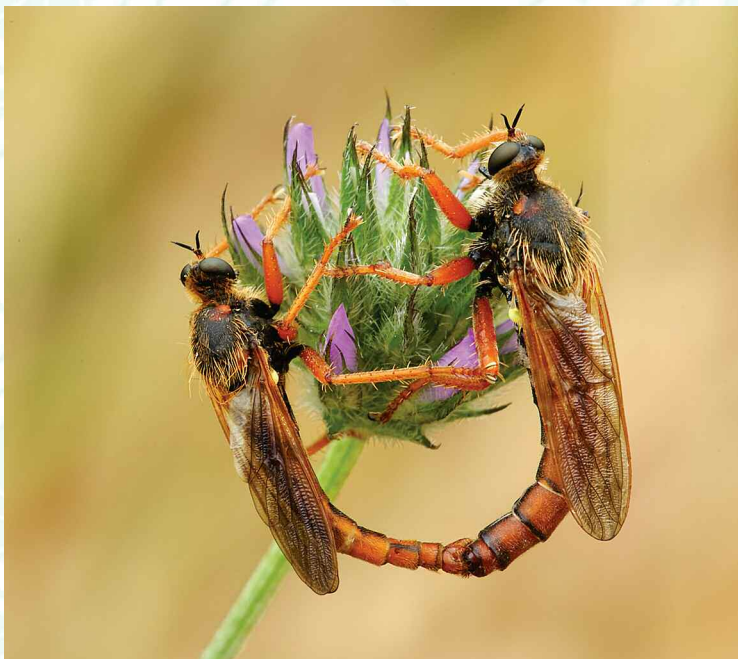


THE IRIS



MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

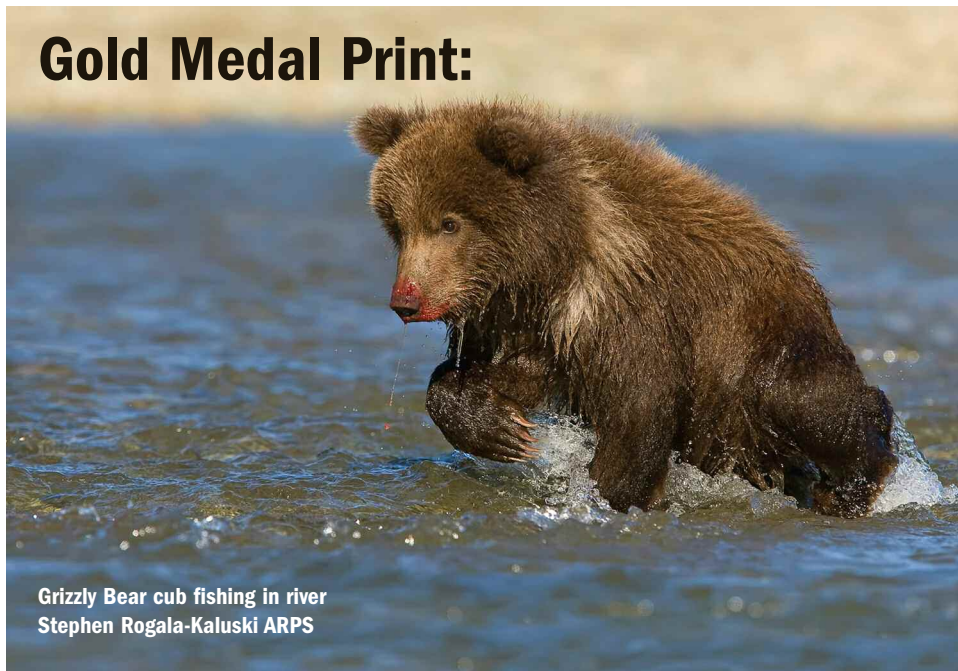
Issue No. 110
Summer 2011



Gold Medal

Mating Robber Flies - *Stenopogon* sp
Lesley Simpson ARPS

Gold Medal Print:



Grizzly Bear cub fishing in river
Stephen Rogala-Kaluski ARPS

The RPS Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2011



Order your copy of the 2011 Exhibition CD/DVD now.

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Nature Group Secretary, Margaret Johnson LRPS,
53 Mapperley Orchard,
Arnold, Nottingham,
NG5 8AH



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All contributions should be submitted to the Editor. Items covering any aspect of nature photography and/or natural history are welcomed, including reviews on equipment and relevant books.

Copy should be sent as .txt or .doc files by email or on CD, or printed using double line spacing on one side of the paper only - please do not send hand written copy.

Digitally captured photographic images are preferred but scanned transparencies are also acceptable. Images should be supplied on CD as sRGB Tiff files, 6" x 4" at 300 ppi (1800 x 1200 pixels, file size approx 6.17MB). Original transparencies may be submitted, however, the Editor cannot specify how long they may be away from the author.

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by Dawn Osborn FRPS

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Field Meeting Announcement

Day & date: Sunday 23rd October 2011

Location: Farnham Heath, Surrey

Meeting Place: Take B3001 South from Farnham. Take the right hand fork, signposted Tilford, immediately past the level crossing. Just outside Tilford Village follow signs to the Rural Life Centre. The entrance is on the right after half a mile.

Grid Reference/Postcode: SU 859433/GU10 2DL

Leader: James Foad

Cost: None

Main subjects of interest: Fungi

Items to bring: Stout Shoes/Wellingtons, Waterproofs, Packed Lunch.

Additional information: Over 150 different species of Fungi have been recorded at Farnham. There may also be late flying dragonflies. Disabled access.

Contact: James Foad tel: 07850 368797 or Email: james_foad@hotmail.com (please put 'Farnham' in the subject line. Important: Please contact the Leader by Wednesday 19th October 2011 for final details and also 22nd October 2011 to make sure the trip is going ahead!

Details of another Field Meeting are on page 37

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President of the Society;
Vice-President of the Society;
Director General of the Society;
Hon. Treasurer of the Society;
Chairman of the Nature A & F Distinctions Panel

Nature Group Exhibitions

Copies of Nature Group Exhibitions dating back to 2000, are available to book for camera clubs/photographic societies. 2000 to 2007 are available in slide format. Since 2008 a CD of the Exhibition has been produced and is available for purchase. For more information please contact the Exhibition Secretary, details above or go to our website: www.rpsnaturegroup.com

Editorial

June 2011, and as I sit at my computer I can hear rain falling on my conservatory roof - a welcome sound here in Norfolk, where we have had little or no rain since March. April was exceptionally hot but in May we experienced some quite cold weather, often accompanied by severe winds but no rain. Night-time temperatures have been very cool but have begun to improve and I have had my moth trap in operation several times since the beginning of the month.

A recent visit to Strumpshaw Fen proved very unproductive - the orchids which were abundant at the same time last year, were very few and very stunted - but we did have some good views of Swallowtail Butterfly which is what the site is best known for.

At the end of April a good number of members attended the Annual Spring Meeting, AGM and Exhibition Opening at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands. Ann Miles FRPS gave a talk on her lifetime passion for flora and insect photography, showing a variety of images both old and new photographed both in this country and overseas. Following lunch, the AGM commenced (report begins on page 38) and the committee for the next two years was elected. I would like to welcome two new members to the committee, Richard Revels FRPS and Kevin Elsby ARPS, I am certain that their knowledge and enthusiasm will benefit the group in the future. I would also like to welcome past-Chairman Geoff Trinder ARPS back to the committee. My good friend Robert Hawkesworth FRPS made the decision to step down after many years of service to the Group, but I'm sure that we will be hearing from him in *The Iris* from time to time in the future.

Speaking of *The Iris*, I have a few articles in hand for the next issue, but as always, more are required. Thank you to those members who have contributed to this issue and to those whose articles I have yet to use - your support is most appreciated.



From the chair

Firstly may I say what an honour it is to be appointed as Chair of the Nature Group. I originally joined the (then very young) Group in 1976 at the instigation of Michael Proctor FRPS and have enjoyed the support and companionship of fellow-members ever since, especially since joining the Committee. I would particularly like to thank Peter and the team for all their hard work over the last two years.

There are several developments to tackle in the near future:

Firstly, the dreaded 'Health and Safety' issue, which appears to put off members of the Group who might consider running field meetings. The Society is required by law to address H&S and we as a Group subscribe to, and must follow, corporate procedure. Over the last year Committee members Tony Bond and Dawn Osborn have produced generic risk assessment forms, which are suitable for Nature Group field meetings and these can be obtained from programme coordinator Colin Smith. If you organise a field meeting, you must fill in these forms. Although adults are responsible for their own actions, you should have assessed risks and informed your group of them and of precautions to take. The staff of many sites which are suitable for field visits will already have carried out their own risk assessments and you can ask for a copy of these to help you carry out your own. This is not actually an onerous task, and if you have carried it out you will be seen to have taken every reasonable precaution.

