



Nature Photo Times

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Field Notes "Competition" By John Pennoyer

It was just in the paper recently where Vikings head coach Brad Childress was thinking of using their 7th pick in the first round for a quarterback. Didn't the Vikings just draft a quarterback last year in the first round? Wasn't he supposed to be the Viking quarterback of the future? His reasoning was that at this level the majority of athletes enjoyed the competition. It will make everyone in that position work harder to be a better player. I certainly agree with that thinking. Back to my high school days (no need state how long ago that was!) when I played in athletics; when someone was trying to compete for my position I always tried to play my best to show the coaches that I deserved to be in that starting position.

Having been a member of this camera club for many years, I have noticed that the images in our monthly competition have greatly improved from just a few years ago. Yes, I will agree today's equipment is far superior to what I started with some 25 years ago. We all are able to capture images today that were next to impossible just 5 years ago. But I think that there is so much more to it than just equipment. When I judge I see some very talented photographers. No longer is it a select few individuals that are getting the 10's. All of us need time to get used to photography especially as it relates to nature. Our equipment now really shortens the learning curve from a few years ago. But as I now judge in our monthly competition, I see photographers with perfect composition, understanding the "nature story" and not just pretty pictures. What surprises me most is the variety of subjects. No longer are wild flowers 80% of the imagery. When I judged in February we had a variety of wildlife, landscapes, wildflowers, insects and many other subjects. So why is it that all of a

sudden our competition is getting so strong? I believe that all of us are students, not only of photography but of the subjects that we photograph as well. Most of us will attend instructional classes/workshops, read books/magazine, and most important of all take lots of images and self learn from each one. Of course I still think one of the best learning tools is being a member of this club! Every time that I am in the field, it could be a failure unless I learn something from this experience. It might be something with my equipment; maybe I discovered a new subject, it may be a location that I have never been to before. But I always want to learn. Once we feel there is nothing more to learn, you will be doomed to failure. I thought that I was the only one that had "passion" for nature photography, after all how many "normal" folks will brave cold, rain, snow, wind and any other element that nature wants to throw at us just to go out and take a picture. But now many of you are right out there with me! C'mon folks give me a break!

It is a real pleasure to judge at this quality of nature photography. Not only are the images inspirational to me but I hope to all of you as well. But it also encourages me to keep improving on my skill as a nature photographer and not just sit around resting on my laurels. Whether or not you enter our monthly competition, the images you see should inspire you to be more creative, open your vision to other subjects, try other techniques, and to just be a better nature photographer. I know that it certainly does it for me! Competition is good for all of us; it makes no difference if it is at the professional sports level or as nature photographers.



Sunrise in the Boundary Waters



Mergansers on the Mississippi

Good Shooting

**“Winter Survival”
By Ron Winch**

It’s a beautiful January morning. The sun, up only an hour or so, beams down through an azure blue sky, sending long dancing shadows across the landscape.

Through the night a light snow, hurried in on the force 6 (25-31 mph) winds of an Alberta Clipper, dusted the sheltered areas with a half inch of light snow. Wind chill dropped to minus 45 degrees. A pretty tough night for critters – especially birds.

White-footed mice, living in old stumps, dens and even abandoned bird nests, ventured out on top of six inches of old snow in search of food – leaving their tracks and tail drags written in the fresh snow.

Voles, heavier bodied and with more fur are hardly affected for they live in the subnival zone where the temperature is likely within a degree or two of freezing. Gray squirrels are snuggled into their tree den or curled up in a deep sleep in their warm windproof basketball size leaf nest high in the old cottonwood and being rocked by the wind. Red squirrels, lacking brown fat to burn for extra heat, are huddled together in a log, or even an underground den. They, however, will need to venture out soon to feed, for they are less furred than their cousins and have virtually no fat reserves. The possum, denned up under the garden shed, is protecting his hairless ears and tail. A hollow 70 foot cottonwood hosts a coon or two. Only the cottontail seems oblivious to the sudden arctic blast as his tracks appear everywhere, especially under the bird feeders.

What about these cold temperatures and extreme wind chills? We hear the TV weather people warning us about frostbite when the thermostat drops to zero, and they really get excited when zeros is accompanied by a thirty mile wind. Perhaps they are right – considering today’s general population. However, I grew up long before the advent of the TV weather person and it was no big deal to spend hours outdoors – even at 43 degrees below zero. Even now it is not uncommon to spend five or six hours out in the coldest weather – be it photography or taking a five mile stroll through the woods.

Even the birds are quiet this morning. Not one has visited the feeders yet. Hopefully they – especially the chickadees – spent the night in the dense evergreens, or even better, in an old woodpecker nest cavity. These tiny bundles of energy, weighing only 10-12 grams (less than one half ounce) have sacrificed fat storage for mobility and would probably perish if unable to restoke their heating plant throughout the day, thus maintaining a norm daytime temperature of 108 degrees F. Over 50% of the fat they store through the day is burned through the cold night. They simply do not have enough caloric reserves in fat to make it through a cold night if they try to regulate the same body temperature at night as through the day. To counter

this they lower body temp by 18-20 degrees F below their normal daytime temperatures, resulting in an energy savings of 20%. Combine this with their plumage, which is denser than that of similar sized birds and we find that heat loss is mainly from the area around the eyes and bill. When turning in for the night, they fluff up and tuck their head under their wing – thus reducing that heat loss.

