

# *Bluenose Focus*

The Newsletter of the Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia  
January 2014 Volume 49 Issue 1

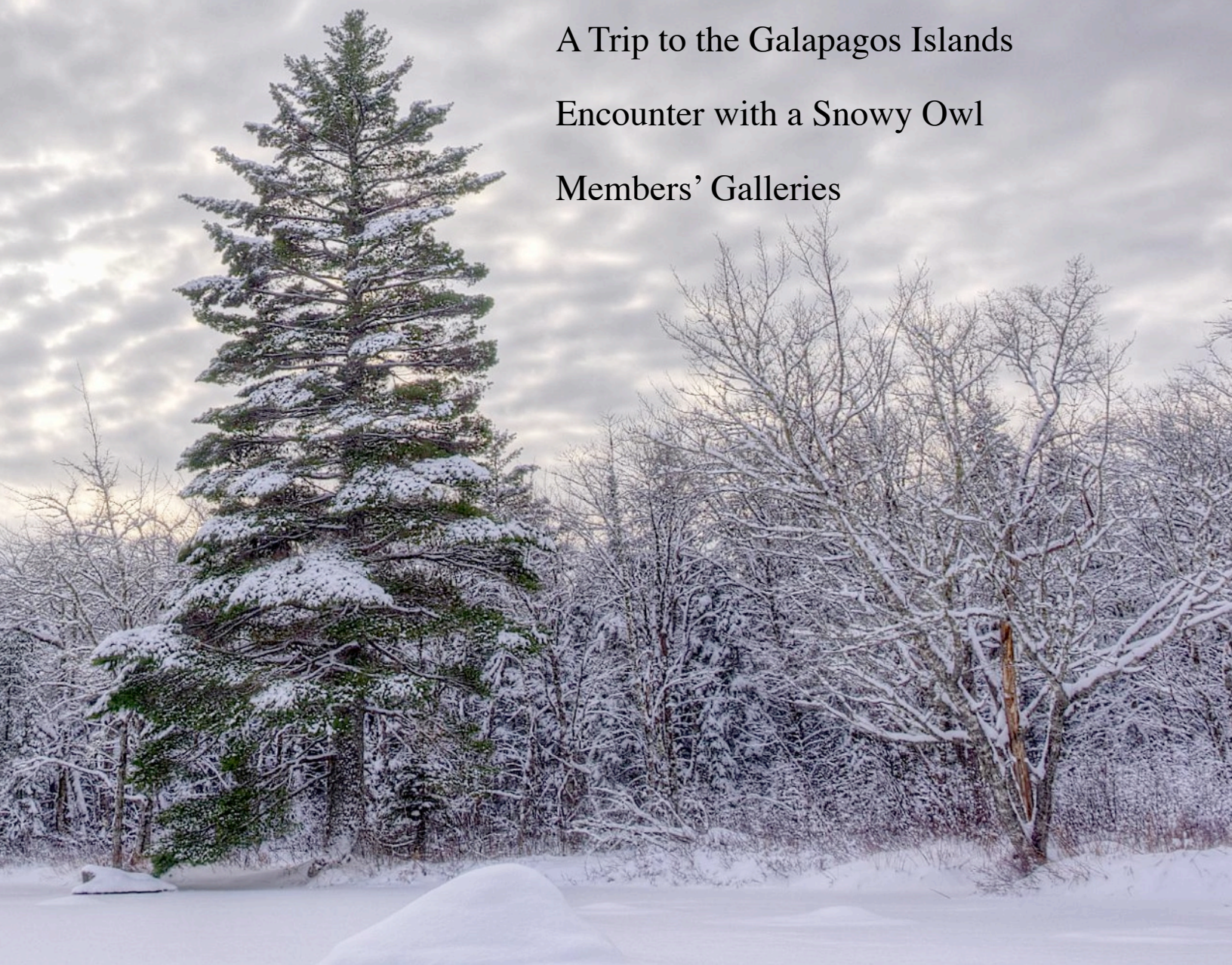
In this issue:

Second Annual Cape Breton Field Trip

A Trip to the Galapagos Islands

Encounter with a Snowy Owl

Members' Galleries



Cover Image by Paul Newton



# Bluenose Focus

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## Newsletter submissions

We welcome your submissions to Bluenose Focus, and will do our best to make sure that the best submissions make it into the newsletter.

Articles prepared using any current software may be submitted. Should there be a difficulty, the Editor will get in touch.

Submitted images should be JPEG format, sRGB colour space, and high resolution.

