

QUACK

Newsletter of E.J. Peiker, Nature Photographer and www.EJPhoto.com

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Welcome to the quarterly newsletter from E.J. Peiker, Nature Photographer and www.EJPhoto.com. In this quarterly email publication, I will keep subscribers posted on upcoming workshops including the DuckShop Workshop Series as well as sharing some photos and experiences with you. I will also give you brief impressions on any new equipment that I get the opportunity to use and any other general information in the world of digital nature photography. Please feel free to forward this along to other photographers and interested parties but please do so only by forwarding this newsletter in its entirety. Note that all content is copyrighted by E.J. Peiker. If you would like to be added or deleted to the mailing list, just send me an email message at ejpeiker@cox.net. Back issues are available online at <http://www.ejphoto.com/newsletter.htm>



Ice Radical - Paradise Bay, Antarctica (D3x, 70-200mm)

© E.J. Peiker

Kauai Workshop

I don't usually lead off Quack with an advertisement but I am making an exception this time because I am very excited with the Kauai Workshop that Greg Downing and I have put together and are offering through NatureScapes.net.

During this week-long workshop we will explore this island like no other photo tour can. With the combined experience of Greg and E.J. in all genres of nature photographer, you will be assured in coming home with once in a lifetime images of Hawaii's oldest and greenest major island. E.J. has extensive experience in photographing Kauai's beauty and knows the island inside out. Nobody knows how to make great bird images in a natural, non-setup environment better than Greg. This workshop is open to 7 participants only.

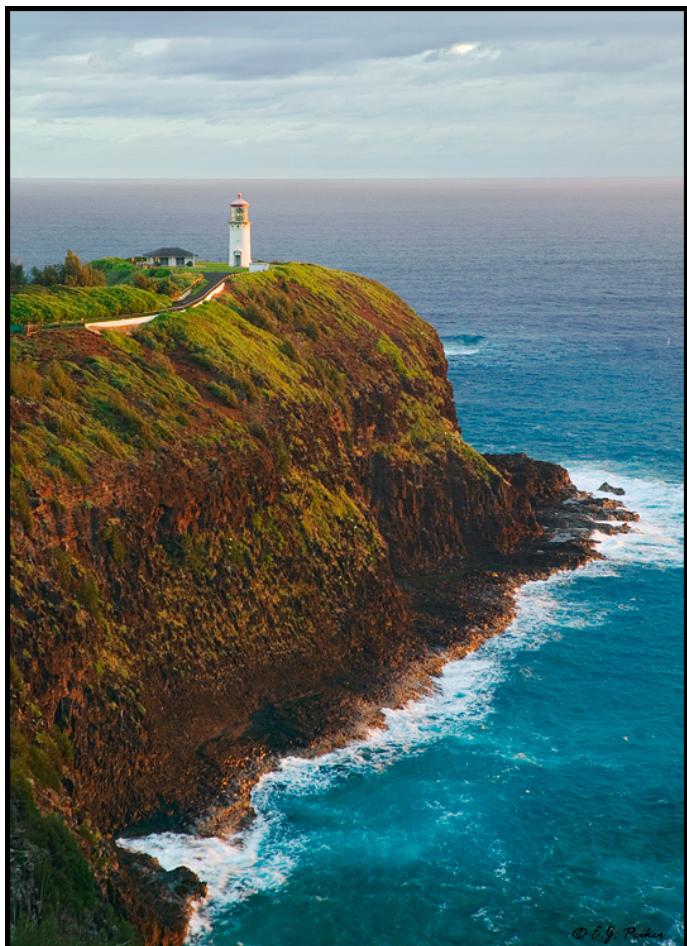
Proposed Itinerary: (*days may be switched around based on weather conditions*)

Day 1

Depart from home and arrive on Kauai by 5:00PM. We will stay at the Kauai Marriott Resort for the entire stay so no packing and repacking will be required. The Marriott is centrally located in Lihue, Kauai's main city. This puts us half way between the two far reaches of the island and allows for easy travel to all of our shooting locations. We will meet in the evening of the first night for a short introduction and orientation session. Keep your eyes and cameras ready for many exotic bird species that visit the courtyard of the hotel.

Day 2

We depart in early morning for Waimea Canyon. This is also called the Grand Canyon of the Pacific. While not as large as the Grand Canyon, in many ways it is as spectacular, if not more spectacular than the Grand Canyon itself due to the rich palette of colors and waterfalls in the canyon. We work our way up the canyon stopping at a multitude of shooting locations. In addition to your landscape gear, bring your bird lenses as there are several spots along the way that are frequented by the beautiful Red-crested Cardinal. At the top of the canyon we will arrive at the absolutely breathtaking Kalalau Valley Lookout. A short one mile hike further up the road allows us to view yet another incredible valley. In the afternoon we will make our way to the western and driest part of the island for ocean and beach landscapes.



