



SHUTTERBUG

Volume 8 Number 9

NEWSLETTER

April 2016

OUR BIRD ISSUE!



Pintails in Formation by Mark Solly

Oceanside Photographers Club Welcomes Visitors

Visitors may attend two free meetings (either/or general meeting or education meeting) before deciding whether to join the club. Please check in at the membership desk as you enter. The annual dues are \$48 for the first year (which includes a name tag) and \$36 per year afterwards. Dues are prorated monthly for new members joining between June and April.

Meeting Times

OPC General Meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM in the East Hall at the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre.

OPC Education Meetings take place on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00PM in the Windsor Room at the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre. Bring your camera and manual if you would like help.

**The aim of the OPC is to promote learning, sharing
and the enjoyment of photography in a convivial atmosphere.**

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**** **MANAGEMENT TEAM ELECTIONS******

We are looking for new members of the Oceanside Photographers Management Team. Join us at the May 4th general meeting and consider putting your name forward. We need new blood in the team!

For more information, please speak with any of the management team at the general meeting or education meeting, or contact us at president.opc@gmail.com

Current and past team members are more than willing and happy to welcome and mentor you!

For club executive contact information, upcoming general meetings, field trips, education meetings and assignments, please visit the OPC website.

<http://oceansidephotographers.ca/wp>

THE SHUTTERBUG

This newsletter is published monthly via posting to the club website. Back issues can also be accessed from the website.

SUBMISSIONS

The newsletter team welcomes suggestions, questions, ideas and photos that illustrate club activities.

Sold an image? Exhibiting? Win a photo contest? Taking a photography related course? Been travelling and have a story and images to share? Other members would be interested in hearing about it.

Please send material to the Newsletter Team at newsletter.opc@gmail.com

CLUB MEETINGS

Please remember to wear your name tag to club meetings and events.

Lost your name tag? See Debra at the membership desk to order another, or via membership.opc@gmail.com

Due to allergies, asthma and other conditions, we request that you do not use any fragrance when attending club meetings.

AFFILIATIONS

Oceanside Photography Club is a member of the Canadian Association of Photographic Arts



Birds at Rathtrevor Beach and at Pipers Lagoon By Mark Solly

The first shot, “Crows In Flight,” was taken at Rathtrevor Beach. It was one of the first sunny days of March. I had noticed a great gathering of the squawking black birds by the water’s edge. There must have been 50 of them. I walked out on the sand towards the ocean so that I could get a better view of the goings on. It was a most unusual spectacle. I had a 150 – 600mm lens to see what I could capture. It was in my mind’s eye to shoot a bunch of birds in flight, wings blurred, some in focus to varying degrees.



The second shot, “Pintail Formation,” was also taken at Rathtrevor Beach on the same day as “Crows in Flight.” It was later in the afternoon and I had been watching the flock feeding for an hour or so prior to taking this shot. The sun was just about to set behind the trees when I could see them preparing to leave the beach where they had been for so long. I was in the right place at the right time. I was still using my 150 – 600mm and had hoped to catch them in formation as they took off from the water and onto their next destination. The photo I chose to submit is a cropped version of the original. I’m quite happy with the diagonal formation of the 6 ducks, combined with their unique wing positioning.



The third shot, "Take Off," was taken at Piper's Lagoon in Nanaimo. I was taking pictures in and around the lagoon when I saw the heron fly into this tree. I went to the west side of the tree, hoping for better lighting from the sun which was setting fast. I took several shots before I realized it was getting ready to take off. I used the 70 – 200mm lens and was able to capture the heron's dismount from the tree top. It was a pretty spectacle.



The fourth shot, "Heron Moon," was taken of the same heron at Piper's Lagoon. I noticed that the moon was in the same vicinity as the heron so I positioned myself in such a way that I was able to capture both the magnificence of the great bird and the beauty and rare sight of the moon in the blue sky above. I am very pleased with this composition.



STUMP A CHUMP!

Welcome to our feature page in which you are invited to submit a 'how do I' photography question that is 'stumping' you. Please submit your question to newsletter.opc@gmail.com by the 15th of each month and read the newsletter issue at the end of the same month for your answer!

Question: How do I make my bird photographs "pop"?

Answer: I think that the answer here is simple to state but not nearly as simple to execute. Simply stated, the answer is "fill the frame" or put another way "get close". In reality this involves a fair amount of cunning, some subterfuge and maybe some additional expense, but not necessarily a huge amount on the expense side.