Submissions should be e-mailed to:

[gmitchell@ap.stmarys.ca](mailto:gmitchell@ap.stmarys.ca)

## The Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia

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Past-President:	Dean Hirtle
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Digital Coordinator:	Mervyn Kumar-Misir

Visit [www.photoguild.ns.ca](http://www.photoguild.ns.ca) for more information



# Editor's Corner

By George Mitchell

You may remember that I requested material for this, the January 2014 issue of the Bluenose Focus, early in December so that I could have it finished before I left Canada for a considerable time. Well, that did not work out, so I am finishing the job here in Costa Rica. No, I don't expect any sympathy, especially given the brutal winter Nova Scotia is having!

There are many good things in this issue. Viki Gaul's PSA report and Joyce Chew's CAPA report show that we are doing extremely well in interclub competitions, winning many individual awards. The Photoguild was first of all clubs in the PSA photojournalism category!

Steve Morris's has an image-packed account of his recent trip to the Galapagos

Islands (p. 19). Look at his Figure 10 and be amazed!

Cliff Sandeson reports on a remarkable encounter with a snowy owl (p. 24).

Several members who were fortunate enough to be on the October Cape Breton field trip have given some of their impressions and images (p. 13).

Members' Galleries are back (p. 26) and are packed with good images.

Again, I encourage you, our members, to submit images, news items, and articles for future issues of the Bluenose Focus. You can reach me at [gmitchell@ap.stmarys.ca](mailto:gmitchell@ap.stmarys.ca).

## 2013-14 Guild Themes At A Glance

1st Guild Assignment

"Triangle(s)"

(Must have been photographed after May 1, 2013)

2nd Guild Assignment

"Rustic"

(Must have been photographed after September 1, 2013)

3rd Guild Assignment

"From the Kitchen"

(Must have been photographed after September 1, 2013)

# President's Message

By Laszlo Podor



The year of 2013 was one of the busiest years or perhaps the busiest year in the history of the Guild since we had four meetings in every month in 2013 (with the exception of the summer months) and we had lots of fieldtrips. Our schedule for the second part of this season is promising many more memorable events.

Personally I was also quite busy at work last year due to the large project I was leading. This resulted in some extra work for a number of people at the Guild, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dean Hirtle and Joyce Chew for their extra help during those weeks I had to be away.

Having a very busy year also means many of our members were helping us during our meetings. I would like to thank Joyce Chew, Dean Hirtle, Fred Greene, Mervyn Kumar-Misir, Bill Murphy, Wayne Garland, Viki Gaul, Edie Greene, Pam Mills, George Mitchell, Hubert Boudreau, Esther Theriault, Kent Speiran. Thank you - your work is really appreciated!

Thanks for Mervyn Kumar-Misir, Rob Fensome, Clarence Nowlan, Nick Honig, Tuma Young, Stephen Scott Patterson, Doug Leahy, Peter Steeper, Barry Burgess, Keith Vaughan, Yau-Sun Tong, Nanciellen Davis, Tanya Elson, Clive Elson,

Fred Greene and Colin Campbell for their help in leading a field trip or for their seminars.

Our Home Evaluation Groups are well organized by Colin Campbell and as a result, we have had some successful home evaluation nights. The hosts were Hubert Boudreau, Paula Daniels and Doug Ward. Thanks!

If you would like to host an evaluation night sometime in early 2014, please contact Colin.

We did not have a Fall Show last year, but we hosted a presentation by Christopher Dodds, one of the Canon Northern Explorers of Light. We had an almost full house and a record number of door prizes. Fred Greene did an extraordinary job in finalizing the details of Christopher's presentation with the photographer and Canon. This presentation was one of the first Canon Northern Explorers of Light presentations in Canada and the first one in Atlantic Canada. Thanks to Fred Greene, Dean Hirtle, Joyce Chew, Mervyn Kumar-Misir, Viki Gaul, Doug Ward for their help in making this happen.

Thanks to Darryl Robertson for his work on our renewed website. He did a marvelous job on making it a very interesting and appealing page. It now has galleries, members-only pages and more. It now



# President's Message

well represents our members and our images.

When all of us are resting after Christmas, George Mitchell, our Newsletter Editor is working hard on our newest issue of Bluenose Focus. And he does it while preparing for the four-month trip to a warmer climate. Thank you George.

Some of those boxes under your Christmas tree possibly had some items from your wish list - maybe a new lens or a new camera, a trip to an exotic place, or just the neighbouring province for a few days to get lost in paradise. With an older camera or a new one, with a tested lens or a new one, you can capture great moments

around you. Whether it's a 9 or 15, you can make a difference with your images.

