

Wildlife Photography

At the Westcountry Wildlife Photography Centre, near Okehampton, Devon.

with Nigel Hicks FBIPP

Date: Saturday 4th June 2016

Time: 10.30am to 4.30pm

Tutor: Nigel Hicks FBIPP

Location: Westcountry Wildlife Photography Centre, Upcott Grange Farm, Broadwoodwidge, Lifton, Devon, PL16 0JS.

Meeting place: At the entrance to Upcott Grange Farm.

Course Outline

The day will be spent with Nigel practising wildlife photography without the need to spend hours or days tracking truly wild animals. The animals at this centre are kept in naturalistic enclosures and are used to the presence of people, so finding and approaching them is not a problem. This enables us to maximise the opportunity to practise the actual art of photographing them: choosing the best perspective, capturing body language, how to cope with animals constantly on the move, photographing typical behaviour, animals in their environment/context, capturing personality and any animal-human interactions, for example.

Animals that are likely to be photographed include red fox, wild cat, European otter, roe deer and barn owl, among others.

The aim of the course will be to teach the following skills:

1. How to control and make use of the balance between shutter speed, lens aperture and ISO to gain the best exposure;
2. How to use some of the semi-manual modes, in particular shutter-priority and aperture-priority, in order to help you to get away from 'auto-everything';
3. How to use a few other important digital camera functions, such as the image histogram and exposure compensation;
4. How to spot and capture great animal compositions with subjects that of course are not trained to cooperate and/or pose for the camera!
5. Capturing interesting or typical animal behaviour;
6. Obtaining images that make the most of any anthropomorphic elements, maximising the chances of empathy between human viewer and the animal depicted in an image.
7. How to look out for the classic mistakes in wildlife photography, as relate to body language and posture.

Skill Level

Participants should have at least a basic understanding of what shutter speed and lens aperture mean, plus a knowledge of how to operate their own camera in order to get at least basic images. They should also be comfortable and relaxed around animals that are not pets.

Beyond this, the only requirements are enthusiasm, and an open mind and readiness to learn!

About the Tutor

Nigel Hicks has been a professional photographer for over 20 years, photographing all over the world for a range of travel clients and photo libraries, including Dorling Kindersley and the National Geographic Creative. He is a Fellow of the BIPP, and has been running his own

photography workshops, mostly in southwest England, for the past 10 years, as well as occasional photography tours to Iceland. To see examples his work go to www.nigelhicks.com.

What to Bring

Camera equipment: Participants can use either a digital SLR or a compact camera, though the former is greatly preferred for this kind of photography. Most work will require a telephoto lens, ranging from approx 70 to 200mm. A macro lens may even be useful for some subjects, plus also a standard lens in the 28-70mm range. A flash gun may also be useful, though most photography will not use this.

All participants should bring a tripod, spare camera batteries, and spare memory card(s).

Anyone with doubts about how to use their camera should bring their camera manual.

Other items: a) water-proofing for both their camera gear and themselves; b) a packed lunch, drinks and snacks (there is nowhere nearby to buy anything); c) mobile phone.

Directions: From the A30 between Okehampton and Launceston, in west Devon, take the Broadwoodwidge turn-off. Take the road through Broadwoodwidge, following signs for Upcott. Follow country lanes towards Upcott and St Giles on the Heath until you reach a crossroads. Turn right here, following signs towards Tillislow. You'll come to Upcott Grange Farm after a few hundred yards, on the right. Park in the lay-by outside the farm.