CamNats Vision

Late Summer 2025

Special Tribute to Jake and Jimmy

- **Shiv Verma - Chair**
- **Monica Verma**
- **Karl Zuzarte**
- **Holly Trahan**
- **Rick Cloran**
- **Mary Doo - Editor**

Cover photograph by Jake Mosser

Massachusetts Camera Naturalists

https://www.masscamnats.org

Message from CamNats Chair

Dear Mass CamNats Members:

I am saddened to inform you that we lost two long-time members of our organization.

Jacob (Jake) Mosser, HonPSA, EPSA, HonNEC, passed away unexpectedly in May. Jake loved Harleys, cats, and photography. He would photograph anything, but nature was his true love. CamNats and the New England photographic community have lost a mentor, a friend, and a legend.

Soon after Jake's passing, we learned that **James (Jimmy) Gately** had also passed away. Jimmy was a man of great strength and character, evident in his determination. When diagnosed with Parkinson's disease 15 years ago, he continued on despite his illness, contributing to the community and pursuing photography.

They will both be sorely missed. My sincere condolences to their families and friends. A tribute to both our departed friends is included in this newsletter.

Our Spring meeting was a great success, and I would like to express my sincere thanks to **Karl Zuzarte** for organizing the location and making necessary arrangements at Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge in Rhode Island. Thank you to all who attended and those who helped clean up after the meeting.

Fall is here, and I hope you take this opportunity to add many great images to your portfolio. Our Fall meeting is scheduled for Saturday, September 27, 2025, at Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, Newburyport, MA. I look forward to seeing you all.

Once again, **Ken Jordan** arranged a wonderful multi-day field trip to Damariscotta, Maine. It was well attended, and a good time was had by all. Thank you, Ken.

A big thanks to **Shawn Carey** for arranging another awesome photo exhibition of CamNats members' photographs at the Parker River Visitor Center. The images will be on display through our fall meeting. A big thanks to all who provided images for the gallery.

Please mark your calendars for the 2025 Annual Meeting that will be held on December 6, 2025, at Greater Lynn Photographic Association's Headquarters, 564 Boston Street, Lynn, MA 01905. Directions are on their website at **https://www.greaterlynnphoto.org/directions.php**

Please note that membership is up for renewal on November 1, 2025. You can pay your dues by PayPal directly on the CamNats website, or you can pay by check. If you are unable to pay by PayPal, you need to mail or give a check for the correct amount to the treasurer. If you choose to mail a check, please make it payable to "Massachusetts Camera Naturalists" and mail it to:

Susan Mosser
173 Central Street
North Reading, MA 01864-2620

If you pay by check, either at a meeting or by mail, you must send an email to mcntreasure(at)masscamnats.org and mention that you paid by check so that your record can be updated manually. All memberships are good for one year, starting on November 1 and expiring October 31 the following year.

Thank you, **Mary Doo**, for your great work with this newsletter. Thank you to all who have contributed images and articles that make our newsletter a pleasure to read. I encourage each and every one of you to share your photographic experiences, photo techniques, travel stories, and your images. Please send these to our editor at **CamNatsNews@Gmail.com**.

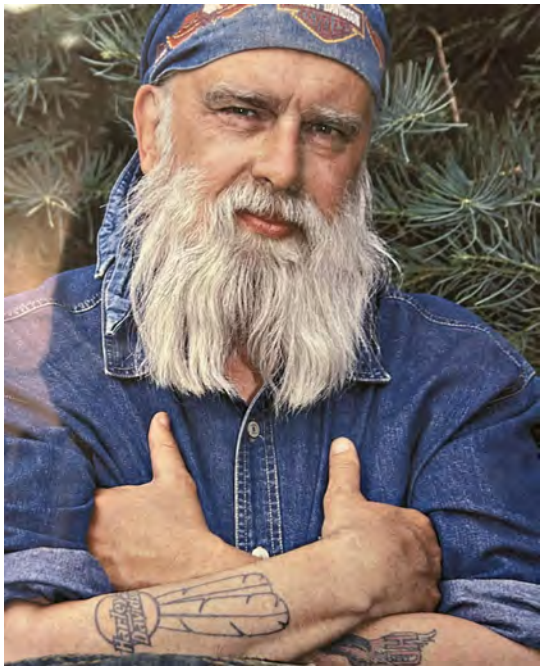
Remember, this is your club. Get involved; make it an organization of learning, sharing, and, most of all, fun. If you have an idea that you feel will benefit the organization, please share it with me so we can work to bring it to fruition

Shiv Verma

Remembering Two Cherished CamNats Members

CamNats sadly marks the passing of two remarkable members whose friendship and talent enriched our photographic community: **Jake Mosser and Jimmy Gately.** More than gifted photographers, they were generous, kind, and deeply devoted to both the craft of photography and the people around them.

