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Photo opportunities recently have been few and far between - wet weather, strong winds and poor light combined with a second National Lockdown and the closure of many parks and reserves has resulted in a lack of shutter activity. I hope you have all fared better.

The shot above was taken a few years ago in West Yellowstone at the Wolf & Grizzly Centre. I hope you have better luck decorating your tree!

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Welcome to Issue 11 of Nature Group eNews.

Another month of National lockdown will have ended by the time you read this, nevertheless large parts of the country will still have tight restrictions. You might find you have time on your hands. Why not make use of it and enter our Annual Exhibition? An Entry Form is included at the back of this issue. We look forward to receiving your entries.

During the summer Nature Group Members have been able to benefit from a number of 'Zoom' workshops. Topics have included 'Raw File Conversion' and the use of 'Layers & Masks' both from Dr. Ian Wilson ARPS and 'Gaining a Distinction in Natural History' by Chair of the Nature Distinctions Panel, Mick Durham FRPS. October saw us hold Chairman's Day and the Nature Group's

AGM plus in late November we held our first 'zoomed' Nature Distinctions Advisory Day

In many ways Zoom has been a great advantage to have during this time. Your Committee have been busy and meeting monthly using Zoom; eliminating the need for long, tiring car journeys.

Field Meetings have been a fundamental part of Nature Group activities since its inception. I can remember when our calendar boasted over 20 meetings around the country from Spring through Autumn. Sadly, in recent years the number of meetings has fallen considerably and unfortunately it just isn't possible for Committee to run more without the help of members. Please consider hosting a meeting.

Thank you to all those members who have contributed to this issue of eNews. All members are invited to submit items of nature photography interest - field meeting reports; reviews of new cameras/ lenses/ software/natural history books/ field guides/photography books/etc. and photography related items for sale.

Please share information with your fellow members through eNews.

Have yourselves a Merry Christmas and remember to stay safe.

Dawn Osborn FRPS, eNews Editor

Switching from Canon to Olympus

by Roger Hance FRPS

I had been a full frame Canon user for over 25 years but just over 2 years ago I sold all my Canon equipment and switched to the Olympus Micro Four Thirds system.

Why did I do this? Well, none of us are getting any younger and, although a decade ago I could carry a heavy tripod and a big rucksack full of gear around all day, I was finding that carrying such heavy gear was taking the fun out of photography. I still wanted to go out and take pictures, but often I would think to myself "Do I really want to carry that all heavy kit around today?" Invariably the answer would be no and I would stay at home. The final turning point came on a trip to Dovedale in the Peak District to photograph Dippers. I arrived very keen and eager to get some good shots but within 30mins of arrival, carrying a Gitzo tripod, Wimberley head, 600mm lens +1.4 converter and a 1DX body, I was tired, my shoulders ached and I soon got fed up. The time had come for change.

The thing that worried me most about changing from a full frame DSLR to a smaller sensor system was the quality, particularly when making prints (I am a Permajet Envoy and it was important that I would still be able to get excellent quality A3 prints using the Olympus system). The thing that convinced me this would not be

an issue was when I saw photographers like David Tipling, Mike Lane and many other top nature photographers changing to Olympus. They would not have changed unless the system produced excellent results. I have to say that I think the print quality I get from Olympus files is even better than the files I printed from when using the Canon system (something I still cannot quite understand because logic says this should not be the case).

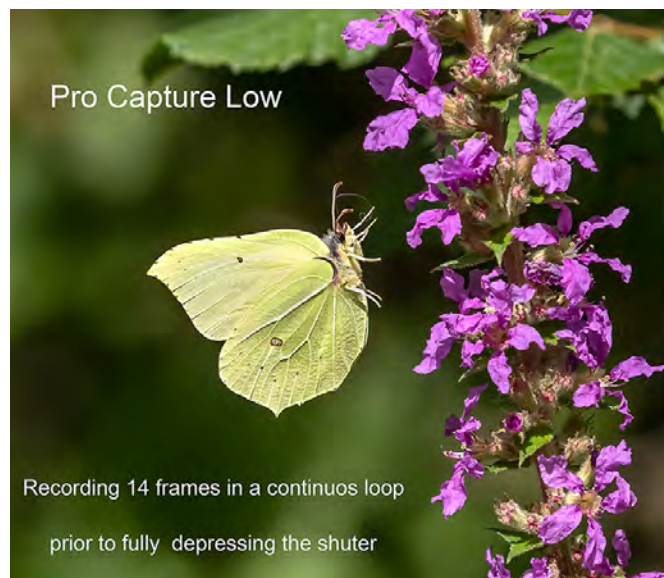
When I initially bought into the system, I did think I had made a big mistake. Compared to a conventional DSLR camera, the Olympus is quite complex and it took me a few weeks to get used to all the menus. Once I had done that, I started to realise what an amazing piece of kit it is.

