Stockton Camera Club

The Shutter Tripper

May 2020

March's Digital Images of the Month

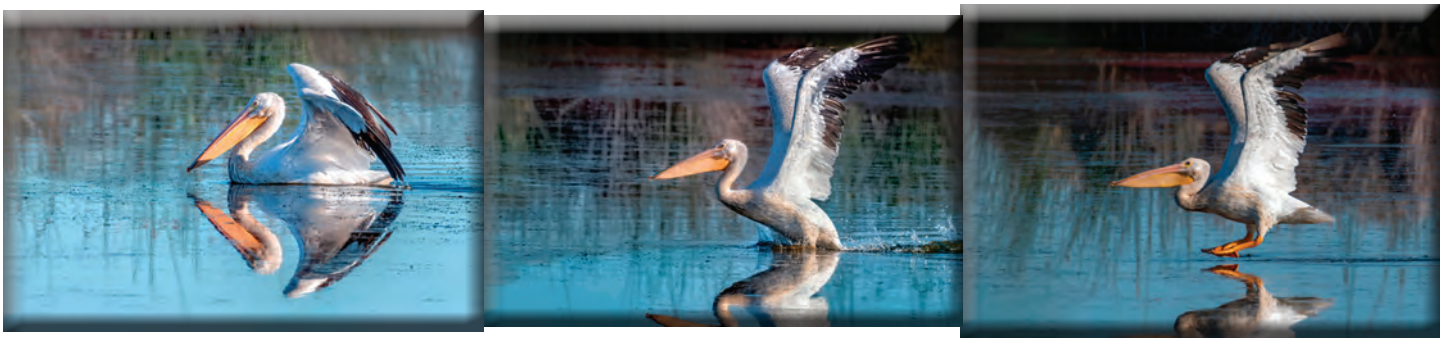
Boats on Maligne Lake

Digital Image of the Month - Sharon Mclemore

March's 10's

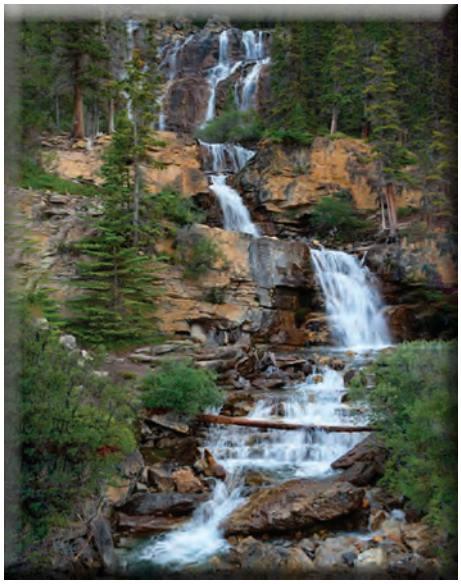
Heading for a Wipeout
Sheldon Mc Cormick

Dandelion
Joanne Sogsti



Pelican Landing
Heide Stover

Hanging On
Elizabeth Parrish



Jasper NP Waterfall
Sharon McLemore

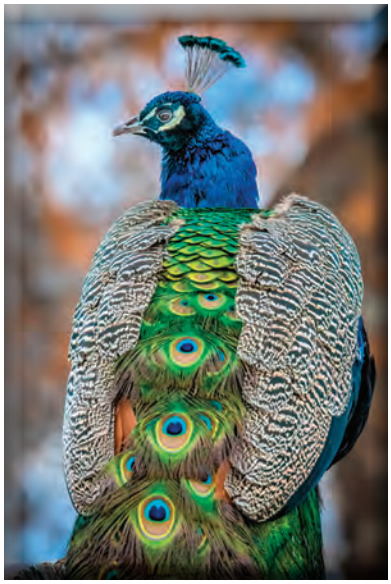
Bubbles Abstract
Em McLaren

Wood Duck Pair Swimming in Common Duckweed Lemna minor
Trey Steinhart

Great Egret Taking Off
Heide Stover

Portrait of Amelia
Joanne Sogsti

Trees and Fog
Sharon McLemore



Peacock
Dean Taylor

Sequence of 3 Same Surfer
Em McLaren

Sandhill Cranes Flying High
Heide Stover

Yosemite Chapel at Night
Sharon McLemore

Pigeon Pt.
Em McLaren

Snow Geese Trio
Dean Taylor

Catherines Baby Slippers and Surprize they Dont Still Fit
Trey Steinhart

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President's Message
May 2020
By Heide Stover

I hope everyone is staying safe. Life is certainly different for us now. This is a good time to play around with photographing at home, indoors or backyard.

I spent 2 days photographing snails, of all things! But there are plenty of them in my yard!

We will have to see how things look for May. Our meeting would normally be on the 21st. I suggest sending in your digital images as there is a chance, we can have them judged online again if we cannot meet.

Stay safe!

A Big Thank You to Our Sponsors!