Jacob (Jake) Mosser, HonPSA, EPSA, HonNEC



Jake passed away unexpectedly on May 17, 2025. Many of us first knew him by reputation—his legendary skill and generosity preceded him. When we finally met, admiration quickly turned to genuine affection. His philosophy on photography and life shines through in his own words:

"The camera is a treasure box in which to keep the beauty of nature while leaving it unharmed. Nature photography can be an outlet for creativity and a salve for the soul. To truly experience the natural world, you need to remove the jaded filter of adulthood, enabling you to see with the eyes of a child in awe of wild places and creatures. If you are beguiled by nature's beauty, seek an intimacy with it beyond mere observation and possess her to the extent possible through photography. When you photograph, do not go with a list of demands; simply go and see ... see as you would listen for faint bird song in still woods; be at peace with nature and bring back what you find in your memories and in your photos."


Photo @ Jacob Mosser


CANON


LIVE FREE OR DIE
LACONIA '97

Jake truly lived this creed. He loved Harleys, cats, and photography—especially nature. He rode a Harley for most of his 76 years and always had a house full of cats, mostly strays and rescues. Though he would photograph anything, nature was his true love. He traveled widely to photograph wildlife and landscapes, including five trips to Africa.

A generous mentor, Jake guided countless photographers across New England and earned many honors for his teaching, presentations, and images.

He was recognized by the Photographic Society of America (PSA), the New England Camera Club Council (NECCC), and his home club, the Greater Lynn Photographic Association (GLPA).

He served on the GLPA Board of Directors for over 30 years and was an Honorary Life Vice President of both NECCC and GLPA. A graduate of Wentworth, he worked at General Electric in Lynn until retirement.

Friends honored his love of the outdoors by taking his ashes for one final walk in the woods behind his home, where he often searched for mushrooms, insects, and wildflowers to photograph.

His close friend Ken Jordan recalls being in awe of Jake until his own photographic skills caught up and their friendship deepened. They shared many adventures—from moose trips in Baxter State Park to journeys through Yellowstone, the Tetons, and Iceland. Long drives to PSA meetings, such as those in Colorado Springs and Pittsburgh, with both Jake and Susan, were filled with jokes, banter, and stories. Ken fondly remembers their road trip to Florida to visit John Lowe and how their bond grew even stronger as Jake's health declined.

James (Jimmy) Gately

Just two weeks later, on May 30, 2025, we lost Jimmy, another beloved friend and longtime GLPA member. He was famous for the ever-present smile that brightened club socials and for the tall tales that kept everyone laughing. He often brought his mother as his date to events, and together they delighted all with their imaginative Halloween costumes.

Jimmy served on the GLPA Board of Directors for nearly 20 years and was a stalwart of the house committee, overseeing repairs, scheduling inspections, and ensuring fire extinguishers were updated. A plumber by trade, he had a vast network of contacts and used it to benefit the club. If something needed to be hauled away, replaced, or installed, someone would inevitably say, "Jimmy knows a guy"—and he always did. He also served for over a decade on the NECCC Annual Photography Conference equipment committee, where his humor filled the base room.

A loyal Nikon shooter, Jimmy affectionately nicknamed his 600 mm lens "Big Bertha," while good-naturedly cursing its weight. He will be remembered for his humor, generosity, and readiness to help anyone in need.

Ken Jordan, who shared countless wildlife trips with Jimmy over three decades, recalls laughter so hearty "our stomachs hurt" and a friendship so close that he feels the void daily: "I so miss him in my heart. I miss his phone calls and the simple joy of talking with him."

Together, Jake and Jimmy embodied the very best of CamNats and GLPA—generosity, artistry, humor, and deep devotion to photography. Their images, stories, and friendships leave a lasting imprint on our community and on everyone fortunate enough to have known them.

Winter Wonderland

JAPAN

BY MONICA VERMA

MONICA VERMA

In the first week of February 2024, Shiv and I packed our gear and flew to Japan for a wildlife photography adventure. Though Shiv has been to Japan many times, this was my first visit to this stunning and amazing country. Our objective was to photograph the snow monkeys in Nagano. In addition, we wanted to photograph the Red-crowned Cranes, Swans, Sea Eagles, and other wildlife in Hokkaido, the northernmost island. The average temperatures in February range from -15 °F to 23 °F. Despite wearing ample cold-weather gear, there were times when the bitter cold was rough, but observing, photographing, and learning about these magnificent animals more than made up for any discomfort.

I carried two camera bodies and three lenses: a 28–75 mm, 70–200 mm, and a 200–600 mm. A sturdy tripod and an ample stock of batteries and memory cards were also essential—the cold in Hokkaido is not kind to battery life.
We started our adventure in Tokyo and took the Shinkansen (bullet train) to Nagano. From there we took a local train to Yudanaka, followed by the hotel limo to Kanbayashi Onsen, a hot-spring village. Not knowing a lick of Japanese didn't deter us, even though most people do not speak English. The people were extremely polite, and we found ways to communicate through sign language and the translator on our phones.

