



Deciding on the Best Equipment for our African Game Drives

April 2024

By Bob Reynolds and Judie Reynolds



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We had finally booked a long anticipated trip to South Africa that included multiple game drives. How do you photograph animals on a game drive and what is the best equipment to take? We read multiple articles, watched YouTube videos and spoke to friends who had already made similar trips. Since we are both photographers, our choices were doubly important. Here is what we learned, what we did and what really worked.

Some advice was universal. First, was “do not, under any circumstances, change your lens in the field.” It’s dusty, dirty and bad things can happen. Second, you will want a wide lens and

a long lens. A wide lens captures landscapes and a sense of place and lets you capture anything up close. A long lens will help you photograph those far away monkeys who scatter whenever you get close. Most photographers suggested two dedicated cameras; one with a long lens, and one with a wider lens.

We each have two camera bodies and lenses that zoom out to 18mm. We also have point-and-shoot cameras that work well for wide daytime shots. We felt that the wide lens option was solved. The bigger question was what do we do for long lenses? The minimum recommended lens was 200mm, but most people recommended 300mm, 500mm or even more for long reach. We have a Sigma 150-500mm lens, but it's a big heavy lens. It's so heavy I almost always use a monopod to support it. Would that work on a game drive?

After reviewing a few more expert opinions, the monopod option was out. You need something more agile and portable. Among the recommendations from many was to buy a used Super Zoom camera such as a Canon SX70 or a Minolta MN53. Many of these had a Full Frame equivalent of 600mm or more. The down side was that these are older models that don't have the latest noise reduction, image stabilization or the fast focusing of newer mirrorless cameras. Not all of them supported Raw files. We researched a number

of used cameras and then decided to go in another direction.

so small, light and easy to carry around. The downside is that it only opens to F8 at 400mm. We were hoping that the F8 limitation would not be a problem on our trip.

After doing a lot of shooting at home, we decided the RF 100-400 was a good option. We bought a second one so that each of us would be equipped for our trip.



Dusty conditions makes changing your lens a bad choice.

Here's what we learned during our game drives. Not only is the environment dusty, the ride during game drives is really rough and bumpy. You absolutely cannot hold a camera steady, change a lens or insert an SD card while the vehicle is moving. While I was holding a camera body in my hands, my camera bag was bouncing all over the floor and had to be secured so it didn't fly out. The ride is so rough

that I found I could not manage two camera bodies around my neck at the same time. I ended up holding just one SLR camera with the 100-400 lens, and then keeping the point and shoot in my pocket where I could grab it when we were close up to elephants or other big animals. That proved to be the best solution for me. The point and shoot (Olympus TG-5) can be operated with just one hand. It works well for wide shots and it shoots in Raw. When I was done with it, I tucked it back in my pocket and then used the Canon R7 SLR.

Judie has a sling-style camera bag that allows her to position the bag in front of her for quicker access to her gear. She was able to switch camera bodies more easily than I could and she used both SLR camera bodies and seldom used the point and shoot.



Using the maximum focal length of 400mm is best when you can't get too close. F8, 1/800, ISO 1600 at 400mm. Photo by Judie Reynolds



In the end, the R7 with a 100-400mm lens was a good combination. For daylight shooting, the F8 aperture was not an issue and the size and weight of the camera was perfect. We also can now recommend MPB as a reputable seller of used equipment. I've bought three used lenses from MPB. When they say the lens is "like new", it is absolutely like new.

Summary of Equipment Used

Judie

Canon R7 mirrorless SLR, 32.5 Megapixel

Lens: Canon RF 100-400 f/5.6-8 IS

Canon 60D DSLR, 18 Megapixel

Lens: Canon 18-200 3.5-5.6 IS

Olympus TG-6 Point and Shoot, 12 Megapixel; 4.5-18mm (25mm-100mm full frame equivalent)

SD Cards: 64GB (many!)