Phone: 209-464-2299/Fax: 209-464-9229

2020 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 May 21	**West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton**	**May General Meeting Special Subject - Urban/Cityscapes**
Thursday June 18	**West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton**	**June General Meeting Special Subject - Prints Only**
Thursday July 19	**West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton**	**July General Meeting Special Subject - Reflections**
Aug TBA	**TBA**	**Annual Pot Luck**
Thursday September 17	**West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton**	**September General Meeting Special Subject - Patterns**
Thursday October 15	**West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton**	**October General Meeting Special Subject - Monochrome**
Thursday November 19	**West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton**	**November General Meeting Special Subject - Prints Only (No Special Subject)**
Thursday December 17	**West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton**	**December General Meeting Special Subject - On the Water**

2021 Calendar of Events

January 21	**TBA**	**Annual Banquet**
Thursday February 18	**West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton**	**February General Meeting Special Subject - Long Exposure**
Thursday March 18	**West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton**	**March General Meeting Special Subject - Fog**
April	**TBA**	**April Workshop/Photo Opportunity**
Thursday May 20	**West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton**	**May General Meeting Special Subject - Macro/Close-up**
Thursday June 17	**West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton**	**June General Meeting Special Subject - Prints Only (No Special Subject)**
July 15	**West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton**	**July General Meeting Special Subject - Creative**

Stockton Camera Club

March, 2020 Competition Standings

Congratulations to all the winners!!!

DIGITAL IMAGE OF THE MONTH WINNER "Mohave Point" by Trey Steinhart

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
Joan Erreca	63	45	18	37	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ron Wetherell	28	28	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reginald Lee	26	26	0	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lanny Brown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Susanne Nichols	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charlene Martin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brenda DeRoos	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adrian Ferreya	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ricky Ortiz	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Albert Rivas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jackie Berryessa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
David Wireback	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Class AA Standing	**TOTAL**	**OPEN**	**SS**	**FEB**	**MAR**	**MAY**	**JUN**	**JULY**	**SEP**	**OCT**	**NOV**	**DEC**
Sheldon McCormick	72	52	20	37	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elizabeth Parrish	72	55	17	36	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Christine Blue	38	28	10	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wayne Carlson	38	28	10	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Doug Ridgway	38	28	10	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Darrell O'Sullivan	36	27	9	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Class AAA Standing	**TOTAL**	**OPEN**	**SS**	**FEB**	**MAR**	**MAY**	**JUN**	**JULY**	**SEP**	**OCT**	**Nov**	**DEC**
Trey Steinhart	79	59	20	40	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dean Taylor	77	58	19	39	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heide Stover	77	58	19	38	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Em McLaren	77	58	19	38	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sharon McLemore	76	58	18	38	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Joanne Sogsti	58	38	20	38	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

2020 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.

Backcountry Journeys
Photography Tours, Workshops & Safaris

Top 5 Filters for Landscape Photography

by Matt Meisenheimer

Filters used to be an accessory that every photographer owned, regardless of genre and style. But the digital age rushed onto the scene rendering many filters obsolete, mainly due to the fact that many desired filter effects have become easily replicated in digital processing applications like Adobe Lightroom and Adobe Photoshop.

However, filters that produce results that cannot be replicated in any processing software still remain. There are still others that can be useful as well, especially if you like to do everything you can to capture the shot in-camera and prefer not to process your images.

As a landscape photographer, I carry three filters with me during every photo trip; a polarizing filter, a 5-stop neutral density filter, and a UV filter. I have those filters for each lens that I use. We will cover those filters, but also discuss the effects of graduated neutral density filters and warming/cooling filters. Filters are sized by thread length and although you might purchase a filter that fits on multiple lenses, you will most likely have to buy filters for each lens that you own in order for them to fit properly.

Circular Polarizing Filter

In my opinion, if you were to own just one filter, it would have to be a polarizing filter. With excellent digital post-processing skills, effects similar to many filters can be created. A polarizing filter is the outlier. There is nothing you can do in post-processing to mimic the effect of a polarizer. Polarizers reduce reflective glare and naturally saturate colors. They are excellent for creating vibrant blue skies and removing harsh reflections from water, leaves, rocks, etc. You can also control the amount of polarization by rotating the filter in a circular fashion when it is attached. A polarizer is on my wide-angle lens almost 100% of the time. One thing to keep in mind though is a polarizing has absolutely no effect if you're shooting directly into the sun. One tip is to buy some polarized sunglasses. The sunglasses will give you a good idea of what effect a polarizer might have on a scene, especially if you tilt your head, which changes how much of the effect is applied.