The monkeys are found in Jigokudani, about a half-hour strenuous trek from our hotel. Crampons were a must, as you have to walk on snow and ice on a well-maintained dirt road with some uphill stretches. Finally, one must climb a fair number of steps to reach the steam bath where the monkeys hang out. This was not the most enjoyable workout but was definitely worth doing just to photograph and observe the antics of these adorable red-faced macaques.

Unfortunately, there were hordes of people in prime space around the steaming water. While photographing, I was startled when a juvenile sprang toward me and used my shoulder as a launching pad to escape a huge adult. There

were times I put my camera down just to observe their behavior. I noticed a baby monkey paddling rapidly toward the center of the pool to its mom. She was blissfully soaking in the warmth with her eyes half shut when the baby reached her. She didn't seem interested in the baby at all and put her hand on his forehead, pushing him down, causing him to exhale underwater and create bubbles as he tried to breathe. Needless to say, he returned rapidly to the edge of the water.

The monkeys are just a few feet away from the observers—if you manage to get to the lower deck. A 70–200 mm lens is more than adequate. In case you want to photograph the monkeys coming down the hill, you would need a longer focal-length lens or use a tele-extender, though this is not my preference. Keep in mind that you have to carry all this on the strenuous trek to the hot spring. I carried just one body and the 70–200 mm lens, which was perfect for this location.

After two days in Kanbayashi, we took the same route back to Tokyo and caught a flight to

Hokkaido. We rented a car and drove around the eastern part of the island. Our first stop was Tsurui, where we stayed in a delightful farmhouse. The home-cooked food was absolutely delicious, especially the breads. Our main aim here was to photograph the Red-crowned Cranes in various locations.

One major draw for wildlife photographers in Tsurui is a very early 4 a.m. arrival time at Otowa Bridge. This bridge traverses the Setsuri River, one of the few rivers that does not freeze in winter, providing a safe roosting place for the cranes at night. This unearthly hour is when people start arriving and putting down their tripods in prime spots. It was so bitterly cold that I needed to get back in the car every so often to warm up. This is when someone moved my tripod! Nothing could dampen my mood, as there was hoar frost on all the vegetation around the water, steam was rising, and the cranes were in the midst of this ethereal scene, just chilling. As the rising sun's glow reached the scene, the color changed from blue to pale pink and peachy yellow. Everything was suffused in this glow. By 7 a.m., the show was almost over as the cranes headed off to their feeding grounds.

We headed to another area where the cranes are fed and photographed them flying in, landing while calling, dancing, leaping, bowing, and interacting with their mates. Apparently, this courtship behavior strengthens the bond between these monogamous pairs, which are symbols of longevity and good luck in Japan. Again, one had to contend with hordes of photographers, and yet again, it was worth it. By about 9:30 the light was getting harsh and reflecting off the snow-covered land, so we returned for a home-cooked, delicious breakfast.

In Tsurui we photographed cranes for three days, morning and evening, at three different locations.

Our next destination was Lake Kussharo for two days. Here we captured images of Whooper Swans finding warmth in the hot, steamy lake with snow-capped mountains as a backdrop. The experience did not disappoint, although one had to position oneself to avoid the multitude of people who arrive by the busloads. It was interesting to watch the swans swarm toward the onlookers as they fed them popcorn, which you can buy at the restaurant here. That was unfortunate, but we can't stop what seems to be the norm in some of these wildlife areas in Japan.

A tour leader positioned his clients along the lake as he walked rapidly with a bag full of popcorn, and the swans followed him by the dozens, creating a photo op of the swans paddling rapidly, all facing in one direction. I was not expecting this spectacle and found my

lens too long to get the entire line of swans. Below is just a portion of the line.

Lake Kussharo provides many additional photo opportunities. The mountainous background is ideal for both sunrise and sunset photography. As most of the lake is frozen, there are excellent ice formations, and if you like trees there are some lovely lone trees along the shoreline.

Early morning is when the swans fly in, and it's an opportune time to photograph them as they land, whooping and calling, which is part of their mating ritual. This also includes head dipping and synchronized swimming. Whooper Swans also have a lifelong monogamous relationship, and we were fortunate to observe how one family of five interacted with each other.

One of the adult swans in this family group (I'm assuming it was the male) appeared to take umbrage with another adult and chased him

(Three swans bowing to leader)

down. Quite an altercation ensued, with both of them managing to lift each other clear off the ice time and time again. This behavior was most interesting to observe. The images below show a small portion of this interaction.

Eventually, the victorious male returned to his family. Three of them proceeded to bow to him—in thanks, maybe?

