

WILD PHOTO TIPS MAGAZINE

Fall 2013
Volume/Issue: 1.1

\$4.95

Creative techniques for every photographer from beginner to expert!

Premier Issue!

SO YOU WANT TO SHOOT ELK?

NEVER STOP LEARNING

MY FAVORITE
PHOTO DESTINATIONS

PENNSYLVANIA ELK
PHOTOGRAPHY
EXPERIENCE

CAMERA TIPS

WILD PHOTO IDEAS

WILD PHOTO TIP #1

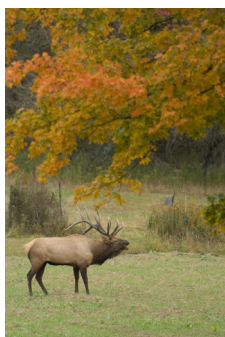


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ABOUT THE COVER PHOTO

This issue's cover photo depicts some of the beauty and wonder of fall and is a great cover for the Fall Issue. Fall in Pennsylvania is an incredible time of the year! The mountains are filled with the sounds of ear-piercing bugles and crashing antlers! All this excitement brings to mind the elk photo shoots in the fall and this issue features an article about our Pennsylvania Elk Photography Experience. This cover photograph was captured on one of these exciting photo trips!

WILD PHOTO TIPS MAGAZINE

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1/4 page = \$25 per issue or \$45 per year (2 issues)
1/2 page = \$45 per issue or \$80 per year (2 issues)
Full page = \$75 per issue or \$130 per year (2 issues)

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So You Want to Photograph the Pennsylvania Elk?

I'VE BEEN TRAVELING TO THE MOUNTAINS OF NORTH-CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA FOR OVER 23 YEARS NOW TO PHOTOGRAPH THE MAJESTIC PENNSYLVANIA ELK. MANY PEOPLE STILL DO NOT REALIZE THERE ARE WILD ELK ROAMING THE MOUNTAINS OF PENNSYLVANIA. WINSLOW HILL IN BENEZETTE TOWNSHIP IS THE ELK CAPITAL OF PA AND WE CALL THIS AREA "ELK COUNTRY!"

Visitor after visitor make the drive to Benezette to see the Pennsylvania Elk. Tourism in the area during the elk rut now far surpasses the first week of deer hunting season and the number of tourists coming to the area is growing!

The Elk Country Visitor Center, which opened in the fall of 2010, attracts many visitors throughout the year. Elk can often be viewed in the fields behind the Center. Volunteers and staff educate the visitors about these unique creatures of the deer family and offer a 4-dimensional movie to further appreciate the wild animals and the beauty of nature in this part of PA.

Most visitors make the drive up Winslow Hill, which is typically the best place for a chance to see and view the PA elk. You can always tell when elk are in a field because of the traffic stoppage and the vehicles stopped along the road. (By the way, do not stop in the middle of the road; pull over and get your vehicle completely off the paved road. Be courteous to other drivers and please respect the privacy of the property owners by refraining from trespassing on their property!)

Now that you've found some elk, you probably want to capture some photographs to remember your sighting and take home with you to family and friends. But how do you proceed? What is the best way to capture photographs of the elk?

First of all, remember that these are wild animals! While they may appear docile and tame, and, yes, some may actually be tame, they still demand respect and distance. This is where a telephoto lens comes in handy - in fact, I argue that a telephoto lens is mandatory for this kind of wildlife photography!

Use the telephoto function on your point and shoot camera or have a telephoto lens already mounted on your DSLR even before you arrive in Elk Country. Preparedness is often a key for success and you never know when you are going to spot and be able to

photograph these amazing creatures! Whatever you do, don't be that guy who runs out into the middle of the field, in front of all the other photographers with his cell phone, trying to get close enough to get a picture! Believe me, I've seen this happen far too many times. It is not safe and it creates great angst among the other photographers. This is also why a long lens is mandatory.

