ALAMANCE PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB ©

April 2019 Newsletter

March PhotoShow Winners

"Winter"

1st Place–Dave Kaplan

More Top Pics Page 4

APC ACTIVITIES

Next Meeting	April 15, 2019 7:00 PM
Board Meeting	To Be Determined
Programs	
April 15, 2019	Zoo Photography by Dave Hattori
June 17, 2019	Seasons in Yellowstone & Tetons by Barney Koszalka
Aug. 19, 2019	NC Botanical Garden by Mike Dunn
Oct. 21, 2019	To be Announced

PhotoShows	
May 20, 2019	Patterns
July 15, 2019	Reflections
Sept. 16, 2019	Haw River Trail or Nature/Landscape
Nov. 18, 2019	Flowers/Macro

President's Comments—April 2019

Behind the Lens with Mike King

"What makes a good Photo?"

What makes a good photo? Simple enough question, but not so simple to answer. For some a good photo could be a snap shot of the grandchild in a sporting event that was shot without the best camera and lens and the lighting was less than favorable. However, it's a photo of the grandchild!

You are on a hike and you only have your smartphone with you and there is a nice view of the tree lined stream with flowers in bloom. You know it will not win a prize or even be worthy of printing for an enlargement, but you captured the feelings that moment in time you experienced. Are these good photos? We all have lots and lots of photos shot of things and places and events that in that moment meant everything. And later as we are reviewing many of these photos, we may decide to delete some and others we take a more in-depth look and categorize them as keep and file. Not all photos will be those award-winning images that are destined to be enlarged and hang in a show or on your living room walls. Photos are good when the photographer feels good about the image or the image has meaning. Not all photos with a personal interest will be understood by a judge looking for technical detail.

Now that the time involved in capturing an image is almost without a thought, we get very snap happy. I am guilty more than most. I grab my smartphone and capture the evening meal, a street scene, a product I need to buy and most anything and everything. Are these good photos or are they just documenting a thought, place or idea?

As far as what makes a good photo, many will say if you like the image, it's a good photo. We, as a photography club, can take several approaches to the term "Good Photo". We can go with the basic photographic rules we have used for years as focus, composition, exposure, subject interest and more. With those thoughts we can also include emotions and what the photo means or is it making a statement. Recently in a discussion about what makes a good photo, a member stated, "Does the photo make you turn around and go back to view it again?" This could be some measurement in viewing photos for technical or interest in an image. Visual Impact and the WOW factor are also a point that I mention at times when looking at a photo. We may not always agree on what is a good photo, however we all can strive to make better photos and improve our technical abilities for the images that are to be seen by others and judged in the competitions.

The important thing as a photographer is to keep capturing the world around us as it is consistently changing and a "Good Photo" can be the next one you make.

Mike King
APC President
Mking0379@gmail.com
336-260-0379

Program April 15th—Zoo Photography
by Dave Hattori

Dave is a Nature and Travel photographer and photo artist based in Apex, North Carolina.

He is an active member of the Carolinas' Nature Photographers Association (CNPA), the North American Nature Photography Association (NANPA) and the Cary Photographic Artists (CPA). Since leaving the corporate world, Dave dedicates much of his time to photography and creating photo art from his images. He has had a number of images place in the CNPA Member's Choice Contest, NANPA Showcase and had his photo art published in Living the Photo Artistic Life magazine.