For me, probably the biggest advantage (although by no means the only one) is the weight. The lenses are so much lighter and compact and I can quite easily carry around a camera that is giving me the equivalent DSLR focal length of 840mm all day without tiring. Another big advantage is the Image Stabilisation. With the Olympus, not only is there image stabilisation in the lens, but in the body as well. I have taken hand held shots with the Olympus at 2secs and still got sharp images.



Another huge advantage is 'Pro Capture'. I actually had the Olympus for about 6 months before I started using this. I went along to an Olympus Open day at London Camera Exchange where David Smith, one of the Olympus experts was demonstrating the equipment and helping with any problems. I explained that I general had a go at all areas of photography, but primarily 'bird photography'. He remarked "you must love Pro Capture" then. Rather sheepishly I said that I had not used it much because I had not really got to grips with it. He said to me "If you like bird photography and you don't use Pro Cap, its a bit like owning a Maserati and driving it around in first or second gear". He kindly explained how to use it, all the settings, etc. I now use it at every opportunity I get.

So what is Pro Capture? Pro Capture is a means of taking action shots where 'normal human reaction time' is not fast enough. Take for example a fast flying bird about to fly away from or to a branch or post. With a conventional DSLR you lock the focus on to the bird and



then wait for it to fly off. The problem is in the split second timing between your eye seeing the bird fly away and your brain sending a message to your finger held on the shutter button. Nine times out of ten you will have missed it. If you are really quick you may get the bird part out of the frame but often you will have no bird at all.

The problem with human reaction time is that it is not anywhere near as fast as we think it actually is. I can remember reading an article on sports photography and it said 'If you see it in the viewfinder, you have missed it'.

Pro capture takes advantage of the electronic shutter. You can set it to either Pro Cap High (up to 60 frames a second) or Pro Cap Low (30 frames a second) Continual autofocus works and will hold focus on Pro Cap Low, but on Pro Cap High you have to manually focus on a certain point where you think the subject with fly from or to.

When you half press the shutter button in either Pro Cap mode the camera starts writing 14 photos to the cameras image buffer, - but not the SD card. When it gets to frame 15, it deletes frame 1, when it gets to 16, it deletes frame 2, when it gets to 17 it deletes frame 3, etc. It will do this continually while you half depress the shutter button.



E-M1 MkII - 40-150mm F2.8 Pro Lens +MC14

ISO 500 1/800th th sec at F5.6

C-AF Sequential Low



When you finally decide to press the shutter the whole way, (as soon as you see the bird take off), the camera grabs the last 14 frames in the buffer and writes them to the SD card while also saving all the images that you shoot while you continue to keep the shutter pressed. Pro Capture has put my success rate jump through the roof!

Using the lighter and more compact Olympus Micro Four Thirds Mirrorless system has brought back the enjoyment into my photography along with a big increase in my success rate.

EM1X 40-150mm F2.8 Pro ISO 800 1/2500th sec at F2.8



Pro Capture High

Manual Focus

In The Blink of An Eye

by Robert Thompson FRPS FIPF

Introduction

Since the digital revolution, photography has been in a constant state of flux. The sophistication of camera technology and the advances in software development make it possible to capture images that would have been difficult to achieve with film in the past. Is it a good thing? In many ways, yes, but the continual pushing of the boundaries means as photographers we need to frequently revise our style and approach. Exploring other ways in which we can express ourselves through our imagery can often mean looking at familiar subjects differently.

I was commissioned some time ago to shoot a series of behavioural images of frogs for a publication. At that time I was also drafting the chapter in my current macro photography book on flash and was looking for subjects other than insects. The commissioning client also wanted, if possible, to show the subject diving into the water and the posture it adopted when doing so.

Frogs spend most of their time close to a pond, or stream. When danger threatens, they quickly head for the relative safety of water, using their large and powerful hind legs to propel themselves off the ground and into the murky depths beyond the reach of potential predators. I was keen on this occasion, to show the subject's posture and behaviour adopted under the water rather than breaking the surface as most high-speed images often show.

I have always had an interest in high-speed flash, and worked on Barn Owls and several other species using film and medium format during the 1990's. At that time, Stephen Dalton was the pioneer of high-speed flash photography and had a world-renowned reputation in this field. As a young enthusiastic nature photographer, I was delighted when I was invited to join Stephen's Natural History Photographic Agency (NHPA) as it was then over twenty-five years ago. I got to know Stephen and he was kind enough to write the foreword for one of my early photography books. He had, himself, worked on frogs for some of his earlier publications and I greatly admired his images of them and the many other subjects that graced his viewfinder. His images were inspirational then, and still are today even twenty-five years on.

One of the qualities that separates an inspirational photographer from the average is not technical competency (although important), but innovation, a creative mind and the ability and determination to carry it through. The camera is not the first, but the last link in the chain; its function is merely to capture the vision. Planning and preparation are the key factors to creating successful images in my experience.