The basic fact of the matter is that you have to get close to the birds to fill the frame with their picture and birds, by their very nature, do not like people to get very close to them. So this is where the cunning comes into play. Birds know that if it walks like a photographer and squawks like a photographer then pretty much - keep away! But if you keep still and quiet for long enough they will in general terms accept your presence as long as you don't move!

It's very difficult to take photographs without moving at all and so you need to be hidden from the birds to the largest extent. It's called a blind in the lingo of the bird-watcher. A blind can be your car, your house, a shed in the garden, or a purpose built observation blind of the type seen at nature reserves. Even with a blind there is an old adage that says that you can catch a bird with food easier than a stick, and having some bird seed ready to drop or throw in the general direction will help the birds to overcome any lingering hesitation they may have.

And now we get to the expensive bit. Gear. As in photographic gear for birding. A long reach zoom lens is your best friend here as it allows framing without you having to move closer or further away from the object of your pursuit. The problem is that the more friendly the birds are, the smaller they tend to be and the longer the reach of your lens needs to be! How long is long enough?

Well for the beginning birder I would say a zoom lens that goes to 300mm on a crop frame sensor (450mm equivalent focal length) is an absolute minimum for back yard shots and larger tamer species on a village pond for instance where a little judicious feeding will entice them closer. Anything longer is a bonus and certainly these days there are a couple of outstanding options available for modest dollars, such as for example the Tamron 150-600 Zoom. Nikon and Canon sell good alternates if you prefer brand name lenses and there are two alternates by Sigma which are also worth considering.

If you shoot full frame then you need the 600mm option in some form or other as, in my humble opinion, anything less means too much cropping in post production.

If you have a bridge camera with a super zoom (to 500mm EFL or better) this will work just fine and is a good alternate to the DSLR + zoom lens scenario but be aware that there is usually some significant shutter lag with these cameras that mean you have to be able to anticipate the birds to capture interesting photos.

Anticipation is necessary whatever the gear you choose, but it is mitigated somewhat by faster response time, faster autofocus systems, and generally more responsive DSLR cameras as compared to some bridge, automatic and point and shoot cameras.

The light - passing ability of your camera should not be ignored here as birds tend to like to keep to the shadow areas for protection and to allow their wonderful natural camouflage to keep them safe, so the faster your lens the more likely you are to be able to shoot in this type of lighting and get a useable photo.

How to separate the bird from the background? This technique requires both planning and considerable luck. In simple terms, the bird needs to be close to the camera and a long way from the background. The lens needs to be as fast as possible for a shallow depth of field and you need to be able to use an f/stop in the range of f/2.8 to f/8. This formula spells expensive glass and here we are talking about 600mm f/4 lenses. However, the 600mm zoom lenses do a great job here provided the bird is closer to the lens than to the background. The more separation there is between the bird and the background the better and less cluttered the photo will look.



Both of these photos were shot with a Tamron 150-600 mm lens at 600mm, hand held at 1/2500 sec and f/8 on my full frame Nikon D4 at ISO 10,000 .

So the final point here is that the camera needs to have a good flexible range of useable ISO as the small f/stop dictates in order to keep the noise under control. The auto ISO feature on the Nikon cameras allows the photographer to set a maximum limit and then to float up and down below that limit according to the ambient light. The advantage of this system is that it is possible to set the upper limit to a value that limits the noise that will appear in the shot.

Another tip concerns the fact that a lot of birds have white feathers on them. White reflects, of course, and in order to keep the whites from "blowing out" I use -1ev exposure compensation when shooting all birds.

Here is the complete set up I have developed for my own use:-

- a. Manual, f/8, 1/2000 - 1/4000 sec, -1EV, Auto ISO 12,800max
- b. Autofocus to AF-C, Single point (centre point) only. Auto tracking and other auto functions turned off.
- c. VR On except if I am using a tripod, then VR off.

That's it, folks! Good luck!

Qualicum Beach Brants



Brants on Qualicum Beach by Marcie Gauntlett
Panasonic Lumix DMC-50 at ISO 400



Brants taking flight by John Critchley
Nikon D4 at ISO 400, F8, and 1/2000 sec

Blinds for Wildlife Shoots (Including Birds!)

By John Critchley

There are many different ways to remain un-threatening to the quarry while still enabling the camera. One of the easiest is the automobile. Stay in the car! Park in a good view point, roll down the window and stay put, camera at the ready. I have used this technique on numerous locations and it works really well as long as the birds are used to seeing cars. There are inexpensive and useful camera mounts that fit onto window glass and window sills and they work well enough to relieve the stress of hand holding a SLR combo for hours at a time. Equipped with a quick release connection the camera can be back in your hands within a second or two. Also, coming from UK where Wild Life Safari Parks are a dime a dozen this technique is useful for all manner of critters from lions to giraffes and monkeys.

