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Creative Director: Carole E. Sauer

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Show Judges: Darrell Gulin George Lipp Roy Toff

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**Expressions**

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The North American Nature Photography Association’s annual Showcase competition continues to be one of the leading nature and wildlife photography contests each year. The wonderful variety of winning images, along with the four provocative essays, in the 2018 Expressions Journal demonstrate the talent and hard work of our community’s photographers and writers. Nature photography is not the easiest genre in which to be successful; photographing in extreme heat and cold, rain and fog, and sloshing through either mud or ice, all while maintaining the patience and fortitude needed to capture a strong image of an elusive subject, is a regular challenge for the serious amateur and professional photographer. The resulting images are valuable for their intrinsic beauty, but more importantly, for promoting awareness of the need for conservation and the role played by every life form in our ecosystem.

We hope that this edition of Expressions provides you with many hours of enjoyment and serves as a valuable addition to your collection.

David C. Lester

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR
Ever since the first time I visited Kenya, the expansive landscape and the myriad of animals that call this wild country their home has called me back year after year. The morning that I captured this image was unlike any other I had ever experienced while on safari. As a pair of male lions was devouring its kill, a pack of menacing hyenas strategically surrounded them and slowly made their way in, enveloping the two. Protecting its kill, this male lion made an example of one of the hyenas, warning its fellow pack members, reminding them who is king of the savanna.”

Aaron Baggenstos is an internationally-acclaimed, award-winning wildlife photographer and author in nature and wildlife. His images tell stories that help protect, preserve, and conserve biodiversity and habitats worldwide.

Officially recognized by National Geographic in the 2016 Nature Photographer of the Year Contest, Baggenstos has also received critical acclaim from Nature’s Best Photography, Outside, and the National Audubon Society. He is a recent contributor for Outdoor Photographer magazine. Through his work Baggenstos hopes to inspire others to photograph, enjoy and take action to protect local and worldwide ecosystems. You can follow his travels through social media streams on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Flickr.

"This photo is especially meaningful to me. In 2006, armed with a point and shoot digital camera, I discovered my passion for photography when I spent several days in Japan observing and photographing snow monkeys in hot springs. This passion has blossomed into a second career. I now travel to remote locations around the globe, photographing rare and endangered species.

I had always wanted to return to Japan and photograph the snow monkeys again, this time with appropriate equipment. I finally returned in February 2017. The weather was cooperative with heavy snowfall providing a lovely backdrop and covering the monkeys in snowflakes. This one infant snow monkey caught my eye. He had such an expressive face and was sitting on the edge of the hot springs alone. I was able to capture several compelling images before he ran off to play in the snow.

This expression was my favorite.

I am a semi-retired anesthesiologist and long-time animal advocate. As I travel the world photographing, I strive to capture images that encourage an emotional connection between the viewer and the subject. Look in those eyes and see a sentient being looking back at you!

A portion of all sales is donated to animal advocacy and conservation groups. In addition I frequently donate photos to organizations to use in fundraising activities.”

Diana Rebman
Judges’ Choice

Suspended - Humpback Mother and Calf  | © Jodi Frediani  | jodifrediani.com
Vava’u, Tonga

“What did I say about ‘it’s all about the light’? Composition, subject, difficulty, and lucky to have such clear water all add to an exceptional image.”
—George Lepp

“The subtle light rays with the mother and young whale make for a winner.”
—Darrell Gulin

“Sun rays really give this image a dreamy, ethereal feel…perfect for the calming nature of a mother whale and baby.”
—Roy Toft

Dustbathing Elephant  | © Wendy Kaveney  | wendykaveney.smugmug.com
Bwabwata Park, Namibia

“If you don’t have color, you must have contrast, depth, and of course content. The elephant is stage center; actually in one of the thirds, and the image speaks volumes.”
—George Lepp

“I have been to Africa many times and I would love to see and have the opportunity to photograph something even close to this. The moment caught with the dust flying in a black and white is outstanding.”
—Darrell Gulin

“Nicely captured moment of the ritual daily behavior of these magnificent animals.”
—Roy Toft
TOP 100: Showcase

Running Cheetah - Blurred Motion | © Douglas Croft
Kruger National Park, South Africa

Mother and Cub | © Adolfo Rapaport
Botswana

Showcase: TOP 100

Svalbard Olga Strait | © Sue Forbes
Olga Strait, Svalbard, Norway

Pacific White-Sided Dolphins Playing | © Shayne McGuire
Khutzeymateen Valley, Canada
Eye Contact | © Tim Bryan
Namiri Plains, Tanzania

Leap for Life | © Greg L. Cook
Baffin Bay, Nunavut

African Elephant Dust Bathing with Calf | © Patrick Pevey
Etosha National Park, Namibia

Snow Monkey Jumping Out of Hot Springs | © Diana Rebman
Jigokudani, Nagano, Japan
TOP 100: Showcase

Silent and Stealthy | © Barbara Fleming
KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

Giraffe and Guinea Fowl Abstract | © Wendy Kaveney
Etosha National Park, Namibia

Red Lechwe in the Morning Mist | © Tom Speelman
Okavango Delta, Botswana

Black-Backed Jackal Grabbing for Turtle Dove | © Carol Grenier
Etosha National Park, Namibia

Pampas Fox Carrying Kit to New Den | © Nate Chappell
The Pantanal, Brazil

Showcase: TOP 100

Etosha National Park, Namibia
TOP 100: Showcase

Curious Humpback Whale Calf Takes a Look | © Jodi Frediani
Vava'u, Tonga

Moose Cow and Calf at Schwabacher Landing | © Alton Marsh
Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming

Bear Spray - Grizzly Shaking Off Water | © Jeff Nadler
British Columbia, Canada

Showcase: TOP 100

Confrontation | © Barry Cain
Botswana

Dancing Coastal Brown Bears | © Tom Speelman
Lake Clark National Park, Alaska
TOP 100: Showcase

Cape Fur Seal | © Tom Speelman
Walvis Bay, Namibia

Red Fox Stretching | © Carol Grenier
Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

Showcase: TOP 100

The Last Swan Dive - Sea Lion Loses to Killer Whales | © Jodi Frediani
Monterey Bay, California

Baboon Tree | © John Norvell
Namibia
TOP 250: Showcase

Harp Seal | © Enrique Aguirre
Canada

Humpback and Calf | © Rick Beldegren
Silver Bank, Dominican Republic

Gleaning | © Diane McAllister
Kaktovik, Alaska

Elk’s Breath Visible in Cold Air | © Carl Henry
Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

Humpback Mother and Calf Feeding | © Christopher Ciccone
Chatham, Massachusetts

Showcase: TOP 250

African Wild Dog Pack Crossing River | © Barbara Fleming
Okavango Delta, Botswana

Chacka Baboon - Lone Sentry at Dawn
© Bonnie Block
Okavango Delta, Botswana

Rim-Lit Polar Bear | © Shiela P. Glatz
Kaktovik, Alaska

Brown Bear Fishing | © William Pohley
Katmai National Park, Alaska

Alaskan Timber Wolf | © Kevin Dooley
Alaska
TOP 250: Showcase

Cheetah Chasing Prey | © Michael Cohen
Tanzania

Plains Zebras Fighting | © Patrick Pevey
Etosha National Park, Namibia

Male Silverback Gorilla | © Hector D. Astorga
Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda

Leopard Running to Safety from Lions | © Teri Franzen
Serengeti National Park, Tanzania

African Elephant Calf Guided by Mom | © Patrick Pevey
Etosha National Park, Namibia

Killer Whale Beach Attack | © Bill Klipp
Peninsula Valdes, Argentina

Clymene Dolphin with Calf | © Sue Forbes
Caribbean Sea, Bonaire

Brown Bear Runs Right Past Us | © David P. Glatz
Katmai National Park, Alaska

Feeding Frenzy | © Michael Cohen
Flamingo, Florida

Leopard with an Impala Kill | © Bill Klipp
Masai Mara, Kenya

Showcase: TOP 250
TOP 250: Showcase

Brown Bear Catching a Salmon | © Paul McCroskey
Katmai National Park, Alaska

Cheetah Chasing Thompson Gazelle | © Michael Cohen
Tanzania

Bobcat with Richardson's Ground Squirrel | © Fi Rust
Estes Park, Colorado

Male Elephant | © LeAnn Stamper
Tanzania

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You can go on a photo tour and just take pictures, or you can travel with us, naturalists that will provide you with the information that explains what you are seeing, and that gives meaning both to your photographs and to your experience. As our participants say, it is what truly sets us apart from all the rest. All of our tours and workshops are personally led by Joe and Mary Ann McDonald.