Planning

Spring is an ideal time to work with these fascinating creatures: activity among individuals is high and specimens are much easier to find. I am one of those people who likes to plan everything out on paper in advance. The construction of a suitable tank was the first of the tasks. I thought a glass unit of around 50cm would be adequate for the type of shot I had in mind. It also needed to be large enough to accommodate a frog at full stretch jumping into the water, but at the same time not too big otherwise the subjects would have too much of an area to choose from. The tank was constructed using quarter-inch glass, but I used a thinner sheet on the front section to improve the clarity. The tank was placed on polystyrene to even out any possible stresses in the base when filled with water.

Setting up the Tank

When selecting and arranging collected material from a pond, it's easy to overcomplicate the set. You should have some idea in your mind as to how you want to arrange the aquatic material in advance. One thing to be aware of is, the more elaborate your set is, the more problems it's likely to cause you. Keep things simple, that way you will have fewer problems when it comes to the microparticles and broken fragments of aquatic vegetation that appear in the water, which although natural, can be a source of annoyance and a distraction when illuminated with flash.

It's a good idea to leave the water standing for a day to allow the tiny air bubbles, which congregate on the surface of the glass and the algal bloom to settle and clarity to return to the water. To keep the temperature cool, I place ice cubes into the water before I begin to shoot since the temperature of the water is naturally higher than it would be outside. Getting any creature in water to behave naturally is all about trying to emulate its natural conditions as close as possible.

The Shoot

Once I was happy with the set arrangement, I used a pair of LED lights mounted on goosenecks, which made it easier to adjust the position of the lighting and gauge the overall effect when replaced with the flash units. An old toy duck of my daughter's was the prop, which I suspended on a wire in the tank; this allowed me to work out the ideal lighting position and assess the overall ambience of the setup.

The next step in the process was to provide a prop for the frogs to jump from. When everything else was in place, I positioned the infrared beam close to the surface of the water as a starting point, although this would need some fine-tuning once I got started. I also knew from previous

experience with other subjects that there would be issues to solve, especially getting it to perform within a restricted area. Also, establishing the ideal focusing spot so that most of the images would be reasonably sharp since the subject was likely to interrupt the beam in a different place each time. Travel distance from interrupting the beam is another issue that requires a little fine-tuning. I did some test shots to refine the exposure but accepted that the lighting would also vary slightly with each shot depending on where the beam was interrupted.

I was fortunate that I had a ready source of frogs just a couple of hundred yards from my home and collected several so I could swap between sessions. I was careful not to overdo it with a single specimen. Short sessions work best; subjects become easily stressed and will lose the incentive to jump. One frog barely jumped at all, when it finally did it was a bit of a clumsy affair. However, I found that one particular frog was a lot more responsive and amenable than the others and despite overshooting the tank on numerous occasions; it did not dampen its enthusiasm for jumping. Patience is the key but be prepared for a high failure rate. The speed at which they enter the water is fast and despite trying to reduce their options, you cannot be sure where they will interrupt the beam! Legs are often partially out of the frame while other shots despite having an ideal posture can be slightly out of focus. Each time they jump the speed at which they enter the water varies as does the position of the legs. Persistence does pay off and after a couple of days and approximately 200 photos later I had managed to get some which I was happy with.

One of the advantages of digital capture is the fact that you have instant access to the image and can tweak the setup when necessary, which I had to do on some occasions during the sessions. From the beginning of the project, I had an image in my mind of what I wanted to achieve and by the end of the two-day session I got what I wanted!



Image information

The three example images show how different the postures are when they enter the water at high-speed. You can clearly see the protective membrane that covers the eyes when entering the water. The final image (left) is the posture that I had in my mind when I started the project. You can also see the trapped air bubbles surrounding the head.

All images photographed at ISO 200 using a Nikon D810 and 105mm micro Nikkor lens.

Field Meeting Report.

led by Julia Andrew & James Foad LRPS

Clowes Wood, Kent.
Sunday 18th October 2020

Clowes Wood, part of the Blean Woodland Complex, is a National Nature Reserve covering 11 square miles near to Canterbury and Whitstable in Kent and is one of the largest areas of ancient woodland in England. It is also home to the rare Heath Fritillary butterfly and the nocturnal migrant Nightjar. On this occasion, locating fungi was the aim.

Nine RPS members joined this autumn field trip for a socially distanced foray. Splitting into two groups, one group of five led by Julia Andrew and another group of four led by James Foad, they set off from the car park in a westerly direction, but taking separate paths in accordance with Covid-19 restrictions.

