



Placer Color



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Newsletter of the Placer Camera Club

Jan 2008

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<http://www.placercameraclub.org>

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Placer Camera Club meets the third Tuesday of each month, except July and August, at 7:00PM in the Beecher Room of the Auburn Placer County Library, 350 Nevada Street, Auburn, Ca. **Visitors Welcome!**

This months meeting will be Tuesday **Jan 15, 2008**. Informal gathering at **6:30** with the meeting starting **promptly at 7 PM**.

This month we have our **print** image evaluations followed by an educational presentation by our judge. Please put name, category and title on print back.

Camera club member **Jerry Berry** will start a show at Sutter Auburn Faith Hospital on January 11th. He will have about 20 images hanging in the main hall at the hospital. Several will be of Mono Lake sunrises and sunsets.

This month's newsletter has several articles on the **pacific flyway** in the Sacramento area. We live in one of the best bird migration areas around and hopefully this will give you a bit of information so you can take advantage. See the first of the articles later in this newsletter.



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Landscape Composition

Adding Dimension

Text and Photos by Sue Barthelow

Add dimension to your landscape photo by including foreground, middle ground and background features. A landscape is usually not dynamic, so it won't change while you decide how to shoot it. Take your time to move around while you look for positions that show the scene at its best. Walk about; get low; get high.

Foreground – include something nearby to anchor the scene. As long as your foreground feature has line or texture, it will create depth. It might be tree branches, the top of a bush, the sand on a beach or a nearby rock. Change your location to find foregrounds that improve the composition. Check your viewfinder and try to achieve good balance of size and placement of your foreground and middle ground objects. Unless a foreground object is your subject, don't let it dominate the scene.

To get everything sharply focused for a long distance scene, keep the foreground objects a short distance from your camera, use a small aperture (large f-stop) and focus one-third the way into the scene.

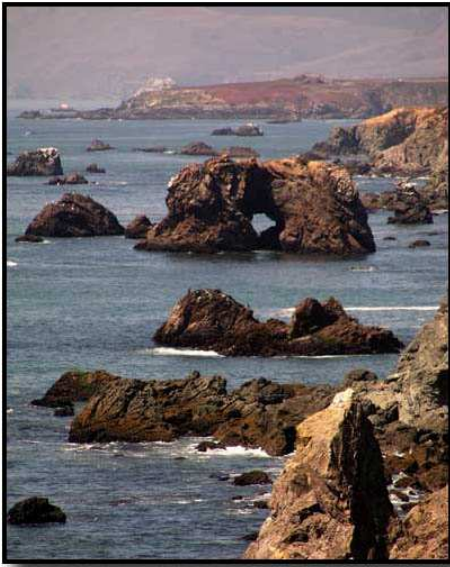
Middle ground – this is usually what the picture is all about. It's what caught your attention and made you grab your camera. Look for the most interesting features and let them be your subject. Frame your picture so your subject is presented at its best. Include surrounding features that support your subject, giving it context without being overly distracting.

Unless it's important to you that your subject is centered, position it off-center. Imagine lines running through your viewfinder, cutting the image into thirds both horizontally and vertically. Compose your subject at or near the spot where two of the lines cross each other. If the scene includes a horizon, don't place the horizon across the center of the image. When the land is more interesting than the sky, place the horizon about one-third the way down from the top.

Background – this is the distant part of the picture. It may be the sky with or without clouds. It may be the ocean or a lake as the water runs its way to the top of the image. Whatever it is, it should be far enough behind the middle ground that it gives the middle ground features depth.

If the scene has a sky full of interesting clouds or colors that are too good to leave out, consider placing the horizon about one-third the up from the bottom.

Example Photos



In the coastline picture, notice how the foreground rock makes you feel like you're standing right there. The wave-splashed rocks draw you up to the subject rock, the one with the hole. The background rocks become progressively smaller until the hills provide a backdrop that forces you to look back into the scene. This photo has incredible depth.

The grass/beach/rock picture has less depth because the background is a simple sky that sits directly behind the middle ground subject. The small view of the ocean that shows itself from behind the subject at the right edge helps connect the middle ground to the background sky. The foreground grass gives most of the depth to this image, drawing your eyes through the scene to the subject rock.



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Summer Hibiscus by Ardath Winterowd

I took this one in my neighbor's back garden...he's a master gardener which gives me many flower photo opportunities throughout the year. I suppose if I were to present this in a critique I would have to agree that the bud seems to be more in focus than the bloom...I like it anyway!