Secondly the advisory CD produced by the Group, which has proved very popular and supportive, and has been praised by Council. A while ago we as a Committee decided not to update the existing CD but to ask HQ to produce an updated version which would be compatible with both PC and Mac platforms. The Travel Group had already made a request, so Council decided to produce a series of CDs/downloads, to provide support for applicants to each of the Panels. The Travel version has recently been released and can be downloaded from the RPS website. The Natural History version is nearing completion, and will be available as a download from the RPS website www.rps.org - check the downloads page for details of release.

Thirdly, field and residential meetings. Our events organiser, Colin Smith, and individual Group members put a great deal of effort into organising a programme and individual meetings but Colin can't produce a programme if no-one comes forward.

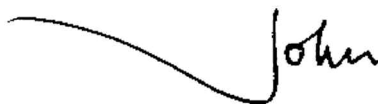
I know that many of you are concerned about carrying out risk assessments, the chance that few people (or none) may turn up and about the impact of visits (and of revisits by individuals) on sites but please try to support the Group by arranging field days for 2012! The sooner you can provide details the better.

This year's residential field weekend at the Kingcombe Centre was undersubscribed, with only 8 members attending what was an excellent meeting, well organised by James Foad. I had the pleasure of meeting the group at the Ryewater reserve near Sherborne on the last day of the weekend and although the weather was poor those of us who had shorter distances to travel home persisted and found some interesting subjects on a wet afternoon. I'm grateful to James for all his hard work in setting up the weekend. I will be setting up an exhibition page on the Nature Group pages on the main RPS website, showing group members' images.

Next year's residential weekend will be held at Malham Tarn Field Centre in North Yorkshire and has been organised by Len Shepherd. 8 members have already expressed interest, so don't leave it too late! Len can be contacted by email (shepherdlen@btinternet.com, 01969 622043).

In 2013 we will probably meet at Preston Montford Field Centre near Shrewsbury - details in a later edition of 'The Iris'.

Finally I have organised a 'Chairman's Day' at Smethwick on Sunday 6th November. Full details are given on page 4 of this issue - please support the Group and come along for what should be an excellent day.



Chairman's Day

Sunday 6th November 2011, 10am

**A day of Natural History photography hosted by
Nature Group Chairman, John Bebbington FRPS
Venue: Smethwick Photographic Society,
The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 2AS**

Programme

- 1000 Arrival, refreshments
- 1030 Welcome and Introduction from the Nature Group chairman, John Bebbington FRPS
- 1100 'Wild Flora' - Andrew Gagg FRPS
Andrew N. Gagg FRPS offers you a few thoughts on the gentle art of finding plants and photographing them and an amble around some of his favourite botanical haunts in the UK and especially mainland Europe.
- 1200 'Larger than Life' - Spike Walker (RPS combined Royal Colleges medal 2010)
Though close-up and 'macro' photography are increasingly popular areas of photography for the amateur, relatively few are prepared to go the extra inch to explore the almost boundless opportunities offered by the fields of photomacrography and photomicrography - obsessions of the speaker for 60 years.
- 1300 Lunch
- 1400 'In my back yard' - the Andy Callow memorial lecture - John Bebbington FRPS
A look at the amazing range of plants and invertebrates which can be found within a few miles of an edge-of-town house in South Somerset.
- 1530 Refreshments and depart

Tickets are available now, price £16 each inc. lunch, teas & coffees.

Ensure your place - book now!

Complete the reply slip below and send, with your cheque payable to RPS Nature Group to:
John Bebbington FRPS, Quantock View, Newtown, LANGPORT TA10 9SE to arrive not later than 30 09 2011.

Please send me _____ tickets for Chairman's day.

I enclose my cheque payable to RPS Nature Group for £ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Looking local for your wildlife pictures.

by Richard Revels FRPS

As I write this article in the spring of 2011 the price of fuel is rocketing and the idea of travelling great distances to take pictures is becoming less attractive by the day. Searching locally for your wildlife pictures is likely to become a serious alternative to jumping into your car and driving for an hour or two to well known favourite destinations. Is this really such a bad thing? I think not. Getting to know your local patch will not only provide you with some great pictures, but also open your eyes to a wide range of nature that is close at hand.

Where do you start? If you don't have access to a local 'wild' area, joining your local Wildlife Trust is likely to give you access to a number of reserves that you can visit in your area. The RSPB also have many reserves spread across Britain and joining is well worth the membership fee. However any local wood and almost all uncultivated areas could be rich in wildlife of one kind or another, but remember that unless there is public access, permission to enter private land should be obtained before visiting. Some road verges can be surprisingly good, particularly for plants and insects.

Another organisation worth considering joining is your local Natural History Society. Besides having field and indoor meetings throughout the year, joining will enable you to meet local experts in various orders of wildlife and they can open your eyes to a

whole range of natural history subjects that maybe you have not noticed before. Any records of what you find will also be of interest to the county recorders.

However, the easiest and best location to undertake nature photography will in be your own garden (assuming you have one). By putting up bird feeders you can attract a range of local birds and maybe even some less common winter visitors. One big advantage in creating your own bird feeding station is that you can tailor make it for photography. Another is that in the winter after an hour or so in your hide, you can pop back into your house to warm up with a nice cup of tea whenever you fancy.

To this end, as winter starts, I remove the old dead tomato plants from my greenhouse and convert part of it into a bird hide. This I do by replacing a pane of glass at one end with a sheet of hardboard in which a hole has been cut large enough for my lens to poke through. This area of the greenhouse is then converted into a dark hide by draping black ground covering material (available from garden centres) from the greenhouse roof. This is light-weight and easily clipped up inside my greenhouse and keeps me in semi-darkness and well hidden. With a padded seat to sit on, it can be a pleasantly comfortably and warm place to spend an hour or so in the winter, even when it is freezing outside.



A Redwing thrush feeding on Cotoneaster berries in my garden.



Although most of the birds that visit your garden will be common species, occasionally something different turns up. However the challenge should always be to produce a better Blue Tit or Goldfinch picture than you had before, rather than just adding a different species to your library of images. Various perches for them to pose on can be placed near the feeders in just the right position and distance for photography when it is your own site. These 'props' should be changed frequently to avoid repeating pictures. I hammer several stakes into the ground near the feeders and tape small branches to them. Two feeders are hung from a stand and two more are placed in a small apple tree a few feet away. I also have an old table beneath the feeders with a branch or a piece of bark on it and food is scattered around the table. The choice of providing suitable and different perches is endless and when your feeding station is in your own garden, you can position everything just as you wish. Planting berry bearing shrubs like Cotoneaster or Sorbus trees in your garden will provide food for various Thrush species every winter, and if you are lucky may even bring in rarer birds like Waxwings.

Garden flowers will bring in a range of nectar feeding insects. Almost all the flowers and shrubs in my garden are there because they are attractive to wildlife. They need not be native British plants, but I do tend to grow mostly native flower species myself. My favourites include Marjoram, Scabious, Corn Marigold, Knapweed, Buddleia, Red Valerian, and Pink Sedum, but there are many others that will also bring in nectar seeking insects.

- 1 *The trusting Robin frequently comes to my feeding station, but seldom stays for more than a minute or two. This one posed for me while I was in my greenhouse hide.*
- 2 *One of my favourite garden birds is the Goldfinch. These stunning birds come frequently to my feeding station every winter and are easy to photograph from my greenhouse hide.*
- 3 *Spring starts as far as I am concerned when the frogs in my garden ponds start spawning in March. Despite having plenty of pictures already, I cannot resist taking a few more shots each spring.*
- 4 *The larvae of the 7 spot ladybird eating black-bean Aphids on the broad bean crop in my garden.*

1 In recent years the Silver-washed Fritillary butterfly has become established in Chicksands Wood, near Shefford, and several other woods in Bedfordshire. Although often very flighty, when feeding on bramble flowers, you can get close enough to take pictures of them.

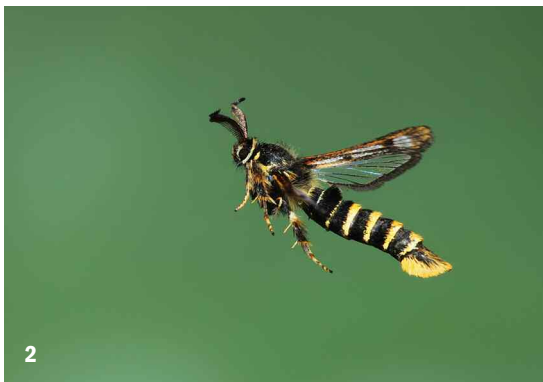
2 The Raspberry Clearwing Moth (*Pennisetia hyalaeformis*) is a recent arrival to Britain but seems to be spreading rapidly. Last June I put out a pheromone lure next to my raspberry canes and several males soon appeared. Using my high-speed flash equipment I was able to get a series of in flight photos as they flew by.

