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Photography week



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Photography Week



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Welcome to the world's No.1 weekly digital photography magazine. If you're already a reader, thanks for your continued support and involvement; if you're new to *Photography Week*, you've come to the right place! In addition to expert advice, brilliant tips and step-by-step tutorials, every issue features interactive galleries of brilliant photos, how-to videos on

essential shooting and editing techniques, and in-depth reviews of the latest camera kit.

But that's not the whole story. *Photography Week* is more than a magazine – it's a community of like-minded people who are passionate about photography. To get involved, just follow any of the links below and share your shots and comments.

Jeff Meyer, Editor

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We're more than just a magazine – read on and discover the many ways you can interact with and enjoy *Photography Week*



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© Reed Miller

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WHAT'S HOT

THE WEEK'S TOP HEADLINES IN PHOTOGRAPHY

PANASONIC'S NEW MACRO LENS IS A FEAT OF MICRO ENGINEERING

Lumix S 100mm f/2.8 Macro is the world's smallest and lightest lens of its kind



© Panasonic

Panasonic has plugged a gap in its Lumix lens lineup with the new Lumix S 100mm f/2.8 Macro lens, which, thanks to a newly developed Dual Phase Linear focusing motor, Panasonic says is the world's smallest and lightest full-frame macro lens over 90mm with a 1:1 magnification.

Not only that, the lens also has the world's closest focusing distance for a macro lens (the same 100mm and 1:1 caveats apply), with a minimum focus distance of just 20.4cm.

This incredible feat of engineering puts the Lumix S 100mm at less than

half the weight of rival lenses from Canon, Nikon, and Sony. And at just 82mm in length, it's between 49-66mm shorter than rivals. The Lumix S 100mm also has an identical body size and filter thread size to other Lumix S f/1.8 prime lenses, making changing lenses during video shooting quick and easy, as gimbals shouldn't need to be rebalanced or camera rigs realigned.

In order to achieve this reduced size there's a notable absence of any optical stabilisation, which is unusual for a macro lens, and sets it apart from rivals; although thanks to Panasonic's

rock-steady IBIS in its latest cameras, this might not be an issue. The lens also contains fewer total lens elements than other comparative lenses, but still squeezes in 3 ASPH, 2 UED, and 1 ED element to match Panasonic's latest sensor's image quality and control over unwanted aberrations.

The lens features what should be a top-notch build quality, offering weather-resistant sealing, and freeze resistance down to -10C.

The Lumix S 100mm f/2.8 Macro lens will be available to purchase from January 24 and will cost \$999 / £999.

F E A T U R E

MAJESTIC INHABITANT

A wolf in Yellowstone National Park, captured by Reed Miller, who extended his focal length from 600mm to 840mm by adding a 1.4x extender



© Reed Miller

SHOOT WINTER WILDLIFE

Unlock your knowledge of photography and learn animal behaviour to capture awe-inspiring moments Words Kim Bunermann

Achieving the perfect winter wildlife shot can be a challenging task that demands patience, skill and perseverance. Waiting for hours in the freezing cold isn't exactly a photographer's dream scenario; however, once you've pressed the shutter and got the perfect photo, all those difficulties are quickly forgotten. During the winter months, some creatures are more active than usual. As food is scarce, they're drawn out of their hiding places, making this the perfect time to see them. In

addition, the environmental changes often give us a better view of the animals. Bare branches, trees and bushes allow us to spot wildlife more easily, and also to frame the animals with fewer distractions.

Winter wildlife photography is a thrilling experience that not only gives you the opportunity to observe and understand animal behaviour in a way that few other activities can, but will also help you become a better photographer. Facing freezing temperatures poses a unique set of challenges, so we must also

consider the impact of snow on our gear when choosing the correct exposure. Furthermore, we need to locate the places inhabited by our chosen wildlife, and make every effort to remain as unobtrusive as possible, in terms of both our appearance and our behaviour, so that we don't disturb the animals.

In this guide we'll outline some of the best methods for spotting and capturing winter wildlife through your camera lens, while also sharing advice on how you can protect and weatherproof your equipment.



F E A T U R E

GET WINTER-READY

Locate your subjects, and get the right gear without breaking the bank

Winter is a wonderful time to spot wildlife, no matter where you are – close to home or in far-flung corners of the world, in urban areas or even in your back garden. Commonly found species include squirrels, birds, owls, otters and deer. However, before grabbing your camera and heading out, it's important to do some research. By connecting with a local nature reserve and using helpful resources such as the RSPB website in the UK, forums, and apps, you'll learn more about rare sightings and be able to identify the species you photograph. To increase your chances of capturing great winter wildlife images, consider starting a photographic diary or journal. By keeping track of sightings and recording all the information in one place, you'll start to see connections and build your knowledge. Record important details, including the date, time, and weather conditions, to create a valuable resource.

As the winter season varies around the world due to the Earth's tilted axis, winter wildlife photography can be enjoyed all year round. When the North Pole tilts towards the sun it's summer in the northern hemisphere, and when the South Pole tilts towards the sun it's winter in the northern hemisphere. This means that north of the equator, winter runs from December to February, and south of the equator it runs from June to August.

To capture powerful images, travel isn't always necessary; hidden gems can be found in local forests or nature reserves. However, when travelling overseas, it's highly recommended to book an experienced guide. A guide will help you stay safe in cold and sometimes treacherous winter landscapes, while also directing you to the best locations. Additionally, they can supply local knowledge that may otherwise take years to build – this is especially important for wildlife that gives birth to their offspring, since some species do so in the winter months and so are particularly sensitive to any disturbances.



CURIOUS GUY

"The long-tailed weasel is a ferocious and relentless predator, known for being fearless," says Reed Miller. "This weasel will soon have a winter white coat, except for some yellow on its stomach and its black-tipped tail."

TOP GEAR

Winter wildlife images can be captured with any camera, but full-frame cameras have an advantage. The bigger sensor produces less noisy high-resolution images, so you can crop frames in editing to get closer to your subject – even if it's further away in the frame – without significantly compromising image quality. The Canon EOS R8, for example, boasts a blistering 40fps burst shooting mode and 4K 60p video, making it an excellent choice for capturing natural behaviour in both stills and moving images.



FEATURE

GET WINTER-READY CONTINUED

TAKING A STANCE

For impactful winter wildlife images, it's crucial to depict the species' natural behaviour, as Reed did in this image of a bull elk



© Reed Miller



SELECT AN OPTIC

Gain more reach, and learn how to get closer without needing to purchase new lenses

To enhance the zoom capabilities of your current lens, consider investing in an teleconverter. These have different strengths, with the 2x extender being a popular choice, as it doubles the focal length. Keep in mind that an extender also reduces the effective lens aperture – a 1.4 extender decreases the maximum aperture by one stop, while a 2x model reduces it by two stops. Additionally, they can affect the optical quality, so it's recommended that you purchase own-brand extenders. If you're looking for a more cost-effective solution, it's always worth checking out secondhand gear.

TELEPHOTO ZOOM

A lens such as the Sigma 70-200mm f/2.8 DG OS HSM is an excellent option to capture a broader view of the surroundings in your shot, while also providing the flexibility to zoom in on a subject from a reasonable distance.



