns;  
contact him at: [grantcoll@aol.com](mailto:grantcoll@aol.com)

f) John Baker's Travel Images Photo Tours,  
<http://www.travelimages.com/index.html>

## 5. Top 7 Colleges & Schools for Outdoor, Nature, & Wildlife Photo Classes-

- The North American Nature Photographers Association,  
<http://www.nanpa.org/index.html>
- The Brooks Institute,  
<http://drf.designschools.com/Brooks-Institute-Of-Photography/>
- Rocky Mountain School of Photography,  
<http://www.rmisp.com/>
- Nikon School of Photography-Underwater Photography Program; <http://www.nikonschool.com/underwater.html>
- The Arts Institute of New York- Photography Classes, with campus in Minneapolis,  
<http://ai.designschools.com/artinstitutes/aiMediaHome.php?PHOTO>
- The New York Institute of Photography,  
<http://www.nyip.com/>
- *For More Information on Photography Schools go to:*  
<http://www.art-photography-schools.com/>

## 6. Most Popular Nature Photography Sites or Locations-

A.) USA-

- 1) Grand Canyon
- 2) Zion's Park, Utah
- 3) The Niagara waterfalls between Canada - United States of America
- 4) Yosemite Park,
- 5) The Adirondacks
- 6) The Blue Ridge Mountains
- 7) Yellowstone
- 8) See Most [Popular U.S. Nature Spots Page.html](#) for other great photo

locations.

B.) Global-

- 1) The Serengeti Park
- 2) Swiss Alps
- 3) The Victoria waterfalls in Zimbabwe – Zambia
- 4) The great coral reef in Australia
- 5) The tropical jungles Guatemala or Ecuador
- 6) The Bora-Bora islands in French Polynesia
- 7) Sand Dunes of the Sahara
- 8) For the rest of the list of 100 most beautiful places; go to:

<http://topratings.wordpress.com/2007/09/07/top-ratings-the-100-most-beautiful-places-in-the-world/>



## 7. National Nature Photography Contests-

- ◆ 38th Annual National Wildlife Photo Contest, sponsored by National Wildlife Magazine, <http://www.outdoorphotographer.com/gear/op-news-and-announcements/38th-annual-national-wildlife-photo-contest.html>
- ◆ Nature Magazine Photo Contest, <http://www.nwf.org/nationalwildlife/photoContestRules.cfm>
- ◆ National Wildlife Refuge Association Photo Contest, <http://nwra.zenfolio.com/>
- ◆ The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota Photo Contest, <http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/minnesota/activities/art25426.html>
- ◆ The National Geographic International Photography Contest, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/photo-contest/submit>
- ◆ The Canadian Museum of Nature, Canadian Wildlife Photography Contest, [http://nature.ca/calendar/cdnwldphoto\\_e.cfm](http://nature.ca/calendar/cdnwldphoto_e.cfm)
- ◆ The EPA Earth Day Photo Contest, <http://www.epa.gov/EarthDay/photocontest/>
- ◆ Nature's Best Photography Magazine Photo Contest, <http://www.naturesbestmagazine.com/index.php?nav=contests>
- ◆ U.S. Natural History Museum, The Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition, <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/visit-us/whats-on/temporary-exhibitions/wpy/competition/about/index.jsp>



## 8. The Top 7 Nature/Wildlife Photographers-

Unfortunately, there isn't common agreement among Nature & Wildlife photographers, as to who is the best. Artists have their own technique of photography so it is very difficult to rank them objectively. We have provided the biographies of 7 outstanding photographers that we think are worthy of your review. At the bottom of this section, you will find links to three Nature Photography Biography Books if you decide to pursue this topic further.



- ◆ Ansel Adams, 1902-84, the grand-father of American Nature Photography, b. San Francisco. He began taking photographs in the High Sierra and Yosemite Valley. His name is permanently associated with Yosemite Valley. He became a professional photographer in 1930. A co-founder of the "zone" style of photography.
- ◆ Imogen Cunningham 1883-1976, American photographer, b. Portland, OR. Cunningham began taking pictures in 1901. After studying abroad, she opened a studio in Seattle in 1910; and for six decades produced an extraordinarily varied body of work including many strong, exquisite portraits. Cunningham was a member of the f/64 group. In the late 1920s, she began her celebrated series of plant photographs, which exhibit an unsurpassed pristine sensuality.
- ◆ Jim Clark has been an award-winning nature photographer, and writer for over 30 years. His articles and images have appeared in magazines such as **Outdoor Photographer**, **Nature's Best**, **Wonderful West Virginia**, **Birder's World**, **Country**, **Wild Bird**, and **Outdoor & Nature Photographer**. A native son of West Virginia, Jim is the author and photographer of two books about his home state and the Appalachians – "West Virginia: The Allegheny Highlands," and "Mountain Memories: An Appalachian Sense of Place." Jim is currently completing two more books about some of his favorite places in the country. The documentary film, "Mountain Memories," which was broadcast on PBS in 2003, profiles Jim's life and career as a nature photographer. Jim is past president of NANPA<sup>xvii</sup> and served on its Board of Directors. Jim serves on the advisory board for **Nature's Best Photography** and is a member of Fuji Film's Talent Team Speakers Program.
- ◆ Robert Glenn Ketchum, In its centennial edition, Audubon magazine editors recognized 100 champions of conservation "who shaped the environmental movement in the 20th



