

**THE ART & SCIENCE OF
PHOTOGRAPHING WILDLIFE
SEPTEMBER 18-20, 2020**

COURSE LEVEL: II COURSE #: S1010

FEE: \$300 PER ADULT AGES 16 AND OLDER

INSTRUCTOR: STEPHEN WEAVER



**Rocky
Mountain
Conservancy**

FIELD INSTITUTE

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**LOCATION: Rocky Mountain Conservancy – Field Institute & Conference Center
1895 Fall River Road, Estes Park, Colorado**

TIME:

Friday: 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM
Saturday: 6:30 AM – 7:30 PM
Sunday: 6:30 AM – 4:00 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Making excellent and artful wildlife photographs in nature is a challenge that requires a combination of technical knowledge, good environmental conditions, knowledge of animal behavior, and the patience and skills to see and capture a “decisive moment” of animals living and interacting in the environment. This course will provide the knowledge foundation of these requirements for photographers of all experience levels and will include the important topics of equipment use and the technical knowledge needed as well as the important creative aspects of composition and the use of light that are essential in making an excellent photograph. We will explore the various environments and ecosystems of Rocky Mountain National Park from forests and meadows to alpine tundra and discuss and practice acceptable methods for approaching the wildlife subjects we may find. The ultimate course goal is to further participant’s knowledge, development and enjoyment in the art of making excellent wildlife images.

COURSE LEVEL: II

Short-distance walks to moderate hikes throughout the day on varied terrain

BRIEF INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY (additional information available at www.RMConservancy.org):

Stephen Weaver is an award-winning nature photographer with over 40 years of experience making images of the natural world. Formally educated as a geologist, Stephen combines his scientific knowledge with his photographic abilities to produce stunning images that illustrate the beauty and diversity of the life and landscape of the earth and its natural systems. Stephen grew up in Pennsylvania and from an early age developed a passion for nature and the outdoors. As an undergraduate geology student, he first visited the Rocky Mountains where he fell in love with the mountain environment and the wide-open grand landscapes of the West. Steve currently photographs throughout North America with a major emphasis on mountain, prairie and desert environments photographing both the landscape on both grand and intimate scales and the wildlife that are part of those ecosystems. Stephen is a charter member of [NANPA](http://www.nanpa.org) (The North American Nature Photography Association) and a member of the new conservation and ethics group [Nature First Alliance for Responsible Nature Photography](http://www.naturefirstalliance.org). His work has been published in textbooks, guidebooks and magazines and his fine-art prints have been purchased by numerous private collectors as well as commercial companies such as hospitals, law offices, banks and real estate companies. His work can be viewed on his website: <http://www.stephen-weaver.com/>

EXPECTATIONS: Professional conduct will be expected from participants at all times. Individual ideas will be respected. Except during course breaks, cellular phones, pagers, and personal entertainment devices are strictly prohibited in the classroom and during field sessions.

CAR-POOLING: Rocky Mountain Conservancy - Field Institute courses utilize car-pooling to limit vehicles traveling into the park. Car-pooling makes it easier to keep the group together, reduces transit time, and allows courses greater access because fewer parking spaces are required at destinations. In addition, it provides an opportunity for participants to discuss course material in small groups during transit. Typically, a few participants from each course volunteer the use of their vehicles for car-pooling to course locations.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

FRIDAY (5:30 PM – 8:30 PM)

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| 5:30 – 5:45 PM | <p>Introductions and participants’ objectives and expectations for the course
 (Participants should bring camera equipment.)
 <i>Review of course itinerary, field safety and logistics, and distribution of handouts</i></p> |
| 5:45 – 7:00 PM | <p>Introduction to digital photography:
 Basic principles and the “nuts and bolts” of the technical aspects of digital photography
 The Exposure Triangle and using the histogram</p> |
| 7:00 – 7:10 PM | <p>Break</p> |
| 7:10 – 8:30 PM | <p>Making great wildlife digital images:
 Capturing the decisive moment!
 Using light and composition
 <i>Importance of Exposure control and camera stability</i>
 <i>Know your equipment. (Bring your user’s manual.)</i>
 <i>Post processing of digital images</i></p> |

SATURDAY (6:30 AM – 7:30 PM)