Neutral Density Filter

My second most used filter is my 5-stop neutral density filter. A neutral density is analogous to putting sunglasses on, the filter will decrease the amount of light available to your camera sensor. Many use neutral density filters to achieve slower shutter speeds, which can be particularly useful for water scenes and fast-moving clouds. When I photograph the coast (ocean-scapes), I always have my neutral density filter on. I like my shutter speed to be around ¼ – 1/6 second for water detail and without a neutral density filter, it's impossible for me to achieve that speed. I also use a neutral density filter to streak clouds when it's windy out. With the right neutral density filter, you can take a couple minute exposure after sunrise or before sunset and create some very interesting effects with the sky. So, what is the right neutral density filter? Well, you can purchase 1-stop neutral density filters all the way up to 10-stop neutral density filters. I recommend either purchasing a 5 to 6-stop filter or buying a 10-stop filter. I also recommend staying away from variable neutral density filters, as the quality usually isn't very good.

Graduated Neutral Density Filter

I don't own a graduated neutral density filter myself, but many photographers still swear by them. They operate in the same way as a normal neutral density filter by decreasing the amount of light available to your sensor. However, they are graduated so the effect is only applied to one half of the filter. This makes them great for dealing with high dynamic range situations, such as when you find yourself shooting into the sun. I don't like them myself because I can achieve the effect of a graduated neutral density in Lightroom/Photoshop by taking multiple exposures and blending them. But, if you don't want to process your photos or spend a lot of time in the digital darkroom, this filter is essential for you. The reason I prefer to do my blending in photoshop is I can control how I blend my exposures together. For instance, I can blend in my darker exposure exactly where the horizon meets the landscape versus a graduated neutral density filter which will also darken other elements in your scene making it look unnatural (i.e. darker sky, but also line across mountains darkening some mountains as well).

UV Filter

In the days of film, it was a no-brainer to have a UV filter mounted on your lens. Film exposures were greatly affected by UV light, but even today, owning a UV filter is a good idea. Although digital sensors are much better at dealing with UV light, a UV filter has a couple of other benefits that make it worthwhile. The first is definitely protection. A quality UV filter will not detract from your image quality and it offers a line of protection for your lens. Not only will it help protect your front element if you drop your camera it also will help protect your lens from smudging and scratching. I've had friends drop their camera or have their tripod tip and although their UV filter was absolutely destroyed, their lens was left unharmed. It can be a good insurance policy. UV filters will also help cut through atmospheric haze and help improve image quality in smoggy or hazy conditions.

Warming/Cooling Filters

Warming and cooling filters are another set of filters that you should look into if you're a photographer that likes to perfect your shot in the field. Warming and cooling filters do exactly what they might imply, they warm up your image or cool down your image. If you shoot in RAW, you can easily accomplish this by creatively adjusting your white balance while post-processing. But like I said if you don't like to process or want to get your shot in the field, try these out. They can be really great for establishing a great mood for your shot. Warming filters work great during the golden hour and can help amplify the great colors you might experience at sunrise or sunset. Cooling filters pair really well with water scenes, overcast days, or foggy/misty conditions.

Recommend Filter Brands

Not all filters are created equal and price points for various filters can be all over the place. Some are made out of simple glass and are less expensive, while more expensive filters might be constructed with optical glass and have an anti-reflective coating. Here are some recommend filter brands – high quality and budget choices:
High Quality: Lee, Nisi, Singh-Ray, B+W, Hoya
Budget: Tiffen, Cokin, Polaroid

Stacking Filters

You can also stack filters. For example, I routinely shoot with both a neutral density filter and a circular polarizer attached to my lens. Combined, they can offer some great effects. It's common for a photographer to stack multiples filters, but there are some things to be aware of. Whenever you are attaching a filter, no matter what the quality, you're adding another element that can deter the signal (light) to your sensor. When you stack filters, you most likely will lose some quality in your images. Sure, it's most likely negligible, but if you're printing your images huge, it's something to be aware of. Vignetting can also be an issue, especially when using filters with wide angles. I get vignetting in the corners even with just a single filter attached to my wide-angle, but usually, it's only something you need to worry about when stacking filters. This is easily corrected in processing software such as Adobe Lightroom, but if you're not processing your images, take heed.

Matt Meisenheimer

Matt Meisenheimer is a photographer based in Wisconsin. His artistry revolves around finding unique compositions and exploring locations that few have seen. He strives to capture those brief moments of dramatic light and weather, which make our grand landscapes so special. Matt loves the process of photography – from planning trips and scouting locations, taking the shot in-field, to post-processing the final image.

Matt is an active adventurer and wildlife enthusiast as well. He graduated with a degree in wildlife ecology and worked in Denali National Park and Mount Rainier National Park as a biologist. He also spent 6 months working in the deserts of Namibia before finding his path in photography. Matt's passion for the wilderness has taken him to many beautiful places around the world.

As a former university teaching assistant, Matt is passionate about instruction. It is his goal to give his students the technical and creative knowledge they need to achieve their own photographic vision. He truly enjoys working with photographers on a personal level and helping them reach their goals.