century.” Included with such luminaries as John Muir, Rachael Carson and David Brower, was photographer, Robert Glenn Ketchum. Ketchum has also been listed by **American Photo** as one of the 100 most important people in photography. During 2000 to 2001, he was given the Robert O. Easton Award for Environmental Stewardship, the Josephine and Frank Duveneck Humanitarian Award, and was named Outstanding Photographer of the Year for 2001 by the **North American Nature Photography Association**, and Outstanding Person of the Year by **Photo Media Magazine**. The diversity of these acknowledgments reflect a unique 30-year career in which Ketchum has dedicated his art to addressing issues of natural resource management and habitat protection. Combined with his personal activism, he and his work have been at the forefront of American artists expressing their concern for the state of the environment.



- ◆ Scott Bourne is an award-winning photographer who is known for his use of color, shape, and form in natural settings.

He is a pioneer in the digital imaging field. Scott has conducted classes, workshops, tours and seminars for the Professional Photographers of America, Great American Photography Workshops, The Nature Photographers of The Pacific Northwest, The Northwest Council of Camera Clubs, Photo Expo East/West, The Seattle Professional Photographers Association, The Washington Professional Photographers Association, The Professional Photographers of Washington, The Winona International School of Photography, Photographic Center Northwest, The Pierce County Professional Photographers Association, and the Cooperative Communicators Association. Scott is working on several books with nature photographers Rod Barbee and David Middleton. Scott's newest book "88 Secrets to Wildlife Photography," with Rod Barbee was released in the Spring of 2005.



- ◆ Edward Kanze- This author, naturalist, wilderness guide, and photographer lives on the Saranac River in New York's 6 million acre Adirondack Park. In 2005, the American Museum of Natural History in conjunction with the **John Burroughs Association** gave Mr. Kanze

the award "Outstanding Published Natural History Essay of 2004," for his provocative essay about the passenger-pigeon, "[In Search Of Something Lost](#)." (The Burroughs awards, bestowed annually at the American Museum, are America's highest honors in nature-writing.) This essay also earned a gold medal in environmental writing by the **International Regional Magazine Association**. Mr. Kanze was featured in the two-hour PBS documentary "[The Adirondacks](#)," directed by 7-time Emmy Award winner Tom Simon. An acclaimed author, Ed has published five award winning photo-books, including "[The World of John Burroughs](#)," which portrays the life of this famous naturalist, philosopher, and literary critic.

- ◆ [Jim Brandenburg](#)<sup>xviii</sup>- Quiet and contemplative, Minnesota photographer Jim Brandenburg is one of the most accomplished and prolific wildlife photographers in the world. The immediacy and serenity Brandenburg captures in the wild often requires long solitary hours and is a reflection of his belief that "Photography is more primitive than writing...as the animals we evolved from, we rely on vision much more than language." Mr. Brandenburg received the **World Achievement Award** from the [United Nations Environmental Program](#) in 1991. He is one of only five Americans to receive such recognition. His award was for his exemplary achievements by using nature photography to enhance public awareness of the earth's fragile environment.
- ◆ Bill Silliker- moose and elk master photographer
- ◆ Gaylan Rowland- the grandmaster of outdoor photography
- ◆ [Check out these three biographical sketches-](#)
  - ◆ "[World's Top Photographers: Landscape](#)," by Terry Hope
  - ◆ "[Wildlife: The World's Top Photographers](#)," by Terry Hope
  - ◆ "[The World's Top Photographers' Workshops: Travel & Nature](#)," by Andy Steel.