3 My favourite flower of my local NR site is the Bee Orchid which flowers in hundreds every June.

Some vegetables also attract insects, particularly aphids, and I set a row of Broad Beans each year just for aphids and their predators. Some years the aphids can devastate the crop, while other years the predators soon get the upper hand. Over the years I have had dozens of pictures of aphids and their predators published in books and magazines, all taken in my garden. I am also keen to record how many different species of both adult and larvae of Ladybirds, Hoverfly and Bugs come to feast on the aphids in my garden.

I have dealt with making a garden pond before (The Iris, issue No.105 pages 9 - 13), and should you have space for a pond, it will attract many wildlife subjects. Frogs and Newts are likely to breed in garden ponds, and from late April into early autumn Damselflies and Dragonflies will also visit to do some egg laying. All these creatures make great subjects for the camera. Birds also frequently use the pond to bathe in.

I am fortunate in having a small local wildlife reserve just over a mile from my home. This was created when a shallow 'levelling lake' was dug about 10 years ago to take storm water from a nearby new industrial estate. Some of the land around the lake was sown with a wild flower seed mix and trees and shrubs have been planted in other places. This location has provided me with many good wildlife pictures over the past few years. I try to take at least one slow walk around here every week during the warmer months - my Macro lens and flashgun at the ready. Usually the slower I go the more I find. For me the appearance of several hundred Bee Orchids has been one of the highlights of this site.





1 The splendid Purple Emperor butterfly seems to have established itself and is now seen regularly in Chicksands Wood. This male posed well for me as it fed on honeydew on an oak leaf.

2 Two male Coots fighting in a town park. In the countryside these birds would be very timid, but in town parks they have no fear of people.

3 A Waxwing feeding on a berry on an embankment in the middle of Biggleswade. Towns are the most likely places to find this winter visitor.



My favourite local wood is about 8 miles away. There has been some excitement there in recent years, as Purple Emperor butterflies, not recorded in Bedfordshire for several decades, are now being regularly seen in the wood. These superb insects occasionally come down from the treetops and settle on the ground along the main ride. On very hot days one may even settle on you to drink your sweat! This happened to me last year. Another large butterfly the Silver-washed Fritillary is also being frequently found in this and also in several other Bedfordshire woods. Two other butterflies, the Comma and the White-letter Hairstreak, are also common at this location and can be easy to photograph as they feed. Last year I concentrated on photographing the Bumble Bees and Hoverflies of this wood, while waiting for choice butterflies to appear and added several new species to my library of pictures of these insects.

Park areas within towns that have lakes can be very good for photographing water dependant and other birds. The birds in such places will have little fear of people, indeed some will expect to be fed when people are around. This makes it very easy to get frame filling shots of birds like Coots and Moorhens that in the countryside may be very timid. Such places are ideal locations for improving your skills at capturing birds in flight as they come and go. In the spring fighting may occur between birds as competition for mates and nesting territories are sorted out. Waxwings were seen in record numbers last winter and flocks of over 300 were reported in some local towns, giving almost everyone a chance to photograph this spectacular bird.

Every year I find the majority of my wildlife pictures have been taken from within a few miles of home, with many coming from my own garden. One thing to remember is that time spent travelling is time wasted, so think local!

On a different note, if you are thinking of trying for an RPS Distinction in Nature, pictures taken locally could provide you with all the images you need for your Associateship or even Fellowship. It is the quality of the pictures in the panel that will be assessed, not how far you travelled to take them.

To see more of Richard's pictures visit his Website:
www.richardrevealsphotography.com

Birds of Sanibel Island – An ARPS Panel

by Mike Rowe ARPS

I suppose the first question has to be, why go for a distinction at all? Well, for me there was a fairly clear tipping-point. I got hooked on wildlife photography in 2005 during a holiday in Florida, shortly after buying my first DSLR. But when I came to show my efforts to friends and family I had a nearly universal reaction, particularly from the older generation: 'that's a nice picture Mike – you must have a good camera'. And this is what set me on a course to prove that the camera shouldn't take all the credit!

I achieved my LRPS in January 2010. Originally intending to stop there, I was driven on by what I'd learned during the process. Maybe I could learn still more by going to the next level?

Working towards an Associateship in Natural History was an obvious choice for me as this was where my interests lay, and after mulling over various topics, I chose to do 'Birds of Sanibel Island'. We have had holidays on Sanibel every year since 2005, so I already had a number of possible images 'in the can'. A plan began to emerge, with a clear sequence of events, hopefully leading to my goal.

The first step was to put together a panel based on images I already had, which I did over the summer of 2010. The second step was to take the panel to a Distinctions Workshop. I was keen to know if I was even in the right ballpark, and if so, where any weaknesses lay and what I needed to do about them. I attended the Workshop at Bramley last September, but unfortunately George McCarthy FRPS, who was due to attend and provide feedback on Natural History, couldn't make it on the day. Well this was a bit of a setback, but George agreed that if I were to send him my panel on CD, then he would review it and give me his views. This he did, and whilst generally quite encouraging there was a common theme. Most of my images were too closely cropped and the birds needed more space. In addition, some of the images were not particularly interesting, or had distracting foregrounds – just the sort of information I needed!

The third step was to take a further holiday on Sanibel in December last year. Normally I would have 'snapped away' at anything, but this time I was very disciplined – I had a particular 'hit list' of birds

Birds of Sanibel Island

Michael Rowe LRPS

ARPS Submission in Natural History

23rd March 2011



1. Royal Tern
Flying



2. Willet
With cockle



3. Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher
Hunting for insects



4. Sanderling
Feeding



5. Sandwich Tern
Flying



6. Little Blue Heron
With insect



7. Reddish Egret
Fishing



8. Great Egret
With Brown Anole



9. Tricolored Heron
With fish



10. Snowy Egret
With minute fish



11. Osprey
Flying



12. Double Crested
Cormorant
With fish



13. Anhinga
With fish



14. Bald Eagle
With prey



15. Roseate Spoonbill
Flying



and behaviours that I needed to capture to improve my ARPS submission. The effect of this was that I'd completely pass many species, regardless of how good the opportunity, knowing my limited time was better spent in trying to address the weaknesses in my panel. For example, I spent literally hours trying for good images of Terns in flight, completely ignoring the photogenic egrets posing nearby.

During the Christmas holidays last year I set about constructing my ARPS submission, merging the better images from the earlier panel with a host of new ones. After taking-up the offer of running the final panel past George to see if I'd overlooked anything, I set to work printing and mounting in January.

Finally, and with great trepidation, I attended the Assessment Day in March 2011, and was delighted to be recommended for ARPS. To add to the honour, I was asked if the Society might retain my panel as an example of the standard required. Well you can't say 'no' can you?

In conclusion. Did I learn more while working towards my Associateship? You bet I did; in camera craft in the field, composition, and more.

[The complete panel of images can be viewed in the Distinctions section of the Nature Group website.](#)



Statement of Intent

Lying off the Gulf Coast of Florida, Sanibel Island is home to many species of bird, in habitats ranging from the open waters and mangroves of the 'Ding' Darling National Wildlife Refuge, to the sandy coastal beaches.

In presenting these images, my intent is to portray a 'snapshot' of typical bird-life on Sanibel during the months of November and December. Wherever possible I have tried to capture birds in action, going about their daily lives.

All birds photographed were wild and free.



Roger's Mushrooms App Review

by Mark Monckton ARPS

I enjoy photographing fungi, but sometimes they can be difficult to identify. When I discovered the mushroom App, I realised I could use it to identify fungi in the field without carrying a heavy book around.

This review is based on an iPhone 4 running version v1.7.25 of the App. At time of writing the iPhone App is £1.19. Considering you get information on over 1500 mushrooms I think it's a bargain. This App is available for the iPad, iPod touch, iPhone (requires OS 3.0 or later) and Android phones. All the information is contained within the app so no internet connection is required to access the data, and does not use up your monthly data allowance. Version 1.7.25 of the App contains 1569 details of mushrooms and 2418 images



New features for v1.7 are:

- Ability to restrict search to North America or Europe fungi
- Add your own notes to the mushroom details

App Navigation

At the bottom of the screen there is a row of icons, each of which has various search options to allow you to find the mushroom you're after. The options are; 'Home', 'List', 'Visual Key', 'Easy Key' and 'more...'. I will describe each option below:

Home

The 'Home' page contains an important disclaimer which you should read if you intend to consume the fungi which you have identified using this app. Tap the 'i' logo, to display some general information about the app. Internet links are at the bottom of the screen for the sister sites 'Trees & shrubs' and 'Roses'.