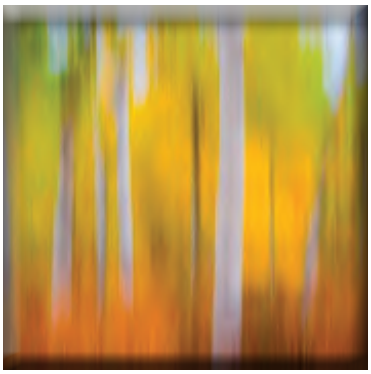
You can see Matt's work and portfolio on his webpage at www.meisphotography.com

Backcountry Journeys
Photography Tours, Workshops & Safaris

Understanding Exposure: A Comprehensive Look into Shutter Speed

by Matt Meisenheimer

Three components come together to create an exposure – aperture, shutter speed, and ISO.



That's right, just three basic components. When you break down photography into its simplest form, those three settings are the basis for everything we do. It is amazing that those three 'basic' settings can also give us so much trouble and anxiety when we try to select the most optimal values for those settings when we are in the field.

All three settings are very important to understand, and your first step as a beginner should be understanding what each setting (aperture, shutter speed, and ISO) affects and how the three settings work together to form an exposure.

In my opinion, shutter speed is the most important to understand, mainly because it has great importance across all genres, especially wildlife and landscape photography. The specific shutter speed you choose can dramatically change how an image looks – i.e. take the same scene and shoot it at two different shutter speeds. I also think that shutter speed is the most basic setting to understand of the three. It simply means how long the shutter is open, right? The short answer is yes, but the effects and consequences of various shutter speeds can be difficult to comprehend, especially for beginners.

What is Shutter Speed Exactly?

The foundation of shutter speed is the camera shutter. The shutter acts as a curtain in front of the shutter. When you take a picture, the curtain reveals the sensor and your 'shutter speed' represents how long the sensor is revealed. The sensor collects light during that time period and then the shutter immediately closes, which stops the transmission of light to the sensor.

So, essentially, 'shutter speed' is how long the camera shutter is open and allowing light to hit the sensor. The longer the shutter is open, the more light that hits the sensor, and conversely, the shorter the shutter is open, the less light that hits the sensor.

Shutter speeds are usually expressed in seconds or fractions of a second. For instance, 1" means a shutter speed of 1 second, while 1/500 means a shutter speed of one five-hundredth of a second.

Almost all mirrorless cameras and DSLRs allow shutter speeds as fast as 1/4000th of a second, while allowing a shutter speed as slow as 30 seconds. Some pro-grade bodies allow faster shutter speeds, and you can implement longer shutter speeds than 30 seconds with the use of 'Bulb' mode and a camera remote.

The Effects of Shutter Speed

The two big effects related to shutter speed are motion blur and the brightness of your exposure. Blur relates to the sharpness of your photo, but also relates to creative choices in the field, specifically when dealing with water, which I will discuss below. The brightness of your exposure can be affected by shutter speed (but ISO and aperture can also change brightness). In this article, I want to mainly discuss the creative choices that come with shutter speed and some of the other technicalities but see the below on how shutter speed affects brightness.

Think of it this way – the longer the shutter speed, the more light that is able to hit the sensor, the more light that hits the sensor means a brighter exposure. So, with all settings being equal, when you select a slower and slower shutter speed, your final exposure will get brighter and brighter.

General Rule of Thumb

Shortly, I will discuss shutter speed as it relates to wildlife and landscape photography, but I wanted to share a quick rule of thumb that you can apply anytime you are in the field. Shutter speed is the reason we have to use tripods. Slow shutter speeds mean that the camera needs to be stabilized otherwise blur from shake and camera motion will ruin your image. If you want or need, to shoot handheld here is a quick rule of thumb that can help lead you to a sharp final image.

Your shutter speed should at least be equivalent to 1/2X, where X is your focal length. For instance, if you are shooting handheld at 50mm, your shutter speed should be at least 1/100s. If you are shooting at 200mm, then your shutter speed should be at least 1/400s.

With systems that have a lens or in-body stabilization, you can get away with a shutter speed of 1/X.

In this situation, a shutter speed of 1/1500s was used to ensure the flying eagle would be sharp. Photo by Russ Nordstrand

Ben used a slow shutter speed to blur the bison running, which resulted in a very creative photograph. Photo by Ben Blankenship

Shutter Speed and Wildlife Photography

For wildlife photography, faster is generally better. Our main goal when photographing wildlife is to freeze the animal and freeze the action. The difficult thing about shutter speed for wildlife and moving subjects is there is no 'correct' speed. At a minimum, I recommend a shutter speed of 1/500s. If the animal isn't moving, you can get away with slower speeds, like 1/250s. Every situation is different, which is why picking a one size fits all shutter speed is difficult. Keep in mind the general rule above, if you are using a 600mm prime, then you should aim for a shutter speed of 1/600s or 1/1200s depending on your camera and if any stabilization is used, such as a gimbal head and tripod.

