

**October 2023  
Newsletter**

[www.alamancephoto.com](http://www.alamancephoto.com)

[www.facebook.com/alamancephotoclub](http://www.facebook.com/alamancephotoclub)

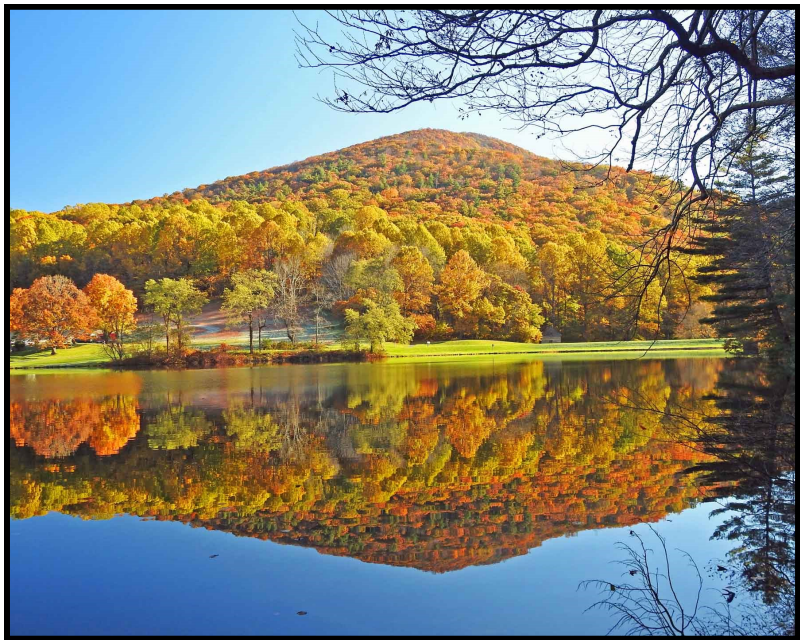


Photo by Hugh Comfort

## **APC ACTIVITIES**

**Next Meeting**

**Oct. 16, 2023**

**7:00pm First Baptist Church**

**Programs**

**Nov. 20, 2023**

**Ciara Wilder Massingale  
(Wilder Uwharrie Photography)**

**Exhibits**

**2023 PhotoShows**

**Oct. 16, 2023**

**People at Work**

**Field Trips**

**Q4 2023**

**Occaneechi Band of the  
Saponi Nation Powwow**

## President's Comments—October 2023

By Keith O'Leary

Hello members and hello Fall! Cooler temps have finally arrived. I love this time of year. I hope all are doing well. Thanks to Cassia Rivera, Nancy Arehart and Jennifer Hadley for such a wonderful program last month. What a privilege it was to have these professional wildlife photographers/conservationists come and share their experiences of shooting photos and video for their short film: "The Right of Passage". I enjoyed the extended Q&A session afterwards too. The turnout for the Double-Vision exhibit reception last month was extraordinary. I am so proud of all who participated and our club.

As you may be aware, we are working on creating a 2024 wall calendar using 13 photos from our members that you will be able to order later this year. These will make good Christmas gifts for family and friends and be a good tool to showcase our club as well.

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming more involved with any aspect of Alamance Photography Club, we would like to hear from you! Please reach out by sending an email to [alamancephoto@gmail.com](mailto:alamancephoto@gmail.com) or by submitting the contact form from our website at [www.alamancephoto.com/contact](http://www.alamancephoto.com/contact).

Please join us for our next meeting on Monday, October 16th which will be a PhotoShow of your photos of "People at Work". I'm looking forward to seeing your submissions.

Thanks for your participation in making this a great club and for inviting others to join us!

Thanks

Keith

## APC BOARD

President	Keith O'Leary	Interim Exhibit Chair	Christie O'Leary
Vice President	John Reich	Outings/Field Trips	Hugh Comfort
Secretary	George Siple	Membership	Ken Sellers
Treasurer	Dianne Sellers	Web Master	Christie O'Leary
Interim PhotoShow Chair	Keith O'Leary	Editor	Ray Munns



## WEBMASTER NOTES

Our website: <https://www.alamancephoto.com/> is a great way:

- To introduce potential members to the club.
- To stay up to date on the club events.



Alamance Photography Club is on [facebook!](#)

- [Public Page](#)
- Private Group Page where members can share photos with each other. If you are part of facebook and would like to join this private group, please email me at [alamancephoto@gmail.com](mailto:alamancephoto@gmail.com).

**Christie O'Leary**  
**Webmaster**



## Table Talkers



**Watch your emails for the next  
Table Talkers meeting.**

**Mark Austin**

## Q4 2023 Personal Field Trip

### 23rd Annual Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation Powwow

Our field trip will take place on Saturday, October 14, although the Powwow continues on Sunday, the 15th. If you are unable to join us on Saturday, you may still participate on Sunday.