List

This contains a list of all the mushrooms in alphabetical order of the scientific name. You can swipe up or down the screen or tap the a-z letters to the right of the screen to navigate to the mushroom. This list is useful if you already know or think you know the mushroom.

Each mushroom has a photograph, the scientific name and common names in different languages. If you have added a note to the mushroom, a little green star at the top left corner of the photograph is displayed. The photograph of the mushroom also has a small coloured square at the top right corner. This is used to indicate the edibility of the mushroom, from very good to deadly.

Colour

Bright Green
Light Green
Grey
Yellow
Pink
Red
Cyan

Rating

edibility - very good eating
edible
inedible
Hallucinogenic
Poisonous/Suspect
Deadly
Unknown

continued on page 42

The Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2011

Projected Image Bronze Medal Winners



Projected Images

Selectors' Awards Section A



Above:
Blister Beetle
Peter Farmer
Martin Withers Award

Below:
Little Egrets fighting
Colin Smith FRPS
John Chamberlin Award



Left:
Great Northern Diver and chick -
Philip Mugridge ARPS
Ann Miles Award



Highly Commended Projected Images

Below:
Mating Black-veined Whites
Lesley Simpson ARPS



Top to bottom:
Lilac-breasted Roller
David Cantrille FRPS

Sanderlings take off
Colin Smith FRPS

Polar Bear courtship behaviour
Ian MacWhirter ARPS



Highly Commended Projected Images



Top right:
Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)
Graham Goddard ARPS



Right:
Coal Tit in flight
Colin Smith FRPS

Below:
Waxwing with berry
Tony Hamblin FRPS



RPS Nature Group Exhibition 2011

Projected Image Awards

Medals:

Gold Medal	Lesley Simpson ARPS	Mating Robber Flies - <i>Stenopogon sp</i>
Bronze Medal Category A	Tony Hamblin FRPS	Great Bustard displaying
Bronze Medal Category B	Mike Stew LRPS	Giant Polypore and Southern Bracket
Selectors' Awards Category A:	Peter Farmer Phil Mugridge ARPS Colin Smith FRPS	Blister Beetle Great Northern Diver and chick Little Egrets fighting
Selectors' Awards Category B:	John Bebbington FRPS Malcom Kitto ARPS Dawn Osborn FRPS	Male & female Birch catkins Porcelain Fungi Inflorescence of Common Spotted Orchid
Highly Commended Category A:	David Cantrille FRPS Graham Goddard ARPS Tony Hamblin FRPS Ian MacWhirter ARPS Lesley Simpson ARPS Colin Smith FRPS Colin Smith FRPS	Lilac-breasted Roller Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> Waxwing with berry Polar Bear courtship behaviour Mating Black-veined Whites Sanderlings take off Coal Tit in flight
Highly Commended Category B:	Maggie Manson ARPS Maggie Manson ARPS Philip Mugridge ARPS John Simpson John Simpson John Weir ARPS	Marsh Haircap and Larch cones Sphagnum moss Eyjafjallajökull Volcano Primula hirsuta Bracket Fungus on Bark Flaming Pholiota
Commended Category A:	Chuck Eccleston ARPS Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS Tony Hamblin FRPS Gordon Mills ARPS Mark Monckton ARPS Helen Mugridge ARPS Steve Price LRPS Richard Revels FRPS	Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i> Sabre Wasp parasitising larvae in pine timber Female Hen Harrier bringing prey to chicks Black-bellied Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> Six-spot Burnet on Bee Orchid Polar Bear Great Spotted Woodpecker in flight Brown Hare boxing #5
Commended Category B:	Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS Mark Monckton ARPS John Weir ARPS	Spindle Shank Early Marsh Orchid Alpine Crocus

Projected Image Acceptances:

Author	Title-1	Award
Jon Allanson LRPS	Kittiwake on nest	Martin Withers Award
Nigel Atkins LRPS	Feeding Desert Elephant	
Peter Basterfield ARPS	Common Greenshank feeding	
	Red Deer Stag at rut	
John Bebbington FRPS	Male & female Birch catkins	
Tony Bond FRPS	Velvet Shank (slide)	Highly Commended
Gordon Bramham ARPS	Five <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	
	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	
	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	
John Bulpitt FRPS	Migrant Hawker hovering	
	Burnet Caterpillar pupating	Commended
	Ringlets	
	Chalkhill Blues	
	Azure Damselfly at Dawn	
David Cantrille FRPS	Snow Goose in flight	
	Lilac-breasted Roller	Commended
	Sandhill Crane in flight	
	Male Lion	
Sandy Cleland FRPS	Tabanid-flies mating	
	Bridled Guillemot arriving with fish	
John Cucksey ARPS	Fairy Tern in flight	Martin Withers Award
Roy Dorkins LRPS	Rhogogaster viridis Sawfly	
Dickie Duckett FRPS	Rufous-naped Lark	
Chuck Eccleston ARPS	White-legged Damselfly <i>Platynemesis pennipes</i>	
	Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	
Alan Edwards ARPS	Snail Kite	Commended
Dr Kevin Elsby ARPS	Male Cuban Bee Hummingbird	
	Grey Heron with nesting material	
	Oystercatcher feeding chick	
Ron Evans ARPS	Goosander (male) <i>Mergus merganser</i>	
	Whitethroats <i>Sylvia communis</i>	Martin Withers Award
Peter Farmer	Blister Beetle	
	Elegant Grasshopper	
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS	Redwing on Holly	
	Blue Tit	
	Little Bee-eater stretching wings	Commended
	African Elephants synchronised drinking	
	Sabre Wasp parasitising larvae in pine timber	
	Spindle Shank	
James Foad	Common Stonefly <i>Perla bipunctata</i>	
Gordon Follows ARPS	Water Rail	Highly Commended
	Capercaillie	
	Sandhill Crane displaying	
Graham Goddard ARPS	Fulmar <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	
	Dipper <i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	
	Great Skua's <i>Catharacta skua</i>	Bronze Medal
	Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	
	Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	
Tony Hamblin FRPS	Great Bustard displaying	
	Female Hen Harrier bringing prey to chicks	
	Hawfinch perched on Hornbeam	Highly Commended
	Waxwing with berry	
	Club-tailed Dragonfly	

Thomas Hanahoe FRPS	Wheatear with insects Shag sunbathing Kingfisher with a fish Green Woodpecker	
Roger Hance FRPS	Water Vole	
Bob Johnson ARPS	Common Kestrel	
Peter Jones ARPS	Female Leopard Honey Badger	
Patricia Kearton LRPS	Warthogs <i>Phacochoerus Africanus</i>	
Malcolm Kitto ARPS	Male Banded Demoiselle Porcelain Fungi	John Chamberlin Award
	Newly emerged Golden Pholiota	
Gillian Langridge	Essex Skipper <i>Thymelicus lineola</i>	
Carol Lewis ARPS	Coyote <i>Canis latrans</i>	
Fiona MacKay ARPS	Hoverfly on Umbellifer Brimstone Moth Larva	
Ian MacWhirter ARPS	Polar Bear courtship behaviour Glaucous Gull with Guillemot prey Black-tailed Godwit	Highly Commended
Jean Manson	Brown Hare Spoonbills	
Maggie Manson ARPS	Zebra in flight Sphagnum moss Marsh Haircap and Larch cones	Highly Commended Highly Commended
Kevin Maskell FRPS	Bull Elk bellowing Great Egret taking off	
Margery Maskell ARPS	Grey Heron in flight Great Egret soaring	
Dave McKay ARPS	Coots fighting <i>Fulica acra</i>	
Richard Merritt FRPS	Colonial Anemone <i>Amphianthus</i> Schooling Jackfish Harlequin Filefish Powder Blue Tangs Oriental Sweetlips	
Gordon Mills ARPS	Black-bellied Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> - USA Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i> - UK Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> - UK Whooper Swans <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> - UK	Commended
Mark Monckton ARPS	Six-spot Burnet on Bee Orchid Scorched Wing Glistening Inkcaps Early Marsh Orchid	Commended Commended
Helen Mugridge ARPS	Arctic Fox Polar Bear Mountain Hare Red Deer Mountain Gorilla	Commended
Philip Mugridge ARPS	Fulmar Gyr Falcon Brown Bear Cub Great Northern Diver and Chick Eyjafjallajokull Volcano	Ann Miles Award Highly Commended
David Osborn FRPS	American Bison Bull dust bathing Elk Cow chasing calf Green Heron Turnstone	