Once you are in position to take a photograph, think about composition. What do you see? Are there any beautiful fall colors that can be incorporated into the image? What is the elk doing? Does this suggest an approach to your photo like turning the camera to a vertical position?

Three technical settings will help separate the animal from its habitat and make the subject pop in your photograph. Depth of field is the first one to consider. We are aiming at a shallow depth of field so that only the subject is in focus. The lower number f-stop you can muster the more shallow the depth of field. I prefer f/4 or even f/2.8 if possible. The second technical setting is ISO. Again, we want to stay as low as is feasibly possible. I try to stay in the basement with my ISO, preferring 200 with my Nikon camera whenever possible. The third setting is shutter speed. A decent speed is required to keep the subject in focus, especially if the animal is moving. The longer your lens, the faster the shutter needs to be, too, to assure sharp focus.

These three technical settings: f-stop, ISO, and shutter speed work together to create proper exposure in a photographic image. It is critical to learn how these work to get the results you are after. Add the fact that wild animals are mostly seen at dawn and dusk when the light is low, and these three technical settings are vitally important to keep on top of when shooting!

A properly exposed image with adequate magnification with a longer lens will provide a pleasing photo to share with your family and friends!



PENNSYLVANIA ELK PHOTOGRAPHY EXPERIENCE

Experiences are made up of a combination of place, time, and relationships. If you are in the right place, at the right time, and with special people, then the experience might even be unforgettable!

The Pennsylvania Elk Photography Experience brings these elements together for wildlife photographers!

If you want to experience wildlife photography at its best then this photo trip is definitely for you. The special location is in north-central Pennsylvania where an elk herd of about 850 roam over the mountains. We locate the elk and put you on to these majestic elk so you can create breath-taking wildlife photographs. With over 20 years of experience we have in these mountains, you can be sure to have plenty of wild photographic opportunities.

Combine this with three photography workshops and you can learn the basics and some advanced tools for wildlife photography. This is a photo trip that combines a hands-on approach with practical classroom instruction.

Now add the camaraderie of fellow photographers with similar goals and you have an experience of a lifetime!

The Pennsylvania Elk Photography Experience is a four-day and three-night photo workshop. All meals are provided and accommodations are right smack dab in the middle of PA elk country. There are times when the elk are right in our backyard, providing photographers with easy and enjoyable shooting to their heart's content.

The three workshops include basic digital camera set-up, techniques on composition, how to photograph wildlife, etiquette on photographing wild animals, and an in-depth workshop on Adobe Lightroom, which is our preferred photo-management and editing software.

Up to six photo shoots are available, with most days finding us out in the wild before sunrise and then after sunset. Workshops are held between the photo shoots and we can customize the trip to meet your needs and desires.

Here are some comments from past participants:

"From a woman's point of view I was with some

incredible men who had a lot to offer and made me feel quite comfortable as part of a team. The help I received was so valuable."

Diane McKinley – Bryn Mawr, PA

"I really enjoyed the week... I think it is a wonderful opportunity to be able to photograph these animals... The week definitely met my expectations... The food was very good."

Brian Freed – Allentown, PA

"Wow, awesome, fantastic, breathtaking, are just some of the words spinning through my head

the morning after my return from the Bob Shank PA Elk Photo Experience. Bob and his experienced team led our group on several daily elk encounters during which we witnessed an astounding number of elk, all the while catering to our every whim and need. My bed was comfortable the food was great and the company even better.

The photos I captured during the weekend exceeded my expectations, but even more importantly I came away from the weekend having personally experienced something truly special."

Ray Carlier – Bethlehem, PA

"Thank you and Dick for making the trip a real joy for me. I liked being with people that have common interests."

Rich Lloyd – Chester County, PA

YOU CAN:

View Photos from Previous Experiences

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZ0yAR8Hilg>
[watch?v=OZ0yAR8Hilg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZ0yAR8Hilg)

Learn more about these photo trips and sign up for a Photography Experience!