His photo portfolio can be seen at: www.davehattoriphoto.com

His photo art portfolio can be seen at: www.davehattoriphotoart.com

APC BOARD

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More PhotoShow Winners

2nd Place–John Reich

3rd Place–John Kinney

HM 2–Gary Gorby

HM 1–Bob Finley

HM 3–Dick. Schenck

Chris Whitted—March PhotoShow

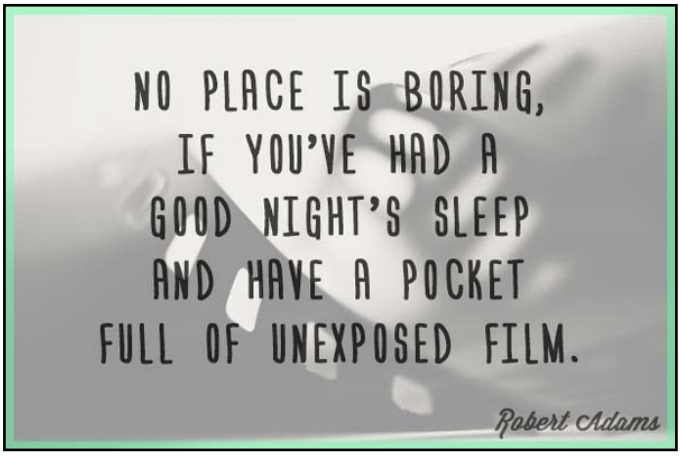
Our March "winter" PhotoShow was presented and critiqued by Chris Whitted. Chris did a great job pointing out what he liked and what he feels may improve our photographs. There were many great photos and it must have been very difficult choosing his top pics. Thank you Chris for sharing with us Monday evening.

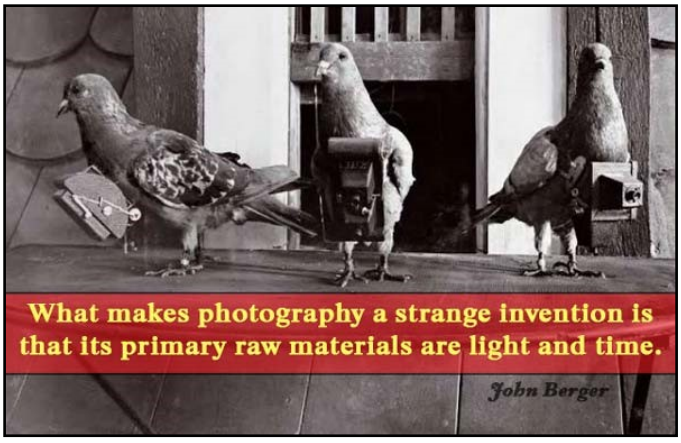
Chris Whitted is a Chatham County resident that returned to his home state of North Carolina in 2004 after earning a degree in Accounting at Virginia Tech. He is currently a Financial Analyst during the week and a photographer on the weekend. Much of his time with a camera is spent on the Haw River or Jordan Lake taking landscape photographs while keeping an eye out for Bald Eagles. His photos have been used by B&H Photo, Pittsboro Parks, Friends of the Lower Haw River SNA, and the Triangle Land Conservancy. Chris' eagerness to learn photography started in 2013, and the capability to learn something new every day from photography is what keeps him behind the lens.

More about Chris and his photos can be seen on line at:

⇒ cwhitted on flickr

⇒ chris_whitted_photography on Instagram





"If you're not shooting in the right direction, it doesn't matter how well you're shooting."

Jay Maisel (photographer, author)

Club Members Gallery

By Sam Lynch

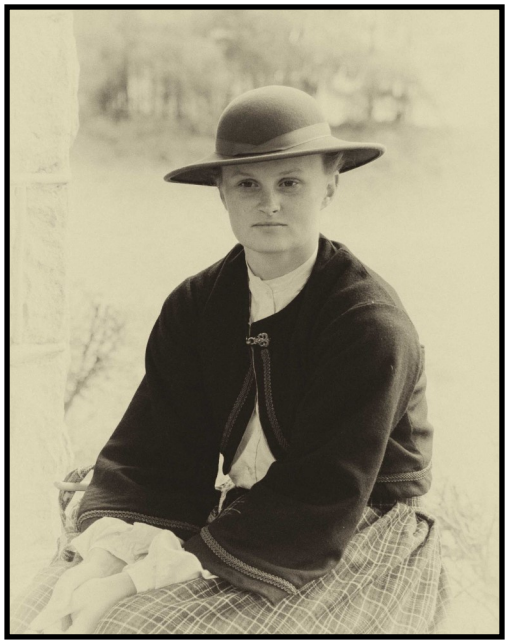
The love for photography runs in my family. Growing up my uncle was a professional photographer. He had his studio in his home which was located beside my grandparents' home. Frequently I would visit his studio and look at the amazing photographs, mostly portraits, he had displayed on the walls of his studio to include portraits of celebrities. He was a Master Photographer and won numerous national awards through the Professional Photographers of America. Growing up my parents owned a Kodak Vigilant Junior camera that they used to take family pictures. The instruction manual is 36 pages, imagine that. I now own that camera. This is how I fell in love with photography plus photography fulfills my creative outlet.