Bob

Canon R7 mirrorless SLR, 32.5 Megapixel

Lens: Canon RF 100-400 f/5.6-8 IS

Canon 7D MkII DSLR, 20.9 Megapixel

Lens: Canon 18-200 3.5-5.6 IS

Olympus TG-5 Point and Shoot, 12 Megapixel; 4.5-18mm (25mm-100mm full frame equivalent)

SD Cards: Multiple 64GB cards

A Local Place to Photograph - Lake Arlington

By Glenn Kaupert

I stop by Lake Arlington about three times a week, I live only a few blocks away. I enjoy photographing the sunrise & sunsets, birds, interesting skies, or whatever else may come my way. There is a 2 mile path around the lake for walkers, runners, and bicycles. In addition to the amenities at and around the lake there are a good number of birds which visit, including red tailed & coopers hawks, bald eagles, owls, osprey, geese, herons, egrets, & ducks, among others. I seem to find something to photograph every time I visit and I'd like to share some of those images I've made.

I watch the morning news to find out what type of weather we have and adjust my commute to work accordingly. If I think there might be the possibility of an interesting sunrise I'll stop by early to capture something. I also watch the weather at sunset as well to determine what might be a good capture.

When you're looking for a place to capture some interesting imagery, take a trip to Lake Arlington. It is close by and you can usually find something interesting to photograph, all you need to do is look for it.

April, 2024

Glenn Kaupert's Photos around Lake Arlington



Full moon rising



Great Blue Heron in flight.



Red-tailed Hawk on the north side of the lake.

April, 2024



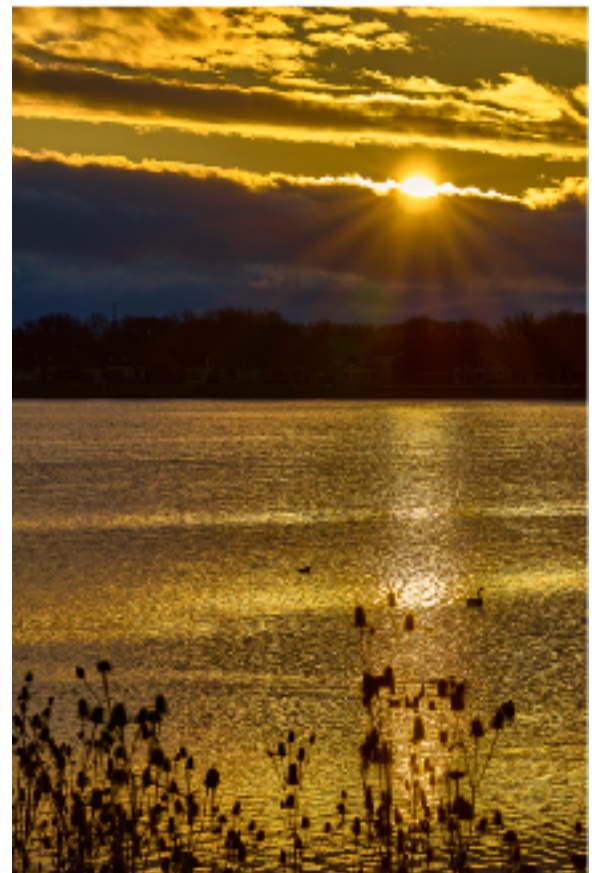
Summer sunset at the lake.



Canada Goose taking off in the fog.



An interesting look at the Thistle plants along the lake.



Sunrise among the clouds



USING A LIGHT PAD

What's your favorite kind of light? Direct sunlight at high noon? No, I didn't think so. Sometimes Mother Nature cooperates by providing a nice bright overcast day - perfect lighting for macro flower photography. The lovely, even lighting enables you to get in close and see the details in the flower with no harsh shadows or blown out highlights. And magic happens when the light is behind the subject! Every detail in the texture of the petals is brought out. And the translucency of the petals is simply beautiful. Backlighting rules!

But what to do when shooting conditions aren't perfect? Technology to the rescue. I bought a light pad several years ago. A light pad is a thin box with a white surface over a bank of LED lights. It provides bright, evenly diffused light behind whatever is placed on the surface. It's a super fun toy for getting out of a photography funk and is an excellent tool for taking macro flower photos. Simply lay the flower on the light pad and let the light shine through the petals. It's a good idea to bracket your shots and overexpose by a stop or two for a high key image. If you think the white background is too plain, you can always add a texture in post processing. Composition can be as simple as a single flower surrounded by negative space or a plethora of overlapping blooms filling the frame.

