



Nature Photo Times

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“Time with Nature”

By Ron Winch

The early December sun washed across the landscape and lightly kissed the tall frosted canary grass – and then melted away, revealing the damp golden seed heads. A jagged streak of gray and black momentarily hovered above the grass, then settled onto the seed head – looking for breakfast no doubt, or was the bird, like any of us in our younger days, simply enjoying the thrill as the grass swayed and bent to the ground under its weight. “Chick-a-dee-dee” –the notes penetrated the cool morning air as the bird took flight and darted away as quickly as it had come. Dozens of tiny diamonds streaked in an arc as the rebounding seed head rejoined the patch of canary grass.

Feeling good about the warmth of this December day, a Redbellied Woodpecker hammers out his tattoo on an old weathered snag. Brilliant red sweeps from the base of the bill over the crown and across the nape, ending at the mantle; telling me this is a male bird. The female is nowhere to be seen at the moment; she often comes in a bit later. Working his way up the trunk he finds the first of many one inch diameter holes packed with suet and seed. A long laughing call is an apparent call for his mate – then he digs in. Suet is a great cold weather substitute for the summer fare of insects and their larva. It’s ideal for maintaining the high body temperature of birds, which range from 100 to 112 degrees F.

Bits of acorn shell sprinkle to the ground, much like the frozen rain of last week. Gray Squirrel sits on an oak branch turning the acorn with his front feet, sharp incisors chipping away the shell. The bitter fruit is a mainstay food for the squirrel. He seems relaxed but keeps a sharp

eye toward the sky, where most danger comes from. Far overhead a redtailed hawk flies slow lazy circles. He is no threat to Gray Squirrel. Without warning, a streak of cinnamon brown erupts from the trunk of the oak tree, chattering as it hits Gray Squirrel in the rump. The acorn is history as Red Squirrel pursues his victim through the tree tops. Up, down and around the trunk and wild aerial leaps from tree to tree until Red Squirrel assured of his victory, breaks off the chase and watches Gray dash for safe haven. Don’t know why these guys have such dislike for each other. I’ve watched this scenario hundreds of times and Red always comes away the winner. It’s like watching a pickup truck and a sports car running an obstacle course.

In the distance a whitetailed deer, alerted by the treetop antics, lifts its head from feeding on acorns and stands rigidly alert. Ears at attention, the right front foot is slowly raised and then quickly and resoundingly stomped on the forest floor. No response from his surroundings. Dark eyes glisten as the statuesque buck nervously moves his head back and forth trying to detect any movement, any danger. Nothing alarming, but being a buck, with hopefully a long life ahead, he snorts once and bounds off in the opposite direction, waving his white flag at me.

It’s not uncommon to see this much activity and even more in an hour or so – if you are in the right place at the right time. The right place – some pristine wilderness area no doubt. Not quite. I had spent the morning at my favorite nature center. Which one? It doesn’t matter. Get to know one near you and it could quickly become your favorite. Volunteer your services – they all need good photography. Get to know the staff. You will be amazed at how much flora and fauna exists so close to you. You’ll be doing the nature center a great service, and you’ll discover your own real worth by doing something you really

love – and sharing it. More importantly, you will be influencing the lives of young people – those same young people who will soon be taking care of us, our environment and our world.

Go forth, do it and enjoy. The rewards are all yours.

