



Fall 2024

CamNats Vision



Authors

- Shawn Carey - Chair
- Rick Cloran
- Ken Jordan
- Tina McManus
- Holly Trahan
- Mary Doo - Editor

Massachusetts Camera Naturalists

<https://www.masscamnats.org>

Message from CamNats Chair



photographer Tim Laman for a lecture. I'm happy to report that the event took place on Saturday, November 2, at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center in Newburyport. It was a fascinating presentation, showcasing Tim's extraordinary bird photography and the incredible dedication required to capture his stunning images. For those who missed it, I encourage you to look up Tim Laman online (<https://www.timlaman.com>), including his videos on YouTube, to get a glimpse of his amazing work.

Next, I wanted to remind everyone to mark their calendars for the annual meeting, which will take place at Greater Lynn (just as we did the past two years) on Saturday, January 25, 2025. Thanks to Susan Mosser for helping to schedule our meeting at GLP. That will be my last meeting as the Chair of Mass CamNats. At the conclusion of the annual meeting, Vice Chair Shiv Verma will officially take over as the Chair. The club will be in very good hands with Shiv leading CamNats for 2025–2026. I, for one, am grateful for all Shiv has done during my tenure, particularly for running the annual meeting this past January when I was unable to attend due to being in Pennsylvania caring for my father.

Hello Mass CamNats members

I hope you are enjoying the fall season and getting out to see and photograph the beautiful colors we get to experience here in New England. I have a few items to pass along.

First, I want to thank everyone who attended the Fall meeting on Saturday, October 5, at Mass Audubon Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary in Natick. We had a great turnout, elected three new members, and enjoyed a wonderful photo-sharing session featuring many outstanding photos and a fantastic video from Deb Page.

At the Fall meeting, I shared the exciting news that we had confirmed National Geographic

Seeing that this will be my last message to the club as the Chair, I want to take this time to thank everyone who served on the Steering Committee, Susan Mosser as our Treasurer, Sally Chisholm as our Recording Secretary, Shiv Verma as the Vice Chair, plus all the other members who have helped at the meetings over the past two years, including Chris Germain and Dana Hoffman. Last but not least, I want to thank all the Mass CamNats members for your support. I hope I have served the club well over the past two years. It has been my honor and pleasure to lead the club. I will continue to do what I can to help CamNats and look forward to seeing all of you at future meetings.

Take care and "Good Shooting."

Shawn Carey



Photographing Nesting Seabirds

By Tina McManus



My favorite birds

to photograph in the spring and summer are the seabirds that nest on the East Coast, in particular, Least Terns, Common Terns, Black Skimmers, and American Oystercatchers. Colonies of Least Terns are found in Massachusetts, while Black Skimmers, American Oystercatchers, and Common Terns can be found on the beaches of Long Island, New York. When birds are nesting in large groups, it gives you the



opportunity to observe all types of behavior over a sustained period. Mating behavior, pair bonding, and the care and feeding of chicks are some of the types of behaviors you'll be able to photograph.

The nesting areas will be roped off, so you must be careful to stay well behind the ropes and not disturb the birds within. If you get too close to the nesting areas, be prepared to be dive-bombed by terns and skimmers. A hat and clothes you don't mind getting dirty are a necessity as you will invariably be pooped on by irate terns. It's good practice

to avoid walking along the rope line as you search, as this will inflame the nesting birds, causing them to leave their nests, which leaves the chicks vulnerable to predation. Once you find a spot, stay back from the birds and slowly work your way closer. If you're quiet and move slowly—better yet, get down low—the birds should calm down, and you can begin your observation. Sometimes you'll encounter birds that just won't calm down. That's your cue to find another spot. Again, remember that there is a lot of chaos in a colony—you don't want to add to it.

As far as gear is concerned, I've found a zoom lens with and without teleconverters, with a range of at least 500mm at the far end, to be useful. I also shoot with my 500mm prime, again with or without teleconverters, but it doesn't provide as much flexibility for flight shots or zooming out if a bird wanders in close. Where I can, I use a skimmer ground pod with a gimbal head, which provides a stable surface for ground-level shooting. Sometimes, however, the birds I want to photograph aren't on a level part of the beach. Then I'll use a tripod or simply lay down my tripod and rest the camera on its legs. If you can't lie on the ground and you have an articulating screen, you can put the camera down low and use the screen to compose the shot. I find that I have trouble seeing the LCD screen, but others have had good luck with this method. Long-sleeved shirts or elbow pads can help cushion your elbows from abrasion, and camera raincoats can keep sand off your equipment. Carrying a blower is a must! I've had sand jam my shutter button more times than I can count. A brush for cleaning sand

off your camera and lens is also very useful. As for the types of photos I personally like to take, my favorites are of parents with chicks and chicks interacting with other chicks. Their behavior is endlessly fascinating to me. Photographing a parent feeding a chick is a shot I always try to take, but it can be very, very tricky. You can spend a lot of hours waiting for the parent to fly in, only to have them turn the wrong way, block the chick, or run behind a group of plants. It's great when you get the shot, though!