Another way to go if you are off the beaten track is a shooting blind. They cost about \$50.00 US. (Google shooting blinds and a raft of hits comes up) The blind has outlooks on all four sides but only one larger opening for observation as well as actual photography. I have used one of these successfully shooting the kingfishers at French Creek, but they have no bottom ground cover sheet and so be prepared to get wet and muddy - depending on the season. Also, putting them up is easy but taking them down not so much. It requires a good piece of skill to fold the spring steel frame into a figure eight so that it collapses into a small circle of material for transporting. They are not big enough for 2 people even if you are friendly and also they require anchoring with the supplied pegs to avoid the wind being an issue. Very little wind is needed to make life interesting! They weigh in at a few pounds and are relatively easy to carry in the provided bag. So . . . let's see.



If you are out in the open, avoid wearing bright colours as they will be easily seen by most birds and wildlife although I am not sure which colours animals can see. Camouflage jackets and pants are popular although I am not sure that they work any better than general dark clothing in greens and browns. As an ex-aviator I can assure you that a fair skinned face sticks out like a sore thumb when viewed from above against a green field, so wear a veil or camo paint to hide the big silver disk type target. I could tell when the individuals in a field were looking up at the aircraft easily and infallibly from thousands of feet in the air, never mind a few tens of feet. So hiding the face is important, staying still is important, and avoiding bright colours is important. Don't forget about your shadow on sunny days. Hide it as well as you can and stay as still as possible making as little noise as possible.

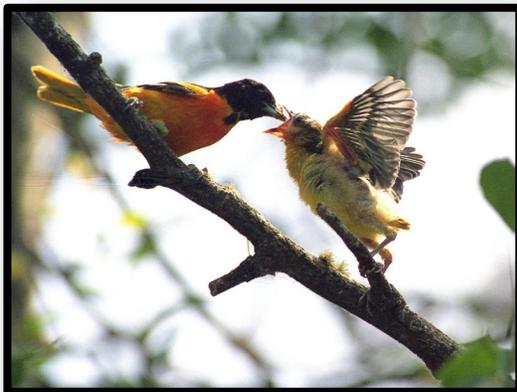
The Baltimore Oriole Chick

By Cliff and Carol Anderson

A few years ago, Carol and I were walking in a wooded area east of Edmonton when we spotted some children watching an oriole chick perched on a low branch of a tree. According to the children, the chick had fallen out of its nest onto the ground. The children had placed a broomstick near the bird. The bird hopped onto it and the kids placed the broomstick beside a tree branch. The bird then perched on the branch.



The chick was loudly calling for food. It stretched out and spread its immature wings creating a wonderful photographic opportunity with the sun backlighting its wings. We scanned the sky hoping to spot a parent oriole. Before long, papa oriole appeared with a load of insects in his beak. He landed on a high branch and appeared to be searching for the screaming chick. The chick was not where it was supposed to be! Papa did notice the chick and cautiously flitted from branch to branch until he was down to the chick's level.



Fortunately, I had an 80 -400 mm telephoto lens on my Nikon. While papa bird fed his chick, I obtained a number of images and even managed to capture the actual transfer of food. All too soon the feeding was over. The papa oriole turned away from his loudly complaining chick, who was still demanding food, before flying off to find more morsels of food.

We felt exhilarated over our sighting and proceeded on our way. The result: a memorable record of an exceptional photographic opportunity that we had just happened upon!



Backyard Hawk by Vivienne Bearder

Several times during the past year when we looked out our family room window into our back yard, we were surprised to see a hawk sitting on the fence. At the same time we noticed that our usual complement of junksos, chickadees, sparrows and other small birds seem to have disappeared (or as we would say back in England—they ‘scarpered’)! Sometimes we have a camera sitting nearby, so I decided to try and capture some images of the bird. If I try to open the patio door to take the photo, the hawk would fly away, so these hand held images were taken through our kitchen window. Having to take the photographs rather spontaneously, the camera (Panasonic Lumix FZ200) was set to ‘Program’ mode. If I am lucky, the hawk would sit still for a while and pose for me!

Alberta Owl By John Critchley

I knew the owls were about and I studied the Alberta map to pinpoint sightings and make seeing one more likely. On the day, we were driving out to a doggy motel to retrieve our family pet and I dragged my camera into the car to just have something to hold onto as we had a long way to go, and I need to feel like I am prepared!