The key is to select a starting shutter speed, like 1/500s, and fire off some test shots. Jump into preview mode immediately and zoom in to see if the animal is sharp. Faster is always better though, and sometimes you only have one chance to capture a shot before the animal or moment has passed. If I am hand-holding at 400mm and a bear appears out of nowhere, I might bump up my shutter speed to 1/1000s to 1/1500s just to make sure I get a sharp shot. Those shutter speeds are most likely more than fast enough to capture a sharp shot, but better safe than sorry.

Birds in flight also garner some special consideration. Not only is the subject moving, but it is moving fast. One of the big objectives when it comes to photographing birds in flight is to freeze the wing motion. A good starting point for freezing wing motion is a starting speed of 1/1000s. I find myself shooting birds in flight at 1/1500s to 1/2000s. Again, faster is better.

Creative techniques using shutter speed can also be used for wildlife photography. Slower shutter speed can blur wildlife movements, which can create unique effects. I have seen great shots using a slow shutter speed anywhere from 1/20s to 1 second on birds in flight and wildlife in motion. Ben Blankenship, one of our great BCJ guides, used a slow shutter speed while capturing some bison in Yellowstone National Park recently, and the end result was great.

To capture this ice calving from Sawyer Glacier in Alaska, I chose a shutter speed of 1/500s to ensure I froze all the movement in the scene. Photo by Matt Meisenheimer

Shutter Speeds for Landscape Photography

For most situations, shutter speed does not matter for landscape photography. The reason? Because we are almost always shooting with the camera mounted on a tripod, which means a shutter speed of 15 seconds or 1/200s has no effect on the sharpness of our image since the camera is stabilized. I recommend always using the 2-second timer option on your camera or a separate camera remote to minimize camera movement.
If you must handhold, keep in mind the rule of thumb from earlier (1/2X or 1/X, where X is your focal length).

Now there are situations where our shutter speed REALLY matters for landscape photography. Two come to mind – shooting a non-static scene and shooting any scene involving water. The first situation, shooting a non-static scene, means photographing a landscape where elements are moving. An easy example is windblown scenes. For instance, if you are shooting a nice landscape with fall foliage and the wind is blowing, moving all those

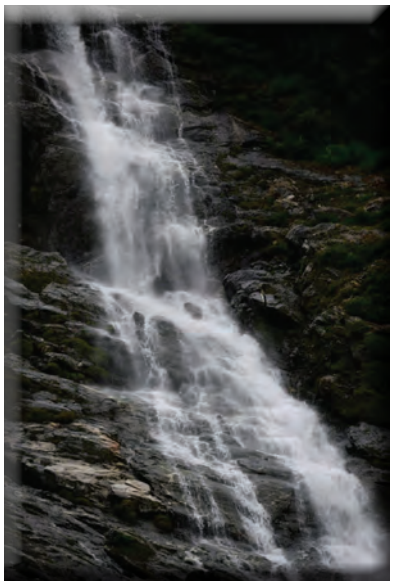
autumn leaves in the tree around, you need to adjust your shutter speed to ensure it is fast enough to freeze the motion of the trees and leaves. I usually start at a shutter speed of 1/50s and then go into preview and zoom in to see if the elements are sharp. Rinse and repeat, adjusting my shutter speed as necessary.

Things get interesting when we discuss water. Shutter speed has an incredible effect on water, whether you choose a fast or slow shutter speed. Slow shutters speeds will blur the motion of the water, creating a unique effect. Fast shutter speeds will freeze the motion of the water, ensuring ample detail in the water. The choice of shutter speed is not a given though, as many photographers prefer their water to look a certain way.

I myself prefer a shutter speed of 1/6s to 1 second for water. I prefer fast-moving water or crashing waves at 1/5s or 1/6s. I find those speeds blur the water just enough while maintaining detail in river rapids or splashing waves. I usually use a 1-second exposure for waterfalls. These are just basic starting points though, as I adjust my shutter speed based on the specific scene and what looks good to my eye.
Another good use for slow shutter speed is when you are shooting a lake or body of water that might have small waves or ripples. Slow shutter speed will completely smooth out the water and make the image much more visually appealing.

Water will look dramatically different at faster shutter speeds, like 1/100s to 1/500s. Below are some examples of what water looks like at varying shutter speeds.