2014 will be another very busy year, with lots of opportunities to learn from each other, share our images with others, submit our images to competitions, and bring home many more of those medals and ribbons from the CAPA and PSA interclub competitions.

I wish you and your family a Successful and Happy New Year with many photographic opportunities (local, or Far-Far-Away) during 2014.

Happy New Year,  
Laszlo Podor  
President



# PSA Report

By Viki Gaul



## PSA Photojournalism Interclub Results for 2012-13

As was announced last season, the PSA Photojournalism Interclub rounds were late being processed and so the results were not available to report till now. And the results are totally worth waiting for. The Photo Guild has successfully stepped up to 1st place overall in Group A. I am including the list from the PSA Website so you can see for yourselves how the placement went. Congratulations to PGNS and to the individuals whose images placed us on the 'TOP OF THE HEAP'.

### PJD Interclub Competition 2012-13 Standings

























Club Name	Dec 15	Feb 15	Apr 15	Jun 15	Total
<b>Group A</b>					
Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia	65	63	71	75	274
Atlantic Lighthouse Photo Group	62	61	68	70	261
Lancaster Photography Assoc	65	59	67	70	261
Huntington Camera Club	65	68	60	61	254
Naples Camera Club	57	48	60	63	228
Wasatch Camera Club	60	-	56	54	170
Shutterbug Camera Club	-	45	-	76	121
Delaware Photographic Society	62	57	-	-	119
Houston Camera Club	-	52	56	-	108
Oklahoma Camera Club	66	-	-	-	66
<b>Group B</b>					
Duluth Superior Camera Club	70	70	66	62	268
West Cumbria Photo Group (UK)	72	70	58	64	264
Nevada Camera Club	65	65	70	63	263
Charlotte Camera Club	60	65	62	62	249
Lincoln Camera Club	60	62	57	60	239
Lake County Camera Club	50	66	51	67	234
Hoylake Photographic Society	50	64	53	55	222
Schnectady Photographic Society	48	47	44	42	181
St. Louis Camera Club	-	70	62	-	132



The following group of images are the entries for the four rounds that led to PGNS scoring the highest of any club, 274, giving us **1st place** for the 2012-13 season. Congratulations to all the participants.

# Photojournalism..... year end results are in

## PSA Interclub Entries 2012-13

				
PGS-BOYEM3209-A6- Three's_A_Crowd.jpg	PGS-CHEWJ6977-A6- 15_Goes...he_Goal.jpg	PGS-CHEWJ6977-A6- Roundin...Corner.jpg	PGS-CHEWJ6977-A6- Sit_Skie...An_Edge.jpg	PGS-CHEWJ6977-A6- Venezuel...or_Ball.jpg
				
★★★★★ PGS-ELSOC2625-A6- Portugal_Cup.jpg	PGS-GAULV1621-A6- Endeavor...t_Flight.jpg	PGS-GHIZM3329-A6- Battle_at_the_net.jpg	PGS-GHIZM3329-A6- U_can_n...uch_me.jpg	PGS-GHIZM5926-A6- Good_catch.jpg
				
PGS-GHIZM5926-A6- Heading_the_ball.jpg	PGS-GHIZM5926-A6- Positioni...lleyball.jpg	PGS-GHIZM5926-A6- Puck_ref...ies_mitt.jpg	PGS-KELLS3920-A6- Do_Not_Climb.jpg	PGS-KUMAM5482-A6- -Reach for the Top.jpg
				
PGS-KUMAM5482-A6- -Surfing...a_Scotia.jpg	PGS-MITCG5549-A6- Donkey_Love.jpg	PGS-MITCG5549-A6- Number_98.jpg	PGS-NOLEM2195-A6- Thailand...Mexico.jpg	PGS-PODOL0034-A6- Sledge_Hockey_1.JPG
				<h1 style="color: red;">1st Place</h1>
PGS-TAUNB8109-A6- Action_at_3rd.jpg	PGS-THERE6427-A6- Sears_Na...Ride_2.jpg	PGS-VAUGK9888-A6- Silver...gh_Jump.jpg	PGS-VAUGK9888-A6- Wheelch...n_no_1.jpg	

I also want to report that our start in the PJ Interclub for this year is strong. Mona Ghiz and Joyce Chew have both received awards in the first round. I hope to be able to present them with their ribbons at the next PSA Meeting and competition at the Guild. Let's keep those great images coming. Perhaps we will be high on the podium again this year. The images we submitted for Round 1 are shown here.



