

Mile High Wildlife Photography Club

October 2009

Volume 33, Number 10

Winter Wildlife Photography Text & Photo by Don Mammoser

Editors Note:

Your Newsletter Editors, Nancy and Chris, would like your input on an idea for future articles. We thought it might be of interest to periodically reprint some of our older newsletter articles from several years ago. Would you like to see some of these older articles reprinted? Please let us know by sending us an e-mail to newsletter@mhwpc.org.

Also, if you've recently taken an unusual or fun photography-related trip and would like to share it with the club, please contact us and we'll be happy to write it up into an article.

This article, "Winter Wildlife Photography" was originally published in our February 2006 newsletter. Enjoy!

Winter seizes the land for a good part of the year in Colorado. Bitter cold, deep snows and moisture-laden skies pose unique challenges to the outdoor photographer. The landscape is stripped bare of foliage and flowers, but seek out and find color in the winter wildlife. Animals that remain active throughout the winter have fur coats or feathers that are thicker, and more beautiful than at any other time of the year. Although some animal species do sleep the season away, you shouldn't be one of them. Instead, use these tips to get your camera and yourself out of hibernation, and capture that winter wildlife on film.



Tip #1. Take advantage of winter light. Take advantage of the sun being at a lower angle in the sky during winter. Side and backlighting opportunities are more prevalent. Winter light is less intense than at other times of the year, giving great warmth to the light and allowing for photographers to shoot with good results even at mid-day.

Tip #2. Expose for your subject (don't worry about the snow). Metering properly during the winter can seem difficult because there may not be anything middle-toned to base your exposure on. Not to worry. Simply look at the subject you are photographing and ask yourself, "What tonality is it?" Then, expose for that tonality and all others in your scene will fall into place. The tone of a red fox is average, meter it and shoot. A ptarmigan in winter is white with detail, or two stops lighter than average—meter the bird and open up two stops. A dark animal such as a moose is properly exposed when you meter it and stop down 1-2 stops. If you do use snow as your starting point, remember that snow is of a lighter tone than

average. You must open up 1-2 1/2 stops from your camera's suggestion depending on whether the snow is shadowed, side-lit or under overcast skies. Here's where testing a roll of film is worthwhile before you get into that once-in-a-lifetime situation.

Tip #3. Track Animals and/or Shoot Tracks. With a fresh snow on the ground you can "read" where wildlife bedded down last night and which direction they traveled for feeding. Following tracks right to the animals is a possibility. Do remember that wildlife have limited energy and resources in winter, so make it a point to photograph them without pushing or disturbing them. Wildlife tracks themselves make interesting photos, as they head off into the horizon.

Tip #4. Don't Forget the Birds. Not all birds fly south for the winter. Avian species can be abundant throughout the winter and certainly make colorful photography subjects. Take advantage of the fact that songbirds can be attracted easily to your yard in the winter with feeders and fresh, unfrozen water.

Tip #5. Use the Fog and Mist of Winter Days for Drama. The cold air of winter causes the fog and mist that outdoor photographers love for those images with mystery and great drama. Just go to any body of unfrozen water on a crisp day and you'll likely get fog or steam. Then, add in a wildlife subject and the chance for compelling images becomes fantastic. Overexpose fog by one stop from average to render it correctly on film.

Tip #6. Keep Yourself Comfortable. You won't feel much like photographing anything if you feel cold and miserable. To stay comfortable, stay dry. Dress in layers, using fabrics that wick moisture away, wear a windbreaker and keep snow out of your boots with a good pair of gaiters. Keep your head covered, as much of your body heat is lost there. In order to keep my hands warm and functioning I wear light gloves in order to maintain control of camera functions. When I'm not actually taking a photo my hands go into large, thick mittens. Inside the mittens I'll place a chemical hand warmer if the air is really frigid.

Tip #7. Keep Your Equipment Dry and Functioning. You don't want to get into position with a wildlife subject only to miss the shot because your camera fails. Keep a fresh set of batteries warm by storing them in an inside

pocket, near your body. A heavy snowfall gives great winter drama to wildlife shots, but can also soak equipment. Protect camera and lens with a simple shower cap. Never blow onto equipment to remove snow and try not to even breathe on lenses and eyepieces, as fogging will be immediate and annoying in cold weather. I use a photo backpack to carry equipment but also bring a large fanny pack (worn in front) during winter shoots to hold accessories and film. This way I don't have to set my bag down in the snow every time I need some small item. Once I get home all my equipment goes into a sealed plastic bag before I take it inside. This prevents condensation from doing damage.

