



Field Notes

Shooting Silhouettes

By John Pennoyer

This summer while my wife and I were on vacation in the Whistler Mountain area of British Columbia, we were hiking on one of the trails when we came upon a very picturesque scene. We had stopped at the overlook to visually fill our senses with this very beautiful mountain scenery. I heard a voice from behind me saying, "Would you take a picture of us?" As I looked around it was a young couple and they probably assumed that I knew what I was doing because they had noticed my tripod and photo pack. The sun was directly in front of us and I knew this would be a difficult photo, but never-the-less I obliged and took their photo. When I was done he asked if he could take our photo to repay the favor. My wife gives him her digital camera and he snaps a photo. After they left I asked her to look at the LCD display and of course the only thing she sees is two dark figures. The light was so bright behind us that the metering system turned us into nothing but dark blobs with no detail.

Whenever the light is brighter behind the subject this will always make for very challenging metering. Usually if you want to get some detail in your subject either use your spot meter and meter right on the subject and compensate accordingly, or use matrix/evaluate metering and open up to help render some detail. But when I am confronted with those types of situations this is a good time to silhouette your subject against this very bright light.

Shooting silhouettes is probably one of the easiest metering that a photographer will have to do. The reason that I say this is that your goal is to make your subject darker than the light, so no need to worry about detail in your subject. The camera by itself will do this automatically, just depending on how large the subject is in the frame. Listed below are some guidelines that I like to think of when shooting for silhouettes.

- 1. Majority of the light must be behind your subject.**
- 2. Meter for the light, not the subject.**
- 3. Change exposure values to determine the silhouette affect. (I have a tendency to stop down when shooting in bright light as this will put more intensity in the light and make your subject darker, which allows more separation from the light to the subject.)**
- 4. Very important for the outline of the subject to define itself. (sometimes head position, wing position etc can ruin the silhouette)**
- 5. Generally the light in the background should be interesting, that is why I think sunrise/sunsets are the best times for silhouettes.**
- 6. Try to keep the background uncluttered, trees, branches etc. can either add or take away from the image.**
- 7. If shooting a bird or animal silhouette, behavior such as wing flap, mouth open, etc. can put considerable interest in the image.**
- 8. I always manual focus - most auto focus systems will have a hard time locking onto a dark subject.**

9. Of course anytime that you shoot into a bright light, lens flare can occur so try to minimize as much as possible.

I have always believed that one thing that will separate photographers is their use of "light". With the type of photography equipment that most of us use today, it has made it much easier to capture images that were almost impossible a few years ago. There really is no such thing as bad light it is just that some light is better than others, it is up to us to use the available light to our advantage and capture that very unique image.

Good Shooting



Prairie Silhouette



Eagle Silhouette

October Awards

Judges: Vijay Karia and Duane Wraalstad

10

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|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Swanson, Robert | Olympic NP Elwha Valley Creek |
| Morgan, Jeff | Cranes (W) |
| Gladitsch, Marilyn | Scarlet Waxy Cap |
| Hahn, Jeff | Dragon Fly Close-up |
| Miller, Joe | Fireweed and Aspen Leaves |
| Aronson, Jim | Drying Off |
| Jenkins, John D. | Snack Time |
| McDonough, Jean | Wet Mint |
| La Mere, John D. | October Reflection |

9

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|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cleveland, Ron | Crane Take Off (W) |
| Wilbrecht, Jon | P9056762 |
| Chaturvedi, Amitabh | My Sweet Home |
| Morgan, Jeff | Ducks (W) |
| Palley, Lil | Montana Sunrise |
| Samuelson, Tom | Ball Cactus |
| Snowden, Curt | Dewy Damsel |
| Muller, Torsten | Morning Glow on Circle Peak |

8

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|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Wilbrecht, Jon | Strawflower |
| Prokosch, Mike | Feeling Out of Place |
| Nadreau, Don | Kadunce Rocks |
| Fleury, Cynthia | Bond Falls |
| Prokosch, Mike | Fog on the Mountain |
| Fleury, Cynthia | Michigan Sunrise |
| Swanson, Robert | Banning SP Wolf Creek Falls |
| Jones, Cathy | Chinese Goose |
| Aronson, Jim | Pearl Strands |
| Duke, Larry | Zoo Beaver |
| McDonough, Jean | Prairie Dog Close-up |
| Snowden, Curt | Pictured Rocks |
| Handsaker, Bill | Capitol Reef |
| Goossens-Bryan, Betty | Black-tailed Prairie Dog |
| La Mere, John D. | Rabbit, North Dakota |
| Jones, Cathy | Blue Heron Landing |
| Samuelson, Tom | Hepatica |
| Goossens-Bryan, Betty | Cedar Waxwing #2 |
| Gladitsch, Marilyn | St. John Wort |
| Harlow, Jerry | Deer on Alert |
| Hahn, Jeff | Anthomyiid Fly |

Whitetail Deer

By
Ron Winch

The whitetail doe paced nervously in a small patch of eight year old cottonwoods. With tail held high and nervously licking her flanks with uncommon frequency. Her sides were convulsing in a steady rhythm, a definite indication that she was about to drop her fawn. Suddenly she stood alert; ears cocked as if trying to pickup and identify some predatory sound. Her whole body quivered as she surveyed the area and cautiously stepped out of the protective cottonwoods then made for the dense spruce grove where she melded into the shadows. It was interesting to learn later that does seem to be able to hold off giving birth for a short time if predators are sensed.