## PSA Print Competition: Round 1 News

Round 1 of the Interclub Print Competitions (ICPC) has been judged. The prints are returned and I am pleased to report the marks are fantastic.

### The Guild received 6 Awards and Honourable Mentions

Large Colour Print-Pink Splendor-Ken Renton-**2nd Place**  
 Large Mono Print-Johnny Vector-Peter Steeper-**3rd Place**  
 Large Mono Print-Fred Greene-Big 8 Wheeler Mono-**Hon Mention**  
 Small Colour Print-Peter Steeper-Cheryl at Polly's Cove 1-**3rd Place**  
 Small Mono Print-Viki Gaul-3 Starlings-**Hon Mention**  
 Creative Print-Eugene Mio-Umbrellas at Dusk-**Hon Mention**



To get an idea of what other clubs are submitting, you might like to visit the PSA website. Copy and paste this URL in your browser. Here you will see a slideshow of the Award winners and HMs. The digital captures of these prints don't meet the quality of the actual prints themselves, but this exercise will give you an understanding of the images submitted from other clubs. Check out the competition so to speak!

<http://psa-photo.org/index.php?ppd-ic-2013-14>

I hope you can attend the next PSA Competition at the Guild....The Interclub Competitions give us an opportunity to see how our images hold up in competition with images from all over. If you have questions about the PSA Competitions held at the Guild, or if you would like more information on how the Interclub Competitions are held, please send me an email, or approach me at the Guild.



By visiting the Photographic Society of America's website at [psa-photo.org](http://psa-photo.org) and clicking on the Conference link on the top bar, you can connect to details about the 2014 PSA Conference. This year is 76th PSA Conference and it boasts an exciting lineup of photo tours, workshops, programs, featured speakers, and social activities.

The conference will take place at the Albuquerque Marriott, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, **Saturday, September 27 through Friday, October 3, 2014.**

Albuquerque is a great location from which to visit local attractions and other towns, but the biggest bonus of all is that the **Annual Balloon Fiesta** begins the day after the conference is over. For those who plan to stay an extra few days, it promises to deliver photo opportunities daily from dawn till dusk. Why not consider attending the PSA Conference this year? For information check out the PSA website or email me at [mudroom@mac.com](mailto:mudroom@mac.com), and I will try to help you in whatever way I can.

Viki Gaul, PSA Club Rep and Area Membership Director

## PSA Interclub Results: Nature Round 1

In 2012-13 PGNS sat in 10th place in Nature Interclub Competitions. After the first round of Nature this season we are in a 3-way tie for third place.

Round 1 included the following group of 6 images. The Egret With Delicate

Branch received an Honourable Mention.

PGNS Members are encouraged submit their 'best Nature images' to compete against the images from clubs all over the world. We stand a chance of improving our placement this year so let's give our best effort.





## PSA Interclub Images: Projected Image Division Round 1

PID Images sent to Interclub Round 1 are in the following 'collage'. We submitted a strong entry that marked

extremely well. Fred Greene received an award and Marian Boyer and Viki Gaul both received Honourable mentions in this round. PGNS stands tied for third place. We will need to keep the pressure on and continue to enter our best PID images. (PID stands for Projected Image Division)



# CAPA News

By Joyce Chew



Happy New Year everyone! Hopefully, Santa has been good to you and you have been enjoying a "new toy" over the holidays.

So far we have done quite well in the Fall round of the CAPA interclub competitions.

In the Nature division, we finished 4th with 147 points (only 1 point away from a 3rd place finish) earning an Honour award.

Congratulations to Viki Gaul who earned 28 points for her image "Egret with delicate branch" and a 1st place certificate of merit!

In the Print round, we tied with the Delta Photo Guild for 5th place with 130 points.

When considering your entries for the upcoming CAPA theme competition selection on Jan 20, please remember that CAPA requires the image to have been shot within the last 24 months. So images must have been shot after February 20, 2012. Titles are an important part of the theme "humorous" as they will be read out loud before the image is shown. As per CAPA's guidelines for Open division, composites are not allowed, and no text may be added to your images.

Looking forward to seeing your submissions for the Winter and Spring CAPA competitions!