The Powwow will be held at the Occaneechi Tribal Grounds, 4902 Dailey Store Road, Burlington --- that is about 15 miles northeast of downtown Burlington, about a 20-30 minute drive to extreme northeastern Alamance county, just off NC-62. There is an entry fee of \$10 per adult and \$5 per senior or child, with free parking. The gates open at 10:00 AM Saturday with The Grand Entry taking place at noon. A Grand Entry is an entry parade of all the Powwow elders and participants in full costume. (The gates open Sunday at 11:00 and the Grand Entry at 1:00.) During the day there are dancing exhibitions and competitions, drumming exhibitions, displays and vendors.

Photographs are encouraged -- but there are a few rules. When photographing a powwow, it is important to be respectful and not take photos at inappropriate moments. For example, don't take photos during prayers, flag songs or other ceremonies or when the Master of Ceremonies has forbid photos. Also, always ask a dancer for permission before you take a photo of their regalia. Many dancers have worked for hours to create their beautiful beadwork and it is something personally meaningful to them. Some don't like to have this beadwork photographed, as it may allow someone else to copy the design.

If you plan on selling your images afterward, make sure you contact the pow wow committee in advance and get signed model releases.

David Hall has attended one of these in the past and found it great for both photography and entertainment. For questions, contact Hugh Comfort 336-350-9241.

Thanks!

Hugh

## October 16th PhotoShow – “People at Work”

We encourage ALL members to submit photographs for our bi-monthly Photo Show and would like to see EVERYONE represented!

We try not to exceed 50 photos per show. Therefore, we ask that you submit a maximum of three (3) photos. We may only use one or two of your photos based on the number of entries so PLEASE indicate your preferred photo in the file name of each photo (01, 02 or 03; see naming information below). If you have any issues with formatting or submitting, please let us know at [apcphotoshow@gmail.com](mailto:apcphotoshow@gmail.com) and we will be happy to assist. Also let us know if your submitted photo is not acknowledged within a few days and/or by the deadline.

### Submission Details

#### Number of Entries:

Max of three (3) entries per member. Please indicate your preferred photo with number 01, 02, or 03.

#### Size:

No larger than 25 MB.

Preferred minimum size is 1024 x 768.

#### Format:

.jpg

#### File Naming:

Please rename your photo submissions using the following format:

Firstname.lastname\_01, \_02 or \_03 (*per use preference*)

Example: john.doe\_01.jpg john.doe\_02.jpg john.doe\_03.jpg

#### Email:

Email Address: Send all images to [apcphotoshow@gmail.com](mailto:apcphotoshow@gmail.com)

Email Subject Line: Include the month of the PhotoShow and your name.

Example: Photos for October PhotoShow – John Doe

#### Entry Deadline:

5:30 PM on Monday, October 9, 2023.

#### Please Note:

*Submissions that do not adhere to the guidelines above may be returned.*

***Don't forget: Photos may be submitted early for the following show!***

## *Double Vision Exhibit*

The 'Double Vision' exhibit was a great success! Thanks to the photographers who submitted their work for exhibit as well as all who joined us at the reception on September 9<sup>th</sup>. We enjoyed collaborating with the Burlington Artists League for this awesome exhibit.

Interim Exhibit Chair,

Christie O'Leary

## *Membership Corner*

*Ken Sellers*

Any new member who joins now until December 31, 2023, receives membership for the rest of this year and all of 2024 for the same yearly fee! That's up to 15 months for the same yearly membership fee. Effective October 1, our yearly membership fees are as follows: Adult-\$42, Family-\$62, Student-\$15.

Ken Sellers

Membership Chair

## Costa Rica Trip with Mio and Jeff Winkle

*Hi to all!*

Jeff and I have this trip planned for the first week of March 2024, which is dedicated to bird and nature photography.

We have a private guide who is a photographer.

We are interested in having 2 to 4 more people to go as a group.

The price of the trip will depend on the number of people going. Maximum 6 people.

- 4 people \$3,150 per person
- 6 people \$2,980 per person

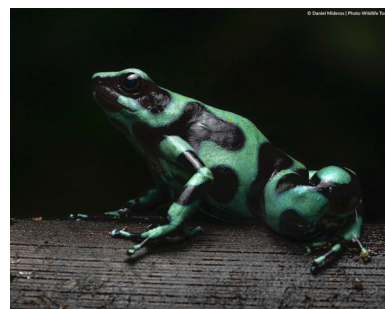
*See the additional attached file to this newsletter email with all the information and details of the trip.*

If you are interested, let me know by the second week of October. To be able to coordinate the list and confirm it with Daniel Mideros, the tour guide.

My email is [miosoti@gmail.com](mailto:miosoti@gmail.com) .

Thanks, Mio

*Photos by tour guide Daniel Mideros*





# Balloon Festival— Photos by Keith O’Leary





# APC Trading Post

Submit brief descriptions of photography items you would like to sell, swap or purchase to Ray Munns ([raymunns@bellsouth.net](mailto:raymunns@bellsouth.net)) no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please include your name, contact info (phone and/or email) and if each item is for sale or something you are looking to purchase. Also notify Ray when items should be removed from the newsletter.