<http://www.bobshankphotography.com>

BASIC PHOTO TIPS

BUY A DSLR!

GETTING QUALITY PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ELK OR ANY ANIMAL IS THE GOAL OF MANY WHO ENJOY NATURE. THEY SEE SOMETHING THEY LIKE AND THEY WANT TO REMEMBER IT BY SNAPPING A PHOTOGRAPH AS A KEEPSAKE. THE PROBLEM IS THAT MANY RESORT TO A SMART PHONE OR SOME OTHER INFERIOR CAMERA TO ACCOMPLISH THE TASK AND THE PHOTOGRAPH TO CAPTURE A SPECIAL MEMORY IS LEFT LACKING!

The best advice is to spend a little money and purchase a Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) camera. This does not have to break your bank either. There are many affordable DSLRs from Nikon and Canon that will help tremendously in capturing wildlife photos.

One of the main advantages of a DSLR is that you can change lenses on the camera. So if you are photographing a child's birthday party, a shorter lens is all that is needed. But when wildlife is the intended subject, you can easily switch to a longer tele-photo lens!

DSLRs are full of features that make life much easier even for the amateur photographer. Smart phone cameras have come a long way in a short time, but they still do not stack up to the quality obtained by a DSLR. Compare the images from these two different cameras and the differences are glaring!

Photographing wild animals is not easy. Using makeshift or inferior camera equipment surely will not help. Don't be that person getting in everyone else's way by walking out in the middle of a field to get close enough with your phone camera to snap a photo.

Get the right equipment--you'll be glad you did! Start off with a DSLR and a 70-300mm lens. This combination is a great way to photograph the Pennsylvania Elk, while still maintaining a proper and safe distance from these wild animals. You see serious photographers with really long lenses for a reason!

Save up some money and buy a DSLR. This investment will allow you to capture the memories you desire and help take your photography to the next level!

NEVER STOP LEARNING

I ADMIT THAT I DID NOT REALLY APPLY MYSELF IN HIGH SCHOOL. I HAD OTHER THINGS ON MY MIND BACK IN THOSE DAYS, BUT AS I PROGRESSED THROUGH COLLEGE AND THEN ON TO GRADUATE SCHOOL, I DEVELOPED A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD LEARNING. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I ENJOY LEARNING EVEN TODAY, MANY YEARS LATER!

Mark Twain was known to have said, "The older I got, the smarter my parents got!" Obviously, what changed was Twain's understanding. Anyone can have a quest for learning new things and photographers should never stop learning. There is an inherent danger with photography that is dangerous—the idea that I know all I need to know and I am an accomplished photographer so I don't need to learn anything new any more. Well, this is the beginning of the end for such a photographer. We need to constantly be learning.

The photography equipment we use is changing rapidly these days. New features are constantly being added to camera bodies and even lenses. The approach to photography is changing these days, too. When we stop learning we lose traction and will eventually become extinct. Now, don't get me wrong, some old tricks and traditions can still be valuable today. The point is that we need to apply them with a thorough understanding of photography that requires constant learning.

The internet is chock full of valuable learning tools. I started watching online tutorials a while ago and these training tools are incredibly helpful. For example, I recently watched a number of videos on how to use Adobe InDesign. This online video training, which I first accessed via YouTube provided me with techniques I am now applying to this magazine!

Here is a short list of ways you can commit to "Never Stop Learning:"

- YouTube
- Kelby Training
- Local Photo Clubs
- Online Webinars
- Photography Workshops & Conferences
- Photo Books
- Magazines
- Experimentation

Commit to learning something new each week and you will reap the benefits ten-fold!