My first camera was a Pentax K1000 that I bought in the early 1970's. It was a great, high quality camera. I used it for many years and took a lot of pictures with it. It was a completely manual SLR camera for all functions. Since that time, I have owned several point and shoot film cameras and several DSLR cameras. My first DSLR was a Sony point and shoot. It took excellent pictures but it was slow in capturing the picture. I later owned a Canon Rebel DSLR which I did not like. After doing some research, I purchased a Nikon D70. I later owned a Nikon D90 and a Nikon D7000. I currently own a Nikon P7700 point and shoot and a Nikon D7200 DSLR. Both of these cameras are great cameras and fully meet my needs. I also own a drone. I bought it for the potential photography capabilities. I have not used it a lot, but I have plans for it.

I love all types of photography. In addition to enjoying taking pictures, I have the privilege of including 3 of my grandchildren in my hobby. Berkley age 14 and Darby age 10 are members of the Alamance Photography Club. They all have a very good eye for taking pictures. I am proud of them and it is very exciting to see their creativity.

I have had the opportunity to travel to many places in the USA including Hawaii and Alaska to take photographs. I have also traveled to Ireland, Switzerland, India and Israel. Over the past 50 years I have had the privilege of capturing the journey of my family in photographs all of which are preserved in 36 photo albums.

Club Members Gallery . . . *Continued*



Photos By
Sam Lynch

Would you like to have either an APC Logo T-Shirt / Polo Shirt

Last fall several APC Members purchased APC LOGO shirts. At our April 15th meeting I will again take orders for either T-Shirts and/or Polo shirts with the Alamance Photography Club logo.

Due to shipping cost I need a minimum order of 5 shirts. I already know of 2 logo shirts that will be ordered. The price remains the same as last year.

T-Shirts

We have 3 colors to choose from — Light Blue, Ivory (tan) or Ash Grey. From my knowledge I would suggest ordering a larger size than normal. I can wear a large but I am ordering an XL.

T shirts—short sleeve -- $18.00

long sleeve -- $21.00

Polo Shirts—Cotton -- $29.00

Blend -- $30.00

Polyester -- $32.00

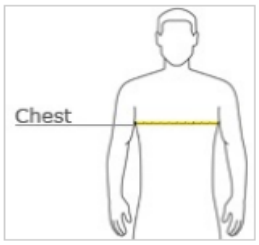
Sorry, but I must ask for payment at time of order and shirts should be available at our May meeting.

For those that are interested in polo shirts

If you so desire, you can also have a polo shirt with a LOGO. However, polo shirts will only have our LOGO embroidered on the front left side of the shirt. Our LOGO will not be on the back as shown for the T-shirts.

See below for directions for determining your correct size and color choice

HOW TO MEASURE



CHEST
With arms down at sides, measure around the upper body, under arms and over the fullest part of the chest.

SIZE CHART

	XS	S	M	L	XL	2XL	3XL	4XL	5XL	6XL
Chest	32-34	35-37	38-40	41-43	44-46	47-49	50-53	54-57	58-60	61-63

COLOR INFORMATION

Polo Shirt Pricing (including tax and shipping)

Cotton————————$29.00

Blend————————$30.00

Polyester————————$32.00

Cash or check payable at time of ordering.

We are not planning on ordering at every meeting.

Tips for Better Flower Photography

By Dave Kennard

Flowers are naturally beautiful, and easy to find in the warmer months of the year, and so make a great subject for a photo. This article covers the top tips to get great photos when photographing flowers in their natural surroundings.

Photo by Wade Brooks

Choose interesting angles

If you want your flower photos to stand out from the crowd, try taking photos from unusual angles, such as looking up.

Generally when taking natural flower photos, you will want to take the photo at slightly above eye level with the flower, ensuring that the center of the flower can be seen. This will mean crouching down, or for smaller flowers getting the camera right down at ground level.

When photographing flowers at ground level, you may need to flatten or remove blades of grass or leaves that would otherwise be in the way between the camera and the flower.

Tips for Better Flower Photography . . . *Continued*

Use natural light and a tripod if needed

For taking photos of flowers in their natural environment you will be best using natural light, and not flash. Natural light will generally give less harsh shadows, and should also ensure that the background behind the flower is lit well.

