



## WALKS ON THE WILD SIDE

[walksonthewildside.co.uk](http://walksonthewildside.co.uk)

40 types of photos to  
capture in 2023 with tips and  
examples.

Helping you capture the  
beauty of nature through  
your lens.

## NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY IDEAS FOR 2023

By Scott Walker

Find me on  **YouTube** at Walks On The Wild Side

## COMPLIMENTARY COLOURS

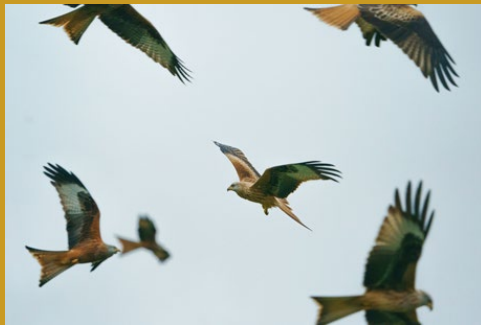


Complimentary colours are opposites on the colour wheel, and pair together in a pleasing way. Here, the red crown of the green woodpecker is the complementary colour of green elsewhere in the photo.



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## FRAME THE SUBJECT

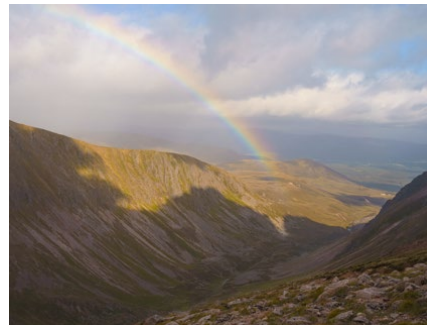


There are lots of ways to frame a subject and bring attention to them: Surround them with leaves, flowers, branches, through an opening - the opportunities are endless. Here, the in focus red kite is surrounded by secondary, out-of-focus subjects.

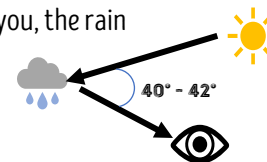


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## CAPTURE A RAINBOW



A rainbow will appear where there is some rain in the sky, and the sun is behind you and low in the sky. Rainbows are only seen when the angle between you, the rain and the sun is  $40^{\circ} - 42^{\circ}$ .



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## BOLD COLOURS



Bright, cloudless skies are great for bold colours. Look for backgrounds and foregrounds that are getting direct sunlight for bold, saturated colours to surround your subject.



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## FLOWER PORTRAITS

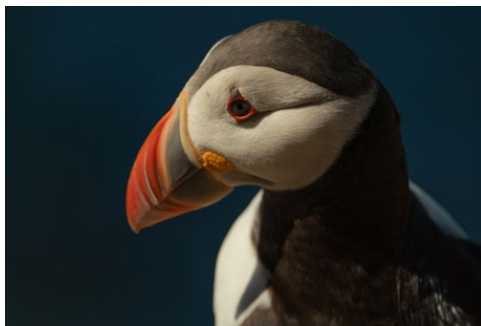


There are many great ways to photograph flowers. A simple starting point is to find a flower that has others of the same species in the background. This will create some lovely bokeh that is the same colour as your subject.



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## CLOSE UP PORTRAIT



Close up portraits allow you to see more details in your subject and help your viewers to connect with it. The closer you are, the steadier you will need to be. So turn on your image stabilisation and/or use a faster shutter speed to get sharp images.



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## SUN RAYS

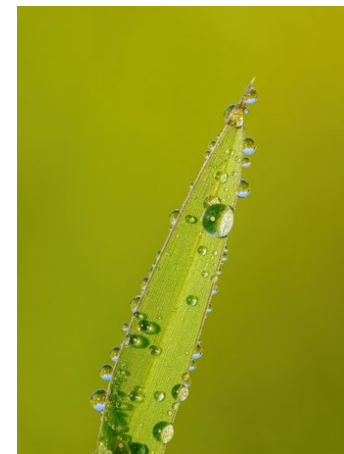


Sun rays look magical and can turn a boring photograph into one which holds people's attention. You will need high humidity, particularly fog or mist. Use a telephoto lens and a narrow aperture (high F number) -  $f/16$  is a good starting point.



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## MACRO DEW DROPS



Spring mornings, immediately after sunrise are a great time to find dew on grasses and flowers. Focus stacking may help to get all the dew drops sharp.



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## MOTION BLUR



Using a slower than usual shutter speed and panning with your subject will allow you to capture motion blur. Keep pace with your subject's head. The shutter speed will depend on how fast your subject moves. 1/50 sec is a good starting point.

## BACKLIT SUBJECTS



Photographing your subject with the sun behind them will allow you to capture rim lighting where the fur or feathers are light, but the subject is in silhouette. Experiment with the exposure for different effects.

