



Nature Photo Times

Member: Photographic Society of America & Twin Cities Area Council of Camera Clubs

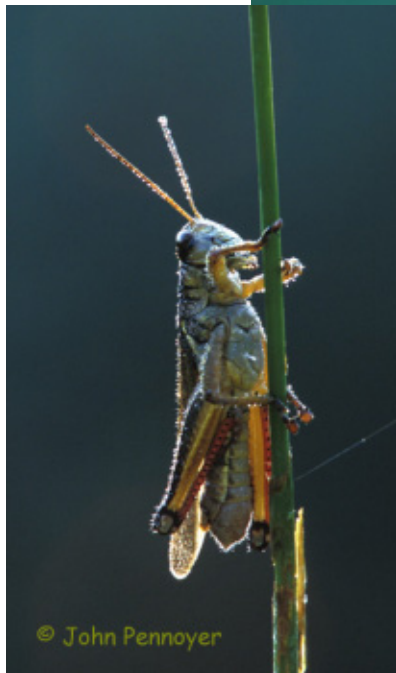
Vol. 48, No. 2 - October, 2003

Field Notes: More Than Bears

by John Pennoyer

As I was driving to the sanctuary, my vehicle showed a temperature of 50 F, a typical temperature for northern Minnesota in July. As the sun started to peek over the horizon, I noticed a misty fog surrounding many of the fields. My excitement grew as a calm wind joined the fog. The morning workshop activity would be better than I had expected.

I arrived at the gate to the Vince Shute Wildlife Sanctuary and found all of the vehicles lined up waiting for me to open the gate. This was our first morning shoot and after the great shooting of the night before, I knew everyone was very anxious to begin. As we pulled into the parking area, we found four or five bears already in the field. Quickly the photographers got their equipment set up and headed for the bears. I began investigating other photo possibilities in and around the field. There were thousands of grasshoppers clinging to blades of grass and after finding a couple of hoppers that had some pleasing background, I positioned my camera for some



© John Pennoyer

nice backlighting and fired off a few frames. I decided to look for some more subjects and very carefully walked through the dew-covered grass. I noticed a dragonfly with its dew-soaked wings waiting to dry so he could fly and proceed to do what dragonflies do! I looked through the viewfinder and fired off several exposures. As the sun got a little higher I also noticed that there were many spider webs in the field.

I looked at all of the workshop participants and noticed that they were all busy concentrating on the bears (after all, that is why they came from all over the United States!). I casually walked over to some of them and mentioned the great possibilities of grasshoppers, butterflies, dragonflies and spider webs.



© John Pennoyer

After a few moments of blank stares and reading, "I didn't come all the way from California to photograph grasshoppers!" on their startled expressions, I took three or four of them out into the field and showed them one of the hoppers that I had photographed. I had already fixed the background so there was no distracting grass in the way. I told all of them to look through

their viewfinders at the hopper. The next words out of their mouths were "WOW, is that ever neat." One of the photographers immediately went to the vehicle to get his macro lens. I also showed them the dragonfly. For the next half-hour or so, six or eight workshop participants began photographing the many subjects in the field. Shortly, a small but steady breeze began and back to the bears they went. However, the

next morning, which was just about the same as the day before, many of the participants were in the field-photographing subjects other than bears.

The Black bears are what attract photographers from around the world to Vince Shute Wildlife Sanctuary, but there is so much more to photograph than just the black bears. Last May I met a National Geographic photographer who spent three weeks at VSWS. He told me that although he travels around the world photographing many species, this area is the most diversified of any that he has ever been to. Not only did he photograph the black bears, but also loons, osprey, mink, many varieties of birds, chipmunks, squirrels etc. While he was in his blind

photographing osprey, he was able to photograph a Minnesota wolf that was walking along a beaver dam.

Nature always makes photography a challenge - wind when we don't want it, clouds when we prefer sun, sun when we prefer clouds, and rain can ruin your day. But for fall colors the rain will help saturate the colors. And of course the critters that we are after do not always cooperate as they follow their own time schedule and not ours. As nature photographers we need to take nature's challenge and photograph what is being offered to us. There is always an image out there - it is just up to us to go and find it.

At the end of the July workshop one of the participants thanked me for pointing out the spider webs, dragonflies and other photo subjects. She was just as excited about those images as her bear images. It is those kinds of comments that really make my day and makes leading workshops a real pleasure.