The best time of the day for photographing flowers is early morning or late afternoon, where the light will be warmer and less harsh than it gets later in the day. The wind is also generally lower at the start and end of the day, meaning you are less likely to get the flower blowing about while you try and take photos of it.

Depending on how well your flower is lit (e.g. if you're shooting a bluebell in woodland, then it's probably relatively dark), you may need to use a tripod to stabilize the camera. When placing the tripod, try to be careful not to squash other nearby flowers and not to knock the flower you are wanting to photograph. You don't want to find the perfect flower and then knock all its petals off while trying to position your tripod!

Photo by Old Stone Photography

For taking photos of flowers during the daytime, try shooting when there is hazy cloud, as the cloud helps diffuse the sunlight. This makes the shadows less harsh and produces a more pleasing photo.

Tips for Better Flower Photography . . . *Continued*

Use a diffuser to diffuse harsh light

If you're trying to photograph a flower under bright daylight, you can use a diffuser to soften the light, and reduce harsh shadows and highlights on the flower. A diffuser is just a thin piece of material or paper that spreads harsh direct light out over a larger area.

You can buy commercially produced diffusers, or make your own. You need some white translucent material, like a plastic bag, tissue paper, or an old T-shirt. Stretch the material over a frame (an old coat hanger bent into a diamond shape works well), and attach it securely.

When photographing the flower, hold the diffuser between the sun and the flower. You should immediately see the reduction in harsh shadows and highlights on the flower.

Landscape style flower photography

When you find a large area covered with flowers, you'll probably want to take a photo of the whole scene. The same rules as standard landscape photography apply here. Try and include some foreground, middle-ground, and background to create a sense of depth and scale. Try and use leading lines and the rule of thirds when composing the photo too.

Photo by Thi Nguyen; ISO 100, f/8.0, 1/160-second exposure *-Thanh-Tâm*

Tips for Better Flower Photography . . . *Continued*

Dew covered petals

Flowers covered in early morning dew make an attractive photo, but if you missed the early morning, or there wasn't any dew, you can create your own. If you have a misting bottle or spray bottle, you can use this to create a false dew on the flower.

Use a reflector or flash to fill in shadows and help light the flower

If you are photographing a flower where the front of the flower isn't directly lit by sunlight, you can use a reflector or a small amount of fill-flash to help light the flower. You can purchase commercially made reflectors, or make your own by sticking a large sheet of kitchen foil to a piece of cardboard.

Place the reflector so that it reflects light back onto the flower. As well as helping to light the flower, since the light will be reflected from a different direction to the main light, it can help fill in harsh shadows on the flower.

Photo by Paul Saad; ISO 100, f/7.1, 1/200-second exposure

As an alternative to a reflector, or in addition, you may also consider using fill-flash to help light the flower and fill in dark shadows. Make sure you have your flash set at low power, as you only want the flash to contribute a small amount of light to the scene, not become the main light source.

Tips for Better Flower Photography . . . *Continued*

Get in close

If your camera has a macro mode, or you have a DSLR with a macro lens, try getting in close and filling the frame with the flower. And then try getting even closer to isolate just part of the flower. You can find some great abstract compositions when focusing on only a very small part of a flower

When taking close-ups or macro photographs of flowers, you may need to use flash or long shutter speeds to illuminate the flower. At these very close distances, flash will usually appear relatively soft, and more like natural light.

Prevent the wind from ruining your photo

A big problem when taking photos of flowers is that they blow about in the wind. This can cause problems in composing your photo if the flower is constantly moving about. And it will also result in a blurry photo if your shutter speed is not high enough to freeze the motion of the flower.

One thing you can do is to set up a wind break between the flower and the wind. You don't need to lug a full size wind break around with you though. If you have a tripod and diffuser or reflector with you, you can place the tripod between the flower and the wind, and then rest the diffuser or reflector up against the tripod's legs. So long as you're not photographing a tall flower, this should act as a decent windbreak.

Another thing you can do is to secure the flower using an accessory known as a plamp (short for plant clamp). This is a small bendable arm with clamps on both ends. One end clamps to your tripod leg, and the other end clamps onto the flower. This stops the flower blowing about in the wind.

Use backlighting to your advantage

The large majority of flowers have relatively thin petals and can make great photos when backlit. The light shines through the petals, giving them quite a different look to a standard photo.