Dawn Osborn FRPS	Snowy Egret fishing Inflorescence of Common Spotted Orchid <i>Mycena epipterygia</i>	Ann Miles Award
Andrew Parsons ARPS	Yellow Hammer amongst May Blossom Female Whitethroat	
Ron Perkins ARPS	Common Terns	
Keith Polwin ARPS	Grey Seal Bull Tiger at waterhole Common Myna	
Steve Price LRPS	Brown Bear Great Spotted Woodpecker in flight	Commended
Ken Rasmussen LRPS	Galapagos Flycatcher Wandering Tattler	
Kay Reeve FRPS	Sallow Kitten Moth (slide)	
Richard Revels FRPS	Brown Hare boxing No.5 Grey Seal Bulls fighting Elephant Hawkmoth flying to Honeysuckle Dog Daisies	Commended
David Robinson ARPS	Great Egret <i>Egretta alba</i> landing Great Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos major</i> Corn Bunting <i>Miliaria calandra</i> Eurasian Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i> with ants and larva in beak	
Stephen Rogala-Kaluski ARPS	Grizzly Bear with salmon Turnstone feeding	
John Simpson	Spurge Hawkmoth Larva <i>Primula hirsuta</i> Bracket Fungus on Bark	Highly Commended Highly Commended
Lesley Simpson ARPS	Mating Black-veined Whites Mating Robber Flies - <i>Stenopogon</i> sp	Highly Commended Gold Medal
Colin Smith FRPS	Little Egrets fighting Sanderlings take off Coal Tit in flight <i>Calopteryx splendens</i> male	John Chamberlin Award Highly Commended Highly Commended
Mike Stew LRPS	Sandwich Tern Male Smooth Newt Giant Polypore and Southern Bracket	Bronze Award
Stephen Street ARPS	Chestnut Heath	
Mike Walker	Isabelline Wheatear Rose Coloured Starling	
Valerie Walker ARPS	Dipper collecting food Knapweed Fritillary Skimmer in flight Spotted Fritillary	
John Weir ARPS	Flaming Pholiota	Highly Commended
John Weir ARPS	Alpine Crocus	Commended
Sheila Weir ARPS	Florida Red-bellied Turtle Hedgehog Puffball	
Mick White LRPS	Hover-fly <i>Syrphus Ribesii</i> Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	

RPS Nature Group Exhibition 2011

Print Awards

Gold Medal:	Stephen Rogala-Kaluski ARPS	Grizzly Bear cub fishing in river
Bronze Medal Category A:	Thomas Hanahoe FRPS	Flock of Knot taking off
Bronze Medal Category B:	John Weir ARPS	Common Puffball
Selectors' Awards Category A:	Dickie Duckett FRPS Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS Ian MacWhirter ARPS	Olivaceous Warbler singing Bee-Eater with bee Polar Bear on ice flow
Selectors' Awards Category B:	Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS Ian McLean ARPS John Weir ARPS	Lady's Slipper Orchid Crocus Robertianus in Pelponnese Clustered Bonnet
Highly Commended Category A:	Liz Cutting ARPS Dr Kevin Elsby ARPS Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS	Grey Heron with nest material Four-spot Chaser Dragonflies emerging Stag Beetles dispute
Highly Commended Category B:	Roger Hance FRPS John Jones ARPS Norman Prue FRPS Kay Reeve FRPS John Weir ARPS	Scarlet Elf Cap fungi Smoky Brackets Common Stinkhorn Yellowleg Bonnets and flies Cladonia bellidifolia
Commended Category A:	John Cucksey ARPS Jean MacWhirter ARPS	King Penguins, South Georgia Courting Polar Bears
Commended Category B:	Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS Richard Revels FRPS	Hungarian Glider Hummingbird Hawkmoth flying to Valerian

Print Acceptances

Author	Title	Award
John Cucksey ARPS	Elephant and Fur Seal Pups King Penguin and Giant Petrel King Penguins, South Georgia	Commended
Liz Cutting ARPS	Brown Hare scratching Green Woodpecker on Birch stump Grey Heron with nest material Jay collecting acorn in snow Waxwing eating Rowan Berry	Highly Commended
Roy Dorkins LRPS	Wild Brown Bear with four cubs Young Red Stag at Leighton Moss	
Dickie Duckett FRPS	Black Guillemots Common Starling flock European Bee-eater tossing bee Marabou Storks fighting Olivaceous Warbler singing Red-crowned Cranes	Ann Miles Award

Dr Kevin Elsby ARPS	Avocet feeding Black-tailed Godwit calling Four-spot Chaser Dragonflies emerging Gannet with nesting material Puffin with fish Razorbills mating	Highly Commended
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS	Lady's Slipper Orchid Bee-Eater with bee Hungarian Glider Long-tailed Tit Stag Beetles dispute Water Buck	Ann Miles Award John Chamberlin Medal Commended
Gordon Follows ARPS	Black Guillemot Bonxie showing aggression Red Squirrel Sandhill Crane in flight	Highly Commended
Thomas Hanahoe FRPS	Avocet feeding Barn Owl hunting Bittern in a reed bed Flock of Knot taking off Otter eating a fish	Bronze Medal
Roger Hance FRPS	Scarlet Elf Cap fungi Gannet in flight Gannet skypointing Garden Tiger Moth Red Kite in flight	Highly Commended
Bob Johnson ARPS	Golden Eagle Great Spotted Woodpecker	
John Jones ARPS	Smoky Brackets Tissue Moths on cave wall	Highly Commended
Bryan Knox ARPS	Brown Bear early morning, Finland Golden Eagle at Sunset Great Crested Grebes Razorbill with Sand Eels, Farne Islands	
Ian MacWhirter ARPS	Juvenile Rabbit Kittiwakes feeding in Glacier meltwater Polar Bear on ice flow South Polar Skua Upland Goose in flight	Martin Withers Award
Jean MacWhirter ARPS	Courting Polar Bears Polar Bear and cub	Commended
Jean Manson	Brown Hare Common Frog Curlew Shetland Wren	
Sue McGarrigle LRPS	Honey fungus Goldfinch on Teasel	
Dave McKay ARPS	White Ibis in the surf Zebra conflict	
Ian McLean ARPS	Crocus Robertianus, Peloponnese Chequered Skipper mud puddling Vapourer Caterpillar Weaver's Fritillary on Veronica sp.	Martin Withers Award

Dawn Osborn FRPS	Brown Pelican on Gulf Coast beach Gentoo Penguin bursting from waves Great Egret fishing in evening light Limpkin calling Pika Redshank foraging	
Richard Parker LRPS	Wren	
Ken Plumb LRPS	Garden Snails Roessels Bush Cricket	
Norman Prue FRPS	Common Stinkhorn	Highly Commended
Ken Rasmussen LRPS	Royal Tern Sally Lightfoot Crabs	
Kay Reeve FRPS	Yellowleg Bonnets and flies Elephant Hawkmoth	Highly Commended
Richard Revels FRPS	Great Crested Grebe offering feather to chick Grey Seals courting Hoverfly cleaning wings Hummingbird Hawkmoth flying to Valerian Male Stag Beetle Silver-spotted Skipper Butterfly feeding	Commended
David Robinson ARPS	Fieldfare in driving snow Glossy Ibis feeding Grey Heron in flight	
Stephen Rogala-Kaluski ARPS	Grizzly Bear charge Grizzly Bear cub fishing in river Grizzly Bear emerging from river Grizzly Bear Sow with cubs Inquisitive Bear cub	Gold Medal
Stan Saunders ARPS	Porcelain Fungus Pink Butterfly Orchid - Italy Six-spot Burnet Moths	
Brian Sherwin LRPS	Green Hairstreak Grizzled Skipper	
Simon Thomas LRPS	Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	
John Weir ARPS	Common Puffball <i>Cladonia Bellidifolia</i> Clustered Bonnet Great Egrets mating	Bronze Medal Highly Commended John Chamberlin Award
Sheila Weir ARPS	Rest Harrow Yellow Wood Violet Germander Speedwell Gentoo Penguins King Cormorants	



Botswana from a boat with Brian Matthews

21st September – 2nd October 2011

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Join me, David Osborn FRPS, for two weeks photographing birds in sunny

Florida

My tenth 'Birds of Florida' photo-tour will be departing mid March 2012 with a maximum of only 6 clients.

We will visit prime sites for bird photography and will have opportunities to photograph Osprey, Great, Snowy and Reddish Egret, Great Blue, Little Blue, Green and Tri-coloured Heron, Glossy and White Ibis, Woodstork, plus a host of other birds.

