

The Newsletter of E.J. Peiker - Nature and Travel Photography

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Welcome to the 18th year of the newsletter from E.J. Peiker, Nature & Travel Photography and www.EJPhoto.com. In this quarterly publication, I share with fellow photographers my photographic experiences, photo equipment reviews, photography tips, processing tips, and industry news. I also inform subscribers about upcoming workshops and products that I offer. All content is copyrighted by E.J. Peiker and may not be reproduced but it is permitted to forward this newsletter in its entirety only. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, unsubscribe, or access back issues, please visit:

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Buttermere - Lake District, England (GFX-50S, 32-64mm)

Social Media and Photography

It is becoming clearer and clearer everyday that to stay viable in the photo industry, a photographer has to fully embrace social media. Many of us wish this wasn't the case but it is and resistance is futile. My online presence for photography began about 20 years ago on a site called NaturePhotographers.net (NPN) where I first started posting photographs and then later became a moderator. After a few good years there, it became obvious to some of the membership that we needed a different online outlet for our photography than NPN was able to provide at the time. This prompted Greg Downing, Heather Forcier, and myself to start NatureScapes.net (NSN). Not only did this provide the online outlet to display our photography, it also offered the ability to start a thriving photo workshop business and to provide a store for essential nature photography gear. Greg still runs NSN today and the workshop business is a big part of what NSN does. I still post photos there regularly as well as moderate several forums and provide online photographic technical support through the Photography Topics, Digital Topics, and Photography Equipment forums. When NSN started, social media as we know it today did not exist. In the 16 years since NSN came on the scene, sites like Facebook, Google Plus, Instagram, and Twitter have taken over much of the photographic content we consume. Google Plus has closed its doors and Twitter is not really a great place for photography content. Facebook and Instagram are leaders in bringing photographic content to the masses. There are many other smaller sites, some specific to photography or certain genres of photography, some more universal, but the bottom line is that to maximize exposure one must be on Facebook and Instagram.

I began my Facebook presence in 2009 and recently stepped up my activity there via my dedicated photography Facebook page - E.J. Peiker -

Nature & Travel Photography (<https://www.facebook.com/EJPeikerNaturePhotographer/>). I started out posting 3 or 4 photos a week and later one photo per day. I now post one wildlife shot and one landscape shot, usually separated by about 12 hours, almost every day. While this can be burdensome, I have been told over and over for the last two or three years, especially by younger people, that to really get eyes on my photos I have to be on Instagram. I resisted this for a long time. Initially my resistance was due to a photographic rights grab by Instagram which has since been resolved, and later due to the restrictive formatting for vertical shots where one can only post a shot that is in the 6x7 format and not have it auto-cropped. A normal 3x2, 4x3, or 5x4 vertical shot is cropped by the Instagram engine. Additionally it is designed for posts from mobile devices only but there are some browser plug-in workarounds that allow you to post pictures from a computer. Despite these limitations, I finally succumbed and have started an Instagram page. I invite you all join me there! You can find it by typing either ejpeiker or E.J. Peiker in the search box or by using this URL: <https://www.instagram.com/ejpeiker/>



Edinburgh - Scotland (GFX-50S, 32-64mm)

Topaz Labs

Topaz Labs has quickly become the 800lb gorilla in the Photoshop Plug-in and third party imaging application market over the last couple of years. They took a big gamble by switching from a traditional Photoshop plug-in model to a model where they have their own imaging suite that runs either in a standalone fashion or as an application that Photoshop can call. This is called Topaz Studio. Additionally they have really pioneered the use of Artificial Intelligence or AI in some of the tools available inside Topaz Studio and also in new stand-alone tools. I have come to rely on some of these tools to do much of the heavy lifting in my workflow. I do as much as I possibly can in Capture One prior to RAW conversion and then invoke Topaz Studio or some of the Topaz AI tools from within Photoshop.



Spring Melt in the Kaibab National Forest - Arizona (GFX-50S, 23mm)

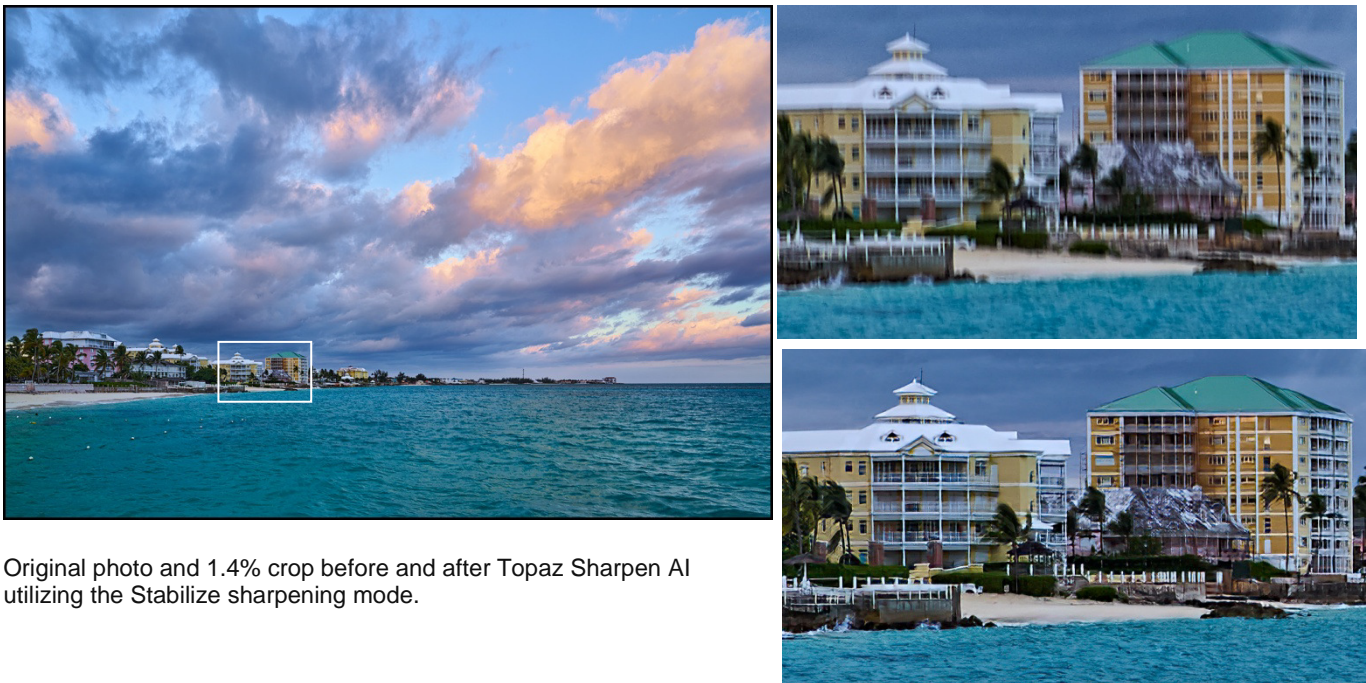
Topaz Studio is a free stand alone image processing software package that comes with all of the basic image editing tools for free. For the casual photographer and casual hobbyist, the free tools may be all that is needed. All of the contrast and color adjustment tools as well as vignettes, text, grain, and much more are available for free and can even be applied in an adjustment layer type style. It will output any file format and RAW conversion is also included. There are many so called "Pro Tools" that can be purchased as add-ons to Topaz Studio either in a bundle or individually. If you purchase some tools and then later want the entire bundle, the cost of the individual tools is removed automatically and you just pay the remainder of the bundle price. These tools include many creative type tools such as tools that allow you to turn your photos into simulated paintings and really do virtually anything you can think of. There are also some very good precision tools for contrast, color, detail, edge enhancement, selective focus, and, again, just about anything you can think of. Topaz Studio could easily be many photographer's only imaging software. I have set-up several photographers that do not want to get into the nuances of learning Photoshop and are very pleased with Studio.