SUPER-TELEPHOTO ZOOM

For getting really close, a focal length of 200mm plus is needed. The Sony FE 200-600mm F5.6-6.3 G OSS, for example, is a great choice. Bear in mind that these types of lenses can be quite heavy, so aren't the easiest to carry around all day.



WEATHERPROOF YOUR KIT

Protect your gear to avoid losing it to mould or dampz

When shooting in cold conditions, it's important to keep an eye on your gear. Even if the weather is dry, melting snow can pose a danger, and your kit can get wet as soon as you're back in warm temperatures. Therefore, it's crucial to dry out your kit after every shoot to prevent condensation. Use a towel to remove any moisture from the camera and lenses to help avoid fungi and mould growth – once either of these elements have entered the kit, it's nearly impossible to get rid of them.

When purchasing new gear, always check first whether it's weather-resistant and sealed. However, even when using weather-resistant gear, it's always a good idea to use accessories to protect expensive equipment. Using a rain shield for lenses is an easy solution to keep water off them; alternatively, a well-attached and taped plastic bag will help keep the moisture out. Lens hoods are also an inexpensive option that protect the lens from water droplets falling on the front element.



FEATURE

BLEND IN

Hide well to capture rare species and true wildlife behaviour

To coax winter wildlife to come out in front of the lens, you must become one with nature, being almost invisible, and blending in with the surroundings by choosing clothing with muted colours and avoiding materials that make noise. Camouflage clothing is your ticket to remaining unnoticed, and reliable waterproof quality gear will protect you from the cold and mud. Accessories such as a camouflage lens cover or crim net will help you stay hidden, and protect your expensive equipment in unpredictable weather conditions.

Waiting for wildlife to appear can be a time-consuming process, which is why permanent and temporary hides can be a better solution. These hides allow you to blend in seamlessly with the surroundings, and offer extra protection against the weather; they can even be turned into a more comfortable environment with preparation. Nature reserves often have specialist wooden hides that are perfect for capturing hard-to-see species in a stable environment. Pop-up hides are similar to tents, and are easy to set up wherever you decide to get in position. These come in various colours and patterns, and fold away into a backpack for easy transportation. You can also create your own hide with a dome or tent decorated with leaves. Finding the perfect spot for the hide can be challenging. As soon as you set it up, get your camera out and check the background and foreground of the



© Reed Miller

IMPACTFUL ACTION A battle of Bighorn rams during the rut. Reed used a shutter speed of 1/2000 sec, while maintaining an aperture of f/4 and an ISO of 100

frame; this way, you can rearrange its position to create a more appealing composition if needed. It's best to leave the hide in position for several days before shooting, so that the wildlife can become more familiar with it and accept its presence. Patience and quietness are key when photographing, so it's crucial to remain as quiet as possible upon arrival, and when setting up your equipment.

ESSENTIAL TOOLS

When capturing wildlife moments with big lenses, a stable support system for the camera is essential to avoid blurry shots. A tripod is a reliable choice to keep the camera set up and ready while waiting for the perfect shot. This has the benefit of hands-free use, but it also limits your ability to make quick changes in image composition and framing options.

For those seeking more flexibility, a bean bag is an excellent alternative, allowing you to support the camera at any level. When photographing out of a built hide, a bean bag can allow you to position the camera on the open window frame often found in these spaces, and is the perfect tool to let you reframe the scene with minimum fuss.

THINK AHEAD Think comfort, and ensure that you have enough power when the action happens

Spending a long time in nature can be a relaxing experience if you prepare well. As it takes patience to wait for wild creatures to appear, the last thing you want to do is leave your position and risk missing the perfect shot.

Bring along some sandwiches, snacks and plenty of water to stay hydrated. When packing ready-to-eat food, make sure to remove it from the plastic packaging and store it in containers that won't make as much noise when you open them up.

When shooting in cold temperatures, camera batteries tend to drain faster than

usual. To avoid running out of power, bring a spare pack of batteries with you, and have the backup battery in your pocket to keep it warm. Additionally, consider investing in a battery grip. This accessory allows you to store an extra battery, meaning you can use two batteries to power your camera. This will prevent you from needing to change batteries during important moments, making the shooting experience smoother. A camera grip also makes it more comfortable to shoot in portrait orientation, as it has an extra shutter button and command dials for full control over your camera.



F E A T U R E

BLEND IN CONTINUED

SLIM PICKINGS

"In the starkness of winter, a big bull bison has to take nourishment where he can find it," says Reed. "That concept works for mankind both physically and spiritually."

SHOW RESPECT

As photographers, we are guests in the animal's habitat. Don't get too close to the species, and let them be themselves. For the most captivating shots, the wildlife has to accept you and your lens first. Leave the environment as it was when you first arrived, and pick up any litter you see.



FEATURE

BUILD CORE SKILLS

The secret to capturing quality winter wildlife images is to observe, be patient and practise

PINE GROSBEAK

This species inhabits coniferous forests across Alaska, western US mountains, Canada, subarctic Scandinavia and northern Russia to Siberia



© Reed Miller

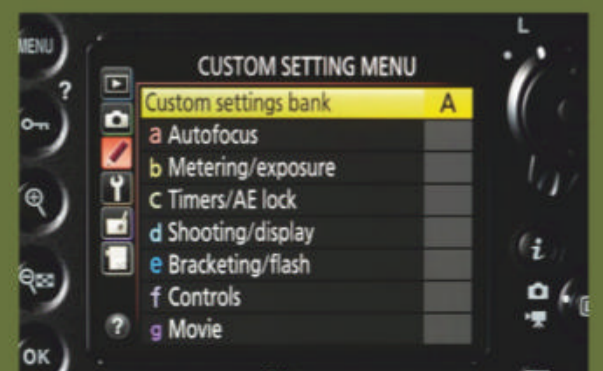
OBSERVATION FOR SUCCESS

Becoming a skilled wildlife photographer requires a solid understanding of both the camera and animals. Here, a monocular is a great tool for observing wildlife in close detail. It lets you study their behaviour and interactions, giving you an edge in being able to predict their next moves. This preparation gives you an advantage in framing fast-changing interactions before they pass.

BE READY

Maximise your chances of capturing the perfect shot

When it comes to capturing the appearance and interactions of wildlife, time is of the essence. It's vital to have your camera set up and ready to go at all times. Before heading out, take time to understand the camera, know your way round the menus, and learn its special features. An effective way of improving your workflow is to customise the camera's buttons. Under the Custom Key option, select the most frequently used features to allow quick access. This helps you in situations where pressing the shutter can make the difference between missing or capturing a lifetime sighting. Take test shots to ensure that the exposure is correct; this will save you time, and allow you to focus on composition and framing when the wildlife appears.



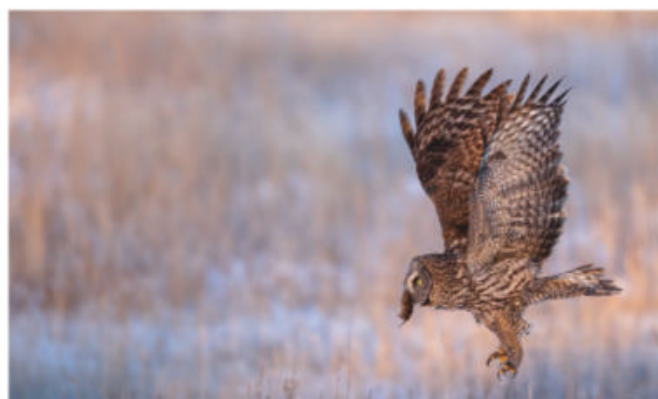
Build up your skills by capturing starter subjects that are commonly found, such as squirrels or robins; these are often seen in gardens, and therefore accustomed to human presence. These animals are generally more hungry during the winter and easy to attract with some food. With time, they will return to the feeding station, giving you more chances to practise.