February Salon Results

Judges: Jeff Hahn & Bill Handsaker

Score	Photographer	Title
8	Aronson, Jim	Curious Whitetail
8	Colambos, Ted	October Sky
8	Cyr, Mariann	Hopper Chick
8	Dykstra, John	Single Maple
8	Ellenbecker, Dave	Leaves in a Woodland pool
8	Goossens Bryan, Betty	ShowyLady'sSlipper
8	Graves, Rick	Mushroom
8	Graves, Rick	Sleepy Owl
8	Jenkins, John	Swan Goose upclose
8	Kandiko, Joe	Fire Tower View
8	McDonough, Jean	Baby Snow Monkey Nursing
8	Samuelson, Tom	Rice Lake Refuge
9	Aronson, Jim	Butterfly on Coneflower
9	Cyr, Mariann	Y-bill Teal
9	Goossens Bryan, Betty	RubyThroated
9	Morgan, Jeff	Snowy Egret
9	Morgan, Jeff	Amer Bitten
9	Perez, Dave	barred owl
9	Perez, Dave	yellow ladyslipper
9	Sanderson, Virginia	Tree Frog
9	Sanderson, Wayne	Elephant
9	Sanderson, Wayne	Spoonbill
10	Cassuto, Nadav	Eurasian Crane
10	Lahr, Ron	fisk lake
10	Sanderson, Virginia	Two Herons

Minnesota Nature Photography Club Yahoo group

What is it?

An internet based service for Nature Photography Club members.

It allows members to keep in touch, share images and techniques, receive notices of photography related events and web-sites. Think of it as a big “real time” electronic notice board for the club.

The normal way to use the service is to sign up to receive messages, then when you or another club member have something to share then you simply email the Yahoo server and everyone in the group will receive it as a personal email. Have a photo question, want company for a shoot, know of a special offer, comment on the last judge, then you just simply post a message to the group. You could also have the option of receiving a daily digest of posted messages, or receiving no email at all. Those who elect to not receive email messages can access all messages from site at any time but this is not the best way to get the most out of this service.

We can also easily put up photo albums of our cherished images for other members to see and comment on. There are currently some albums from members available for viewing. Albums or individual photos can be uploaded by any member and viewing is restricted to members of Nature Photography Club Yahoo group; not available to non-members. Albums can be snapshots of Nature Photography Club events/outings, member trip/outing images, photos posted by members seeking critiques, or members simply sharing/showing off their images.

Why Join?

It's free, it's fun, it's informative, it's legal. Have a question about a new camera/old film darkroom technique/place to visit and can't wait until the next Nature Photography Club regular monthly meeting; then this is the place to get help or share information with like minded people. Heard about a photography opportunity or gallery show coming up in the Twin Cities; then this is the place to share the knowledge. Have photos of last years Nature Photography Club Christmas social and don't know what to do with them; then this is the place to share them. Have two versions of your favorite vacation image and don't know which one to enter in next month's

salon; then post the image and get critiques before selecting image to be judged. Considering a new camera/computer/scanner/printer; then post the question and watch the tech gurus offer their opinions. Nature Photography Club Yahoo group is self-policing and political opinions or inappropriate images are not welcome.

How do I join?

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mnnature/>

Or go to YAHOO.COM homepage and click on GROUPS. Enter mnnature (all one word) in search box titled FIND A GROUP. Then simply follow the instructions. If you do not already have a Yahoo ID and password you will first need to register. After registering then go to mnnature Yahoo group and click on JOIN THIS GROUP. You can reveal as much or as little about yourself as you elect to join the group. Some members have ID's and email addresses that make it obvious who they are and some look completely anonymous.

Field Notes

“Hands of Man”

By John Pennoyer

When I joined the Nature Camera Club many years ago, one of the first things that I learned was not to show images in club competition that would show “the hand of man.” For many years I would pass up any image that would begin to show this forbidden rule for nature competition. According to PSA Guidelines for nature competition the “hands of man” should not be present “unless” it enhances the nature story. So not to leave this to someone’s judgment I simply would pass up all images that had any hint of hands of man.

I certainly do agree with the PSA Guidelines for nature photography. But my problem was that it totally narrowed my vision. I did not want to take any images that were nothing

but pure nature. As I now look back, it was silly for me to allow this to narrow my vision. About 12-15 years ago I may have had an opportunity to capture a Northern Shrike that was sitting on a telephone wire. My 400mm with a 1.4X was sitting on the seat next to me and all I had to do was to stick it out the window and capture my image. But my simple mind said “hands of man!” After a couple of minutes of observing this rare photo op, the Shrike decided it had enough and flew away. How many other opportunities do you think that I have had on a Northern Shrike? Yes you’re right “NONE”!