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Through the Viewfinder

Text and Photo by Tony Middleton

This month we will look at a photograph taken last summer while on a trip up the Oregon Coast. This picture was taken from the KOA campground in Waldport, Oregon on July 22, 2007. The subject is the Alsea River Bridge and the Waldport waterfront in the distance. After 4 days and 3 nights of rain and wind, the weather finally cleared enough for me to shoot a series of shots of this bridge as the lights came up and the darkness deepened. This shot was taken at 9:38 PM; the air was still full of moisture, which gives the picture the hazy look.

The particulars of the shot: All of the pictures taken this evening (approx. 50) were from



a tripod mount using a remote shutter release. On my 20D was a Tamron 28-75mm F2.8 telephoto lens. The focal length was set at 35mm with the flash disabled. This night I was experimenting with different shutter speeds so the camera was set to Tv mode (shutter priority) with a 5 second shutter speed, F stop was at a camera controlled 2.8 with an automatic White Balance in RAW mode.

When trying to learn more about the different functions of my equipment I set a few goals that I am trying to achieve. In this way I can measure the results by reviewing the information stored with the picture at a later time. I was most pleased with the reflection of the lights on the water, which was one of the goals I set for this session.

Things I learned from this shoot:

1. Be prepared to wait out the weather. I saw this opportunity the first night I was in Waldport, but had to wait until the last night of my stay to have the opportunity to take this picture.
2. Keep an eye on your equipment. With the extreme amount of moisture in the air I was continually wiping the lens and covering the entire unit with a waterproof bag while waiting between shots.

3. Don't be afraid to try something new. By using a new function on my camera and taking the time to set up all of the different equipment needed for this shoot (not to mention standing out on a damp, windy bluff in the dark for around 1 ½ hours) I was able to finally get this beautiful look at the Alsea River Bridge through my viewfinder.

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Owls and Rails

Text and Photos by Walt Carnahan



Owls and Rails don't have much in common except for the fact that their habits make them difficult to photograph. Attempting to lure these creatures to a photographable location by playing tape recordings of their calls is frequently productive but frowned upon by some members of the birding community due to the stress it is alleged to create.

Another way to flush rails from their habitat scratching deep in the undergrowth of marshes is to wait for a high tide. The rising tide will cause the rails to appear as they attempt to continue their browsing. Spring tides, the highest of the high tides, occur when the sun and moon are aligned and exerting their gravitational attraction in concert during full and new moons.



Rather than figure all this out, I consulted a tide table on the internet <http://www.saltwatertides.com/dynamic.dir/californiasites.html> for the location of Alameda. Arrowhead Marsh, which is just north of the Oakland airport, had been recommended by Doug Herr whose photography I greatly admire. His work is shown at his website, <http://www.wildlightphoto.com> The spring tide was December 23rd at 9:30 AM

Christmas bird counts and other commitments kept me away from the bay area until Christmas. So while most people were unwrapping presents, Barbara and I were strolling



along a wharf waiting for the water to rise. We did see a Northern Harrier, floating over the Marsh, a Redtail Hawk and some Greater Scaup along with the more common ducks. Then, as the tide approached its maximum the first of several Clapper Rails appeared along with the only appearance of a Virginia Rail. The Clapper Rails were a life bird for me and I spent the next hour getting good looks. As the tide settled, about four hundred Marbled Godwits and Willets gathered a few feet away on the end of the wharf, only to scatter when a bald eagle flew over.

Owls crepuscular habits are another problem altogether. Ray Hasey had reported hearing four Great Horned Owls per mile as he drove along the levy along the Sutter National Wildlife Refuge. I hadn't heard about the Sutter Refuge and was excited to discover that it is the closest to Grass Valley of the Sacramento Refuge Complex. The directions, given at the website <http://www.fws.gov/sacramentovalleyrefuges/sutter.htm> place it just 6 miles south of Yuba City.

After driving along the East Levy Rd. and seeing lots of raptors, including a Peregrine Falcon and the Waterfowl refuge I got out along Hughes Rd. and discovered the walking trails. Large flocks of Greater White-fronted Geese, Snow Geese, Mallards and Widgeon flushed as I approached incautiously from along the trail. I haven't gone back yet with a blind to wait for some good close looks.



My first two trips I had four owls, three Great Horned and one Barn, in the afternoon. The duck preserve inaccessible but viewable from the East Levy Road held lots of widgeon, gadwalls and the usual assortment of ducks. There are additional trail entrances along both the East and West Levy Roads, although most of the West Levy Road is closed.

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On Being Ready

Text by Sue Barthelow

If only there were pictures to show you. Unfortunately, my camera was in the trunk. How many times has that happened? It seems like opportunities always arise when I can't do anything about them. Have my camera by my side, nothing special happens. Put it in the trunk, miss a picture of a lifetime. You'd think I'd learn. Obviously, I haven't.