Topaz Labs has also introduced a number of AI tools that are gaining a lot of attention. The first of these was a tool called AI Clear (which was originally included in Studio as an optional paid add-on module). AI Clear is absolutely amazing. It uses AI to determine what in an image is detail vs. what is not and selectively applies sharpening to detailed areas and noise reduction to areas that are not image detail. The amount of each is variable but the automated choices are often very good. I find AI clear great on higher ISO bird photos where it smoothes out the noise in the background without softening the feather

detail and in fact enhancing it and overcoming the softening effects of demosaicing. It is exceptional at overcoming the effects of overly strong anti-aliasing filters employed by some cameras, especially those made by Canon which employ unusually strong AA filters by today's standards. AI Clear is now available as a stand-alone product as part of the DeNoise AI application. DeNoise AI can also be run from inside Photoshop and employs a stronger version of intelligent noise reduction than AI Clear alone but I find in most cases, AI Clear is all I need unless I had to go to some crazy high ISO values (my definition of crazy high is above ISO 3200).

AI Gigapixel has quickly become my only uprezzing tool. When I need to enlarge an image for any reason or by any amount, this is the tool I use. AI Gigapixel uses artificial intelligence to make images bigger. This is useful for big prints and is really useful for older photographs taken in the era of the 4 to 8 megapixel camera. This stand-alone application can make a viable 16 megapixel image out of a 4 megapixels one and the results can be amazing. It has already allowed me to sell a number of images to publications that I would have been hesitant to sell due to the small file size prior to applying AI Gigapixel to the images. During the upsizing, it smoothes background noise and enhances detail similar to AI Clear.

Sharpen AI is another Topaz AI stand alone program that is very powerful. It offers standard sharpening, a lens blur sharpening module and a module designed to correct for subject or camera movement. The results are mind blowing. On my system, for some reason this application installed without the option to use the graphics card processor (GPU) to do the sharpening enabled and it was extremely slow. On some 42 megapixel images it took as much as 18 minutes using the motion blur reduction module. Once I figured out that GPU acceleration was turned off and corrected this, the same image processed in 25 seconds. Here is an example of just over 1% of a frame that suffered from motion blur:



Original photo and 1.4% crop before and after Topaz Sharpen AI utilizing the Stabilize sharpening mode.

The final AI tool currently available from Topaz Labs is called JPEG to RAW AI. This is the least useful of the AI tools. What it does is convert a JPEG file into a DNG file which then allows you to use your RAW converters tools to further process the image. In the conversion, it applies a process similar to what AI Clear does to the files thereby reducing noise and enhancing detail a bit. I think this tool's marketing as making a RAW file out of a JPEG is a bit disingenuous. You cannot re-mosaic the file into

a RAW file. You are simply turning a JPEG into a different file format that allows more manipulation latitude. I have tried this with a number of JPEG files but simply do not find the improvement potential to be enough to justify the purchase. It is a way to apply a bit more manipulation to phone pictures and perhaps it could be more useful if you accidentally left your camera in JPEG only mode. In the end, if I wanted a RAW processing file flow, I would shoot RAW and if I wanted a JPEG flow which is a lot less work but much lower quality then I would just shoot JPEG. Despite what I said, I am sure there are those that will find JPEG to RAW AI very useful.

In addition to Topaz Studio and the new Topaz AI tools, all of the original plug-ins are still available and usable and there are a few tools that currently do not have an equivalent in Studio such as the starburst plug-in. Overall I think Topaz has done an incredible job at bringing very powerful tools that utilize the computational imaging to the photography community. Prices for these tools vary and there are almost always coupons or specials that can substantially reduce the cost. Simply attending one of Topaz Labs webinars usually end with an exclusive 25% off code that is good for one week.