Harold Davis has developed a unique technique for shooting on a light pad and combining multiple layers to emphasize the translucency of the petals. Popular Photo Magazine described his images as "ethereal" and "having a translucence that borders on spiritual". Two of his images have recently been used for US postage stamps. For more about Harold Davis, check out his website - digitalfieldguide.com.

April, 2024

Prices for light pads range from a little under \$100 to over \$1000. I'd suggest buying a light pad on the lower end of the scale. Just keep in mind that a too small light pad will limit what you're able to do. Mine is 16x18". I wouldn't recommend getting anything smaller than that.

A few helpful tips -

Choose flowers that are somewhat sheer (daffodils, iris, anemonies). Dense flowers like roses have little or no translucency.

Flowers are fragile. Handle them carefully. To make them face up, try gently breaking the heads off and laying them on the light pad.

Curving stems add interest.

Shoot quickly. Flowers don't stay fresh for long. But as Alan Shapiro showed us on his zoom presentation last month, there's beauty to be found even in faded or dried blooms. Check out his website - alanshapirophotography.com. The guy's amazing!

And you don't have to be limited to flowers. Leaves or thin slices of onion, kiwi and oranges give interesting results as well.

Experiment and have fun!



Levitation Photography by Judy King

I got this great idea last Halloween - Levitation Photography - but it can be used any time or place your imagination takes you!

It's pretty straightforward:

1. Take a snapshot of the background that you want to have the levitation image put onto.



2. Take a picture of the subject that you will be levitating. In this example, my ever-cooperative Hubby will be "dropped in".



3. Upload both the empty background and drop-in image into Photoshop.
4. Lighten the empty background image as needed.
5. Use the Quick Selection Tool (QST) and draw around subject. It helps to enlarge the image to see exactly where the QST is going. Be patient, it takes time!



Once you are happy with the QST, copy the image then paste the subject onto the empty background where you want it.

6. On that image, click on EDIT / Free Transform to get a box around the subject.



Click on the white boxes to move the subject anywhere you want.

And there you have it!

It's fun and (for me) kind of a challenge.

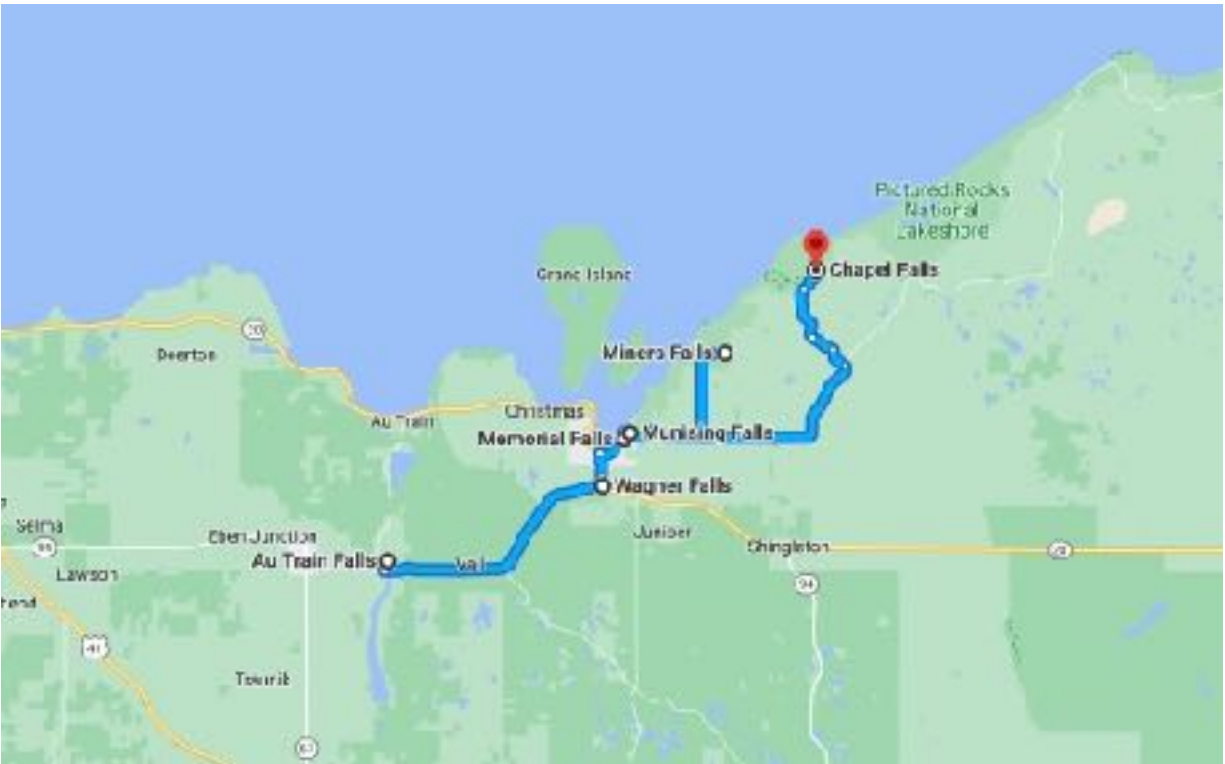
Thanks for reading and if you try this, have a blast! Share your completed image with the club and on social media!