## For Sale

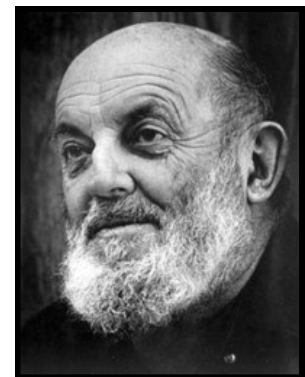
Nikon D5000 Camera with 2 batteries \$300

Nikon 28-300 F3.5- 5.6 ED VR  
\$500 Excellent condition



Contact Mio Winkle 336-329-4423

*"There is nothing worse than a sharp image of a fuzzy concept." — Ansel Adams*



# Filters for Fall Color Photos

By Kevin McNeal

When shooting in autumn, the polarizer, neutral-density and grad ND filters are indispensable for achieving stunning imagery.



*Early-morning light showcases the stunning autumn colors along the Dallas Divide in Colorado. Filter used: Singh-Ray LB ColorCombo Polarizer*

When it comes to color and impact, fall is full of opportunity. The season is an amazing time to create mood with color while capturing landscapes as they transform before one's eyes. Trying to create an image I'm particularly passionate about, however—especially in autumn—can be challenging.

When shooting fall colors, there are filters that I never leave home without: a polarizer and neutral density (ND) filter. These filters overcome obstacles that otherwise would be impossible to correct without using a filter, even digitally. Polarizers and neutral density filters are indispensable in many of these photographic situations.

A third filter I recommend is the graduated neutral density (grad ND) filter. It's basically a standard neutral density filter but only covers a portion of the frame. The darker portion is used to reduce light in the brighter part of a scene, preventing it from being overexposed. This allows the camera to expose properly for the area that is not darkened and to balance the overall exposure.

## *Filters for Fall Color Photos . . . Continued*

### **Filters for Fall Color: The Polarizer**

The most important of the filters for fall color is the polarizer. Useable in all facets of nature photography, this filter can make a significant improvement to your images. The polarizer deepens the color of blue skies, provides more saturated colors, and reduces glare and reflections in bright or sunny conditions. Concerning fall foliage, the polarizer eliminates glare on leaves and flowers. It intensifies and saturates color in wet foliage and adds color density to blue or hazy skies.

One additional benefit of using a polarizer is that it cuts through the haze in the atmosphere. This added clarity allows subjects to stand out more against the deeper tones of the sky, so that fall foliage looks even more pronounced.

*Late autumn season in the Tombstone Range of the Yukon, as pink pastels reflect onto the landscape. Filter used: Singh-Ray LB ColorCombo Polarizer*



When light reflects off a shiny surface, it becomes polarized. When we see this reflection, from the surface of water, for example, we call it glare. A polarizer rotated to the correct position will block or absorb most of the reflected glare while letting light polarized perpendicular to the reflection to pass through. This is achieved by using a specialized foil positioned between two sheets of glass. The front part of this filter can be rotated, altering the amount of polarized light that is blocked out by the filter. A simple rotation of the front glass allows the photographer to dial in the amount of effect desired in the image.

To do this properly, position the polarizer on the lens and rotate slowly while looking through the camera's viewfinder. Choosing where to stop the rotation is a personal choice, but you want to maximize the effect up to the point where it begins to look unrealistic. For example, when the scene includes blue skies, rotate the polarizer only until you get deep, rich blues. If over rotated, the blues can turn into an unrealistic darker tone, especially in higher elevations.

### *Filters for Fall Color Photos . . . Continued*

To maximize the potential of a polarizer, keep the sun at a right angle to the camera. Face the sun and hold your hands out to your sides; where your arms are pointing are the directions where the polarizer will work the best. A 90-degree angle to the sun is optimal because this is the location of the most polarized light in the sky.

One challenge many photographers have is determining the best time to use a polarizer. It's effective in many situations, but if you're unsure when to use a polarizer, hold it up and look through it with your eye instead of screwing it onto the lens. This is a quick way to see if the polarizer is having any effect. In fall the polarizer is best utilized just before midday, when conditions are brighter. The increased brightness adds extra contrast to the scene and cuts through the haze, especially when shooting through a telephoto lens. Photographing fall color on sunny days can add additional depth in the image when including the sky in your compositions, especially when contrasted against the vibrant colors of fall.

In addition to deepening blue skies, the most understated reason for using the polarizer is to reduce glare and reflections. This is important because once glare is present in an image, no amount of post processing can undo the damage. That glare reduces the color saturation in images, giving them a flat, washed-out appearance. The polarizer alters this by blocking out the polarized light, enhancing color saturation.

Reflections can be an issue without a polarizer as well. This is evident in scenes that contain water. Nature photography in fall often includes elements such as creeks and lakes, which cause unwanted surface reflections. I like to take images of colorful foliage against the backdrop of the darker water. This would be impossible without a polarizer. This filter also reduces the glare off darker rocks, which allows the color of the foliage to stand out even more. Having the ability to dial in a certain amount of polarized light allows each photographer to create a sense of style that's uniquely his or her own.

Over the last few years, polarizers have been really improving in terms of color rendition, build and size. They are now designed and built lighter than ever before. Options now include a slim mount with the ability to screw on a second filter such as an ND. They are also designed to allow more light into the camera. In the past, using a polarizer would block two stops of light. Changes to the design in new polarizers have reduced that down to one-stop of light. This means that more light reaches the camera sensor thus allowing increased shutter speeds or lower ISOs. Improvements to the optical glass and coatings within the filter have made them stronger and more resistant to scratching while the glass has become clearer, reducing glare. The result is a sharper image overall.