## **CAPA Interclub: Nature**

Great Egret in Flight	Fred Greene	24	
Egret Landing	Ken Renton	21	
Killdeer	Nick Honig	25	
Fly in Rhododendron	George Mitchell	22	
Egret with Delicate Branch	Viki Gaul	28	1st place!
Western Male with Berry	Marian Boyer	27	

## **CAPA Interclub: Print**

A Gannet Portrait	Marian Boyer	20
Hostellerie des Arenes	George Mitchell	21
Icelandic Landscape	Eugene Mio	21
Great Egret Backlit	Viki Gaul	25
Big Foot in Action	Mervyn Kumar-Misir	24
Dolores Anne	Fred Greene	19

# Cape Breton Field Trip

Editor's Note: For the second year in a row, Nick Honig and Tuma Young organized and led an October field trip to various places on Cape Breton Island. Below are some impressions of the trip from participants.

Both Tuma and I were very glad that the trip was a success according to the feedback we received from the participants. So our thanks go to all the members that came on this trip because it was all of you who made it a very pleasant experience. Your participation, suggestions, good humor and energy made this trip another Guild memory to keep.

The weather was great for the whole trip and I think the colors were at their peak. Our first night at the Keltic Lodge was a treat and a lot of fun with some of us having a few sips of wine. A big "Thank You" to both Clive and Tuma who were able to get us seated all together for the most part in the dining room for a pleasant meal. The next morning a few of us braved the morning cold and went out to photograph the sunrise.

We thought that the trip to the Gampo Abbey Buddhist Monastery was certainly educational, and a thanks to Peter Wuttge for leading us back through the woods to our cars from the Stupa. From there to the Duck Cove Inn took us all day with various stops. One of these was at a vista pullout along the highway. The vista was spectacular but when I looked behind me I saw the rock outcrop with vegetation in fall colors.

Of the many stops we made the Bog was one of them. In the spring this is an amazing spot to do close-up photography. If you don't have a close-up lens you can accomplish this task also with a very long lens. I walked around with the 500mm lens and found several subjects.

The Skyline Trail was the most exciting when we saw the moose and were able to get close enough to get full frames. However, the moose was always hidden a little bit behind the trees.

When we arrived at the Duck Cove Inn it was getting close to supper time and Gordon Lawrence from the Duck Cove Inn was a little anxious as only a few of us had checked in at that point. I assured him that all of us would be there shortly in time for the buffet dinner he had prepared for us. He came through with flying colors with an unforgettable Thanksgiving Turkey dinner feast. He and his staff went the extra mile to make our stay there a very pleasant one indeed. The food was delicious.

Tuma and I have made the trip to Cape Clear a number of times and it always seems to take forever to get there. I'm glad we went and all stuck with us because the scenery at the top was worth it.

Nick and Tuma



# Cape Breton Field Trip

Photos by Nick and/or Tuma





# Cape Breton Field Trip

Part of the group visited the grounds of Gampo Abbey, a Western Buddhist Monastery near Pleasant Bay. We parked and then walked for perhaps thirty minutes to reach the Stupa of Enlightenment, whose building began in 1999, with its consecration in 2001. A stupa and the slogans or sayings that surround it provide a place for medita-

tion and contemplation. Within the stupa are relics and offerings, further underlining the sacredness of the place. As we followed a path through the woods and back to the cars, we passed gardens that included fall foliage and the remains of late autumn flowers.

Nanciellen Davis



photos  
by  
Nanciellen



# Cape Breton Field Trip

## **Hunting for Moose. Ken Renton**

When we first met at the Herring Choker Restaurant near Baddeck, it was clear that everyone was obsessed by the possibility of seeing and photographing moose on the Fall Colours trip to Cape Breton. Despite Tuma's hesitation to guarantee us a sighting, he assured us we would visit habitats known to harbour the elusive creatures. That evening, two members of the group reported seeing "a big black shadow" and a "moose rear end" near the golf course next to the lodge. However without images to offer some confirmation, these reports were viewed with some degree of skepticism. For the next two days the mythical moose appeared to avoid the Guild paparazzi who had invaded their territory. Jennifer and Carla even went without breakfast to unsuccessfully seek moose at dawn near Pleasant Bay. They did however get a very distant glimpse of a lone male at Benjie's Lake later in the day. At the Bog trail we all witnessed areas where the moose had bedded down for the night, and although their droppings and hoof trails abounded, the creatures themselves were nowhere to be seen.