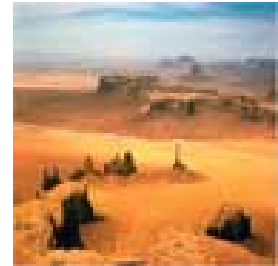
## 9. Major Styles or "Schools" of Nature Photography-



- ◆ [The Zone System](#), pioneered by Ansel Adams and Fred Archer, is a photographic technique for determining optimal film exposure and development. [Principles include](#): Visualization, Exposure metering, Exposure zones, and Zones as tone and texture. [Zones as tone and texture](#) include three different exposure scales for the negative: (a) the full

range from black to white, represented by Zone 0 through Zone X, (b) The dynamic range comprising Zone I through Zone IX, which represents the darkest and lightest “useful” negative densities, and (c) The textural range comprising Zone II through Zone VIII. This range of zones conveys a sense of texture and the recognition of substance. Techniques include: Effective film speed, Exposure, Development time, and additional darkroom processes involving selenium toning.

- ◆ P.H. Emerson introduced Pictorialism, in the book "**Naturalistic Photography for Students of Art.**" Pictorialism largely subscribed to the ideal that art photography needed to emulate the great paintings and etchings of the time. Most of the pictures made were black & white or sepia-toned. Among the methods used were soft-focus, special filters, and lens coatings, heavy manipulation in the darkroom, and exotic printing processes.
- ◆ Naturalism or sometimes called Realism- Naturalists worked to create photographs that were sharp in focus, simple in composition, and evoked a sense of serenity between man and nature. These artists also managed to imbue ordinary everyday subjects with a sense of artistry. This style of “natural” photography rejected or ignored earlier photography, which involved “painterly” touching up. In short, the photos were more “real.”
- ◆ Modernism- photography that reflects the “modern” movement of the 1950’s, with a concentration on things, collages, vibrant & intense images.
- ◆ Impressionism-The impressionist movement developed from naturalistic painting and landscape photography. This style is concerned with the expression of feeling, rather than accurate depiction or systematic structure. Characteristics of Impressionist Photography include varying uses of greytone, emphasis on light and its changing qualities (often accentuating the effects of the passage of time), ordinary subject matter, the inclusion of movement as a crucial element of human perception and experience, and unusual visual angles. Photographers whose work is characterized by soft focus and atmospheric effects have also been called Impressionists. Photography inspired Impressionists to capture the moment, not only in the fleeting passage of time but its relevance to the changing effects of light. "When one looks at impressionist photography,



the common thread seems to be an absence of distinctly clear lines; the distinction between subject and the background is diffused resulting in a substantial departure from realism.”

- ◆ Nature Videography- using digital videocameras to record & report on the raw power and vulnerability of Nature.
- ◆ Environmental Style of Nature Photography – using the power of the camera to illustrate the effects of modern society and technology on the Beauty of Nature.

#### **10. Situations or Occasions where a “Photo Opportunity” occurs-**

- ◆ Taking a walk in a park or forest,
- ◆ On a Campout,
- ◆ Canoeing down a River,
- ◆ In your backyard,
- ◆ While hunting, fishing, skiing etc.
- ◆ On a trip to an exotic destination, or a remote location,
- ◆ At the zoo or horticulture gardens,
- ◆ At farms, lakes, and rivers.

#### **11. Related Product Categories- (You Can Find Ads & Links to these Products & Sources on the Margins of these two html pages.)**

##### **A. Books & Magazines on Outdoor/Nature/Wildlife Photography**

###### **1.) Great Outdoors Photography Books at Amazon.Com**

- (a.) “John Shaw's Nature Photography Field Guide” (Paperback),
- (b.) “World's Top Photographers: Landscape,” by Terry Hope,
- (c.) “Wildlife: The World's Top Photographers,” by Terry Hope,
- (d.) “The Master Guide for Wildlife Photographers,” by Bill Silliker,
- (e.) “The World's Top Photographers' Workshops: Travel & Nature,” by Andy Steel
- (f.) “Dynamic Wildlife Photography: Techniques for Creating Captivating Images,” by Cathy Illg.

###### **2.) Nature Photo Magazines**

- a) Outdoor Photography Magazine
- b) Nature’s Best Photography Magazine

- c) National Wildlife Magazine
- d) Smithsonian Nature's Best Photography Magazine
- e) National Geographic Adventure Magazine

### **B. Equipment**

- 1) Cameras, (both digital & film); tripods,
- 2) Lenses, (zoom, close-up, pancake, fishbowl, & telescopic)
- 3) "Outdoor" film, Memory Cards, & Camera Batteries,
- 4) Camera supplies, gear, & apparel, camera bags,
- 5) Video cameras & camcorders,
- 6) Other optical supplies (i.e. binoculars, telescopes),
- 7) Film Processing Places.

### **C. Lighting supplies-**

- 1) Mobile lighting,
- 2) Digital Flash Attachments, Film Flash Attachments, Flash meters,
- 3) Light meters,
- 4) Photo-flood lights,
- 5) Light Battery Packs,
- 6) Reflectors, filters, screens,
- 7) Hoods, portable light-tents, & light umbrellas.