### *Filters for Fall Color Photos . . . Continued*

Features such as color enhancement and color balance can be combined into one filter to give the maximum benefit for fall color photos. Color-intensifying filters work by using a specialized optical glass known as “didymium” glass. The glass accentuates a portion of the color spectrum while suppressing others. An intensifier that enhances color saturation in the red-orange area of the color spectrum increases those colors without affecting the overall color balance of the image, making it ideal for autumn foliage. One of the key signatures to a stunning autumn image is having an image with strong colors in the warm tones without affecting the neutral and white colors.

#### **The ND Filter**

The use of an ND filter allows for exposure creativity. It encourages the photographer to think outside the box and develop fresh concepts of viewing nature. A neutral density filter is made to reduce the amount of light that reaches the camera’s sensor so that a longer exposure is required to achieve an equivalent exposure. The longer exposures enabled by ND filters provide photographers the ability to add a dynamic feel of movement, especially noticeable with subjects like flowing water, which can be a great complement to the brisk colors of fall foliage when contrasted with the blurred effect of moving streams, rapids and water banks. Ideally, to capture this blur, you need to expose the image for at least half a second, but often available ambient light will require a faster shutter speed, even when using the lowest ISO and smallest aperture. This is when it’s advisable to use an ND filter to block light from reaching the camera sensor and thus increase the exposure time. Be careful not to increase the exposure too much, though, as this can blow out highlights in the water.

*Sun breaks through the early-morning mist along the Wenatchee River in Leavenworth, Washington. Filter used: Singh-Ray Mor-Slo ND 5-Stop*





### *Filters for Fall Color Photos . . . Continued*

When using an ND filter, I like to use bracketed shots. Taking multiple images with different shutter speeds gives the water a different mood. The longer the shutter speed, the calmer and more tranquil the water will appear. Shorter shutter speeds project movement and action. The overall mood and impact are more dynamic. Textures in the water are defined and create patterns that lead the eye through the image. The use of longer or shorter shutter speeds with ND Filters is a creative choice that defines the impact of your image, depending on the mood you are trying to create.

Because the ND filter is dark, it becomes more difficult to see what you are photographing once the filter is on the lens. It's advisable to compose your image and check that everything is sharp before putting on the ND filter. This is particularly true when using higher stop (denser) ND filters, or when stacking filters. For example, ND filters can even be combined with polarizers—the polarizer reduces the glare and reflection while the ND filter increases exposure time.

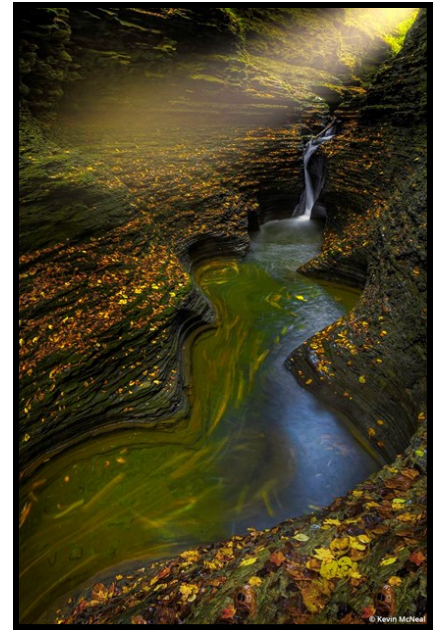
When buying ND filters, make sure they're threaded, which means that other filters can be stacked on. Note that vignetting can occur with very wide-angle lenses when stacking two or more filters. A trick to avoid this is to zoom in a short distance or purchase a larger filter with a step-up ring. This can be very effective, especially during midday when the light would otherwise be too strong to capture a long exposure. The result of these filters combined transforms the mood of an image. The longer shutter speed allows the photographer to use wider apertures like f/16 to capture sharpness throughout the image while still using a long exposure.

Like polarizers over the last several years, ND filters have become much better. ND filters are available in various strengths, meaning the number of stops of light that can be blocked from entering the camera. A few years ago, the darkest ND available was 10 stops. At that time, results with a typical 10-stop filter were very inconsistent. If shutter speeds were long, it was not uncommon to see a magenta color cast in the overall image. ND filters have come a long way in the last few years, especially when it comes to avoiding color-casts. ND filters now reach 20 stops of light with excellent results. This allows us to use even longer exposure times and thus more movement and mood in the image. Even in the brightest daylight, a 20-stop ND filter can allow very long shutter speeds.

### *Filters for Fall Color Photos . . . Continued*

When trying to determine correct exposures with ND filters, it can be difficult to get it precisely without the process of trial and error. I suggest using a smartphone app that calculates neutral density exposures to determine exactly the amount of time needed based on the filter being used. When shooting longer exposures, it's also necessary to have a sturdy tripod and ballhead to prevent any movement of the camera itself.