The birds have a definite time when they start hatching their chicks. You might find a late-nesting bird or a bird that has re-nested, but generally, once a species has started hatching, they pretty much hatch over the same short time period. Also, each species hatches at a different time of the season. If you want to photograph Black Skimmer chicks, for instance, you'll need to know approximately when they'll hatch. The same goes for Common Terns, Least Terns, and Oystercatchers.



As always with animals, the more time you spend watching their behavior, the better the photos you'll be able to capture. Once you get familiar with them, you'll be able to anticipate behavior. I hope you'll spend time photographing these wonderful birds and enjoy it as much as I do!



Tina McManus

With me, it's always been about the animals. Growing up in Lake George in the Adirondacks as a “free-range” child, there was nothing better I liked to do than roam the nearby woods and streams.

Throughout my life, various cameras came and went - including a Canon SLR film camera with a telephoto lens - but life moved on, and photography was always put on the back burner.

In 2011, I bought my first digital SLR, a Canon 7D. I eventually bought a 70-200mm f/4 lens, but birds and wildlife looked like tiny dots. When Tamron came out with their 150-600mm lens around 2014, it finally gave me the means to start photographing wildlife and birds. I enjoy learning both fieldcraft, the art of finding, getting close to, and not disturbing the animal, and the technical side of capturing their story with a camera.

Today, my equipment includes a Canon R3 and R5, both mirrorless cameras, 1.4x and 2x teleconverters, and a 500mm f/4 EF lens.

My greatest enjoyment comes from making images that capture the personality of my subject or that convey a sense of my subject and its habitat in a way that makes the viewer care about nature and the need to preserve it.

The Armchair Photographer

~ Holly Trahan ~

Every photographer has their own style, even if they don't realize it yet. My own style is trying to capture wildlife, not only to tell their story but to reveal their personalities, if possible. Hiking in the woods, kayaking in a marsh, even crawling on the ground in the grass, mud, and sand were all ways I pursued the shot I wanted - until, that is, life got in the way.

Life has a way of bringing us to a sudden stop. I've also referred to it as Murphy and his stupid law!

Just when everything seems to be going smoothly, something happens to prevent me from doing what I love: photographing wildlife.

Murphy's Law (life) has interrupted my photography more than a few times, forcing me to reinvent how I go out to photograph.

Two major interruptions in life required me to seriously reassess how I could get the wildlife shots I still wanted, while nature was busy presenting



opportunities. Pushing a baby carriage with my equipment in it was one way to help with balance and to get me back out into nature.

With my balance off-kilter, standing at a tripod wasn't something I could easily do. Since I love hand-holding my camera - especially for birds in flight shots - I needed to find something that allowed me to sit and still shoot effectively. I tried a camp stool but found I needed something to support my back. Feeling a bit like Goldilocks, I tried multiple chairs until I finally found the one that worked for me!

The GoPlus is an umbrella-folding camping chair with 360° rotation, along with two arms. An added perk is the beverage holder in one of the arms, which holds my hot coffee! The GoPlus ended up being the perfect chair for this Armchair photographer!



In the beginning, I was using a walker, which prevented me from walking too far. So, most of my outings were limited to roadside pullovers, and I needed help setting up and getting into my chair. It was discouraging at first because the pictures I was taking were not the quality I wanted. Hand-holding lacked the steadiness I originally had to get the crisp sharpness I desired in my images.

It took a lot of work and perseverance, but I was eventually able to overcome the shakiness of hand-holding my camera with a long lens weighing close to 8 pounds. Sitting in the chair, I can brace my left elbow on the arm of the chair or sometimes lean into the arm and brace my elbow against the side of my body, giving me the steadiness I need to get the shot. The GoPlus chair also allows me to swivel and track to capture the flight shots I want. The GoPlus chair is now part of my camera gear, and I've just bought a newer, improved, camouflaged version!

Getting down on the ground for low shots is no longer an option, but I can sometimes find low spots to set up my chair, allowing the illusion of being on the same plane as the subject I'm photographing.

As life and time move forward, it's up to us to adapt to the new circumstances we face, even if we're not quite ready. Look for ways to adapt to whatever your situation is and get out to photograph nature. And if you happen to see the Armchair Photographer while you're out shooting, stop and say hello!





Holly Trahan

Holly has a passion for all areas of Wildlife & Nature Photography, with some interests in Creative & Action Photography as well.