Kilauea Light, Kauai - EOS 1Ds Mark II, 24-70mm

© E.J. Parker

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Day 3

Today we depart for a full day at the Kilauea National Wildlife Refuge. There is no better place in the world to photograph birds like Red-footed Booby, Red-tailed Tropic Bird, Nene (Hawaiian Goose) and many other species in flight. Greg and E.J. will be giving flight-shooting tips throughout so that you come home with magnificent images. If we are lucky and there is enough wind we might even capture the Layson Albatross coming in and out of its protected nesting area in the refuge.

Day 4

Exotic and tropical species of plants and flowers are a mainstay on the tropical island of Kauai. This morning we will go to the National Tropical Botanical Garden on the southern slopes of Kauai. Note that no tripods are allowed so that legs don't damage any plants. Take your camera and a tele zoom and come home with beautiful tropical flower photos. The afternoon will blow your mind as we will go for a helicopter tour of the island. This is not just any helicopter ride. We have secured three flights on Hughes 500 helicopters that are operated with no doors for unimpeded shooting. Complete instruction on how to photograph from aircraft will be given by E.J. who has a lot of experience with this type of photography. To top things off, we will have exclusive use of these helicopters and will only put 3 people rather than the usual 4 or 5 to insure that everyone has an open air and unimpeded view. You will see and photograph the truly spectacular Napali Coast, waterfalls that are inaccessible other than by helicopter and much much more. This is not to be missed.

Day 5

Coastal Landscapes are a mainstay on the island. This morning we will chase the light and get beautiful coastal landscapes in the morning along the North Shore as well as visiting some central waterfalls. In the afternoon we will take a private chartered catamaran to get another look at the incredible Napali Coast, this time from sea level.



Aerial Waterfalls - EOS 1Ds Mark II, 24-70mm

Day 6

We are reserving Day 6 as a place holder for now in case we have to move our plans or have a bad weather spell but rest assured we will find spectacular things to photograph each and every day. We have many options for this day including rain forest photography, more sea scapes, etc. This evening we will take in the Hawaiian Tradition of a Luau. Luau's offer copious amounts of native foods as well as native entertainment. If you've never been to one, you are sure to enjoy it. Be sure to bring your camera (the best high ISO camera you have) with a Tele Zoom to record it all.



© D.J. Petke

White-tailed Tropicbird, Kauai - EOS 1D Mark II, 500mm
just lay on the beach before returning to the airport for evening/overnight flights home.

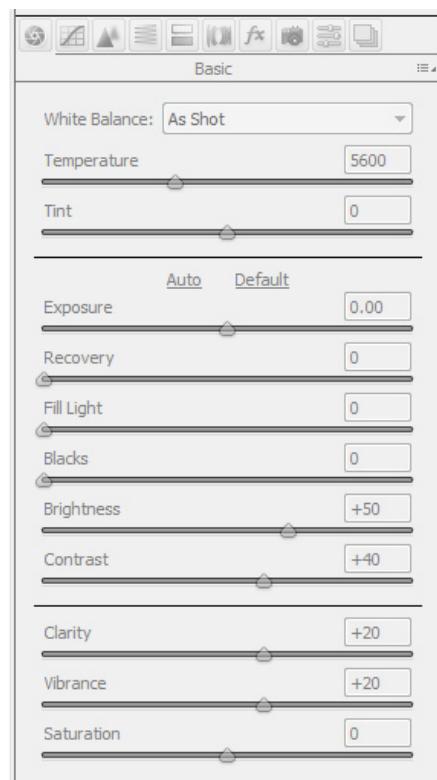
If this unique adventure is for you, please visit the following link for more information and to register:
<http://www.naturescapes.net/docs/index.php/workshops>

Making Photoshop's Automated Features Work For You - Part II

In the Autumn issue of Quack, we discussed how to set-up some of Photoshop's tools so that their automated features will become a benefit rather something that is to be avoided. Specifically we tackled setting up an automatic black and white point adjustment using the Levels or Curves tool and setting up the Shadow/Highlight tool. The out of the box auto settings for Photoshop's tools are generally garish and most people avoid them after using them just once. But by reprogramming these tools in a few simple steps, we can create some major time savers.

This quarter, we will set-up Adobe Camera Raw so that the starting point for adjustments is in a much better place and occasionally, no adjustment from these settings is needed at all. Again we will be using Photoshop CS5 however all of the settings except one also apply to CS4.