Northumberland - England (GFX-50S, 32-64mm)

Adapting Lenses

With the proliferation of mirrorless cameras and full frame models now available from Canon, Leica, Nikon, Panasonic, and Sony more and more people are looking to adapt some of their favorite lenses

from their DSLRs to their mirrorless cameras. The thing that makes this possible is that mirrorless cameras have a much shorter flange-back distance than mirrored cameras do. In DSLRs, there must be space between the camera mount and the sensor for the mirror-box and its associated up and down movements. Additionally there must be room for the secondary mirror behind the main mirror to bounce light to the off-sensor autofocus array. Since a mirrorless camera does not need this extra space and since autofocus is accomplished on the imaging sensor, there is a much smaller distance on mirrorless cameras between the lens mount and the sensor. The difference in distance between the lens mount and sensor is the area that can be taken up by a lens adapter to allow the DSLR lens to focus properly to infinity on the mirrorless camera. If we take a look at Nikon as an example, the Nikon F-mount has a flange-back distance of 46.5mm but the Nikon Z-mount's flange-back distance is only 16mm. This means an adapter needs to add 30.5mm of distance between the sensor and the lens mount for a Nikon F-mount lens to work on a Nikon Z-mount mirrorless camera. This also allows one to use a different camera system lens. If a Sony E-mount camera user wants to use their old Canon 180mm Macro lens, since nobody makes a long macro lens for mirrorless yet, a Canon to Sony adapter can be used. This adapter adds the 26mm distance between Sony's 18mm E-mount flange-back distance and Canon's 44mm EF mount along with some electronics to make the two signal compatible. Below, please find a table of lens mount flange-back distance. As long as the flange back distance of your mirrorless system is less than that of your lens you wish to adapt, there is likely an adapter available:

Current Lens Mounts			Popular Historic Lens Mounts		
Lens Mount	Flange Focal Distance	Mount Type	Lens Mount	Flange Focal Distance	Mount Type
Nikon Z	16.0mm	Bayonet	Pentax Q	9.2mm	Bayonet
Nikon 1	17.0mm	Bayonet	Samsung NX	25.5mm	Bayonet
FUJIFILM X	17.7mm	Bayonet	M39 (26tpi)	28.8mm	Screw
Canon EF-M	18.0mm	Bayonet	Contax G	29.0mm	Bayonet
Sony E	18.0mm	Bayonet	Nikon S	34.85mm	Bayonet
Hasselblad X	18.14mm	Bayonet	Four Thirds	38.67mm	Bayonet
Micro Four Thirds	19.25mm	Bayonet	Canon FD	42.0mm	Bayonet or breech-lock
Leica L	20.0mm	Bayonet	Minolta SR	43.5mm	Bayonet
Canon RF	20.0mm	Bayonet	Exakta	44.7mm	Bayonet
FUJIFILM G	26.7mm	Bayonet	M42 (x1)	45.46mm	Screw
Leica M	27.8mm	Bayonet	Contax C/Y	45.5mm	Bayonet
Canon EF	44.0mm	Bayonet	DKL	45.7mm	Bayonet
Sigma SA	44.0mm	Bayonet	Olympus OM	46.0mm	Bayonet
Minolta/Sony A	44.5mm	Bayonet	Leica R	64.0mm	Bayonet
Pentax K	45.46mm	Bayonet	Contax 645	64.0mm	Bayonet
Nikon F	46.5mm	Bayonet	Bronica ETRS	69.0mm	Bayonet
Leica S	50.0mm	Bayonet	Pentacon Six/Exakta 66	74.1mm	Breech-lock
ARRI PL	52.0mm	Breech-lock (cine)	Hasselblad V	74.9mm	Bayonet
T Mount	55.0mm	Screw (M42 x 0.75)	Pentax 6 x 7	84.95mm	Bayonet
Hasselblad H	61.63mm	Bayonet	Bronica SQ	85.0mm	Bayonet
Mamiya 645	63.3mm	Bayonet	Mamiya RZ67	108.0mm	Bayonet
Pentax 645	70.87mm	Bayonet	Mamiya RB67	111.0mm	Bayonet or breech-lock

Flange-back distance Table courtesy of B&H Photo & Video

Most adapters are just tubes that add the difference in distance between the two different mounts and do not have any optics involved. There are a subset of adapters that are also format converters that do include some optics. The two most popular types of optical adapters are so called Speed-boosters, and medium format converters. Speed boosters adapt a lens meant for a larger format and adapts it to a smaller format. The extra light collected to illuminate the larger sensor is concentrated optically to a smaller format thereby changing both the focal length and actually effectively changing the maximum aperture. These are especially popular among smaller format shooters like those using micro 4/3 systems. The second type of optical adapter is the medium format converter. These allow a lens designed for a full frame 35mm camera to be used on the cropped medium format (44x33mm) sensors without any vignetting. They are essentially a teleconverter and have the associated light loss of a teleconverter and at the same time expand the image circle. Of course this type of adapter will also magnify any optical flaws and project that flaw onto a sensor that is more likely to show any flaws. Using these adapters does however expand the very limited medium format lens options but in general, it should be reserved for only very good 35mm lenses for the best results. I routinely use the Venus Optics Laowa Medium Format Converter (MFC) to convert wide angle lenses as super wide lenses are just not available in the medium format world. Specifically, the optically matched Venus Optics Laowa 12mm f/2.8 becomes a medium format 17mm f/4 lens which has a similar field of view as a 13mm lens would have on a 35mm full frame camera. An example of this combination is illustrated below. This photo would not have been possible using available medium format lenses:



Death Valley - California (GFX-50S, Laowa Nikon-GFX Medium Format Converter, Laowa 12mm f/2.8)

A major consideration when selecting an adapter, and even which mirrorless camera system to buy, is whether or not your legacy 35mm format lens will autofocus on the mirrorless camera with an adapter. Things can get a bit tricky here. The best AF performance will be on a mirrorless camera from the same manufacturer as the 35mm format lens when using that camera manufacturer's adapter. For example, adapting Canon EF lenses to Canon RF mirrorless cameras is nearly seamless with little difference in performance between EF lenses and similar RF lenses on EOS R cameras when using one of Canon's adapters. Nikon Z cameras work seamlessly with Nikon F mount lenses as long as they are of the AF-S, AF-I or AF-P variety. Older lenses could have some compromises such as manual focus only or in rare cases, they not work at all due to legacy mechanical linkages.