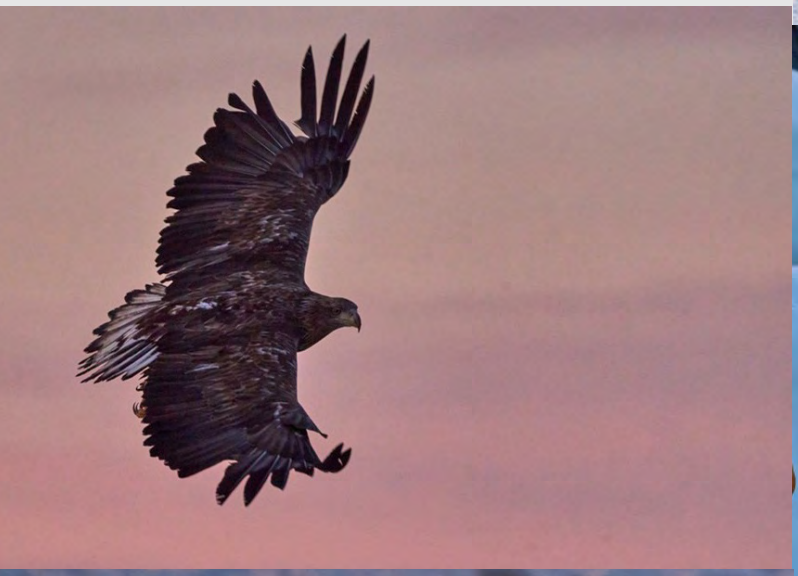
Swans are a good subject for slow-shutter-speed photography. I tried my hand at this and was quite pleased with the result.

There are many opportunities here for good images of the swans in the steamy water, though isolating them can be difficult. The evening light gives the entire scene a delicate pink glow, which makes for some great images. There are other water birds in this area, like pintails, teals, and other fowl.

After Kusharo, we headed further north to Rausu to photograph the Steller's Sea Eagles and White-tailed Eagles. The Steller's Sea Eagles are larger, with bright yellow-orange beaks and feet.

Once again, before sunrise, we took a boat out to the ice floes that come down from the Sea of Okhotsk (Russia). We were lucky to get the ice floes. Earlier, there were indications of no ice floes in the area. Regardless, we decided to take our chances and hoped for the best. Without the floes, the photographs would not be as compelling. As we got closer to where we needed to be, the sun peeped over the horizon, transforming the entire scene with a deep orange hue.

For the most part, I had to shoot at a high ISO and shutter speed to compensate for the low light and motion of the boat.



The boat crew throw fish for the eagles, which keeps them in the area and keeps the tourists/ photographers coming—a lucrative business. This was the one thing about photographing wildlife in Japan that was a little disturbing.

During the day, we drove around the Notsuke Peninsula in the hope of photographing the Sika Deer and Ezo Red Fox. We were lucky to get both in good light with attractive backgrounds.

Our last location for photography was Nemuro, which we had heard was a good place for Steller's Sea Eagles. Once again, the owners of this place feed the eagles, so there are plenty of them. This is one place I will not go back to even though the images were good.

The highlight was when a red fox came trotting nonchalantly and stole the largest fish out of the pile of fish that had been left on the frozen bay by the owners. There was a half-hearted skirmish between one eagle and the fox, but he got away calmly with the fish.

Hopefully, someday we can go back to Japan and spend time photographing these wonderful creatures again, although I would do some things differently.

The Auroras

By Karl Zuzarte

Photo @ Karl Zuzarte

An aurora—also commonly known as the Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis) or Southern Lights (Aurora Australis)—is a natural light display in our Earth's sky, predominantly observed in high-latitude regions (around the Arctic and Antarctic). Auroras display dynamic patterns of radiant lights that appear as curtains, rays, spirals, or flickers covering the entire sky.

Auroras are the result of disturbances in the Earth's magnetosphere caused by enhanced speeds of solar wind from coronal holes and coronal mass ejections. These disturbances alter the trajectories of charged particles in the magnetospheric plasma. These particles consist mainly of electrons and protons that precipitate into the upper atmosphere. The resulting ionization and excitation of atmospheric constituents emit light of varying color and complexity. The form of the aurora, occurring within bands around both polar regions, also depends on the amount of acceleration imparted to the precipitating particles.

Aurora is derived from the Roman goddess of the dawn, Aurora.

The words borealis and australis are derived from the ancient gods of the north wind (Boreas) and the south wind (Auster or Australis) in Greco-Roman mythology.

Auroras are most commonly observed in the “auroral” zone, a band approximately 6 degrees wide in latitude centered on 67 degrees North and South.

The Aurora Borealis is visible from areas around the Arctic Circle such as Alaska, Canada, Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, Scandinavia, Finland, Norway, Scotland, and Russia.