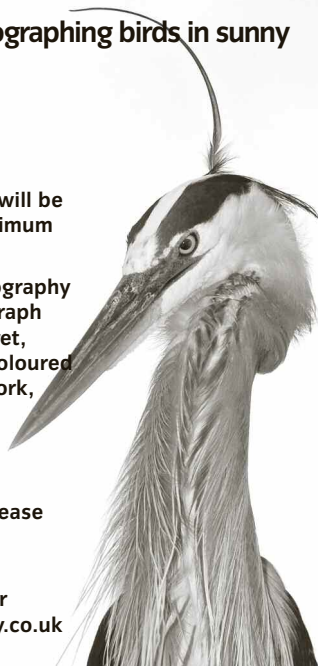
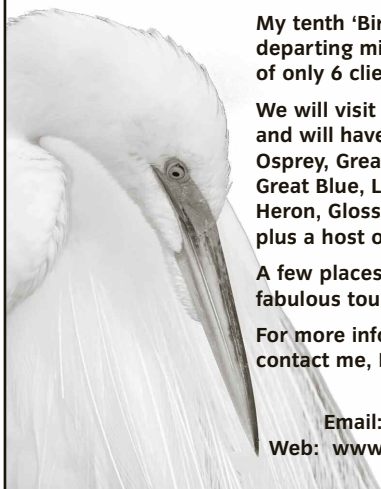
A few places are still available for this fabulous tour - why not join me?

For more information or a brochure please contact me, David Osborn FRPS:

Tel: 01263 511221

Email: poppyland3@aol.com or

Web: www.davidosbornphotography.co.uk





Selectors' Awards Projected Images Category B

Top right:
Porcelain Fungi
Malcolm Kitto ARPS
John Chamberlin Award



Opposite:
Male & female Birch catkins
John Bebbington FRPS
Martin Withers Award



Left:
Inflorescence of
Common Spotted Orchid
Dawn Osborn FRPS
Ann Miles Award



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Highly Commended Projected Images

- 1 Flaming Pholiota
John Weir ARPS
- 2 Marsh Haircap and Larch cones
Maggie Manson ARPS
- 3 Eyjafjallajökull Volcano
Philip Mugridge ARPS
- 4 Primula hirsuta
John Simpson
- 5 Sphagnum moss
Maggie Manson ARPS
- 6 John Simpson
Bracket Fungus on Bark



6

The Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2011

Print Bronze Medal Winners



Above:
Flock of Knot taking off
Thomas Hanahoe FRPS

Right:
Common Puffball
John Weir ARPS



Print Section

Selectors' Awards Category A

Bee-Eater with bee
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
John Chamberlin Medal



Olivaceous Warbler singing
Dickie Duckett FRPS
Ann Miles Award



Polar Bear on ice flow
Ian MacWhirter ARPS
Martin Withers Award





Print Section

Selectors' Awards Category B



Above: Crocus Robertianus in Peloponnese
Ian McLean ARPS
Martin Withers Award

Below: Lady's Slipper Orchid
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
Ann Miles Award

Below: Clustered Bonnet
John Weir ARPS
John Chamberlin Award



Print Section

Highly Commended Category A



Above: Grey Heron with nest material
Liz Cutting ARPS



Right: Four-spot Chaser Dragonflies emerging
Dr Kevin Elsby ARPS

Below: Stag Beetles dispute
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS



Highly Commended Category B
images on back cover.

A Camera on the Farm



by Alan Potts FRPS

Ever since I opened my eyes to the world in 1939 my future was to be a farmer. It was a way of life you inherited; in fact I was born the fourth generation in the Potts family that was to live by the land. Some say born a farmer always a farmer, but as I grew up my interest began to unfold towards other aspects to do with the land, and that was nature.

At the age of twelve my first encounter with wildlife was the Lapwing. I was crossing a field on the farm when I was mobbed by a pair of lapwings. I stopped to watch them as they swooped over my head calling out their peewit song. I could not understand why they were displaying so erratically until I looked down at my feet, and there behold was a nest with three chicks and a fourth struggling its way out of the shell. I was so captivated I sat down beside them and watched the chick's final push to break free.

Since that day I have always been passionate about nature, it is wild and beautiful and stirs my imagination. Some years later I became interested in photography and my ambition was to capture all forms of wildlife, which gave me a wonderful sense of achievement.

In the late 70's I joined the RPS, around the time when the Nature Group formed and also the Audio Visual Group. My interest grew in compiling natural history audio visual presentations. I enjoyed

Each autumn we plough 450 acres of arable land, attracting many Black-headed Gulls. I am amazed how many worms are consumed by Black-headed Gulls. It is estimated that over two million earth worms live in each acre of land.

the challenge in collecting wildlife sound effects on tape, together with slides and multi projection to illustrate nature. At a later date I gained my A and F distinction in the A/V section.

Although wildlife photography was a great influence, being a farmer was still my bread and butter. Today the family farm comprises of 650 acres of arable land and 45 D.I.Y livery stables managed by my son Andrew, my wife Mary and myself.

Over the years farming and wildlife have had some very controversial moments due to the pressures from conservation. Farming has flourished to produce more food, at the cost of nature. The last twenty years have been difficult times with many thousands of acres lost to building developments, polluted waterways and even getting rid of man's waste in the form of landfill sights. Old habits die hard, and the word conservation has more meaning today than ever before, with many inroads through government policies, for the preservation of nature. Although intensively farmed, we now deliberately leave areas of land set aside for nature.



What has become more noticeable is climate change. For the photographer, the winter of 2010 was an inspiring time, a season cruel yet beautiful. Ice, snow and frost along with naked trees, have added a stark graphic contrast to the most beautiful landscapes. But these magical occasions eventually outstay their welcome when it becomes a prolonged hard spell of weather. Recorded to be the coldest December, the hardships for wildlife to survive, became greater than ever before. At this time of year the sun is low in the sky, and that provides the opportunity to take good pictures, indeed my attempt to capture the qualities of light is most rewarding during early morning or late afternoon. I've always felt that a camera is a tool of expression, and how you use it can be creatively rewarding.

- 1: *We all know what its like when things go right, but this Peregrine was one of the most exciting moments of all times.*
- 2: *A collection of gulls in the snow storm, frantically took to the sky when a fox appeared from out of the reeds.*
- 3: *A spell of good luck. I was taken by surprise when this fox appeared on a frozen lake mobbed by two crows.*

- 1: *Each year Short-eared Owls, migrants from Scandinavia, over winter on the farmland.*
- 2: *The Yellowhammer is a sparkling bird. Photographed from the Land Rover, it perched on a fence looking out across the winter farmland.*
- 3: *The Goldfinch is a delightful bird to see in the snow, feeding on teasel they are now more numerous than ever before.*
- 4: *Photographed from the tractor, the Starling makes a delightful subject. It's only when looking closely that you realise what delightful markings they have.*

During winter many birds will perish if there is prolonged snow and ice. But their search for food gives the opportunity to photograph them in a winter environment.

I have two main feeding areas on the farm that are regularly stocked with wild bird seed. The feeders are placed in the yard where there is an occasional amount of farm traffic, so they become used to people and machinery. This gives me the advantage to do nearly all my photography from the window ledge of a Land Rover. It means I can drive up when the conditions are right, settle down with a bean bag and camera, and within a few minutes they return.

The stage is set with all different perches for them to land on. I prefer to work with a 500mm Nikon auto focus lens combined with a 1.4 convertor and Nikon D700 body. At around six meters this is a comfortable working distance that the birds accept. Too close and they become wary of the camera.

Not often do I prefer strong sunlight, but with snow on the ground, light is reflected into the shadows giving some wonderful effects, especially if it's backlit. An advantage in shooting from a vehicle, is that you are not fixed to one position, as with a hide.

Small birds can be frustrating to photograph as they are always on the move. But this all adds to the sense of achievement when things go right.

We have all experienced being in the wrong place at the wrong time, it happens so often when photographing wildlife. But being in the right place at the right time, is a wonderful experience not to be missed.





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A winters day in December I will never forget my son Andrew rang me from the field, "Hey Dad grab your camera I'm coming to pick you up". "What's so special" I said, "Peregrine at 20 meters" he replied. Within minutes he came dashing into the yard with the four track, I jumped in and we hastily returned to the field. Sure enough there was the bird of my dreams, feeding, to my amazement, on a male kestrel. It could not have been better placed, a thick Hawthorn hedgerow separated us from the Peregrine. There was a narrow gap in the hedge that allowed me to frame the picture and shoot away. It had always been by belief until then, that predators did not kill other predators for food. Perhaps the shortage of food, due to the extreme winter, caused an unusual change in behavior!

Northumberland, has areas of disused underground coal mining, and here there are some wonderful wildlife habitats that have been created by pit ponds. On this occasion I was in a permanent hide managed by the Northumberland Wildlife Trust overlooking a lake. My intention was to photograph water fowl. A wonderful collection of ducks, Whooper Swans and Canada Geese were on the partially frozen lake. Within minutes of settling down in the hide, all the birds took off displaying as they circled overhead. Out of the reeds appeared a fox being mobbed by a pair of crows. It's difficult to put into words that great feeling when things go right and something special happens right in front of you but on occasions such as this, it makes the many hours of frustration and disappointment all worth while.

