In conjunction with Borrego Art Institute … A New Mexico Photographic Workshop

“Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge: Bird Extravaganza and Photography Workshop”
November 15-17, 2019

With your trip leader – Sandy Zelasko

INTRODUCTION
Situated along the Rio Grande River, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge covers more than 57,000 acres and is a major wintering ground for cranes and waterfowl. Refuge personnel manage the water levels of its wetlands and impoundments to simulate what was once the seasonal flow of water from the Rio Grande before the river was dammed and the flow altered. To feed the huge number of birds visiting the refuge each year, nearby fields are planted with corn, winter wheat, millet, and other grains. Loop roads transect the refuge marshes and fields and provide prime sites for wildlife viewing and photography. Species that may be seen include shovelers, buffleheads, pintails, teal and other ducks; bald and golden eagles; kestrels and other hawks; turkey; meadowlarks; quail; roadrunners; coyotes; mule deer; and more. In November, large flocks of snow geese and sandhill cranes will be present. At night to escape predators, the birds flock to the marshes and shallow pools. With dawn, the snow geese and other waterfowl rise in mass from the wetlands and sweep overhead on their way to nearby fields to feed. Each day we will spend the early morning and late afternoon hours at the refuge photographing birds and many other species of wildlife which are present at the sanctuary.
BOSQUE DEL APACHE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, NEW MEXICO

Founded in 1939, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge is a wilderness jewel which lies in the Albuquerque Basin near the Rio Grande River approximately 90 miles south of Albuquerque, NM. Some 371 species of birds, 73 species of mammals, 12 species of amphibians, 56 species of reptiles and 23 species of fish have been observed on the refuge.

We will be traveling a 12-mile tour loop divided into South Loop Road and North Loop Road. Along this route is excellent winter viewing of migratory birds, wetland wildlife and much more. Early mornings we will photograph mass “lift offs” of snow geese and sandhill cranes, a spectacle visitors from all over the world come to witness. We’ll visit surrounding cropland to photograph entertaining sandhills as they feed on freshly mown harvests. In addition, we could possibly see roadrunners traversing the hedgerows, kingfishers searching the ponds, javelina navigating corn fields and hawks, eagles and/or falcons make a meal of slow moving geese, songbirds and other unfortunate prey.

Equally as impressive, we could find wild turkeys roaming wooded areas, coyotes hunting for waterfowl, dabblers and divers feeding in the ponds and early morning mule deer. Kit, red and gray fox call Bosque del Apache their home and we may get really lucky and witness an elusive bobcat. Following is a link to a comprehensive list of wildlife on the refuge, https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/BDA2008_WildlifeList.pdf.
TRIP ITINERARY

The Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge: Bird Extravaganza and Photography Workshop begins Friday, November 15, 2019 at 5:30 AM and ends Sunday, November 17, 2019 at 6:00 PM. Photographers of all levels are encouraged to participate. A low student to instructor ratio affords individual attention and flexibility. Maximum 8 participants.

We will be based out of Socorro, NM. Best Western Socorro Hotel & Suites is our recommended lodging. Please plan to arrive and check into your hotel in the day before our workshop begins. There will be no orientation before the workshop, however, we will share participant introductions, safety discussion, ethics, logistics of the trip and your goals for the workshop after our first field session.

If you are flying in, Albuquerque (ABQ) is the nearest airport to Socorro. From Albuquerque take Interstate 25 approximately 80 miles south to Socorro. Plan your trip to include at least four overnight stays in Socorro beginning November 14, 2019 checking out Monday, November 18a unless you are extending your stay beyond the scope of this workshop. You can reserve and pick up a rental car at the airport in Albuquerque. You are responsible for transportation to Socorro, all travel to Bosque del Apache and travel throughout the refuge each day of the workshop. Bosque del Apache is approximately 18 miles south of Socorro.

Socorro has a grocery store, gasoline, lodging, eateries and a Walmart. Your trip leader will be staying at the Chupadero RV Park in San Antonio, NM. (Alternative lodging options are listed under RESOURCES below.)

Your instructor has an exciting workshop planned for you however, note that this itinerary will be flexible in response to weather, lighting, availability of animals, client safety and/or desires of the group. Midday hours are set aside for lunch, on your own or with the group, personal errands, a nap, image review or you can continue shooting. Your instructor will be available and welcome your questions during all sessions.

