

Field Notes

by John Pennoyer

New Vision

After my wife informed me that she was going to downtown Maple Grove for a little shopping, I figured it was a good time to make my escape and I asked if she would mind if I joined Dale Bohlke and the crew on one of his outings to River Terrace SNA. I normally don't need to ask permission, but I had just spent 3 days photographing Prairie Chickens in Northern MN and this morning I had spent time photographing one of my favorite spring-time subjects - the wild turkey. As she made some comment about "why was I asking her" my vehicle was already heading south.

As I pulled into the meeting spot at River Terrace, I saw that Mariann Cyr and Dave Ellenbecker had already arrived. We soon discovered that the DNR had decided to do a controlled burn on the prairie. Probably 75% of the prairie was "black", so we hiked to the unburned portion of the prairie. Here we found our quarry, the prairie pasque flower. A short time later, 7 or 8 more vehicles pulled in and a string of camera toting photographers began hiking up the steep slope.

For a few minutes we greeted each other and made some jokes with Dale about scheduling a club outing to witness a prairie burn. But shortly we were off in different directions trying to find the perfect specimen to photograph. I know that some of the photographers on this trip had never photographed this flower before, but as for me, I have many images of this beautiful prairie flower in my stock file. I certainly did not need another image showing a cluster of them. I already had singles, pairs, and groupings of beautifully exposed pasque flowers. I needed something different that would enhance my stock file. After finding a nice pair of flowers, I put down my equipment and grabbed my camera and lenses and just looked at the flowers with various lenses and compositions. I mounted my camera and lens on the tripod I kept the ball head loose in order to keep my composition



Backlit White Lady Slippers - John Pennoyer
Camera: Nikon N90s, Lens: 80-200 Zoom, Film: Velvia, Matrix Metering, EV: -1/3, Gold Reflector

options open. After several rounds of repositioning from horizontal to vertical, I finally locked the ball head in place.

Needing a little break, I walked through the prairie and observed the other photographers. The majority of them were using macro lenses. This brought back memories for me because the pasque flower is the first flower I ever photographed with a macro lens. This occurred about 20 years ago when the camera club had an outing at Nine Mile Creek. Since that time, the majority of my wildflower photography has been with a macro lens.

For the last 3 or 4 years I have felt the need to have a new vision for my wildflower photography. My feeling was that the macro lens was making my wildflower

photography too one-dimensional. So I have been trying to expand my vision by using other lenses such as my 24mm, 28-70 zoom and even my 80-200 zoom. These types of images give the viewer a totally different perspective by not just showing the beautiful flowers but also their habitat.

With the sun now lower in the sky, I figured it was time to go back to my set-up before I missed it. Looking through the viewfinder I used the zoom control and moved from 28mm to 70mm trying to get the best composition. At about 35mm I moved the two stop graduated-neutral density filter with the setting sun perfectly between the two flower blossoms. I fired off about 4 exposures. Over the next three or four minutes I tried many different compositions- horizontal, vertical and various positions of the setting sun and flowers. When I was all done I had taken about 20 exposures of the same plant all with the setting sun as a background. As of this writing I do not have my images back. But what I do know is that whether I like them or not, always trying to find a "new vision" especially on a common subject is what keeps up my interest in photography.

Everyone have a great summer and hope to see you in the field!!
Good Shooting.

Showy Ladyslippers in habitat - John Pennoyer
Camera: Nikon N90s, Lens: Nikon 28-70 Zoom, Film: Velvia, Matrix Metering, EV: -1/3, Filter: 81B warming





"...a hundred feet in front of me stands an eight hundred pound Coastal Brown Bear chest deep in the shimmering pool."



Standing knee deep in a cold coastal Alaskan river I can feel the migrating salmon brush against my hip boots. Tension is high. With my eye pressed to the view finder I watch the large "V" shaped wake spread across the surface of the river. It's getting closer by the second and then, like a volcano erupting, it explodes from the water and a hundred feet in front of me stands an eight hundred pound Coastal Brown Bear chest deep in the shimmering pool. Water streams down from his head and neck in silver rivulets, punctuated only by dark beady eyes. He stares directly at me but seems to offer no threat, only curiosity. His nose and muzzle is red with the blood of salmon. He shakes like a dog and water droplets flying all directions. Now his bloody muzzle is brilliant red as he turns slightly to the side and picks up the sunlight.

At six frames a second, I'm soon loading another roll of film into the Nikon and waiting for more action as the bear returns upstream to try again in his quest for salmon.