Holly lives in Warwick, RI, where she raised her three children, who are grown now with families of their own.

Holly is a long-time member of the Photographic Society of RI, where she has competed and won many awards throughout the years, rising through all the levels to the top AA Class. She has held several positions on the Board of Directors, including her current position as Member-at-Large. Holly has also been a Massachusetts Camera Naturalist member for many years, which she considers an honor.

Holly's vision for wildlife and nature photography is to capture wildlife in their natural habitats and help to tell their story through the images she has taken. Holly hopes to show through her images some of the wildlife's behavior and personalities, highlighting their emotions, whether tender or harsh, and at times maybe even a little humorous.

CamNats Field Trip

~ Ken Jordan ~



I was looking forward to this trip for weeks, and it was finally Friday morning! We were packed and ready to leave.

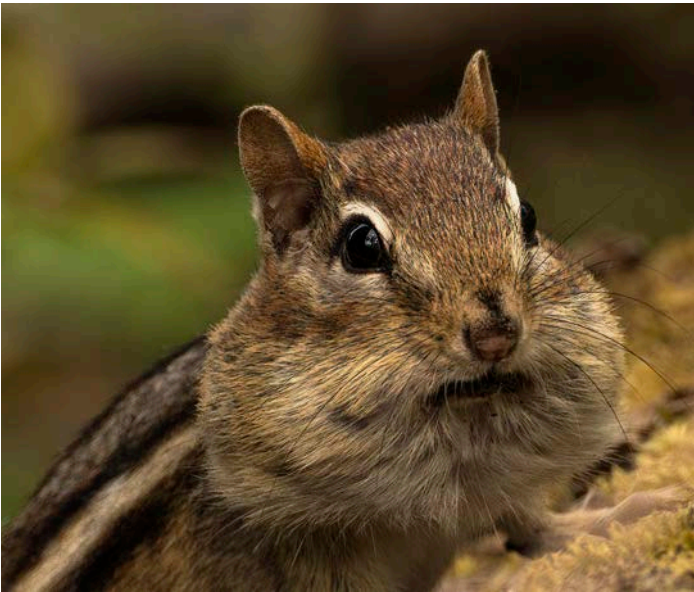
Arriving in Damariscotta Mills, the first place I looked was the water flowing under the bridge at the Damariscotta Mills Fish Ladder. The river was full of fish; now the pressure was off. The alewives were moving upriver. The threat of rain had passed; it was a great start.

Saturday morning came, and my favorite thing to do is get up at sunrise and sit behind Mulligan's Smokehouse on Bayview Road near the Damariscotta Mills Fish Ladder. We could have had more sun this morning for sunrise, but I couldn't complain. You could see the cormorants, eagles, and ospreys catching fish and the swallows swooping down to grab a feather or two floating on the water. For over two hours, we sat there checking our watches for the 8 a.m. breakfast hour—not to

be missed! We talked about the ospreys not showing up as much as in past years, and someone said it might be because of more eagles around. That could be true!

After breakfast, we went back to the Damariscotta River to meet other CamNats members who drove up Saturday morning and started to plan where our best chances were to find ospreys diving. The sun position, water level, tide, and number of alewives determine where the best chances for good photos would be. We texted everyone (19 people) and said we were heading to Warren to see what was going on there. Once there, people said, "You should have been here earlier; the ospreys were diving." Isn't that always the way!

After an hour or so, we made our way to Payson Park (a little upriver, but also in Warren) to see what was going on there. Payson Park has a footbridge over the river to a nice path in the woods that follows the



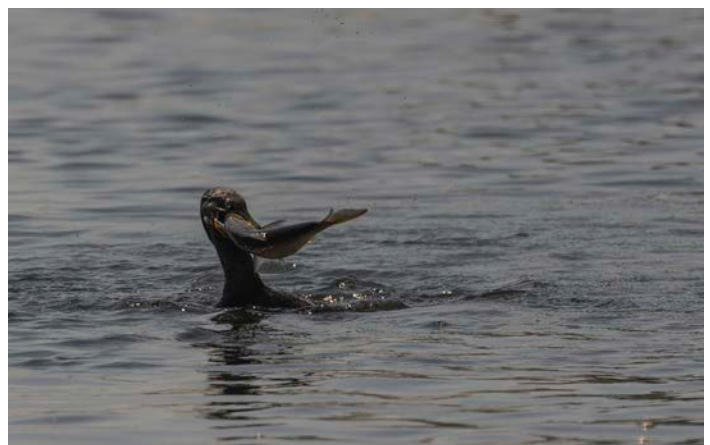
river. Wildflowers, warblers, and eagles were there. We then headed to Moody's Diner for lunch. We went back to Payson Park again and walked the trail looking for whatever nature had to offer, then back to 4 Rod Road in Warren for ospreys. It was now getting close to 6:00 p.m., the sky was clouding over, and dinner was on our minds. Then Lesley Mattuchio said, "Let's go to a place where we can have a nice glass of wine." Good move, Lesley!