Documenting an animal's winter behaviour, including food gathering, will add an extra layer to the image, which educates and provides context to the viewer. Remember to respect their space and observe their behaviour. If they move away, don't harass and follow them. With patience, you will gain their trust, and the next time they might get closer to the lens. This is a slow process, but in the end, it will make the experience even more special and rewarding.

Once you've built a rapport with the inhabitants of your garden, take it to the next level by introducing props and fun items to the scene. An apple or a

mini picnic bench are great examples. You'll find that squirrels, in particular, are naturally curious, and will be drawn to these objects, allowing you to capture more engaging shots.

As a next step, look out for local wildlife hotspots. Perhaps there's a nature reserve close by that you can visit regularly to become more familiar with the environment and wildlife. By returning to a known place you'll learn more about the species' behaviour, and how to deal with different lighting and weather conditions.



THE HUNT "A great gray owl finds a meal as the low sun starts to paint its colourful tones."



FEATURE

BUILD CORE SKILLS CONTINUED

SPEED UP YOUR CAMERA Select the ideal settings to accurately capture changing behaviour and movements



1 SHOOT SILENT

The shutter release noise of a camera might scare any wildlife nearby. Compared with DSLRs, mirrorless cameras produce a much quieter sound. To further reduce the noise, activate the electronic or silent shutter option. If this feature is not available, some cameras have a lockup option to minimise noise.



2 SHOOT IN M

To achieve sharp results, select an aperture of around $f/8$. The shutter speed should be adjusted depending on the speed of the subject, and typically ranges from $1/400$ to $1/2000$ sec. Set the ISO for a well-exposed photo, using a high ISO if needed; a sharp, noisy image is better than a blurry one, as noise can always be corrected at the editing stage.



3 SELECT BURST MODE

Using burst mode is a great way to ensure you never miss the action. In this mode, the camera takes multiple frames per second, giving you a better chance of capturing the perfect shot. Mirrorless cameras are particularly effective at this, as they have electronic shutters that perform better than those in DSLR cameras.



4 BACK BUTTON FOCUSING

Sometimes it can be difficult to control both the focus and shutter button operations at the same time. Here, the back-button focus method is a great solution. This allows you to control both functions independently, as the autofocus can now be activated with the AF-ON button located at the back of the camera.



5 DETECT THE ANIMAL'S EYE

Many newer camera models come with an advanced feature that automatically focuses on the subject's eyes. With the Subject-to-Detect mode, found in the AF menu, the camera maintains focus and tracks the subject even when it moves within the frame. Alternatively, select the Servo AF, which acts in a similar way but isn't as accurate.



6 ADJUST TRACKING SENSITIVITY

If the tracking sensitivity is set to a low value the camera may fail to track the subject's movements correctly, which can result in blurry shots. To avoid this, it's essential to set the sensitivity to a high value. This way, the camera can accurately detect the movement, and record the wildlife's action in detail.



FEATURE

INCLUDE AND EXCLUDE

Discover how to use camera settings to create mood and narrative in winter wildlife photography

When it comes to capturing wildlife, framing and aperture settings are crucial factors to consider. By using the right techniques, you can convey your message through two different photographic directions.

Sometimes, it can be challenging to find the right composition, as trees and other background features may distract from the subject but can't be removed. In such cases, it's recommended that you zoom right into your subject and work with an open aperture such as f/2. The reason for this is that the lower your f-stop number, the shallower

the depth of field, meaning the background gets blurred out. This helps in smoothing out distracting elements and keeping the viewer's attention on the subject. Take care, because the shallower the depth of field, the narrower the focus area, meaning fewer image elements will be sharp. Frames shot with an open aperture convey a distinctive, calming atmosphere that captivates the viewer with close insights but have less sharpness in the subject. However, focusing on the wildlife's main features means that its behaviour may not be captured,

and a narrative layer may be missing.

To create a variety of winter wildlife shots, it's best to work with medium apertures such as f/11 – as long as the surroundings are suitable. Bigger f-stop numbers have the benefit of rendering the scene sharp without significantly blurring other elements. It's worth considering including the environment, as it plays a significant role in giving the viewer insights into the subject's life. This way, you build a context and even tell a story. Photographs with narratives are more informative, and educate the viewer by showing natural behaviour.

STAY FLEXIBLE Shift frame sections to show wild subjects in all their facets



© Reed Miller

When you're shooting in the wild, look to change your photographic approach from time to time. Rearranging the frame by zooming in and out, and changing the depth of field, will help to keep the viewer engaged.

For example, one creative approach could be to go to the extremes and fill the frame with only the subject. By zooming right in on the wildlife, features like the fur gain new importance. Showing just a few parts of the subject can

also make the photograph look more abstract.

On the other hand, there are situations where it's necessary to frame the scene wider for practical reasons. For example, when capturing a flying bird or

wildlife in action, you want to be sure that you've captured the entire subject, especially if there are any unpredictable movements; you can always fine-tune the cropping to achieve the desired effect later in post-processing.



INCLUDE AND EXCLUDE CONTINUED

CREATE ATMOSPHERE

SMALL DETAILS

Here, the viewer has a detailed view of the belted kingfisher, while the falling snowflakes add an enchanting touch to the mesmerising winter atmosphere

HIGHLIGHTED SUBJECT

The use of a shallow depth of field expertly draws the viewer's attention towards the subject, ensuring that it remains the focal point of the composition

SHALLOW DOF

Reed used aperture priority mode and chose an f/4 aperture to create a blurred background that isn't distracting and maintains the focus on the subject

CREATE CAPTIVATING COMPOSITIONS

When framing a shot, it can be challenging to determine what should and shouldn't be included. As a general rule, prioritise your subject, and avoid adding anything that could distract from the wildlife. This may require simplifying your composition, but doing so will allow your subject to really stand out.

NARRATIVE LAYER

This mule deer doe taking refuge from a snowstorm evokes curiosity, leaving the viewer to narrate a story and interpret the scene

WIDE ANGLE

By framing the scene wider, Reed captured the serenity of the scene amid the harsh conditions, displaying the subject in its natural habitat

RULE OF THIRDS

Reed applied this classic rule by placing the subject off-centre in the first third of the photograph to create a pleasing composition

SHOW SURROUNDINGS



FEATURE

FILL THE WHITE GAPS

Learn how to handle exposure in the snow like a pro to capture magical winter light

MAKE COLOURS POP

To captivate the viewer, choosing subjects that boldly stand out against the white canvas is a great strategy. Squirrels or foxes are excellent choices, as their orange fur adds a splash of colour. During the editing process, enhance this colour using the selective colour layer option, or by increasing vibrancy and saturation; take care not to overdo the colours, as this can result in unnatural-looking subjects.