Tips for Better Flower Photography . . . *Continued*

Look at the flower condition and remove any distractions

There are exceptions to everything, but in the large majority of cases, a photo of an undamaged flower will look nicer than that of a damaged one. If you are in an area with lots of the same flowers, take your time to look at a few of the flowers and try to find the one that is in the best condition.

Photo by Valerie

Pay attention also to what is surrounding the flower, and try to avoid including other elements (such as a random blade of grass) that distract from the flower. Sometimes you may be able to change the angle you are photographing at to remove the distracting elements.

Other times you may need to squash down or remove the distracting elements. If you are photographing outside of your garden, be careful what you are removing though.

Isolate the flower from its surroundings

Set your camera lens to use a large aperture (e.g. f/2.8) when photographing the flower to help throw the background out of focus. If the space permits, also try using a lens with a longer focal length or zooming in on your camera and taking the photo from further away. This change in perspective helps to isolate the flower from the rest of the scene.

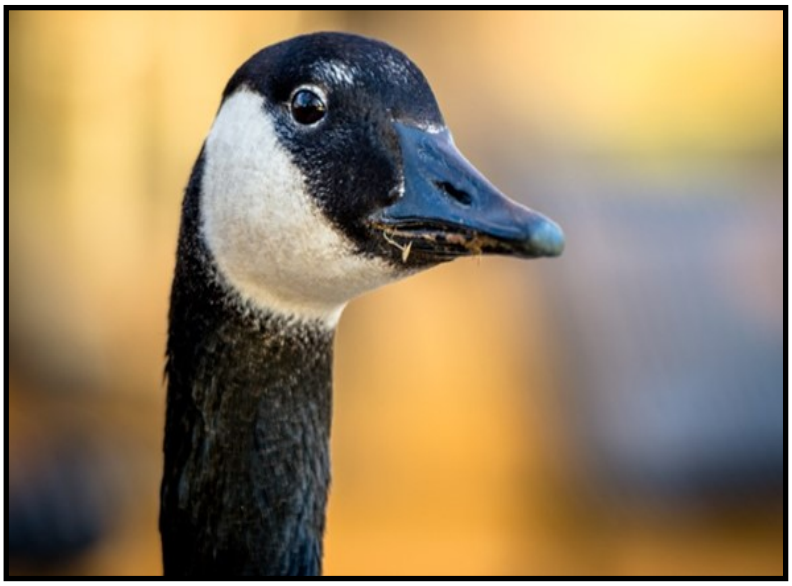
PICTURECORRECT.com

How to Understand Your Camera's Exposure Compensation Feature

By Simon Ringsmuth

In this article, learn about the Exposure Compensation feature on your camera to get the best exposures.

Whether you're shooting sports, animals, portraits, toys, snowflakes, rocks, fish, weddings, or pretty much anything else you almost always have one goal in mind. You want your pictures to be properly exposed. Of course, you can fix an image in Photoshop if it's too light or too dark, and shooting RAW definitely helps with that. But over the years I've found that the best solution is to just get your exposure right in camera.



This means finding the right combination of aperture, shutter speed, and ISO to get your image to look the way you want. But there's another option you have at your disposal as well – your camera's Exposure Compensation feature. Understanding what this does and how it works can help you get your pictures looking pixel-perfect in camera without having to adjust anything afterward.

What is Exposure Compensation?

Buried deep in the computational brain of your camera is something called a light meter whose job it is to measure the amount of light entering the lens. This lets your camera adjust some of the exposure settings automatically or gives you enough information for you to make adjustments yourself.

Understanding In-Camera Exposure Compensation Feature . . . *Continued*

The problem with metering and the camera choosing the exposure

Depending on how you have your metering mode set up, it might look at all the light coming in through lens, just the part in the center, or sometimes only the light where you have your focus point set.

As your camera takes measurements of the incoming light and adjusts exposure settings, it tries as hard as it can to get a picture that is properly exposed. It might make the aperture larger or smaller, adjust the shutter speed, change the ISO or use a combination of all three of those techniques just to make sure the photo comes out right.

The trouble is, your camera doesn't always have a good sense of how you want your picture to look.

My camera tried to make this image much darker because of all the light behind this young man, so I used exposure compensation to make the background slightly overexposed which meant my subject was properly exposed.