1: *The Snow Bunting is a good tick for any photographer.*

2: *Canada Geese are found breeding in many parts of Northumberland. I had been in a hide when the bird came out of the water to feed.*

3: *I could see this Redshank was about to take off, leaping into the sky - I had the camera shutter in constant mode.*

4: *My favorite bird is the Lapwing. On this occasion the strong wind and driving snow made it difficult to keep the lens steady.*

Kruger

by David Cantrille FRPS

I have made two trips to the Kruger, both with Stu Porter of Wild 4 Photo Safaris. Stu is a South African photographer and qualified wildlife guide who organises trips around the Kruger for photographers in his specially adapted vehicles. My wife and I judged that it would be more worthwhile to explore this national park with someone who knew his way around.

The Kruger is one of Africa's largest national parks, covering over 7,000 square miles. It is in the east of South Africa, bordered by Zimbabwe to the north and Mozambique to the east. We stayed in national park lodges: Satara, Lower Sabie and Skukuza, among others, which meant that we could be out photographing from dawn until dusk if we wished.

Our first trip, in July 2009, was in the South African mid-winter. The advantages of this were that it never got too hot and, as it was very cold early in the morning, we were able to photograph many birds on branches waiting to warm up: Pearl-spotted and

Little Barred Owls, Lilac-breasted and Purple Rollers, White-fronted vultures and bateleur eagles. Our second trip in September 2010 produced more birds in flight but the increasing heat meant that a mid-day rest was often preferable.

Two days of our trip were spent at Tshukudu private game lodge (recommended), on the edge of Kruger, which looks after orphaned and injured animals, releasing them back into the wild where possible. Here we photographed Cheetah, Wild Dog and Leopard. In 2009 we were permitted to photograph inside an enclosure with Savannah, a hand-reared Cheetah and three of her three-month old cubs. The cubs were tolerant of humans but not hand-reared. We heard six months after our trip that Savannah and her cubs had been released back into the wild but that she had been killed by Lions, presumably in defence of her cubs. The three cubs had found their own way back to the game lodge and, by our 2010 visit were almost fully grown.



Above: Wild Dog
Right: Leopard at night
Below: White Rhinos





Also at the game lodge we visited a Caracal, a secretive animal one would rarely see in the wild. The female was tolerant of humans; her mate in the next enclosure was not. The two-day old cub, eyes still shut, was destined for the wild when large enough to be released. We were also able to photograph a King Cheetah during our 2010 visit. King Cheetah are a rare variant and have darker than normal markings. The lodge owners were trying to find a mate for her but she had rejected all suitors thus far.

We were privileged to see many Lion, Leopard, Cheetah and Elephant in the Kruger, also Buffalo. On two occasions these were very close-up and, on one occasion had multiple Oxpeckers cleaning them of parasites. We were also highly privileged on both trips to see Leopards mating, something that Stu himself had not previously witnessed.

A memorable day was spent in the hide at Lake Panic near Skukuza, photographing Hippo, Crocodile, Herons, Weaver birds, Darters, Water Rail and Kingfishers. Unfortunately, this first visit to the hide was marred by bad light so we were unable to get many good pictures. A second visit produced better images including Jacana and Black Crape.

Stu's experience of the park meant that we did not waste time in areas that were generally unproductive of much wildlife. We therefore had no unfruitful days. Good areas were Lower Sabie, which had several dams nearby with Hippo, Elephant, Buffalo, Yellow-billed Stork, Saddle-billed Stork, Hammerkop, Goliath Heron and a Giant Kingfisher. Around Satara the terrain was less wooded; here we found Ostrich, Cheetah, Rhino, Buffalo and Lion. Inside the lodge grounds were Hoopoe, Glossy and Blue-eared Starlings, Red and Yellow-billed Hornbills, Sunbirds, Mouse birds and many others, whilst at the game lodge a Bush Pig came snuffling up to us.

My equipment was a Canon 1D MkII and a 1D MkIV with a 500 F4L lens plus extenders. On the second camera I used a 70-200 F4L IS. My wife had a 400 F4 L DO lens, with extender, plus a 100-400 zoom lens, a combination she found ideal. The vehicle had beanbags attached. Although we took tripods they were hardly ever used, even in the lodge grounds when we were photographing birds we found it easier to use the cameras hand held.

Both trips were very successful and enjoyable. Perhaps another trip is on the cards for us in the next year or so.

Top: Caracal at game lodge
Centre: Cheetah with cub
Bottom: King Cheetah

More of David's pictures on the inside back cover.

Field Meeting 2011

Date & Time: Saturday 8th October at 10am.

Location: Thorndon Park North , Brentwood.

Leader: Alison Johnson

Contact: Email alisonjohnson@talktalk.net

Meeting place: Visitor centre, Thorndon Park North, The Avenue, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 3RZ

Grid ref: TQ 605 915

Main subjects of interest: Thorndon Country Park offers a variety of habitats including ancient woodland, parkland, ponds, a marsh and meadow.

There are some stunning ancient trees including Giant Oak and Hornbeam pollards.

We expect to find a range of fungus.

Items to bring: Waterproofs, boots and a packed lunch.

Other information: Cafe and visitor centre on site. More information from: http://www.essexwt.org.uk/visitor_centres_nature_reserves/thorndon/

Cost: Car parking charge and a small donation for County Fungi Recorder please.

Important: Pre-booking is necessary. Contact the leader by email: alisonjohnson@talktalk.net

Please check the website - www.rpsnaturegroup.com - for details of other Field Meetings still to come in 2011.

Rogers Mushrooms App Review,

Continued from page 12

To view the details of the mushroom, simply tap the screen on the mushroom and you will be presented with the scientific name and photos of the mushroom - swipe left/right to see all photos. Tap the photo to show a larger version and detailed information about the mushroom.

To add or show a note, tap the green tick to the right of the screen. This displays an area you can add your own notes about the mushroom.

Visual Key

The 'Visual key' has three options:

White or Cream spores

Pink, Brown and black spored Agarics

Fungi other than those with gills

On selecting one of these options you are presented with a large image of the types of mushrooms within the category you have selected. Scroll around the image, if you see one that matches the description or picture, selecting the name in bold will provide you with a list of mushrooms. Double tap enlarges the image.

I find the visual key the quickest and easiest way to identify a mushroom when I am not sure of the ID.

Easy Key

The 'Easy key', presents you with a series of selections about the mushroom you which to find. These are; Location, Edibility, Colour, Size, Cap type, Stem type, Flesh, and Spore colour and Habitat.

You do not need to fill in each section, just the ones you are sure about. Then select 'Search' at the bottom of the list. You are then presented with a list of mushrooms, from exact match to partial match. The number of mushrooms in the list depends on the options you have selected. The more options you select the better the search will be, and will help you identify your mushroom. Tip: Remember to tap 'Clear All' when doing another search.

More...

The 'More...' option contains a list of options. The most useful is the Help and Preferences. Help explains how to use each section. Preferences allow you to limit searches by location i.e. North America or Europe and maximum exact/partial matches. If you live in Europe I recommend you select Europe and leave the matches options as is. There is also a handy Glossary.

Conclusion

I have found identifying fungi far quicker using the App compared with using a book. Easy to navigate and fast searching make this App a joy to use. The images of the mushrooms are good enough to identify mushrooms, but are not as clear as I would expect on an iPhone 4 - probably due to jpg compression/resolution which may be to minimise the size of the App.

If you are interested in mushrooms or need to identify them. I highly recommend this app.

Ease of use:	10/10
Quality of images:	9/10
Value for money:	10/10
Overall:	9.5/10

RPS Nature Group AGM 2011

The 35th Annual General Meeting of the Nature Group of the Royal Photographic Society was held at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, on Saturday 30th April 2011 at 2pm. It was chaired by Peter Jones ARPS and attended by 54 members.

Apologies

These were received from Nigel Atkins, Robert Bates, Patricia Kryer, Kevin Maskell, David Osborn, Kevin Elsby, Kay Reeve and Kevin Whately.

Minutes of the 2010 AGM

The minutes of the 2010 AGM printed in issue 107 of 'The Iris' were accepted as a true and correct record of what then took place and signed by Peter Jones.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report

Peter Jones said that he had had two excellent years as Chairman and thanked the committee for all their hard work. He also thanked all attending this AGM. At this point Robert Hawkesworth thanked Peter for the way he had coped in spite of difficulties. Peter Jones said that he believed that if one took on a job one should attend as many meetings and field trips as possible and do one's best.

