

Stockton Camera Club

The Shutter Tripper November 2018

October Digital Images of the Month



Osprey in Flight

Class A Image of the Month - Sheldon McCormick



50 Shades of Grey

Class AA Image of the Month - Christine Blue



Barn Window - Palouse

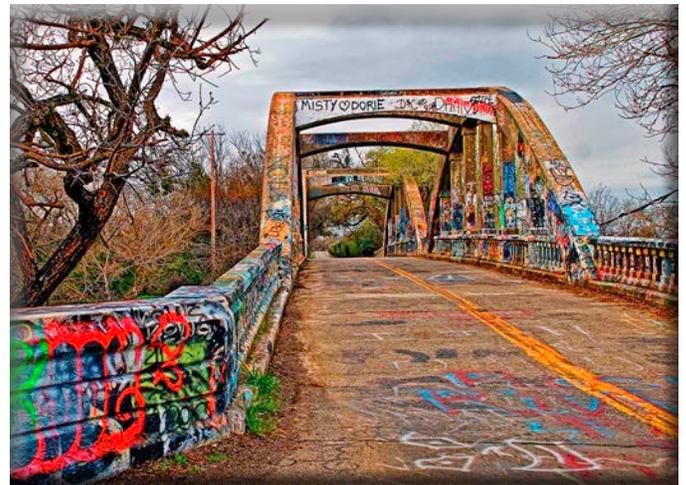
Class AAA Image of the Month - Sharon McLemore

October Print Images of the Month



Coming to a Point

Class A Print of the Month - Wayne Carlson



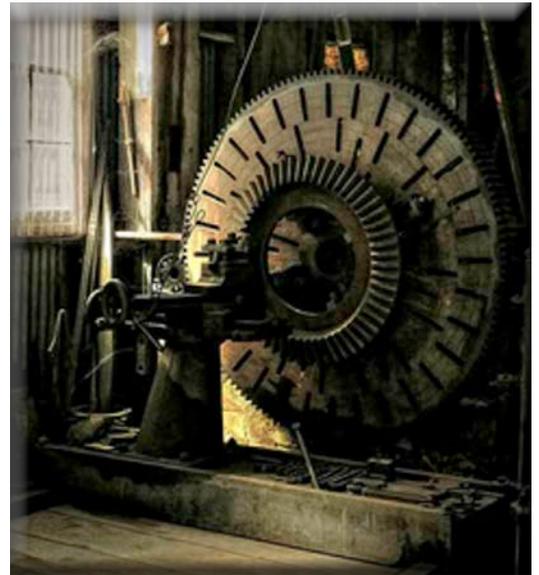
Stevenson Bridge

Class AAA Print of the Month - Joanne Sogsti

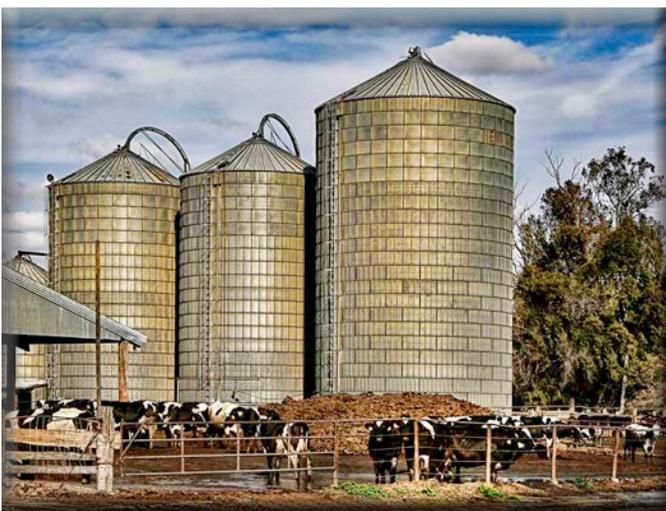
October 10's of the Month



Fawn in Ice Plant
Heide Stover



Foundry Wheel
Sharon McLemore



Got Milk
Em McLaren



Dark Dahlia
Christine Blue



Redwinged Blackbird after Osprey
Heide Stover



Aluminum Rose
Wayne Carlson



Dive into Dahalia
Em McLaren



Night Hunter
Joanne Sogsti



Grey Crowned Crane
Christine Blue

Sandhill Crane Photography Opportunity

Woodbridge Ecological Reserve

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

On October 24th, some of the members of the Camera Club went to the North Unit of the Woodbridge Ecological Reserve to photograph the Cranes at sunset. Doug was one of the docents who helped guide the group. It was great being out there seeing and hearing the Cranes and watching the sunset. Some of the members stayed, and photographed, the full moon rising. Coffee, tea and cookies were available everyone. em McLaren



October Meeting Notes

Heide opened the meeting. Bob Haradee and Leslie Gordon were guests tonight. Brenda DeRoos joined the club.