A missed photo op for sure, as this happened only thirty feet from my library window, but I learned a lot about deer behavior and biology in my ensuing research.

For instance, did you know that over five million whitetail deer are born each year? All those fawns should help us realize that we should be good stewards of the earth. Deer bring out strong emotions in people. Bucks portray the image of strength and majesty, does grace and beauty, and fawns the frolicsome innocence of children. And still we visualize deer as a symbol of wilderness.

The whitetails reproductive rhythm is regulated by photoperiods; not by temperature. Therefore, fawns are born in late spring as the days grow longer and climatic conditions are favorable, and food and cover are abundant. About 75% of doe fawns and all yearling does usually breed in our area. Most whitetail fawns are born in late May or early June following a 200 day gestation. Doe fawns usually breed in December and their fawns are born in July. Fawns are born with front feet and head first. The doe may give birth while standing or lying down. Fawns are licked clean by the mother – thus establishing the bond between them. Twins are usually born about 20 minutes apart.

Fast forward to early August; we now have seven deer as regulars in the pasture and under an old apple tree. There is a single doe, a doe with one fawn and two doe with twin fawns. They can be quite approachable in the early evening. While

mowing spotted knapweed with the tractor I have come within 20 feet of three deer. Toni however, walks out in the pasture with the horses and easily approaches that close. Or she may sit down and the deer, curious as they are, will stiff-leggedly approach as she talks to them.

Occasionally, I watch and photograph from a blind. One evening in early September all seven deer were enjoying fallen apples when two fawns began to frolic. They would run and jump like the impalas of Africa. The highlight of the evening was a contest of who could jump over mother without touching. Four successful jumps proved their worth and with tail raised they raced across the open pasture into a brushy ravine and back again to nibble fallen apples.

Another evening as I was photographing a tawny colored doe in the golden light I was surprised by a young wild turkey poking its head into the blind. No chance for a photo, but what an experience!

Best to hold onto those memories, for deer season is at hand and we are sure to loose some of our friends. But not to worry, maybe we will get a few of those five million newborn fawns next spring.

The Digital Decision

By Cathy Guisewite (Thanks to Lawrence Duke)

CG: I haven't seen you in ages! Where have you been?

His Wife: Camera shopping.

Her Hubby: We're going Digital.

HW: My honey is studying the mega pixel situation.

HH: Yah! 5mp, 4mp, 3mp, 2mp, or 1.2mp

HW: I'm in charge of zoom. 3x

optical/2.5x digital Vs. 3x optical/6x

digital Vs. 4x optical/2x digital Vs.

6x optical/2.5x digital Vs. 2xoptical/3x

digital...

HW: The kids are researching battery options.

Kids: (in chorus) Nickel-metal Hydride!

Lithium-ion! Photo-Lithium!

HW: Our dream is to come together as a family at the end of July...find a ten-minute window where the technology isn't changing...buy our camera...and then spend two weeks in August studying the instruction book and upgrading our computer!

CG: Any plans to go anywhere to take pictures?

HW: Who has time? Or money?

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Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month, September through May. Set-up and social time with light refreshments begins at 6:30 pm. The nature slide salon starts at 7:00 pm and a program follows the salon. Meetings are held at:

Visitor Center, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife
Refuge,
3815 East 80th Street
Bloomington, MN

Editors Corner

Reminder: Your club dues are needed see the enclosed form and instructions. Thanks.

November Meeting (11/17/04):

"A Photographer's Sketchbook" Dale Bohlke

This presentation shows the transformation of an idea into an image. Some photographers pre-visualize, and then take one or two shots to get a great image; I may need to shoot a roll or two to get the same result. The ideal image may take years to acquire or it may come during one shooting session with the subject. During this presentation you will see various works, both in progress and those where I feel I have reached my ideal image.

2005 Minnesota Botany Exhibition:

Enclosed in this newsletter you will find copies of the entry form and an information sheet on this event.

FIRST CLASS MAIL



December Meeting:

We will have our annual year-end Salon at the December meeting. **If you have slides on the attached list, please bring them to the November meeting, or send them, by 11/18, to:**

Mariann Cyr
3955 Glenview Ave.
Arden Hills, MN 55112

Jeff Morgan has the files of the digital images that are eligible and will provide these to Mariann.

Everyone must indicate if their images are wildlife in order to be eligible for the wildlife award. Put a "W" designation on the slide. Some people have already indicated if their digital images are wildlife, but if you did not check with Mariann so it is recorded correctly.

Wildlife is defined as one or more organisms living free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat. Therefore, photographs of zoo animals or game farm animals are not eligible (nor are botanical specimens from gardens, farms, nurseries, or arboretums).