Julia's group walked through woodland comprising of Birch, Sweet Chestnut, Oak and Hornbeam, finding fungus both in and around the clearings and deeper into the wooded areas. There was Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*), known for its scarlet cap and fairytale look, bright yellow Sulphur Tuft (*Hypholoma fasciculare*) and tiny *Mycena* species hiding in and amongst moss covered tree stumps. James's group followed the Blean trail alongside the woodbanks and ditches locating Fly Agaric, deep golden Yellow Stag's Horn Fungus (*Calocera viscosa*) and the wonderful Shaggy Inkcap (*Coprinus comatus*).

Photographic tips were shared, including how to focus stack and how to adjust tripods for low-down, ground level fungi. The use of other equipment such as tweezers, pastry brushes, reflectors and clamps was explored. One of our experts was even able to tell us which fungus were edible; but we didn't risk it.

After an enjoyable and interesting morning, both groups met back at the car park for lunch where they shared socially distanced stories in a socially distanced circle before heading back into the woodland for the afternoon. When light faded everyone met back at the car park where further stories were shared and farewells were made.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable day shared by like-minded fungi enthusiasts and it was particularly special because it's been such a difficult year due to Covid 19.

Images:

Top: Photographing Fly Agaric by Mike Walker

Middle: Fly Agaric by Nigel Symington

Bottom: *Mycena inclinata* by Nigel Symington





Images:
 Top left: *Amanita muscaria* by James Foad
 Top right: *Amantia muscaria* by Julia Andrew
 Lower right: *Mycena* species by Steve Oakes
 Bottom: A 'socially distanced' walk by Steve Oakes



Wildlife Gardens & Lockdown

by Richard Revels FRPS

During 2020 the Covid-19 virus has changed all our lives. With so many restrictions on where we can go and what we can do. Like most Nature Group members, my plans for 2020 had to be adapted due to lockdown restrictions. The wildlife coming into my garden had always played an important part in providing me with wildlife subjects for my camera, but had never been as important to me as they became this year, during the lockdown.

For many years I have been encouraging wildlife into my garden by making it as wildlife friendly as possible. That has enabled me to photograph whatever came quickly without the need to travel. Over the years it has provided me with many thousands of pictures of creatures ranging from Mice, Voles, Hedgehogs, Grey Squirrel and Red Fox, to various bird species, and many hundreds of different insects and other invertebrates that ranged in size from about 2mm Ants and Aphids, to Privet Hawkmoths, Britain's largest resident moth. Most gardens hold a remarkable amount of wildlife and if trees and bushes are in your garden or near by, that will boost numbers considerably. There is likely to be well in excess of 1,000 different invertebrate species in most gardens, many will be small and mostly go unnoticed as we go about our daily lives.

It seems likely that Covid-19 will affect our lives for some time yet, so making our gardens more wildlife friendly seems a very good idea. My own modest sized garden is mostly set out to attract wildlife for photography, but it also provides me with some fruit and vegetables for eating.

Having a garden pond will enhance the range of creatures coming into any garden; however a pond may not be suitable for every household as small children can fall in and drown. If you do have a pond, preferably without fish, it will attract a much wider range of wildlife into a garden. The local Frogs and Newts soon found mine, as did Dragon and Damselflies.

One essential thing for every pond should be an escape route for Hedgehogs and other small mammals that may fall in - they may be unable to climb up the slippery plastic sides of the pond liner and drown. All that is required to prevent that happening is to put a few logs or concrete slabs partly in the water. That will also provide a drinking and bathing platform for birds and other creatures. Every year I see female Southern Hawker Dragonflies egg laying on the various logs around my pond edges.





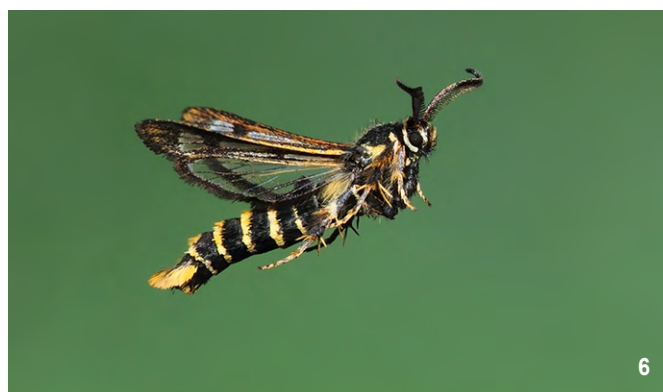
In the September 2020 issue of the Nature Group eNewsletter my article showed an area of my garden with many Corn Marigolds *Chrysanthemum segetum* and other once common wild flowers. Such flowers provide a variety of insects with food as well as looking good. Several of my friends and neighbours have requested some seeds for their own gardens. Many garden centres sell packets of wild flower seeds and that is where most of mine originally came from. As a general approach I would say if garden flowers are attracting Bees, Butterflies and other wildlife they are good plants to have, if however they are just for show providing no food for visiting insects, I personally would consider replacing them with plants that provide both nectar and pollen, as well as looking attractive.