There we were, driving to our friends' house near Napa for New Year's Eve. Four of us filled the car. I was settled in the back seat. As we started down the grade to the Valley from Auburn, amazing things started to happen. It started with a band of silver that appeared at the top of what at first looked like a fog bank on the west side of the Valley. The silver was soon accompanied by diffused pinkish-red light that seemed to glow through the fog as if it was projected through the mist.

As we reached a bit of high ground between Loomis and Rocklin, we could see the hills on the west side of the Valley. It wasn't fog after all; it was a perfectly placed band of clouds maybe as far away as the coast.

We watched as the colors exploded. Strange fingers of light added interest. It was one of the most amazing sunsets I've ever seen. I wanted to search for high ground and capture it with my camera. Instead, I watched it from the back seat until we reached West Sacramento, when it began to fade.

Unfortunately, the images were out of my reach. I only hope that one of you was luckier than I was. My camera has been at my side since that day. Has it come in handy? No it hasn't. But next time I'll be ready. I promise.

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The Pacific Flyway in the Sacramento Area

Birds migrate each year from Alaska to South America. Many of these stop over in the Sacramento valley which is on the Pacific flyway. Many thousands of waterfowl are in this area and the best times are December to March. We have many excellent wildlife areas for the birds in the area and many are great for viewing or photography. These are wild birds and not used to seeing humans like the ones in local parks. This means you have to move slowly and use caution as they will try to avoid human contact. Many areas have an auto loop tour. You can use your car as a blind shooting with your camera out the window. Many of the side roads will have areas to park so you can get out and shoot the birds from a distance. Telephotos in the range to 200mm to 400mm and above are best.

The following articles should give you a good starting point.

Sandhill Crane Photography in the Delta

Text and Photo by Jim White

It's that time again! The Sandhill Cranes are back in the Delta. At least 35,000 Lessor and 7000 Greater Sandhill Cranes winter in central valley of California in the open grain, grass, and flooded agricultural fields. A goodly number of these can be found in the Isenberg Crane Preserve near Lodi. Not only will you see Cranes but also thousands of White Fronted Geese, Tundra Swans, assorted ducks and herons and many wintering hawks. If you are lucky, maybe even a Bald Eagle! All of the above may be viewed from a dead end road where the traffic is usually very light. Very often (usually in the mornings) the birds are near the road. Members of the Placer Camera Club recently photographed herons and egrets from as close as 30 to 100 feet from the road.



How to find the preserve? A little tricky, but if you follow these instructions it will be easy. Go south from Sacramento on Interstate 5 and watch for Twin Cities road, then the road to Walnut Grove and Staten Island and then you will come to Peltier road. Take the off-ramp to the stop sign and turn left and go under the freeway to Thornton road. Turn right on Thornton road and go to the next stop sign, that should be Woodbridge road. Turn right on Woodbridge, go under the freeway again and you are heading west into the Isenberg Crane Preserve (a.k.a. Woodbridge Ecological Reserve). Be sure and park off the pavement and lookout for an occasional high speed driver, I think in training to be a race car driver.

When to go? Mornings are best, but I would not pass up a chance to go in the afternoon too. The birds are often loafing in the middle of the afternoon, but will start flying as soon as the sun gets low. Windy days are a plus, if you can hang on to your hat and gear, the birds love to fly into the wind. Try shooting the swans landing or taking off the water. Try shooting the cranes while they are leaping (dancing) and playing grab a...(butts). Three of our members recently photographed a Peregrine Falcon on nearby Staten Island, so keep a look out for Peregrine and Prairie falcons. Remember to take your bird book and binoculars too. You never know what you will see, on the Isenberg Crane Preserve.

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Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge

Text and Photo by Bruce Gregory

The below link will take you to the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge Complex Home page. The buttons on the left of the home page will take you to more info. Top button on recreational opportunities is probably the most useful for us. The wildlife viewing portion has more links to things like bird counts.

I have photographed on the auto loops described for the unit near Maxwell and the Colusa unit. If you check the "Complex Map" you will see that there are many units of this refuge. I haven't tried the other units, and don't know about access in the other units. The Colusa and Maxwell unit can be done in the same day.

Another side trip in the area is the rural roads that parallel I 5 north of Hwy 20. One of my trips there I went to Sac. Wlf. Refuge near Maxwell in the early morning, at about 1pm I went west from Maxwell to connect to the rural roads paralleling I 5 came east on Hwy 20 and did Colusa Refuge in the late afternoon. My picture of the oak tree & horse that's on the quilt was taken on Leesville Rd on that trip.