Good Shooting

Minnesota Nature Photography Field Trips

At A Glance Calendar

Check out the updated list of field trips for the club year. Dates have changed for several of the trips and two new trips have been added.

All trips will be held regardless of weather. Any changes will be printed in the newsletter. For further information contact Dale Bohlke at (952) 445-6125 or dbohlke@mn.rr.com.

October	October 12, 4:00 pm <i>Location:</i> Wood Rill SNA <i>Subject:</i> Fall Maples <i>Notes:</i> Meet at the parking lot on Old Long Lake Road. Wear good footwear for hillside trail walking.
November	** November 23, 8:00 am <i>Location:</i> Reicks Lake Alma, WI <i>Subject:</i> Tundra Swans
December	December 6th & 7th <i>Location:</i> DeSoto NWR Missouri Valley, IA <i>Subject:</i> 50,000 - 100,000 snow geese
January	** January 11th, 2:00 pm <i>Location:</i> Monticello, MN <i>Subject:</i> Trumpeter Swans
February	February 7th, 8:00 am <i>Location:</i> Red Wing, MN <i>Subject:</i> Bald Eagles
March <i>(Just added!)</i>	* March 20th, 8:00 am <i>Location:</i> Minnesota Valley Refuge Visitor Center <i>Subject:</i> Feeder Birds
April	** April 18th, 6:00 pm <i>Location:</i> River Terrace <i>Subject:</i> Pasque Flowers
April <i>(Just added!)</i>	* April 24th & 25th <i>Location:</i> Blue Stem Prairie <i>Subject:</i> Prairie Chickens and Pasque Flowers (Tentative)
May	May 22nd, 8:00 am <i>Location:</i> Schaefer Prairie <i>Subject:</i> Lady Slippers

* Indicates a new trip

** Indicates that there has been a date change

Trip Details

Wood Rill SNA Field Trip - October 12th, 4:00 pm

Photograph maple trees at their best on the hills of Wood Rill Scientific and Natural Area. The maple trees in this area should make fall landscapes or color close ups beautiful. Use Velvia or another high saturation film to make the colors sing. Wetlands, ferns, and tamaracks are also within the SNA boundaries. There may also be a variety of mushrooms on the logs. Tripods and just about any lens will produce memorable fall shots. You are limited only by your imagination during this magical time of the year. Good footwear is essential since this field trip will involve hillside trail walking.

When driving to Wood Rill please note that Old Long Lake Road which leads to the parking lot suddenly appears on the north side of Highway 12. Meet at the parking lot at 4 PM on Sunday, October 12. The trip will take place regardless of the weather

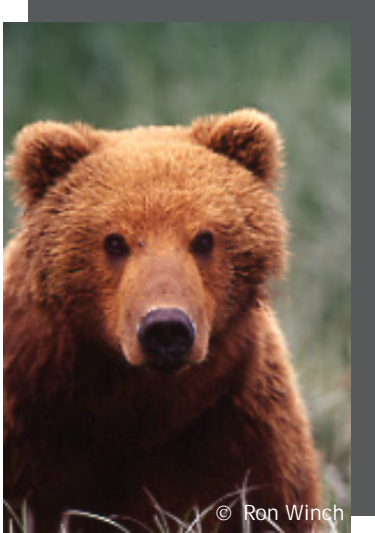
**** Reicks Lake Field Trip - November 23rd, 8:00 am**

The subject of this trip is the beautiful tundra swan. Reicks Lake near Alma, Wisconsin has a high concentration of birds during the latter part of November despite significant habitat degradation over the years. You will see hundreds of birds throughout the day, most 50 yards or more away, but a few get close for a good image. The longest lens available and patience are necessary for a salon slide. Expect to stand outside during the entire day and be ready for intense action at any moment. Temperatures can be 30 to 70 degrees.

