



Nature Photo Times

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From the President

What a great turn out we had for our September meeting, not only with members but we also had many visitors. I believe some of the visitors also became members last night. Those of you that did not make the September meeting you missed a great program that was put on by Peggy Booth DNR Supervisor of Minnesota's Scientific and Natural Areas. I want to thank Peggy for taking her time to put on a great Power Point presentation. She gave us some inside information on how to search the DNR web site for a SNA area. Also she showed us some of her favorite SNA's to visit and photograph. Thanks again Peggy!

One of my goals this year is to try and get more field trips for photography and fellowship. Drew Mattison will be sending out a Yahoo group e-mail as the colors begin to change in the Twin Cities area. He has a couple of local areas that should be colorful. Also I will be at Crex Meadows WMA near Grantsburg, WI on Friday night 24th and Saturday morning the 25th to photograph migrating Sandhill Cranes during sunrise/sunset and of course any other subjects that nature provides. I will again have the sign-up sheet at the October club meeting. If anyone would be interested in organizing a field trip this year, let myself or Drew know.

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Hopefully I get this name right, if not I will apologize at the club meeting! But after 7-8 months with no one to take charge of "name badges". Pam Carroll came forward and she said that she will be glad to handle this important task. But we also are going to change the

procedure, instead of having the name badges as present, she will be changing them all and you will be responsible and take them home and wear them when you come to club meetings. This is the best way because even when we had someone to do the name badges, with our present system when that person was not able to make the meetings he/she had to find someone to bring the name badges in or they were never there. So thanks again Pam. Look for new name badges very shortly!

One of the topics at our Board meeting in early September was to have club "business cards" Jim Duncan very quickly went to work and "viola" he brings in some business cards at our September meeting. These business cards have club info for meeting place, time and web site etc. If you are like me and run into folks out in the field or at workshops etc. I like to have these cards to give them with all of our club info. These cards will allow them to search our web site and get much more information. If you would like to have a few cards to promote our club let me know at the meeting.

I hope to see you at the October meeting our program for October is "Photographing Waterfalls" by club member Rikk Flohr.

John Pennoyer

Field Notes
“Shooting on the Fly”
By John Pennoyer

Being old certainly has advantages. Of course by “old” I don’t mean age I mean having many years of photography experience. My Photography started in about 1978 when my brother gave me his Pentax Spotmatic camera with a 100-300mm zoom lens. In about 1980 I traded that in for a Nikon FE camera and a couple of lenses. Although my goal at that time was wildlife photography the lenses I bought were not conducive to that type of photography so I slowly got into landscape and flowers. A few years later I bought my first “biggie” lens a Nikon 400mm F3.5 and I used that lens for about 20 years. Of course being a manual focus lens and shooting film, the majority of my wildlife was portrait style. Although I tried on occasion, shooting birds on the “wing” was usually an act of futility. However as time progresses, somewhere in the middle 80”s auto focus began to make its arrival, and this did help a little. The auto focus allowed the camera to capture fast moving subjects such as birds. But it was still quite expensive because your “keepers” were still quite low. On occasion I tried to shoot flying waterfowl and managed to get some keepers of flying trumpeters. No need to talk about the rolls of film that I shot to get the one or two keepers.

Camera manufacturers over time improved with multiple focus points etc, but without a doubt the biggest change is right now with digital cameras. I have been shooting digital for over 5 years now and I shoot more birds on the wing in one day that I did over the previous 20+ years combined.

All camera manufacturers have certainly improved on their auto focus accuracy and with digital there is absolutely no costs to shooting- just keep the keepers and delete-delete-delete! So with winter coming and many of us going to shoot trumpeters at Monticello and eagles on the Mississippi, I thought that I would write on my process of “Shooting on the Fly”.

First of all it is important to set your camera up properly. For my Nikons it is “focus tracking”, dynamic auto focus, and continuous high speed shooting. Read your owner’s manual on how to set up your particular camera. The terms I am talking about should be familiar to Nikon shooters, but all manufacturers will set up the same way just maybe different terms. Of course the faster shutter speeds will allow more keepers. My D100 was 3 fps, D200 is 5 fps and now my D300 is 8 fps. Of course for the wildlife photographer we want the cameras with multiple dynamic focus areas and the faster the shutter the better.