Although lawns are great places for children to play, and adults to relax and socialise on, they are usually fairly sterile places for wildlife. However for the sake of family harmony I would suggest getting approval of your family before making major changes to a lawn. If lawns are not kept too tidy and well-trimmed, they can produce some unexpected wild flowers that just appear, perhaps from wind-blown seed or maybe seeds that hitched a ride on boots or clothing. I know several people who are extremely proud of the wild orchids that appeared on their lawns. They usually begin with just one or two plants but if left to flower and seed, numbers can build up over a few years. One house in Bedford has several hundred Common Spotted Orchids flowering on their



lawn every year. Bee orchids also frequently establish themselves on lawns; however numbers of this orchid can fluctuate greatly from year to year.

Shrubs and small bushes can attract wildlife into gardens, especially if they are the food plant of the larval stage of insects. They can also provide some shade during the heat of the day and help prevent insects overheating. So you may conclude from the above that I try to have a mixture of flowers and shrubs as well as a pond for wildlife, I do however also grow some fruit and vegetables for myself. My garden has become one of the best local places for photographing wildlife. Ideally a garden needs flowering plants for invertebrates to feed on from late winter through to late autumn, and in my garden that will start with Dandelions and Primroses and end with Devils-bit Scabious and Ivy flowers.



My Top 10 'must have' flowers in my wildlife garden.

Marjoram	<i>Origanum vulgare</i> , is excellent for a range of insects.
Scabious	any or all three species, Field, Small, and Devils-Bit.
Red Valerian	<i>C. ruber</i> . If dead-headed will continue to produce flowers into autumn.
Buddleia	Good for a range of butterflies, bees and flies.
Sedum	Usually good for butterflies in early autumn, but hardly any this year.
Knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i> excellent for a range of insects.
Wood Forget-me-not	<i>M. sylvaticia</i> . A good early spring flowering plant.
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i> . Good for insects on the flowers in autumn, but needs keeping under control. Holly Blue butterfly larvae feed on the flower buds in August and September.
Lavender	A good garden flower for a range of bees and other insects.
Ox-eye daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> , is a good flowers for insects and they also brighten up any long grass areas of a garden.

Books about Garden Wildlife and creating your own Wildlife Garden.

Rather than write about how to create a wildlife garden myself I recommend getting the below two books that are excellent guides, with many illustrations. Both books are well worth getting as they give plenty of good advice about a range of subjects.

Chris Packham's Back Garden Nature Reserve. Published in 2001 by New Holland, for The Wildlife Trusts. ISBN 1-85974-520-2

Excellent advice about making a wildlife garden covering just about everything you need to know. The many illustrations are a mixture of artwork and photographs. This is a 'must have' book for creating or improving a garden for wildlife.

Guide to Garden Wildlife by Richard Lewington. Published in 2008 by British Wildlife Publishing. ISBN 978-0-9531399-7-2

Part of this book also gives excellent advice about making a wildlife garden and with Richard Lewington's superb paintings covering many hundreds of the most common creatures to be found in gardens, it's a 'must have' book. The bird paintings are by Richard's brother, Ian Lewington, and are also of superb quality. In total there are over 900 paintings as well as dozens of photographs.

Richard Revels FRPS. Autumn 2020.



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Image Captions:

1. The cold snowy weather of 'The Beast from the East' during March 2018 brought this **Red Fox** into my own and several neighbours gardens looking for food. Like many urban foxes it looks as if it has been hit by a car, damaging the fur on its hind leg. It was seen for about half an hour. I took this picture from a window inside my house.
2. My garden pond at the end of June 2020. Note the concrete slabs and logs that provide an escape for small mammals and a bathing platform for birds. The logs provide a substrate on which the Southern Hawker Dragonfly lays its eggs each summer.

Image captions continued on next page

Image captions continued from previous page.

3. A female **Southern Hawker Dragonfly** egg laying on a log around my pond edge.
4. Most years I find a **Crab Spider** on the flowers in my garden waiting to ambush a visiting insect. This one caught a male Gatekeeper butterfly and a few days later a small Bumble Bee. If prey are present in your garden the predators will soon move in and find them.
5. The **Common Spotted Orchid** can become established on garden lawns not treated with weed killers or fertiliser. This lawn in Bedford had well over 200 flowering on the day I visited it and the owners were justly proud of this splendid display.
6. The **Raspberry Clearwing** moth is one of the new arrivals to Britain this century, and was first recorded in Bedfordshire in 2008. In July 2010 I put out a pheromone lure next to my Raspberry canes and several males were attracted several males to it. I set up my high speed flash to capture one in flight as it flew towards the pheromone lure.
7. Last year there were five **Knott Grass Moth Larvae** feeding on the Devils-bit Scabious flower buds. Although this is a very striking caterpillar, the adult moth is but much less showy.
8. **Goldfinch** flying to my birds feeder. These birds have become quite frequent in gardens in my area during the past few decades, probably because people have been putting out bird feeders.
9. During 2020 I saw several female **Brimstone Butterflies** egg laying on Buckthorn bushes in my garden. When the larvae started feeding I netted two of them over to protect them from predators. The remaining larvae all disappeared within weeks, no doubt eaten by predators. This is one of the protected Brimstones that hatched while I was in my garden. I removed the net and photographed it before it flew away.
10. In the 1990s **Roselle's Bush Crickets** were found only in the South Eastern Counties of England but they have extended their range and are now found in the Central and Midland Counties. They are seen most years in my garden. Some females have wings capable of flight that makes finding new suitable habitats easy.