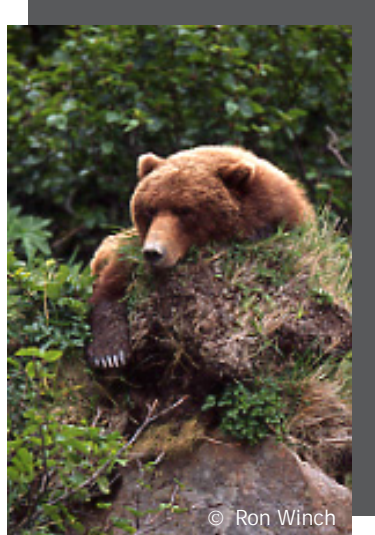
Saving Your Underexposed Slides

Dale Bohlke

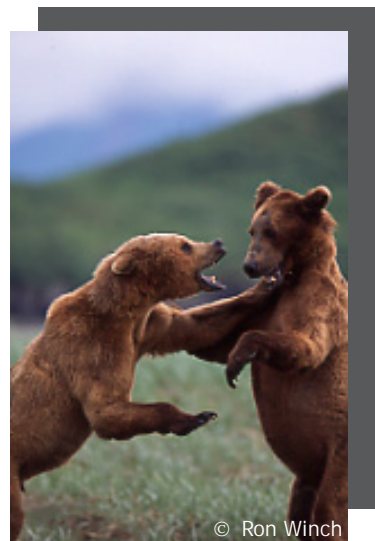
The shot of a lifetime - but you followed the camera meter and underexposed your favorite shot of the trip. Don't throw the slide away, it can be easily salvaged. Duplicate the slide and ask that it to be overexposed the amount you think needed to restore the scene's light. If you are unsure ask for both one half and one stop overexposures of the slide. The counter person may say it can't be done but don't let that stop you. At National Camera it has worked well. They send slides to Universal Color in New Hope for duping so it might be easier to go directly to them. This is not an original idea but taken from something written by Galen Rowell. You can also use this to your advantage in a low light situation and purposely underexpose, then dupe to lighten.



© Ron Winch



© Ron Winch



© Ron Winch

The early morning sun kissed the western shore of Geographic Harbor as the four of us struggled into hip boots in preparation for boarding the twenty-four foot skiff. This was our third trip to photograph the coastal Brown Bears of Alaska, each trip in a different month.

Captain Chuck was already on board the skiff, lending a hand as we passed our heavy tripods and thirty pound backpacks to him. We were all armed with 600mm f4, 500mm f4 or 400mm f2 lenses plus an 80-200 f2.8 zoom, a short wide-angle zoom and a goodly supply of film. Raingear and an extra fleece jacket were bungeed to the backpacks as Alaskan weather can predictably change from mild and sunny to cold, windy and rainy or snowy - even in June.

Glancing back at Chuck, I noticed that he had only a Canon body attached to a 100-400mm IS lens, f5.6 - no tripod or camera bag and was probably shooting ISO 400 print film. Back on the boat he had several albums of great bear behavior photos, but then he has been working with some of the best wildlife photographers in the world for eleven years.

Once ashore, we trekked a mile or so through sedge meadows photographing bears, eagles and a nest of young Ravens. Slowly meandering toward us, a six hundred pound bear approached to within thirty feet, stood up on her hind feet for a better look and apparently deciding that we were no threat, she laid down and went to sleep. Talk about feeling privileged - to have such a great animal trust us that much. After just one more photo, we turned and carefully walked away, leaving the sleeping bear.

Walking back to the skiff in mid afternoon we chanced upon two mid-sized bears play fighting. Standing on hind feet with lips curled they boxed each other, but never hard enough to provoke the other. The slaps didn't seem to faze either one, but probably would have sent my head rolling through the meadow.

Back on the boat the four of us settled into a well-deserved lunch and

hot tea. Chuck had things to attend to in the wheelhouse. As the last sloppy Joe disappeared, Chuck ventured forth with a big smile and laid out three exquisite prints from the morning shoot. No wonder we never saw him change film. When asked about going digital, he replied, "I leave home in mid May and never return until after Thanksgiving, and in years past I never saw my photos till the New Year. So, I bought the necessary gear to shoot and print here on the boat. Now I'm really enjoying photography. And, with the ability to change ISO at any time, I don't have to worry about film speed." Digital anyone?

I met Charlie a year ago, a retiree with a computer background. He was just getting into digital shooting and had grandiose ideas about what he was going to do. Sure, I thought. Well, I bumped into Charlie again in July. He was sitting in a lawn chair at ringside shooting the agility event of a very large dog show. Armed with a Nikon D1H and a 70-200mm f2.8 VR lens atop a monopod, every dog to run the course got at least ten shots. Over the two day event Charlie would shoot over 7,000 photos. When he filled a card, an assistant would take it to the van, make a quick "contact sheet" and display it for the dog owners and handlers to see. Tucked away in the van was a special high-speed printer. Digital camera, high-speed printer and impulse buying made Charlie a happy man. Asked about how much work was involved after the show? About three hours. Digital anyone?