HARD-WORKING FOX

"This fox caught several voles and then did something I've never seen before," says Reed. "He buried the voles in the shallow snow with his nose, and then came back later to gather a few and took them to the den."

During the winter season, natural light is a precious resource. To frame winter wildlife at its best, aim to take photos during the golden hours of sunrise and sunset. In the morning, face east, and in the afternoon, position yourself towards the west to catch the warm glow of the winter sun – your smartphone's compass will help you identify the direction in which you should be facing.

The bright snow backdrop can pose some challenges when it comes to the ideal exposure. The snow can deceive the camera's light meter, resulting

in underexposed photographs. To combat this, it's best to intentionally overexpose or underexpose your images in specific situations. A popular approach is to overexpose scenes on purpose by using maximum open apertures. This technique lets you increase the shutter speed, which makes it possible to freeze wildlife interaction. This way, you also avoid pushing the ISO to the extremes, and this helps capture more vibrant colours and prevents the bright snow from having a grey tint. However, when taking pictures of winter birds against a bright sky, it's better to underexpose the image.

When it comes to pressing the shutter, there's no room for error in timing. Get your camera settings ready, frame the subject first, then remain in one spot for an extended period. Waiting for the animal to turn around and make eye contact with the camera creates a sense of intensity in your composition. When the wildlife is staring directly at the lens it has a much stronger impact on the viewer, creating a powerful connection. Since lots of winter wildlife is typically shy, capturing this moment is a rare experience that will leave a lasting impression on both you and your viewers.



FILL THE WHITE GAPS CONTINUED

PRO ADVICE

Wildlife photographer Reed Miller laments a lack of winter images



"Have you ever thought you had fantastic shots but downloaded the images and they just aren't sharp? I learned this lesson the hard way...

many times. Heat waves, mirages and optical distortion can all be difficult in the heat, however, I believe that't is a much bigger problem in the cold, especially if you're shooting with a long lens. Of course, the more magnification, the more distortion.

If I'm shooting an animal from my vehicle (yes, that sounds lazy but it's often the best way), I turn off the engine and roll down every window, so that the temperature equalises enough in my vehicle and I don't get distortion or blurry images. Believe me when I say that your passengers will love this method; soon you'll be able to put your camera on the seat next to you, which will increase your awesome fast camera access skills!"

SEEING EYE-TO-EYE

Lower your position to add new dimensions to your photographs

When you're taking pictures of winter creatures, don't stick to photographing them from head height. Especially when you have small subjects in front of the camera, standing at your normal height can result in a lack of impact in the images. Getting down low with the lens will significantly enhance the visual appeal of the subject, while also adding foreground interest to the composition. This way, you include details of the animal's habitat that provide context for the viewer. Here, blurring the background with low f-numbers such as f/2.8 or f/4 is a clever and effective technique to highlight the main subject.



FEATURE

TOP 10 PLACES TO SHOOT WILDLIFE

Venture further afield than your garden or local park

PINPOINT PUPILS

"This saw-whet owl has much smaller pupils than I normally see because they're usually in the shadows," says Reed.



1 THE ALPS, SWITZERLAND

Home of wolves, ibex, wild goats and red deer. Thanks to reintroduction programs, large predators such as the Eurasian lynx have made a comeback.

2 FÁKASEL, ICELAND

A powerful winter subject is Icelandic horses. These are smaller than regular horses, sometimes even as small as a pony, and are built to survive in harsh climates.

3 WEST HIGHLAND PENINSULAS, SCOTLAND

Scotland's big five are red squirrels, red deer, golden eagles, otters, and harbour seals. Additionally, you'll find diverse wildlife, including mountain hares, roe deer, swans, geese and more.

4 LADAKH, INDIA

Amid the winter snow roams the majestic Snow leopard, a master hunter with unparalleled tracking skills, always on the hunt for its next prey.

5 SVALBARD AND HALLINGDAL, NORWAY

Norway is a haven for winter wildlife, with species such as the Arctic fox, busk ox, polar bear, and reindeer thriving alongside the 700kg national animal, the moose.

6 ISLE OF MULL, UNITED KINGDOM

Known as the otter capital of the UK, this island is perfect for capturing otters on the seashore, particularly during the winter months when they're more active.

7 WAPUSK NATIONAL PARK, CANADA

This national park, spanning over a vast expanse of 11,475km², is known as the world's

premier location for photographing polar bears and their cubs.

8 JIGOKUDANI YAEN-KOEN, JAPAN

Also known as Hell's Valley, this is a hotspot for snow monkeys. When the snow falls, the macaques of Nagano enjoy soaking in the hot springs.

9 BIAŁOWIEZA NATIONAL PARK, POLAND

A global leader in breeding European bison, with the population almost doubling to 200. It's also home to roe and red deer, European mouflon sheep, and wolves.

10 GIGRIN FARM, WALES

In the serene mid-Wales countryside lies a haven for bird enthusiasts, a farm inhabited by over 400-500 bird species, providing captivating subjects for your next shoot.

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SPONSORED CONTENT



GuruShots

We've joined up with online photo game GuruShots to print the winning images from the Mostly White challenge

GuruShots is billed as the world's leading photo game. It's an online photography platform conceived to give global exposure to people who love taking photographs. GuruShots members start out as Newbies and compete with other photographers to win challenges, increase their ranking on the site and eventually

progress to coveted 'Guru' status.