All this may not be enough to survive an extremely cold night. But by controlling the shivering through controlled shivering outbreaks, body temp gradually drops until a particular depth of hypothermia is reached. Shivering is then resumed with regular bursts, maintaining a closely regulated hypothermia. In chickadees this response is not dictated by declining fat reserves, but is induced by decreasing temperatures and is used as primary means energy conservation.

Finally in the warmth of the noonday sun our resident flock of six chickadees shows up at the feeders, looking as chipper as ever, and feast on fattening black sunflower seeds.

As humans, we aren't all that concerned about severe winter conditions. We don't seek shelter from the cold, but rather venture out into it, buffered by layers of fleece or goose down. And when we get cold, we retreat to our warm snug burrow. Wildlife, on the other hand, has a bit more to contend with. Consider a chilly January night. The weather report indicates 0 degrees F in the suburbs. That temperature is at 4-6 feet above the ground. At the snow surface it is likely 7-10 degrees colder. At ground level, under 10-12 inches of snow the temp is only a degree or two from the freezing mark. Little wonder rabbits have such warm fur and voles live in tunnels with grass nests beneath the snow. All this matters little to birds – except for the ruffed grouse who dives into snow and tunnels down 10-12 inches, taking advantage of the snow's insulation.

Of even greater concern is the wind, for it steals heat quickly. A 20 mph wind at ground level can easily double to 40 mph at 20-35 feet. At 0 degrees F the wind chill at ground level is minus 22 degrees

F, at 35 feet minus 44 degrees F. Pretty tough on our small feathered friends.

Hope this gives you a greater appreciation for all those living outside your snug burrow.

February Salon Results – John Pennoyer Judging

Score of 8:

Baker, Eric	Surfing Ibis
Fleury, Cynthia	Wild Geranium 2
Galambos, Ted	Rock Pattern
Gladitsch, Marilyn	Nature's Pattern
Goossens-Bryan, Betty	White-tail Close-up (W)
Graves, Rick	I See You (W)
Holt, Kristin	Sharptail Grouse (W)
Hoyt, David	Dunlin on One Foot (W)
Lahr, Ron	Marshmallows
Mattison, Drew	Twenty Below
McDonough, Jean	Porcupine Up High
McDonough, Jean	Giraff Walking Left
Miller, Joe	Pine Silhouette
Morgan, Jeff	Fight (W)
	Green Heron in Duck Weed
Nelson, Vern	Wolf Creek by Moonlight
Perez, Dave	Longhorn in Rut (W)
Polley, Lil	I See You (W)
Samuelson, Tom	Flying Bass (W)
Vichich, Dave	Lynx
Wilbrecht, Jon	

Score of 9:

Aronson, Jim	Three Swans (W)
Baker, Eric	Ruff Grouse
Bertas, Mary Kay	Sunrise
Fleury, Cynthia	Caves Cove
Nadreau, Don	North Shore Sunrise
Scholljegerdes, Flo	Prairie Smoke

Score of 10:

Cassuto, Nadav	Stonechat (W)
Cyr, Mariann	Fur Seal (W)
Cyr, Mariann	Adelie in Snow (W)
Gladitsch, Marilyn	Amanita #30
Morgan, Jeff	Domestic Duties (W)
Vichich, Dave	Flying Fish 2 (W)
Zosel, David	Barred Owl (W)
Zosel, David	Dragon Fly (W)

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Editor: Don Nadreau, 763-377-4589,
dnadreau@usfamily.net
124 Ardmore Dr.
Golden Valley, MN 55422

President: Mariann Cyr 651-636-3738
mcyr@mmm.com
Vice Pres.: Larry Duke
lduke1601@earthlink.net
Treasurer: Jim Duncan 651-459-3558
Jduncan001@comcast.net
Secretary - Rod Blesener 952.465.3420
rblesener@fishbowl-solutions.com

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 21, 2007 Meeting

March Program: "The Motorized Blind" by Nadav Cassuto.

Workshop:

John Pennoyer will be instructing a week-end workshop on Nature Photography. The workshop includes a class room session at REI Bloomington on Saturday April 28th with an optional field shoot in SE Minnesota on Sunday April 29th. The class is designed for the beginner to intermediate level photographer. Information available outside the meeting room, or feel free to talk to John

FIRST CLASS MAIL



Correction to last month's salon results -
Dave Zosel - Muskrat (W) – 8, our apologies Dave!

Equipment for Sale:

Lens Sale

Bernie Friel is offering a Nikon 80-200/f2.8 AF with a new design Kirk tripod collar.

Bernie also has a Nikkor Fisheye Auto 8mm f/2.8 AIS lens w/caps built in filter ring w/ Y/48, Y/52, O/56, R/60 and L/1A filters in LN condition and UG case, \$2,750. Contact Bernie Friel at 651-454-3655.

Lawrence Duke has Nikon; two Macros, a 105/2.8 AF, for 1:1, and a 200/f4 Ai MF for sale. Also, a user, Nikon 400/2.8 Ai MF, glass is in great shape.