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This is how Google defines ethics. But what does this word really mean? And how is it best applied to the world of nature photography? Ethics is a strong word, used to show character, compassion and high morals. It is a word used by big corporations, small businesses and individuals alike to describe the manner in which they operate. It shows the rest of the world that their priorities are principles and behavior over personal gain.

Ethics in photography has been debated for decades. But seemingly no time in history has this word been more heavily debated than today. What has changed so significantly that thrusts this topic to top priority for bloggers, magazines, journalists, individuals and organizations around the world? The answer is broad and complex. But this complexity has put ethics in the spotlight and it is here to stay. This is a good thing. It is critically important that this topic be discussed far and wide in the field of nature photography. The images were incredible. The names of the best seemed untouchable. I was naive, yet eager.

Without any understanding of ethics in the field of photography, I decided to pursue this dream. It wasn’t long before my naivety caught up with me. The answer to many of my questions on how these images were obtained was just a Google search away. One search of “ethical photography” pored in the results. Articles after article, blog post after blog post came in with discussions about owl baiting, game farm photography, zoo photography, professional blinds, bird feeders, Photoshop, cloning, HDR and so many other topics associated with ethics in photography. My head spun and my eyes were opened wide. I first felt somewhat embarrassed, then anxious and upset. But most importantly, I received an education. This information provided me a foundation from which to grow. It gave me the ability to choose a path and make decisions on how I wanted my photography to be represented.

Ethics in our field has such a broad reach. It can refer to technology in the form of the gear we use. Do we use high-power strobes, on-camera flash or a lens that helps keep our distance from our subjects? Even our camera noise as we fire 14 frames a second at a skittish animal is part of this discussion. What we do in post-production with the available powerful software comes into question. Exposure compensation, contrast adjustments, saturation, sharpening and noise reduction are all part of much of our work flow. Is there a line we cross between what we truly captured and what is “art?” It covers birdfeeders and the debate of whether or not they are ethical. Are we providing birds a necessary supplement to the food lost to their shrinking habitat or are we creating a hunting ground for Cooper’s hawks?

Most importantly, for this conversation, ethics is about the welfare of our subject and the choices we make in our pursuit to capture images of it. The choices we make in our chosen hobby or profession directly impact the welfare of the very subjects we are shooting. We need to make choices that put the health and safety of our subjects first.

Photographing owls is one of the hottest and most controversial topics surrounding ethical photography today. One technique that is commonly used is the use of live mice to lure the owls closer to the photographers to capture the stunning images we see of the owl snatching its prey. The images are stunning. The technique is questionable. While it may be perfectly legal to do so in some places, we have to ask ourselves if using this technique is in the best interest of our subject. Is there a danger of this owl becoming habituated to humans? Is there the possibility of diseases being transferred to the owl? Is this being done near roads that might cause car strikes in the future? And certainly the life of the mouse must be brought into consideration. Is sacrificing the life of a sentient being for the sake of our image ethical? There are many workshops available that provide this service for photographers. Tour operators have an opportunity to educate their guests on making ethical choices and promoting techniques that have their subject’s safety at the forefront of their operations.

Another technique that is widely used is photographing animals from “professional blinds.” In this form of photography, guests sit in fixed blinds while bait is placed in a field at a distance favorable to photography. For example, a deer carcass is placed in a field to attract wolves. Over time, the wolves have associated this...
specific location with a constant supply of food. The wolves are habituated to the blinds and the people, and their desire to eat trumps the natural fear they may have toward humans. This can lead to conflicts in the future which can easily end in the death of the wolf.

Often used in Europe, the technique of placing dog food to attract bears and other predators is common. Guests again sit in a professional blind and dog food is placed at a distance and in a setting favorable for photography. Bears are drawn in by the smell and by their learned behavior that this location provides a constant supply of food. As the bears approach and their desire to eat trumps the natural fear they may have toward humans. This can lead to conflicts in the future which can easily end in the death of the wolf.

Another form of ethics comes in our commitment to our admirers, fans, friends and followers. It surrounds disclosing the truth behind our images. Truth In Captioning has become another important topic that we as artists have an obligation to adhere to. As our images rack up the likes, shares and retweets, our fans get taken to a place where many of them will never get to go. They admire us because we provide them a window into a world that most won’t have the opportunity to look through. They follow us because they believe us. We have the opportunity to educate people on true animal behavior and habitat. When we falsify what truly happens in the natural world, we take something away from that animal. We take something away from the experience and connection our fans have with that animal. We owe it to our subjects and our fans to be truthful in the manner in which we capture our images. If we photograph an animal at a zoo, we should say so. If we capture an image of an animal whose behavior may have been influenced by bait, we should say so. If we photograph an animal in a controlled setting such as a game farm, we should disclose this fact.

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The industry understands the value and benefit in using images captured using high ethical standards.

Ethics is a difficult and challenging topic to discuss in nature photography. There are few blacks and whites and a whole lot of gray. What ethics boils down to are personal choices, integrity and honesty. It boils down to making a decision that shows compassion for our subjects and puts their safety and well-being above all else. Your personal ethics are your moral principles that govern your behavior in this field.
Chuck Haney Photo Workshops 2018

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It’s early morning on the beach. Sunrise shots are done and now it’s time to walk the beach. I start my walk during low tide. There is always something to see. I stop by a tidal pool and see a large shell. A hermit crab bigger than my hand comes out to greet me. We look each other over for a while. He is magnificent. Since he was cooperating, I took some pictures while I crept closer and closer. He was very good about the whole thing. I think he was showing off his bright colors and blue eyes.”

This image was taken on Hilton Head Island with a Canon 7D and EF24-70mm f/2.8L USM at 45mm, 1/250 at f/5.6, ISO 200.

Friedman works for a major telecom. Photography is his art. He’s been taking photographs for over 40 years. He found his niche in nature photography. His online gallery can be found at pixglyph.com.
It’s important for us as nature photographers to tell a story at the same time we instill awe. This image is well composed and takes us into the realm of natural history photography.

—George Lepp

Well composed, right depth of field, the water droplet being the cherry on the cake!

—Roy Toft

Sharp, interesting macro image. Eggs, dew drop and highlights all work together.

—Darrell Gulin

"If I hear ‘it’s all about the light’ one more time I’ll throw up, but then here is an image that is all about the light. Ethereal feeling for one of the monsters of the deep. The light hitting the two remora by its fin is an added bonus!"

—George Lepp

Such a dreamy image of an extraordinary subject. The image amplifies the ‘awe’ this creature inspires!

—Roy Toft

This black and white image with the light rays works so well with this underwater photograph.

—Darrell Gulin
**TOP 100: Showcase**

- **Glowing Madagascar Ammonite**
  - © Barry B. Brown
  - Madagascar

- **Reef Shark in a School of Yellowtail Snappers**
  - © Rick Beldegreen
  - Tiger Beach, Bahamas

**Showcase: TOP 100**

- **Schooling Begas (Haemulon Vittatum) Blue Wave**
  - © Stan Bysshe
  - Watamula, Curacao, Caribbean Sea

- **Sea Jewels**
  - © Jodi Frediani
  - Vellellas in a bucket, Monterey Bay, California
**TOP 100: Showcase**

**Dewdrop with Garden**  
© Barbara Friedman  
Ithaca, New York

**Robber Fly**  
© Hector D. Astorga  
Santa Clara Ranch, South Texas

**Comet Darter Pair in Wheel**  
© Jim Burns  
Travis County, Texas

**Tiny ¼-inch Derilissus sp.**  
© Barry B. Brown  
St. Eustatius, Caribbean Sea

**Boufno**  
© Bryant Turffs  
Archer, Florida
Ice Bubbles | © Chuck Haney
Glacier National Park, Montana

American Alligator Waits for Prey in a Stream | © Larry Lynch
Lakeland, Florida

Pink Anemonefish in Magnificent Anemone | © Matthew Meier
Anda, Bohol, Philippines

Schooling Jacks | © James Squires
Cabo Pulmo, Mexico
TOP 250: Showcase

Reefscape with Schooling Fish | © Cameron Azad
Raja Ampat, Indonesia

Pelagic Red Crabs In invade the Harbor | © Jodi Frediani
Monterey Harbor, Monterey, California