Nature Group Videos

Videos were made of most of our recent Zoom events. If you missed or would like to watch any of them again, please go to Nature Group Home page <https://rps.org/groups/nature/> You will find a new section 'Event Recordings' <https://rps.org/groups/nature/event-recordings/> All future recordings will be listed there.

1. Two different sessions on **Raw Conversion for Nature Photographers.** Dr Ian Wilson ARPS
2. **Gaining a Distinction in Natural History,** Mick Durham FRPS
3. **Layers and Masks,** Dr Ian Wilson ARPS
4. Chairman's Day - 31st October 2020.
An impressive line up of speakers!
If you missed this event you should watch this.

Future Events will include:

1. **Printing Your Images** by Dr Ian Wilson ARPS
This talk will include preparing images for printing, profiles for screen and paper, etc.
2. **UK Wildlife - Introductions & Conservation.**
Nick Upton is a multi-award winning filmmaker and photographer who has worked with Sir David Attenborough at the BBC and produced many films for the BBC and broadcasters worldwide.

From the Programme Coordinator

It would be wonderful for the Nature Group to have outings in all parts of the UK in 2021.

Do you know of locations where a Field Meeting could take place? Locations could be anywhere you know well or a more formal site, such as a Reserve. The meetings would have to be for a controlled number of members (currently 6 can meet outdoors) and can be for a whole or half day.

Please let me know if you are interested in showing Members around one of your favourite spots. You do not need to be an expert, just a knowledge of the site and an interest in sharing photography with like-minded people. We will do all the advertising and booking, so it really isn't very time-consuming. Obviously, while Covid restrictions remain, groups will be limited in number and people will be reminded about observing social distancing.

If you have questions then I would be pleased to answer them.

Please contact me at: annmiles70@gmail.com

Publication information

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Mid Summer	Copy deadline end June Published late July.

All contributions should be submitted to the Editor at: naturegroup_ews_editor@btinternet.com. Any item of interest to nature photographers is welcomed, including reviews on equipment and relevant books. Copy should be submitted as .txt or .doc files by email. Please do not send hand written copy.

Digitally captured photographic images should be supplied as flattened 8bit sRGB tif* or jpg files, 6" x 4" at 200 pixels per inch. Please do not submit larger images. * Preferred format.

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Distribution:

eNews is available to members as a download from the Nature Group Members section of the RPS website. An RPS Bulletin advising members of its availability will be emailed to Members using addresses supplied by them to the RPS Membership Department in Bristol. Please update them if you change your email address.

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Design & layout

by Dawn Osborn FRPS

Nature Group Committee

Officers:

Chair: Thomas Hanahoe FRPS,
Bedfordshire
Email: thomhanahoe@gmail.com

Hon. Secretary: Duncan Locke LRPS
Worcester.
E-mail: duncan.locke@btinternet.com

Hon. Treasurer: *
vacant

Committee Members:

Vice Chairman: David O'Neill LRPS
Berkshire,
Email: david.oneill_nh@outlook.com

Editor of The Iris: Gerald Griffin ARPS
Staffordshire.
E-mail: iris_editor@griff45.com

eNewsletter Editor: Dawn Osborn FRPS
Norfolk.
Email: naturegroup_ews_editor@btinternet.com

Exhibition Secretary: Ralph Snook ARPS
Bristol
E-mail: rpsngexsec@btinternet.com

NG Rep to SIG Committee: David O'Neill LRPS
Berkshire,
Email: david.oneill_nh@outlook.com

Programme Co-ordinator: Ann Miles FRPS
Cambridgeshire,
Email: annmiles70@gmail.com

Webmaster: Ralph Snook ARPS
Bristol
E-mail: rpsnatureweb@rps.org

Julia Andrew LRPS
London
Email: andrew.julia@gmail.com

James Foad LRPS
Kent
email: jamesfoadlrps@inbox.com

Stan Saunders ARPS
Bedfordshire
stan.saunders2@btpopenworld.com

Julia Wainwright ARPS
Middlesex
Email: julia@julasimagesuk.com

Ex officio Committee members:

President of the Society;
Chief Executive Office (CEO) of the Society;
Hon. Treasurer of the Society;
Chair of the Natural History Distinctions Panel
Immediate Past Chair of the Nature Group:
Kevin Elsby FRPS.

