

Take Fantastic Wildlife Photos at the Zoo with Your Camera!

NASA Goddard Photo Club
February 9, 2022

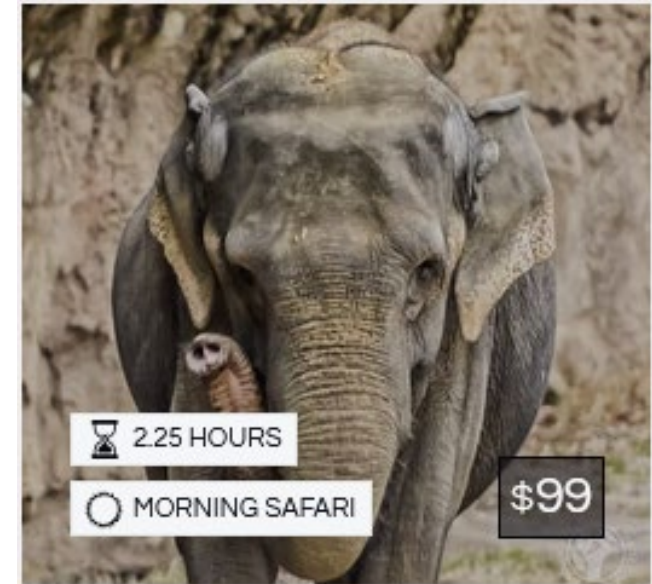


Xiao Qi Ji ("Little Miracle") - Giant panda

Program



1. Intros
2. Helpful Wildlife Camera Equipment
3. Quick Tour of Wildlife Camera Settings
4. Composition
5. Q&A



EARLY Morning at the National Zoo!

Capture Great Early Morning Photos of the Animals at the National Zoo!

Bright Eyes Photos by Julie Gould

I teach Early Mornings at the National Zoo AND

Dog Photography with Washington Photo Safari.

Bright Eyes Photo is my encore career, now in its 5th year.

I do volunteer work at local animal rescues.

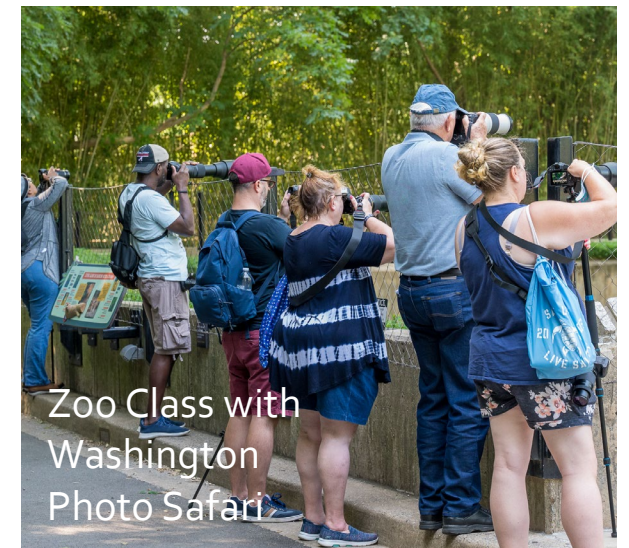
The Pandas bring me joy especially during the pandemic.



Bei Bei - Giant panda



Lucky Dog Animal Rescue- post Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico



Zoo Class with Washington Photo Safari



Xiao Qi Ji and Mom, Mei Xiang-
Giant pandas: Fruitsicle battle!



Helpful Wildlife Camera Equipment

DSLR & Mirrorless cameras: Sensor size is important

Full Frame FX = Bigger sensor = more megapixels,
expensive, heavy

DX = Smaller sensor = less megapixels, less expensive,
lighter weight

Telephoto Lenses: 70-200mm, 200-400mm, 70-300mm.

Sturdy Tripod or Monopod or Sandbag

Lens Hood

Wildlife Digital Camera Settings

- Auto Focus mode: Continuous Action -- AF-C on Nikon and AI Servo on Canon
- Shooting mode: High-speed continuous (CH on Nikon)
- Focus: Single point focus (on the animal's eyes!) or Dynamic Area for broader coverage around the focus point.
- Shutter speed 1/500+ -- Animals move fast and blink often!
- Aperture f2.8-4
- White Balance: Cloudy—all around setting
- ISO ranges: 400-1600; or Auto ISO.
- Metering Mode: Matrix metering
- RAW or High Quality JPEG
- Clean the lens: Clean often with a lint free cloth!



