

10 ESSENTIAL WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

1. **DIRTY DON'T MATTER.** You need to be prepared to get dirty. Your shot is important, and your clothes will wash. This is not for you if you're scared of getting wet or dirty. Be prepared to lie in a puddle if that's where you need to be to make the shot work.
2. **EYE-LEVEL.** When it comes to animals, you really need the camera to be at the same level as the subject. Shots of birds from below or animals from above don't work- we always see them from that perspective. Meeting eye-level puts us in the shot with them.
3. **COMPOSITION.** Be aware of the background. Be aware of where in the shot your subject is. Be particularly aware of where it's facing. Facing Left, position it on the right and vice versa. Placing a figure on the left that is facing right gives a feeling of hope and positivity, on the right facing left is thoughtful, reflective, or nostalgic.
4. **YOU'RE YOUR AUDIENCE.** Take photos YOU like. If you like the picture you're taking, you're more likely to take care both at the time, and with the after-work. If you can't love your work, you can't expect other people to.
5. **MANUAL AS MUCH AS POSS.** Using auto may be easier, but only by using manual can you control your shot. At the very least, use manual for focus. A lot of things can be changed on the computer in processing, but refocusing can't.
6. **USE RAW.** If possible, shoot in RAW mode. There are many benefits, but the most useful is that you can undo any changes you make even years later. Preferences change over time, and the same is for what changes you like to make post-production. In RAW you can redo them without having to save a copy of the original first.
7. **WASTE SHOTS.** Expect to take a hundred pics for every good one. Animals are unpredictable, weather is unpredictable. If you get three or four decent shots from a day's shooting, you're doing alright.
8. **DON'T DELETE.** No matter how bad the shot, don't delete it. Firstly, you can learn from mistakes. If you regularly go through your shots, being reminded of the dodgy ones helps you remember not to repeat them. You can also try and work out what went wrong- whether it was something you did, or the world around you.
9. **LEAVE THE SCREEN ALONE.** Don't keep checking your pictures in-camera. Besides wasting battery, you could miss a shot. Check them when you have a break, or finish, or at home. The truth is, these pics are done- you can't do anything about them now.
10. **APPRECIATE.** Every so often, give yourself five minutes off, just to take in, enjoy and appreciate your surroundings and your subject. In direct contradiction to Tip 9, don't stress if you miss a good shot. It's important to remind yourself of what you're celebrating with your photos.