Heide talked about the trip she, Sharon, and Dean took to attend the PSA conference in Salt Lake City. She said there were interesting workshops during that week and they got to make some great photo shoot stops on the way home.

1. Heide reported that SJVCCC's last competition for the year is next month. The prints for the year-end need to be taken to the Nov. meeting. End of year digital images are due by midnight Nov. 11 and also must have been shown during this last year.

2. She also announced that there are 2 openings left for the Crane Event at Woodbridge but there is no tripod space left. If you would like to go, please contact Doug at: doug_flyfisher@yahoo.com

3. Dean announced that he and Joanne Sogsti both entered the Lodi Community Art Center Show and both won prizes. Congratulations to you both!

4. Wayne donated photo magazines and info on how to do Photo Stacking instructions which he left on the back table for members.

Dean introduced Clifford Oto as this month's judge. Clifford is only one of two photographers at the Stockton Record. Dean said Clifford is an excellent photographer and mentor to others.

PRINT COMPETITION WINNERS FOR OCTOBER

CLASS A "Coming To A Point" by Wayne

CLASS AA No Entries

CLASS AAA "Stevenson Graffiti Bridge" by Joanne

DIGITAL COMPETITION WINNERS FOR OCTOBER

CLASS A "Osprey in Flight" by Sheldon

CLASS AA "50 Shades of Grey" by Christine

CLASS AAA "Barn Window" by Sharon

Congratulations to all the winners!

Please remember that November is PRINTS ONLY and there is no Special Subject for November.

Let me know if there are any corrections or additions to the notes. Thanks, em

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President's Message

November 2018

By Heide Stover

We had a good meeting with Clifford Otto as our judge. He had very good critiques on our prints and images and always expressed his thoughts in a nice coherent fashion. I am sorry that we didn't have more members present. We had a slight glitch with the projector but Wayne figured it out and we were able to see the images on the screen.

We have new members as of the last meeting. Brenda and her husband Chris joined and Brenda showed some of her prints. It is great to have new members get started right away. We also had a couple of guests and I hope that they feel free to come again.

Rich Bullard has moved to Modesto and will be joining the Modesto Camera Club. We will miss you Rich!

Birds are migrating so there should be some good opportunities for interesting bird shots. Get out there and snap away. See you at the next meeting.

A Big Thank You to Our Sponsors!



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2018 Competition Policy

A. GENERAL RULES

1. Only paid-up members may enter club competition.
2. Regular print and digital image competition period: Once each month except January. A competition year is February through December. Current regular meetings are February, March, May, July, September, October and December. The number of meetings may change from time to time at the discretion of the Board of Directors and approval of the general membership as facilities permit. The Annual Awards Dinner will be held in January.
3. A total of four (4) images (all prints, all digital or a combination of both) may be entered each competition month. A total of three (3) images may be entered in the Open Division and a total of one (1) in the Special Subject Division. The number of entries may change from time to time at the discretion of the Board of Directors and the approval of the general membership.
4. Each image will be scored from 6 to 10 points. All prints or digital images receiving 9 or 10 points will be classed as an honor image. The title of each print or digital image entered will be read before being evaluated. The name of the maker will be read for 9-point honor winners. Maker's names will be announced for the 10 point images after the Print & Digital Image-of-the-Month winners are chosen.
5. A print or digital image that does not receive an honor score, may be re-entered one more time in the same division.
6. A print or digital image may be entered in all divisions for which it qualifies; i.e., an honor image in Open may also be entered in the Special Subject Division at another competition. A print or digital image that receives an honor score may not be re-entered in the same division.
7. Any print or digital image that appears to be ineligible for competition or not qualified for a specific division could expect to be challenged. The Competition Vice-President shall decide whether or not the image is acceptable.
8. The exhibitor must have exposed each negative, slide or digital image entered. All images submitted for judging must be the work of the photographer/maker including the taking of the images and any digital enhancements and/or manipulation of the image. This does not apply to the processing of film or printing by a commercial processor.
9. The same image should not be entered both as a print and a projected digital image in the same competition.
10. In the event of absence or barring unforeseen circumstances, a member may submit make-up prints or digital images for one competition night per competition year; and whenever possible must submit all make-up prints or digital images at the meeting immediately following the month a member failed or was unable to submit the prints or digital images. Make-ups in the Special Subject Division must be the same subject as the month missed. Also, in case of absence a member may assign the responsibility of submitting his or her prints and/or digital images for competition to another member.
11. A club member who serves as judge cannot enter his or her own prints or digital images in the same competition. The judge's make-up prints or digital images can then be entered in another competition during that competition year. This is in addition to the once-a-year make-up provision already