Enter the solution

Sometimes you might want your picture to be slightly overexposed (lighter) or underexposed (darker), and this is where the exposure compensation feature really starts to shine. If you notice that your images aren't coming out quite as light or as dark as you want them, you can either change the aperture, shutter, or ISO yourself.

Or just tell your camera "Hey, brighten things up a bit will you?" and with a quick twist of the Exposure Compensation dial, voilà, your problems are solved.

Most people find Exposure Compensation to be particularly useful when shooting in a semi-manual mode such as Aperture or Shutter Priority, but you can use it in other modes as well like program, auto or even full manual.

In order to dispel some of the mystery surrounding the exposure compensation feature, let's take a look at what your camera is actually doing to the settings when you use it in any of those modes.

Understanding In-Camera Exposure Compensation Feature . . . *Continued*

General Notes for Using Exposure Compensation

NOTE: Please make note that when you dial in any Exposure Compensation, it does not get reset to zero automatically for your next shot. You need to change it yourself manually once you're done using it.

PROBLEM: One of the biggest problems beginners have is not realizing their Exposure Compensation is active. If you have erratic exposures, or all your images are either too dark or too light – check to see if the Exposure Compensation dial has been moved and correct it to zero if necessary.

"How does exposure compensation work? Please, tell us more!"

Aperture Priority Mode

Most photographers I know shoot primarily in Aperture Priority mode because of the way aperture affects depth of field and other critical elements of the composition. I use this mode almost exclusively, usually combined with auto-ISO to make sure my shutter speed never gets too slow, and it works like a charm.

I like adjusting my aperture and letting my camera take care of everything else because nine times out of ten it's just easier for the way I prefer to shoot. If I notice my pictures are too bright or too dark, I just adjust the Exposure Compensation to take care of it.

When shooting in Aperture Priority, adjusting the Exposure Compensation doesn't ever change your aperture–doing so would defeat the whole purpose of using this mode! Instead, it changes the shutter speed by either speeding it up or slowing it down in order to make your picture brighter or darker.

Understanding In-Camera Exposure Compensation Feature . . . *Continued*

How it works

In the image below, shot in Aperture Priority, you can see that the subject is way too dark while the background is properly exposed. This is partially a result of my camera's metering mode but also because the scene itself contains a high degree of dynamic range and is therefore tricky to get just right.

Aperture Priority, 200mm, 1/750th, ƒ/4.0, ISO 100, no Exposure Compensation

To fix the problem I could have changed my camera's metering mode but instead, I chose to dial in an exposure compensation value of +2EV. The result left the background totally blown out while giving me a properly-exposed subject.

Aperture Priority, 200mm, 1/180th, ƒ/4.0, ISO 100, +2EV Exposure Compensation

The key takeaway is that while the focal length, aperture, and ISO values did not change, the shutter speed most certainly did. My camera dropped it all the way down to 1/180 second which let in much more light and therefore resulted in a two-stop overexposure from the original.

Understanding In-Camera Exposure Compensation Feature . . . *Continued*

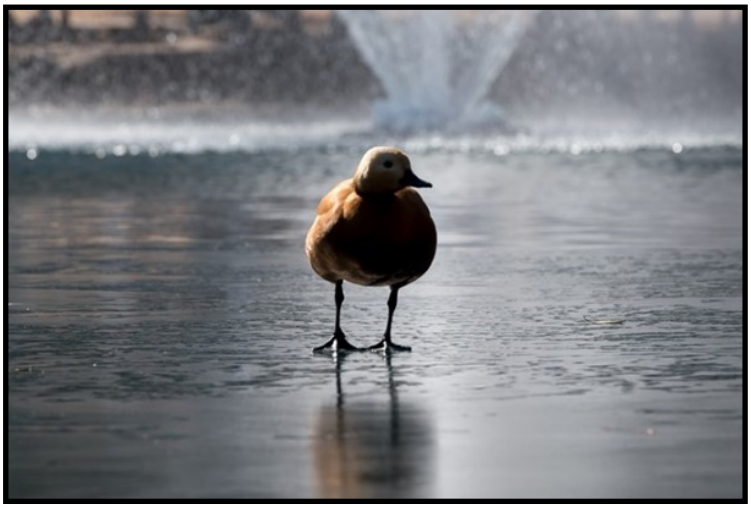
When using exposure compensation in Aperture Priority, your camera will adjust the shutter speed to be faster or slower, which can make a big difference if you are shooting a moving subject. You might want a fast shutter speed but if you're dialing in a few stops of exposure compensation, you might end up with one that is too slow to capture the image you are going for.