*A break in early-morning light illuminates the canyon walls of Watkins Glen State Park in New York. Filter used: Singh-Ray Mor-Slo ND 10-Stop*



### **The Grad ND**

The last filter that's used for photographing fall colors is the graduated neutral density filter, which compensates for an uneven light source. Often in landscape images, the sky is brighter than the ground; if you meter the exposure for the ground, the sky is overexposed. Alternatively, if you expose for the sky, the ground becomes underexposed. Sunrises and sunsets are common times where the skies are bright, but the foreground is in shadow. Graduated filters were designed to allow us to balance the light in the sky with the light in the landscape so that everything will be properly exposed.

Grad ND filters are designed so the top part of the filter is dark and the bottom is clear. Like standard NDs, grad NDs come in various strengths. The best for a particular scene depends on the number of stops needed to balance the sky and foreground, so having a few different strengths on hand is ideal. The trick to using them is to place the graduation in the right position. Inaccuracy will cause unnatural shadows in the image to be placed too high or low. You want to align the filter's transition as closely as possible to the light in the scene.

### *Filters for Fall Color Photos . . . Continued*

In addition to the strength or density of these filters, there are also “hard” and “soft” grads, which refers to how abrupt the filter’s transition from light to dark is. When evaluating a scene, the transition between exposures isn’t always clearly defined, and a hard grad will create a noticeable line. In this situation, use a soft grad so that the transition is smoother. Conversely, when the transition from bright to shadow areas in the scene is abrupt, like the horizon of an ocean, a hard grad will work best.

To line up your grad ND correctly, use the depth-of-field preview button while looking through the viewfinder or use live view on your camera’s LCD. Fine-tune by moving the filter up or down and rotating it to position it just right. In a pinch, the simplest way to do this is to manually hold the filter in front of your lens. Rectangular filters like LEE Filter’s 100mm System are a great choice as they can be handheld or—even better—dropped into the filter holder and then rotated for precise alignment, hands-free.

### **Warming & Cooling Filters for Fall Color**

When photographing fall colors, it’s important to capture the mood of the season. When you think of autumn colors, warm tones such as red, yellow and orange come to mind. You want to capture the whole color spectrum of warm tones while keeping the neutral tones natural. A warming filter, which often can be used in combination with a polarizer or as an all-in-one filter, can be very beneficial. The filter adds subtle warmth to the overall color of the image without looking unnatural. It improves shadow detail that can be lost with a neutral polarizer. The warm tones of an image pop out more against the cooler tones; this contrast in color tones adds more impact and color balance to the image. For autumn colors, the foliage is more pronounced against the cooler tones in the image. Another added benefit of a warming polarizer is its ability to cut through haze, resulting in a clearer and more natural-appearing image.

*Side light hits the iconic Denali during the peak of autumn in Alaska. Filter used: Singh-Ray Warming Polarizer*



## *Filters for Fall Color Photos . . . Continued*

### **Recommended Filters: Buy Quality Glass**

When purchasing a filter, quality is important. Chances are, you spent good money investing in your lens, so why put a poor-quality filter in front? The performance of your lens and filters is only as good as the lowest-quality glass used, and not all filters are created equal.

For example, you'll likely use your polarizer frequently, so it doesn't make sense to choose a bargain polarizer that might compromise your lens' image quality. I use the Singh-Ray LB ColorCombo, which is a combination of a warming polarizer and a color intensifier. I use this polarizer when I want to capture the best of the warmer tones in my images, especially the reds. It works by leaving the neutral colors and only saturating the vibrant colors.

Manufacturers such as B+W, Heliopan, Hoya, Lee and others also make high-quality circular and linear polarizers, with numerous models to best match your camera and lens.

When choosing an ND filter, it's important to make sure that it doesn't have any colorcast. Blender ND filters from Formatt-Hitech use a transition that's very gradual over the length of the filter, rather than just in the middle, ideal for situations where the light transition is subtle. For ND grads, I recommend buying large, rectangular filters that are comfortable to hold and are large enough to cover all your lenses.

### **Falling Into Place**

I try to create a story with my images as well as a sense of place, and shooting fall colors is an event I look forward to all year. Capturing the vibrancy of changing seasons has always meant something special to me. Even with the advances in digital photography and processing, it's advantageous when shooting autumn landscapes to use optical filters to capture the beautiful colors, tones and hues that abound in the fall.

**Outdoor  
Photographer**

# Shoot for the Moon: Tips on Photographing the Moon

By Matt Shrier

If care is not taken when photographing the moon, it is likely that you will get either an overly dark photo, a moon that looks like the sun, a very small moon, or all of the above. I would like to offer some tips on a different strategy for making compelling moon photographs.



*Photo by Airman Magazine; ISO 1000, f/16.0, 1/60-second exposure*

So let's first discuss why it is so difficult to photograph the moon. There are two main issues:

- the brightness of the moon
- the size of the moon

Almost everyone has experienced a "moon-lit night". This is when a full moon, or nearly full moon, lights up a dark night. You see everything around you fairly well, which is evidence that the small amount of sunlight that the moon reflects is actually quite bright.