Check Out Our Online Version
www.bobshankphotography.com

MY FAVORITE PHOTO DESTINATIONS

CHINCOTEAGUE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

CHINCOTEAGUE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE PHOTO LOCATIONS FOR BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY. THIS PLACE JUST ROCKS! I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I WENT TO THIS LOCATION BECAUSE I CAME HOME WITH A BOATLOAD OF QUALITY IMAGES. THE BIRDS AND OTHER WILDLIFE ARE ABUNDANT AND THE LOCATION IS WELL-SUITED FOR NATURAL AND WILD BACKGROUNDS.

Like any destination, pre-planning is essential for a productive trip. Online research is readily available for most wildlife refuges and Chincoteague has an enormous amount of information available for the online researcher. Maps and Refuge info is easily accessible and will provide you with a good pre-trip agenda. Obviously, travel info and overnight accommodations are also necessary pre-trip requirements.

Packing for a photo trip Chincoteague will be influenced by the time of year you will be there. Long lenses are definitely helpful for any bird photographer and the typical wildlife arsenal will serve you well when visiting this special destination.

If you want to photograph birds then I highly recommend Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge!

Chincoteague Links:

National Park Service Chincoteague Island
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/chinco/>

Nearby:

Assateague Island National Seashore
<http://www.nps.gov/asis/index.htm>

Ocean City Maryland
<http://ococean.com/>

SAMPLE PACKING LIST

Camera
Tripod
70-200mm Lens
200-400mm Lens
24-70mm Lens
Cleaning Equipment
Flash Cards
Backup Battery
Cable Release
Computer
External Hard Drive

Jacket
Hat
Rain Jacket
Long Pants
Hiking Boots
Map
Water Bottle



WILDLIFE TIP OF THE MONTH

PATIENCE

THEY SAY PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE. THIS IS NO MORE TRUE THAN IN WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY. I CONTINUE TO BE AMAZED HOW MANY TIMES I SEE SOMEONE GET OUT OF THEIR CAR, AIM THEIR CAMERA AT A WILD ANIMAL, CLICK THE SHUTTER, AND LEAVE. I GUESS THEY FIGURE THEY GOT THEIR SHOT. BUT THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY THAN JUST SNAPPING A SHOT AND MOVING ON.

Spending time with an animal for any length of time provides more photographs from different angles and perspectives. You also get to observe the animal in its natural habitat doing the things it does each and every day. Besides the changes in animal behavior and their interaction with each other, the light also changes over the course of time. Even in the middle of the day the sun can go behind clouds, so spending more time with a subject is highly recommended.

I actually find it amazing how patient I am when behind my camera. I am not a patient person by nature! But get me onto a wild animal and I can literally stand there all day, behind my tripod, photographing the animal.

The next time you are out on a photo shoot, slow down. Take time to enjoy your surroundings and really observe the subject for a long, long time. This will undoubtedly improve your photography and provide you with better quality photographs! Yep, patience is a virtue, especially in photography.

ON LOCATION: A STEP BY STEP ACCOUNT A SHORT HIKE FROM CAMP

AS I GET READY TO LEAVE MY CAMP UP ON WINSLOW HILL, I DOUBLE-CHECK TO BE SURE I HAVE WHAT I NEED FOR A DAY'S WORTH OF SHOOTING. CAMERA? CHECK. LENSES? CHECK. TELECONVERTER? CHECK. TRIPOD? CHECK. MEMORY CARDS? CHECK. CABLE RELEASE? CHECK. BACKUP BATTERY? CHECK.

This pre-shoot process is pretty darned important because there is nothing worse than getting two miles from camp and realizing I've forgotten something!

Then it's out the door I go. I sometimes have a prearranged route already in my mind, but other times I just make it up as I go, figuring where the wildlife might be most abundant and hoping God's Creation has something special in store on this specific shoot.

I extend each of my three tripod legs and carry the rig over my shoulder. The camera is already turned on and my 200-400mm lens is attached and secured onto the ballhead attached to my tripod. Each of the knobs is tightened, of course, so the whole unit rides nicely on my shoulder.