allowed.

12. Prints or digital images may be projected/viewed briefly before the judging of each division if the judge indicates he/she would like a preview.

B. PRINT ENTRY RULES

1. Each print entered must have a completed label attached to the back of the print including; name of maker, title, date entered and Division (Open or Special Subject). The writing or printing on the form must be legible. Labels must be attached on the back of the print in the upper left-hand corner for correct viewing of the print.
2. All prints must be matted or mounted with a total size (including mat board) of no larger than 18" X 24" and no smaller than 8" X 10". Exception: One side of a Panorama Print may be no larger than 36". Prints that are smaller than 5" X 7" will not be accepted. The maker's name must not appear on the viewing surface of the image. Framed prints shall not be entered.
3. Prints accompanied by entry forms should be submitted no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the regular monthly meeting.
4. Prints receiving a score of 10 points, in each class, will be regrouped and judged for selection for the Print-of-the-Month honors. Print-of-the-Month honors will be given in Class A, AA & AAA.

C. DIGITAL IMAGE ENTRY RULES

1. Digital images must be submitted in a format and by the deadline specified by the Competition Vice-President. Digital images may be submitted by email, mailed (CD) or delivered (CD) to the Competition Vice-President. Definition of Digital Image: An image taken with a digital camera, a negative, slide or print scanned into the computer and processed digitally.
2. Images must be in a format compatible with the projector. The key thing to keep in mind when formatting photos for submission is that the projector we use in the competition has a (maximum) resolution of 1400 x 1050 pixels. This means that any photo that exceeds this size in either dimension, could end-up being cropped by the projector. In other words: the image width cannot be more than 1400 pixels and the image height cannot be more than 1050 pixels. If your image is horizontal, only change the width to 1400, if your image is vertical, only change the height to 1050. Do not change both. Down-sizing the image from the "native" resolution coming out of your camera also significantly reduces the file size. This helps when emailing the files and takes-up less space on our hard-drives.
3. The maker's name, title of image, date entered and division (Open or Special Subject) must be included as the title of the image. When you have finished re-sizing your image save your image with a new title. For example do a Save as: Smith Sunrise Splendor 05-15 O.jpeg. (O-Open or SS-Special Subject). Specify whether you're Beginner, Advanced or Very Advanced.
4. Digital Images receiving a score of 10 points, in each class, will be regrouped and judged for selection for the Digital Image-of-the-Month honors. Digital Image-of-the-Month honors will be given in Class A, AA & AAA.

Stockton Camera Club
October 2018 Competition Standing
Congratulations to all the winners!!!

Clifford Oto, the photographer for The Record, viewed a total of 40 prints and digital images for a average score of 9.025