Geomagnetic storms can push auroras to lower (north) or higher (south) latitudes.

Karl M Zuzarte, MD, MNEC

Massachusetts was lucky a few times during the cyclical peak in 2024–2025.

Factors that Determine Witnessing the Auroras

1. Weather

A clear, dark sky—the less cloud cover, the better the visibility. The more moonlight, the less dominant the aurora is likely to be, though one can also use the moon creatively.

2. Latitude

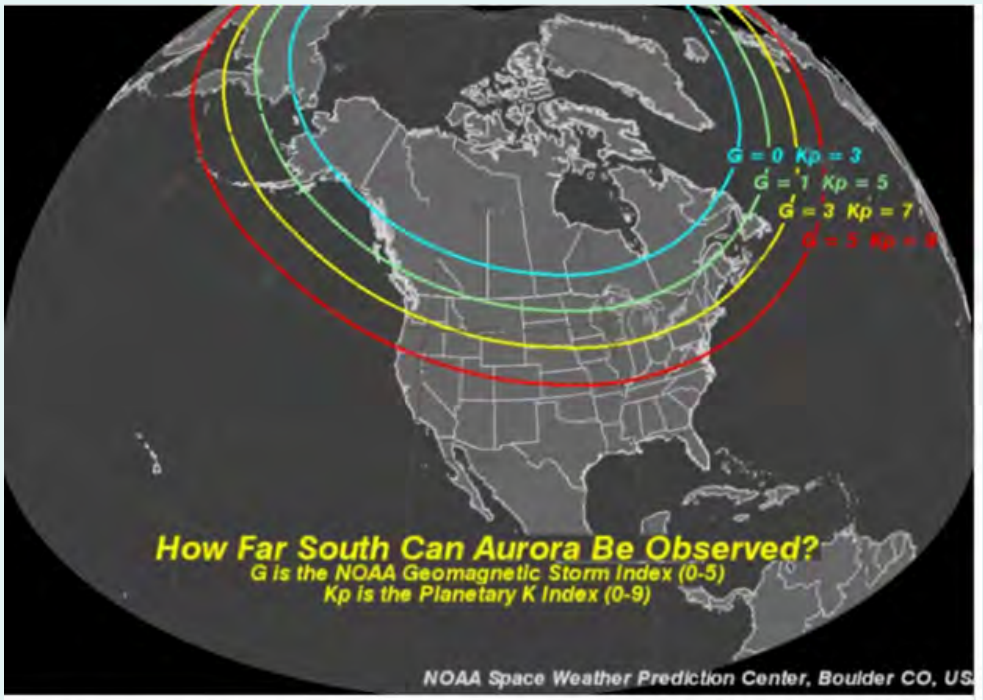
55–80 degrees is best—the higher the better. At higher latitudes, auroras dance overhead; farther south they tend to appear closer to the horizon, best viewed facing north.
Auroras are seen most often in polar areas. Winters offer the best opportunity since the nights are much longer. Statistically, the best time is between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m.

3. Geomagnetic Activity

Aurorae occur when charged particles (mostly electrons and protons) in the solar wind penetrate Earth's magnetic shield and collide with atoms of oxygen and nitrogen in the upper atmosphere.

The Kp index is a 10-point scale that characterizes the magnitude of a geomagnetic disturbance. Using the referenced map below, areas above the green line have a greater chance of observing this phenomenon.

Besides a strong Kp index (usually greater than 6, though bright auroras have been seen with lower Kp levels—suggesting other factors such as solar flares in the right direction), flares are classified by size (A, B, C, M, and X, with A being the smallest). M- and X-class flares predict high activity.



The Kp index is a 10-point scale used to characterize the magnitude of a geomagnetic disturbance. The areas above the green line have the greatest chances of seeing the northern lights. (NOAA Space Weather Prediction Center graphic)

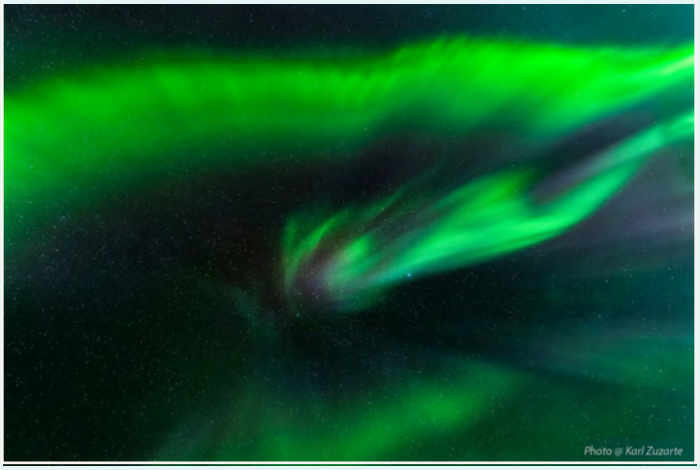
How to Photograph Auroras

Essentially similar to any astro-landscape photography:

- Wide-angle lenses (14–24 mm) with an f/2.8 or wider aperture
- Preferably a full-frame camera body with a remote control to avoid camera shake
- A sturdy tripod
- A foreground element for context—looking north offers the best chance, especially as one moves away from
- the poles
- Manually focus on the stars.
- Exposure is a function of the intensity of the aurora and the speed at which it moves. A good starting point is ISO 3200 / f 2.8 / 4 seconds. By using manual mode, one can vary the exposure and adjust ISO on the fly.