Why is this a problem for moon photography? When the moon is so bright and everything itself is much darker, it is impossible to make a photo where both the moon and the subject are clearly visible. Either the moon is very bright and washed out (everything else is properly exposed), or the moon's details are well-defined, but everything else is black or very dark. We'll get to possible solutions in a little bit.



### *Shoot for the Moon: Tips on Photographing the Moon . . . Continued*

The other problem with moon photography is that the moon is actually quite small in the sky. Using a normal lens will cause the moon to appear very small in the resulting photo. This will not usually create a compelling image, even if the frame is properly exposed. Of course, you can use a zoom lens and take a photo of the moon, but that is usually pretty boring.

#### **Tips for Photographing the Moon**



*Photo by European Southern Observa*

So what is a photographer to do? My suggestions are as follows:

- Plan on photographing a full moon at or near moonrise or moonset, when the moon is very near the horizon.
- Look for interesting subjects that are large (e.g., buildings or trees), are in a flat region, and are visible from a distance of a few hundred feet to a few hundred yards.
- Research the direction/angle (the azimuth) where the moon will rise or set in a given month, and select a location where the moon will easily be visible and adjacent to the subject from a distance.

OK, you may not be able to easily visualize these ideas, but let me explain what I'm trying to accomplish here. I want you to photograph the full moon near the horizon, from a distance, and with an interesting subject in the frame. The reason I want you to photograph the full moon near the horizon is because the light it is emitting nearly matches the ambient light of the rest of the world at that time. That's because the sun is directly behind you and it is illuminating both the moon and your subject equally.

### *Shoot for the Moon: Tips on Photographing the Moon . . . Continued*



*Photo by Anita Ritenour; ISO 400, f/13.0, .6-second exposure*

This concept of even lighting only works with the full moon, because during other phases of the moon, it is either too high in the sky or below the horizon when the sun is behind you.

Now, simply photographing the moon near the horizon does not alone make for an interesting image. So think about making the moon LARGE in the frame and in combination with an interesting subject. This is the hard part. You obviously will be using a zoom lens for this, so you will be shooting BOTH the moon and the subject from a distance. They need to be very near each other in the frame. This is where a lot of planning is needed. You need a large, unobstructed, flat area for this (i.e. no hills, trees, buildings, etc.) so that the rising or setting moon is visible.

There are websites for researching the direction and time of moonrises and moonsets throughout the year. There are only about 12 full moons per year (sometimes 13), so you may end up getting very few good opportunities to make the shots you are planning. And don't forget about mother nature—a single cloud can ruin all of your plans.

I hope you can make use of these tips in your moon photography.

# Burst Mode: What Is It? How Should You Use It?

By Megan Kennedy

Do you want to capture action shots of kids running, birds flying, sports players dunking, split-second moments on the streets, and more?

Well, you can – if you know how to use your camera's burst mode, that is.

Burst mode, also known as continuous shooting mode, allows you to shoot a series of rapid-fire images without stopping. Depending on your camera's capabilities, you can record 5, 10, 20, or even 60 images per second, and each one offers another opportunity to capture a once-in-a-lifetime action image.

In this article, I'm going to share everything you need to use burst mode like a pro, going from the basics all the way up to advanced continuous-shooting guidelines.

Let's dive right in.

## What is burst mode?

Burst mode is a camera function that allows you to capture a series of photographs in quick succession. With burst mode activated, you can hold down the shutter button, and your camera will rattle off a set of photos.



Burst mode is great for capturing fast-moving subjects!

### **Burst Mode: What Is It? How Should You Use It? . . . Continued**

The specific burst mode speeds vary from camera to camera; low-end and older cameras offer burst modes in the 3 frames-per-second range (i.e., 3 photos per second). Class-leading sports cameras offer 20, 30, or 60 frames per second. And the average camera offers 6-12 frames per second.

Unfortunately, most camera burst modes are not unlimited. As you take photos, your camera's buffer – where images are stored before being added to your memory card – fills up.



Once the buffer is full, your burst mode will stop working (at least until the buffer frees up space, at which point you can start shooting bursts again).

There are exceptions when shooting lower-quality images or when using top-of-the-line cameras, but generally speaking, if you hold down your camera's burst mode, it'll eventually freeze up.

#### **High-speed continuous vs low-speed continuous**

Many cameras offer a variety of continuous shooting modes (or speeds), and the availability of a particular mode depends on several factors.

Your choice of autofocus can play a role. AF-S tends to allow for faster continuous shooting speeds compared to AF-C. The quality and size of the files also matter; if you're capturing JPEGs, compressed RAW files, or cropped files, you may be able to shoot at higher speeds. The type of shutter you're using will affect the speed as well, but I'll delve into that later.

Now, you might see two burst speeds often labeled "high-speed continuous" and "low-speed continuous." High-speed continuous generally offers a few additional frames per second compared to low-speed continuous, but from a practical perspective, what's the difference? In other words, how do you choose one mode over the other?

If you're working with ultra-fast action, such as a car race or a bird in flight, selecting the higher-speed option is essential. Otherwise, lower-speed continuous shooting will likely be sufficient. Remember, it's about matching the speed to the subject to create the perfect shot.