* Members please note:

David O'Neill is currently acting as Nature Group Hon. Treasurer. He cannot continue in this role beyond the 2021 AGM. If you have the necessary experience, please help the Nature Group by volunteering for this very important role. Please contact David O'Neill for further information. Email: david.oneill_nh@outlook.com

Nature Group Exhibitions:

CDs/DVDs of older Nature Group Exhibitions are available for purchase by camera clubs/photo-graphic societies for use in their programme. Please contact the Exhibition Secretary, E-mail: rpsngexsec@btinternet.com

PicturesToExe presentations of the 2020 exhibition have been created in both Windows and Mac versions and must be downloaded to your own computer in order to view them. Information on downloading is provided on the Dropbox content page.

The 2020 Exhibition is available now and previous years will be added as time allows. Access to the Dropbox account is available to Nature Group Members by requesting the link by email from the webmaster: natureweb@rps.org

Website Galleries

Members are invited to have their Associate or Fellowship Nature Distinctions panel added to the Distinctions Gallery. LRPS panels will be allowed if they consist solely of nature images. Distinctions panels should include an image of the panel's layout. Members may also have 12 of their nature images added to the Members' Gallery.

• Image files should be named as follows:

Image Title by Author.jpg
eg 'Blackbird by John Smith ARPS.jpg'.
The title is used to create the accreditation/ copyright shown when hovering over the image, so it is very important that you follow this instruction.

• All images must be converted to sRGB colour and saved in jpg format. Image size will be adjusted when adding the gallery to the website.

• Please forward your images to the webmaster at natureweb@rps.org via wetransfer (or a similar application) to avoid issues with email size limits.



The Royal Photographic Society,

RPS HOUSE, 337 PAINTWORKS, ARNOS VALE, BRISTOL BS4 3AR, UK.

Tel: 0117 316 4450 VAT Registration No. GB 753 3057 41 Registered Charity No. 1107831
www.rps.org | www.rps.org/contact Follow us: twitter.com/The_RPS Like us: facebook.com/royalphotographic.society

Nature Group Committee Elections 2021

Would YOU like to join the Committee?

The Nature Group Committee is elected to serve for two years.
The next Election will be at the AGM on 24th April 2021 for the 2021-2023 Committee.

We are keen to hear from any Nature Group Member who would like to join the Committee and assist in the running of the Group. Perhaps there are things that you would like to see the Group doing? If so, why not join the Committee and put your ideas forward?

The Committee meets on-line about every six weeks or so, allowing Committee Members from all parts of the UK and beyond to attend meetings without the need for travelling.
All Committee Members are expected to make a full contribution to the operation of the Group.

The Committee roles to be elected are:

**Vice Chair
Honorary Secretary
Four Committee Members**

**Special Interest Group Representative to RPS
Honorary Treasurer**

With impending changes to the Committee we are particularly keen to find a new Honorary Secretary and a new Honorary Treasurer.

Please feel free to contact any of the present Committee Members listed on the previous page of this issue of eNews for further information about what is involved.

If you think you would like to become involved in helping to run your Group, or wish to nominate another Nature Group Member, please complete the Nomination Form below and return it to the Honorary Secretary to arrive by Thursday 24th December 2020. We would like to hear from you.

Nomination Form for RPS Nature Group Committee Elections 2021

**Nominees, Proposers and Seconders must all be Current Members of the RPS Nature Group.
Closing Date: Saturday 27th March 2021. (Note: revised date from that published in The Iris).**

I wish to nominate:

For the Post of: RPS Membership No.

Name of Proposer:

Signature: RPS Membership No.

Name of Secunder:

Signature: RPS Membership No.

If elected I agree to serving on the RPS Nature Group Committee in the above Post:

Signature: Date:

After completion by all three persons this form should be returned to:

Duncan Locke LRPS, RPS Nature Group Honorary Secretary.

Please email: duncan.locke@btinternet.com or Tel: 07989 49423 for the postal address.

Photocopies or scanned PDF copies of the completed form are acceptable and may be returned by post or email.

2021 Nature Group Members Exhibition

As a result of Covid-19 restrictions we have made some changes to the entry and awards of this year's Exhibition.

- There will be no print section in 2021.
- Each entrant will be allowed to enter up to 6 digital images in each of the two categories instead of the usual limit of four.
- A Gold Medal will be awarded for the 'best' image in each Category and a Bronze Medal to the runner up. Certificates for Selectors Choices and Highly Commended images will remain as in previous years.
- The acceptance numbers are likely to increase as the level will be maintained as a percentage of the total entry.

We are confident that we will be able to run a digital only exhibition despite any restrictions that may be in place. This will be achieved by remote judging using a combination of a web based version of the selection software and the Zoom app. This has already been used successfully in the Midland and Welsh Salons.