Coronal Mass Ejections

Coronal mass ejections (CMEs) are the source of the particles that cause auroras, and geomagnetic storms are the mechanism by which those particles reach the poles and interact with the atmosphere.



Capturing CMEs is a serious challenge because they occur unannounced and often directly overhead.

One must be ready—when hearing that "sound of thunder," point in that direction and hope the camera settings are right—usually no more than a 2-second exposure.

Stories Behind the Lens

Imagine the excitement of seeing my first aurora in Iceland while driving along Ring Road 1: 10 seconds / f 4.0 / ISO 400.

This one is in Alaska—standing on the frozen, hoar-frosted Dietrich River at –40 degrees.

This one takes advantage of a fuller moon casting shadows on the hoar-frosted Dietrich River.

Taking advantage of ISO variance—shot at ISO 400 and pushed in post-processing—are the sea stacks in the Dyrhólaey area of Iceland.

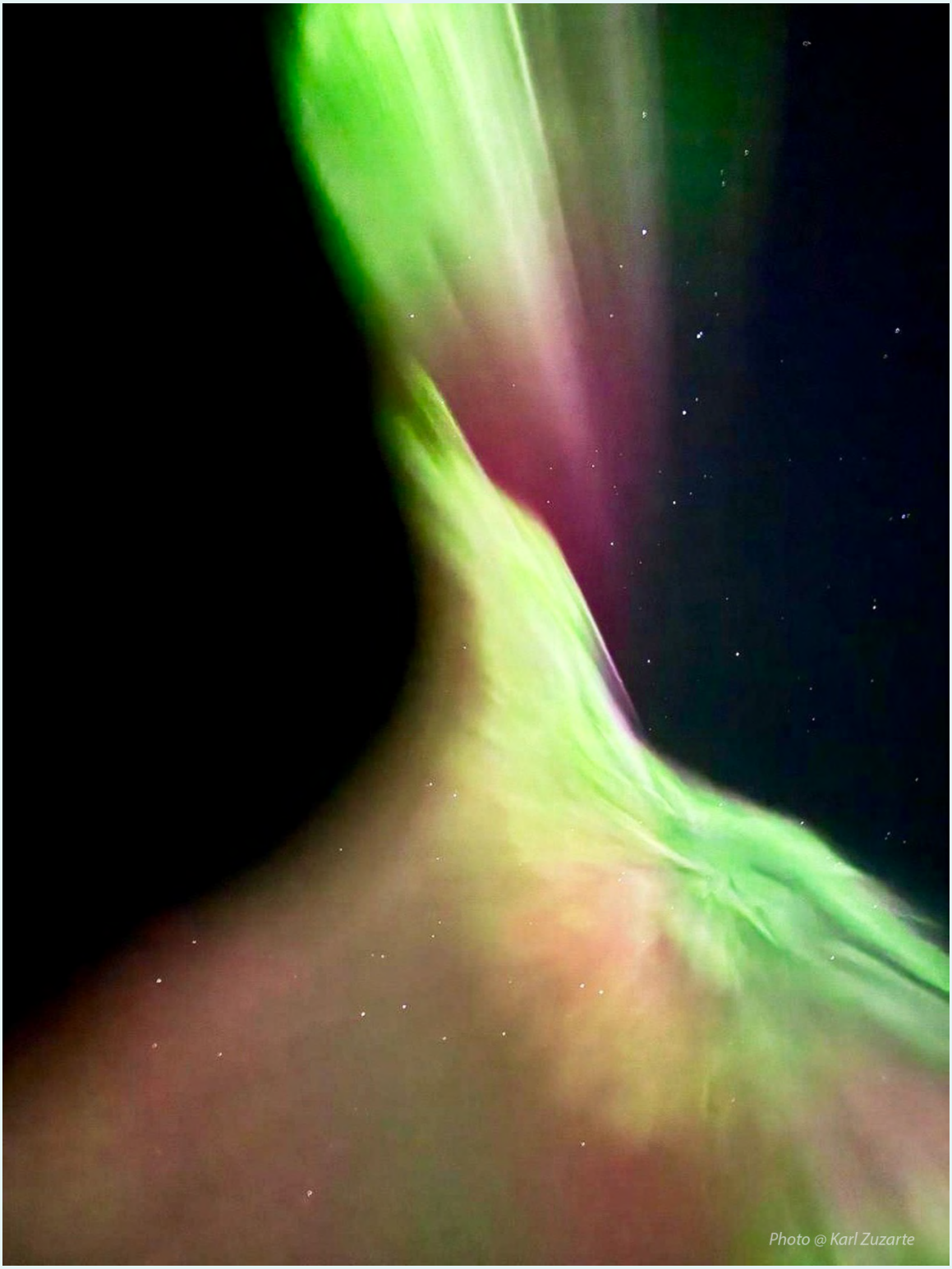
Capturing the auroral curtains: 1.5-second exposure.