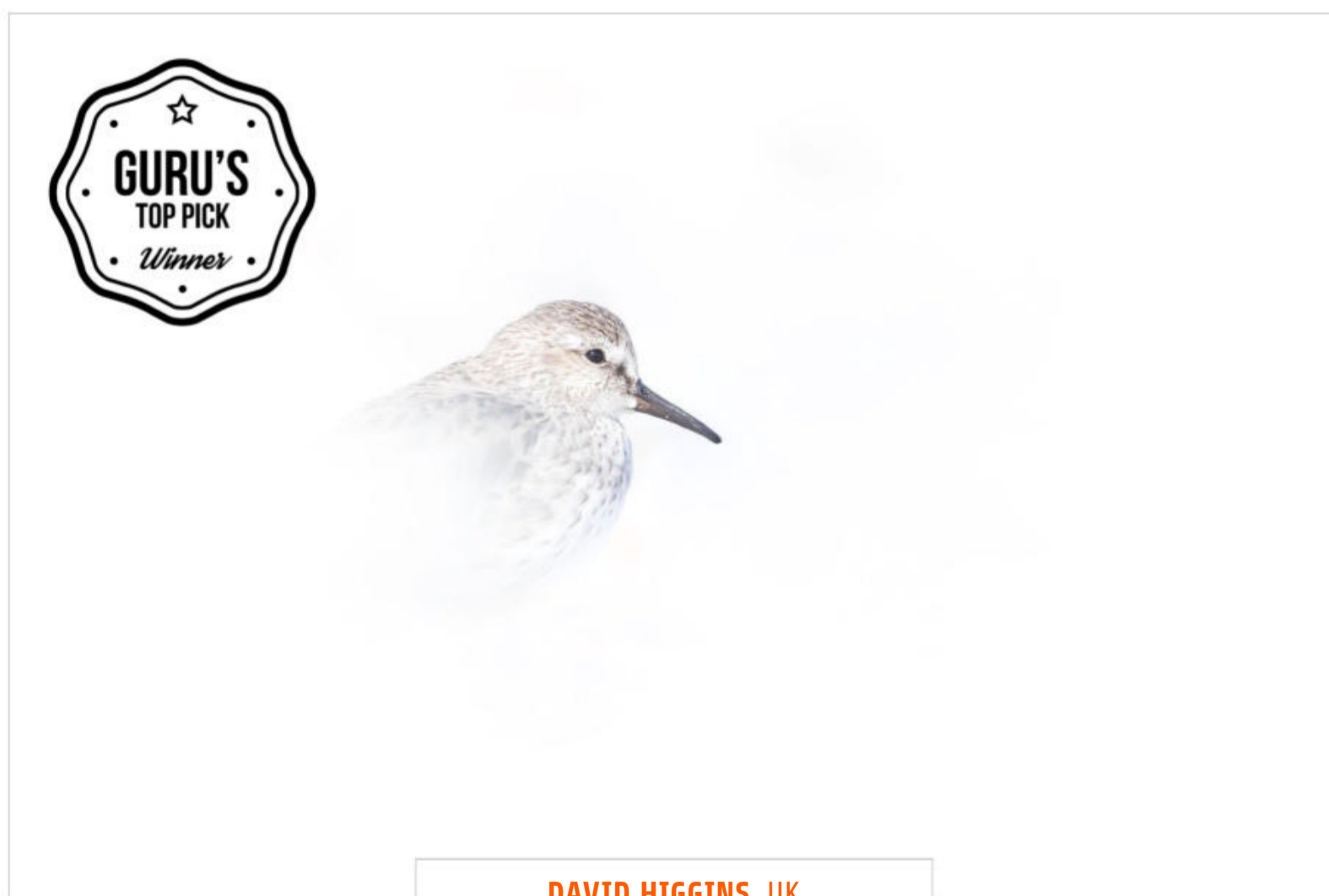
Challenges are voted on by Gurus and the wider GuruShots community, and there's a fresh competition brief – such as this Mostly White challenge – every day. Challenge winners receive prizes from GuruShots' sponsors, including Lowepro, Kodak and Lensbaby.

<https://bit.ly/4aJnKkI>

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GURUSHOTS 'MOSTLY WHITE' CHALLENGE



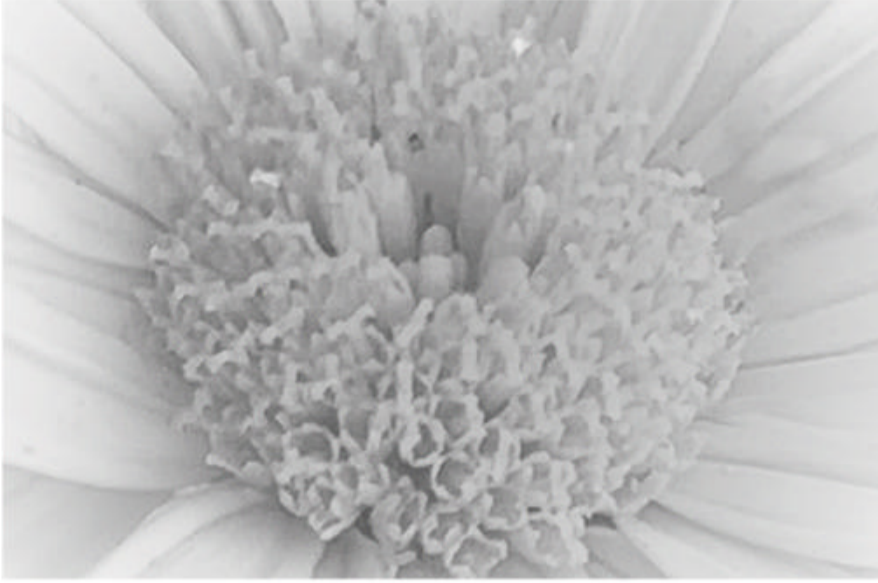
Above, from top-left to bottom-right: **Lynn Shelton** United States, **Norma George** UK, **Patrick Nealis** United States, **Ján Šóš** Slovakia, **Yana Raaga** Latvia, **Sharon Scharich** United States



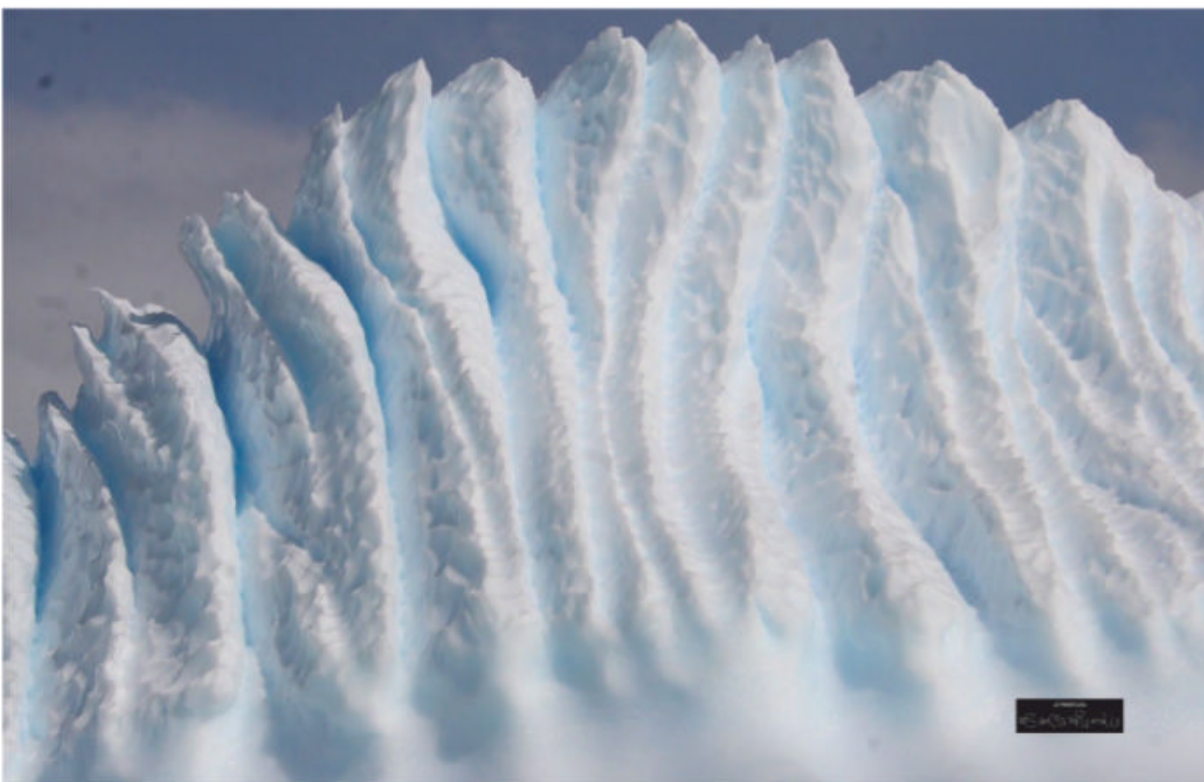
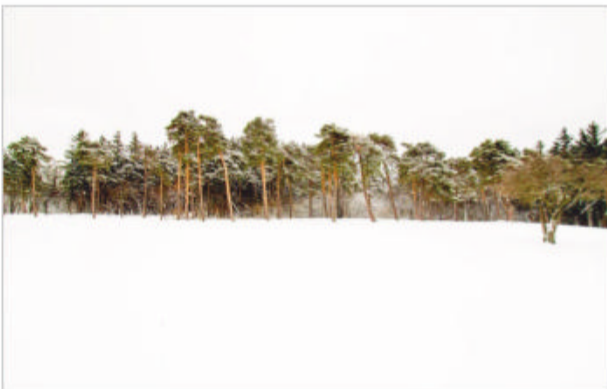
Above, from top-left to bottom-right: **Roy Egloff** Switzerland, **Eileen Roach** United States, **Sridhar Setty** United States, **Fabiano Dos Santos** United States