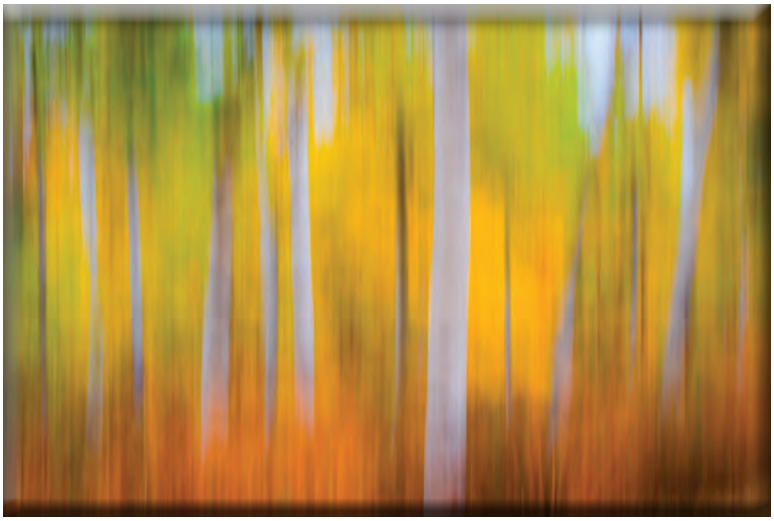
Look at the examples, you can see the wide array of results from shooting water at differing shutter speed. No two shots of water are alike as well, that is another reason I like shooting water so much. Regardless of what effect you prefer, next time you are in the field, I recommend adjusting your shutter speed for water so you can first hand see the differences in your own photos.



This waterfall was captured using a shutter speed of 1/500s. You can see the impressive detail in the cascading water spray. Photo by Matt Meisenheimer

I captured this waterfall in Alaska using a shutter speed of 1/4s. I liked how 1/4s blurred the rapids in the foreground, as well as the waterfall. Photo by Matt Meisenheimer

This is a beautiful waterfall tucked away in the Columbia River Gorge. I used a 1-second shutter speed, as I liked the amount of blur it introduced to the water. Photo by Matt Meisenheimer



The image is of an aspen grove during fall. The creative blur was achieved using the panning technique described.

Panning

You can also come up with some creative photos by trying out panning techniques. For instance, some interesting shots of trees (especially trees with fall color) can be created by setting a shutter speed of 1/10s to 1/30s and panning vertically immediately after pressing the shutter button. See below for an example.

This image of the Milky Way was captured using a 20-second shutter speed – 14mm, f/2.8, 20s, ISO 6400). Photo by Matt Meisenheimer

Night Photography

Shutter speed is extremely important for night photography. Slow shutter speeds are required for night photography. Night is hard on our camera; landscapes are completely dark and the camera sensor needs a lot of time to absorb as much light as possible. Shutter speeds for night photography can range from just a few seconds to 25-30 seconds. A few seconds can suffice at dusk or dawn, or during a really strong Northern Lights show. Longer shutter speeds, like 20 seconds, will be required for capturing the stars and Milky Way.
The Milky way is a lot of fun to shoot, so I will recommend some settings. A good starting point is a shutter speed of 20-25 seconds (f/2.8 to f/4, ISO 1600 to ISO 3200)…too much longer than that and the stars will start to blur due to the rotation of the Earth.

Side Note: Neutral Density Filters

Neutral density (ND) filters can help you achieve slower shutter speeds. An ND filter is analogous to putting sunglasses on. When we put on sunglasses, light is blocked and things appear darker. It is the same for an ND filter, they reduce the amount of light available to your camera sensor. They come in different stops – 4 stop, 5 stop, 6 stop, 10 stop and more. The more stops of light, the darker the filter will be and the more light it will block.

I use ND filters for two scenarios – when I want a slower shutter speed of 1/5s to 1s, but there is too much light to achieve those shutter speeds at optimal aperture and ISO settings AND when I want a really long exposure.

First, I use a 4 stop or 5 stop filter when I am shooting most ocean scenes, especially in the US when I find myself on the west coast for most of my seascape photography. Because the sun is setting in the west and I am shooting directly into the sun, I cannot achieve slow shutter speeds when I am at optimal settings of f/11 and ISO 64, for instance. Putting an ND filter on my lens reduces the amount of light (like sunglasses) and allows me to get that slower shutter speed. I also use an ND filter when shooting waterfalls and streams in bright light.

Occasionally, I use a really dark ND filter, like a 10 stop to experiment with blurring. For instance, I might try a really slow shutter speed on water, like 20-30 seconds. That long of a shutter speed will result in wispy water, which can be a cool effect with the right composition. A super long shutter speed like that can also have an interesting effect when used in conjunction with fast-moving clouds. A 20 second exposure will blur the clouds and streak them. That can be a really nice complement to your scene.

Closing Thoughts

I cannot stress enough the importance of having a deep understanding of the three big camera settings – shutter speed, aperture, and ISO – and understanding how they work together. Shutter speed is very important because it has direct implications on the sharpness of your image, but also has many creative uses. When you are in the field, think about the shutter speeds you are using and the final results you are getting. Why is the animal you are shooting sharp, what focal length were you at, why is the water blurred, why is my image blurred etc. Question your results so you can better understand the settings you use. When you become an expert in the technicalities, then you can just react in the field and let creativity take over.