Spectrum of Colors

- Red – oxygen interacting with the solar wind 250 km above
- Green – the most common, oxygen interacting with the solar wind at 100 km
- Yellow-green – oxygen interacting at various heights above 100 km

- Blue/purple – nitrogen interactions at lower levels; they tend to be overshadowed by green but can be captured by cameras. Purple and blue are rare.

Cell phones – these keep getting better and better! This one handheld. But putting it on a tripod can get even better results



And finally, the Massachusetts Spectacle!

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The Armchair Photographer

Barn Swallows

by Holly Trahan

One of my favorite subjects to photograph in the springtime are the Barn Swallows. Their speed with quick, sharp turns fascinates me. Yet, for a long time, capturing them in flight eluded me. I would try, but by the time I saw them they were gone, seeming to disappear into thin air.

Barn Swallows are small, 6–8 inches in length, with a deeply forked tail with white spots, a blue-black back, a rusty reddish throat, and a reddish-brown underside. When perched, the swallow-sized Barn Swallow appears cone-shaped, with a slightly flattened head, no visible neck, and broad shoulders that taper to long, pointed wings. The tail extends well beyond the wingtips, and the long outer feathers give the tail a deep fork. Their cinnamon-colored face contrasts nicely with their blue crown. Males and females are close in markings, although the males are more boldly colored than females, and females have a lighter underside.

Barn Swallows have been found on almost every continent with the exception of Antarctica, but are becoming threatened in Canada. Population has decreased 76% in the last 40 years. The population decrease is possibly due to climate change, predators, lost nesting and foraging

habitat, and changes in insect populations due to pesticides.

Barn Swallows are monogamous for the duration of the breeding season, often mating in the air. They can feed their young and drink water all while flying. They come back to the same nesting sites year after year, but don't always use the same nest. At one time, the nesting sites were cliffs and caves, but as environments changed, so did their nesting sites. They started using barns, eaves, or other building structures, such as under open buildings and under bridges, to build their mud nests.

Barn Swallows mate from March through September, often having two clutches, laying 3 to 5 eggs, sometimes 7 eggs in each clutch.

But how does one attempt to photograph these fast little birds, flying at speeds of up to 46 mph? It takes practice and can be rewarding, but also frustrating when the misses are more than the successful keeper rate!

First, you need to know where to look. Typically, Barn Swallows like marshes, where they roost in tall grass and reeds when not nesting and raising their young, which both parents participate in.

If they are nesting in barns, then the farm fields may be a great place for them to find bugs. Sometimes the farm equipment will disturb bugs, which the Barn Swallows are quite happy to gobble up or take back to the nest.

I've found photographing barn swallows to be a bit challenging. When they nest high in the rafters, they fly in and out at a height that makes it difficult to capture a good angle as they pass. If you have access to the barn, or maybe

a porch they have chosen, the success rate of photographing the chicks will be much higher.

I have personally found that if you can find them nesting under a building on stilts or under a bridge in or near a marsh, the success rate is even better. You can photograph them swooping in and out, and you are at eye level with them.

If they are nesting near a salt marsh, there are plenty of bugs to feed young swallows with wide-open beaks, begging for food to fill never-ending appetites.

Once you have located the Barn Swallows, buckle up for a crazy ride, trying to capture these fast little bullets twisting, turning, with sudden stops, drops, and heading straight up in the air within your viewfinder! That is, if you can keep them in your viewfinder!

No matter the mode you shoot in, a fast shutter speed is highly recommended. I prefer shooting in manual mode, setting my shutter speed first, which is a top priority. I also find light can vary

quickly because they are all over the place, so I keep my ISO on auto. I start off by placing my shutter speed at about 1/4000th of a second, knowing I can use noise-reducing software if needed in post-processing. For me, it's essential to freeze the moment in time. Once I've captured a few shots, and the light is bright, I can try some lower shutter speeds. I keep my F-stop around F-8, +/- depending on lighting conditions. I am also set up for continuous shooting and tracking. My camera of choice is a Nikon Z9 with a Z 180–600mm lens. When I first arrive, I get set up and seated in my swivel armchair. My camera is on and ready to photograph, but I choose to assess and observe. I might be missing some first shots, but I think it's best to observe, watching for flight patterns. Try to decipher if they are just catching bugs in the air to eat, or are they returning to a nest to feed chicks or take food to a fledgling? Barn Swallows are like many other birds— a bit predictable if you take a moment to observe them. Once I've decided how I think the shot will be set up, then I'm ready for the challenge.