One nice thing about age is that as we get older we seem to get smarter. Although I do consider myself primarily a nature photographer, by that I mean photographing the flora and fauna in its native habitat, I also consider myself an outdoor photographer by capturing many other types of images taken outdoors. My wife and I made a trip to Scotland last spring and I took many images along the coast with all of the colorful old boats and buildings that made for some great story telling images of Scotland. Yes I did get my nature images of coastal sea birds, but I also enjoyed very much the other imagery that I did take.

When I now drive the back roads in search of winter images, if I see a nice field and a snow covered barb wire fence line, I will stop the vehicle and see if I can work out a composition. Just a couple of weeks ago there was a full moon. I looked at the calendar and had my wife make a reservation for the North Shore with my goal being to capture the full moon over Split Rock Lighthouse. In most cases for a full moon a photographer will have two chances - the day before the full moon and the day of the full moon. On the day before, it was so cloudy that I never even went to the location. But on the next day it was clear blue sky and the moon came up on schedule 4:54 PM. For the next 75 minutes I captured probably 75 images. Of course those will never be part of a nature competition, but it was still an exciting evening and there will be other

types of competition and uses for images such as that.

I would encourage all nature photographers to not get caught up in the “hands of man” and allow it to prevent them from capturing some great and maybe rare images. Maybe the image won’t qualify for our club or PSA nature competition, but remember there are always other categories to enter those images in.

One final thought, one of my favorite black bear images was taken last summer at one of my workshops. One of the volunteers always liked to stay in the little cabin that is in the middle of the field. Every morning the same young black bear would go to the door scratch at it until Karen would peek her head out as if the bear was there to get a special breakfast treat.

Good Shooting



“Where’s Breakfast?”

By John Pennoyer



“Full Moon over Split Rock”

By John Pennoyer

Nature Photography "enhancing your skills"

John Pennoyer will be instructing a Photography class at Eastman Nature Center in Dayton, MN

This class is designed for new nature photographers to the intermediate level.

May 20, 2006

10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Class size is limited, April 1 is deadline

There is a brochure outside or talk to John

e-mail: johnpennoyer@comcast.net

www.impressionsofnature.net

Here's an update on the 2005 Refuge Image Contest!

We received over 1450 images, including a wide variety of high quality photos taken at over 150 refuges around the country. We are excited to announce that our judges have selected the semi-finalist entries, and you can now view the thumbnails of these images. Just click on the contest logo on our homepage www.refugenet.org <<http://www.refugenet.org/>> and follow the link to the thumbnail gallery.

The prize winners will be announced on March 14, 2006. NWRA's Refuge Image Library, a searchable collection of refuge images featuring the semifinalist entries from the photo contest, will be launched that same day.

We invite you to take a look at the semi-finalists, it's an impressive collection. Undeniable evidence that refuges are great places to visit and that folks are out there experiencing our country's varied wildlife heritage!

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2006-2007 Elections

Nominations are now open for club office positions. If you are interested in serving as a club officer, please contact Mariann Cyr (phone and email is listed on the last page of this newsletter). The slate of candidates will be published in the April newsletter and votes will be cast in May. New officers will take office in June.

In addition to officer candidates, the club needs volunteers! We need help with digital entries and slide shows (contact Jeff Morgan),

judging, organizing field trips, treats, and other opportunities. Please give some consideration to volunteering, it takes a small amount of time and effort but enhances our club immensely.

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Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month, September through May

6:15 PM - Set-up and Social Time
6:45 PM - Announcements and Business
7:00 PM - Program
8:00 PM - Nature Salon (Competition and Judge's Comments).

Meetings are held at:
Visitor Center, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge,
3815 East 80th Street
Bloomington, MN

March 15, 2006 Meeting

The Botany International Slides will be shown for this month's program. Salon judges will be Michelle Burkstrand and Jean McDonough. Hope to see you there!!

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