Keep in mind the general rule of 1/2X or 1/X, and the general starting places to use for different types of photography. For wildlife photography, we commonly want shutter speeds as fast as possible. For landscape photography, usually shutter speed does not matter as much, but has big implications when it comes to movement and water. The best thing you can do is to get out there and shoot as much as possible, and try out some of these settings and techniques.

Matt Meisenheimer

Matt Meisenheimer is a photographer based in Wisconsin. His artistry revolves around finding unique compositions and exploring locations that few have seen. He strives to capture those brief moments of dramatic light and weather, which make our grand landscapes so special. Matt loves the process of photography – from planning trips and scouting locations, taking the shot in-field, to post-processing the final image. Matt is an active adventurer and wildlife enthusiast as well. He graduated with a degree in wildlife ecology and worked in Denali National Park and Mount Rainier National Park as a biologist. He also spent 6 months working in the deserts of Namibia before finding his path in photography. Matt's passion for the wilderness has taken him to many beautiful places around the world. As a former university teaching assistant, Matt is passionate about instruction. It is his goal to give his students the technical and creative knowledge they need to achieve their own photographic vision. He truly enjoys working with photographers on a personal level and helping them reach their goals. You can see Matt's work and portfolio on his webpage at www.meisphotography.com

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Thinking Abstract(ly)

by Kenton Krueger

Let's take a minute to see our world differently.

It's pretty easy for us photographers to get caught up in our chosen styles. We often identify as "landscapers," or "wildlife photographers," and some of us might say we do a "little of both." Certainly, there is nothing wrong with focusing on what we love. This is how we hone our craft. This is how we make strides and get better and better.

Meanwhile, trying other styles, like abstract photography, can offer us additional ways to further our artistic expression. Abstract photography is an exceptionally creative style of photography. What's even better, is that this style can be practiced from nearly anywhere, making it perfect to get out and try right now as many of us have a bit more time on our hands, and aren't venturing too far from home. Abstract photography is somewhat difficult to define because it is an art form that allows for a LOT of creativity while not holding steadfast to much in the way of "rules." But, let's do our best to apply some sort of definition so we know where to begin.

Abstraction occurs when a photographer captures a portion of a specific scene, isolating it from its contextual environment utilizing things like color, shape, form, or texture to create a unique perception of an otherwise familiar object.

Say you're out for a walk in the neighborhood and you spot a rusty old car parked along the road. This car is a true beauty and thoughts race on how you might compose this car in an image. Maybe you could come back at 'golden hour,' or sunset, and you could plan to shoot it when some weather is moving in so as to add some glorious clouds into the colorful softly lit sky behind the cool car. There is certainly nothing wrong with this traditional approach to a nice subject. This is actually a great way to look at things as a photographer.

Perhaps this time, though, get a bit closer and find a different perspective by looking at the car differently. Look for visual interest in the form of lines, color, shapes and/or texture. Textures can be really key as they aid the viewer in moving their eyes across the image and make your overall composition more dynamic.

Ok, now what? We'll not refer to the following as "rules," because we've already decided this style of photography has no rules and is too creative to worry about such a thing. Still, there do exist a handful of considerations you'll likely want to pay attention to if you'd like to create an image with impact.

Light

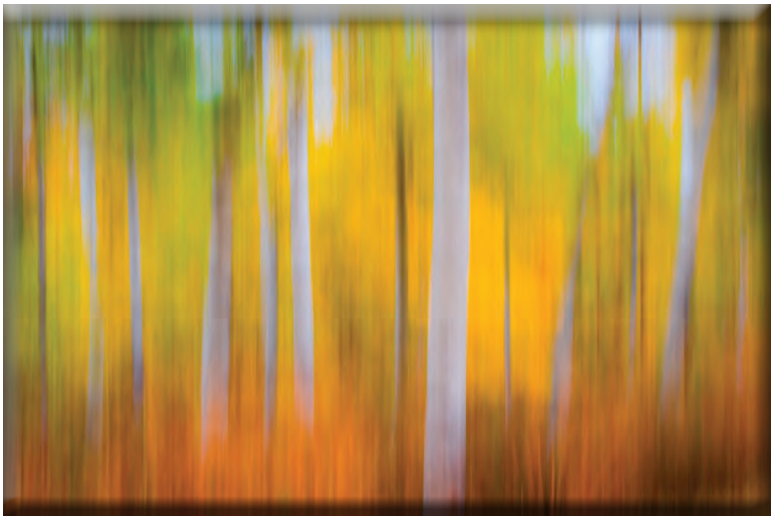
Use light to emphasize and dramatize your subject. The same scene could have a very different impact under differing lighting conditions so it is important to shoot the scene intentionally with your intended outcome in mind. Sound familiar?

Simplicity

Make a singular statement by subtracting all distractions. The outcome will be a simpler and cleaner image. Simplicity is especially important with an abstract because in separating your scene from what makes it recognizable, everything that is in the image needs to make an impact.