A typical day will go something like this: Meet before civil twilight (this time of year that will be approximately 5:30 AM depending on where we will start the day), to photograph sunrise, scenery and wildlife in the area. Depending on what we find we may stay in a location a while before moving on to the next scheduled spot. We will break for lunch (picnic or back to town) and then resume photographing in the afternoon until twilight (approximately 5:30 PM). There is no night photography scheduled for this workshop but you may wish to include this opportunity in a dark sky region.

Make sure to plan your breakfasts ‘to go’ and have snacks, water and lunches available in the event we stay longer at a location than anticipated. Your host will have water and snacks available while in the field but suggest planning carefully by purchasing food for lunch on days we will not have access to a store or a restaurant. Please let us know if you have food allergies or a medical condition that might conflict with the snack choice. We will do our best to accommodate your needs.

Places high on our list to photograph are:

- North & South Crane Ponds
- Flight Deck if conditions are favorable
- John P. Taylor Jr. Memorial Trail
- Marsh Overlook Trail
- Willow & Coyote Decks
- Farm Deck and surrounding fields
- Visitor Center- quail & more

“Bosque Wetlands”

“Morning Blast Off”

This workshop is designed for the nature photographer and bird lover. We will spend time in the areas with the best photographic possibilities and lighting. Conditions in the field will vary. There will be a small amount of hiking on boardwalks, over rocky areas but mostly on level, well-worn paths. We will search for wildlife such as mule deer, elk, javelina, pronghorn antelope, coyotes, shore birds, cranes, geese and many other species. We hope to encounter all of the above and will concentrate on getting the best possible images while adhering to responsible wildlife guidelines set forth by the National Wildlife Refuge System. November is a perfect month to see spectacular wildlife behavior. We will be extra careful not to disturb our subjects while getting you in position for the best photography and bird viewing.

“Snow goose”
DETAILS

BAI PRICE: $745 pp, BAI member / $795 pp, non-member. Three days / Six field sessions – Open to 8 participants (Minimum of 4 participants necessary at the quoted price. Note: In the event the minimum participant number is not met, a small group supplement may be added to the price above for each person.)

Start date: November 15, 2019, 5:30 AM   End date: November 17, 2019, 6:00 PM

Total payment is due at booking to hold a spot in this workshop. Make your payment out to Sandra Lee Photography and mail to 15864 Severino Lane, Valley Center, CA 92082 or call 760-749-2174 to process your credit card. Visa, MasterCard, check and money order are all acceptable forms of payment.

What is included:
- Passionate, enthusiastic, professional photography instructor Sandy Zelasko.
- Six field sessions, photo instruction and image discussion specific to your needs.
- 25+ years of instructional experience DBA Sandra Lee Photography.
- Snacks and water during the workshop.

Not included:
- Lodging, airfare, transportation and meals. Participants are urged to ride-share to shooting locations.
- Bosque del Apache NWR entry fees. Please bring your America the Beautiful pass, senior pass, Bosque pass or Federal Duck Stamp that will cover your entry fee. You may purchase any of these passes at the Visitor Center. Vehicle $5 per day without pass at entrance booth.
- Trip insurance. You are encouraged to purchase trip insurance in case of an unforeseen emergency which requires you to cancel.

Cancellation policy:
- Cancellations made 30 days from the start of the workshop are non-refundable.

RESOURCES

To help plan your trip, visit the Bosque del Apache NWR website at https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Bosque_del_Apache/. Workshop dates were selected so that participants may have an opportunity to explore additional attractions in and around the refuge. Below are a few helpful links for planning your trip.

Lodging (partial list):

Additional attractions in the Socorro, New Mexico area:
- National Radio Astronomy Observatory (VLA) - http://www.vla.nrao.edu/
- Downtown Socorro - http://www.soccorronm.org/attractions/shopping/
- Three Rivers Petroglyph Site (camping) - https://www.blm.gov/visit/three-rivers-petroglyph-site

Suggested packing:
- A list of suggested packing supplies and equipment will be sent upon booking.

If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to Sandy at 760-749-2174 or slzphoto@sbcglobal.net.

Thanks!

IMAGE GALLERY