Print of the Month Class A – Coming to a Point by Wayne Carlson

Print of the Month Class AA – None

Print of the Month Class AAA – Stevenson Graffiti Bridge by Joanne Sogsti

Digital image of the Month Class A – Osprey in Flight by Sheldon McCormick

Digital Image of the Month Class AA – 50 Shades of Grey by Christine Blue

Digital Image of the Month Class AAA – Barn Window, Palouse by Sharon McLemore

Please check out the website, <http://www.stockton-cameraclub.com/home.html>

Class A Standings	TOTAL	OPEN	SS	FEB	MAR	MAY	JUN	JULY	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Wayne Carlson	264	215	49	37	39	39	35	39	38	37	0	0
Sheldon McCormick	253	198	55	36	35	38	38	37	34	35	0	0
Jim Cahill	90	80	10	25	0	38	27	0	0	0	0	0
Ron Wetherell	75	75	0	27	0	19	0	29	0	0	0	0
Lanny Brown	56	36	20	0	10	18	18	10	0	0	0	0
Brenda DeRoos	32	23	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	0
Monica Hoeft	26	26	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Class AA Standing	TOTAL	OPEN	SS	FEB	MAR	MAY	JUN	JULY	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Em McLaren	268	210	58	39	38	38	38	39	38	38	0	0
Heide Stover	263	208	55	39	39	37	37	37	37	37	0	0
Elizabeth Parrish	252	199	53	36	34	38	37	38	35	34	0	0
Paul Chapman	214	167	47	34	37	36	34	38	35	0	0	0
Christine Blue	229	172	57	37	39	38	0	39	37	39	0	0
Richard Bullard	111	93	18	0	37	36	38	0	0	0	0	0
Stan Sogsti	37	28	9	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ed Richter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Class AAA Standing	TOTAL	OPEN	SS	FEB	MAR	MAY	JUN	JULY	SEPT	OCT	Nov	DEC
Dean Taylor	268	211	57	39	39	39	39	38	38	36	0	0
Joanne Sogsti	268	210	58	39	37	39	39	40	37	37	0	0
Sharon McLemore	264	206	58	38	39	39	37	38	37	36	0	0
Doug Ridgway	156	126	30	39	39	0	0	39	39	0	0	0
Trey Steinhart	151	115	36	37	37	37	0	40	0	0	0	0
Susanne Nichols	60	30	30	0	20	20	0	0	20	0	0	0

2018 Calendar of Events

Every 3rd Thursday (Except April, June & Aug) 6:30 PM	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	Membership Meeting Contact Heide Stover h1stover@aol.com
Thursday November 15	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	November General Meeting Prints only with no special subject
Thursday December 20	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	December General Meeting Special Subject - Before (Unprocessed) And After (Processed) Photo

2019 Calendar of Events

Thursday January 17	TBA	Annual Banquet
Thursday February 21	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	February General Meeting Special Subject - Guilty Pleasure
Thursday March 21	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	March General Meeting Special Subject - Focus On One Color
April	TBA	April Workshop/Photo Opportunity
Thursday May 16	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	May General Meeting Special Subject - Backlit
Thursday June 20	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	June General Meeting Prints only with no special subject
Thursday July 18	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	July General Meeting Special Subject - Gates/Fences

When shooting in autumn, the polarizer, neutral-density and grad ND filters are indispensable for achieving stunning imagery



Early-morning light showcases the stunning autumn colors along the Dallas Divide in Colorado. Filter used: Singh-Ray LB ColorCombo Polarizer.



Late autumn season in the Tombstone Range of the Yukon, as pink pastels reflect onto the landscape. Filter used: Singh-Ray LB ColorCombo Polarizer.

When it comes to color and impact, fall is full of opportunity. The season is an amazing time to create mood with color while capturing landscapes as they transform before one's eyes. Trying to create an image I'm particularly passionate about, however—especially in autumn—can be challenging.

When shooting fall colors, there are filters that I never leave home without: a polarizer and neutral density (ND) filter. These filters overcome obstacles that otherwise would be impossible to correct without using a filter, even digitally. Polarizers and neutral density filters are indispensable in many of these photographic situations.

A third filter I recommend is the graduated neutral density (grad ND) filter. It's basically a standard neutral density filter but only covers a portion of the frame. The darker portion is used to reduce light in the brighter part of a scene, preventing it from being overexposed. This allows the camera to expose properly for the area that is not darkened and to balance the overall exposure.

Filters For Fall Color: The Polarizer

The most important of the filters for fall color is the polarizer. Useable in all facets of nature photography, this filter can make a significant improvement to your images. The polarizer deepens the color of blue skies, provides more saturated colors, and reduces glare and reflections in bright or sunny conditions. Concerning fall foliage, the polarizer eliminates glare on leaves and flowers. It intensifies and saturates color in wet foliage and adds color density to blue or hazy skies.

One additional benefit of using a polarizer is that it cuts through the haze in the atmosphere. This added clarity allows subjects to stand out more against the deeper tones of the sky, so that fall foliage looks even more pronounced.