Composition

Don't forget, while reveling in all of this creative fun, that you'll still need to consider your composition. Ok, so maybe there is one "rule." Rule #1: Never ever neglect composition. Kidding aside, use elements of design to your advantage when possible. How are you framing patterns, shapes, and colors? How might you alter your angle to take advantage of lines?



Motion

Have you ever moved your camera at the moment you take the shot? Here is your chance! By doing so, you create a mix of different colors, lines, and patterns. This is a really fun way to create abstracts of Aspen trees (see example above). Have fun with this, try it a bunch! See what is possible and what sorts of patterns and interest you can create. Use slower shutter speed to capture this motion blur.

Distance

The distance from your subject that you choose to shoot is a variable to definitely play around with. Something that you can play around with. Distort reality by moving away. Details come alive when shot from up close, some that may not have been as apparent from a normal distance. Maybe start with 1/10th of a second and then adjust from there.

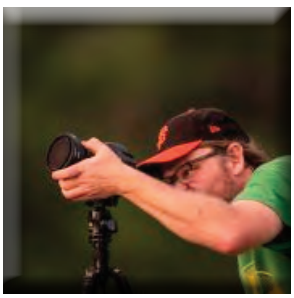
This brings us to a point that shouldn't be overlooked. While on your quest to find abstract opportunities don't be afraid to utilize your macro lens if you have one. With abstracts a lot of the time the desire is to move closer. You can do this with a telephoto lens, or with a macro. A macro lens will help magnify tiny objects and details that can enhance abstraction in your image without zooming or cropping, keeping the sharpness of your image without losing any resolution.

Post-processing offers another chance to get more creative than normal. Work freely with colors, cropping, rotating, and distorting things to whatever makes the impact you're seeking. Just play. Photography is fun!

Looking for abstracts does not have to be limited to your front yard, neighborhood, or even to this time of our lives being stuck at home. Don't be shy about keeping this newfound skill with you when shooting other styles. While landscape photographers are typically consumed with "the view," they would be wise to also look for potential abstracts while out in the field. For example: while shooting at Bryce Canyon when on Backcountry Journeys' Canyons of Utah: Zion & Bryce trip, the intended shot is of the vast amphitheater of rock hoodoos down below, set aglow by the soft light of golden hour. Yet, perhaps there is an abstract down in that collection of oddball and mysterious shapes, shadows and colors? Maybe if you reach for that telephoto lens and zoom in on a particular portion of the rock hoodoos you'll find some magic. A fantastic abstract can always be there, you just have to look for one.

Abstract photography offers a chance to try something new and get inspired. There really aren't many rules to follow except to be creative and have fun! So why not head out (or, just look around your living room) and find everyday objects to get started. Look with a creative and open mind while out on your next walk. Look at objects in your own home, yet try to do so in a different way. Heck, break some of those traditional "rules." Shoot out of focus. Rotate your image. Try some crazy angles. Those of you who despise tripods and are sick of your BCJ (landscape) photo guides forcing you to use one, here's an opportunity to kick it to the curb – or use it, your choice. Keep in mind the elements (listed above) that can help you create good images. Don't be afraid to overly manipulate your images in post-processing and create some art.

If you've read this far, likely you are still interested in giving abstract photography a try. If you do, we'd LOVE to see the results posted on the Backcountry Journeys Tribe Facebook page. So, lets dust off those cameras, get inspired, get creative, and get out there! Abstract photography is often viewed as being more emotional than other forms of photography, providing the practitioner with a break from the world as he/she takes time to look at the world differently. Sound good right about now?



Kenton Krueger grew up and spent the first 33 years of his life in the corn country of Omaha, Nebraska. After studying aviation at the University of Nebraska Omaha's Aviation Institute, he "conned" his way into the newsroom at the award-winning Omaha World-Herald where for 3+ years he wrote and photographed news articles on a variety of topics such as community events, travel and even mixed martial arts for the sports department. Yet something was missing. While on backpacking trips to Grand Teton and Grand Canyon National Parks in the mid-2000's he was quick to realize that the wildlands of the western United States stoked a fire in his heart as nothing else could. This realization led to relocation to Flagstaff, Arizona, and he hasn't looked back. He has spent the past several years guiding backpackers, hikers and photographers into the wild places of the American West such as Havasu Falls, Grand Canyon, and Yellowstone National Parks as well as in the Grand Staircase Escalante in southern Utah. In addition to backpacking and camping, his adventures include rock climbing, exploring the slot canyons of southern Utah, mountain biking, and bagging 14ers in Colorado's San Juan Mountain Mountain Range. Kenton is a trail runner, former pilot, newspaper photographer, and writer. Kenton looks forward to utilizing his years of guiding experience, combined with his passion and experience behind the lens to provide memorable and unforgettable experiences at the wild places we will visit together.