



Hints & Tips: 10 Tips for Shooting Wildlife

10 Tips for Shooting Wildlife

1) Use a long lens

Most animals are very small, so you need a long lens - at least 200mm, preferably more, to really get small animals so they fill the frame. When you combine this with the fact that often you cannot get close to the animals it becomes all the more crucial.

If you want an extra long lens - which are usually outrageously expensive you can always hire them by the day or week.

2) Use a tripod

The longer the lens the more likely you are to have camera shake, so a tripod is pretty much a necessity.

Also, you don't want to carry that weighty lens in a shooting position for hours at a time and the very movement of bringing the camera up to shoot might be enough to scare the animal away.

3) Use remote release

Whether you use a cable or wireless release this reduces your movement to the animal. It also helps you reduce camera shake as well.

4) Blur backgrounds

Use depth of field to drop backgrounds out of focus. If you are lucky your combination of distance and long lens will really help here anyway.

In particular you want to avoid bright highlights behind the animal.

5) Shoot in bursts

As the animal may often react to the shutter going off use "motor-drive" burst mode to shoot many images in quick succession. This will help you catch the animals reaction.



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6) Patience

Absolutely patience is a virtue when shooting wildlife. While grabbing a shot of an animal is relatively easy, getting a great shot requires time and patience.

You need to observe the animal, how it moves, where it moves to. You need to know whether it has especially interesting activities - like feeding.

If you have originally disturbed the animal you need to give it time to settle down and relax.

7) Create a feeding zone

Particular for birds visiting your house a perch and feeder are great ways of encouraging regular visits. You don't have to use a commercial feeder - which would look artificial, there are ways you can improvise garden features so they look more natural. For example a dead branch strategically placed can have food laid out on it every day.

8) Set up a hide

A hide usually refers to a large camouflaged tent or similar that you can hide in. But you may want to do the same thing for just your camera if you are shooting remotely.

A simple waterproof cover with some foliage draped over to soften might be all it needs.

9) Find easy locations

There are many places to view animals in the "wild" such as bird sanctuaries and some parks. There are many more opportunities than either the wild outdoors or the zoo.

For example Slimbridge Wetlands Trust has acres of lakes and wetland with many different birds and animals spread around all in a very natural environment.

10) Dress appropriately

Muted colours, warm clothes, wellies or boots are obvious starting points. But maybe you also need clothes that don't rustle, no shiny buttons, dark gloves and hat to cut down your skin brightness.