When light reflects off a shiny surface, it becomes polarized. When we see this reflection, from the surface of water, for example, we call it glare. A polarizer rotated to the correct position will block or absorb most of the reflected glare while letting light polarized perpendicular to the reflection to pass through. This is achieved by using a specialized foil positioned between two sheets of glass. The front part of this filter can be rotated, altering the

amount of polarized light that is blocked out by the filter. A simple rotation of the front glass allows the photographer to dial in the amount of effect desired in the image.

To do this properly, position the polarizer on the lens and rotate slowly while looking through the camera's viewfinder. Choosing where to stop the rotation is a personal choice, but you want to maximize the effect up to the point where it begins to look unrealistic. For example, when the scene includes blue skies, rotate the polarizer only until you get deep, rich blues. If over rotated, the blues can turn into an unrealistic darker tone, especially in higher elevations. To maximize the potential of a polarizer, keep the sun at a right angle to the camera. Face the sun and hold your hands out to your sides; where your arms are pointing are the directions where the polarizer will work the best. A 90-degree angle to the sun is optimal because this is the location of the most polarized light in the sky.

One challenge many photographers have is determining the best time to use a polarizer. It's effective in many situations, but if

you're unsure when to use a polarizer, hold it up and look through it with your eye instead of screwing it onto the lens. This is a quick way to see if the polarizer is having any effect. In the fall, the polarizer is best utilized just before midday, when conditions are brighter. The increased brightness adds extra contrast to the scene and cuts through the haze, especially when shooting through a telephoto lens. Photographing fall color on sunny days can add additional depth in the image when including the sky in your compositions, especially when contrasted against the vibrant colors of fall.

In addition to deepening blue skies, the most understated reason for using the polarizer is to reduce glare and reflections. This is important because once glare is present in an image, no amount of post processing can undo the damage. That glare reduces the color saturation in images, giving them a flat, washed-out appearance. The polarizer alters this by blocking out the polarized light, enhancing color saturation.

Reflections can be an issue without a polarizer as well. This is evident in scenes that contain water. Nature photography in fall often includes elements such as creeks and lakes, which cause unwanted surface reflections. I like to take images of colorful foliage against the backdrop of the darker water. This would be impossible without a polarizer. This filter also reduces the glare off darker rocks, which allows the color of the foliage to stand out even more. Having the ability to dial in a certain amount of polarized light allows each photographer to create a sense of style that's uniquely his or her own.

Over the last few years, polarizers have been really improving in terms of color rendition, build and size. They are now designed and built lighter than ever before. Options now include a slim mount with the ability to screw on a second filter such as an ND. They are also designed to allow more light into the camera. In the past, using a polarizer would block two stops of light. Changes to the design in new polarizers have reduced that down to one-stop of light. This means that more light reaches the camera sensor thus allowing increased shutter speeds or lower ISOs. Improvements to the optical glass and coatings within the filter have made them stronger and more resistant to scratching while the glass has become clearer, reducing glare. The result is a sharper image overall.

Features such as color enhancement and color balance can be combined into one filter to give the maximum benefit for fall color photos. Color-intensifying filters work by using a specialized optical glass known as "didymium" glass. The glass accentuates a portion of the color spectrum while suppressing others. An intensifier that enhances color saturation in the red-orange area of the color spectrum increases those colors without affecting the overall color balance of the image, making it ideal for autumn foliage. One of the key signatures to a stunning autumn image is having an image with strong colors in the warm tones without affecting the neutral and white colors.



Sun breaks through the early-morning mist along the Wenatchee River in Leavenworth, Washington. Filter used: Singh-Ray Mor-Slo ND 5-Stop.

The ND Filter

The use of an ND filter allows for exposure creativity. It encourages the photographer to think outside the box and develop fresh concepts of viewing nature. A neutral density filter is made to reduce the amount of light that reaches the camera's sensor so that a longer exposure is required to achieve an equivalent exposure. The longer exposures enabled by ND filters provide photographers the ability to add a dynamic feel of movement, especially noticeable with subjects like flowing water, which can be a great complement to the brisk colors of fall foliage when contrasted with the blurred effect of moving streams, rapids and water banks. Ideally, to capture this blur, you need to expose the image for at least half a second, but often available ambient light will require a faster shutter speed, even when using the lowest ISO and smallest aperture. This is when it's advisable to use an ND filter to block light from reaching the camera sensor and thus increase the exposure time. Be careful not to increase the exposure too much, though, as this can blow out highlights in the water.

