



From the President

I am sitting here in my office the day after our club meeting; the temperature is in the mid 40s with a blue sky sunny day. Most of the snow is gone with only a few piles scattered here and there. Tonight and tomorrow there is a winter storm watch in central and southern Minnesota, doesn't that sound just the way March is supposed to be. All of us get anxious for some spring photography? Than BAM" we get one final attempt at some winter photography! Which if we do get enough snow fall, tomorrow AM I will be in and around Big Woods St. Park. and the Rice County area, some great landscapes and water falls in that area.

Again many folks made our March club meeting a great success. Mariann Cyr put on a great program on Botanical Photography, not only on doing close-ups but also putting the botanical subject into the landscape. I absolutely loved the "wildflowers" growing in her driveway! Joking aside those were great examples of showing digital cropping, focal length of lenses, etc. Al Schulz did a great job as our sole judge for the monthly competition; I want to thank him for agreeing to the single format and his excellent comments on the judging. I personally think comments are more important than the score, we all can learn from comments. At our April Board meeting that will be one of the subjects that will be brought up is "judging". It has been a difficult year getting judges, so shall we use just one judge instead of two, more outside judge's etc. feel free to give me your opinions on judging. It is an important area during our monthly meetings and we want it to be first class. Once again our refreshments were way over the edge! Thanks to Claire Dolan for doing a great job and the time and effort to put it all together. Just as a reminder I thought that I had mentioned this before, but the club will reimburse for refreshments. Save the receipts and give to Jim Duncan, our treasurer, or if he is not there give them to me and I will see that you get reimbursed.

By the time you read this it will be around the middle of April, so no one should have any problems finding subjects to photograph. For me I will be looking for early spring flowers such as Pasque flowers (River Terrace SNA) hepaticas (almost any hardwood forest). Waterfowl will be migrating so almost any open water will hold waterfowl, I have my select areas that I will shoot from my floating blind or just cruise around Crex Meadows and shooting from the car. Of course one of my

favorite subjects in April is the Eastern Wild Turkey like this month's "Field Notes" article.

The April meetings program will be on "Wild Horses of the West" presented by Dominique Braud. Many of you know Dominique from previous judging etc. that he has done for our club. He is an accomplished nature photographer and is a High school teacher and will feel very comfortable with your questions. Judges for April will be Mike Prokosch and Jane Myers.

Field Trips:

April: Saturday April 12, (sunrise) "White Pelicans" Those that signed up will be receiving an e-mail from Matt Ebbers totally depends when the birds arrive.

May: "Spring Wildflowers" Led by Mariann Cyr dates to be determined, but will be in early May!

John Pennoyer

"Winter Survival"

By Ron Winch

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

Through the night a light snow, hurried in by force 5 (25-35 mph) winds of an Alberta Clipper, dusted the sheltered areas with a half inch of 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 low bird nests venture out on top of six inches of old snow in search of food – leaving their tracks written in the fresh snow. Voles, heavier bodied and with more fur are hardly affected for they live in the subnivian zone where the temperature is likely within a degree or two of freezing. Gray squirrels are snuggled into their dens or curled up in deep sleep in their warm windproof basketball sized leaf nest 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 in 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 is denned up under the garden shed, protecting its hairless ears and tail. A 70 foot hollow cottonwood hosts a raccoon or two. Only the cotton tail seems oblivious to

the sudden arctic blast as his tracks appear everywhere, especially under the bird feeders.

What about these cold temperatures and wind chill? We hear the TV weather people warning us about frostbite when the thermometer drops to zero; and they get really excited when zero 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 weatherperson, and it was no big deal to spend hours outdoors – even at 25 degrees below zero. Even now it is not uncommon to spend four or five hours out in the coldest of weather – whether it be 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 a dense spruce or pine, or even better in an old woodpecker nest cavity. These tiny bundles of energy weighting only 10-12 grams (less than half an ounce) have sacrificed fat storage for mobility, and would probably perish if unable to restoke their heating plant throughout the day, thus maintaining a normal daytime temperature of 108 degrees F. Over 50% of the fat they store through the day is burned though 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 temperature by 18-20 degrees below normal daytime temps, resulting in an energy savings of 20%. Combine this with their plumage, which is denser than that of similar size 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 heat loss. All this may not be enough to survive an extremely cold night. By 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 fat reserves, but is induced by decreasing temperatures and is used as a primary means of energy conservation.