## **Burst Mode: What Is It? How Should You Use It? . . . Continued**

### **When should you use burst mode?**

Technically, you can use burst mode all the time. Assuming you don't hold down the shutter button for too long at any one time, you can capture a burst of images every time you find a new subject.

However, I don't recommend you use your continuous shooting mode constantly. For one, this will encourage you to get lazy with your photography – you'll shoot in bursts and you'll never learn how to time beautifully composed images. Plus, constant burst mode will produce a huge number of files. Your memory cards will fill up insanely fast, and so will your hard drives.

Instead, I suggest turning on burst mode when you know you're photographing action, or when you're about to see a once-in-a-lifetime moment.

For instance, if you're shooting a sports game, you might leave burst mode on for the entire event; that way, whenever something interesting happens – a slam dunk, a turnover, a buzzer-beater – you're ready to capture the essential moments. Same if you're photographing fast-moving wildlife or birds, a child's soccer game, or a dog doing an agility course.

Burst mode is also perfect for capturing moments that are unmissable (even if they don't involve action). If you're photographing your child walking across the stage at graduation, burst mode will all but guarantee a shot of them accepting their diploma. If you're photographing a portrait subject, burst mode will increase your chances of capturing an evocative expression or pose. And if you're photographing a street scene, burst mode will help you record split-second interactions, such as spouses making eye contact.

By the way, you can also use burst photography to capture technically difficult scenes. If you're manually focusing on a flower at high magnifications, you could fire off a series of images as you slowly adjust the point of focus, and you're more likely to get a nice result.

Here's a list of photography genres that use burst mode on a regular basis:

- Sports photography
- Pet photography
- Bird photography
- Wildlife photography
- Street photography (sometimes)
- Event photography (sometimes)





## **Burst Mode: What Is It? How Should You Use It? . . . Continued**

### **How to use burst mode (step by step)**

Now that you're familiar with the definition and importance of burst mode, let's look at how you can use it for the best results.

#### **Step 1: Activate burst mode on your camera**

Activating burst mode depends on your camera (and it can vary from model to model, so don't assume that all cameras from the same brand or even from the same series are the same).

In general, you'll want to look for a Drive menu or a Shooting mode menu. Some cameras offer dedicated Shooting mode dials (you get this on certain Fujifilm models), while others offer Shooting mode buttons (several Olympus cameras feature one of these), and still others require a menu dive to adjust the shooting mode.

Once you've located your Shooting mode menu, you'll want to select the Continuous or Continuous High option, sometimes symbolized as multiple stacked frames (see the icon in the bottom right corner of this Canon 5D Mark II display):

If you've tried and failed to activate burst mode, consult your camera manual or have a look online.



#### **Step 2: Select the relevant focus mode**

With burst mode engaged, you'll also need to set the right focus mode. For action photography, it's best to use your camera's continuous focusing mode, known as AI Servo on Canon and AF-C on most other camera brands (including Nikon and Sony). Continuous focus will constantly track moving objects even as you hold down the shutter button, helping to maintain sharp focus as your subject moves across the scene and you capture bursts of images.

Alternatively, if you've already composed a shot but want to guarantee a good pose, a beautiful moment, etc., I'd recommend using your camera's single-shot autofocus mode, known as One-Shot on Canon and AF-S on most other brands. Simply half-press the shutter button to lock focus, then when your subject moves into the frame, fully press the shutter button to fire off a burst.

## **Burst Mode: What Is It? How Should You Use It? . . . Continued**

### **Step 3: Carefully choose your settings**

Last, you'll need to dial in the right camera settings for your shooting situation. While these will vary from scene to scene, make sure your shutter speed is relatively fast; otherwise, you'll end up with blurry shots (or, if your shutter speed is really slow, your camera's burst mode won't work properly). I'd recommend shooting at 1/250s and above for slower-moving objects, and 1/1000s and above for faster-moving objects.

If you're struggling to get the shutter speed you need, try widening the aperture or boosting the ISO.



### **Step 4: Capture a burst of images**

Now the fun begins! As soon as you find a subject worth shooting, hold down the shutter button, and your camera will fire off a burst of photos.

As I explained above, it's important to show restraint when using burst mode; otherwise, your camera's buffer will fill, and you'll miss critical moments. So wait until a good shot starts to materialize – if you're using single-shot autofocus, you should generally lock focus in advance – and then fully press the shutter button to capture the perfect photo.

Burst mode is great for capturing fleeting moments.



## **Burst Mode: What Is It? How Should You Use It? . . . Continued**

### **Continuous shooting and shutter type**

Modern cameras offer two types of shutters: mechanical and electronic. DSLRs primarily use mechanical shutters, where a physical mechanism uncovers and covers the camera sensor when you press the shutter button. It's a reliable method that's been around for decades.

But in recent years, mirrorless cameras have pivoted toward electronic shutters. With this technology, the sensor automatically exposes the photo when the shutter button is pressed, removing the necessity for a mechanical element. It's a major advancement that provides some distinct advantages, but it also comes with a potential drawback.

First, the advantages: Electronic shutters are generally faster than mechanical shutters, which means you can shoot at impossibly fast shutter speeds like 1/40000s, and you get elevated continuous shooting speeds, too.