Looking forward beyond 2021, it is our intention to return to a print and digital exhibition along the same lines as in previous years. Please continue to support the exhibition by entering your digital images and thereby helping to ensure that we have another high quality Nature Group Exhibition.

Conditions of Entry

Entry is restricted to Members of the Nature Group of The Royal Photographic Society.

General Conditions

- All entries must be titled with the correct English name.
Scientific names should only be used where there is no appropriate English name.
Trivial or cute titles are not acceptable and will result in images so titled to be disqualified.
- All images must convey the truth of what the author saw at the time of taking.
Any image manipulations must be confined to exposure adjustments and the removal of minor blemishes or distractions.
- The final image must have been produced from a single negative, transparency or digital recording and must not be a combination of images. The only exception to this condition is focus stacking.
- **Images of captive subjects or images captured using live bait are not permitted.**
- Work accepted in previous Nature Group Exhibitions is not eligible regardless of which section it was accepted in (i.e. images should not have been previously accepted as slides, digital images or prints). **This also applies to near duplicates of previous acceptances.**
- Entering this Exhibition assumes that entrants agree to their entries being used to promote the Nature Group by inclusion in for example, the Exhibition 'slide shows', The Iris, The RPS Journal, the Nature Group's section of the RPS website and the Nature Group Gallery Website. Copyright of all images remains with the author.
- Acceptance of entries will be notified by report cards which will be emailed or posted to all entrants.
- Whilst every care will be taken with all entries submitted, the Nature Group cannot accept any responsibility for loss or damage, however caused.
- Submission of work implies acceptance of the above conditions.
- **Failure to comply with the Conditions of Entry will result in your entry being rejected.**

Production of Digital Files

- **Maximum image size is: 1600 pixels horizontally x 1200 pixels vertically.**
Files to be in jpeg format, with sRGB colour space and at a resolution of 300 dpi.
Please do not add a background fill as the projection software will do this automatically.
- File naming protocol: Category and number (to correspond with the details on the Entry Form), space and Title. (e.g. PA1 Common Seal, DB1 Oxeye Daisies). Please use both upper and lower case as in these examples
- For manual entries: CD/DVD with your name/s and distinctions written clearly on the face.
The CD/DVD should contain a folder for each entrant with up to 12 image files in each folder.
Folder naming protocol: Name and RPS Distinction. (e.g. Joe Bloggs ARPS)
File naming protocol: As stated above.
Burn as a Data CD/DVD and close it. Do not use options to write 'Session' or 'Multi Session'.
- After selection all CDs/DVDs will be destroyed and unaccepted images will be deleted from Nature Group Computers.

2021 Nature Group Members Exhibition

Exhibition Selectors: To Be Confirmed

Exhibition Calendar:

Entry system will open	25 th November 2020
Closing date for entries	7th February 2021
Selection Day	16th February 2021
Report cards	by mid-March 2021
Exhibition Opening	24th April 2021

The preferred method of entry is via the online entry system. Nature Group members will be sent an invitation email that will contain a link to the entry system. Any members that cannot use the online entry system can post a completed entry form along with a CD/DVD containing their images to the following address.

RPS Nature Group Exhibition
c/o Ralph Snook ARPS
8 Knole Close
Almondsbury
Bristol
BS32 4EJ

Email: rpsngxsec@btinternet.com

The Members Exhibition page of the Nature Group section of the RPS Website will contain a link to the entry system, and a copy of the entry form can also be downloaded from there.

Gold and Bronze Medals will be awarded to the best and runner up images in each category. Selector, and Highly Commended certificates will also be awarded in each. The 'Tony Wharton' award will be presented to the most successful entrant in the exhibition.

The acceptance list, plus a selection of award-winning images, will be published in the Summer issue of 'The Iris'. The awarded images will also appear on the Nature Group Galleries website.

'slide shows' of all accepted images will be available to download from the Nature Group Dropbox Account, there will be no DVD automatically issued to each entrant.

Further details of the entry conditions can be viewed in the online entry system, the Nature Group area of the RPS website, and on the manual entry form shown below.

2021 Nature Group Members Exhibition

ENTRY FORM (Manual Entry Only)

ENTRANT DETAILS (Please complete legibly in BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name: Honours:
Address:
Post Code: Tel No:
Email:
I accept the Conditions of Entry and confirm I am a member of the RPS Nature Group
Signed:

There is no fee required to enter the exhibition.

IMAGE ENTRY DETAILS (Please complete legibly in Block Capitals)

Digital Images – Category A - All creatures – birds, mammals, reptiles, marine life, insects, etc.

Cat Id	Image Title
DA1	
DA2	
DA3	
DA4	
DA5	
DA6	

Digital Images – Category B - All plant life (including flora, fungi, lichens) and all other subjects including geological and microscopy, plus patterns, (design and form found in nature).

Cat Id	Image Title
DB1	
DB2	
DB3	
DB4	
DB5	
DB6	