Canon lenses in general are relatively easy to adapt to other systems since it is a completely electronic mount and as long as the adapter manufacturer does a good job at signal routing, a Canon EF lens will work on virtually any mirrorless camera with autofocus. It may not support all autofocus modes but AF should work reasonably well although tracking action may be a challenge. Canon DSLR lenses can be adapted with AF to almost all mirrorless cameras.

There are currently no reliable adapters that allow Nikon lenses to autofocus on other manufacturer's cameras. This is due to the vast majority of Nikon lenses having a mechanical aperture linkage. It should be relatively easy to make an adapter that allows electronic aperture Nikon E lenses to autofocus on other mirrorless cameras but this is a small market since most Nikon lenses are not E lenses. I do expect this to change in the future.

If you are willing to go to manual focus, virtually any DSLR lens can be adapted to virtually any mirrorless camera. Do realize that manual focus is much easier on a mirrorless camera than a DSLR due to focusing aids such as electronic viewfinder (EVF) magnification and focus peaking. When selecting an adapter for Nikon lenses to another manufacturer's camera systems, make sure you get one that has an aperture ring since you will not be able to control aperture from the camera (as of this writing). Also note that



Cuernos del Paine - Chile (D810, 21mm)

currently there is no adapter that allows any aperture control at all on Nikon E lenses when mounted to a non-Nikon mirrorless camera - you will be shooting wide open all the time if you put an E lens on an adapter and mount that to any other brand of camera.

Do not expect to get the same level of subject tracking when shooting any kind of action with an adapted 35mm lens. The autofocus motors that provide for fast AF on an off-sensor AF system in a DSLR is a very different design than the type of AF motor for an action oriented mirrorless camera lens.

There is a growing industry dedicated to manufacturing lens mount adapters. Some of the companies that I recommend which make good quality adapters are Metabones, Sigma, Fotodiox, Steelsring, Kipon, Novoflex, and Techart. In general, dumb adapters that do not support autofocus can be had for around \$100 while full featured electronic adapters that allow aperture control and autofocus are in the \$400 range. There are much cheaper adapters available but often these have some planarity issues, fit issues, light leak issues, and internal reflection issues - I recommend against brands that are not listed above. You can even get adapters that convert really old vintage lenses to modern mounts. For example I have an adapter that allows me to use my 1936 Leica screw-mount lenses on a Sony a7R III camera body. I also have adapters that allow me to use old Minolta Rokkor MD and Nikon D/G lenses on the Sony mirrorless cameras. I can use Nikon lenses on my Fuji medium format system, either with the MFC adapter described above, or with a dumb adapter that general has a bit of vignetting but does not lose a stop of light.

In closing, the best experience for both AF and image quality is usually with a lens that is of the same brand as your mirrorless camera but many photographers are expanding their lens ranges with older lenses and adapters and some just like to tinker with other optics mounted on a new mirrorless camera. It can be fun to discover the qualities of vintage lenses on modern cameras.

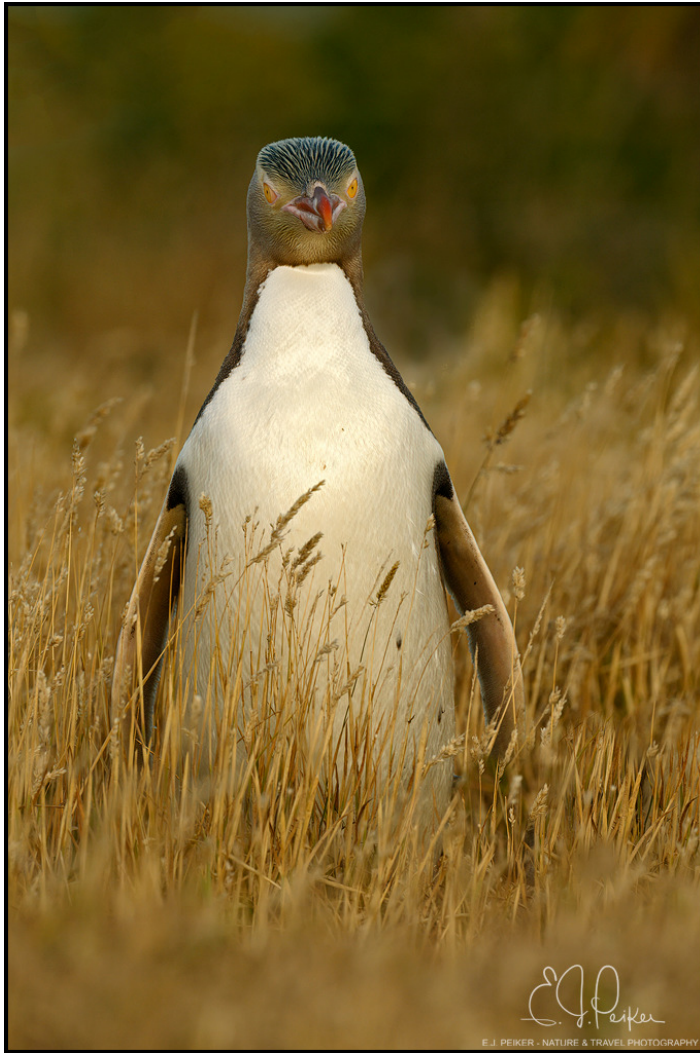


Lake District - England (GFX 50S, 32-64mm)

Photo-press Insanity?

In the world of the ever more hyperbolic photo-press which seems to be largely fueled by YouTubers who need ever and ever increasing clicks to keep themselves viable in the photo industry, the hyperbole is getting crazier and crazier. All of the examples below I have seen at least 3 different times by very well known photo press outlets or very well known photo press YouTubers:

1. "This new Lens is too sharp, it lacks character!" What? you want less sharp lenses? I'm sure you can figure out how to either defocus your images or soften them in post processing if you want blurry shots!



Yellow-eyed Penguin - New Zealand (D300, 500mm)

Give me the most razor sharp options that technology can provide and if I need to soften something up I will.