Lets start with the Basic Tab. In the Basic Tab, you will want to set White Balance to As Shot - no automated setting will work well here since every picture is different. This will simply utilize the white balance that the camera used. I generally recommend setting the camera for automatic white balance unless you have a specific reason not to.



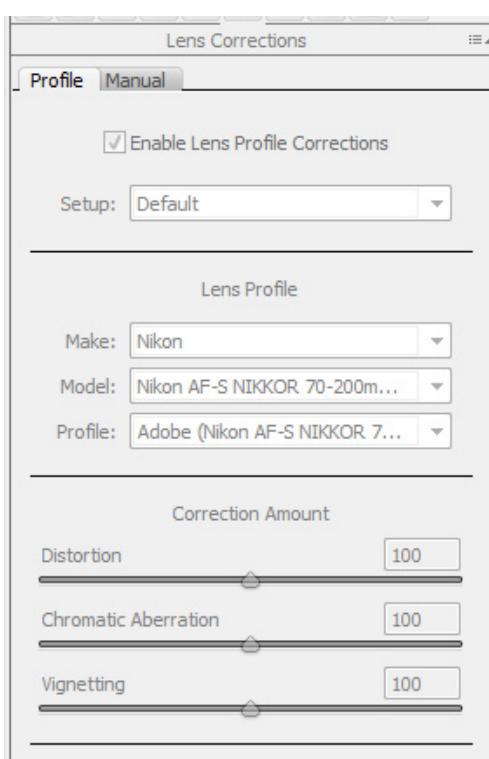
Day 7

We will depart in early morning to the Spouting Horn on the south shore of the island to photograph water shooting up out of this lava tube against the morning light. On the way back we will drive through and stop to photograph the world famous Kauai Tree Tunnel. We will arrive back at the hotel in time for check-out. The afternoon will be time off to do shopping, visit any tourist attractions that you might be interested in or

I set Exposure, Recovery, Fill Light, and Blacks to 0. Some prefer setting blacks to 5; this is OK too. Brightness is set to 50 and Contrast is set to 40. Finally Clarity and Vibrance are both set to 20.

The next tab is the Tone Curve Tab which I leave set at Adobe defaults - Parametrics all zeroed out and Point set to Medium Contrast. I also leave all of the entries on the Sharpening and Noise Reduction Tab at Adobe defaults. I have played with both of these extensively and for a default setting, the factory settings work fine. Certainly for individual images you may choose to play with these values.

Under the Lens Correction Tab, CS5 introduces some major changes with camera/lens profiles. If you



do not see specific camera and lens profiles, you are running an out of date version of Camera Raw and you should update it before proceeding. Check the Enable Lens Profile Corrections box and something magical happens. ACR will read what camera and lens you used and apply corrections for linear distortions, chromatic aberrations, and light fall-off automatically. Adobe is continually updating the lens database too. I have found that virtually all lenses except the super telephotos from the major manufacturers are there. This is so much easier than doing these corrections manually which is how we used to have to do it before CS5.

Moving to the Camera Corrections Tab, simply select 2010 (Current) under Process and you will be sure that you are running the latest and greatest algorithms for your camera. This may change in the future to 2011 so occasionally check this tab to make sure that Current is still enabled.

Finally we have to save these as defaults for your camera. On the bar that has the title for the tab you are on such as the one that says Lens Corrections in the image to the left, you will see a small icon that looks like three little lines and a tiny triangle. Click on that icon and then click on Save New Camera Raw Defaults. This will now make these the defaults when you first

launch a photo into ACR. You will need to do the set-up above on an image taken with each camera you own once and ACR then remembers that camera and the defaults. Also note that ACR is smart enough to know when you are working on a photo taken with a different lens than the one you used in the photo that you just set-up ACR with. It will automatically switch to the correct lens profile. The above tips will save you time and, especially for CS5 users, save you lots of headache in correcting lens problems automatically.

"How Do You Select Which Camera To Use?"

I get asked this question quite often by people that see that I often travel to a photo shoot with anywhere from 2 to 5 cameras (Six if you count my iPhone). Each has its strengths and weaknesses and I try to sue the tool best suited for the job at hand.

At the time of this writing I own four camera bodies and have access to a fifth. I'll describe when I chose each one below:

Nikon D3x - this 24 megapixel super DSLR is my body of choice for landscape photography. It records more detail than any other 35mm DSLR on the market and has exceptional noise characteristics at ISO 100 and 200 and still good noise performance at ISO 400. In landscape photo I like to have the full range of my lenses design focal length available to me so utilizing a full frame body for landscape photography is key. The only way up from a D3x is to go to Medium Format which is something I am constantly milling around but have not yet been able to financially justify.