On the final day, Carolyne and I came across 3 males and a female on a section of barrens on the Skyline trail. Although two of them disappeared immediately into thick woods, a couple of males ignored us and continued to devour the tops of young

spruce trees. We were able photograph them easily with a 200mm lens. The bulk and height of these animals is almost unimaginable, and both had massive racks of antlers. Unfortunately our long lenses were noticed by others on the trail and we were quickly surrounded by a noisy and very unthoughtful gaggle of folks with iphones, ipads and point and shoots. The animals became a little agitated so we quietly left and carried on down the trail. Eventually our entire group met at the trail head and on the way out we were rewarded by the sighting of a lone male bedded down among some trees obviously digesting his spruce tree lunch. We all got some images but it was unfortunate that he was partly obscured by a few branches which prevented us from getting that elusive "15" image. As we neared the end of the trail we came across a male making amorous advances to a female moose in a heavily wooded area. While she sidled slowly under the lowest braches all he could do to keep up was to crash through the brush as his antlers ripped off overhanging branches. Unfortunately the dense undergrowth made it impossible to photograph the chase.

So, in the end every member of the group had a moose sighting and some of us were fortunate enough to get some good images. There would be no complaints that Tuma and Nick had not produced the goods.



# Cape Breton Field Trip



photos  
by  
Ken Renton



# Cape Breton Field Trip

On the last day we decided to drive to Cape Clear for our final photo shoot, and we set out on a slow and hazardous trek over rugged logging roads that never seemed to end, but it was well worth the drive. The view at the top was spectacular. However, the highlight of

the day was when Tuma sauntered up the trail carrying a tray filled with smoked salmon, cream cheese, crackers and capers! "Just because we are in the middle of nowhere, it doesn't mean we can't have sophistication" says he.

Carolynne Renton



Photos  
by  
Carolynne Renton





# A Trip to the Galapagos Islands

## by Stephen Morris

Everyone has heard of the Galapagos islands; the magical, faraway islands at the Equator brimming with interesting terrestrial and aquatic animals. Well, it's all true. The Galapagos islands are truly remarkable. A lot of people have this trip on their bucket list and it should be. It is an awesome experience, probably



Figure 1

unique in the world.

Recently, I traveled to Ecuador on a 7 day photographic expedition to visit 6 of the Galapagos Islands. There are about 120 vessels offering charters to the Galapagos Islands throughout the year, and the trips vary dramatically in cost, duration and level of comfort. If you are planning a trip, sift through all the information carefully to find the best trip for you. The Ecuadorian government controls access to the islands, and therefore by law you require a naturalist to accompany you to land on the islands.

As well, regulations control access to the various islands, and charter ships have to have an approved itinerary. As a passenger, you don't actually see any of this and simply enjoy the magic of the voy-



Figure 2

age. Our ship, the 300 foot, MS National Geographic Endeavour (Figure 1) was a luxurious cruise ship with about 90 passengers and 80 crew, including 2 National Geographic photographers, 3



Figure 3

photo instructors and 6 naturalists.



# A Trip to the Galapagos Islands

Since the Galapagos islands are located about 1000km west of the Pacific coast of Ecuador, passengers fly to the islands

Figure 4



and then join the ship. Generally, passengers fly to Baltra and then load onto the ship. The 18 major islands of the Galapagos are scattered over about 8000 square kilometers of the Pacific Ocean. There are also numerous smaller islands and rocks and tiny islands. The trip itinerary will determine what you see, since

Figure 5



each island is completely different and has different types of animal life. Charles Darwin noticed the diversity of life

on the various islands, and this subsequently led him to the conclusion that the diversity could be explained by natural selection. His historic journey aboard the Beagle in the 1830's led to the Theory of Evolution, and spawned a huge



Figure 6

tourist infatuation with the Galapagos islands.

Each day we visited a different island,



Figure 7

and snorkelled in a different location, which led to a wide variety of sightings of the local animal life. Most of the animals were exceptionally tame and could

# A Trip to the Galapagos Islands

be approached fairly closely. Naturalists

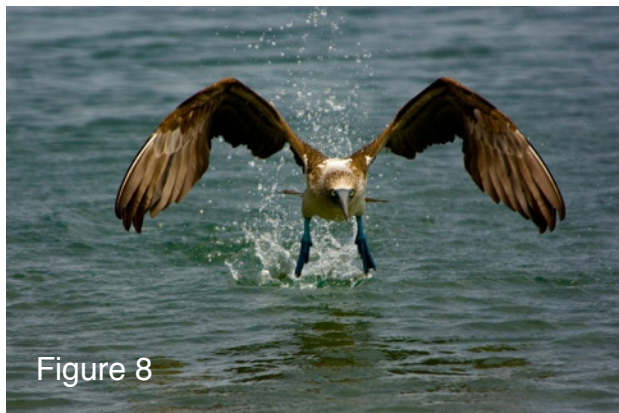


Figure 8

kept an eye on everyone to make sure they didn't bother the animals, and kept records of what the group saw. However, it was often the animals who approached us and came quite close! Our group saw a wide variety of animals including