Tip #8. Add that Silhouette. Winter skies at sunrise and sunset are often the most colorful of any time of the year. Add an animal to a colorful winter sky for a great photo. Expose for the sky color and let the animal go black.

Tip #9. Keep in Mind Your Own Mobility. Heavy winter snows can disrupt both automobile and people-powered modes of transportation. Keep a set of tire chains for your vehicle, even if you have four-wheel drive. Many areas require chains by law if roads are snow covered and chains add a great deal of safety (and peace of mind) to slippery winter driving while in search of wildlife. A pair of snowshoes or cross-country skis add mobility and encourage exploration. They make animal tracking much easier and more enjoyable than the alternative of post-holing through deep winter snows.

Hospitality for the October Meeting

Charlie & Byron Boyle cookies/snacks

Roger Kinney beverages

Mile High Travels and Tag Along Trips

Invite your fellow club members on your next photo excursion! All you need is to provide is WHO – WHAT – WHERE – WHEN!

WHO HAS TRIPS PLANNED – WHERE ARE YOU GOING THIS FALL ?!

Anyone interested in Mile High Travels or Tag-Along Trips can contact Chuck Winter.(303)972-2538, cwinter80127@gmail.com, or, cwinter@mii-rmcc.com. Future trips can also be submitted to the newsletter for inclusion in the next edition. For short-notice trips, consider posting a blog on the club website!

SHARE THE FUN—JOIN THE FUN—ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE

Notes From The Library

Come by and check us out! We have lots of materials for you to use for ideas and information. We are adding a new copy of *Digital Photographer's Handbook* by Tom Ang. It has lots of valuable information and pictures in it. We also have some DVDs and videos of favorite spots to photograph. See you at the next meeting!!!!!!!

Joe and Betsy Lamb



Digital Study Meeting

Our Digital Classroom meeting for September featured several members presenting "My Favorite Photoshop Tip", with the group sharing many tips and shortcuts

All paid members are encouraged to attend the digital study meetings. The meetings start at 7:15 PM on the 4th Wednesday of each month. Enter through the main entrance, not the doors used for accessing the theater. Bring a notebook and writing implement to take your notes.

Upcoming Programs

October

Speakers: Gordon and Cathy Illg

How to Photograph Nature

Presentation on the nuts and bolts of nature and wildlife photography

November

Speaker: Lisa Schneizer from the PSA.

Lisa will be presenting a program on the benefits of a Photographic Society of America membership.

December

Speaker and Program TBD



Ron Eberhart's photo "Redwoods in the Fog" has been included in the Top 250 of over 3,250 entries in the NANPA (North American Nature Photography Assn) Showcase Competition. Ron's photo will appear in the 2010 NANPA print journal, *Expressions*.

Congratulations to Ron Eberhart whose photo, Cottonwood River Ripples, was one of the juror Kathy Moran's selections for the 2009 Art in Nature Exhibition. The Exhibition is sponsored by The Center for Fine Art Photography. For more information on the exhibit and the other juror selections, please see:

<http://www.c4fap.org/exhibitors/2009ArtInNature/>

September Club Competition Results

Judge: Charlie Summers

Club Members: Wildlife



First Place

Praying Mantis

Mary Paetow

Other Scenic Winners:

2nd	<i>Midway Falls</i>	Fred Stearns
3rd	<i>Flowers in Sandstone</i>	Brenda Fletcher
HM	<i>Lightning</i>	Chuck Summers
HM	<i>Mariposa Lily</i>	Mary Paetow

Other Wildlife Winners:

2nd	<i>Egret Yoga</i>	Lynn Bishop
3rd	<i>Pika</i>	Fred Stearns
HM	<i>Marmot</i>	Brenda Fletcher
HM	<i>Spotted Sandpiper</i>	Lara Hardesty

Club Members: Scenic



First Place

Natures Curves

Bob Cross

Club Members: Wildlife—Captive or Controlled



First Place

Big Bear Yawn

Lynn Bishop

Other Wildlife-Captive or Controlled Winners:

2nd	<i>Here's Looking at You</i>	Lynn Bishop
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September Masters Competition Results

Judge: Charlie Summers

Masters: Wildlife



First Place

Pika with Food

Fi Rust

Other Wildlife Winners:

2nd	<i>Kissee Kissee</i>	Jan Forseth
3rd	<i>Western Bluebird</i>	Sam Fletcher

Other Scenic Winners:

2nd	<i>Bisti Badlands Sunset</i>	Reb Babock
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Masters: Scenic