My personal preference for shooting flying birds is to stop action while they are flying, so the biggest obstacle is to get fast enough shutter speed. For larger birds such as eagles, herons, swans, etc I try for at least 1/1000 of a second and maybe 1/640 will work in certain situations. However for smaller waterfowl such as ducks I like to get to 1/2000 of a second. A photographer can achieve these fast shutter speeds by working with close to wide open apertures and of course with digital we can get to higher ISO settings. The newer camera models have improved considerably on “noise” at the higher ISO settings. But remember to stop action, faster is better.

Handholding your camera system is the best way to track flying birds. The lenses in the 80-400/100-400 range are excellent for handholding. With such fast shutter speeds there is no reason to even need VR/IS. As a matter of fact in cold weather when I am shooting trumpeter swans “on the wing” my VR is off to save on battery life. If using one of the big lenses there is absolutely nothing better than having that system mounted on a “Gimbal Head”. Yes! Yes! There is nothing better than these heads for tracking flying birds or even fast moving animals. The Gimbal heads (Wimberly, 5th Generation, Custom brackets, Kirk, Jobu just to name a few of the Gimbal manufacturers) allow the photographer to keep level horizons, shore line’s etc. but still move your camera system vertical and horizontal with ease.

The real key to “Shooting on the fly” is to get your system to lock on the bird. Many times if the bird/s are at a distance I will manual focus on the bird and then let the auto focus take over. If the birds are in a group usually be sure to focus on the lead bird. As you pan with the bird/s when the composition looks good, I fire off in short bursts as compared to just holding the shutter down all the time. I may do that once in a while, but still prefer to compose birds in flight and fire when ready. Many times I never hit the trigger because as I look through the view finder it just does not come together. There are two real keys for this; panning with the flying birds to maintain composition and auto focus locking on. Of course with shooting digital it is so easy to practice.

But like anything else in nature photography understanding habits, behavior etc .of your subject is an asset that allows you to capture images that others may miss. So here are some “Hot Tips”. All birds will take off and land into the wind. So if you are on the river in Monticello and a group of Trumpeters all of a sudden begin to swim in the opposite direction and it is into the wind, be ready because they may be ready to take flight. Also, many birds will circle before they land, so if they come by and the opportunity does not present itself, stay ready they may give you a 2nd or even a 3rd chance. Many times birds on the water may give clues that they are ready to take flight from head bobbing, lots of noise, etc. Perched birds may defecate just before leaving their perch. Many ducks will try to get a partner or two to take flight with them. Also when one bird or group of bird takes off it will many times encourage others to follow, so look around and stay ready.

Well there you have it. These are just some ideas on “Shooting on the Fly”. If you have never experienced this type of photography, no better place than now, Crex Meadows for Sand hill Cranes in October to middle of November and for some winter flying, Trumpeters of Monticello, and Bald Eagles of Red Wing.



“Eagle after Prey”

John Pennoyer



“Goldeneyes on the Mississippi”

John Pennoyer

Good Shooting

September Salon Results

Title	Photographer	Score
Bumble Bee (W)	David Zosel	8
Cascade Falls	Rod Blessener	8
	Dave	
Fern Patterns	Ellenbecker	8
Fox Pup (W)	David Zosel	8
Full Curl Ram	John Pennoyer	8
Osprey #2 (W)	Nadav Cassuto	8
Pelican Profile (W)	Drew Mattison	8
Prairie Sunset (W)	David Hoyt	8
Snake River	Ron Cleveland	8
Sunset	Tom Samuelson	8
Tree & Mountain	Rick Graves	8
Courtship (W)	Roger Williams	9
	Marilyn	
Hepaticas	Gladitsch	9
Osprey #1 (W)	Nadav Cassuto	9
Red Eye (W)	Kristin Hoyt	9
My Dinner	Rick Graves	10
Sandhill	Dave Vichich	10
Shaefer Prairie	Tom Samuelson	10
Common Loon (W)	Roger Williams	10

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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

**September Meeting
Wednesday Oct. 15, 2008**

“Photographing Waterfalls” by club member
Rikk Flohr.

Judge for the October Salon will be .

FIRST CLASS MAIL



Editor's notes:

Ron Winch is in Mongolia this month and did not
submit an article. He will have an article next month
and we look forward to hearing tales and seeing images
from his trip.