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| 6:30 AM | <p>Meet at Field Institute.</p> |
| 6:30 – 10:30 AM | <p>Depart for In-the-Field Part I and field photography session.
 Instruction, demonstrations, discussion
 <i>Emphasis on photography equipment and techniques for wildlife work; working with wild subjects (how to approach, blinds, wardrobe, etc.)</i>
 Field photography session</p> |
| 10:30 AM– 12:30 PM | <p>Return to Field Institute.
 <i>Summary of morning session</i>
 <i>Critique of participants’ work from morning</i></p> |
| 12:30 - 2:00 PM | <p>Lunch – participants’ discretion (optional: group picnic and continued discussion of morning session)
 Audio-visual program of instructor’s work</p> |
| 2:00 – 7:30 PM | <p>Depart for In-the-Field Part II and field photography session.
 Instruction, demonstrations, discussion
 <i>Emphasis on how to find your subjects (when, where, what to look for); animal behavior and how to learn to anticipate what might happen next</i>
 Field photography session</p> |

SUNDAY (6:30 AM – 4:00 PM)

6:30 AM	Meet at Field Institute.
6:30 – 10:30 AM	Depart for In-the-Field Part III and field photography session. Instruction, demonstrations, discussion <i>Emphasis on photographer behavior and ethics in the field</i> Field photography session
10:30 – 12:00 noon	Return to Field Institute. <i>Summary of morning session</i> <i>Critique of participants' work from morning</i> <i>Storing and finding your images</i> <i>Post processing topics</i>
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Lunch – participants' discretion (optional: group picnic and discussion of morning session)
1:00 – 3:15 PM	Continue critique of participants' work from morning. Critique of participants' prior works
3:15 – 3:25 PM	Break
3:25 – 4:00 PM	Summary review of class material and Q&A Course evaluations and conclusion

WHAT TO BRING:

- Camera equipment and accessories:

Photographing wildlife requires a photographer to get close — but not too close — to the intended subject. To maintain a comfortable working distance (for the wild subjects), telephoto lenses are preferred (the longer the better); on 35mm format, a 200mm lens would be considered the minimum. However, opportunities may arise to use wide angle and normal lenses and even macro lenses. For versatility, a digital DSLR or mirrorless camera system with interchangeable lenses with focal lengths of wide to telephoto is recommended. Regardless of the system, the camera body should have built-in exposure metering and auto-focusing capabilities that will allow you to capture wildlife in motion. All that said, please bring the photography equipment you have, are most familiar with. It is strongly suggested that you also bring the camera manual. Additional photographic equipment you should have/bring include:

- Camera bag/backpack large enough to comfortably carry gear (can double as a daypack for raingear, extra jacket, etc.)
- ****Camera support necessary:** Tripod, monopod, or shoulder stock sturdy enough to handle your camera/lens
 - Electronic shutter release
 - Spare camera batteries and/or charger
 - Extra memory cards
- ***Additional Equipment***
 - Sturdy hiking shoes or boots
 - Clothing layers for comfort, including raingear
 - Chemical hand-warmers
 - Sack lunches, snacks, energy bars, **WATER**
 - Large plastic bag as “camera raingear”
 - Small notebook and pen for notetaking
 - Laptop computer with post processing program and card reader for image downloads for critiques (optional)
 - 4-6 photos (prior works) for critique/discussion (optional)

REMEMBER TO BRING THE 10 ESSENTIALS:

Rocky Mountain National Park recommends that hikers always carry the 10 essentials in their daypacks.

- Raingear
- Map and compass
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Sunglasses and sunscreen
- Candles
- Matches or other fire starter
- Pocketknife
- First-aid kit
- Extra layers of clothing
- Sack lunch, snacks, water

Note: Rocky Mountain Conservancy - Field Institute recommends that participants for all courses dress in layers and wear comfortable, sturdy hiking boots/shoes. Participants should be prepared for sudden changes in temperature and weather conditions.

REFUND POLICY:

Cancellations received at least 14 days prior to the start of a class will qualify for a refund minus a cancellation fee of \$25 per participant for a one-day class, \$50 for a multi-day class, \$5 per kid's class and \$15 per half-day class or bus tour seat. Registration money transferred to another class will be subject to a \$10 switch fee.

Cancellations received less than 14 days prior to the start of a class or bus tour will not generate a refund. If the Field Institute cancels a class, every effort will be made to place the participant in another class; otherwise, a full refund will be given.

TEACHER RECERTIFICATION CREDIT:

Most courses are eligible for teacher recertification credit through the Centennial Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES). The fee is \$25 per course (.5 unit) or \$25 per series of threaded courses (1.0 - 3.0 units). A list of threaded courses can be found online at www.RMConservancy.org. Participants must enroll in all courses of a threaded series in order to qualify for the \$25 multi-unit fee. Please be prepared to pay for this credit with a check, made payable to BOCES, on the first day of a course or on the final day of a threaded series of courses.