<http://www.fws.gov/sacramentovalleyrefuges/index.htm>

Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge

Text and Photo by Mike Schumacher

Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge is located near Live Oak on highway 99 above Yuba city.

There is a 3 mile auto loop tour park. The birds that frequent the refuge are wild ones encountered on the Pacific flyway. Most do not tolerate close human presence so shooting from your car is not recommended. If you do exit your car move very slowly and do



auto loop tour park. The birds that frequent the refuge are wild ones encountered on the Pacific flyway. Most do not tolerate close human presence so shooting from your car is not recommended. If you do exit your car move very slowly and do

not slam your car door. Snow Geese, Blue Heron, Great Egrets, and many different types of ducks...Northern Shoveler, Pintail, Cinnamon Teal, Mallard, etc. are present here at various times of the year. The best times are December to March. Check out the webpage for travel info.

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/lands/wa/region2/graylodge/glwa_pages/maps.htm

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Sierra Valley

Text and Photos by Jim White



We went to Sierra Valley on New Years day. I was hoping to see some eagles. We only saw one and he was too high and heading north. Two eagles have been sitting in a tree on a ranch where I know the people but they were elsewhere the day we were there.

Here is what the valley looks like now. It is a neat place in

winter I think, and we will go back after this next series of storms. I am trying to break into the farm publications market and Sierra Valley is about as good as it gets in the winter for farm photos. If you go up there you need 4 wheel drive and temps at least



below 25, better around 15-20. The ground needs to be frozen real good or you might stay longer than you want. I do not recommend Yuba Pass, unless the road is in really good shape. We go the Truckee-Sierraville way. Marble Hot Springs road is tricky but passable if the temps are cold and the snow shallow. Use the paved roads at the south end of the valley to be safe. Jim



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Swap Shop

For Sale - Canon bg-e2 vertical battery grip for Canon 20d & 30d \$90
Call or e-mail Mike Schumacher at 530-367-4505 or radioman@ftcnet.net

FOR SALE

Nikon Nikkor 200mm f/4 Micro IF AIS lens. This is the manual focus model which focuses down to a reproduction ratio of 1:2 (half life size) without any attachments. Even at 1:2 magnification, the free-working distance is approximately 19.5 inches between the front of the lens and the subject. This is one of the big advantages of a long focal length macro lens over shorter ones. This lens is among the few top rated close-up/macro lenses in the world. It is tack sharp and easy to use. It will work on both manual and auto focus Nikon camera bodies, (in manual focus mode of course which is likely all you'd use in macro photography), both film and digital. Many people forget that it is also an excellent telephoto lens.

The glass is flawless. The diaphragm is crisp and smooth with the blades being perfectly dry. It has both the built-in tripod collar and sliding hood shade, each of which operates as new. Both original front & rear caps are included. I'm also providing a 52mm UV-Haze filter if you want to be extra careful with that front element.

As a bonus, also included is the **Nikon 4T Close-up Attachment Lens.** This is a high quality, multi-element diopter which increases the magnification ratio of the base lens without losing any light. It simply screws onto the front of the lens just like a filter. It is a great accessory for this lens. It is in mint condition and comes with its original box and paperwork.

For those that were subjected to my club presentation on Close-up/Macro Photography a few months ago, the majority of the images I shared during that time were captured using this very lens.

I'm looking to get \$310, (which incidentally is less than what comparable lenses are selling for on eBay, *without* the 4T, which is \$30-50 itself). I'd love to see someone in the club continue to enjoy this lens as much as I have.

I'll be bringing the lens to the next few club meetings if you want to attach it to your Nikon (or Fuji) 35mm or digital camera body and see what it can do. I can also be reached at 530-268-3475 or 530-320-8961 or rgjk@suddenlink.net.

Thanks, Richard Myren.

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If you want to sell or are looking for photography related items members can list them in the newsletter or on the club website. Email or call me. Listings are free for members. Mike 530-367-4505 radioman@ftcnet.net

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Huey Monitor Calibration

The club has a Huey monitor calibration system for use by club members. Contact Judy Hooper to 'check out' Huey. 530-888-8308.

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Calendar of Events

January

15th – Camera Club Meeting – Print Image Evaluations

[Placer Camera Club Webpage](#)

Check out the Placer Camera Club webpage. Webmaster Sue barthelow has been doing a fantastic job! Thanks Sue!

<http://www.placercameraclub.org>

→ *Please feel free to contact me with items for the newsletter!*

Mike Schumacher (Newsletter) 530-367-4505 radioman@ftcnet.net

See you at the meeting Jan 15th at 7 PM!!