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GURUSHOTS 'MOSTLY WHITE' CHALLENGE



Above, from top-left to bottom-right: **Gewin Mitch** United States, **David Brinkman** United States, **Radek Matouš** Czech Republic, **Xan White** Switzerland



Above, from top-left to bottom-right: **Johnny** United States, **Ellh Mihalopoyloy** Greece, **Nate Riggins** United States, **Brian Spears** United States, **Marilyn Rifkin** United States, **Frank Shufletoski** Canada

<https://bit.ly/4aJnKkI>

I N S P I R A T I O N

IT'S COOL, THAT

THE BEST THING WE'VE SEEN THIS WEEK



John Calvin, Grand Prize Photo winner



Juan Fernando Capetillo Torres, 2nd place, Portrait category



Josh Murphy, 1st place, Photojournalism category



Forest Qiao, 1st place, Wildlife category

Images © The photographer and courtesy Tamron USA

TALENTED PHOTOGRAPHERS PUT TAMRON'S GLASS TO GOOD USE

Lens maker announces the impressive winners of its annual Photo/Video contest

Tamron USA has revealed the winners of its annual Photo/Video Contest, featuring an impressive selection of images taken by photographers using the brand's highly regarded lenses.

The contest was open to photographers and videographers / filmmakers in the USA, Canada, and Mexico, with prizes awarded in Travel / Landscape, Wildlife, Close-up / Fine Art, Portrait, Sports / Action, Photojournalism, and Video categories.

John Calvin took the Grand Prize in the Photo category for his black-and-white image taken in the Great Sand Dunes National Park in southern Colorado. The judging panel was made up of Tamron creative partners from the worlds of professional photography and videography, with the winners receiving Tamron lenses.

Click the link to see all the winning images and video entries at Tamron's competition web page.



S K I L L S

CRASH COURSE

ESSENTIAL PHOTO SKILLS MADE EASY



CAPTURE A MOON SHOT

Mike Harris shows you how to take one giant leap towards taking stunning moon photos in just six small steps

You don't need to be a keen astrophotographer with specialised gear to capture stunning images of the moon like this one – you will, however, need the longest lens you can lay your hands on, and you'll need to do a little planning.

Kit-wise, a superzoom bridge camera is one option – these offer focal lengths that match and often exceed those of the lenses available

for DSLR and mirrorless cameras, and we're using the Nikon P1000, which has a 125x optical zoom that equates to mammoth 3000mm focal length in 35mm. A telephoto lens on a DSLR or mirrorless camera will also do the trick, and if your lenses aren't long enough, teleconverters are an economical way of boosting your reach.

Like all forms of astrophotography, the success of an astro shoot hinges

primarily on planning. Clear nights are a must, and you'll find plenty of resources online, such as Clear Outside (www.bit.ly/ClearOutside), that can tell you when conditions will be favourable.

You'll also need to consider the moon phase, and here you can be creative – for example, we chose not to shoot a full moon, as we felt that some shadow added extra definition, and helped to make the moon appear less flat.



SKILLS

HOW TO SHOOT THE MOON



1

CHECK THE CONDITIONS

For a conventional close-up of the moon, you'll need to shoot on a clear night. The Clear Outside app is available on iOS and Android, and is an excellent resource – it contains a wealth of information, including the moon phase, weather forecast, and the moon's overall visibility.

2

SET UP

And camera movement will be amplified at higher magnifications, so set up on a sturdy tripod. We shot through an open window; shooting inside entails more planning to ensure the moon is in a suitable position, but it shelters your camera and tripod from the wind.



3

SPOT METERING

By switching to Spot metering you can expose specifically for the area where your focus point is set. Since we're shooting a bright sphere against a black background, this allows us to expose just for the moon – we don't have to worry about underexposing the background.



S K I L L S

HOW TO SHOOT THE MOON



4

ZOOM IN

Loosen your tripod head and target the moon through the viewfinder. Slowly zoom in while adjusting your framing accordingly to ensure that you don't lose your subject. For optimum image quality we turned our P1000's digital zoom off – its mighty 125x optical zoom was still more than sufficient.

5

EXPOSURE SETTINGS

Lenses tend to produce softer images at wide-open apertures, and suffer from diffraction at very narrow apertures. Aim to shoot at your lens's sweet spot (roughly f/8 or f/11). The bright moon will allow you to use a low ISO and a relatively fast shutter speed:

we shot at 1/100 sec, f/8, ISO200.



6

ELIMINATE VIBRATIONS

Switch off any form of image stabilisation and focus to infinity. If you don't have a remote shutter release, set your camera's self-timer to three seconds – this will prevent any movement caused by you pressing the shutter button from ruining your shot.



E D I T I N G

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DOWNLOAD THE
PROJECT FILES
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HOW TO...

COLOUR INFRARED MADE EASY

Love the infrared look but don't fancy converting your camera? James Paterson turns to Affinity Photo filters

Infrared light is all around us, yet we can't see it. That's because the visible spectrum that we are able to view is really only a very narrow band of the entire range of electromagnetic radiation we know as light. If you think of the colours of the rainbow – violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red – each colour has a slightly different wavelength, and therefore a different speed. Red visible light has the longest wavelength and is the fastest. But just beyond visible red

light is infrared, which is faster still.

While infrared light isn't visible to the eye, there are cameras and sensors that can capture it, and if you have an old camera you can have it converted to capture infrared (note that this is an irreversible process) for a few hundred pounds. If you'd rather not make permanent changes to your camera, it's possible to add an infrared look to any photo with a combination of tonal adjustments and filters, and we can do this in Affinity Photo with ease.

Colour infrared photography creates a certain look in which green and yellow foliage becomes reddish and appears to glow, while blue skies become very dark. As such, we can mimic the infrared look by changing the brightness of different colour ranges, then applying a glow filter to enhance the effect.

In this issue's video tutorial we'll walk you through the simple process, using key Affinity Photo tools including the Channel Mixer controls, Live Filters and adjustment layers.



FLASH MODIFIERS

Angela Nicholson tests three magnetic modifier kits

Hahnel Module Creative Lantern Kit

www.hahnel.ie £59/\$100. Module 360 Clamp: £10/\$11; Module 600 Clamp: £10/\$21

Add the Clamp, and this kit softens flashgun light effectively and enables creative colour effects

Hahnel is known for its third-party camera batteries and chargers, but it also makes accessories, including remote controls, flash triggers, flashguns and flash modifiers. The Module Creative Lantern Kit is one of the company's modular flash modifier systems, and requires either the Module 360 Clamp or Module 600 Clamp to mount on a flash.