## GARDEN BIRDS



You don't have to go anywhere to capture lovely photos. There will be wildlife around your home. Provide some food to encourage the wildlife and you'll soon be in a position to capture what's in your garden. Alternatively you can use a local park or even a balcony.

## ABSTRACT ANGLES



Find new ways of looking at things to show your audience a view that they won't normally see or notice. This photo is looking down upon the top of Christmas tree, which abstracts the tip from the tree itself.



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## PATTERNS



Nature is full of patterns when you look for them. This photo is looking along the branch of a monkey puzzle tree. Think about the symmetry of flowers, spirals in shells, patterns in wet sand, bubbles in flowing water, cracks in dry mud and many others.

## FANTASTIC FOG



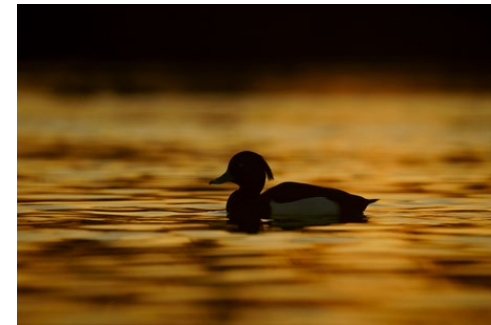
Mist and fog can help make beautiful photos. It can add mystery, silky textures, magical light and it provides separation between the subject and the background. Whenever there's a weather forecast of fog, get out with your camera.

## UNUSUAL PERSPECTIVES



Angles that give views which people wouldn't normally see make interesting photos, such as looking directly down to your subject.

## SILHOUETTES



A silhouette is where the photo is underexposed so that the subject is entirely (or almost entirely) black. Your light source, usually the sun, should be behind your subject. Golden hour and blue hour are fantastic for silhouettes.



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## FABULOUS FUNGI



In autumn, fungi appear everywhere, in particular woodlands. Although mushrooms are easy to find, it is not easy to make a nice photo. Search for perfect specimens that are not damaged and which has tidy surroundings (or that you can tidy up).

## SHORT TELEPHOTO SHOT

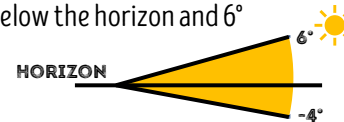


Don't always rely on a super telephoto lens for wildlife photography. If you can find a subject that will allow you to get close, you can get beautiful images with a really shallow depth of field using a 70-200mm lens, or equivalent. This image was taken at 180mm.

## GOLDEN HOUR



Around sunrise and sunset the light is soft and golden. Golden hour isn't an hour. It's between 20 mins and 90 mins, varying through the year. This occurs when the sun is between 4° below the horizon and 6° above it.



## LOW KEY



Embrace the dark side. Low key photos are dramatic and mysterious. They are deliberately under exposed so that the shadows are really dark, if not, black. Use your eyes judge the aesthetic and/or use the histogram to expose to the left.



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## BLUE HOUR



Just before sunrise and after sunset there is often a briefly beautiful period of intense blue light. Blue hour isn't an hour and usually only lasts for about 10-15 mins. This occurs when the sun is between 6° and 4° below the horizon.



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## BLACK & WHITE



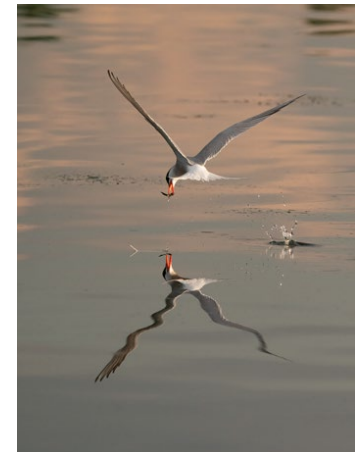
Black & white photography is a classic look and is an artform in itself. Removing colour helps you learn to see tonal contrasts. Shooting in black and white, rather than relying on photo editing, will make you a better photographer..

## FINE ART FLORA



Plant life of all kinds can make artistic images including dead flowers, fungi, weeds, lichen, grasses and many others. Frame them with a contrasting background and flat or diffused lighting to create a still life style photo. This is a photo of poppy seed heads.

## REFLECTIONS



Reflections are a fantastic compositional device, whether animals, flowers, insects or mountains, find some relatively still water.



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## BUTTERFLIES



Butterflies are photogenic subjects, and most are large enough that you can use pretty much any lens - it doesn't have to be a macro lens. A nice clear background with a shallow depth of field will really help. Make sure you've got the butterfly's eyes in focus.



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## ICM



Intentional camera movement (ICM) photos can be created with any camera movement and a slower than usual shutter speed. Try gently shaking the camera, sweeping it horizontally or vertically, moving it towards or away from the scene, or twisting the camera as in this photo of a swan on water.