Ring-tailed Lemur

Wildlife Smartphone Camera Settings

IN CAMERA MODE:

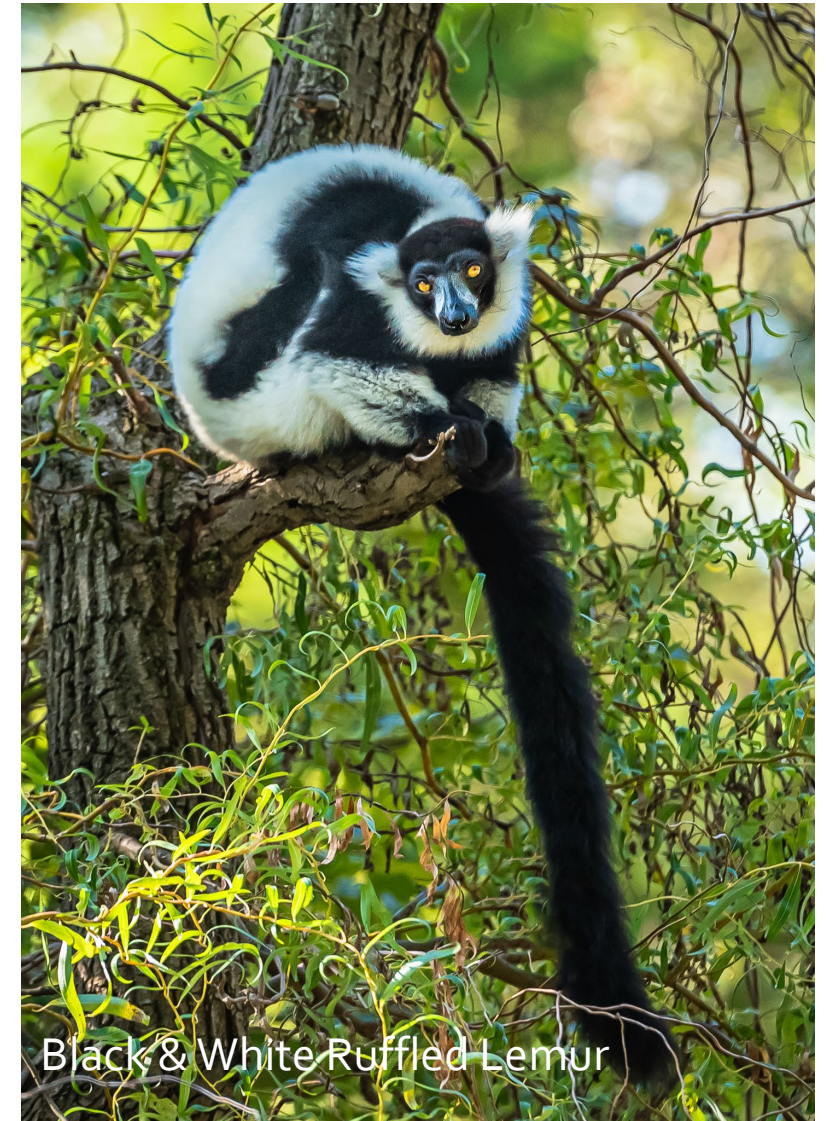
Set the Focus for sharp photos: Smartphones don't know where to focus unless you set the focus manually. Set the focus for the animal's eye!

iPhone: Compose the photo. Tap on the screen where you want to set your focus. A yellow box will appear to indicate the focus point.

Android: Aim the camera, and a white circle will appear in the center. This circle shows the area on which the camera will focus and set exposure. Tap again on your subject, and the circle will move to it.

Adjust Exposure brightness levels: To avoid over- or under-exposure, you can adjust the brightness on the go.

iPhone: Start by tapping to set focus. You'll see a vertical yellow line to the right of the yellow box. Swipe up or down to adjust brightness.



Black & White Ruffed Lemur

Wildlife Smartphone Camera Settings

Continuous Shooting Action Shots: **Animals move!** Use the burst mode to capture animals in motion. Takes 10 photos per second. See handout for keeping only the best shots & deleting the rest to save space.