Sometimes, I take the ThinkTank belt and pouches on

a walk like this, but today I am just going for a short hike, so the ThinkTank stays back at camp. The spare battery and memory card case are in my front left pocket. I also have a small trash bag and a plastic grocery bag in case of rain.

As I walk off my 3 1/2 acre property, I scan with my eyes for any movement as I turn my head back and forth. My gait is steady but slow, trying to sneak like an Indian or mountain man. The object is to see the wildlife before they see me. I've been a hunter since I was 12 years old, so this type of sneaking through the woods comes quite naturally for me now. And as I wildlife photographer, I realized that I am kinda like a hunter, stalking my subjects to capture them on my memory card.

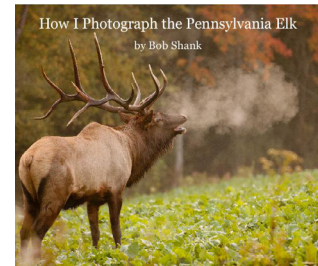
I see a small herd of cow elk to my right in a small field, green with lush grass. The cows are feeding and did not recognize my presence yet. I get as close as possible without being discovered and set up my tripod. Usually the first click gives me away, but I remain still and calm, sometimes pretending not to even care about the elk--a great tip I learned from Lennie Rue III some ten years ago. I take a few shots and then decide to work these cows for a while, so I attach my cable release. Occasionally, I move my tripod slightly to get a better angle around a tree or tall grass. I stay in this location for two hours and nearly fill my Lexar memory card. Is there anything better than a photo hike from the cabin? Not in my book!

CAMERA TIP - VIEWING IN-CAMERA IMAGES BIGGER

SOME NIKON CAMERAS PROVIDE A SETUP FEATURE TO ALLOW YOUR THUMB BUTTON TO BE PRESSED WHILE VIEWING A PHOTO ON YOUR LCD. BY PRESSING THIS BUTTON WHILE PREVIEWING A PHOTO, IT INCREASES IT'S VIEWABLE SIZE TO MAKE IT EASIER TO SEE DETAILS AND CHECK FOR PROPER FOCUS. I USE THIS FEATURE ALL THE TIME! THIS TIP DOES NOT WORK WITH EVERY CAMERA, BUT IT SHOULD WORK FOR THE NIKON CAMERAS FROM THE D90 AND ABOVE. HERE'S HOW HOW TO SET UP A CAMERA TO DO THIS:

1. Go into the menu by pressing the menu button
 2. Go to the Custom Setting Menu (with the pencil)
 3. Then go to Controls (F)
 4. And then Multi Selector Center Button (F1)
 5. Drop down to Playback Mode & press right arrow
 6. Select Zoom On/Off
 7. Select Medium Magnification
 8. And press OK
- Now, when you press the center of the Multi Selector

Button while viewing a photograph on the LCD screen, it will zoom in so you can see more detail. This is helpful to see if key elements are in focus or not. Give this tip a try and see if you like it!



How I Photograph the PA Elk

This book in both hardcover & soft cover editions is available at the Elk Country Visitor's Center on Winslow Hill, PA & online at www.bobshankphotography.com
Learn tried and true techniques for capturing great wildlife photographs!

WILD PHOTO IDEAS PHOTOGRAPH A NON-PROFIT FUND-RAISING EVENT

Do yourself and your creative edge a favor and photograph a non-profit fund-raising event. Several good things can come from doing a photo shoot like this: more opportunities to hone your photography skills, meet some nice and interesting people along the way, do a good deed, and make a difference!

Last year I volunteered to photograph the inaugural PD Bike Tour in Malvern, Pennsylvania. The event was organized to raise money for Parkinson's Disease. I decided to attend this first-time event to capture photographs and help promote this worthy cause. What I didn't think about was the great people I would have the chance to meet and be around for the day. I heard stories of determination, grit, and tenacity! I was motivated to tell the story through my photographs and I even wrote an article for a newspaper.