For the second year in a row, several of us have been living on a sixty-five foot boat for ten days at a stretch and photographing Coastal Brown Bears off the coast of Katmai National Park. The adventure begins with several days on Kodiak Island driving the backroads (and they are all backroads) searching out photo opportunities with bison, elk, fox, landscapes and rivers. Only a few roads exist on Kodiak as most of the island is a National Wildlife refuge for the Kodiak Brown Bear. The island is also home of a large fishing fleet and the largest U.S. Coast Guard base in the world with responsibilities for safety and rescue on the North Pacific and unforgiving Bering Sea.

At 9:00 AM the last of our luggage is safely strapped down in the cargo hold of the Beaver floatplane and we're off on a forty-five minute flight across Shekhof Strait to Geographic Harbor,

the coastal waters of Katmai National Park. Brooks Falls, where the bears stand on the falls waiting for salmon to jump into their mouths, is over fifty miles inland from the coast.

The sixty-five foot Coastal Explorer will be our home for the photo shoot. Accommodations are quite comfortable and there is plenty of fresh seafood. Captain Chuck has been plying these waters for ten years and knows many of the bears by name.

Our best count has been twenty-one bears in sight at one time. Salmon are migrating in from the sea, running up the streams to lay eggs and die, or be eaten by bears. This morning we are working the bears on a small river and standing at the edge of the water. All lenses are pointed at a mid-sized bear working her way downstream toward us. A quick rush yields a twenty inch fish, which is torn apart and quickly devoured. She continues downstream towards us. At 100 feet the word is given, "Pick up your gear and move back as a group", thus keeping the appearance of a "mass of humanity" rather than individuals. Tripods and camera bags were hoisted and moved back a safe distance - all but one camera backpack. Patti didn't seem to be with the program this morning as she moved her tripod back, but failed to pick up her camera bag. Too late! The bear spots the bag, comes over to investigate, rolls it over once and begins dragging it towards the river. Luckily, no food in the bag, but enough is enough! In unison the six of us throw our arms into the air and yell. That did it. The bear dropped the bag in a puddle of rotting fish and water, looked up bewildered and returned to fishing.

In May, shortly after the bears come out of hibernation, the salmon are still out to sea, we find bears feeding on sedges, grasses and digging for clams at low tide. Tripods steadied in the bottom of the twenty-six foot skiff we zero in on a light colored bear wandering the shoreline at low tide.

(Alaska cont'd...)

Coming into shallow water, Chuck goes over the side and carefully walks the skiff along, following the bear. A keen nose soon senses a clam in the sand and the digging begins. Slightly curved claws on large front feet dig methodically down, down and down, sometimes until the bear is resting on its chest before reaching and extracting the clam. One foot firmly holding the clam on the sand, one claw of the other foot is extended and delicately picks open the clam. Picture if you will, a six-hundred pound bear holding down a four inch clam and opening the shell with a claw the size of your little finger.

In these days when international travel is on hold for many of us, maybe it's time to discover the rich photo opportunities in Alaska. It's a BIG place and has much to offer.

As the club year winds down, I'd like to thank all those who help to make this the finest camera club in the Twin Cities. May we continue to be of service to each other, the photographic community and especially our host, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Be the Great Spirit willing, we will gather again in September to continue our quest for great nature images.



Events etc...

Como Park Conservatory Camera Event
Wednesday, June 11th from 6:30 - 8:30 pm. Photograph a parade of annuals in the pinks, blues, yellows, and whites of the summer season during the Conservatory's camera event. Tripods are permitted and admission is only \$5.00.

Ron Winch presently has two photos on display as part of a group exhibit at Lakeview Hospital in Stillwater. From mid May until late July he will have twelve images in a group show at Dunn Brothers Coffee Shop in Loring Park, Minneapolis. From late May to mid June, his display of fifteen photos can be seen at the Fine Grind Coffee Shop at 2038 Marshal Avenue in St. Paul.