The 2-Hour Road Trip Along Alger County's Waterfall Trail Is A Glorious Spring Adventure In Michigan

By Sophie Boudreau

Submitted by Mike Garber

Are you already plotting your next great adventure in Michigan? Our state is chock full of [natural attractions](#) that add magic to any travel plans, but there's something special about checking out the Upper Peninsula in all its splendor. One natural feature of the U.P. that sets it apart is the abundance of glorious waterfalls in Michigan. One area is especially rich with enchantment. Follow this waterfall trail in Michigan for a journey like none other.



From beginning to end, the trail extends for approximately 44 miles. With time added for gas breaks, pit stops, and unexpected detours, you should anticipate approximately two hours of driving time. If you'd like to tailor this outing to your specific needs, check out our [adjustable map](#) of the route.

Start things off at Au Train Falls, which actually consists of two separate upper and lower fall areas. Situated along the [Au Train River](#), the larger upper falls tumble down for approximately 40 feet, while the lower falls extend about ten feet. Located off County Highway 533, Au Train Falls offer convenient parking and relatively quick access: the walk to the upper falls from the parking area will only take about 15 minutes.



Planning ahead...

From Larry Brady

Mark Your Calendars for August 10, 2024

This year's DeKalb County Barn Tour will celebrate the 10 year anniversary of our tour! We are in the final stages of our winter planning and are excited to announce that this year's tour will be held in the Courtland Township. More information will be available in the coming weeks. If you haven't already, follow us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/DeKalbCountyBarnTour>

Advance tickets are on sale now at our website. Reserve yours today at <https://www.dekalbcountybarntour.com/events/2024-dekalb-county-barn-tour>

From Larry Brady

RESULTS OF APRIL 3rd PRINT COMPETITION

Small Monochrome

Bob Reynolds, "What's He Thinking", AW-23 pts. -- Small Monochrome Print of the Month

Fred Gold, "Pondering the Mystery", AW-23 pts.

Bob Reynolds, "Black and White", HM-23 pts.

Steve Seburn, "Window on a Broken Back", HM-22pts

Monochrome

Steve Seburn, "Old Dairy Barn", AW-24 pts. – Large Monochrome Print of the Month

Jan Weld, "Great Gray Owl Landing", HM-24 pts.

Small Color

Jan Weld, "Hummer Harassing Barred Owl", AW-26 pts. – Small Color Print of the Month

Fred Gold, "Walk Like an Egyptian", AW-23 pts

Bob Reynolds, "Tentacles", HM-24 pts.

Nancy Soos, "Succulent", HM-23 pts.

Large Color

Jan Weld, "Watchful Cheetah", AW-25 pts. – Large Color Print of the Month

Alfredo Rodriguez, "Zoo Lion Two", AW-24 pts.