Peter thanked Margery Maskell for all her hard work as treasurer. Thanks also went to Tony Bond, Geoff Trinder and John Jones for their work on committee. He thanked Colin Smith for his efforts to find volunteers to lead field meetings but the support of more members is needed. A special thanks went to those members of the group who had volunteered.

Dawn Osborn's work on The Iris was greatly appreciated by all the committee and the members and she was to be commended for the high standard of both The Iris and the website.

Robert Hawkesworth, who is standing down from the committee this year was thanked for his many years of service to the group as secretary, past chairman and committee member.

Sue McGarrigle had handled the exhibition with great efficiency with some sterling support from Jim Hartje, Ashley Franklin, Ian Bailey and John Jones who were thanked on our behalf. Vice-chair John Bebbington was thanked for his support and advice when needed. Margaret Johnson was thanked for all the time and work she put in as secretary and Peter

presented her with the Nature Group's Silver Medal for services to the Nature Group. She gave her heartfelt thanks and said that it was an honour to be given this and a complete surprise.

Treasurer's Report

General Comments:- This year has not seen any major changes to the way our finances have to be recorded and so this report is fairly simple. It aims to expand and explain the balance sheet attached. As usual the Balance Sheet is an overall summary of Receipts and Payments for the year. Because some items 'straddle' year ends, it cannot be a detailed Balance Sheet for each item.

Subscriptions:- The Subscription Income shown in the Balance Sheet is that credited monthly to our Cash Book Account during the current Financial year (which is, of course, the Nature Group Subscriptions paid to the RPS at Bath for December 2009 through to November 2010). The Life Member's subscription reimbursements for 2010 are not included in this year's accounts, due to a problem at Bath.

John Bebbington was at the "Think Photography" event on the 12-14 November. Hopefully some of his expenses will be reimbursed by Bath in 2011.

Interest:- As has been happening for the last two years, interest is still poor compared to previous years. In addition, interest for the last quarter of 2010 was not paid into the Nature Group account in December. This was due to a problem in Bath. Interest is likely to stay fairly low in 2011.

Sundry Income:- This include VAT refunds and income of £590 from the sale of the 'A' Guidance Interactive CDs of which 59 were sold during the year. My thanks to Trevor Hyman for continuing to distribute these CDs.

The Iris:- Three editions of The Iris were published this year -(#106, #107 and #108). The cost of production and postage has risen as predicted, though subscriptions and adverts have helped to offset some of the costs.

Annual Exhibition:- The Exhibition appears to have made a loss this year, but this was due to a one-off payment of £599 for a laptop and software for use on Selection Day, etc. Therefore when this was deducted, it was actually in profit.

General Administration:- This includes all running costs of the Nature Group [general postage, telephone, stationery and travel to committee meetings, the cost of our web-site and VAT expenditure].

Overall Financial Situation:- The Balance Sheet shows and excess of Expenditure over Income of £1601.46. This large negative figure is mainly due to the Life Member's subscription of 2010 (approximately £700), and the last quarter's interest (approximately £40) not being included in this year's accounts. Also, the one off payment for the new equipment and software (approximately £680). Even so, the Cash Book still shows a healthy credit balance at the end of 2010. Finally I wish to thank Trevor Hyman LRPS for auditing the accounts earlier this year.

Secretary's Report

Our current membership, according to RPS HQ, a fortnight ago is 686, which is 38 more than at this time last year. So we must be getting something right. Members that do leave continue to have issues with Bath and not with us as a group. Some of those who leave the Society take out a subscription to The Iris. The cost of administration continues to rise due to the cost of postage. To send out a new member's pack now costs 92p compared with 81p in March. It has been a good year for the group and I hope that it continues.

I would like to thank Robert Hawkesworth for all he has done for the Nature Group and for all the help he has given me, especially when I first became secretary. He will be sorely missed on the committee but his expertise will still be used in his role on the A & F panels. Thank you Robert.

Election of Officers and Committee

All the present officers were willing to stand for re-election and were elected without opposition. They are:

Chairman: John Bebbington FRPS

Secretary: Margaret Johnson LRPS

Treasurer: Margery Maskell ARPS

Vice Chairman: Tony Bond FRPS

The Committee: with the exception of Robert Hawkesworth, the existing committee were willing to stand for re-election and there were also two nominations. As there were places to spare all were elected without opposition. They are:

Immediate Past Chairman: Peter Jones ARPS

Editor of The Iris: Dawn Osborn FRPS

Exhibition Secretary: Sue McGarrigle LRPS

Programme Co-ordinator: Colin Smith FRPS

Committee: Dr Kevin Elsby ARPS

John Jones ARPS

Richard Revels FRPS

Geoff Trinder ARPS

Any Other Business

John Jones asked once again that Exhibition prints should not have thick double mounts as this made them impossible to hang. He had to hang five prints at the base of one big panel so that they would not fall. If prints fall during the night it sets off the alarms and Judith Parry is woken by the police to deal with the alarm. There was much discussion about double mounting and it was stated that a backing board behind the print would be all right as long as the edges of the mount were no more than 3mm thick. This was proposed by Simon Thomas and seconded by Robert Hawkesworth. It was agreed that the committee would clarify this before the next exhibition. Prints that did not comply to the rules next year would not be accepted. It was suggested that we could also have a recent A or F panel on display and this was accepted by all present. There was much discussion as to whether everyone who entered should have at least one entry accepted but it was decided that quality was of the utmost importance and this should not be comprised. More entries of flowers and fungus would be welcomed as there was a preponderance of animals and birds. It was noted that the CD was not compatible with the Mac OS and this will be looked into.

Two years ago RPS HQ said that they would like to update The Nature Group Interactive Associateship CD, making it more corporate; because the Nature Group Committee felt that the cost of upgrading existing software was excessive, this was accepted. However the CD has not yet been produced by the RPS. A 'Travel' interactive CD has been produced, and can be downloaded from the RPS website. Tony Wharton (Chair of the Natural History 'A' and 'F' Distinction Panel) was dissatisfied with this model and the Nature Group Associateship CD continues to be updated by us although RPS HQ would like to take it over.

John Bebbington stated that Bath had asked the Group to consider producing 'The Iris' in A4 format to bring it into line with other groups, but this had been discussed at the Groups meeting at Bath in March and was thought unnecessary. It was also rejected by those present: not only would this entail developing new templates but also postage costs would increase. Everyone in the Nature Group is extremely proud of the content and distinctive format of The Iris.

Date and Venue of the 36th AGM 2012:

31st March 2012 at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury.

The meeting closed at 2.34 pm

THE NATURE GROUP OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

Receipts and Payments Accounts for 1st. January 2010 to 31st December 2010

Nature Group 'Cash Book' at RPS Bath

<u>Year 2009</u>		<u>Year 2010</u>
<u>Receipts</u>		
6,303.67	Subscriptions	6,573.50
1,457.87	Life Subs.	0.00
765.00	Lectures & Workshops	0.00
1,655.70	Annual Exhibition	1,380.25
77.47	Interest received (to Cash Book)	79.15
566.20	Sundry Income	694.15
495.03	IRIS Subs, Adverts, etc	217.37
11,320.94	sub totals	8,944.42
<u>Payments</u>		
6,284.95	The Iris incl. postage	6,328.19
489.00	Lectures & Workshops	233.20
1,511.24	Annual Exhibition	1,741.38
2,416.22	General Administration	2,243.11
10,701.41	sub totals	10,545.88
619.53	Receipts minus Payments	-1,601.46

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2010

Nature Group Cash Book	£
Balance brought forward from 2009	12,917.54
Cleared Credit Card vouchers from 2009	10.00
Uncleared Cheques from 2010	139.42
Credit Card vouchers not cashed in 2010	-30.00
Receipts minus Payments 2010	-1,601.46
Total	11,435.50
<u>Total Carried Forward To Financial Year 2011</u>	11,435.50

M J Maskell 17th January 2011
 Margery J Maskell (Hon Treasurer)

Independent Examiner's Report to Members

The statements of account for the period ended 31st December 2010 set out above have been prepared from the books and records of the Nature Group of the Royal Photographic Society and are in accordance therewith.

J. T. Hyman 1st February 2011
 J. T. Hyman (Independent Examiner)

Kruger

by David Cantrille

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- 1: Lilac-breasted Roller at sunset.
- 2: African Hoopoe
- 3: Giant Kingfisher
- 4: Hammerkop with frog
- 5: Lion with vicious snarl





Print Section

Highly Commended Category B

Above: Common Stinkhorn Norman Prue FRPS

Top right: Scarlet Elf Cap fungi Roger Hance FRPS

Opposite: Yellowleg Bonnets & Flies Kay Reeve FRPS

Bottom left: *Cladonia bellidifolia* John Weir ARPS

Bottom right: Smoky Brackets John Jones ARPS