I handhold my camera, and I also like to rest the Arca-Swiss foot plate collar (I replaced the one that comes with the Nikon lens) in the palm

of my left hand. For comfort, I use a potholder made for pan handles on the foot which rests in the palm of my left hand. I start off zoomed out, around 300 mm +/-. This method allows me to rest/balance the foot in my palm, while my fingers can quickly zoom in when I've located the Barn Swallow(s) in the viewfinder. I have also found that if for some reason my lens is searching back and forth to focus, I can use a finger to quickly adjust the focus ring to help it along to find the subject and focus quicker. I also use the back focus button, with the half-button focus on the shutter release turned off. Once I'm tracking the Barn Swallow(s), I can bring the zoom in to fill the frame or back out, all while following up and down and with sudden changes of direction, but staying with them, all while using my chair to help me track by swiveling where I need to be.

As you practice, you will find your keeper rate improves greatly. I have seen and captured the fledglings on wires, waiting for Mom or Dad to fly to them with food. But a shot I'm still hoping to see and capture is a fledgling being fed on the fly!

Rick Cloran, HonFPSAn HonNEC

Not All Nature Subjects Are Sexy

The Common Baby's Ear, sometimes referred to as the White Baby's Ear, is roundish in outline and runs between 1 and 1.5 inches in diameter. It is virtually flat with a large opening and, as the name implies, curved like a human ear. The shell is generally white unless it has been discolored by contact with other substances in its environment. Contrary to the somewhat delicate name and appearance, the Common Baby's Ear (Sinum perspectivum) is a carnivorous snail and member of the moon shell family that typically feeds on small clams. One curiosity of this species is that its body is larger than its shell, leaving the animal incapable of drawing all the way into it. When expanded, the body completely envelops the shell. They spend the majority of their time buried in sandy bottom areas along beaches. To help them burrow through the sand, they produce a significant volume of slimy mucus.

The Common Baby's Ear can be found on beaches ranging from Maryland to Brazil. Its "cousin," the Brown Baby's Ear (Sinum maculatum), which has a brownish and less flat shell, can also be found in this range. The best time to locate one is during a neap tide, when their normal environment is more openly exposed.

You can learn more about the Common Baby's Ear at the National Shell Museum and get a sense of what you might be looking for in this YouTube video: Live Baby's Ear.

Another denizen of the zone exposed during a neap tide is the Decorator Worm (Diopatra cuprea), also known as the Plumed Worm or Ornate Worm. The tube is sometimes "decorated" with fragments of debris that the worm finds in the area. The upper end of the tube is referred to as a chimney. The worms feed by creating a

suction that pulls water through the tube, allowing them to filter out potential food using a mucus lining that forms a "net." While the tubes can be smaller, such as the one in the photo, they can actually reach a length of one meter. They can be found in the warmer waters of the western Atlantic from Cape Cod to the West Indies as well as in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. You can learn more about Parchment Worms at this Wikipedia link: Diopatra cuprea – Wikipedia.

A Common Baby's Ear Burrowing During a Neap Tide

Emerging Decorator Worm

Editor's Note

True to its name, this is indeed a "Late Summer" ***CamNats Vision.*** After an unforgettable journey through North and South Xinjiang and Hong Kong this summer, I made an unexpected nine-day detour in a Hong Kong hospital with pneumonia. It was a small hiccup, and thankfully I am now fully recovered, and I appreciate your patience as this issue made its way to you.

This edition pays special tribute to Jake Mosser and Jimmy Gately, two beloved members and remarkable photographers whose artistry and generosity left a lasting legacy. The tribute article is a heartfelt compilation drawn from obituaries and warm member contributions.

I also wish to thank Monica Verma for sharing her extraordinary photographic journey in Japan; Karl Zuzarte for his stunning aurora photography (among the best I have seen); Holly Trahan for her delightful flying barn swallows and detailed techniques; and Rick Cloran for his rich natural-history insights. Each article reflects the creativity, curiosity, and dedication that make CamNats vibrant and inspiring.

I invite you to share your photographic experiences, travel stories, techniques, or anything you wish to tell us for the upcoming Fall 2025 issue. Your voices and images keep ***CamNats Vision*** alive and inspiring.

Thanks again for your patience with this late-summer edition and for the continued generosity and artistry you bring to our community.

Sincerely,

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