Figure 9

many that I hadn't seen before. Highlights included the Galapagos sea lions, hammerhead sharks, blue footed boobies and the Galapagos tortoises. The walks tended to be quite short and followed restricted paths in order to lessen the environmental impact of large groups. Typi-

cally we would walk for 2-3 km over 2 hours or so. Photo instructors worked with the passengers to help them obtain their best photos. Along the pathways, we met sea lions, land and aquatic iguanas and birdlife, so each walk yielded different photos. The lighting was often harsh and obtaining good exposure on the photos was a bit of a challenge. Several of our group of passengers had won



Figure 10

their trip with photo competitions so the level of photography was pretty high. We compared photos in the evening, and we had a number of presentations on photography by the National Geographic photographers and the photo instructors.

The itinerary included the following stops: Las Bachas beach, Santa Cruz island, North Seymour and Rabida islands, Punta Espinosa, Fernandina island, Punta Vicente Roca, Isabela island, Urbina Bay and Tagus Cove, Isabela Island, Espumilla beach, Buccaneer Cove and Puerot Egas, Santiago island, Santa Cruz island, Punta Pitt and Kicker rock, San Cristobal island. The naturalists



# A Trip to the Galapagos Islands

have an expectation about what they may see each day, but the animal life varies depending on the season and conditions.



Figure 11

Each day yielded a different unexpected experience. Our first stop, North Seymour, was spectacular. We did a short 2km rocky trail, and saw swallow tail gulls, blue footed boobies, great and magnificent frigate birds nesting, and hundreds of sea lions lounging (Figure 2). In the afternoon, we went ashore on Rabida island and walked on the red (high in iron oxide) beach. There were abundant Galapagos hawks (Figure 3), mockingbirds and sea lions.

Isabella island, our next stop, has five volcanoes. Like all of the shore excursions, we walked over rock and sand, and saw extraordinary terrestrial and aquatic life. Yellow warblers are all over but are particularly conspicuous along the coastline (Figure 4). There are flightless cormorants (Figure 5) which have evolved to simply fish and then walk

onto shore. We saw them while snorkelling as well, and they swim like fish! The typical beach scene includes sea lions as well as sea iguanas. The iguanas will rest on shore and get warm in the sun's rays before venturing off into the fairly cool waters to eat algae (Figure 6).

The snorkelling trips on each island were highlights. We saw some of the same things each time, but usually it was a completely different unexpected experience. There were large schools of tropical fishes, lots of invertebrates and sea mammals. The big sightings included sea turtles (figure 7), flightless cormorants, sharks and penguins. The sea lions in particular were either very curious or very friendly since they would often come and visit as soon as we got into the water (which was 68F, 20C). The penguins and flightless cormorants buzzed by quickly and were



Figure 12

great to see.

Each of the islands has several names. For example, we then went to Santiago



# A Trip to the Galapagos Islands

Island, which is also known as San Salvador or James Island. The variety of names reflects the history of the region. There were lots of animals to photograph including blue footed boobies and sea lions (Figure 8, 9).

We went ashore on Santa Cruz island and visited the most inhabited town Puerto Ayora (population 12,000). It is home to the Charles Darwin Research Station where you can see the several subspecies of the Galapagos tortoise. Sea lions and marine iguanas lie around the town's streets and a variety of birds looks for possible food offerings. An outdoor fish market, in particular, provides ample entertainment. A fish cutter prepares mahi mahi for customers while a sea lion and American pelicans swoop in for the occasional scraps (Figure 10).

Other memorable experiences included seeing the Lucy lightfoot crabs (figure 11), the land iguanas (figure 12) and the courtship of the magnificent frigatebirds (Figure 13). The animal life is distinct, colourful, tame and very photogenic.

Another day, our snorkel trip was to Kicker rock, San Cristobal island. Our guides/naturalists suggested that we

might "see a shark." As we swam through the gap between 2 towering 500 foot high rocks which are remnants of a lava cone, we started to see some large swimming shapes below us. As I dove down to 20-30 feet, I discovered that there were dozens of Galapagos, hammerhead and black tip reef sharks swimming gently against the current running between the islands. However,

the visibility of the water was a little murky and there was a concern that we would be mistaken for something for dinner! Spectacular experience. I have a few photos but they aren't great, and I would rather

share the experience rather than the photos!