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

As humans, we are not all that concerned about severe winter conditions. We don't always 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 temp is at 4 to 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 thermometer reads only 2 degrees from the freezing mark. It's little wonder rabbits have such heavy fur, and voles live in tunnels and grass nests beneath the snow. All this matters little to most birds – except for the ruffed grouse

who dive into the snow and tunnel down 10-12 inches, taking advantage of the snows insulation.

Of even greater concern is the wind, for it robs heat quickly. A 20 mph wind at one foot above the ground can easily double to 40 mph at 30-35 feet. At 0 degrees F the wind chill at ground level is minus 22, at 35 feet, minus 44. Pretty tough on our small feathered friends.

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

Field Notes

“It's Turkey time”

By John Pennoyer

There have been many wildlife success stories in Minnesota, trumpeter swans and bald eagles just to name a couple of them. But I think one of greatest success stories is the Eastern Wild Turkey. In the 1800's Minnesota was home to 1000s of wild turkeys, but with market hunting their populations plummeted. In the very early 70's groups of conservationists, hunting organization and the Minnesota DNR began a project to reestablish the wild turkey in SE Minnesota. What started with a couple hundred turkeys are now over 30,000 birds. With their range now established in areas of central Minnesota and all points south. Minnesota has had a hunting season for wild turkeys since 1973. Regardless of your opinions of hunting we definitely owe this success to the hunting fraternity. Not only do I pursue this magnificent game bird with shotgun, but also with camera. So I thought that we would learn a little something on Minnesota's Eastern Wild Turkeys.

Meleagris gallopavo (Eastern Wild Turkey) Facts: Average weight of the wild turkey is about 10 lbs to 25 lbs with the males being larger. They eat almost anything, from grasses, insects, seeds, and even frogs and snakes, even picking seeds out of a manure pile. The hens are bred in April and May and lay about 10-12 eggs. After hatching this family (excluding the Tom) will stay together until next spring, even joining other family units in winter. A first year male is referred to as a “Jake” it will usually support a short beard of just a couple of inches. The mature males are referred to as “Toms” and of course this is the bird that I want to locate in my camera's view finder, but more about that later. When alarmed they are more likely to run than fly, but they are very fast fliers even though just for short distances. In the evening they roost in trees, usually mature large limb trees such as maples, oaks, pines etc. This keeps them off the ground and away from predators. They fly up into their evening roosting spots at sunset and but will generally fly down maybe ½ hour before sunrise. Their defense is their very keen eyesight, by other bird standards I consider the wild turkey to be, well rather dumb. But their eyesight is why they can survive in an

environment that is full of predators, as a photographer or hunter this is what you must overcome to get that full frame photo of a strutting male tom.

Photography tips: Wild turkeys are now located in many local parks and maybe even in your backyard. Many have become habituated to people as they do their fine dining out of local parks or your backyard bird feeder. But I still pursue my Turkey the old fashion way, and that is in a wildlife type area where they are really wild. For me it is not just getting the image but the work (for me enjoyment) that is involved to trick this strutting tom into my viewfinder. Finding a location is probably the hardest, but again an area with so many birds could be the easiest. I have gotten permission on private farms, but I usually go to wildlife management areas that are open to turkey hunting. With an area like that I do not have to be concerned with staying on trails, setting up a blind etc. But if you go to a local park, state park etc. be sure to get permission for your activity. Because of the price of fuel I am now trying to work with a local park to allow me to do some photography this spring.

For many years I used camo from head to toe and camo netting totally surrounding me and camera equipment, that system has proved quite successful. But the problem with that system is if the turkey came in from another direction, I dare not move, because if I did all I would see is the tail feathers as the turkey was running away. So a good friend of mine who is a very dedicated and successful turkey hunter told me just to use a hunting blind that can be purchased at any sporting good stores. Remember I said turkeys are basically dumb birds and newly set-up blind will not make them aware of your presence. I have actually had both Toms and hens so close to my hunting blind that if I reached out through the window I could have given them a pat on the head. One of the benefits of a blind such as this is that you can move inside and the turkeys will not see you. The two photos accompanying this article were taken from my blind and both cases I had to move my tripod around to get the photo from another window. Learning to call in a mature tom is the real key to getting that image. No way can this article help you there but you must master these calls, yelps, gobbles, purrs, and putts. There are others but those are the basics, with the yelp being the number one to master, which by the way it is not hard, with a little information and practice you could be calling in your first strutting tom. Of course the best time to call in a tom is in the spring during the breeding season, toms will come into a call from late March to early June. The best time is actually the first two weeks of May, with the reasoning is that most hens have been bred and the males are out searching for new conquests and when he hears that “yelp” he may come running in. Turkeys have very dark feathers so it is necessary to expose properly, but if a tom is strutting and as all the blood rushes to his head, his waddle will begin to turn a very bright red, but his head turns almost whitish/blue, so be careful not to burn that out. I usually use my Nikons matrix metering and dial in another -1/3 or -2/3 stop of underexposure. There is much more to be successful in photographing a strutting tom,

with some of it being luck, but this is enough information to get you started. But I must for warn you---whether hunting or photographing wild turkeys it is very addictive!!