2. "Banding is not an issue because who misses exposure by 5 stops?" This is pretty short sighted. It isn't about mis-exposing a shot by 5 stops, it is about shadow recovery. A camera can only "see" a fraction of the tonality in a scene that the human eye can see so we use tools like shadow recovery or selective exposure boost or High Dynamic Range (HDR) imaging to try to expand the compressed tonality of a photographic image into something that more closely resembles what we saw. If the shadows end up banded after doing this, it isn't a good look! And, by the way, in a world where sensors are getting ever more ISO invariant and these same pundits are demanding higher and higher ISO noise free photographs, if you have banding when you lift the shadows or underexpose, you are also going to have banding at really high ISO values!

3. "The color science of brand A is so much better than Brand B" - this just shows that they are shooting JPEG while wearing "I shoot RAW" T-shirts. Color science, the way they are applying the term, is basically an evaluation of how the manufacturer converts the sensor data

to a JPEG and in that regard there are those, manufacturers that are much better than others with Fuji easily being at the top of the heap due to all of the available film simulation modes which apply to JPEG files. If camera manufacturers have a low color deviation the images are color accurate (when adjusted for the proper white balance). Most cameras these days are incredibly accurate in color at the RAW level. A RAW shooter then takes that output and manipulates the color to their liking in the RAW

processing workflow. Knowing how to use their RAW converter of choice well determines the color accuracy which is then often manipulated in Photoshop. In other words, "color science" in today's digital camera world is much ado about nothing if you are a RAW shooter and if you shoot JPEG, most manufacturers give you many picture styles and the ability to manipulate those picture styles.

4. Sony fanboy pundits say Full frame is as good as Medium Format! Fuji X fanboy pundit says APS-C is as good as Full Frame! Olympus fanatic says micro 4/3 is as good as APS-C (and full frame!!!), 1" sensor shooter says it's as good as m43 and APS-C and...! So then by the transitive property of mathematics a tiny little cell phone sensor is as good as a Phase One IQ-150 151 megapixel full sized medium format sensor - it's all hogwash designed to justify their own bias and to placate their investment bias.

5. "ISO doesn't matter" - while this is more true today than it was in the past due to sensor design, ISO still matters. Even the most ISO invariant sensors are not perfectly so and utilize dual gain stages in their output amps to make them as invariant as possible but in the end there is still some difference by shooting at the proper ISO. Where it very much matters, and what most pundits miss (virtually none of which are landscape photographers), is on the low ISO end. Yes with largely ISO invariant sensors I can underexpose the shot and just boost it by the amount that I underexposed by not selecting the proper ISO in post processing without giving up much in final image quality or noise. The same is not true when you need a really low ISO to slow the shutter speed down. Sensor saturation is sensor saturation and if the sensor is saturated at my base ISO, changing it to a lower "expanded" ISO does not change the fact that the sensor is saturated and it does not allow me to then select a slower shutter speed unless I am willing to accept overexposure and blown out areas.

6. "This lens is not f/1.4 (or f/1.2 or f/0.95) so it sucks" - insert whatever aperture you want for a given focal length lens. The corollary is "It isn't an f 1.4 lens or faster, it isn't a professional lens". This comes from Studio portrait and Wedding photographer bias which makes up the vast majority of the most vocal part of the photo punditry. For example, a landscape photographer, unless they are doing astro, does not ever need an f/1.4 lens, in fact many shun them because they are much heavier than their f/2 or f/2.8 counterparts and are often not that sharp wide open. Let's take the example of the newly available 28-70 f/2 zoom (Canon RF). It weighs 3.1 lb and is humongous but is an incredible lens. Alternately you could take an 24-70 f/4 which weighs 1.3 lb and is 1/3 the size. Both are going to give you essentially equal shots at f/5.6 to f/16; which would you rather carry into the field on a long trek to an alpine lake with a reflection of a beautiful mountain? Is the 24-70 f/4 which also has superb optics, especially at the apertures needed less capable of taking a professional photograph?

7. "This lens is crap because it is made of plastic components" - um no, the lens is crap if the optical performance isn't good. A plastic lens may not be appropriate for your use but the lens itself isn't crap, it's just not the right tool for you!

8. The constant touting of warming filters or UV Haze filters which offer absolutely nothing other than equipment protection. If you feel you need the physical protection of a UV Haze filter then by all means use one but get a good multicoated filter because you are adding two more glass surfaces to the optical formula. These cannot enhance and can only degrade image quality (with a good one, not enough to be

perceptible though). A warming filter on the other hand serves no purpose whatsoever in the world of digital photography if you are shooting RAW files. If you have your camera set to auto white balance, the camera will just take the warming back out. If you select the white balance manually, you can dial in any amount of warming you want without the need of a filter. You can also warm images to any look you want in post processing.

I probably could go on for several more pages but just wanted to point out some of the hyperbole you hear or read, especially from the one-upsmanship YouTube punditry. Always look for multiple sources, especially those that are not affiliated with any brand and have a reputation for being unbiased.

Spring Travels

As you may have noticed from some of the picture posts in this article as well as my social media posts, I recently traveled to the UK for a two week photo adventure. The itinerary included Edinburgh and, St. Abb's Head in Scotland followed by Northumberland and the Lake District in England. It was a relatively productive trip even though it started off a bit on my back-foot. The original plan was to fly from Phoenix