Electronic shutters are also far quieter – even silent – and this makes a huge difference in event photography. Imagine working a quiet ceremony like a wedding in a church; thanks to the near-silent electronic shutter, you can shoot non-stop without worrying about distracting the attendees. Also, since there's limited mechanical wear and tear to deal with, electronic shutters tend to last longer than mechanical shutters.

However, as I mentioned, electronic shutters do have a drawback: the rolling shutter effect. Basically, the electronic shutter exposes lines of the sensor one by one, so if the exposure process is slow enough and the subject is moving quickly, the final shot can show a distorted subject. The good news is that camera manufacturers are getting better at speeding up the exposure process, and some modern mirrorless cameras do a great job of preventing or reducing the rolling shutter!

Therefore, when you need lightning-fast shooting speeds, an electronic shutter is usually a good choice. But if you're photographing action, especially something moving quickly across the frame, make sure you either shoot with an electronic shutter designed to eliminate the rolling shutter effect or switch over to the mechanical shutter.

Note: Understanding when to use each shutter type can significantly impact your photography, so don't be afraid to experiment and see what works best for you!



## **Burst Mode: What Is It? How Should You Use It? . . . Continued**

### **Tips for using your camera's continuous shooting mode**

Looking to improve your burst mode shooting? Here are a few handy tips to help you level up your images:

#### **1. Don't hammer the shutter button**

Burst mode is powerful, but to get the best results, you need to handle the shutter button with care. It's easy to press down hard on the button when using continuous shooting mode, but this actually leads to increased blurriness due to camera shake.

Instead, lightly press the shutter button, almost as if your finger is rolling off its surface.

The idea behind this gentle touch is to eliminate as much vibration as possible. This becomes especially important when you're working at slower shutter speeds or when shooting at high magnifications. Think of it like holding a glass of water filled to the brim – any sudden movement can cause a spill. By treating the shutter button with finesse, you reduce the chances of a “spill” in your photo, keeping those images sharp and clear.

#### **2. Think about your compositions**

While the excitement of action photography and the use of burst mode might draw your attention to shutter speeds and timing, composition remains a key factor in creating stunning images. You might think that capturing the perfect moment is everything, but how you frame that moment is equally crucial.



As you shoot, it's essential to ask yourself: Where should each element be placed for maximum impact? What are the relationships between the objects in the frame?

Even in the midst of fast-paced shooting, guidelines like the rule of thirds can help improve your compositions. Similarly, the rule of space, which involves leaving space in the direction your subject is moving or looking, can add dynamism to your shots.

Remember, every shot, even the ones taken in a split second, tells a story. Make sure your story is visually compelling by thinking about composition – even when using burst mode.

## **Burst Mode: What Is It? How Should You Use It? . . . Continued**

### **3. Bring plenty of memory cards**

Continuous shooting mode will fill up your memory cards far faster than you might expect. Imagine shooting at 10 FPS for just one minute. You'll end up with a whopping 600 photos! So if you plan on capturing action and using burst mode, make sure to carry plenty of memory cards.

I recommend grabbing a memory card case and filling it up with 64 GB (or larger) cards. Take the entire set with you whenever you plan to photograph action. It's like packing extra batteries for a long journey; you never know when you'll need them, but having them on hand can be a lifesaver.

Burst mode is an exciting feature that opens up new photographic possibilities, but without enough storage, you could find yourself missing out on incredible moments. Make sure you're well-equipped to handle the excitement and intensity of continuous shooting!

### **4. Shoot in good light for maximum sharpness**

We all know the importance of light in photography, but when capturing action, light becomes even more vital. The lower the light, the slower your shutter speed, leading to softer, less sharp images. Even when using burst mode, having insufficient light can lead to disappointing results.

For truly sharp shots, you need to keep your shutter speed fast – and to do that, you need good lighting. The golden hours, the time shortly after sunrise or before sunset, are perfect for capturing well-lit photographs. The middle of the day also provides strong light, but be careful, as this light can be harsh and unflattering.

If you find yourself needing to shoot in low light, boosting your ISO instead of slowing down your shutter speed can be a viable option. It might increase the visible noise in your images, but a bit of noise is preferable to a blurry mess.

### **5. Use burst mode in low light**

Although it's ideal to shoot in good light, sometimes you'll find yourself working in dim conditions. In those situations, burst mode can actually be your ally in getting sharper shots.



### **Burst Mode: What Is It? How Should You Use It? . . . Continued**

When you press the shutter button, you create vibrations that may lead to blur. The harder you press, the more the camera shakes. Burst mode minimizes this issue because you need to press the shutter button only once for each burst. The subsequent images in a burst-mode series are likely to be sharper than the first shot.



It may seem counterintuitive to think that burst mode, which is often associated with action and sports photography, can be handy in low-light situations. But understanding this principle can save a shoot when the light isn't cooperating.

#### **Burst mode in photography: final words**

Now that you've finished this article, you know all about continuous shooting photography – and how it can improve your results.

So spend some time testing it out. Find an action subject, and have fun firing off bursts of shots. You'll get better at using burst mode, and you'll start to understand your camera's capabilities and limitations.