Mature Tom

John Pennoyer



Gobbling Tom

John Pennoyer

Good Shooting

Minnesota Nature Photography Club
 March 2008 Salon Scores
 Judge: Alan Schulz

Photographer	Title	Score	Format
Scholljegerdes, Florence	Water Lilies on Pond	8	Slide
Jenkins, John D.	Fixed Gaze	8	Slide
Gladitsch, Marilyn	Trillium Duo	8	Slide
Nelson, Vern	White-breasted Nuthatch	8	Slide
Galambos, Ted	Cape Waves	8	Digital
Handsaker, Bill	Grouse	8	Digital
Hass, Wayne	Itasca Dawn	8	Digital
Mattison, Drew	Carver Sunset	8	Digital
Perez, David	Snow Goose	8	Digital
Ramos, Carolle	Frozen Sunrise	8	Digital
Vichich, Dave	Bears (W)	8	Digital
Zosel, David	Swan Parley (W)	8	Digital
Cleveland, Ron	Oyster Catcher Pair (W)	8	Digital
Duke, Lawrence	Swans	8	Digital
Galambos, Ted	Forest Snow	8	Digital
Hoyt, Kristin	Bison Portrait (W)	8	Digital
Hoyt, David	Roseate Catch (W)	8	Digital
McDonough, Jean	Elephants Galore (W)	8	Digital
Perez, David	Monarch on Yellow Flower	8	Digital
Wilbrecht, Jon	Wild Geranium	8	Digital
Gladitsch, Marilyn	Bull Thistle	9	Slide
Nelson, Vern	Black-capped Chickadee	9	Slide
Dykstra, John	Iris	9	Digital
Hass, Lynn	Spoonbill	9	Digital
Mattison, Drew	Landing (W)	9	Digital
Nadreau, Don	El Capitan	9	Digital
Rehpohl, Dean	Trail Surprise	9	Digital
Vichich, Dave	The Grab (W)	9	Digital
Wilson, Tom	Flying Drake 2 (W)	9	Digital
Zosel, David	Bluewing (W)	9	Digital
Hoyt, Kristin	Snowy Coyote (W)	10	Digital
Hoyt, David	Heron Stare (W)	10	Digital
McDonough, Jean	Leopard in Tree with Gazelle (W)	10	Digital
Wilson, Tom	Mama Loon (W)	10	Digital
Cyr, Mariann	Pasqueflower Trio	10	Digital
Dykstra, John	Brown Creek	10	Digital

Changing of the Guard at MinnesotaNature.org

Ron Cleveland will hand off Webmaster duties over the summer to someone who can update the design and make some general quality improvements. Two people have expressed an interest so far. We want to be sure that all who may be interested have a chance to get the details on what is involved. The board will select a

person in the next few months. A write-up with background information, software currently used and a rough workflow may be requested by E-mail to clevelandron@comcast.net. That will also get you on the list of people interested in the position. You are strongly urged to contact Ron if you have ideas and abilities for improving the site.

“Winter in Yosemite”

By Don Nadreau

I love California, if I could afford it, I would live there (just can't get myself to pay a million dollars for a place the size of an outhouse). My next best option is to visit at least once a year and shoot as many images as possible. This year I decided to spend my time in Yosemite for some winter photography. I joined a workshop for this trip; for the knowledge of the workshop leaders and the company of fellow photographers. We got out to Yosemite on a Wednesday in late February. It rained/snowed the whole five days we were there. It provided some interesting images, but not the ones I envisioned. The following are some recommendations for you to consider if you go out to Yosemite in the winter.

Equipment:

1. Bring a lens hood for each lens. I didn't have mine and it was a real hassle keeping the snow and rain off the front of the lens.
2. Some type of protection for your camera and lens. We had rain/snow every day and the equipment did get wet.
3. Bring an umbrella. Are you sensing a theme here?
4. A polarizing filter is a great tool for Yosemite. The two fellows that lead the workshop do strictly landscape photography and keep a polarizer on each of their lens at all times, that way they don't have to switch the filter from lens to lens.
5. Bring plenty of lens cloths and a couple of towels to clean water off the equipment.