Key features

The kit comes in a smart wallet that holds the key components, including the Lantern Diffuser and a filter adapter that accepts any of the six included coloured gels. The Clamp needed to attach the kit to the flashgun is purchased separately and is available in two sizes. The Clamps also allow Hahnel's other Module flash accessories to be mounted.

Both Module Clamps extend to fit over a flashgun head and spring back to hold firmly. The Module 360 Clamp opens to 35-64mm while the Module 600 Clamp stretches from 65-80mm. The two clamps have magnets within them to hold the Lantern Diffuser or the filter adapter in position over the flash.

When closed, the Lantern Diffuser looks like a U-shaped piece of plastic, but it opens to reveal a concertina-like structure made from

what appears to be white paper, and it's this that spreads and diffuses the light.

Hahnel supplies six coloured filters with the kit: blue, green, purple, red, orange and yellow; these cut out between 1 EV (yellow) and 1, 2/3EV (green) of light, and they're intended primarily for creative effect rather than for colour correction.

Build and handling

The Module Creative Lantern Kit feels well-made, despite being primarily plastic. The Clamp feels similar to a mobile phone clamp in use, with good tension, and feels reassuringly secure on the flashgun.

When it's closed, the Lantern Diffuser feels robust, but the diffusion material seems quite delicate and needs to be handled with care to avoid creasing the structure. Meanwhile, the filter adapter feels durable, and the rigid colour gels snap in and out easily.

While the Lantern Diffuser can be attached directly to the Clamp, it's also possible to mount the filter adapter first and then pop the Diffuser on top. When the Diffuser is used on the Clamp, the magnetic attraction is strong, but the Diffuser slides up or down. This is avoided by mounting it on the filter adapter, which has a lip to hold the Diffuser in position.



Performance

The coloured filters may be of occasional use for creative effects, especially background or rim lighting, but the Lantern Diffuser is likely to see the most use. As well as softening the light from a flashgun, the Lantern Diffuser spreads it further across the scene so that images have more uniform exposure.

With the Lantern Diffuser in position, the highlights are less harsh and the shadows look less dramatic as there's smoother gradation,



FEATURES

- 1 Six coloured gels are included in the kit, plus a filter adapter to attach them.
- 2 The lantern diffuser has a concertina-like structure that spreads and diffuses the light.
- 3 The kit comes in a smart wallet that holds all the components, including the lantern diffuser, securely.

S P E C S

KIT INCLUDES: LANTERN DIFFUSER, FILTER ADAPTER, SIX COLOUR GEL FILTERS, WALLET

COMPATIBLE WITH: FLASHGUNS FROM AROUND 35MM TO 80MM WIDE WITH THE CORRECT CLAMP

MOUNT: VIA AN EXPANDABLE CLAMP WITH MAGNETS TO HOLD THE FILTER ADAPTER AND DIFFUSER

MATERIAL: PLASTIC

VERDICT

Hahnel's Module Creative Lantern kit is compact and lightweight. The included case keeps everything together in your camera bag, and you can take it anywhere to soften light from your flashgun at a moment's notice. The required clamp is extra, but it's easy to fit, and the diffuser mounts quickly via the magnets; just take care to avoid damaging the concertina-like diffuser.



GROUP TEST FLASH MODIFIERS

MagMod Professional Flash Kit 2

www.magnetmod.com £250/\$200

Now even better, and easier to use on round or rectangular flashguns

MagMod founder Spencer Boerup had the idea for a flash modifier system using magnets. In 2013, the first system launched on Kickstarter and quickly caught the attention of portrait and wedding photographers, thanks to its robust build and ease of use. The MagGrip's design means the MagMod system can be used on a huge number of flashguns. The MagGrip 2 makes it compatible with an even wider range of flashes.

Key features

MagMod sells all its components separately, but if you're buying for the first time, it makes sense to buy a kit. The Starter Kit 2 includes the MagGrip 2, MagSphere 2 and MagGrid 2, while the Professional Flash Kit 2 adds the MagBounce 2 and Pro Correction Gels, too.

The MagGrip 2 is essential for the system. It's made from tough, stretchy silicone and fits on the head of the flash, housing magnets that enable the modifiers to be attached. The MagSphere 2 transforms a flash into a diffused omnidirectional light source, making the light softer. Made from white silicone, it has the same squishy feel as the original version but at 88g, it's 40% lighter.

Similarly, the MagBounce, which is designed for use on a flash pointing upwards rather than forwards, is made from white silicone and is lighter than the original version. It's claimed to increase the apparent size of a flash by over 300%. Unlike most lighting grids, the MagGrid is made from silicone. It weighs under 49g, is more compact than the previous version and has magnets that enable it to mount quickly on the MagGrip 2.

MagMod's Pro Correction Gels are made from rigid polycarbonate and are easier to handle than gel sheets. Unlike the original MagMod gels that had to be mounted on a holder, the new ones have a magnet on either side and snap onto the MagGrip 2.

Build and handling

Although lighter than their predecessors, the MagGrip 2, MagSphere 2, MagGrid 2 and MagBounce 2 look similar. The MagGrip 2, however, has a larger, more rounded aperture that makes it easier to fit on flashes with a circular head. That said, it still takes a bit of wiggling to get it onto a Profoto A-series flash – if you have more than one flashgun, you won't want to swap the MagGrip between them, you'll want one for each light.

MagMod is a modular system which means that once the MagGrip is on the flash, the modifiers can be used by themselves or stacked together. There's a powerful magnetic attraction between the MagGrip and the light modifiers which means that once the modifier is around 2cm from the MagGrip, you can let go and the MagSphere, Bounce, Grid or Gel snaps onto the flash.

MagMod supplies a drawstring bag with the Professional Flash Kit 2. Thanks to the silicone nature of the MagSphere and MagBounce, it has just enough room to fit the components, keeping everything together in your bag.

Performance

Once the MagGrip is on the flash, using the rest of the kit is a cinch. The MagSphere 2

does a good job of diffusing and softening the light so highlights are less harsh and shadows aren't as deep. If you need a wider throw of light, the MagBounce is a great choice as it spreads the flash brilliantly. Conversely, the grid reduces light spill well and there's rapid fall-off towards the edges of the frame, depending upon the direction of the flash.

Meanwhile, the six correction gels (1/4 CTO, 1/2 CT, Full CTO, 1/2 CTB, Plus Green and 8x ND) give you good scope for matching the flash to the ambient conditions. If you want to get more creative with the colour of the flash, there are the Pro Artistic Gels and Pro Creative Gels, each with six filters.

Though not a major issue, it's worth taking care where you place the MagSphere and MagBounce when they are not in use. The silicone is a magnet for dust and dirt, and while it's not a problem in use it doesn't look good, especially in a professional setting.

**FEATURES**

- 1 The six correction gels offer good scope for matching the flash to the ambient lighting conditions.
- 2 MagMod is a modular system so once the MagGrip is on, modifiers can be stacked.
- 3 The drawstring bag has just enough room to keep all the components together.

