

1 Bird Photography

2 Introduction

- Tom Rea
 - Sun City 3.5 years
 - Member of :
 - Photography Club
 - Former VP, Chair for Competition and Exhibitions
 - Current Chair of Nominating Committee
 - Expert Level
 - Bird Club
 - Christmas Bird Count and Field Trips
 - Garden Club

3 Equipment

- High end camera and large zoom lens
 - Camera Body \$800 – \$1200
 - 300-600 mm lenses
 - \$1000 to \$9000
 - 10-12 megapixels
- Lower end example
 - Pentax X70 Megazoom for \$400
 - 24X wide-angle optical zoom equivalent to 26–624mm
 - 12.0 megapixels

4 Camera Settings

- Focus – Center Spot
- AF cameras make this easy. Use Nikon's Continuous AF (AF-C) mode or Canon's AI Servo mode. These modes let the cameras track moving subjects. Set your camera to use all the focus sensors. In Nikon this is the Dynamic AF Area Mode, whose icon is a box in the middle with little dots all around it. These modes let the camera use different AF sensors as the bird flies around in your frame
- ISO 100-200
- Fast Shutter Speed (>1/400 sec)
- Set to either sports mode or Shutter priority
- Use Burst feature

5 Camera Settings

- Don't worry about high aperture settings (f16, f22)
- The moving bird is the most important subject NOT the background

6 Time of day

- Early morning or Late Afternoon
 - Birds gather more at this time of day
 - Color of light is better
- Less light for photographing
 - Use slower shutter speeds and smaller aperture numbers (f2-5.6)
 - May need to use higher ISO setting (400-800)
 - May need fill flash

7 Record the "Event"

8 Record "The Event"

- Some photos may not be prize winners
- BUT

- You have recorded the event
- You will be able to go home and identify the species

9 Be Cautious

- Be Aware of surrounding before taking pictures
 - Snakes
 - Alligators
 - Dangerous Footing

10 Be Prepared

11 Be Prepared

- Pre-focus if using zoom lens
 - Limit vs. Full on Zoom lenses
 - Set operating mode (Sports, Landscape, Shutter Priority)

12 Take “Test” shots for exposure

- Try different settings
- Take Test Shots and review for best setting
- If available, use camera Histogram to review settings

- Remember it is best to underexpose (image too dark) than to overexpose (image too bright)

13 Under-exposed

14 Under-exposed adjusted

15 The “Eyes” have it

- Set camera to center spot focus
- Set camera to “Servo” focus mode for still photos
- Set camera to CS (Continuous Servo) for moving birds
- **Focus on eyes**
 - Use AF-S (Servo) mode
 - Push shutter button ½ way down
 - Focus on eyes
 - Reframe for composition and press shutter button fully

16 AF-CS vs. AF-S (explanation)

- **AF-C** (AF continuous, sometimes called continuous servo) is good use when photographing moving objects. When your camera is set to **AF-C** and you focus on a moving subject, for example a dog running towards you, **the focus will stay on the animal so long as your shutter button is held half way down**. In other words, the camera will keep re-focusing as the animal moves. That is, so long as you keep your shutter button held half way down.
- **AF-S** (AF single, sometimes called single area AF) mode, is good for photographing subjects that don't move, such as flowers or portraits etc. It locks the focus on the non moving object that you want to photograph. You can then recompose the shot and take the photograph.

17 Have Patience and be “Stealthy”

- Some birds will fly away when you approach, but they may come back!!
- Approach slowly and stop often
- No sudden moves
- In time, you will become part of the background to them

18 Tips

- PAN a flying bird
- Use a soft touch when holding camera and pressing the shutter release button
- Use bursting even on non-moving shots
- Use Tripod or monopod for still shots of birds
- May not want to pan if taking photos of a flock of birds, but you do want a very fast shutter speed

19 Tips

- Sports mode –OK
- Shutter priority mode is better
 - You have control
- **PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE !!!!**

20 Q/A