Nikon D700 - this is also a full frame sensor DSLR and it records 12 megapixels. Since there are only half the pixels that the D3x has in the same size sensor, each pixel has twice the area and therefore nearly 4 times the light collection capability (assuming the same pixel design). This makes this camera an exceptional low light camera. It has fantastic noise characteristics through ISO 1600 and still has excellent performance as high as ISO 6400. When I need to do low light photography and I don't have the luxury of long shutter speeds, the D700 is my choice. It also serves as my backup to the D3x should something go wrong with it.

Nikon D300 - The D300 utilizes a 1.5x crop factor. This has the effect of making every lens you mount on it appear as if it were 1.5 times as long. The D300 camera of choice for birds as long as there is good light since its noise characteristics above ISO 400 deteriorate quickly due to its small pixel size. With the optional vertical grip and the upgraded EN-EL4 battery, the D300 gives me 8 frames per second which is generally a nice frame rate for action photography.

Nikon D3s - I don't own this camera but often have access to either a D3 or a D3s. I chose this camera when I need both high ISO performance and super fast frame rate. This would then be the choice for wildlife on darker days.



Leopard Seal, Pleaneau, Antarctica - D3s, 70-200mm
© E.J. Peiker

Panasonic GF-1 - my light and ever-ready camera. I only have the 14-45mm lens which is the 35mm equivalent of a 28-90mm lens - a nice working range from moderate wide angle to short telephoto. When I am hiking or just want a camera along for those just-in-case snapshots, the GF-1 is my choice. It is fully capable of professional, publishable results.

[Facebook Page](#)

On my Facebook Fan Page, I am keeping those interested up to date on what photo excursions I go on as well as short commentaries on a variety of photo related subjects and tools. I also have 80 galleries accessible through there including all of my latest Antarctica photos. Please visit:
www.facebook.com/pages/EJ-Peiker-Nature-Photographer/150804446733

and if you like what you see, please click the "Like" button.

Private Photography Instruction

In addition to the successful private DuckShops which I launched last winter after many years of group instruction workshops, I am now also offering private instruction in Wildlife and Landscape photography at the place of your choosing within the USA and Canada. All DuckShops and private Workshops will be of the one on one variety (or two on one). Clients may schedule time in 4 hour time blocks for either classroom or field sessions. With just two people, a number of shooting locations become possible that aren't possible for larger groups and thereby making it possible to photograph some species or locations that are not attainable with larger groups. More specific instruction, based on the client's specific needs, can be given using this delivery method in either the classroom or in the field. For more information please see the following link: http://www.ejphoto.com/duckshop_private.htm

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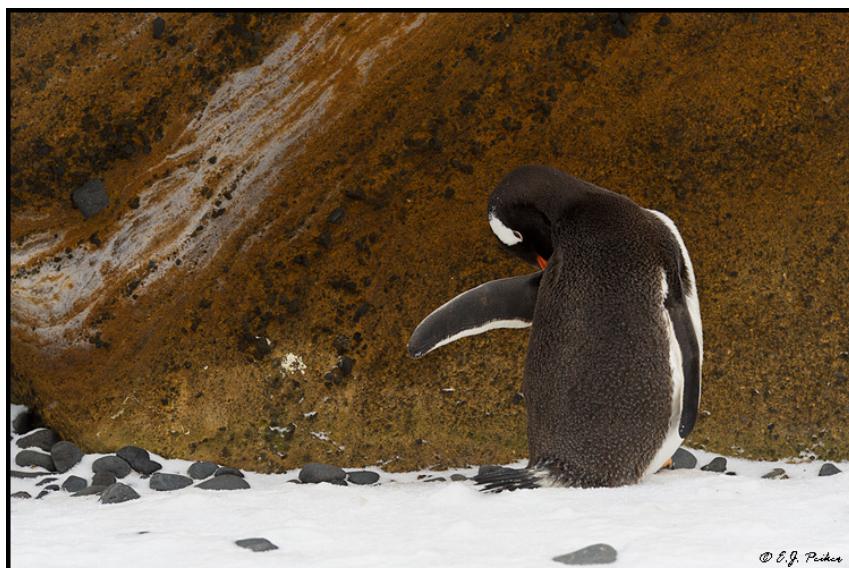
E.J. Peiker is a founding partner in NatureScapes.net and receives non-monetary compensation from Naturescapes.net

Those that know me, know I would not endorse a product even for compensation if I did not feel it were a superior product.

Notice:

EJPhoto will be closed November 30 - December 14, 2010. All orders and inquiries will be processed in the order in which they were received.

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Gentoo Penguin, Brown Bluff, Antarctica - D3s, 70-200mm