**S P E C S**

KIT INCLUDES: MAGGRIP 2, MAGSPHERE 2, MAGGRID 2, MAGBOUNCE 2, PRO CORRECTION GELS, SOFT POUCH

COMPATIBLE WITH: MOST FLASHGUNS/STROBES WITH RECTANGULAR OR ROUND HEADS EG PROFOTO A1, GODOX V1 AND WESTCOTT FJ80

MOUNT: MAGNETIC
MATERIAL: SILICONE

VERDICT

It commands a hefty price, but the MagMod Professional Flash Kit 2 is well made, durable and easy to use. It also works well; but if the price is too steep, take a look at the MagMod Starter Kit 2, which has everything you need to get more attractive results with flash.



GROUP TEST FLASH MODIFIERS

Rogue Round Flash Kit + Rogue Flash Adapter (Standard)

www.rogueflash.com £136/\$130

Control the light from your flashgun with magnetic modifiers for both round or rectangular heads

Expolmaging is best known for its Rogue FlashBender, but also produces a collection of round magnetic flash modifiers that are quick and easy to use. Paired with the Rogue Flash Adapter, available in Standard or Small sizes, the circular modifiers can also be used on flashguns or strobes with a rectangular head. The Rogue Round Flash Kit is sold on its own, or with the Rogue Flash Adapter, though you can buy the kit components separately.

Key features

The Rogue Round Flash Kit contains a Rogue Flash Diffuser Dome, Flash Gel Lens, Flash Grid 45 and 3-Gel Starter Set and a Storage Pouch – all you need to control, soften or colour balance light from a flashgun with a round head. It is compatible with Godox (V1, R100, and HR200 head for AD200), Geekoto (GT 250, GTR) and Westcott FJ80 flash units while a Rogue PF Adapter (£35/\$35) is required with the Profoto A1, A1X and A10. The modifiers attach directly to compatible round heads via magnetic attraction but the Profoto heads need help from the PF Adapter.

Thanks to the inclusion of the standard-sized Rogue Flash Adapter, the magnetic modifiers can be used on compatible rectangular flashguns/strobes such as the Canon Speedlite 580EX, 600EX, Nikon Speedlight SB700, SB910, Godox TT685, V860, Metz 52 AF1, Nissin Di700A, MG10, Sony F45, F60 and Yongnuo 685. The small Rogue Flash Adapter is designed for use on smaller flashes such as the Canon 430EX, Nikon SB600 and SB800, Godox TT350, Nissin (i40, i60A) and Sony F32. Once the Adapter is mounted on the flash, the modifiers can be snapped on and off the flash in the same way as they can on round flashes.

Build and handling

The Rogue Round Flash Kit and Rogue Flash Adapter feel well made. Depending upon the

size of the flash, the Flash Adapter can take a bit of stretching to fit on a rectangular strobe. The magnets hold the modifiers in place, so they aren't easily knocked off, but are also easy to remove. Expolmaging supplies a drawstring pouch to keep all the components together in your bag.

To adjust the colour of the flash, attach the Flash Gel Lens. This doesn't take much lining up as the magnets pull it into the correct position. Then you can put the gel on the lens followed by the grid and the Diffuser Dome. If you don't want to use a gel, the grid or diffuser can be attached to the flash or Flash Adapter for rectangular flashes.

Performance

As well as being easy to use, the Rogue Round Flash Kit and Rogue Flash Adapter do their

job well. The diffuser dome softens light effectively, spreading it evenly across the frame and making shadows less harsh.

Although the dome is white, it makes images slightly warmer when shooting with a camera that's set to Auto White Balance mode than when it's not used. The grid does a good job of reducing the light-spill and making the light from a flashgun more directional, so it can be targeted effectively.

There are just three gels in the kit (1/2 CTO 5700K to 3500K, Cotton Candy Pink and Blue Steel) so the options are limited. However, they're a good start and there are plenty more available on the Rogue website.



FEATURES

- 1 The kit comes with a 3-Gel Starter Set, but there are more available on the website
- 2 The Flash Adapter can take a bit of stretching to fit on a rectangular strobe.
- 3 To adjust the colour, attach the Flash Gel Lens and magnets pull it into position.



S P E C S

KIT INCLUDES: FLASH DIFFUSER DOME, FLASH GEL LENS, FLASH GRID 45, 3-GEL STARTER SET, STORAGE POUCH
COMPATIBLE WITH: GODOX, GEEKOTO AND WESTCOTT MODELS. FLASH ADAPTER FITS MOST FLASHES
MOUNT: MAGNETIC
MATERIAL: PLASTIC

VERDICT

The Rogue Round Flash Kit is great for anyone who wants to get a bit more creative or to capture more attractive images with flashguns or strobes that have a round head. It's easy to use and effective. The Rogue Flash Adapter extends the kit's use to flash units with rectangular heads, but make sure you buy the correct size for your strobe.



GROUP TEST FLASH MODIFIERS

THE RESULTS ARE IN...

All these flash modifier kits work well and are easy to use, with magnets holding the key components in place. The Hahnel Module Creative Lantern Kit is a great choice for anyone on a budget or wanting a compact set up. The Rogue

Kit feels more robust than the Hahnel kit, and the different modifiers snap smartly in and out of position. Ultimately, however, the MagMod Professional Flash Kit is our pick of the bunch. It's versatile and durable, and though it can take some wrestling to get the MagGrip

onto some flashguns, once mounted, it's easy to swap between the various modifiers. It's the most expensive system of the three, but should give years of service; it doesn't object to being squashed, and if you drop anything it will just bounce.



GOOD

Hahnel Module Creative Lantern Kit

Softens flashgun light and enables colour effects, but you need to buy the Clamp



BETTER

Rogue Round Flash Kit + Rogue Flash Adapter (Standard)

Great for capturing attractive images with flashguns or strobes with a round head



BEST

MagMod Professional Flash Kit 2

A well-made, durable and easy to use kit, but it commands a hefty price

HOW THE FLASH MODIFIERS COMPARE



Hahnel Module Creative Lantern Kit



MagMod Professional Flash Kit 2



Rogue Round Flash Kit + Rogue Flash Adapter (Standard)

Contact	www.hahnel.ie	magnetmod.com	rogueflash.com
Kit includes	Lantern diffuser, filter adapter, six colour gel filters, wallet	MagGrip 2, MagSphere 2, MagGrid 2, MagBounce 2, Pro Correction Gels, soft pouch	Flash Diffuser Dome, Flash Gel Lens, Flash Grid 45, 3-Gel Starter Set, storage pouch
Compatible with	Flashguns from around 35mm to 80mm wide with the correct clamp	Most flashguns/strobes with rectangular or round heads, e.g. Profoto A1, Godox V1 and Westcott FJ80	Godox, Geekoto and Westcott models. Flash Adapter fits most flashes
Mount	Via an expandable clamp with magnets to hold the filter adapter and diffuser	Magnetic	Magnetic
Material	Plastic	Silicone	Plastic
Price	£59/\$100; Module 360 Clamp: £10/\$11 Module 600 Clamp: £10/\$21	£250/\$200	£136/\$130

Features	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Build & handling	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Overall	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

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A P P S

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N-Photo is a monthly magazine for Nikon photographers, and is packed with technique and Photoshop video lessons every month.



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<http://bit.ly/30Fo0l0>



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