



Photo Safari

Seeing the outdoors through a camera lens offers a whole new perspective.

BY GLENN RIFKIN

The late afternoon sun turned the sky over the beach a vivid yellow. A brisk, stiff wind had been blowing all day, producing huge rollers that crested toward the beach, each topped with a vaporous spray as it crashed to the sand. My wife and I were hunkered down at the edge of the dunes trying to escape the frigid wind that had forced us to don winter parkas and wool hats in the middle of September. We had come to Martha's Vineyard for a long weekend, our first escape since the COVID-19

lockdowns. And for me, armed with my trusty Canon 80D digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) camera, it was going to be a weekend-long photo safari.

During the worst of the pandemic, the opportunity to leave the house for a hike in the mountains or a walk in the woods or along the shore provided some desperately needed relief. And during this golden age of digital photography, a legion of Ansel Adams wannabes armed with cameras, lenses, tripods, and artistic perspectives found great

Photo: Glenn Rifkin

SNAPSHOT Top 3 Cameras for Capturing the Wild



Canon EOS 5D Mark IV DSLR with 24-105mm f/4L II Lens

Not only is it a go-to for still photography, it is also 4K-capable for shooting video.

\$3,399



Sony Alpha a7S III Mirrorless Digital Camera with 24-70mm f/2.8 Lens Kit

A well-rounded mirrorless camera with a versatile base lens.

\$5,696



Hasselblad X1D II 50C Medium Format Mirrorless Camera

The choice of pros, this one makes snapping sharp images intuitive and seamless. (Lens sold separately.)

\$5,750

creative relief in snapping landscapes, furry friends, birds, and waterfalls. With social media providing an accessible gallery, dozens of nature photography groups on Facebook and Instagram attracted thousands of shutterbugs from around the world eager to share their work.

For business executives in need of a rejuvenating escape from the pressures of the workplace, nature photography is a stress reducer with countless psychic rewards. The learning curve is not steep, and the prerequisites to success track well with a business background. Photographing the wild requires patience, incredible focus, a storyteller's mindset, and the ability to see what others might miss. Novices can start with the latest smartphone camera, but eventually a high-quality tool will be essential to capture the most compelling—and satisfying—images. Postproduction software, such as Adobe Photoshop or Lightroom, will necessitate some online tutorials, but the art of transforming originals into stunning and artistic images is as enthralling as shooting the picture in the first place. Sharing the finished product with a gallery like the Nature Odyssey Worldwide Photo Group offers a chance to get a nonmonetary bonus of digital oohs and aahs.

"Whenever the stress meter reached peak levels, wandering into the woods in search of the perfect wildlife shot

never failed to calm me and put me in a better frame of mind to tackle challenges," says Andy Albert, former publisher and chairman of Harrison Scott Publications. "Just me and my Canon DSLR in nature's beauty. Perfect solitude. And unlike golf, modern photography allows me to instantly delete my worst shots."

Capturing a red fox in repose in the late afternoon sun, a small herd of deer wandering through the deep snow in

the woods behind my home, an early-morning reflection of trees in a pond at a nearby park, a sunset on a small island in Maine—this provides me the kind of satisfaction that defies explanation. In a world with high-quality digital cameras

built into smartphones, literally everyone is now a photographer. There were an estimated 1.2 trillion photographs taken in 2017, and that number increases every year. But access to a camera does not an artist make. The best nature photographers see the photographs that others may overlook. Executives who embrace this understand light, composition, shadows, motion, and timing as much as they grasp a P&L statement. As the pandemic winds down, they will once again travel to the Pantanal in South America, the Greek islands, or the wilds of Yellowstone to seek the perfect image. ▀

Photographing the wild requires the ability to see what others might miss.