## **12. Selling Your Photos On-Line-**

- a) <http://www.dphotojournal.com/sell-photos-online/>
- b) [http://www.shutterfly.com/professional\\_photo\\_gallery/how\\_it\\_works.jsp](http://www.shutterfly.com/professional_photo_gallery/how_it_works.jsp)
- c) <http://www.cafepress.com/cp/info/sell/>

## **13. List of References, Resources, & Web-sites-**

- a) Photolinks.Com,  
[http://www.photolinks.ch/links/photoinformation/photo\\_courses.html](http://www.photolinks.ch/links/photoinformation/photo_courses.html)
- b) Top Photos.Net, <http://www.topphotos.net/> (has a list of good photo books, and outdoor photographers)
- c) OpticsPlanet.Com, <http://www.opticsplanet.com/>
- d) Photography Review.Com  
<http://www.photographyreview.com/reviewscrx.aspx>
- e) Outdoor Photographer.Com  
<http://www.outdoorphotographer.com/gear/cameras.html>
- f) Fine Art, Nature Photography & Landscape Photographs, at:

<http://www.insirpationalphotoimages.com>

## 14. Endnotes-

<sup>i</sup> <http://www.outdoorphotographer.com/gear/more-gear/short-reports/canon-powershot-pro1.html>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.sony.net/Products/dslr/a350/features.html>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://outside.away.com/outside/gear/gearguy/200610/20061023.html>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.outdoorphotographer.com/gear/first-look/pentax-k20d.html>  
<http://www.outdoorphotographer.com/gear/cameras.html>

<sup>v</sup> (Sources: Andrew Hudson; <http://away.com/photo/tip-sheet/ten-tips.html>)

Related Gorp Article: "What makes a Great Photo?" at: <http://away.com/photo/tip-sheet/great-photo.html>

<sup>vi</sup> [http://community.shutterfly.com/howto/basics/great\\_pictures\\_basic.pdf](http://community.shutterfly.com/howto/basics/great_pictures_basic.pdf)

<sup>vii</sup> Source: <http://www.betterphoto.com/exploring/tips.asp>

<sup>viii</sup> Today, almost all digital cameras come with a little built-in pop-up flash unit that enables you to light up your subject even though the camera may be metering for the bright light source.

<sup>ix</sup> (Sources: Richard I 'Anson is the International Manager of Lonely Planet Images and is author of "**Travel Photography: A Guide to Taking Better Pictures**," which can be purchased at Lonely Planet. COM:

[http://shop.lonelyplanet.com/Primary/Region/AFRICA/Pictorials\\_and\\_Reference\\_Guides/PRD\\_PRD\\_1782/Travel+Photography.jsp?bmUID=1221091931812](http://shop.lonelyplanet.com/Primary/Region/AFRICA/Pictorials_and_Reference_Guides/PRD_PRD_1782/Travel+Photography.jsp?bmUID=1221091931812) AND,

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2007/apr/12/top10.photography.tips> AND,

[http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travelstories/author/lonely\\_planet\\_images/](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travelstories/author/lonely_planet_images/))

<sup>x</sup> For more information, check out [Article Dashboard.Com](http://www.articledashboard.com), for a listing of more great photo tips.

<sup>xi</sup> (Source: <http://www.pnwimages.com/ps/photography/tips-for-better-photography/>)

<sup>xii</sup> Written by Nevets Notrom (Sources: <http://www.articledashboard.com/Article/The-Basics-Of-Digital-Cameras/508181>, and, <http://www.retrevo.com/s/Top+Tips+for+buying+a+Digital+Camera?sub.x=12&sub.y=14&sub=Search>)

<sup>xiii</sup> For more information on megapixels, and a differing viewpoint, go to:

<http://www.goldengod.net/2006/08/16/are-megapixels-really-that-important/>

<sup>xiv</sup> <http://www.steves-digicams.com/>

<sup>xv</sup> A very good article on the subject of buying Memory Cards can be found at:

[http://www.mahalo.com/How\\_to\\_Buy\\_Memory\\_Cards\\_for\\_a\\_Digital\\_Camera](http://www.mahalo.com/How_to_Buy_Memory_Cards_for_a_Digital_Camera)

<sup>xvi</sup> Learn more about Image Compression for Memory Cards at:

<http://www.hometechanswers.com/digital-photography/digital-camera-memory.html>

<sup>xvii</sup> North American Nature Photography Association.

<sup>xviii</sup> <http://www.globalgallery.com/artist.bio.php?nm=jim+brandenburg>

THE END.