Of course, there is much more to Ecuador than the Galapagos Islands. A common arrival point in the country is Quito, the capital. There is a wide variety of interesting and spectacular sight-seeing to do in and around Quito, so a few days there on the way to or from the Galapagos islands would be time well spent. There are mountainous highlands, colourful and lively markets, tropical jungles and gorgeous beaches, all in a very compact country which is friendly and relatively easy to travel in.



Figure 13

# Encounter with a Snowy Owl

by Cliff Sandeson

This winter there has been a snowy owl eruption all over North America. Large numbers of snowy owls have left their home territories in Northern Canada



and have migrated south. They have been sighted as far south as North Carolina and even one in Bermuda. The reason for this eruption is unclear.



One theory is that there has been a crash in lemming populations and the owls are moving south in search of food. Another theory is that there was a population boom in the summer, and

that many of the juvenile birds are on the move in search of food. It has been noted that many of the birds sighted in Nova Scotia are indeed juveniles.

Knowing that there were many owls in the province, I decided to look for them with the hope of capturing a few images. I spend a fair amount of time in the Digby area, and knowing that the owls were most often being sighted in coastal, marsh areas, I decided to explore the Marsh Road area at the Head of St. Mary's Bay. The Marsh road



connects Highway 1 to the Digby Neck Road. There is a large rock berm at the head of the Bay, and community pastures and hayfields on the other side of the road. Snowy owls like to perch on fence posts, large rocks or small knolls, and the pastures would provide good hunting territory.

On Monday, December 9, I arrived on the Marsh Road just at sunrise

(7:45), and immediately saw an owl fly from the edge of a creek. Since it was a dark morning, I decided to leave the owl alone and explore a bit more. I returned to the creek at 9:00 after the light had improved considerably. I



couldn't find the owl but decided to go for a walk anyway, and after 15 minutes was able to locate a snowy owl. I took a few record shots and followed the owl up the creek until it finally flew in a direction that I could not follow. I found a farm road and started back to my car. I had only gone a short distance when I looked ahead and saw a second owl in the middle of the farm road. As I got closer and closer, I realised that the owl was sitting on the ground surrounded by a pile of feathers. The owl was eating a dead snowy owl. It is doubtful that one owl had killed the other. It is more likely that the dead owl had run into a wire fence or had died of natural causes, and that the second owl was very hungry and was scavenging whatever it could find. As I approached the owl, I expected it to fly, but instead it started to drag the dead owl down the path ahead of me.

Every few metres, it would stop and glare at me defiantly but it was not going to abandon its meal. Eventually, I was so close that I had to zoom out with my 150 - 500mm lens to avoid cropping the wing tips.

After 20 minutes and 50 plus images, I decided that I had stressed the bird enough. I returned to the patch of feathers and collected a few as souvenirs before circling back through the fields to my car.

Many owls are still being sighted in the province, including owls on Devil's Island at the mouth of Halifax Harbour and at Hartlen Point in Eastern Passage. Every year there are a few reports of snowy owls in the province but if



you want to add images of this beautiful bird to your collection, this is the winter to do it. They will probably remain for a few more weeks but, by the end of February and into March, they will begin to migrate back to their summer territories. If you do go in search of these birds, remember to be respectful of them and try not to stress them any more than necessary.



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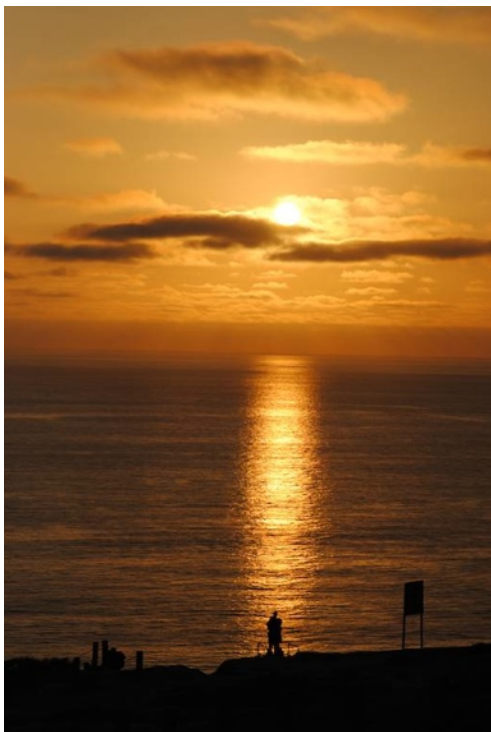




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