Kathy Grady, "Purple Water Lily", HM-24 pts

August Greidanus, "Five Finches Feasting", HM-23 pts

PHOTOS FROM THE APRIL 3rd COMPETITION

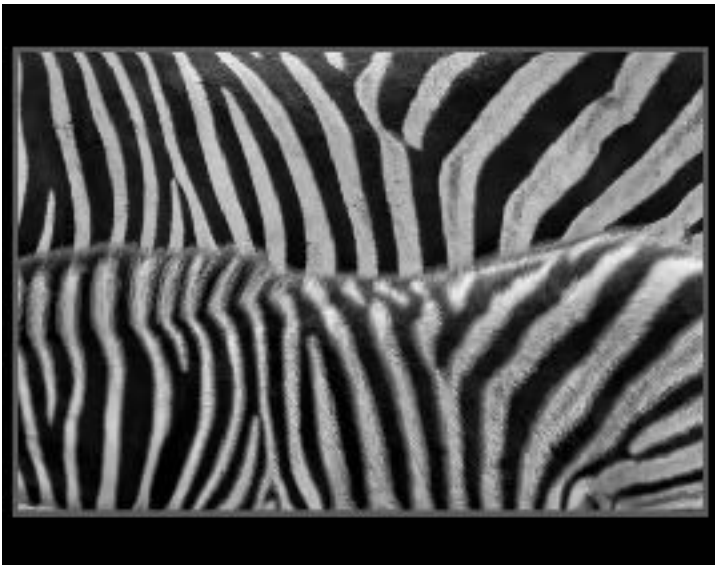
SMALL MONOCHROME



Bob Reynolds, "What's He Thinking", AW-23 pts. -- Small



Fred Gold, "Pondering the Mystery", AW-23 pts.



Bob Reynolds, "Black and White",



Steve Seburn, "Window on a Broken Back", HM-22pts

LARGE MONOCHROME



Steve Seburn, "Old Dairy Barn", AW-24 pts. – Large Monochrome Print of the



Jan Weld, "Great Gray Owl Landing", HM-24 pts.

SMALL COLOR



Jan Weld, "Hummer Harassing Barred Owl", AW-26 pts. – Small Color Print of



Fred Gold, "Walk Like an Egyptian", AW-23 pts



Bob Reynolds, "Tentacles",



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LARGE COLOR

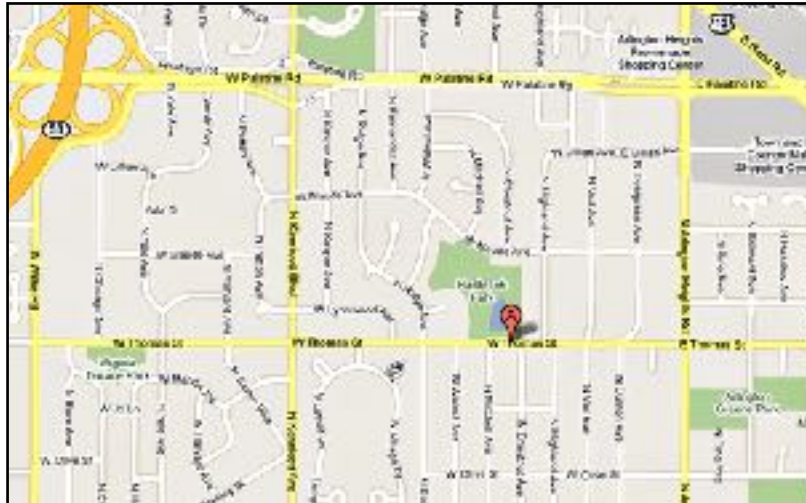


Jan Weld, "Watchful Cheetah", AW-25
pts. – Large Color Print of the Month



Alfredo Rodriguez, "Zoo Lion Two",

*ACC meets at the Christian Church of
Arlington Heights, 333 W. Thomas Avenue,
three blocks west of Arlington Heights
Road, across from Hasbrook Park on the
1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at
7:30 p.m.*



*Chicago
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