Minnesota Nature Photography Field Trips



These are the updated plans for field trips. Additional modifications are possible. All trips are open to prospective members. Trips will take place as planned regardless of weather. For more details contact Dale Bohlke at (952) 445-6125 or dbohlke@mn.rr.com

May **May 17, 6 AM to 9 AM**
Location: Tierney Woods
Subject: Ephemerals & Ferns

June **June 21, 7 PM to 10 PM**
Location: Black Dog Prairie
Subject: Butterfly Weed

July **July 11, 7 PM to 10 PM**
Location: Roscoe Prairie
Subject: Prairie sunset
Notes: Meet at Cold Spring Dairy Queen

August **August 23, 6 AM to 8:30 AM**
before sunrise (Tentative)
Location: Black Dog Prairie
Subject: Monarch Migration
Notes: Photograph Monarch butterflies before they warm up

September **September 27, early morning**
before sunrise (Tentative)
Location: Louisville Swamp
Subject: Spider Webs
Notes: Arrive early and finish the morning at the Renaissance Festival

April Awards

Judges: Alan Schulz & Florence Scholljegerdes

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Dave Klein	Preening Snowy Plover
Jean McDonough	3 King Penguins
Tom Samuelson	Unitl Spring
John Zeiss	Clownfish

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Jim Aronson	Pelican Lake Sunrise
Dale Bohlke	New Found Gap
Mariann Cyr	Soaptree Yucca
Mariann Cyr	Northern Shoveler
Joe Kandiko	Icicles
Vijay Karai	Wolf on the Run

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Dave Ellenbecker	Maple in Transition
Bill Handsaker	Young Moose in Mud
John D. Jenkins	Thor's Hammer Bryce Canyon
Joe Kandiko	Superior Ice
Vijay Karai	Trumpeter Swan Wing Flap
Dave Klein	Sanibel Sanderlings at Sunset
John D. La Mere	3 Trumpeters
John D. La Mere	Bosque Crane
Dottie Lillestrand	Red Leaf #1-2002
Jean McDonough	Antarctic Scene
Gerald Moran	Sandhill Cranes
Vern Nelson	Viceroy
Vern Nelson	Canada Goose Incubating 4 Eggs
Tom Samuelson	Pressure Ridge
John Zeiss	Sunset

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Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month,
Sept-May at the Visitor Center of the Minnesota Valley
National Wildlife Refuge, 3815 East 80th Street,
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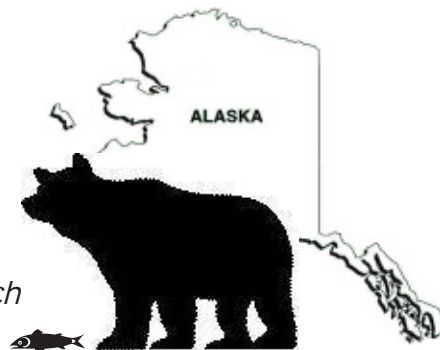


May Program

The Bears of

Katmai & Kodiak

presented by Ron Winch
& Toni Meglitsch



Sea Lions bark in the harbor within Kodiak city limits. Red Fox patrol the Pasagshak Bay Road. Bison roam the hills south of the Pasagshak State Recreational Site. Ravens call from the Sitka spruce and Puffins nest on the rocky cliffs near Chiniak. All this plus great rivers and scenics - all on Kodiak Island.

A forty-five minute flight to coastal Katmai National Park may bring you face to face with an Alaskan Brown Bear. Bald Eagles, Red Fox, Lynx, Black Oystercatchers and Harlequin Ducks also offer good photo ops. See bears digging for clams in May and gorging on salmon in September.

Come and share in the wildlife and wild places of coastal Alaska as photographed and presented by Ron Winch and Toni Meglitsch.



Tell a Story

- Dale Bohlke

A Summer Challenge

This summer there will be an almost endless number of photo opportunities. But each of us has only 90 chances to take this photo. Jim Brandenburg took one photo each day for 90 days, how about taking one good photograph in 90 days? Start the day early, well before sunrise, and walk to your chosen location. Use all the film you need, maybe bring a friend. Perhaps view your subject without your camera one day and with it at another time. You will experience a natural phenomenon that few people do. What am I talking about? A summer sunrise!



Minnesota Zoo's 25 Year Birthday Photo Contest

Bring your film to Proex and enter your favorite animal (including human) or plant photograph in the Minnesota Zoo's 25 Year Birthday Photo Contest, sponsored by Proex.

Winning photographs will be displayed at the Minnesota Zoo through Labor Day. In addition, you could win one of the following great prizes:

- A camera
- An Annual Membership to the Minnesota Zoo
- Gift Basket from the Go Wild Gift Shop
- Behind-the-Scenes Zoo Tour (for up to six people)

Pick up an entry form and complete contest rules at your nearest Proex store. All entries must be received by June 1, 2003.



Election Time is Here...

Have you always wanted to run for office, but were deterred by the cost of a lengthy campaign? Do you have a vision of where you'd take the club if you were in charge? Now's your chance!!! Elections for club officers will be held at the May meeting. If you'd like to run for any of the offices, please contact Joe Kandiko at (612) 445-3406.