After we cleared the city of Airdrie and headed NE to the kennel, lo and behold this critter was sat on a small fence post by the side of the road. We stopped the car and I started shooting the owl through the open window but he was so annoyed he turned his back on us more often than not and kept looking over his shoulder no matter how much noise the shutter made on my D4. (It is the noisiest shutter I have ever heard!) Finally the yelling of our passenger about a crow doing a flyby was too much and the owl flew off, but I missed the departure shot as I was distracted by all the commotion. Maybe we need a ticket for distracted photographing!

Still I got the shot and here it is, complete with fence post and barbed wire. Nikon D4 and Tamron 150-600 lens at 600mm, f/8 and 1/2500 sec ISO 400, -1 ev compensation.



Photographing Birds By Libby Lovis

One of my favourite field trips is to the Bird Sanctuary (Pacific Northwest Raptors) in Duncan. I have been there several times with both clubs I belong to and with my granddaughter and it is always amazing. It is a great place to practice your photography skills with birds both sitting still (ish) and flying displays to try out moving birds which are always difficult to capture especially if you are holding a DSLR with a big lens as well - this is getting too heavy for me to hold now.



Another place to go is the North Island Wildlife Recovery Center in Errington although there are no flight displays there. Birds in cages are always a challenge so that is another skill to be mastered.

There are many books and online resources to use and if all else fails set up your camera in a window in your house trained onto a tree that the birds in your yard use all the time and practice shooting them there.

This is a wonderful hobby and you learn so much about the birds themselves while watching. Remember if you intend to submit your pictures for serious competition there is not supposed to be any man made items in the photo i.e bird feeders. I have heard of people who drill a hole in a log and fill it with suet to get around this problem.



Eagle By Vaughn Roberts

Hummingbirds

By John Critchley



I set up the branch 3 years ago and then hung the bird feeder fairly close to it, but out of camera angle. Now the birds are quite happy to perch for the camera which is set up in the kitchen and I shoot through the kitchen window glass from a distance of about ten feet. These are uncropped shots taken with a D7200 attached to a 500mm f/4 lens and a 1.4 times teleconverter. This gives an equivalent focal length of 1,050mm



I love the attitude of this one with his tongue stuck out at me!

The 3 shots on the right were taken without any set up or other inducements to the birds! Shot with a Tamron 150-600mm lens at 600mm, f/8 and 1/2500sec hand held on my D4 at a distance of eight to ten feet. I think this bird is a young Rufus hummingbird, but am not sure. It could be an Anna's Hummingbird too, but there is quite a lot of rusty red colour for an Anna's.

The size of the Lobelia flowers gives a good scale for the size of the bird! He was TINY!



PHOTO ASSIGNMENT WINNERS

“Clocks”

Category: Colour

*First Place
Pocket Watch
Mary Watts*



*Second Place
Time for Peace
Michael Van der Ree*



*Third Place
Timepiece
Beth Millar*



PHOTO ASSIGNMENT WINNERS

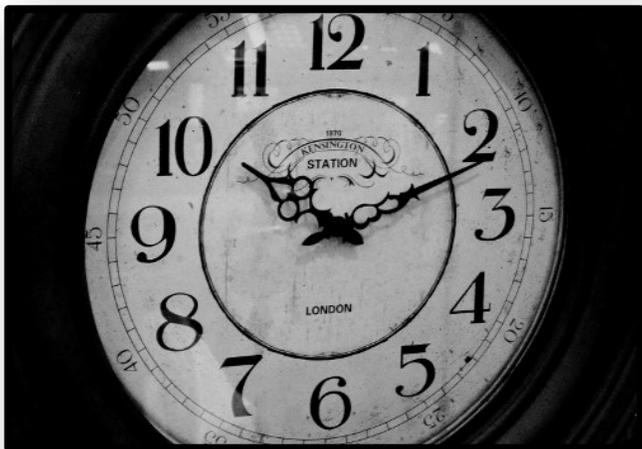
“Clocks”

Category: Black and White

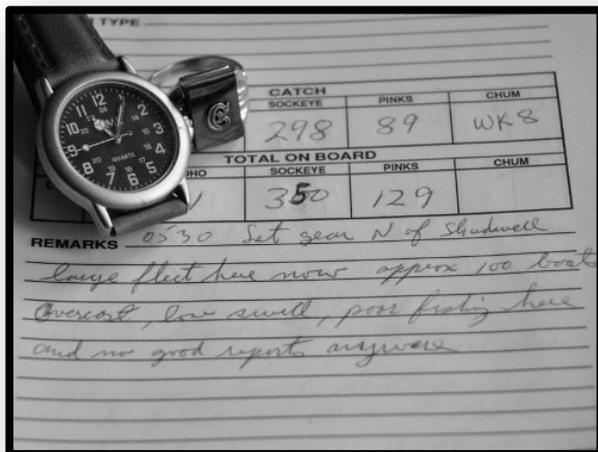
First Place
Steam Clock
Brad Powell



Second
British Time
Cliff Anderson



Third Place Tie
In Memory of Dad
Linda Lundberg



Third Place Tie
Time Reflection
Mary Watts

PHOTO ASSIGNMENT WINNERS

“Clocks”