Photograph a non-profit event--it might just change your perspective and even your life!



WILD PHOTO TIP #1

WATCH THOSE BACKGROUNDS!



WATCH YOUR BACKGROUNDS. PHOTOGRAPHS BECOME BUSY MUCH OF THE TIME DUE TO COMPETING ELEMENTS IN A SCENE. BACKGROUNDS CAUSE PARTICULARLY NASTY PROBLEMS AS LIGHT POLES SPROUT OUT OF PEOPLE'S HEADS AND CLUTTER UP AN OTHERWISE SERENE SCENE.

Backgrounds should be as simple as possible and typically one color if possible. This is exactly why studio photographers use seamless backgrounds—it takes this variable out of the equation!

Take a few moments now to look at some of your recent photographs. Study them closely and pay particular attention to the backgrounds in your photos. What do you see? Are the backgrounds simple and straightforward or are they busy?

By paying attention to backgrounds more carefully, you can bring your photography to a new level. Look at these examples and note which photographs are better based on their backgrounds.

Now, on your next photo shoot, pay careful attention to the backgrounds behind your subjects. Can you clean up a background by moving slightly to one side or the other? Can you blur out a busy background by setting a shallow depth of field?

Backgrounds are important. Pay more attention to the backgrounds in your photos, and the payoff will be tremendous!



PHOTO SOFTWARE TIP SHOOT IN RAW

IN ADVANCED PHOTOGRAPHY RAW IS PREFERRED! MOST ADVANCED CAMERAS HAVE A RAW SETTING, WHICH IS DIFFERENT FROM JPG. WHY IS RAW PREFERRED? WELL, JPG, TIFF, OR ANY OTHER FORMAT OTHER THAN RAW BAKE IN SOME SETTINGS WHEN THE SHUTTER IS RELEASED. BAKED IN MEANS THAT YOU CANNOT CHANGE SOME SETTINGS ONCE THE IMAGE IS CAPTURED.

White balance, for example, cannot be changed in a jpg format. Capture an image in raw and you have the ability to change the white balance at your will after the image is captured!

There are other features that can be changed when shooting in RAW. The one downside is that RAW images require more space on a memory card. But with memory cards being less expensive and larger these days, the trade-off is, well, worth it!

Set your camera to the RAW setting and give it a try for a while. Then, when editing images, see what you can change in post-processing. Give it a try! You will be able to make significant changes even after you captured the image with your camera!

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PA Elk Photo Experience

www.bobshankphotography.com



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CREATIVE CORNER



PHOTO CRITIQUE

LEARNING HOW TO TAKE BETTER PHOTOGRAPHS
BY BEING CRITICAL OF OUR WORK



Bugling Bull Breath

This photograph was captured on a brisk, cold morning in the fall during the rut. Bulls were bugling and competing to breed cows. The day was beautiful and the fall colors were just starting to convert the landscape to a paint-like scene full of vibrant colors.

The breath of the bull while he was bugling can be seen in the brisk air in front of his open mouth. His large rack of antlers is also glistening in the sun from the frost that is slowly melting away and leaving behind a slick, wet sheen. The bull's head is tilted back slightly in that classic bugling pose as the rack is laid back along the line of his body. Finally, the background is thrown out of focus to keep the focus of the viewer's eyes on the main subject--the majestic bull elk.

These are all good features of this photograph but it is not perfect by any means. The turnip greens are a bit oversaturated. There is also a group of weeds in the lower left-hand corner that slightly blocks a clear view of the bull. The subject is a bit too much on the left side of the image, which creates not only an off-balance photograph, but also makes framing this print difficult without losing some detail behind the frame.

Sometimes we are limited in wildlife photography by the location of an animal in a scene or by the conditions of the weather. Photographing wild animals is certainly not like creating portraits in a studio! There are times we have to make some compromises to even get a shot. This is true in this photograph. It is not perfect, but I believe it works quite well. What do you think?