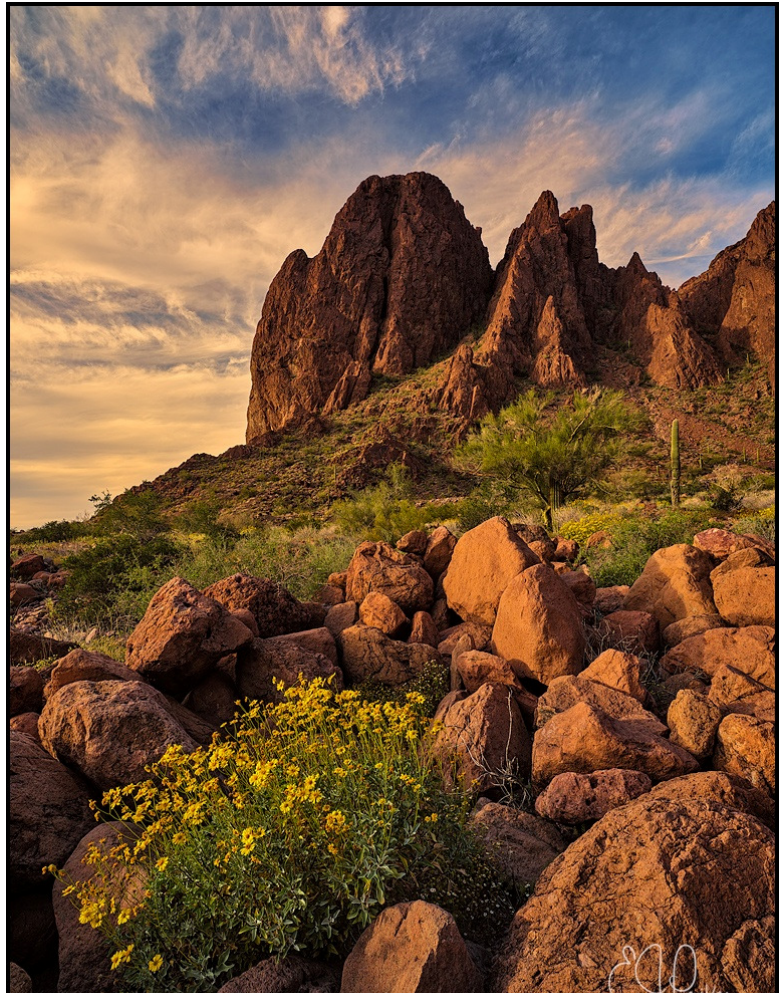


Edinburgh - Scotland (GFX-50S, 32-64mm)

to London and then transfer to a flight that would get me into Edinburgh in late afternoon/early evening which would allow for a nice evening shoot in this historic old city. Unfortunately the inbound flight to Phoenix from London was nearly 6 hours late and resulted in a 5 hour delay in departure which then caused me to miss my flight to Edinburgh. I did make it to Edinburgh but not until 11:30PM. I checked into an airport hotel and hit the ground running by 4:30AM so that I could make it into the city before sunrise. I spent a nice early morning photographing from Calton Hill east of the city looking back into the historic areas but I did have to cancel some of the places I intended to shoot due to the missed shoot the night before. From there I resumed my planned itinerary and photographed the rugged coast of southeast Scotland at St. Abb's Head and then worked my way down into Northumberland in England where I joined a photo tour and workshop put on by my old friend and UK photographer Steve Gosling and his co-leader Mark Banks. Following 6 days of shooting in this area I drove across the

country to the northwestern part of England where I photographed England's Lake District on my own. I quickly realized that to do this place justice would probably require two full weeks but I only had 5 days so I narrowed down my places to visit. Fortunately I only lost about a half day to weather in the Lake District (and another nearly full day in Northumberland) but when photographing anywhere in the British Isles, one must be prepared for losing some time due to weather. This was better than I expected although it was unseasonably cold including even a bit of snow in May. As always, I immensely enjoyed photographing in the UK and need to plan return visits that include Wales and Northern Ireland, the last countries in the UK that I have not photographed.

Prior to going to Scotland and England, I continued my Spring 2019 focus on photographing areas in Arizona that I had not previously photographed. In late March I went exploring an area of the Kaibab National Forest that has a number of seasonal waterfalls that only run reliably during the spring snow melt in the northern mountains. You can see one of them in the photo posted alongside the Topaz article above. One week later I ventured to the far western part of the state to the Kofa Mountains while there were still wildflowers in bloom. This is a beautiful and rugged mountain



Kofa Mountains - Arizona (GFX 50S, 23mm)

range that captures light from the setting sun any time of year but is especially lush in early Spring.



In April we took our annual Easter time trip to the Caribbean - something that has become somewhat of a tradition. This year we visited New Providence Island in the Bahamas for a week of fine dining, leisure and relaxation. I did very little photography during the week but did run across a pretty little Cape May Warbler that needed to have his picture taken.

The Story Behind The Photo



Way back at the dawn of the digital era of photography in the Fall of 2002, I went to the Canadian Rockies in Alberta for the first time. After shooting on my own in Banff National Park for several days, I drove north to Jasper to join a Jasper National Park photography workshop led by my friends Charles Glatzer and Tom Hill. One evening on our way back to the hotel we came upon two bull Elk's that were sparring. I quickly mounted my 70-200mm lens on my then state of the art 4 megapixel Canon EOS 1D and started shooting these two from all angles. The Elks continued to go at it and did not seem to mind a group of photographers shooting them at maximum frames per second to catch all the action. As I usually do, I got low to put myself at eye level. I kept shooting for several minutes when all of the sudden I was out of zoom range on the wide end. I was at 70mm and could not zoom out any farther and the Elk were completely filling my viewfinder! I looked up and saw that I was WAY too close to the swinging antlers of these large and powerful animals. I looked behind me where a group of about a hundred people had assembled some of them telling me to get back since I was too close. This is the last shot I took at 70mm before retreating to the safety of the masses. While I got a great and engaging shot, this also caused me to do some thinking about safety, especially around active wildlife. I now incorporate this story into many of my presentations to nature photographers to teach the lesson of safety in the field. Always stay aware of your surroundings and how close you are getting to potential dangers.

As an aside, this image was only 4 megapixels. I have since uprezzed this to 16 megapixels using Topaz AI Gigapixel making this image still viable for sales even today. If anything the post AI Gigapixel file looks better than the original due to its AI algorithms that refine fine detail while eliminating noise.



Mount Chephran - Alberta, Canada (D800E, 21mm)

Bi-annual Garage Sale Continues

There are still some great deals on some of my used gear and accessories...