Category: Digital Art

*First Place
Spiralling Out of Time
Brad Powell*



*Second Place
Time Turning
Beth Millar*



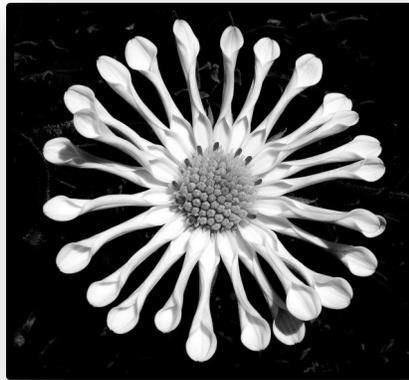
*Third Place
Face of Time
Linda Lundberg*



Oceanside Photographers Member News

Cliff Anderson Exhibit at Island Exposures

Club member Cliff Anderson will be having an exhibit of his black and white flower images at Island Exposures in Parksville from Monday April 18th for approximately one month.



John Critchley Photo Sale at the MacMillan Arts Centre



Congratulations John!

Article about Marcie Gauntlett

Don't miss the article about Marcie Gauntlett on page 30 of the Spring Issue of Parksville Qualicum Beach OASIS magazine. The article is titled 'Well-Traveled Artist Marcie Gauntlett.' Have a read of this scoop about one of your fellow club members!

WEB LINKS AND APPS FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

At Oceanside Photographers Club general and education meetings we find that members will tell us about web sites and apps of interest to photographers. We all know that there is a wealth of knowledge and creativity on the 'net', but we don't always know where to start looking. This page will be a regular feature in the newsletter, so if you have a particular web site you have found that you find useful or if you need help in finding a website on a particular photography topic, please contact the newsletter team at newsletter.opc@gmail.com

How Do I Get the Best Bird Photos?

<https://photographylife.com/how-to-photograph-birds>

<http://www.digitalcameraworld.com/2013/06/03/bird-photography-tips-how-to-shoot-pin-sharp-pictures-of-birds-of-prey/>

<http://www.digitalbirdphotography.com/8.10.html>

Contributed by Shelley Harynuk

Where Do I Find Birds to Photograph?

<http://www.hellobc.com/vancouver-island/things-to-do/parks-wildlife/bird-watching.aspx>

<http://www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com/> easily accessible from the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal in Delta/Ladner

Misc Resources

Birds of the Pacific Northwest <http://www.nwnature.net/birds/>

Birds of British Columbia <http://www.birdcanada.com/birding-by-province/bc/>

Canadian Nature Photographer (The Blind Photographer)

<http://www.canadiannaturephotographer.com/waynelynch.html>

Photographing Herons <https://www.ephotozine.com/article/photographing-herons-15523>

Contributed By Vivienne Bearder

EDITOR'S GRAB BAG

By Shelley Harynuk

I thought that since this issue of the Shutterbug Newsletter has a theme of “birds” perhaps I would talk about birds too. The birds in my mind right now are the Snowbirds, that daring team of nine pilots that make their home in Comox for two to three weeks every April. We go up every year trying to find just the right spot and the right camera settings to capture the very best of the incredible formations they fly. As an added bonus we are often graced with the ear splitting power of an F-18 flying its own manoeuvres overhead.

We have a little beach spot that we used to go to and it was as if we were being treated to a private airshow put on by the Snowbirds just for us. They have now moved a little further inland and thanks to a tip from a fellow photographer (thanks Vivienne) we discovered Air Force Beach. A lovely man let us stand in the bed of his pick up truck so that we could get a better view and line of sight. The man's name was Sonny, christened Neville but never known by anything other than Sonny. When asked why he was called Sonny, he responded with “Well I'm my father's son.” Anyway, I digress, Sonny was quite proud of the fact that he had never owned a camera in his life. He was just out there to watch as he did most days the Snowbirds were in town. I'm guessing that he probably enjoyed the show a lot more than we did as we worked to get the shot. Next time we go I'm leaving my camera at home and will take the Sonny path and just enjoy watching those crazy birds fly.

Shelley Harynuk
Newsletter Director and Editor

