



Nature Photo Times

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From the President

What a fantastic winter it has been so far! For winter photography there is nothing better than cold and snow. It is a great time to be out around the frozen lakes, prairies, and forests with camera in hand and looking for those different compositions. One of my favorite compositions in the winter is shadows in the snow. I set my camera low to the snow and allow the shadow to draw the viewer into the subject. Trees, plants that stick up through the snow, snow patterns all make for great shadow subjects. John Gregor our judge for January lives in Two Harbors and he also made the comment that there is more snow and ice on the North Shore than there has been in many years. Thanks John for the judging and great comments for January. John leads many workshops and classes not only in the Twin Cities but around the world; visit his web site (www.coldsnapphotography.com), he is a great tour leader and instructor. He also mentioned a calendar competition for Bluefin Bay Resort; you can find guidelines on their web site (www.bluefinbay.com) and just click on information.

Our program for next month will be a short presentation on the field trip for "Full Moon over Split Rock". Also I will have a presentation on "Photographing Prairies". Just some photo tips on where to go, what subjects, best times, how to locate etc.

John Pennoyer

Field Notes "Dust Bunnies" By John Pennoyer

When I bought my first digital camera in 2003, I never realized how it would change my photography life. Not only has digital made me a much more creative photographer, but it also has

taught me some neat savvy words or phrases such as raw file, jpegs, histogram, CMOS, CCD, pixels and of course many other words. After six years of shooting digital I can now talk with the best of them and make it sound like I really know what I am doing. However as a result of shooting digital there is one word that makes me cringe every time I am confronted with it... "sensor dust" or as some call it "dust bunnies".

If you are shooting a SLR digital you have or will be confronted with dust that gets on the sensor. Anytime the camera is turned on the sensor generates a small magnetic field that not only sends colored light information but is also a magnet for dust to collect on the sensor. Of course dust can already be on the camera when assembled at the factory, or it can easily get in as we change lenses etc. Most veteran digital photographers know that to reduce the chance of dust entering the camera one needs to always turn off the camera before changing lenses. Of course someone like me where almost 100% of my photography is in the outdoors, I am always in a dust environment. So this February's Field Notes... what to do about those dust bunnies.

Sensor dust will show up on your images generally in the even tone subjects such as blue sky, white walls etc. These "spots" will be a total distraction from your images. It depends on your aperture setting as to if the "spot" is a fuzzy blur or hard spot, but it makes no difference as it must be removed. Here are some very basic steps in using Photoshop to remove dust spots. Use the zoom tool in Photoshop to zoom in the area of the dust spot- this will make it easier to remove. You can use either the clone stamp tool or the spot healing brush tool. Both of them will work even though some may prefer one over the other. One of my tips is to be sure to use a "soft brush." The size of the brush should be larger than the dust spot. When using the Clone stamp tool be sure to sample a spot that is identical in tone and texture to the area where the spot is. The Spot Healing Brush tool will sample the pixels in the area of the spot and as you click will try

to match the pixels. When the spot is removed be sure there is no tell-tale sign of spot removal. Look at the image at normal size and be sure the area where the spot is removed flows well with rest of image.

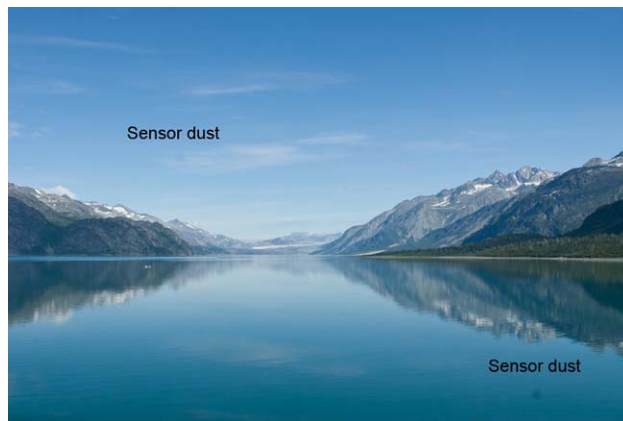
But the best method of course is trying to prevent sensor dust from getting on your images in the first place. One of the best web sites on the various methods of cleaning your cameras sensor is www.cleaningdigitalcameras.com. I am not going to go into the pros and cons of each method but just to tell you what I do to try and keep my sensor clean. How often you clean depends on how much you shoot. But here is my routine. Every 7-10 days I take both of my cameras and remove the lenses and lock up the mirror and use my Giotto Rocket Blaster to blow off the sensor. If I am on a major trip I may even do that on a daily or semi-daily basis. Far better off to remove dust now then removing dust from images. There are many bulb type air blasters out there. Just do not use compressed canned type air. This is the only cleaning method that camera manufacturers recommend and to my knowledge no camera manufacture allows any other method and may even void warranties. But occasionally a bit of dust will get stuck on the sensor and may have to be physically removed. I have used the “wet method” with eclipse fluid, pec-pads and a sensor wand on my Nikon D100 and D200 cameras maybe 10-12 times. Of course we are not really cleaning the sensor but using a low-pass glass type filter that fits over the sensor, so if you decide to use any type of method to physically clean this filter just proceed with caution.

There are a couple of different ways to inspect your sensor for dust spots. Perform a test shot on a plain white paper (or any light color even blue sky works well), set your aperture to F-22 or smaller, fill the frame with white and take a shot. Inspect image on your computer and look for the dust spots. This also is a good method to do after cleaning sensor to see if spots are gone. Several manufacturers make loupes (www.sensorinspection.com) that are specifically designed to fit over lens opening and after locking up the mirror visually inspect the sensor.

Of course with all of the preventative methods that you choose to remove sensor dust, invariably you will be reviewing images on your computer and there they are several images with the same spot on each and every one. But that is just the joy of digital photography!

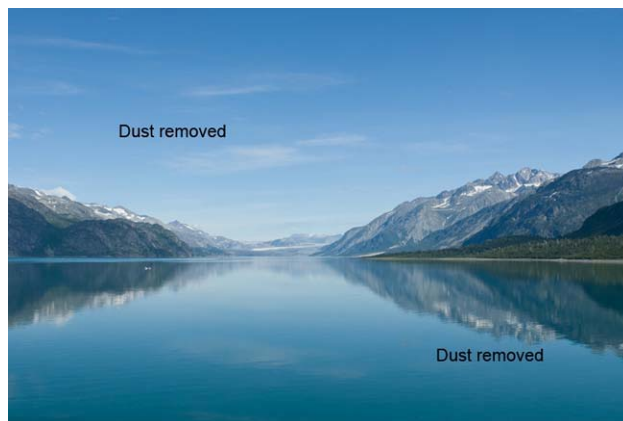
Some of the newer cameras now have a feature where they will activate the sensor to shake

dust spots loose. How well does this work? Well with my D300 which has this feature I have taken probably over 5000 images with it and I have yet to have to remove any dust spots with the computer. I do however on a regular basis use the Giotto Rocket Blaster on the sensor. But I know the “sensor clean” function does work. I have mine automatically clean sensor when I turn the camera on. Just keep them clean and----- Good Shooting



Sensor Dust

By John Pennoyer



Dust Removed

By John Pennoyer

“Nature Moments” By Ron Winch

The early December sun washed across the landscape and lightly kissed the tall frosted canary grass – then melted away, revealing the golden damp seed heads. A jagged streak of gray and black momentarily hovered above the grass, then settled on to 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 that 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 the mainstay food for the squirrel. He seems relaxed, but keeps a sharp eye toward the sky, where most danger comes from. For 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 he 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 the 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 white-tailed deer, alerted by the tree top antics, lifts its head from feeding on acorns and stands rigidly alert. Ears at attention, the right foot is slowly raised and then quickly and resoundingly stomped on the forest floor. No response from his surroundings. Bark 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.

January Salon Results

(John Gregor Judge):

Photographer	Title	Score
Blesener, Rod	Angry Swan (W)	8
Cyr, Mariann	Buchberry in Moss	8
Dykstra, John	Cascade	8
Fierst, Joe	Great Grey on Post	8
Goossens-Bryan, Betty	After the Storm	8
Graves, Rick	Margerie Glacier	8
Hoppe, Paul	Coneflower Fire	8
McDonough, Jean	King Penguins in Color	8
Pennoyer, John	Ladyslippers in Habitat	8
Perez, Dave	Marsh Marigold	8
Perez, Dave	Pearly Eye	8
Rehpohl, Dean	Duluth Gull (W)	8
Tredinnick, Don	Geese Flying (W)	8
Vichich, Dave	Eagle 109 (W)	8
Vichich, Dave	Misty (W)	8
Zosel, Dave	Black-capped Chickadee (W)	8
Cyr, Mariann	Gosling (W)	9
Dykstra, John	Redhead (W)	9
Fierst, Joe	Eagle with Branch	9
McDonough, Jean	Red Sanddunes Patterns	9
Nadreau, Don	Superior Sunrise	9
Pennoyer, John	Bluebell Habitat	9
Ramos, Carolee	Dragon Flies (W)	9
Rehpohl, Dean	Winter Prep (W)	9
Hoppe, Paul	Loons Feeding (W)	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

February Meeting

Wednesday Feb. 18, 2009

The February meeting will include a
presentation on the "Bald Eagles of Burlington" by
Dave Vichich. A slide show titled "Full Moon over
Split Rock" of the field trip that 10 of us took in
January. This will include some information on
photographing the full moon. "Photographing the
Prairies of Minnesota" will be also be presented by
John Pennoyer if time permits.

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