



A guest's perspective on a British Mammals Photo workshop in West Devon – October 2013.

Guest: Hilary Spurrier

I am a keen, but relatively inexperienced, amateur photographer who is interested in wildlife. I am more confident taking landscapes but am interested in developing my ability to capture animals in as natural a setting as possible.

I have a Canon 550D with a range of lenses from macro to 300mm and am eager to develop my proficiency at using them in a range of different conditions

The opportunity to photo a number of mammals in fairly natural surroundings is an experience not to be missed

Expectations

I had previously travelled on Safari with Bob and knew that his expertise as a photographer and naturalist would ensure that there would be the best possible opportunities for taking photographs of normally elusive British mammals.

Bob has a very good teaching style and I was confident that he would be ready to provide gentle guidance enabling me to become more skilled at using my equipment.

My expectation was to see and photo a number of animals. This hope was more than met in a busy but thoroughly enjoyable two days. Bob's knowledge and expertise ensured that the animals were viewed to the best advantage and that the photographers were given the best opportunity to take some great shots.

The close working between Bob and the centre staff enabled us to photo at least eight different species in a day.

The wild life centre is in a beautiful and unspoilt corner of Devon close to Dartmoor. The backdrop of the moors was an added bonus.





Highlights

There were many stunning moments from the opportunity to view beavers at sunset to the chance to see a pair of otters playing and feeding,

Some of the smaller animals were totally captivating. The water voles were fascinating and the chance to photograph them in the specially designed set and even in their underground burrows whilst difficult was very special. The pine marten and pole cat proved to be challenging because of their agility making shots of them even more rewarding.



Evaluation

The combination of excellent weather, stunning wildlife and first rate tuition ensured that this was a first rate experience. The time flew by and the meticulous organisation of Bob and the wild – life centre staff ensured that not a moment was wasted. Thus said there was plenty of time with each species to enable us to observe them as well as taking photographs.



The guidance from Bob was pitched at just the right level to encourage us to try different techniques and learn more about photo'ing animals without blinding us with too much technical information unless we wanted it.

I will definitely sign up for more courses