It's not a problem per se, but it is something to note and it could dramatically affect your images if you aren't aware of what is happening. If you need a faster shutter speed you can increase the ISO a bit also.

Shutter Priority Mode

In a similar vein, using Exposure Compensation when shooting in Shutter Priority will not change your shutter speed but will instead alter the aperture in order to make your image lighter or darker.

When I shot the image below of a duck on a frozen pond, I wanted a fast shutter speed in case my avian friend started moving quickly. So I used Shutter Priority with a speed of 1/250th of a second.



Shutter Priority, 200mm, 1/250th, f/8.0, ISO 100, no Exposure Compensation

You can probably tell that something isn't right with the photo. The duck is too dark! I had to lighten the composition quickly before it flew away, so I dialed in a value of +1.5EV on my Exposure Compensation.

Understanding In-Camera Exposure Compensation Feature . . . *Continued*

Shutter Priority, 200mm, 1/250, f/4.8, ISO 100, +1.5EV Exposure Compensation

This image is a bit different from the static wood carving in the aperture priority example because you can clearly see the effect that exposure compensation has had on the composition. My camera kept the shutter speed unchanged but used a much wider aperture which gave me an image with far less depth of field. Notice how both the foreground and the background are much blurrier – a direct result of shooting with a wider aperture.

What about ISO

You might have noticed that a third exposure parameter has thus far remained unchanged, that of the ISO. While it's standard for most cameras to alter the aperture and shutter speed when using Exposure Compensation, ISO is usually the last parameter to get changed unless you are using Auto ISO.

In that case, your camera will most definitely change the ISO if it needs to, especially if shooting in Aperture Priority and your minimum shutter speed (as set up in your settings) has been reached.

I had to use a fast shutter speed on this image and didn't care too much about aperture, so I shot in Shutter Priority and used Exposure Compensation to get the image to look how I wanted. I did not use Auto-ISO because I wanted a nice clean picture, so my camera adjusted only the aperture when I dialed in the Exposure Compensation.

Understanding In-Camera Exposure Compensation Feature . . . *Continued*

Manual Mode

NOTE: This only applies to Nikon shooters! If you use Canon, Fuji or another brand, Exposure Compensation does not have any effect in Manual Mode.

Exposure Compensation in Manual Mode works a bit differently because nothing changes at all when you dial in a value. Instead, it's your camera's light meter itself that changes so you can adjust the aperture, shutter, and ISO values manually in order to get your picture to look how you want.

It's an interesting twist on things that might seem a little strange at first if you are used to having things automatically change when you adjust exposure compensation, but once you start using this method you may not ever want to go back.

It essentially gives you the best of all worlds by letting you adjust exposure settings to get the value you are looking for, you can then choose precisely the parameters you want to change.

In Manual Mode, adjusting Exposure Compensation only changes how your light meter displays exposure. Notice how the vertical line indicating the point of proper exposure has shifted when dialing in an Exposure Compensation value of +2EV.

Understanding In-Camera Exposure Compensation Feature . . . *Continued*

The magic of mirrorless

I know the subject of mirrorless cameras versus DSLRs can be a bit of a thorny one for some photographers, but I would be remiss if I didn't at least mention it here in an article about exposure compensation.

While the same logic applies regarding Aperture and Shutter Priority modes, the big difference is how you can actually see your exposure settings change in real-time as you look at your camera.

This rear screen (right) of this mirrorless Fuji X100F shows me that the photo will be properly exposed.

This is one of the main strengths of shooting mirrorless, though it should be noted that DSLRs can also do this in Live View–albeit usually with some tradeoffs such as slower autofocus that usually happens when utilizing Live View.

I can see the result of a -1EV Exposure Compensation on the digital readouts (i.e. light meter, histogram, etc.) but most notably the image itself has decreased in brightness as well (right). This helps me get a very good idea of what effect this Exposure Compensation will have on the final image.