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## SUBJECT IN LANDSCAPE



Use shorter focal lengths to show off your subject in the context of their environment. This can be really compelling for your viewers. Ensure there is space around your subject to show off the landscape, but also that there is enough background separation to show off your subject.



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## GROUP PORTRAIT



Photographs of wildlife in their social groupings help to show your viewers something extra about your subject. This can help viewers relate to the subject because we are also social creatures.



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## WOODLAND LANDSCAPE



Not every part of every woodland makes a beautiful photo. Look for patterns of trees, or a point of difference - where a single tree is very different in shape from the others around it. Fog and interesting light can really help to make a woodland photo.



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## CATCH LIGHTS



Catch lights are the sparks of light in your subject's eyes, reflecting the light source. Without catch lights the eyes can look flat and lifeless. Those little specular highlights can really help your viewers connect with your subject.



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## HIGH KEY

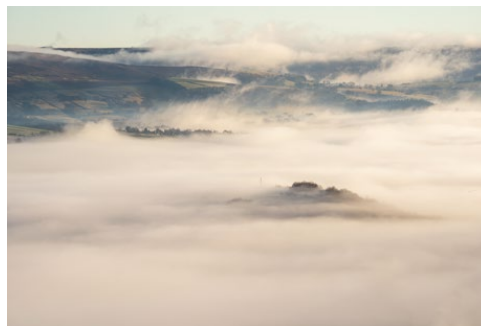


High key photos feel light and airy. They are overexposed to the point where the highlights are very bright or even blown out and have very little contrast. Use the your eyes judge the aesthetic and/or use the histogram to expose to the right.



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## WEATHER PHENOMENON



Weather phenomena provide great opportunities for interesting photos. Above is a cloud inversion. Others include dust storms, lightning, fogbows, and various cloud formations. The most dramatic are the various forms of cyclone - if you're brave!



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## BIRDS IN FLIGHT



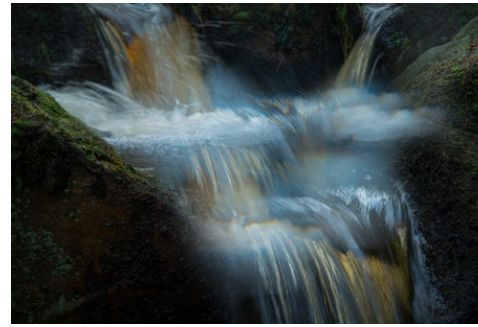
People are fascinated by birds in flight. Try to avoid photos where you are simply photographing a bird against a plain sky - these can be really boring. Track your bird and photograph it as it passes some interesting background features.

## FOREGROUND BLUR



A defocused foreground can really elevate your photos and add depth to them. This photo of a dipper collecting nesting material has some foreground mossy rocks that are about halfway between the camera and the bird - introducing layers to the photo.

## SHOOT THROUGH



You can create really interesting images by shooting through translucent objects. You can buy creative filters, glass prisms and spheres. You can also use objects that you have at home like plastic drinks bottles and translucent coloured sweet wrappers.

## SUBJECT IN THE RAIN



Many people don't go out to photograph nature in the rain, so capturing some rainy photos can really make your photography stand out. Think about the subject you want to capture - some wildlife is not affected by rain in any way, but others may seek shelter.



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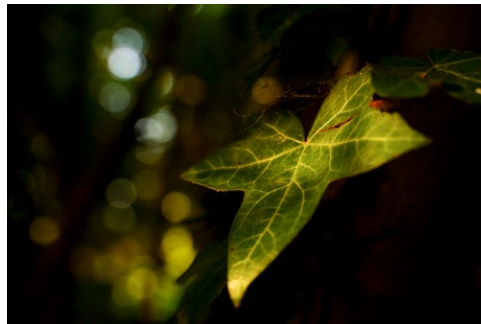
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## ON THE WATER



Birds on the water are one of the easiest subjects to create beautiful photos of. Get down low to water level and shoot across it. This makes it easy to blur out as much detail of the surroundings as possible.

## LOW LIGHT LEAVES



You can get lovely photos of individual leaves in dense woodlands, early in the morning when the sun is low in the sky. Look for light breaking through to illuminate a leaf and compose your shot with other bright leaves in the background for beautiful bokeh.

## PARENT & CHILD



Most species of mammals and birds raise their offspring for a short period of time after birth. During this time you can often find interactions and bonding between parent and child which your viewers can relate to.

## INTERESTING INSECTS



Wherever you are in the world, from spring to early autumn there is an abundance of insects to photograph. Always aim to get your subject's eyes sharp and in focus. Using a flash with some diffusion will really help.



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