Tiny ¼-inch Clingfish | © Barry B. Brown
St. Eustatius, Caribbean Sea

Cardinal Fish Mouth-Brooding Eggs | © Cameron Azad
Anilao, Philippines

Anchovies | © Jodi Frediani
Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor, Santa Cruz, California

Pelagic Red Crabs In invade the Harbor | © Jodi Frediani
Monterey Harbor, Monterey, California

Showcase: TOP 250

Reef Shark | © Rick Beldegreen
Tiger Beach, Bahamas

Green Immigrant Leaf Weevil on Fluorescing Rock
© Sandra Rothenberg | Barrie, Ontario

Juvenile Mimic File Fish | © Cameron Azad
Forgotten Islands, Indonesia

American Alligator Eye-Shine | © Larry Lynch
Myakka River State Park, Florida

Clownfish in Pink Anemone | © George Cathcart
Palau, Micronesia
**TOP 250: Showcase**

- **Coral Polyps** | © James Squires  
  Little Cayman Island

- **Coachwhip Snake Swimming** | © William Pohley  
  Santa Clara Ranch, South Texas

- **Chameleon** | © Lane Lewis  
  Fort Mill, South Carolina

- **Thermoregulating American Alligator** | © Elijah Goodwin  
  Charleston, South Carolina

- **Red Snake** | © Christina Selby  
  Rio Eiru, Brazil

- **Lemon Shark Pup in Protective Mangroves** | © Shane Gross  
  Eleuthena Island, Bahamas

- **Sally Light Foot Crabs** | © Bill Klipp  
  Galapagos Islands

- **Ice Bubbles V** | © Chuck Haney  
  Glacier National Park, Montana

- **Snorkeling with American Crocodiles** | © Rick Beldegreen  
  Chinchorro, Mexico

- **Showcase: TOP 250**
**TOP 250: Showcase**

**Honeybees on Comb** | © Mary Beth Jarrosak
Block Island, Rhode Island

**Saddleback Moth Resting on Leaf** | © Kim Young
Carbondale, Illinois

**Magnolia Blossom** | © Stacey Meanwell
Madison, Wisconsin

**Sweat Bee Loaded with Pollen** | © Michael Shane
Salt Lake City, Utah

**Dahlia** | © Charles Needle
Swan Island Dahlia Farm, Canby, Oregon

**Common Buckeye Butterfly** | © John Mack
Ithaca, New York

**Yellow Jacket Wasp (Polistes sp.)** | © Melody Lytle
Laguna Seca Ranch, South Texas

**Black Swallowtail Caterpillar** | © Robert Rommel
Jim Wells County, Texas

**Robber Fly Preys on Alate Leafcutter Ant** | © Doug Wechsler
Jarupe Biological Reserve, Ecuador

**Showcase: TOP 250**
TOP 250: Showcase

Halloween Pennant Dragonfly  | © Constance Mier  
Chokoloskee Island, Florida

Big Beautiful Spider in Dewy Web  | © Susan Dykstra  
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada

Canada Dogwood  | © Tom Haxby  
Shore of Lake Superior, Michigan

Honeybee in Flight with Pollen Sac  | © Melissa Usrey  
Lake Arrowhead, California

“Mollie is top notch! I have worked with many outstanding professors, and she has topped them all as a teacher! The trip was far above my expectations, and I had very high expectations. Mollie is amazing and motivated us to shoot our best work. She helped us find unique views and good color combinations. Her encouragement and instruction have made me a much better photographer.” L.R.

“Mollie is top notch! The views were majestic, the lodging was superb, and oh the food! But most of all, Mollie’s instruction was the best. She is patient and positive. Her trip organization and attention to every participant is outstanding. Thank you Mollie!” P.B.

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Changing Demographics of Wildlife Photography

Women Photographers Share Their Insights

by Dawn Y. Wilson

“Based on the advice of these five talented women, being prepared and confident will also go a long way in getting your nature photography career off the ground or into overdrive.”

Melissa Groo in the field. Photo by Mary D’Agostino.
In 2011, I published a book featuring the winning photos from a nature photography contest I conducted for women photographers. In my research for the book, I learned that the photography industry at the time reflected a ratio of three to one, men to women. That was an improvement from only 20 percent of the industry being women in 1983.

Although the photography industry today as a whole is closer to a 50/50 split, statistics don’t seem to exist regarding the demographics specific to nature or wildlife photography. It is still pretty common even today to see only one, maybe two, women in a group of twelve photographers lined up along the road in popular photo locations such as the Rocky Mountain or Yellowstone National Parks.

So I thought I would reach out to other female wildlife photographers to get their thoughts on the state of the industry for women in wildlife photography.

The reasons are varied as to why this group of women—Wendy Shattil, Sandy Sisti, Megan Lorenz, Melissa Groo and Ashleigh Scully—ventured into the realm of wildlife photography, but their talents are all very noticeable.

Wendy Shattil is a seasoned veteran in wildlife photography with more than 35 years of experience documenting and telling the stories about wild animals, including the first woman to win the highly coveted grand prize in the BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition in 1990.

Sandy Sisti found wildlife photography as her calling when she left her East-Coast pharmaceutical profession—another male-dominated field—to successfully pursue wildlife photography in the Yellowstone Ecosystem. Within just a few years she won the top pro wildlife prize in the inaugural Nature’s Best Photography Yellowstone Forever photo contest.

Megan Lorenz, a resident of Toronto, Ontario, won the grand prize in the prestigious Nature’s Best Photography Windland Smith Rice International Awards competition in 2015. It was only the third time a woman won the prize in 20 years.

Melissa Groo has made a steady climb through the ins and outs of wildlife photography by winning the grand prize in the National Audubon Society’s annual photo contest in 2015 and building a solid following with her writing and instruction.

Ashleigh Scully, the youngest member of the panel at 15 years old at the time of the interview, is a rising star in wildlife photography with dozens of credits and prizes for her photography. Ashley was interviewed by Ellen DeGeneres to highlight her photography and she recently won the Youth Photographer of the Year award from Nature’s Best Photography.

We had an interesting conversation about how the challenges of entering and making a living in wildlife photography do not only apply to women. As a group, however, we were in agreement that it seems there may be unique challenges women are making strides to overcome as we all feel we are seeing more women nature photographers in the field today than even just a few years ago.

“Early on there was a rumored bias against women in nature photography,” said Shattil. “I remember a few women submitting slides to photo editors using initials instead of first names, hoping to be judged solely on their work. I heard about encounters in the field where women were told they weren’t physically capable of doing the job. But I was never aware of being discriminated against myself. I grew up with three brothers and learned to hold my own.”

“Women certainly face issues of not being considered as members of camera companies, on panels, judging contests,” said Groo. “But we need more people at every level of the industry to make more of an effort. We need more women to speak at conferences, more ambassadors, more workshop leaders.”

“I struggled with the safety side of things when I started,” said Lorenz. “The idea of being out in a remote location with nobody else and no cell signal was my biggest worry. But I had the tools to deal with any situation. I made sure I had the right supplies, I knew where the closest cell signal was, where the hospitals were located. I had a plan.”

“I used to feel pressure when there were ten men [standing there],” said Scully. “Now I have made a name for myself and can join them with confidence. It is their problem if they can’t deal with it.”

That theme of confidence was a common one during our discussions.

Sandy Sisti talked about how her previous career taught her how to work harder than her male counterparts.

“I worked hard to make sure I got and gave respect,” said Sisti. “Once you get respect, you can work together. Do the best you can and speak out when you have to.”

“Some of the biggest challenges in becoming a nature photographer are the years it takes to gain experience, develop a body of work and create a network of people who are information resources,” said Shattil. “As my experience increased, so did confidence when my images showed that I’d paid my dues.”

Another common theme amongst the women was having a mentor to help achieve success and confidence.

“Initially I had a wonderful mentor,” said Lorenz. “Having someone I respected and trusted gave me confidence to pursue the career. I learned to take constructive criticism and I now have thicker skin. Without his guidance I wouldn’t have continued the pursuit.”

“Doors were opened for me through my mentors, especially Melissa Groo and Henry Holdsworth,” said Scully. “My mentors helped me see a whole new level of composition and looking at a scene to frame it up. They helped me further my passion.”

Scully suggests reaching out and saying “Hi” as a great way to find a mentor.

“Ask if they have a workshop or if you can drive around with them,” said Scully. “Get up the nerve to reach out.”

Developing the relationships through networking, working hard and having confidence seemed to help
all of the women to open doors, which helped to propel their careers.  
“While I first started, there was a local article written about my work in 2011,” said Sisti. “But I also did a lot of work with Buffalo Field Campaign; I wrote some articles, and I also sent photos to and wrote articles for Outdoor Photographer. That led to a cover article in Outdoor Photographer about my work, and that opened some doors to other magazines.”

“My career was boosted by winning the Audubon competition in 2015,” said Groo. “That helped me develop a strong bond with Audubon about bird photography, which developed into crafting ethics (guidelines) in bird photography with Kenn Kaufman. Some photographers are just great marketers. I found I had to be doing something I was committed to doing and sharing and helping other photographers.”

Wendy added the point that the other 90 percent of nature photography—the time not spent photographing— involves a lot of business tasks, networking, marketing, planning, and coordinating details.

“The support work of nature photography doesn’t have anything to do with being a man or woman,” said Shattil. “Find your niche. Have a clear vision of what you can uniquely bring to your nature photography passion and aim for being the best.”

“A photographer from Europe recently contacted me through my Flickr account about photographing bighorn sheep near my home in Colorado. I suggested to the photographer that he hire me as a guide for the day to find and photograph the large mammals. As soon as the photographer agreed and we made arrangements to meet, I realized I just booked a day alone with a man from another country who I knew nothing about other than what I saw on his website and Flickr pages. Although the situation turned out fantastic and he not only saw his first bighorn sheep of his life but captured some stunning photos of large rams demonstrating rut behaviors, the potential for the situation to be bad was concerning.

To overcome this, I left my itinerary for the day with my boyfriend. I made sure to check in with him as soon as I picked up my client, as soon as we arrived at our destination, and shortly after to let him know all was okay and that we were having great success with the sheep. I also hid a charged iPad in my vehicle with the Find My iPhone app available just in case something did happen and I didn’t return; the device would reveal my location. Whether you are a man or a woman, security concerns do exist. Being prepared and confident will help you overcome those situations should they go downhill.

Based on the advice of these five talented women, being prepared and confident will also go a long way in getting your nature photography career off the ground or into overdrive.

If you are interested in learning more about getting involved in nature photography and seeing what other women nature photographers are producing, consider looking at femalenaturephotography.com, a site dedicated to inspiring, connecting and supporting women nature photographers.

Another option is to join a photography group dedicated to the pursuit, education and betterment of nature photography, such as North American Nature Photography Association (nanpa.org).
Nature Photography Celebration
May 20-22, 2018
Jackson Hole, WY
The Center for Performing Arts
www.nanpa.org

Celebrate nature with this hands-on opportunity to use the latest technology in photography from vendors, and experience Lightning Talks, panel discussions and keynote presentations on the future of photography and the ecosystem of Yellowstone.

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Sessions by Jenny Nichols, Clay Bolt, Jaymi Heimbuch, David Akoubian, Dennis Jorgensen, Mike Francis, Tom Horton, Cheryl Opperman, Morgan Heim, Jennifer Leigh Warner, and more!

North American Nature Photography Association (NANPA) | www.nanpa.org | info@nanpa.org
I began my photographic journey just eight years ago, and the journey has taken me many places across the United States. In all those places where I have been blessed to be behind the camera, I have tried to capture images which are both meaningful and exciting. The way I approach my work is to recognize that it is important for me to be open to potential images that abound in those places I find myself. Thus, what finds my eye is what I record.

The image Ferns and Birch Trees was created when I was fortunate to find myself in a wooded area covered with late season ferns, scattered amongst birch trees clothed in beautiful fall colors. This area is located in the Sieur de Monts area of Acadia National Park, Maine. While there were other spots with only ferns, or birch trees, this is the one location which I found that had the perfect combination.

It’s truly an amazing Creation out there, and I believe God is the Artist in Chief. He has provided us with wondrous and endless opportunities to record His work, if we just stop and take the time to see!”

Growing up in Australia, I was surrounded by an incredible landscape that captivated. When I was eight, my parents bought me the gift of a camera and—after a fateful snapshot of a spider web in the family garden—I was hooked. My travels have taken me to the most amazing locations around the world, capturing landscapes that I could only once dream of shooting. I am so grateful for the beauty of this planet, and I will never stop sharing it.

“I've always had a deep fascination with the night skies. As a kid, I remember my dad pointing out the constellations. All we saw back then was a black sky and millions of stars—only what the naked eye could see. The camera totally changed that vision. Exploring the Olympic peninsula, I searched for a totally remote location—away from as much light pollution as possible. This amazing silhouette of the sea stack, reaching towards the night sky—it was the perfect scene to complete the image I was chasing.”
“My first look was that this was nice, and then all the elements came into play. The depth of the image with the fish sharp and the background equally sharp defy photographic principles.”
—George Lepp

“Just so many layers to this simple, calm, but extremely difficult to capture image...superb!”
—Roy Toft

“This is an image that you can look at for some time and find so much going on with it. Love the calm and looking into the water with the fish in the foreground.”
—Darrell Gulin

—Foreground, middle ground, and distance, all interesting. Color galore without being garish. This is hard to pull off and all the planets have to be in alignment. Well done!”
—George Lepp

“Eye popping, yet not over the top, color and detail. Magical scene that puts the viewer right smack in the middle of this alpine meadow!”
—Roy Toft

“If you like color and a great landscape, this is the image for you.”
—Darrell Gulin
Showcase: TOP 100

Milky Way Over Crater Lake | © Chuck Haney
Crater Lake National Park, Oregon

Pilings, Thunderstorm and Sunset | © Michael Cohen
Naples, Florida

Waterscape with Red Mangrove Trees and Clouds | © Constance Mier
Biscayne Bay, Florida

Death Valley Dunes | © Margaret Larkin
Death Valley, California

Phil.
TOP 100: Showcase

Foggy Morning on the River
© Sivani Babu
Jedediah Smith Redwood State Park, California

Tidal Flats
© Brenda Tharp
Cook Inlet, Alaska

Showcase: TOP 100

Sunset at Palouse Falls
© Ian Frazier
Palouse Falls, Washington

Autumn at Wenatchee River as the Storm Clears
© Bob Watson
Wenatchee National Forest, Washington
TOP 100: Showcase

Rainbow-Hued Reefscape | © Cameron Azad
Raja Ampat, Indonesia

Bald Cypress at Evening Twilight | © Elijah Goodwin
Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia

Manitoba After Midnight | © Roy Swoboda
Manitoba, Canada

Autumn Moods | © Peter Lik
Oregon

Showcase: TOP 100

Manitoba After Midnight | © Roy Swoboda
Manitoba, Canada

Dance of the Illuminating Light | © Shayne McGuire
Canyon X, Arizona
TOP 100: Showcase

Electric Peak  | © Cynthia Parnell  
Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

Massive Lettuce Coral Reef  | © Cameron Azad  
Forgotten Islands, Indonesia

Illuminated Clouds and Stars Over Mobius Arch  | © Alice Cahill  
Eastern Sierra, California

Virgin Falls  | © Margaret Gaines  
Girdwood, Alaska
TOP 250: Showcase

Sunset at La Jolla Tide Pools  |  © Dan Jenkins
La Jolla, California

Star Trails at Trona Pinnacles  |  © Alice Cahill
California

Elakala Falls  |  © Richard Sandford
Blackwater Falls State Park, West Virginia

Sea Ice Scapes  |  © Fabiola Forns
Svalbard

Marble Caves  |  © Stuart Gordon
Lago General Carrera, Patagonia, Chile

Moonrise with Sunset Light and Mountains  |  © Sivani Babu
Port Charcot, Antarctica

Showcase: TOP 250

Milky Way and Ancient Bristlecone Pine  
© Ian Frazier
White Mountains, California

Iceout at Sunset on Mountain Lake  
© Thomas Horton
Lost Lake, Uinta Mountains, Utah

Trip to Cedar Falls  
© Jim Crotty
Hocking Hills State Park, Ohio

Sea Stacks Against the Milky Way  
© Sivani Babu
Harris Beach State Park, Oregon

An Air Tanker Flies Over a Wildfire  
© Sivani Babu
Carmel, California
TOP 250: Showcase

Live Oaks in Infrared | © Jamie Konarski Davidson
Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, South Carolina

Beaver Pond Reflections in Autumn | © George Sanker
Acadia National Park, Maine

Milky Way Lava Glow | © Naona ‘Peaches’ Wallin
Big Island, Hawaii

Showcase: TOP 250

Grand Canyon Sunrise | © Jeremy Duguid
North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona

Cauldron of Creation | © Geoffrey Schmid
Kamokuna, Big Island, Hawaii

Aerial View of Cracks in the Mud | © David DesRochers
Cook Inlet, Alaska

Waterscape with Red Mangrove and Clouds | © Constance Mier
Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida

Black Canyon at Night | © Peter Nestler
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Colorado

First Light of Dawn on Waterfall and River | © Thomas Horton
Fall Creek, Swan Valley, Idaho

Beaver Pond Reflections in Autumn | © George Sanker
Acadia National Park, Maine

Dawnrise | © Geoffrey Schmid
Mount St. Helens National Monument, Washington

Nevada Falls | © Jill Mudge
Slot Canyon, Zion National Park, Utah

Showcase: TOP 250
TOP 250: Showcase

Maligne Lake | © Robert Rommel
Jasper National Park, Alberta, Canada

Northern Lights | © Deborah Kozura
Iceland

Avalanche Canyon | © Richard Sandford
Glacier National Park, Montana

Herbert’s Last Stand | © Peter Nestler
Juneau, Alaska

Ice Chunks Melting in the Morning Sun | © Susan Dykstra
Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada

Showcase: TOP 250

Red Mangrove Silhouette in Fog | © Constance Mier
Biscayne Bay, Florida

By the Light of the Moon | © Dave Hattori
Bonsai Rock, Lake Tahoe, Nevada

Spring Thaw | © Roy Swoboda
Great Plains, Nebraska
Aerial Artistry

by Jason Krause

“A lot of people don’t know how to use a camera but can fly a drone. Someone who can do both will have a huge advantage.”

AERIAL ARTISTRY

“Getting a picture of a whale means sitting for hour after hour in a kayak, day after day, waiting for them to approach,” she says. “It’s an awesome experience, but you have to be so lucky and so many things have to go right to even have a chance to get a good picture.”

Then, in 2014, she discovered drone photography. Before drones with high-definition cameras became available, helicopters were the only available option for taking overhead photos. These are loud, formidable machines whose downwash not only frightens animals but creates visible waves in water. But drones allowed Garlington to approach the whales without disturbing the animals as they migrated. “The whales don’t seem to notice the drones flying over, and I have the time I need to line up the shot,” she says.

Even though drones provide nature photographers with a powerful new tool for capturing animals in their environment, drone photographers face special challenges. Drones are not allowed to fly in many places, and Garlington has had to partner with marine biologists who have special permits that allow her to fly in marine sanctuaries. The scientists keep most of the photos for their research, while Garlington keeps the ones with aesthetic appeal.

But with her drones, Garlington says she can capture high-definition shots that are impossible otherwise, like the overhead picture of a mother whale tending to her calf. “It’s not a flying machine, but a 3D camera,” says Garlington, who is the co-founder of the DII Aerial Photography Academy. “It is essentially a tripod you can put anywhere in the sky around your subject.”

LEARNING TO FLY

Like Garlington, Kara Murphy was a professional photographer before discovering drone photography. She worked for many years photographing concerts and live events, but after several years realized the market was saturated. “I was bored with photography because everyone in the pit was getting the same angle I was,” she says. “Drones were a whole new way to approach photography. Plus, there is simply more money in drone photography.”

While drone photography is potentially lucrative, the startup costs and risks associated with it can be daunting. Murphy says the most important rule of drone photography is “Two drones equals one, and one drone equals none.” By this, she simply means that drone technology is still so buggy and prone to failure that photographers need to have backup plans if a drone fails. “It takes courage to do this, because you will face a catastrophe at some point,” says Murphy. “Drones are simply not 100 percent reliable. If you are on a job and the drone won’t take off, you can’t just say to the client, ‘I guess we’re not flying today.’”

Murphy says she has lost two drones in her time as a drone photographer. Garlington says she has yet to lose a drone, but still takes two with her to Hawaii each year when shooting whales, and has a third back home which her husband can mail to her if the first two are lost.

In order to minimize the risks, Mike Bishop, a drone photographer and filmmaker, says he researches a topographic maps and other resources to assess where good places to land and take off are, and to identify potential hazards and any no-fly zones in the vicinity. “These key variables must be accounted for before your drone takes to the skies,” he says. “It’s always good to have a backup drone if you can.”

It also pays to have insurance. In the U.S., insurance is not required for recreational or commercial drone use. In Canada, though, if you’re operating commercially you must be covered for at least $100,000 liability. Murphy says she carries $1 million in liability insurance whenever she flies. For photographers who don’t fly regularly, Verifly offers on-demand, drone insurance which can be paid for through an app immediately before a flight.

GETTING A DRONE LICENSE

Flying a drone professionally may mean becoming certified as an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) pilot. While anyone can fly a drone without a license, professionals recommend getting certified before starting a drone business. In June of 2016, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced rules for drones, which became effective in August 2016. The new rule, known as Part 107, provides the first national regulations for commercial operation of unmanned aircraft systems under 55 pounds. “When you get an FAA drone license, it can get you out of situations where someone asks, ‘Do you have a permit for that thing?’” says Bishop. “You can say ‘Yes I do,’ and show them your license.”

Murphy says she put off getting certified until she was offered a lucrative job filming video footage in San Francisco. “Certification is especially important if you want to get paid for your drone photography,” she says. “It is illegal to get paid for work done while flying a drone unless you are certified. Even if someone buys you a beer in exchange for a photo, that is considered commercial operation of a drone.”

Another harsh fact of life for drone photographers is that many of the best spots for shooting are off-limits. Most notably, drones are forbidden in many national parks in the United States. That’s because drones have been lost in the Grand Canyon, flown into geysers in Yellowstone, and even bounced off Abraham Lincoln’s face on Mount Rushmore. In response to these and other incidents, the U.S. National Park Service released a memorandum in 2014 prohibiting the launch, operation, and landing of unmanned drones in national parks. This restriction is still in place in many parks.
However, it is possible to get permission to fly even in places that explicitly forbid drone flights. First, check a park’s website to see if there is a designated drone flight zone. There's a chance it does, although it is rarely the most picturesque location. Contact the park’s superintendent for permission to fly in other locations. The park is under no obligation to allow your flight, but if you can offer up specific information — when you will arrive, where and where you will fly, for how long, and what you hope to capture, they may grant permission.

The penalty for flying without permission is a misdemeanor charge punishable with up to six months in jail and/or a $5,000 fine. When flying internationally, some countries such as Nicaragua, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia have such onerous restrictions that flying drones legally is almost impossible. "The limiting factors right now are really regulations; it has become a lot more difficult to legally fly in some areas, and some countries have outright banned drones," says Bishop. "Always look into local regulations before traveling."

If you want to know when and where it is permissible to fly, there are several useful apps. AirMap and the FAA's BlueFly are free downloads which tell you what airspace restrictions exist in an area as well as identify any controlled airspace.

Airspace falls into two broad categories, controlled and uncontrolled. Controlled airspace ranges from Class A to Class G. Classification like Class B, C, and D surround airports and extend out several miles depending on the size of an airport. Class G airspace is uncontrolled and no restrictions exist. Airspace restrictions may be placed around military installations, power plants, or for emergencies or special circumstances like a forest fire or if the President of the United States is visiting a particular city. "Airspace restrictions can be a big problem, depending on where you are in the country," says Murphy. "Of course, if you are Part 107 certified, it is possible to get waivers, as long as you are willing to jump through a lot of hoops."

UP IN THE AIR

Of course, drone photography is still photography, and the same skills that work on terra firma apply to shots taken from the air. "Very few people who jump onto the drone photography bandwagon really know how to take good photos," Murphy says. "A lot of people don’t know how to use a camera but can fly a drone. Someone who can do both has a huge advantage."

Getting a perfect shot is difficult with a drone, especially if wind buffets the drone, propellers or another obstruction get into a shot, or if atmospheric conditions change while in the air. Murphy says that shooting flat is especially important in drone photography as it provides more ability to improve photos in post processing. "In drone photography, it is especially important to get as much information onto your memory card as possible," she says.

To start, shoot in D-Log or RAW mode (depending on the type of drone) to maintain dynamic range. Your image retains greater levels of detail that allow you more flexibility in the post-processing phase. For bright or sunny conditions, make sure you’re using a neutral density filter to slow the shutter speed since most drone cameras have a fixed aperture.

Murphy and Garlington say they try to overshoot when out in the field, knowing that many of the photos will be compromised somehow. And while software can help make good images better, it isn’t a cure-all for pre-production mistakes. It’s imperative to get the settings in your drone camera adjusted properly before you take off. Otherwise, you may not be able to fix common issues such as graininess or overexposure without compromising the overall quality of your pictures.
Chinese drone maker DJI is the dominant manufacturer of both consumer and commercial drones. Its newest professional drone, the Phantom 4 Pro, was made with photographers in mind. Garlington says the company consulted her and business partner Randy Braun about what photographers wanted from a drone platform. “We gave them a wishlist of what we wanted to see, but I thought they would laugh it off,” she says. “But when the drone came out, it had pretty much everything we asked for.”

Unfortunately, the technology is advancing so rapidly that drones become obsolete quickly. “It really pays to keep upgrading and investing in the latest drone technology right now,” says Murphy. “The Phantom 3 quality is just not the same as the Phantom 4. The sensor is just not as large and some of the newer features are worth the investment.”

In addition to buying multiple drones, a photographer will need to invest in a number of important peripherals and other gear. For example, Murphy recommends pilots buy a PolarPro or similar backpack for taking drones into the wild. In addition to a professional-grade photography drone, which can cost $1,500, Murphy says every photographer will need a packet of ND filters (4, 8, and 16, if filming) to cut down on glare, for about $99. In addition, at least 5 drone batteries ($100 - $169 a piece) and a portable charger ($214) will help keep a drone in the air for a longer time.

While the DJI Phantom 4 Pro is the industry leader right now, Yuneec and other makers offer similarly capable photography drones. In addition, the DJI Mavic is a smaller, lighter drone that might be useful for hobbyists or beginning drone photographers. However, any drone you buy today will almost certainly be obsolete in the near future as there is still plenty of room for technical advancements. The image quality will continue to improve as well as size and portability. Bishop has one particular wish for drone technology. “I would personally like to see a near silent drone,” he says. “I feel like without the loud sound they make it would become a lot less threatening and annoying to people.”
I first came upon the grey crowned crane when visiting the Masai Mara in Kenya in 1994. This composite is part of my Envisioning Habitat series and strives to show the elegance, wonder and beauty of these magnificent birds. The image of Mt. Kenya in the background seemed to be the perfect landscape with which to frame the primitive and ethereal nature of their incredible world. Using her classical training in the arts and a newfound interest in 21st century tools, Medow layers her photographs, weaving them together to create visual narratives. Her work entices the viewer to enter the natural world and envision her wild birds in imaginary and real environments. Since first exhibiting her work in 2006, Medow has received many accolades and her work is held in many private collections. There have been numerous articles written about her work. Medow hopes that by embracing her hyper-real bird images, her audience will also create more space for birds living on our planet and be mindful of the fragility and beauty of life itself. Her work can be viewed at cherylmedow.com.

Devils Tower has always been on my ‘bucket list’ of places to see and photograph. Last August I finally had the opportunity to spend a few days in Wyoming to experience this amazing geological feature. I was hoping for some beautiful clouds to showcase the tower, but smoke from recent wildfires had cast a pall on the scene. As I drove around the tower, I became entranced by the gorgeous golden grass in the foreground. I took a straight shot showcasing the grass, and I used a phone app to create an ‘eye’ with the tower at the center of the shot. I made some final adjustments on the computer to finish the image. Cahill is retired and pursues her passion for nature photography full time. She believes that a deep connection with nature is vital to health and well-being. She hopes her images might awaken a reverence and curiosity about nature in others. Cahill has been published in NANPA Expressions multiple times and was the Grand Prize winner of the Audubon photo contest in 2012.
Supermoon Eclipse | © Elijah Goodwin | bestnatureimages.com
Tarrytown, New York

"Millions of photographs were taken of the solar eclipse and here we have a lesser hyped lunar eclipse done very creatively and technically well done. Very impressive presentation."  
—George Lepp

"Great image for the category! Photo display of the eclipse is well done and interesting. Great photo technique."  
—Darrell Gulin

"Very artistic expression of a well shot composite of lunar eclipse!"  
—Roy Toft

Two Snowys | © Cheryl Medow | cherylmedow.com
Lake St. Catherine, Louisiana

"This image caught my eye immediately. I knew it wasn’t a ‘pure’ photograph, but I didn’t care. So well done in all respects. It reminds me of an Audubon painting!"  
—George Lepp

"Seamless rendering of photography and computer artistry! Leaves one pondering ‘just how did they do this!’ Flawless synergy between photography and artistic creation on the computer."  
—Roy Toft

"I just love this image in the Altered Reality category. The snowy egrets worked so well with a backdrop of stars. The technique in working this image is so distinctive!"  
—Darrell Gulin

"Great image for the category! Photo display of the eclipse is well done and interesting. Great photo technique."  
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—Darrell Gulin
**TOP 100: Showcase**

Kori Bustard with Zebras \ © Cheryl Medow
Laikipia, Kenya

Composite Image of Ermine Leaping Over Snow \ © Carl Henry
Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

Papyrus in Bicolor Background \ © Anne Grimes
Ayden, North Carolina

Multiple Exposure Tilt \ © Charles Needle
Seattle, Washington
TOP 250: Showcase

Sunflower | © Barbara Adams
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Flamingos at Rio Lagartos | © Cheryl Medow
Rio Lagartos, Yucatan, Mexico

Barred Owl Pair Dreamy Glow | © Erik Hagstrom
Woodinville, Washington

Water Lily Twirl | © Cindy Cone
Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida

January Wolf Moon | © Jim Crotty
Sugarcreek MetroPark, Dayton, Ohio

Solar Eclipse Totality | © Joyce Harman
Little Tennessee River, Tennessee

Pixie Forest in Infrared Faux Color | © Jamie Konarski Davidson
Blue Ridge Parkway, North Carolina

Solar Eclipse | © Joyce Harman
Little Tennessee River, Tennessee

Water Leaf | © Charles Needle
Butchart Gardens, British Columbia, Canada

Painterly View of Great Blue Heron | © Betty Sederquist
Point Reyes, California
TOP 250: Showcase

Aurora Borealis Flipped Image Pano | © Janet MacCausland | Saskatchewan, Canada

Great Blue Heron at Rest | © Cheryl Medow
Viera Wetlands, Florida

Great Egret Preening | © Cheryl Medow
Viera Wetlands, Florida

Lightning Storm Multiple Exposure | © Joyce Harman
Flint Hill, Virginia

Birch Trees Blur in Winter | © Keith Kennedy
Hokkaido, Japan

Snowy Egret and a Pelican | © Cheryl Medow
Malibu, California

Pearl-Spotted Owl | © Cheryl Medow
Linyati, Botswana

Malachite Kingfisher | © Cheryl Medow
Okavango Delta, Botswana

Great Blue Courtship | © Cheryl Medow
Viera Wetlands, Florida

Great Egret Preening | © Cheryl Medow
Viera Wetlands, Florida
A Filmmaker’s Journey

by Kate Fox Kelley

“While the primary value of these video stories is that they’re scientifically, historically, and journalistically accurate, their secondary mission is to inspire contemplation, connection, enhanced perspective, and action.”

TOP 250: Showcase

Spoonbill Ecstasy | © Rona Schwarz
Alligator Farm, St. Augustine, Florida

Sandhill Crane in Flight | © Sandra Zelasko
Point Reyes, California

Solar Eclipse Infinity Interpretation | © Joyce Harman
Little Tennessee River, Tennessee

Grizzly Bear | © Steven Barger
Canada
During the last seven years, I’ve worked as an associate producer of various short-form video content projects on National Geographic News & Digital, as well as for a couple of independent companies. The focus has been on conservation and endangered elements of the natural world. These opportunities allowed me to participate in some of the most meaningful explorations of my life. Telling these stories offered adventure, along with a deeper appreciation for what is primitive and sacred in the natural world.

I have been intrigued by specimens as small as the endangered snail kite and the black-footed ferret, and stopped in my tracks at the wonder and criticality of ecosystems, including the North American prairies, forests, desert scrub, marine wildlife in the Prince William Sound, and the African Savannah. In telling stories of these places, I have a richer understanding of the power of video to tell viewers important stories that help to raise awareness, increase action, and enrich research and education. Connecting with talented scientists, writers, photographers, and artists, who, through their passion for the natural world, and who dedicate their lives to a matter includes the wildlife, as well as the people who are navigating and examining these places, along with the places themselves.

My preference for vacation has evolved into chasing after nature stories, which allows a lot of time in the field. On one occasion, some friends were traveling the entire length of Baja California, Mexico, by foot and stand-up paddleboard. Offering to help take video of their journey, my husband and I traveled by kayak down the Sea of Cortez for nearly ten days. We abandoned the conveniences of civilized shelter and paddled with all of our film and survival gear down the unruly coastline. We had never felt such freedom.

Both video and still photography can tell a rich story. With documentary video, you can introduce a more intimate portrayal of your subject from the perspective of the wildlife and people you are shooting, as well that of the director. The experience becomes more complex, yet gratifying, when working with layers of voiceovers or music scores to enhance the video. Finally, with the large amount of video, there is always the big question around what to leave in and what to take out.

A key aspect of making worthwhile video is to learn how to interview people on camera. Interviews require a good deal of preparation, and a strong grasp of the subject at hand. My most treasured interview to date was with George Schaller, one of the world’s most illustrious field biologists. Although George has a soft-spoken manner, his strong passion for wildlife infuses his home, lifestyle, and purpose. His work as a scientist ties directly to his work as a conservationist. While this interview primarily focused on tigers facing the brink of their extinction in the wild and his work in preserving and protecting the species, I took away from the conversation more than a concern and passion for just this one species. Listening to and reading his work, I recognized that science is the bedrock of conservation, and the accuracy and timelines of scientific data are key. George’s belief is that this data can provide a reliable foundation and to support conservation. The rich details
A payload was finally located after a day's journey. Photo by Kate Kelley.

A cluster of Aspen trees at the top of an unknown mountain in the San Juan mountain range. This is the area where John Flaig's payload vicinity at 9,300 feet in the foothills of the San Juan mountain range. After nearly eight hours of infrequent GPS signals, we thought the cameras were lost. When we arrived in the vicinity, we were overjoyed when we located the small box nestled amongst the aspen trees. I'm not sure who was happier, John or me. We had cameras intact that contained scientifically curated data and stunning photos from space. Best of all, we had a great story.

**THE SOUND**

Crouched in the hull of a 36-foot sailboat named Sweet Baboo, I lay among heavy camera cases crashing down on me. It was nearly a ten-hour sail from Seward, Alaska, to our destination, the Prince William Sound. We were fighting 40-foot waves and hails in order to beat a storm that could potentially render our journey a failure. This was my first experience on a sailboat, and against the advice of the captain to come out on the deck for fresh air in the freezing rain, I panicked and hid inside the cabin, desperate to make the pain of my seasickness and fear of capsizing go away.

Sweet Baboo persevered and we ended up in one of the most enchanting ecosystems I had ever laid eyes on. The beauty of this temperate archipelago east of the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska, a flourishing biome containing an abundance of marine wildlife and magnificent glaciers, is hard to imagine unless you see it first-hand. Once the storm cleared, we were sailing alongside bobbing sea otters with paws full of mussels and pups nestled on their mothers’ bellies.

Before releasing a Styrofoam cooler into the atmosphere, John filled it with a GPS tracker, a GoPro Hero 3+ with external battery pack and microphone, a 28mm SMC manual focus lens, 4 activated heat packs, a Canon PowerShot A4000 IS. This kit allowed John to capture a new space view of Earth for a fraction of what NASA spends for a similar vantage point.

TOUCHING SPACE

One of my initial assignments as an associate producer was to create a three- to five-minute short film for National Geographic News. Our team was following photographer John Flaig, who has a unique approach to photography in that he captures aerial stills and video of Earth from a weather balloon. This story took us on an unplanned adventure across several states. While not my first time climbing a sizeable mountain, it was my first time climbing to 9,000 feet as part of my job.

The cooler had traveled over 300 miles after being released near Valle, Arizona, in the open desert off an unpaved road. After nearly eight hours of infrequent GPS signals, we thought the cameras were lost. When we arrived in the vicinity, we were overjoyed when we located the small box nestled amongst the aspen trees.

In order to study the catastrophic Exxon Valdez oil spill that occurred nearly 30 years ago, National Geographic gave the green light for our team to create a three-part digital story documenting the aftermath of the spill.

We spent a week in the sound, both following Whale 1 and meeting with members of the community who were also environmental activists and lovers of the sound. We also spent a good portion of our time searching for evidence of residual contamination to the environment. On the northern edge of Knight Island, waiting for the tide to recede, we marveled at the large spawing salmon swimming up a nearby stream, eagles and marbled murrelets above, tiny crustations, barnacles and seaweed. Sadly, at nightfall after the tide receded, we uncovered pockets of oil still residue under rocks amongst the food chain we watched earlier in the daylight.

**TRUE SOLDIERS FOR ENVIRONMENTALISM**

Answering a call for a short film on the significant work being done by the park rangers in Akagera National Park, I had the opportunity to travel to Rwanda. Managed by the local government in conjunction with the conservation organization, African Parks, Akagera is one of the continent’s largest and most diverse national parks. Upon our visit in 2014, the park had plans to revive the population of lion and rhino into its natural habitat. Displaced refugees fleeing genocide in 1994 had pushed these animals out of their homes. The park was abandoned after the civil war, and refugees started taking over the protected land for cattle farming. The animals were not only displaced, they were poached for food.
and black market sales. The Rwandan government slowly started taking the park back during the country's recovery from genocide. Lions and rhinos are reportedly thriving after their reintroduction in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Today, Akagera is a "Big Five" national park, meaning that within it live lion, buffalo, leopard, elephant, and rhino. Our mission in Akagera was to understand and capture video highlighting the lives of the park rangers who protect the park from big game poachers. Fully operationalized and armed, this group resembles militarized soldiers more than park rangers one might see in our beloved Yellowstone. We were given unlimited access to the men's camp, occupied by about 30 of the rangers. This camp was not temporary quarters for the guards, but their home. These men were on duty, and they risked their lives out of dedication to conserve this park and the creatures within it.

Telling the stories of these soldiers via film entailed conducting interviews and shooting footage of the surrounding majestic area. The story enabled many people to understand the cause the soldiers on, along with the state of endangered wildlife in this part of the world. Through interviews, these men made it clear that they were here not just as their job, but because they had a passion for protecting this park and the species within it.

Later screened in New York City at the Explorers Club, this film helped raise nearly a quarter of a million dollars for preserving the park and supporting Akagera Park rangers.

CODA
While the primary value of these video stories is that they're scientifically, historically, and journalistically accurate, their underlying mission is to inspire contemplation, connection, enhanced perspective, and action.

To master the craft of documentary filmmaking, particularly field production, one must have a thorough understanding of the equipment used for production, as well as how to enable yourself and your equipment to survive the harsh, sometimes brutal, outdoor environment. Preparation must involve both considerations about the elements along with subject matter. If physical elements and ability to maneuver technical equipment are not considered ahead of time, you run a significant risk of becoming too fixated on navigating the environment and your equipment, failing to take in your surroundings, and not focusing on the story you’re trying to tell. Immense investigation and research on our story objectives are critical to capturing an accurate and influential perspective for the audience. Trudging, observing, reading, writing, timely filming and waking up at odd hours to catch the perfect light helped me develop a deeper passion for exploration and connection to the natural world, and a stronger thirst for telling stories that promote the work people are doing to protect what is wild.
While driving around on an overcast day, I found a beautiful white-tailed kite perched in a tree. Setting up my lens on a tripod at a distance not to disturb the bird, I photographed what turned out to be a magical event. As a calling male kite flew toward the female, she would call back and fly out to meet him where they performed this magical duet and exchanged the rodent offering. I watched this event happen several times during my morning.

Sunderland grew up shooting film and switched to digital about 12 years ago. Since then, Kevan has become a full-time traveling wildlife photographer. His images have appeared in Wild Bird, Audubon, Nature’s Best Photography and numerous state magazines. They have also been shown in galleries throughout South Florida including Everglades National Park and J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge. His images can also be seen at sunderlandwildlife.com, on flickr (flickr.com/photos/35303070@N02/) or on Facebook (facebook.com/kevan.sunderland). This image was taken with a Canon EOS-1Dx, EF800 mm f/5.6L IS USM, f/6.3, 1/1250 sec., ISO 500.

“Watching the red-footed boobies swoop down during the fleeting moments that the flying fish leap out of the water was incredible. After spending days out on deck as we sailed across the Indian Ocean, I got lucky with calm early morning conditions when the fish were flying and the birds hunting. Out of all the images I took, I got quite a few of the boobies catching the fish but this one really caught my eye, showing that moment before capture. This image was taken near the Amirante Island Group, Seychelles, using a Canon 5D Mk III with Canon 300mm f/2.8 lens with 1.4x teleconverter, f/9 at 1/1600 sec., at ISO 640.”

Forbes managed to escape her Silicon Valley job about six years ago to follow her passion of nature photography full time. She is based in Redwood City, California, but works as part of the expedition staff on small ships around the world, teaching photography and guiding. You can find her images at sueforbesphotography.com.

Sue Forbes
As nature photographers we strive to catch the decisive moment when the action is at its peak. Here is a perfect example. Motor drives/fast frame rates are helping us, but this quail photograph is special."

—George Lepp

"Raw... gritty... power... aggression... just perfect! My kind of image!"

—Roy Toft

"The dust, action, composition, backdrop, combined to make a great image."

—Darrell Gulin

"Action, behavior, natural history, and excellent execution make this raptor image special. We see more and more of these exceptional images as our tools improve."

—George Lepp

"Raptors... behavior, in flight, tack sharp... YES! This is a winner!"

—Roy Toft

"This caught my eye right away in judging the bird category. Sharp, action, simple background, interesting, caught the moment."

—Darrell Gulin
TOP 100: Showcase

Atlantic Puffin | © Michael Milicia
Grímsey Island, Iceland

Royal Terns | © Peter Brannon
St. Petersburg, Florida

Whooper Swan | © Keith Kennedy
Kushiro, Japan

Showcase: TOP 100

Short-Billed Dowitcher with Sandworm | © Peter Brannon
St. Petersburg, Florida

Bald Eagles | © Arash Hazeghi
Haines, Alaska
**TOP 100: Showcase**

- **Least Bittern with Fish** | © Peter Brannon
  Lakeland, Florida

- **Northern Gannet Close-Up** | © William Pohley
  Bonaventure Island, Quebec, Canada

- **Marsh Tit Nibbling Icicle** | © Diana Rebman
  Hokkaido, Japan

- **Great Hornbill** | © Peter Balunek
  Kaziranga, India

- **Horned Puffin Walks on Water** | © Aaron Baggenstos
  Lake Clark National Park, Alaska

**Showcase: TOP 100**

- **Greater Prairie Chickens Sparring** | © Rona Schwarz
  Burchard, Nebraska

- **Least Bittern with Fish** | © Peter Brannon
  Lakeland, Florida

- **Great Hornbill** | © Peter Balunek
  Kaziranga, India
TOP 100: Showcase

King Penguins | © Jane Scott Norris
Volunteer Point, Falkland Islands

Great Kiskadee and Green Jay | © Melody Lytle
Laguna Seca Ranch, Texas

Showcase: TOP 100

A Hamerkop Prepares His Meal | © Barbara Fleming
Mkuzi Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Leaping Gentoo Penguin | © Indranil Sircar
Sea Lion Island, Falkland Islands
Acorn Woodpeckers Fighting  | © William Pohley
Tucson, Arizona

Burrowing Owlets  | © Marina Scarr
Cape Coral, Florida

Osprey with Needlefish  | © Carol Grenier
Blue Lake, Florida

Limpkin Feeding  | © Marina Scarr
Myakka River State Park, Florida

Falcons Mid-Air Food Exchange & Live Bird  | © Thanh Tran
California

Tuscon, Arizona

Myakka River State Park, Florida
Western Grebes
Building Their Nest
© Karen Schuenemann
Irvine, California

Reddish Egret with Fish
© Peter Brannon
St. Petersburg, Florida

Snowy Owl
© Jim Urbach
Canada

Ascension
© Zeralda LaGrange
Lake Martin, Louisiana
TOP 250: Showcase

Great Gray Owl
© Michael Milicia
Montreal, Quebec

Late Arrival at the Clay Lick
© Peter Cavanagh
Tambopata River, Peru

Dalmatian Pelican
© Denise Ippolito
Lake Kerkini, Greece

Black-necked Stilts Mating
© Marina Scarr
Celery Fields, Florida

Common Terns
© Tom Reichert
Long Island, New York

American Avocets in Flight
© Kevin Barry
Salton Sea, California

Gentoo Penguins Porpoising Past An Iceberg
© Sue Forbes
Cuverville Island, Antarctic Peninsula

Western Grebes Grass Dance Courting Ritual
© Carol Grenier
Pyramid Lake, Nevada

Great Blue Heron in Surf
© Sean Fitzgerald
Galveston Island State Park, Texas

Sage Grouse
© Lance Carter
Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming
TOP 250: Showcase

Sandhill Cranes at First Light  | © Christopher Ciccone
Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico

Barred Owlet - Hangin’ In There  | © Christopher Ciccone
Middlesex County, Massachusetts

American Oystercatcher Feeding Young Chick  | © Teri Franzen
Nickerson Beach, Long Island, New York

Golden-Fronted Woodpecker Feeding Young  | © Cindy Goeddel
Belize

Elegant Terns Take Over Beach  | © Rick Derevan
Cayucos, California

Singing Dickcissel at Sunrise  | © Daniel Grossi
Cleveland, Ohio

Cardinal on Saguaro Skeleton  | © Margaret Larkin
Tucson, Arizona

Greater Prairie Chicken in Flight  | © Rona Schwarz
Burchard, Nebraska

Juvenile Burrowing Owl  | © Arash Hazeghi
Riverside, California

Red-Bellied Woodpecker  | © Peter Brannon
St. Petersburg, Florida

Nickerson Beach, Long Island, New York

Elegant Terns Take Over Beach

Cayucos, California

Showcase: TOP 250
TOP 250: Showcase

Green Hermit | © Ann Gillis
Costa Rica

Ross Geese | © Irene Reti
Merced National Wildlife Refuge, California

Common Loon | © Ann Gillis
Michigan

Showcase: TOP 250

Roadrunner Chasing Dove | © Wendy Kaveney
Buckeye, Arizona

Wood Duck with Duckling | © Peter Brannon
Zephyrhills, Florida

Bald Eagles: Clash of the Talons | © Aaron Baggenstos
Skagit Valley, Washington

Indigo Bunting on Weigela Blossoms | © Sandra Rothenberg
Warren, Pennsylvania

Tufted Puffin After Take-Off | © Gary Paige
Kodiak Island, Alaska

Peregrine Falcon Juveniles | © Larry Moskovitz
Torrey Pines, California

Short-Eared Owl in Winter Habitat | © Arash Hazeghi
Vancouver Delta, British Columbia

Ross Geese | © Irene Reti
Merced National Wildlife Refuge, California

Common Loon | © Ann Gillis
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Tufted Puffin After Take-Off | © Gary Paige
Kodiak Island, Alaska

Peregrine Falcon Juveniles | © Larry Moskovitz
Torrey Pines, California
**TOP 250: Showcase**

- **Great Egret in Flight** | © Elijah Goodwin  
  St. Augustine, Florida

- **Lunar Landing** (Brandt’s Cormorant) | © Lisa Langell  
  La Jolla, California

- **Steller’s Sea Eagle** | © Keith Kennedy  
  Hokkaido, Japan

- **Female House Finch Building a Nest** | © Wendy Kaveney  
  Buckeye, Arizona

- **Braving the Storm** | © Lee Levin-Friend  
  Emmaus, Pennsylvania

- **Great Gray Owl Hover Hunting** (No Baiting!) | © Christopher Ciccone  
  Île Saint-Bernard de Châteauguay, Quebec

- **Great Egret in Flight** | © Elijah Goodwin  
  St. Augustine, Florida

- **Royal Tern - Bathing** | © Tim Boyer  
  Mission Bay, California

- **Western Grebe Parents Feeding Feathers to Chick** | © Carol Grenier  
  Pyramid Lake, Washoe County, Nevada

- **Purple Gallinule Territory Dispute** | © Stephanie Rossi  
  Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, South Carolina
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