Conclusion

I used to be somewhat scared of using Exposure Compensation because I didn't really understand what was happening when I changed its value. With a much better idea of what my camera is changing, and why, I am now much more comfortable using it on a daily basis to get my shots to look how I want.

In fact, I often won't even change my metering modes anymore and instead just rely on Exposure Compensation because I know what it's doing to my photos and I'm not scared of using it. If you have never used it much either, you might want to go ahead and give a try. You just might like it.

Digital Photography School

12 Tips for Better Vacation Photos

Featuring Diane Berkenfeld & Lindsay Silverman

Foodies aren't the only folks taking pictures of what they eat. Traveling often allows you to try new, unfamiliar or exotic dishes. Taking a photo before you dig in is one way to remember the meal. COOLPIX cameras and some Nikon DSLRs have a Food Scene Mode that makes it easy to get a shot like this.

Photo by Lindsay Silverman

You don't always need the entire subject in the frame for the viewer to understand the scene. (below and next page)

Photo by Lindsay Silverman

12 Tips for Better Vacation Photos . . . *Continued*

Photo by Diane Berkenfeld

Follow simple composition tips for great photos. Most of the time you don't want to place the horizon in the middle of an image. Below, the photographer placed it off center, with lush vegetation filling two-thirds of the frame and the water of the pond filling only one-third of the frame.

Photo by Lindsay Silverman

12 Tips for Better Vacation Photos . . . *Continued*

Whether you stumble upon a sign like this one on the side of a barn or the kind of signage that explains the flora or fauna that live in the area or the description of a historical landmark, take a photo. You may not decide it's something you want to show off, but it will jog your memory about the photos you took in the area.

Photo by Diane Berkenfeld

Visits to a farm or farm stand offer up wonderful subjects. You can photograph the entire scene or zoom in tight for a close up of a singular grouping of subjects, like the rhubarb pictured here. The photo is all about color, shapes and lines.

Photo by Diane Berkenfeld

12 Tips for Better Vacation Photos . . . *Continued*

1. Make sure your batteries are fresh (if your camera uses Alkaline batteries) and fully charged (if your camera uses rechargeable Li-ion ones). We've all run out of power at one inopportune time or another but doing so while traveling can be devastating.

2. Bring extra media cards. You don't want to face the decision of having to delete images or video clips to make room for new ones in the middle of your vacation.

3. Do your homework. Research the location if you aren't familiar with it. Once there, you can even ask the locals if there are any places off the beaten path that might make for interesting photographs or video. Taking maps or guidebooks with you on your trip? Take a photo of the family gathered together, with the maps and books spread out, as a fun way to start your vacation image capture.

4. Have fun. Look for unique angles such as carefully climbing high above your subjects, or getting the camera low to the ground for a change in viewpoint. Take both video and stills when you do this for more variety.

5. Take some candid photos during the vacation of everyone having fun. You can capture great expressions and moments when your subject isn't aware that the camera is pointed at them.

6. Stabilize the camera whenever possible. If your camera has VR (Vibration Reduction), turn it on.

7. Take a shot of the nearby signage so it will be easy for you to recall where you were for a specific photo or video.

8. Zoom in on the details. Fill the frame with your entire subject. Fun photos at a market, for example, might be a shot where the entire image is a close up of one particular subject such as a basket of ripe fruit or veggies, or table full of souvenirs.

9. Shoot your food! It's easy to take a great shot of a mouth-watering plate of food by using the Macro mode or zooming in tight on the dish. This is a fun photo you can take to remember the delicacies you enjoyed on your trip.

10. Take a variety of photos: wide establishing shots that show the whole scene, as well as photos that focus on one subject. This will help you tell a more complete story of your trip.

11. Pass the camera around. How will anyone know you were there if you stay behind the camera the entire time? Have others in your group take pictures or shoot video of you having fun too.

12. Follow these three easy rules of composition:

- Rule of thirds: When you look through your viewfinder or at the LCD screen, imagine a tic-tac-toe grid over the scene. The rule of thirds suggests that the points where the lines intersect are the best places to position your subject. Doing so will generally result in a pleasant and balanced composition.
- Most pictures look better if the horizon is positioned above or below the middle of the frame, not directly in the center of the image. The exception is when shooting a reflection.
- When photographing people and animals, it's best to have them looking into the frame.

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