Transportation:

1. A four wheel drive vehicle is a good choice. The roads are not real good and they do get some big snow storms.
2. You are required to have, and use when required, a set of chains for your vehicle. This creates some problems if you rent your vehicle as the lease agreement on the rental cars forbids using them. Use your best judgment. Also, you can rent chains in Merced, CA. which is on Highway 140, my recommended route into the park.

Lodging:

1. El Portal is a small town just outside the park on Highway 140. Lodging is less expensive there, but you have to drive into the park each day.
2. Within the park there are two choices, the Yosemite Lodge (moderately priced) and the Ahwahnee hotel (very expensive). Trust me, you need to see the Ahwahnee, so I recommend a lunch there one day.

Photography:

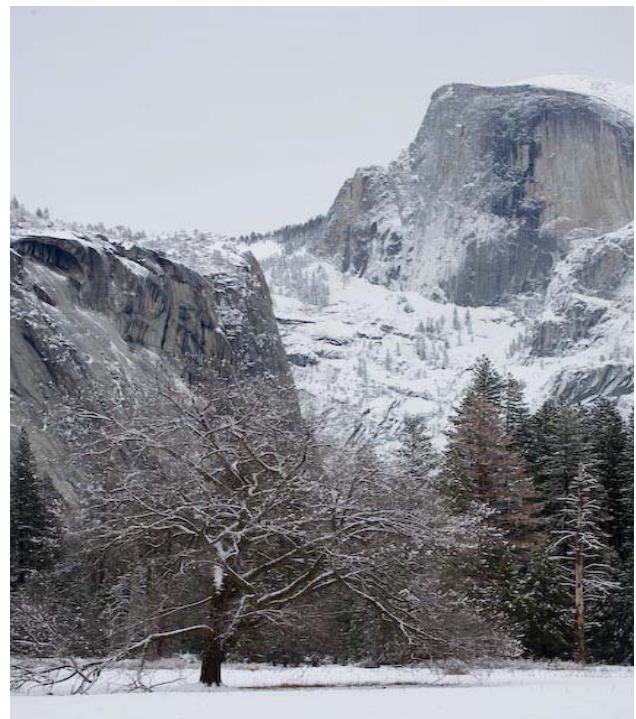
1. Best shooting is in the evening for sunset. Sunrise is not too bad but the valley runs east to west and is more open on the west end so you

get good light in the evening more than in the morning.

2. The prime spot for sunset is at the “tunnel view”, which is just before the tunnel on highway 41.
3. I also like the “valley view” which is down on the valley floor along the Merced River. These spots are all marked on the brochure the ranger gives you upon entering the park. I got my favorite sunrise shot here.
4. If it is a nice sunny day with clouds, any of the spots in the valley are good.
5. There are many books which can point you to places to shoot. I recommend the Photo Secrets book on San Francisco & Northern California.
6. February is a good time to do a winter shoot in Yosemite. Allow at least 3-4 days if possible. Watch for clearing storms which will produce some great shots (particularly from Tunnel View where you can see the whole valley).

Finally, here are some miscellaneous thoughts. First, use all your lenses. People tend to get fixed on the wide angle shots when there are many other opportunities. One of the biggest problems in California is the contrails from the many jet planes flying overhead. Sometimes they will dissipate quickly, but often they just ruin a good image. You can always do some Photoshop work to eliminate them, but that is a last resort (and invalidates the image for our salons).

I highly recommend a winter trip to Yosemite. My trip was not as good as hoped, but I did get some good images and I will definitely be going back in the near future.



Half Dome

Don Nadreau

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

6:00 PM - Set-up and Social Time

6:30 PM - Announcements and Business

6:45 PM - Program

7:45 PM - Nature Salon (Competition and Judge's Comments).

Meetings are held at:

REI

750 West American Blvd

Bloomington, MN 55420

April Meeting

Wednesday April 16, 2008

Our program for April will be on "Wild Horses of the West" presented by Dominique Braud.

FIRST CLASS MAIL



Free Photo Items

I'm David Hansen a photographer at the U of M, headquartered on the St. Paul campus. I shoot our entire horticultural, agricultural, and forestry/wildlife research images. I am cleaning out some of our unused supplies and came across eight boxes (20 per box) of brand new Gepe glass mounts (anti newton glass). And, perhaps 75 Lindia (Swiss) mounts in what was a box of 100.

Can you think of anyone who would like these? I expect you still have some film shooters, and I'd just like to give these to someone who would make use of them.

Let me know and I'll send them or drop them off, I just hate to throw them away.

David L. Hansen

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