First Place

Mesa Arch

Russ Burden

Masters: Wildlife-Captive or Controlled



First Place

Cute Coon

Jan Forseth

At the Last Meeting

Our September meeting featured a presentation produced by Chuck Winter with input from a variety of club members – a slide show tour of many of Colorado's best locations for fall colors and wildlife. Chuck said it well in introducing the program – other people have to fly in to the Colorado area to see these sights, we have only to drive into the mountains for a couple hours to reach these photogenic locales. THIS is the best season for living in Colorado and being a photographer! The input from the club really showed what great possibilities await in our outdoors, and the great level of talent within the club membership. The show was a 'nuts and bolts' format, showing exactly where to go for fall and how to get there. Included in the program were the following areas for fall colors:

San Juan Mountains locations:

- Owl Creek Pass
- Ouray
- Lake City
- Silverton
- Dallas Divide
- Yankee Boy Basin
- Cinnamon Pass and Engineer Pass
- Lake City Cutoff
- Corkscrew Gulch
- Red Mountain Pass
- Ophir
- Girl Scout Camp Road - County Rd 5

Rocky Mountain National Park locations:

- Route 7 - Longs Peak
- Wild Basin
- Fall River Road
- Bear Lake
- Moraine Park

The best areas for Colorado fall wildlife include:

Rocky Mountain National Park

Mount Evans

I - 70 Corridor

Those in attendance for this meeting really got some great ideas and inspiration to get out and shoot some pictures! If you're unsure where a location is or how to get there, or if you would like to invite other club members for an outing with you, please use the member email lists or website blog to get the word out!

Prior to the presentation, there were some club announcements and business of note as well. "The Wildlife Experience" will again invite the club to have an exhibit in 2010. The exact theme has yet to be determined, but will have something to do with landscapes. Please give your board members any ideas or input you have – what would you like to see the club do?

An announcement was made that Frank Weston recently resigned from the club's board of directors. By a vote of the club members present, Ron Eberhart was elected to fill this vacancy on the board. The current slate of officers was also elected to serve in 2010.

Photo Ops of Interest

Adobe® Photoshop® CS4 Down & Dirty Tricks Tour

Denver, CO | Wednesday, October 14, 2009

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND! Three of the best graphic designers on the planet, Scott Kelby, Corey Barker, and Jack Davis have joined forces to bring back one of the most successful seminar tours in history. They have created an amazing new tour packed full of the hottest, most-requested, eye-popping, jaw-dropping Photoshop effects, that look hard, but are easy (once you know the secrets). You'll learn the very latest Photoshop tips, tricks, and advanced techniques that give you the design skills to stand-out in a competitive market, and take your photography and Photoshop creativity to a whole new level!

Register at www.kelbytraininglive.com today or call us at 1.800.201.7323.

Member Workshops and Seminars:

Cathy & Gordon Illg – Workshops:

Adventure Photography 303 237-7086

gordon@advenphoto.com

www.advenphoto.com

2009 Schedule:

- ◇ Fall Wildlife Models, October 5-8
- ◇ Polar Bears, October 30-November 5
- ◇ Alaska Eagles, November 15-21
- ◇ Arches & Canyonlands, November 30-December 5

Our 2010 schedule is also available. We are offering our NANPA discount to all club members also – \$50.00 discount on less than 5 day tours and \$75.00 discount on all other domestic tours.

Russ Burden's Photography Tours:

Visit www.russburdenphotography.com. Contact Russ at 303-791-9997, rburden@ecentral.com

Destinations include:.

- Oct. 20 - 25, 2009 - Hunts Mesa
- Nov. 1 - 7, 2009 - Bryce Canyon and Zion National Parks
- Dec. 1 - 7, 2009 - Bosque Del Apache & White Sands National Monument

Mile High Wildlife Photography Club

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TEAM LEADERS

Monthly Programs: Chuck Winter

cwinter@mii-rmcc.com 303-972-2538

Membership: Rita Summers

ritasummers@gmail.com 303-840-3355

Special Programs/Field Trips: Chuck Winter

cwinter@mii-rmcc.com 303-972-2538

Competition: Russ Burden

Competition Scoring: Chris Loffredo

Competition Entries/Judging Coordinator:

Fred Stearns 303 400-0385

Snacks/Greeters: Nancy Stocker 303-759-4056

Publicity: Buzz Soard 303-779-9933

Library: Betsy Lamb 303-841-2565

BOARD of DIRECTORS

Rita Summers • Russ Burden

Chuck Winter • Chris Loffredo • Ron Eberhart

October Meeting

Wednesday, October 14th

7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

at

THE WILDLIFE EXPERIENCE

10035 South Peoria

Competition: Wildlife, Scenic, & Open

September Attendance: Approximately 62

October Digital Training Meeting

Wednesday, October 28rd

7:15 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Please send your articles and input to

newsletter@mhwpc.org.