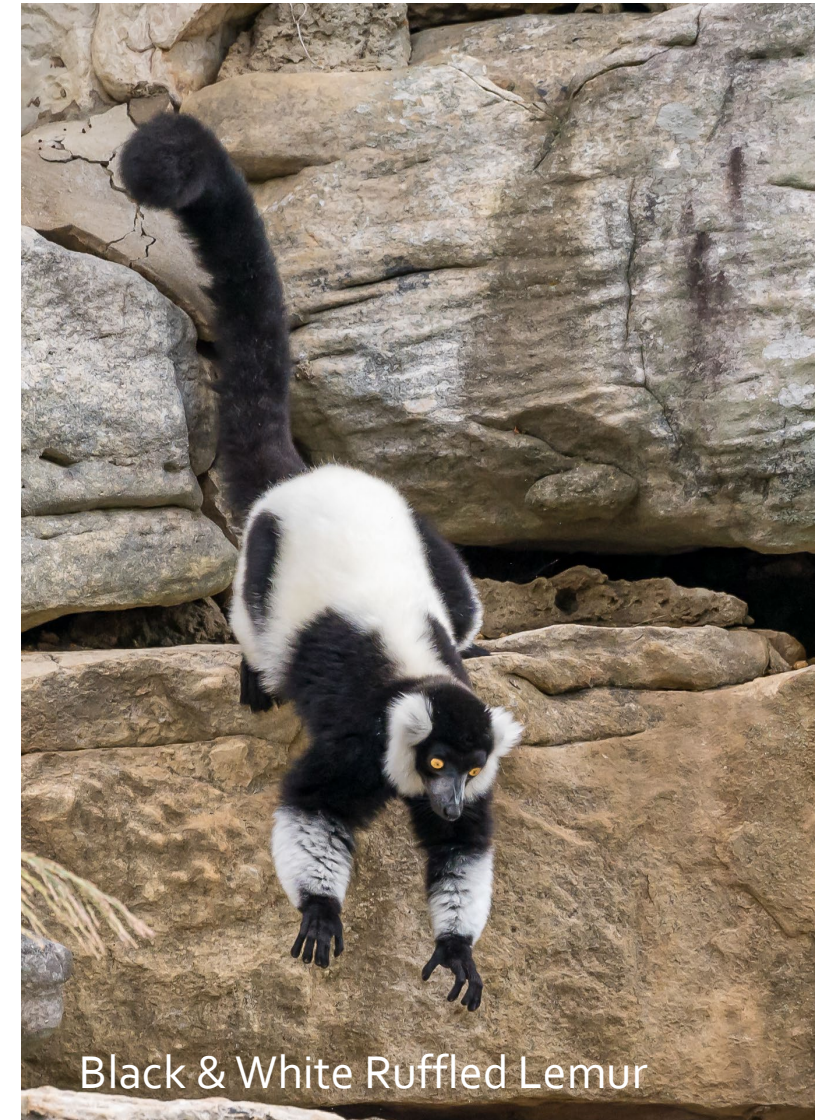
iPhone & Android: press & hold the shutter key

Zoom in to your subject: Use your camera's telephoto feature to get tight and close to your animal.

iPhone: Tap on 1x icon at bottom of viewfinder to get the 2x icon.

Android: Use the 2-finger pinch method or use Volume Up to zoom in and Volume down to zoom out. If your Android does not have a zoom feature, use a 3rd party app camera such as Camera 360 or Goggle Camera.

Clean the lens: Clean often with a lint free cloth!



Black & White Ruffed Lemur

Composition

Focus on animal eyes: get on animal's eye level.

Framing: Background/Foreground should be natural setting vs concrete/distractions: zoom in & fill the frame.

Blur background with wide f stop: f2.8-f4.

Early morning/late afternoons have best, soft light AND most active time for animals outdoors.



Male African Lion



American Bald Eagle



Male African Lion



Male African Lion

Composition

Position of sun: behind you; open shade with even lighting; avoid harsh, direct sunlight.

Change perspective: move side-to-side and up and down to capture different angles and reflections.

Leading lines: find pathways to lead to the animals.



Amur Tiger



Xiao Qi Ji ("Little Miracle") - Giant panda

Summary: The 5 Key Points of Zoo Photography

1. Focus on the animal's eyes.
2. Move around to get the best angles, natural backgrounds.
3. Capture the action with a fast shutter speed.
4. Shoot in the early morning or late afternoons, not in the harsh glare of the sun.
5. Use a zoom lens to get close and fill the frame.



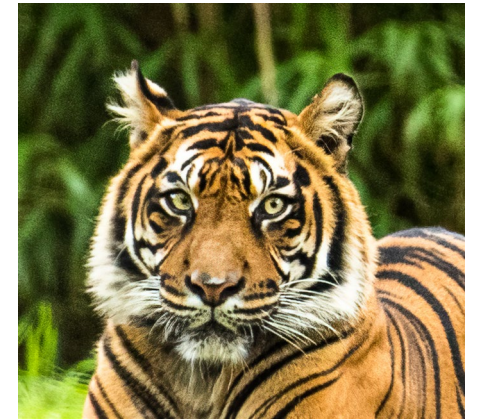
Orangutan Super Highway:
The O-Line



African elephant lunch



Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur
meets his daily Step goal



Sumatran tiger:
Don't mess with me

Q&A

Next Early Morning at the National Zoo classes are:

Feb 20, March 13, April 10, May 11,
June 5, July 24

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