So, 15 of us headed to King Eider's Pub on Main Street in Damariscotta, only to find out they were full. Who would have thought that on a Saturday night restaurants would be crowded? By now it was beginning to rain, And they were nice enough to call a couple of places nearby to see if they had a place for 15. Were we lucky! The Damariscotta River Grill, almost across the street, said they had a private room in the back that would fit us. "We'll take it." It was a great choice for our group dinner to end the CAMNATS SATURDAY FIELD TRIP.



Many of us stayed a few more days, determined to get a winning photo. We continued hunting for the ospreys; some of us were successful, but I was not. Everyone who stayed at The Mill Pond Inn gathered in the parlor each evening, drink in hand, talking about the fun we had each day and how lucky we were to have such friends to share nature with.



Ken Jordan, MNEC

Ken is a member of the Greater Lynn Photographic Association (GLPA) where he has served on the Board of Directors for many years. He is also a member of the Massachusetts Camera Naturalists (CamNats) and actively contributed to the NECCC annual conference as a member of the equipment committee for over 15 years.

Ken has judged several interclub competitions and PSA Nature International Exhibitions. While nature photography holds a special place in his heart, Ken is interested in photographing any subject that catches his eye. Notable is his architecture work, both interiors and exteriors.

Ken has received many awards/medals for his images in International Exhibitions, NECCC and PSA interclub competitions and GLPA club competitions. He clinched the 'Best of Show' in the PSA Council Challenge, representing the NECCC Council, and also the PSA Nature Wildlife Image of the Year for his "Peregrine Falcon Defeathering Meal" image.

You can explore more of Ken's work at
www.kenjordanphoto.com

Color Space Conversion



Rick Cloran
HonPSA, GMPSA, Hon NEC

Many of us tend to work in one of the wide gamut color spaces, either ProPhoto or AdobeRGB. As a result, we often find that we need to convert the image to a smaller color space when we actually use it. The most obvious instance may be when we finish an image that will be projected or used on the internet, but some of us may convert from ProPhoto down to AdobeRGB even when printing.

I'll start by assuming that we all have Color Settings correct for the space we work in. That is a Gamma of 1.8 for ProPhoto and a Gamma of 2.2 for AdobeRGB. sRGB doesn't really have a set Gamma but using 2.2 is a reasonable choice. The conversion process itself is simple. We go to Edit > Convert to Profile and pick the color space we are converting to. The rub in all of this relates back to those Gamma settings.

Photoshop handles the recalculation of the color numbers from one space to another (the math behind the "magic") well for solid pixel layers. However, the translation is not accurate when layers that are not "solid" pixels (e.g., adjustment layers, layers with Blend Modes other than normal, layers with lowered opacity, etc.) are involved. The math doesn't get handled. The result can be slightly duller, less saturated colors and flatter contrast. This can be subtle and hard to pick up on, but it is there.

The easiest way around the problem is to create a duplicate image, size and sharpen as needed, and then flatten the image prior to converting to the target color space. Since you would then be dealing with a single, solid pixel layer, Photoshop will handle the conversion correctly. At a minimum, create a new composite layer on top of your layer stack (after sizing and sharpening) and then do the conversion. Remember that you want to be on a solid pixel layer, so if you use an app or macro for sharpening that adds multiple layers or shifts the Blend Mode to Luminosity and then do the conversion, you may still be introducing some slight shifting.

Editor's Note

It is my honor to present this vibrant Fall issue of **CamNats Vision**. Our newsletter-magazine thrives because of the incredible talent, passion, and generosity of our members who share a love for nature photography. A heartfelt thank you goes out to this issue's inspiring contributors: Tina McManus, Holly Trahan, and Ken Jordan. Their work beautifully captures the wonder of the natural world and celebrates the unique camaraderie that makes CamNats such a special community.

Special thanks go to Shawn Carey for his continued support and leadership, and to Rick Cloran, whose technical expertise and artistic insights continue to shine and inspire in every issue.

As we step into the Fall season, I wish to invite your participation and contributions, which are essential to the ongoing success of CamNats Vision. Whether it's a nature story, a showcase of your photography, a helpful how-to article, or a recap of an event, we welcome it all. This is your platform to share your voice, showcase your work, and inspire others who share your passion for photographing the beauty of nature.

Thank you for making CamNats Vision a success. I look forward to seeing the creativity, knowledge, and inspiration you will bring to our upcoming Winter issue and beyond. Together, we can continue to celebrate and grow our shared love of nature photography.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Mary Doo
Editor, CamNats Vision
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