One last note, there is an excellent new magazine on digital photography by the publishers of *Outdoor Photography*. *Digital Photo Pro*: volume 1 number 1 is on the newsstands now. The article by Jay Maisel is worth the price of the magazine. Maisel, who hates anything new and techie, has been shooting digital almost exclusively for nearly three years and realistically discusses the pros and cons of digital shooting. The magazine is pricey at \$7.95 (136 pages), but has a great introductory offer of six issues for \$14.97. Digital Anyone?

Nature Photo Times

published Sept-May by the

Minnesota Nature Photography Club

www.minnesotanature.org

Editor: Cathy Jones, 952-897-1881, cathyj@toomuchheat.com
3533 W. 103rd St
Bloomington, MN 55431

President: Tom Samuelson 952-472-2235 thsamuel@citolink.com
Co Vice Pres.: Mike Hagerty 612-920-2635 michaelhag@yahoo.com
Co Vice Pres.: Vijay Karai 763-757-6300 vkara@temgweb.com
Treasurer: Jim Duncan 651-459-3558 jduncan001@comcast.net

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,
Bloomington, MN

FIRST CLASS MAIL

October Program

Judging Criteria

What makes a good photo?
Members will discuss the
elements that contribute to
an outstanding nature image



Club Tidbits...

Recently, the Environmental Journal accompanied some club members on a photo shoot at the Louisville Swamp Unit of the Minnesota Valley NWR. What is the "Minnesota State Lottery's Environmental Journal"? It's a weekly 30 minute program that covers a myriad of stories on how to enjoy and protect Minnesota's natural resources.

The show highlighting our club will be broadcast on October 25th and 26th and can be seen locally on channel 45 in the Twin Cities. For more information, go to www.lottery.state.mn.us/envjourn.html

The dates have been set for the 2004 Vince Shute Wildlife Sanctuary Photo workshops. The dates are Saturday, July 24th through Monday, July 26th and Saturday, August 14th through Sunday, August 16th. For more information, contact John Pennoyer at impnatur@aol.com

The Crex Meadows Wildlife Management Area in Grantsburg, Wisconsin will host an open house on Sunday, October 12th. Club member Ron Winch will be giving a slide presentation that afternoon. He will also have thirty prints on display there for approximately six weeks.

If you have an article or "tidbit" of interest to club members, please contact Cathy Jones at (952) 897-1881 or send your article to cathyj@toomuchheat.com

September Awards

Judges: John Pennoyer &
John D. Jenkins

10

Dale Bohlke	Blazing Star Morning
Dale Bohlke	Moose River
Marilyn Gladitsch	Amanita Family
Bill Hansaker	East End of Long Canyon on Burr Trail
Kathy Hobbs	Hungry Hummer
John D. La Mere	September Sunrise
Jean McDonough	Gentoo and Two Chicks
Toni Meglitsch	Brown Bear at Low Tide
Toni Meglitsch	Leopard on Savannah

9

Mary Kay Bertas	Yosemite
Jim Duncan	Bottle Brush
Dave Ellenbecker	Cedar Bog Orchids
Dave Ellenbecker	Orb Web and Dew
Marilyn Gladitsch	Trillium Trio
Bill Handsaker	Calf Creek Falls, Utah
Kathy Hobbs	Taking a Peek
Vijay Karai	Caterpillar
Dave Klein	Baltimore Oriole
John D. La Mere	Green Backed Heron
Flo Scholljegerdes	Skunk Cabbage in Bloom
John Zeiss	Polar Bear #13
John Zeiss	Sax

8

Jim Arnsen	Early Morning Sharp Tail
Mary Kay Bertas	Zion
Ron Cleveland	Showy Lady's Slipper at Lake Itasca
Mariann Cyr	Cactus
Jim Duncan	Iris Bud
Tom Farrell	Albino Lady's Slipper
Cynthia Fleury	Wild Geranium
Cathy Jones	Goose Resting
Joe Kandiko	Garden
Dottie Lillestrand	Jack in Pulpit
Jean McDonough	Petrel and Chick
Tom Samuelson	Tree Swallow
Duane Wraalstad	Fern Bud
Duane Wraalstad	Web #00

In this issue...

- Saving Your Underexposed Slide
- Field Notes: More Than Bears
- Digital Anyone?
- Club Field Trips
- Club Highlighted in Environmental Journal
- And more...