Every two years or so I go through my drawers and closets and amass a pile of photographic gear that I no longer use. In many cases the gear is as good as brand new, in some cases there is just a slight bit of wear and in just a few cases there is significant wear but things work great. In all cases, there are significant savings if you are in need of any of these items. Here is the 2019 gear for sale in my bi-annual garage sale. All items include ground shipping to anywhere in the USA. Items are for sale in the USA for shipment to USA addresses only - I do not ship to addresses outside of the USA. Please send email to ejpeiker@cox.net if interested in any of these items:

Camera/Lens Support

Sigma TS-81 Lens foot with integrated Arca-swiss dovetail for Sigma 500 f/4 Sport and 150-600mm Sport, New in Box - \$150

Sunway Foto LF-M1 Arca Swiss Dovetail integrated lens foot for Sigma 150-600 Sport (also fits 500 f/4), New in Box - \$75

Jobu Design LF-S504 Arca-swiss integrated lens foot for Sigma 500 f/4 (also fits 150-600 Sport), Like New - \$75

Filters

150mm Square Filter System

Lee 150mm Filter System

Lee 150mm Filter Holder (just add adapter plate for your lens) w/0.6 Soft GND, Like New - \$250

Lee 150mm Little Stopper 6 stop ND, Like New - \$75

Lee 150mm Circular Polarizer, Like New - \$150

Lee 150mm Canvass Filter Pouch, Excellent - \$50

105mm Filters

Breakthrough Filters X4 Circular Polarizer, Like New - \$150

Formatt-Hitech Firecrest Circular Polarizer, Like New - \$200

Singh-Ray Mor-Slo 5 stop ND filter, Like New - \$250

Singh-Ray I-Ray 690 Red and Near Infrared Filter, Like New - \$250

95mm Filters

Carl Zeiss T* Circular Polarizer, Excellent+ - \$250

77mm Filters

Singh-Ray Thin LB Warming Polarizer, Excellent+ - \$150

Singh-Ray Thin Circular Polarizer, Excellent - \$150

Singh-Ray Tin Mor-Slo 10 Stop ND Filter, Excellent (very slight coating scratch at edge - no impact on photos) - \$175

Singh-Ray Vari-N-Duo adjustable ND/Polarizer, Excellent+ - \$200

Tiffen 82A, Good (glass floats a bit in filter ring) - \$30

Tiffen 81B, Like New - \$50

Tiffen 80A, Good (small amount of paint wear on filter ring) - \$35

Hoya 81A, Excellent - \$35

Hoya 81B, Excellent - \$35

Luminesque Filter Kit – CPL and UV, New in Box - \$35

72mm Filters

Hoya 81A, Excellent+ - \$35

Hoya 81A, Excellent - \$30

Tiffen 81B, Excellent+ - \$35

Tiffen 812 Foliage enhancer, Excellent+ - \$35

67mm Filters

B+W ND 3.0 10-stop ND filter - \$50

Singh-Ray LB Neutral Circular Polarizer, Excellent - \$50

Hoya Pro 1 5-stop ND Filter, Excellent - \$40

62mm Filters

Tiffen Circular Polarizer, Good (glass floats in filter ring) - \$25

Tiffen 812 Foliage enhancer, Like New - \$35

58mm Filters

SOLD [s]B+W Circular Polarizer, Excellent - \$50[s]

Tiffen 81A, Excellent - \$30

55mm Filters

Hoya HD2 Circular Polarizer, Excellent+ - \$40

52mm Filters

Zeiss T* Circular Polarizer, Like New - \$50

B+W ND 1.8, 6-stop F-Pro ND, Like New - \$45

Backpacks

Gura Gear Bataflae 26L, Excellent+ (no visible signs of wear) - \$115

CF Cards (very low use on all of these)

Lexar 800x 64GB - \$40

Lexar 800x 64GB - \$40

Lexar 1066x 16GB - \$25

Lexar 1000x 16GB - \$20

Lexar 1000x 16GB - \$20

Think Tank CF Card Wallet (stores 10 cards), Excellent - \$20

Cable Release

Hahnel Remote Shutter Release for Phase One XF, 645DF+, Mamiya645, New in Box - \$75

Contact ejpeiker@cox.net or PM if interested in purchasing any of the items in the Garage Sale. PayPal accepted with no surcharge. Ground shipping included.



Lesser Scaup Couple - Tempe, Arizona (D500, 500mm)

The Best Lenses For Your Nikon DSLR, Canon DSLR, and Sony (FE) Cameras

The table of best lenses for your camera is a living document that gets updated every quarter. Changes from previous tables can be seen in bold. Once the ecosystem for the Canon RF and Nikon Z mount matures, I may include or switch over to those mounts. For now, all of the lenses below work well with the proper adapter to Canon and Nikon full frame mirrorless cameras.