When using an ND filter, I like to use bracketed shots. Taking multiple images with different shutter speeds gives the water a different mood. The longer the shutter speed, the calmer and more tranquil the water will appear. Shorter shutter speeds project movement and action. The overall mood and impact are more dynamic. Textures in the water are defined and create patterns that lead the eye through the image. The use of longer or shorter shutter speeds with ND Filters is a creative choice that defines the impact of your image, depending on the mood you are trying to create.

Because the ND filter is dark, it becomes more difficult to see what you are photographing once the filter is on the lens. It's advisable to compose your image and check that everything is sharp before putting on the ND filter. This is particularly true when using higher stop (denser) ND filters, or when stacking filters. For example, ND filters can even be combined with polarizers—the polarizer reduces the glare and reflection while the ND filter increases exposure time.



A break in early-morning light illuminates the canyon walls of Watkins Glen State Park in New York. Filter used: Singh-Ray Mor-Slo ND 10-Stop.

When buying ND filters, make sure they're threaded, which means that other filters can be stacked on. Note that vignetting can occur with very wide-angle lenses when stacking two or more filters. A trick to avoid this is to zoom in a short distance or purchase a larger filter with a step-up ring. This can be very effective, especially during midday when the light would otherwise be too strong to capture a long exposure. The result of these filters combined transforms the mood of an image. The longer shutter speed allows the photographer to use wider apertures like $f/16$ to capture sharpness throughout the image while still using a long exposure.

Like polarizers over the last several years, ND filters have become much better. ND filters are available in various strengths, meaning the number of stops of light that can be blocked from entering the camera. A few years ago, the darkest ND available was 10 stops. At that time, results with a typical 10-stop filter were very inconsistent. If shutter speeds were long it was not uncommon to see a magenta color cast in the overall image. ND filters have come a long way in the last few years, especially when it comes to avoiding colorcasts. ND filters now reach 20 stops of light with excellent results. This allows us to use even longer exposure times and thus more movement and mood in the image. Even in the brightest daylight, a 20-stop ND filter can allow very long shutter speeds.

When trying to determine correct exposures with ND filters, it can be difficult to get it precisely without the process of trial and error. I suggest using a smartphone app that calculates neutral density exposures to determine exactly the amount of time needed based on the filter being used. When shooting longer exposures, it's also necessary to have a sturdy tripod and ballhead to prevent any movement of the camera itself.

The Grad ND

The last filter that's used for photographing fall colors is the graduated neutral density filter, which compensates for an uneven light source. Often in landscape images, the sky is brighter than the ground; if you meter the exposure for the ground, the sky is overexposed. Alternatively, if you expose for the sky, the ground becomes underexposed. Sunrises and sunsets are common times where the skies are bright, but the foreground is in shadow. Graduated filters were designed to allow us to balance the light in the sky with the light in the landscape so that everything will be properly exposed.

Grad ND filters are designed so that the top part of the filter is dark and the bottom is clear. Like standard NDs, grad NDs come in various strengths. The best for a particular scene depends on the number of stops needed to balance the sky and foreground, so having a few different strengths on hand is ideal. The trick to using them is to place the graduation in the right position. Inaccuracy will cause unnatural shadows in the image to be placed too high or low. You want to align the filter's transition as closely as possible to the light in the scene.

In addition to the strength or density of these filters, there are also "hard" and "soft" grads, which refers to how abrupt the filter's transition from light to dark is. When evaluating a scene, the transition between exposures isn't always clearly defined, and a hard grad will create a noticeable line. In this situation, use a soft grad so that the transition is smoother. Conversely, when the transition from bright to shadow areas in the scene is abrupt, like the horizon of an ocean, a hard grad will work best.

To line up your grad ND correctly, use the depth-of-field preview button while looking through the viewfinder or use live view on your camera's LCD. Fine-tune by moving the filter up or down and rotating it to position it just right. In a pinch, the simplest way to do this is to manually hold the filter in front of your lens. Rectangular filters like LEE Filter's 100mm System are a great choice as they can be handheld or—even better—dropped into the filter holder and then rotated for precise alignment, hands-free.



Side light hits the iconic Denali during the peak of autumn in Alaska. Filter used: Singh-Ray Warming Polarizer.

Warming & Cooling Filters For Fall Color

When photographing fall colors, it's important to capture the mood of the season. When you think of autumn colors, warm tones such as red, yellow and orange come to mind. You want to capture the whole color spectrum of warm tones while keeping the neutral tones natural. A warming filter, which often can be used in combination with a polarizer or as an all-in-one filter, can be very beneficial. The filter adds subtle warmth to the overall color of the image without looking unnatural. It improves shadow detail that can be lost with a neutral polarizer. The warm tones of an image pop out more against the cooler tones; this contrast in color tones adds more impact and color balance to the image. For autumn colors, the foliage is more pronounced against the cooler tones in the image. Another added benefit of a warming polarizer is its ability to cut through haze, resulting in a clearer and more natural-appearing image.

Recommended Filters: Buy Quality Glass

When purchasing a filter, quality is important. Chances are, you spent good money investing in your lens, so why put a poor-quality filter in front? The performance of your lens and filters is only as good as the lowest-quality glass used, and not all filters are created equal.

For example, you'll likely use your polarizer frequently, so it doesn't make sense to choose a bargain polarizer that might compromise your lens' image quality. I use the Singh-Ray LB ColorCombo, which is a combination of a warming polarizer and a color intensifier. I use this polarizer when I want to capture the best of the warmer tones in my images, especially the reds. It works by leaving the neutral colors and only saturating the vibrant colors.

Manufacturers such as B+W, Heliopan, Hoya, Lee and others also make high-quality circular and linear polarizers, with numerous models to best match your camera and lens.

When choosing an ND filter, it's important to make sure that it doesn't have any colorcast. Blender ND filters from Formatt-Hitech use a transition that's very gradual over the length of the filter, rather than just in the middle, ideal for situations where the light transition is subtle. For ND grads, I recommend buying large, rectangular filters that are comfortable to hold and are large enough to cover all your lenses.

Falling Into Place

I try to create a story with my images as well as a sense of place, and shooting fall colors is an event I look forward to all year. Capturing the vibrancy of changing seasons has always meant something special to me. Even with the advances in digital photography and processing, it's advantageous when shooting autumn landscapes to use optical filters to capture the beautiful colors, tones and hues that abound in the fall.

See more of Kevin McNeal's work at kevinmcnealphotography.com.



Creative Blur Techniques for Wildlife Photographer by Aaron Baggenstos

One of the most rewarding aspects of my career is being able explore new photographic concepts and teach them to others. This keeps me on a constant journey to photograph in new and innovative ways.

Over the last several months I've been experimenting with creative blurs on wildlife. Not only have I learned a lot but I have had a blast practicing with different concepts. Below you will find a few images I have taken along the way and four techniques I used to capture them. I've also listed the equipment and camera settings. Keep in mind that there are hundreds of ways to produce creative blurs and this is by no means a comprehensive analysis. My hope is that you will enjoy viewing these images as much as I did creating them, and that they will inspire you to get out and make a few of your own.



Caption: Pan Blur, Red Fox, San Juan Island, Washington State
Equipment: Nikon D500, Nikkor 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6 Lens, TVC-34L Tripod, LC-A13 PKG, TA-3 leveling base, FG-02 Fluid Gimbal
Head Settings: F4, 1/100, ISO320



Caption: Pan Blur, Wildebeest River Crossing, Mara River, Kenya
Equipment: Nikon D810, Nikkor 600mm f4 FL Lens, RRS Safari
Rig Settings: F20, 1/25, ISO160

1. Pan Blurs

Quick Tip: A universal tip when shooting any kind of creative blur is to have a solid tripod to support your camera. Unwanted vibration is the nemesis of this genre. For the greatest success with pan blurs use a perfectly level tripod and a fluid head. Use a polarizer or neutral density filter on bright days.

This type of blur is fairly popular. The camera settings aren't difficult to master but, as with all creative blurs, they take incredible patience, practice, and a bit of luck. I often attempt panning images on overcast days, as low light is actually beneficial. My favorite shutter speeds are between 1/10th-1/125th of a second. I usually determine my shutter speed on the fly based on the subject's speed, distance, and angle of movement.

Experiment with different shutter speeds to dial yourself in before the action occurs. In general, the higher the shutter speed, the less motion blur you will get. The lower the shutter speed, the lower your keeper ratio will be. Once you have your settings, the real secret here is perseverance. At first in an uncontrolled situation you may take a few hundred shots before you get one keeper. Stick with it, you will produce some stunning results.



Wing Blur, Snowy Owl, Alberta, Canada Equipment: Nikon D4S, Nikkor 600mm f4 FL Lens, TVC-34L Tripod, FG-02 Fluid Gimbal Head Settings: F22, 1/50, ISO50

Wing blur, Hummingbird, Costa Rica Equipment: Nikon D810, Nikkor 70-200mm f2.8 II Lens, LCF-10 Foot, TVC-34L Tripod, FG-02 Fluid Gimbal Head Settings: F8, 1/250, ISO320

2. Wing Blurs

Quick Tip: Use slow shutter speeds around 1/50th of a second on birds in flight for a “wing blur” effect. The desired shutter speed will vary on species and behavior.

Snowy owls are among my favorite birds on the planet. Their massive wings and elegant flight make them a crown jewel for nature photographers. Until recently, I wasn’t a fan of “wing blurs” as I had tried them in the past with little success. Repetition and persistence proved to be the key with this type of image. I took well over 1,000 unusable photos over three weeks in the field to make this one frame. In this case, the high risk came with a high reward.



Zoom Blur, Elephant, Kenya, Africa Equipment: Nikon D810, Nikkor 70-200mm f2.8 II Lens, RRS Safari Rig Settings: F22, 1/25, ISO160, processed using Nik Color Effects Pro

Zoom Blur, King Vulture, Costa Rica Equipment: Nikon D5, Nikkor 70-200mm f2.8 II Lens, LCF-10 Foot, TVC-34L Tripod, FG-02 Fluid Gimbal Head Settings: F20, 1/10, ISO100

3. Zoom Blurs

Quick Tip: Try zooming mid exposure to create this alluring effect

Using a zoom lens, you can accomplish this type of image using slow shutter speeds and a tripod. On safari in Africa it’s virtually impossible to use a tripod, so I prefer to shoot off of a monopod mounted to the side of the vehicle using the RRS Safari Rig. That way I have a stable platform for both images and video.

For this technique I recommend practicing on a subject that doesn’t move, like a tree or flower, first. Try a one second exposure allowing the subject to “burn” into the sensor before zooming at the very end to create the streaks. Then try faster shutter speeds like 1/25 and zoom for the duration of the exposure. You will find there is quite a bit of creative control in this technique. One important key here is to position both your subject (usually the eye of the animal) and focal point in the dead center of the frame. That way your streaks lead directly toward your subject. If the focus point is off to the side the lines will point in that direction. Once you get the hang of it try this on more difficult moving subjects.



Water Blur, Harlequin Duck, Yellowstone National Park
Equipment: Nikon D500, Nikkor 600mm f4 FL Lens, LCF-18 Foot, TVC-34L Tripod, FG-02 Fluid Gimbal Head, Nikon MC-30A Shutter Release Settings: F22, 1/2, ISO50, Mirror Lockup

Water Blur, Brown Bears, Katmai National Park, Alaska
Equipment: Nikon D800, Nikkor 70-200mm f2.8 II Lens, LCF-10 Foot, TVC-34L Tripod, Nikon MC-30A Shutter Release Settings: F25, 1/10, ISO100, Mirror Lockup

4. Water Blurs

Quick Tip: Use a polarizer or neutral density filter and slow shutter speeds to create “cotton candy” water effect. Use mirror lockup to get sharper results.

I shoot this type of image the same way I would a waterfall with an added level of difficulty. If the animal, in this case the harlequin duck, moves at all during a half second exposure, it’s sure to blur and ruin the effect. Again, take lots of frames with the hope that one will come out perfect. Choose a stable platform for your tripod, use a shutter release, and activate mirror lockup to prevent shutter slap. Any small vibration will kill the sharpness of the animal’s appearance.

Conclusion: Creative blurs are a fun and challenging way to produce unique looking images. I have had a blast experimenting with different concepts with some great success. My hope is that these images have inspired you to get out and create a few of your own. See you out there.



Aaron Baggenstos is an award-winning professional wildlife photographer from Seattle, Washington. Aaron specializes in leading photography tours and workshops in Alaska, Yellowstone, Costa Rica, and Africa.

His photographs have been recognized by National Geographic, Nature’s Best, Outside, NANPA, and the Audubon Society. Recently, several of his images were chosen for the final rounds in the prestigious 2015 & 2016 BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year.

You can follow Aaron’s travels on his [Website](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Youtube](#), and [Flickr](#) pages.