Lens Category	Canon EF Mount	Nikon F Mount	Sony (F)E Mount
Full-frame Fisheye	Canon 8-15mm f/4L Sigma 15mm f/2.8	Nikon 8-15mm f/3.5E Sigma 15mm f/2.8	Sony 28mm f/2 + 16mm Fisheye Conversion Lens
Hyper Wide Prime	Sigma 14mm f/1.8 Art Irix 11mm f/4	Sigma 14mm f/1.8 Art Irix 11mm f/4	Sigma 14mm f/1.8 Art Voigtlander 12mm f/5.6
Ultra Wide Prime	Zeiss Milvus 15mm f/2.8 Canon TS-E 17mm f/4	Zeiss Milvus 15mm f/2.8 Nikon 19mm f/4 PC	Zeiss Batis 18mm f/2.8 Voigtlander 15mm f/4.5
Extra Wide Prime	Zeiss Milvus 21mm f/2.8 Sigma 20mm f/1.4 Art	Zeiss Milvus 21mm f/2.8 Sigma 20mm f/1.4 Art	Zeiss Loxia 21mm f/2.8 Tokina Firin 20mm f/2 AF
Standard Wide Prime	Zeiss Otus 28mm f/1.4 Zeiss Milvus 25mm f/1.4 Sigma 24mm f/1.4 Art	Zeiss Otus 28mm f/1.4 Zeiss Milvus 25mm f/1.4 Sigma 24mm f/1.4 Art	Sony 24mm f/1.4 GM Sigma 24mm f/1.4 Art
Moderate Wide Prime	Sigma 35mm f/1.4 Canon 35mm f/1.4L II	Sigma 35mm f/1.4 Zeiss Milvus 35mm f/2	Sigma 35mm f/1.4 Art Sony-Zeiss 35mm f/1.4
Standard Prime	Zeiss 55mm f/1.4 Otus Sigma 50mm f/1.4 DG Art	Zeiss 55mm f/1.4 Otus Sigma 50mm f/1.4 DG Art	Sony-Zeiss 55mm f/1.8 Zeiss Loxia 2/50
Portrait Prime (short telephoto)	Zeiss 85mm f/1.4 Otus Canon 85mm f/1.2L II Sigma 105mm f/1.4 Art	Zeiss 85mm f/1.4 Otus Sigma 105mm f/1.4 Art Nikon 105mm f/1.4E	Sigma 105mm f/1.4 Art Sony 85mm f/1.4 GM Zeiss Batis 1.8/85
Medium Telephoto Prime	Canon 135mm f/2L Sigma 135mm f/1.8 Art	Sigma 135mm f/1.8 Art	Sigma 135mm f/1.8 Art Sony 135mm f/1.8 GM Zeiss Batis 135mm f/2.8
200mm Prime	Canon 200mm f/2L Canon 200mm f/2.8L II	Nikon 200mm f/2G Nikon Micro Nikkor 200mm f/4ED	N/A
300mm Prime	Canon 300mm f/2.8L IS II	Nikon 300mm f/2.8G VR Nikon 300mm f/4 PF	N/A
400mm Prime	Canon 400mm f/2.8L IS II Canon 400mm f/4 DO II	Nikon 400mm f/2.8E VR	Sony 400mm f/2.8 GM
500mm Prime	Canon 500mm f/4L IS II Sigma 500mm f/4 DG OS HSM	Nikon 500mm f/4E VR Sigma 500mm f/4 DG OS HSM Nikon 500mm f/5.6 PF	N/A
600mm Prime	Canon 600mm f/4L IS III	Nikon 600mm f/4E VR	N/A
800mm Prime	Canon 800mm f/5.6L IS Sigma 800mm f/5.6APO DG	Nikon 800mm f/5.6E VR Sigma 800mm f/5.6APO DG	N/A
Wide Angle Zoom	Sigma 14-24 f/2.8 Art Canon 11-24mm f/4L Canon 16-35mm f/2.8L III	Sigma 14-24mm f/2.8 Art Nikon 14-24mm f/2.8G Sigma 12-24mm f/4 Art	Sony 16-35mm f/2.8 GM Sony 12-24mm f/4 G Sony 16-35 f/4 Z
Standard Zoom	Canon 24-70mm f/2.8L II Tamron 24-70mm f/2.8 G2 Di VC	Nikon 24-70mm f/2.8E ED VR Tamron 24-70mm f/2.8 G2 Di VC	Sony 24-70 f/2.8 GM Sony 24-105 f/4G Tamron 25-75mm f/2.8
Telephoto Zoom	Canon 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II Tamron 70-200mm f/2.8 G2	Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8E FL VR Tamron 70-200mm f/2.8 G2	Sony 70-200 f/2.8 GM Sony 70-200 f/4G
Super Telephoto Zoom	Canon 200-400mm f/4L 1.4x Canon 100-400 f/4.5-5.6 II	Nikon 180-400 f/4E 1.4x Sigma 150-600 f/4.5-6.3 Sport	Sony 100-400 f/4.5-5.6 GM Sony 70-300 f/4.5-5.6G
Macro	Sigma 150mm f/2.8 Macro OS Irix 150mm f/2.8 Macro	Sigma 150mm f/2.8 Macro OS Irix 150mm f/2.8 Macro	Sony 90mm f/2.8 Macro Tokina Firin 100mm f/2.8 Voigtlander 110mm f/2.5 Macro

Workshops

All of my group workshops are run through NatureScapes Certified Workshops. Please check out all of the great offerings from NSN here: <https://www.naturescapes.net/workshops/>

Private instruction in camera operation, landscape and wildlife photography are also available as well as image processing training. Photo workstation consulting services are also available. To learn more click here: http://www.ejphoto.com/duckshop_private.htm

Facebook and Instagram Pages

I routinely post new photos, articles, etc on my Professional Facebook Page and my Instagram Business Page as well as links to my latest articles. If interested, please click below and then click on the Like button.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/EJ-Peiker-Nature-Photographer/>
<https://www.instagram.com/ejpeiker/>

Newsletter Info

This is the 18th year of my quarterly Newsletter. I try to cover the wide array of digital imaging and products from mirrorless to medium format and everything in between. Throughout the years, the information contained herein has always been free and will continue to be free despite the many hours it takes to put it together and significant equipment and travel expenses. Most of the products that I have tested and reviewed, I have purchased myself. A small minority have been made available to me for review and evaluation by loyal readers and a by the manufacturers themselves. While the newsletter is free either via eMail subscription or via accessing it on my website at

<http://www.ejphoto.com/newsletter.htm>, if

you find the information useful to you and you do wish to donate for my continuing efforts, you may do so via PayPal and sending the funds to ejpeiker@cox.net.

Disclaimers

E.J. Peiker conducts consulting services and product design services for a number of photographic product companies. Those that know me know that I would not endorse a product, even for compensation, if I did not feel it were a superior product.

E.J. Peiker is a co-founder of www.Naturescapes.net and leads photographic workshops under the NatureScapes Certified Workshops banner.



Gray Catbird - Texas (D800, 500mm)

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Lake Powell, Arizona (D800E, 24-70mm)

E.J. PEIKER - NATURE & TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY