



NATURE PHOTO LABYRINTH

SPECIAL COURSE: MODULE 2 – NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Types of Nature Photography	0
3.	Getting strated in Nature Photography	6
4.	Using Smartphones to take Nature Photographs	9
5.	Tips to Capture Amazing Photos on Phone	11
6.	Practice Activities	12
7.	Links to more Information on the Topic	13



1. INTRODUCTION



Nature photography includes extensive range of photography taken outdoors. The outdoors are the main subjects of the photography genre known as "nature photography." Sky, water, and landscapes are examples of specific subjects, as are the plants, birds and animals that live in these environments, or even both. Between this and the fields of wildlife, underwater, botanical, and other types of photography, it's a blurry line.

Nature photography allows you to capture the beauty of the natural world through the lens of a camera. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced photographer, there's always something new to learn and explore in nature photography.

You can start with a smartphone and then start investing in the photography equipment or you can get started with an actual camera right away. To get started, you'll need a basic understanding of photography and techniques. If you start with a smartphone, then later, a good camera with manual controls and a range of lenses will give you the flexibility to capture a wide range of subjects and scenes. You may also want to invest in a sturdy tripod and a set of filters to help you control light and create special effects.

Special Course: Module 2 – Nature Photography

Once you have basics sorted out, it's time to start exploring the natural world around you. Nature photography can be done in a variety of environments, from local parks and gardens to more remote wilderness areas. Look for interesting subjects such as wildlife, landscapes, flowers, and insects. Remember to be patient and observant, and to pay attention to the details that make each subject unique.

It's important to respect the natural world and the creatures that inhabit it. Always follow local rules and regulations, and never disturb or harm wildlife or their habitats. With a little patience, practice, and respect for the environment, nature photography can be a fulfilling and rewarding hobby for photographers of all levels.



Note: All photos used in this document are sourced from Unsplash Free Image

2. TYPES OF NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

The wonders of nature can leave us awestruck due to its various mysterious and magical ways of creating something beautiful. Nature being composed of multifaceted elements that create an enchanted kaleidoscope, gives rise to a number of types of nature photography than just one. Here's a list of some of them to give you an idea to understand nature photography.

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

One of the most well-known types of nature photography is landscape photography. It includes any image of an entire outdoor landscape, whether it be a broad view of a mountain range or a small area of forest caught during the golden hour. The location itself, such as a farm, field, orchard, seashore, or cave, as well as the actual items found there, can be the subject of fascination. (Trees, hills, rocks, wildlife, and so on). This kind of photography also heavily relies on weather and light, with even slight changes in the season or hour of the day having a significant impact on the composition as a whole.



Photographs of landscapes have long been used to promote conservation initiatives because they catch so much at once. Conservation photography, as the term suggests, refers to landscape photos used with the explicit goal of fostering concern for the natural world. Although not all landscape photos are made with conservation in mind, any picture that captures the awe of the world can do that. That implies that each of us can encourage greater environmental sensitivity among ourselves and others by using our devices.

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

As essential to nature as soil and water are animals. Animals (typically those who have not been domesticated) are highlighted in their native environments, wherever that may be, in wildlife photos.



In addition to shooting, wildlife photographers also need to possess a number of important abilities. This is so that the photographer can capture not only the appearance of wild creatures but also how they interact with their surroundings without disturbing them. This typically calls for a thorough knowledge of the

behaviour, habits, and environments of an animal subject, as well as the capacity to take pictures without interfering in any way.

Thus, wildlife photographers invest highly in their equipment relying on it to take one great shot, as this takes lot of patience and time, sometimes days and months.

FLOWER PHOTOGRAPHY

One of nature's most beautiful creations, flowers are brought into focus in astounding detail by floral photos. It also goes by the names of "plant photography," "garden photography," or "botanical photography," and it heavily depends on design to give us a closer look at something we might normally see but not fully appreciate.

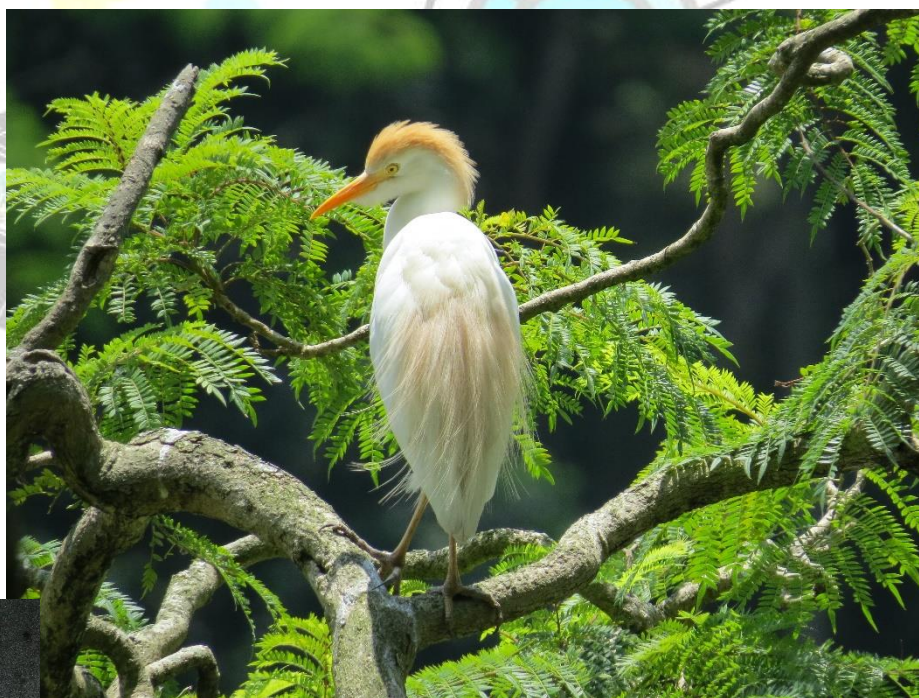




Since the topic is one that the majority of us are quite acquainted with, it differs from nature photographs of secret beaches and endangered animal species in that regard. Plant photography, however, helps us to appreciate the blossoms around us again by catching them in novel ways, from the commonplace daisies in a suburban garden to the exceptionally rare Juliet's Rose.

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

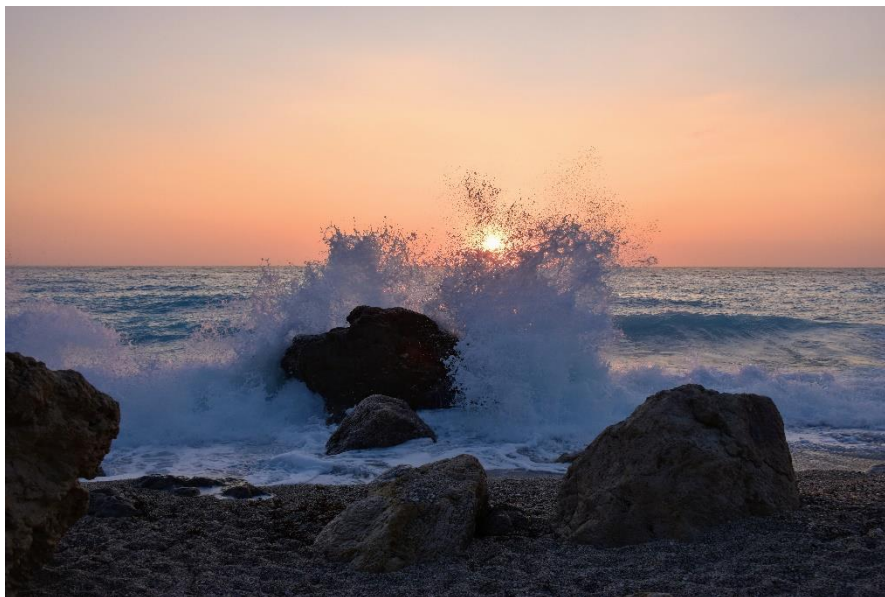
Another aspect of environment that we frequently spend a lot of time with but not always pay attention to is birds. Amazing occurrences, however, can occur when they are caught on video, particularly when they are caught in flight.



Bird photography is a special talent that calls for a lot of discipline and a knack for pressing the shutter release at precisely the right time. A bird shooter must also have an eye for framing so that the picture clearly shows both the bird and its surroundings. Wide angle images are frequently used

in this kind of photography because they enable the shooter to place the bird in context with its environment.

OCEAN PHOTOGRAPHY



Many are confused between ocean photography and seascape photography, but in actual ocean photography is a subset of landscape photography. Ocean is a subject that moves constantly, with splashes, waves, reflections of light painting a panorama across the

water from time to time. Given the liquid state of water it is also logistically tricky as there are high chances of getting equipment wet while handling.

To an extent, photographs of ocean are as much as vastness of the ocean, as they are about the things mentioned earlier. Therefore, using the shutter speed at strategic level is important in ocean photography.

Shutter speeds are slowed down to capture waves and ripples without blurring the shot and can be further tweaked to mitigate movement in the shot and make the ocean appear more serene than it really is. Hence, ocean photography differs from seascape photography, as seas are calmer compared to vast oceans.



MARINE LIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

Marine life photography is considered as a part of wildlife photography and requires you to take photos while under water. This includes taking photos of plants, animals, and other organisms that live in the waters – seas,

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oceans, or brackish waters. Marine life photography can be challenging as it requires you to go underwater and take photos. For this, you need your equipment to be waterproof, and need to be comfortable with water and have swimming skills that will allow you to snorkel or dive to capture the photos.

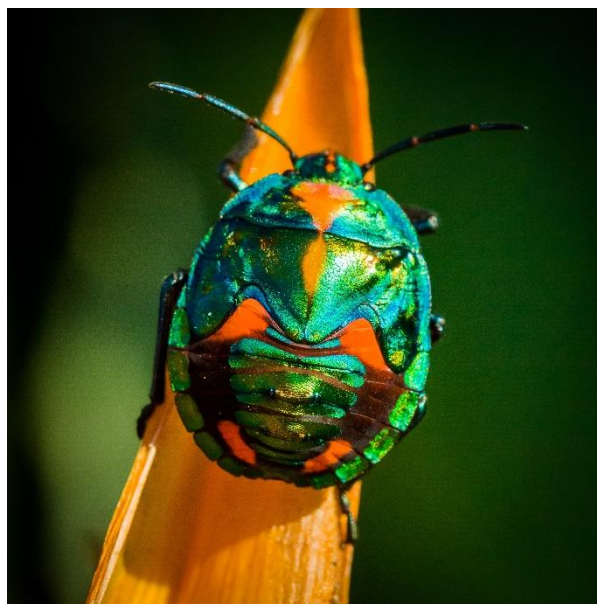


Marine life photography can be fun and exhilarating experience, but the principles of taking photos differs as the light gets absorbed by water, and the light spectrum changes as you travel deeper. This requires you to add your own light to bring out the colours. The important things to remember are to understand exposure and what affect the aperture, shutter speed and ISO have on your image, and to use a strobe to add light and bring out the colour of your subject matter. In addition, to improve colour, contrast and sharpness of an image get closer to the subject, but respect the space of the subject.

MACRO PHOTOGRAPHY

The close-up images of small subjects that appear to be life-sized in the frame, is known as macro photography. Insects and tiny particles are popular for macro photography. These can appear majestic at higher resolution.

A must for this type of photography is having a macro lens, as zooming often blurs the image. Macro lens are affordable and are also available for smartphones.



MICRO PHOTOGRAPHY

Micro photography gets us even closer to subjects, giving us a look at things that we wouldn't be able to see at all without a specialized lens (in this case, a micro lens). It's sometimes referred to as microscopic photography or photomicrography, and is just a step further in the magnification process than its macro cousin. If you want to get technical, the magnification of photomicrography is between 10:1 and 20:1, while macro is 1:1 up to 10:1.



3. GETTING STRATED IN NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Nature photography is an exciting and rewarding. In the beginning its important know about the following things:

Get to Know Your Gear



Before you start taking photos, it's important to become familiar with your equipment. Whether you're using a DSLR camera or a smartphone, take the time to read the manual and learn how to use the different settings and features. This will help you get the most out of your camera and allow you to experiment with different techniques and

styles of photography. If you are using a smartphone, try to get familiar with how different settings work and the results they give. On smartphones you can also download apps that can be useful or invest in attachable lenses.

Choose Your Subject

The natural world is full of amazing subjects for photography, from landscapes and seascapes to wildlife and flowers. Choose a subject that interests you and start exploring. Look for interesting angles, lighting, and compositions that highlight the beauty of your subject. Don't be afraid to experiment and try new things.



Pay Attention to Lighting



Lighting is one of the most important aspects of nature photography. Pay attention to the direction and quality of the light, and use it to your advantage. Early morning and late afternoon are often the best times for photography, as the light is warm and golden. If you're shooting during the middle of the day, look for shaded areas or use a diffuser to soften the light.

Think About Composition

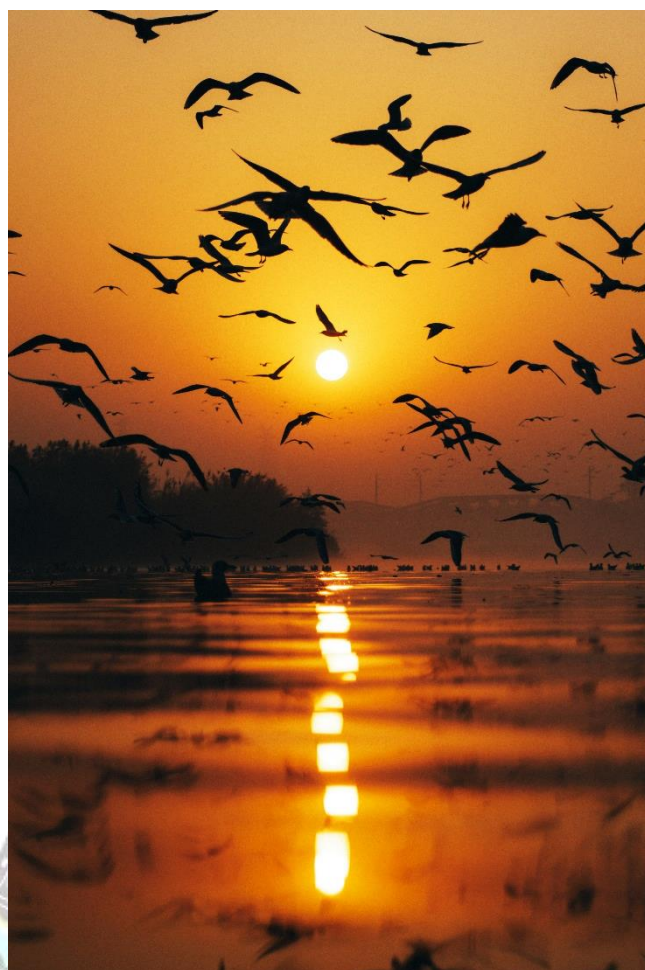
Composition is the arrangement of elements within a photo. A well-composed photo will draw the viewer's eye to the subject and create a sense of balance and harmony. The rule of thirds is a basic principle of composition that can help you create more interesting and dynamic photos. Imagine dividing your frame into thirds both horizontally and vertically, and placing your subject at one of the intersection points.



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Practice, Practice, Practice

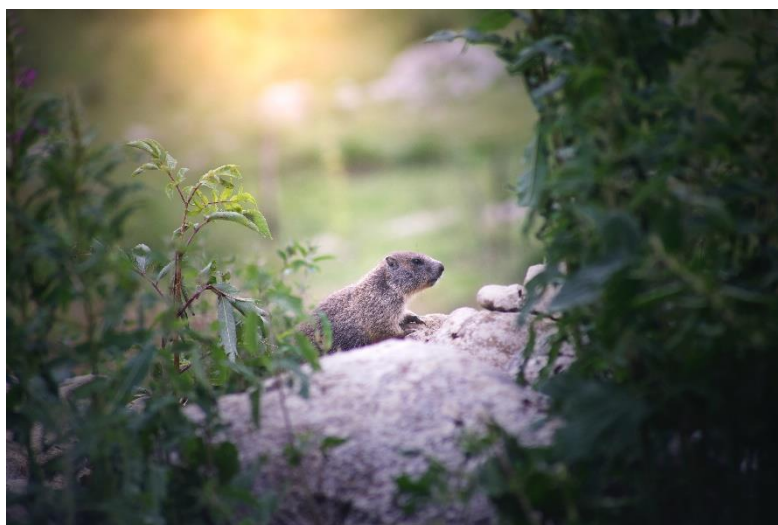
As with any skill, the more you practice, the better you'll become. Take your camera with you everywhere you go, and look for opportunities to take photos. Experiment with different techniques and styles, and don't be afraid to make mistakes. Some of the best photos come from unexpected moments.



Share Your Photos

Once you've taken some great photos, share them with others. Social media is a great way to connect with other photographers and get feedback on your work. You can also enter photo contests or submit your work to magazines or websites.

In conclusion, nature photography is a wonderful hobby that allows you to connect with the natural world and create beautiful images. With the right equipment, techniques, and practice, you can capture stunning photos that will inspire and delight others. So, get out there, explore, and start taking photos!



4. USING SMARTPHONES TO TAKE NATURE PHOTOGRAPHS



Nature photography is a wonderful way to capture the beauty of the natural world around us, and with the advancement of smartphone cameras, it's now easier than ever to take stunning photos of the great outdoors. Whether you're an experienced photographer or a beginner, a smartphone can be a powerful tool for capturing the magic of nature.

Smartphone cameras have come a long way in recent years, with many models boasting impressive features such as high-resolution sensors, multiple lenses, and advanced image processing algorithms. This means that you can now take sharp, detailed photos of landscapes, wildlife, and other natural subjects without the need for expensive camera equipment.

In addition to the hardware, there are also a wide range of photography apps and editing tools available for smartphones that can help you take your nature photography to the next level. From manual controls and exposure adjustments to filters and special effects, these apps offer a range of options for capturing and enhancing your photos.

Of course, capturing stunning nature photos with a smartphone requires more than just a good camera and the right apps. You'll also need to know the basics of composition, lighting, and subject selection. By learning these skills and putting them into practice, you can create breath-taking images that capture the beauty and wonder of the natural world.

We'll explore some tips and tricks for taking great nature photos with your smartphone. So, grab your smartphone and let's get started!

1. CAMERA INVERSION

Elements and organisms in nature come in all shapes and sizes. Most of the times our attention is drawn towards bigger subjects, making us to ignore the small flowers, insects and animals. Here's an effective tip to enhance the presence of those small subjects: rotate your phone camera to 180

degrees, which positions your lens at bottom of the phone and capture the image.

Rotating your phone camera allows the lens to be at eye-level of the subject, sometimes even from below, looking up. This angle allows to elevate the small stature of the subject into something majestic and fill the frame.

You may also want to try getting down on your hands and knees or laying down flat for a bug's eye view. You can use the elements around to frame the subjects, such as grass, fallen leaves or flowers.

2. MACRO LENSES

We have talked about macro lenses earlier. Macro lens attachments will allow to achieve shallow depth of field with your smartphone, that you might get with a DSLR. This works well with flowers, making it stand out from its background.

New phones have good macro settings for nature photography. It's also great for insects but getting closer might scare them away. Be patient and keep trying. It takes time to get used to working with these lenses, especially with a moving subject. Start with a lower magnification lens (such as 7x) before trying a higher one (such as 14x or 21x). Handholding requires practice and time. Minor movements of your camera or lens are amplified by lenses. A tripod is useful, especially for taking photos of flowers rather than insects that may flee quickly.

3. TO ZOOM OR NOT TO ZOOM

Smartphone cameras often disappoint when it comes to optical zoom, making it challenging to capture distant wildlife. One solution is attaching a telephoto lens, but you can also use natural leading lines such as watercourses, tree lines or changes in the landscape to guide your viewer's eye. Additionally, try physically moving closer to your subject. Take a hike!

4. BURST MODE

Your smartphone, like any other camera, has a burst mode. Use it to take multiple photos in quick succession. With this feature, you can increase your chances of capturing the perfect shot of a bird in flight with its wings outstretched or a stag jumping as it jumps, fully stretched, across your composition.

5. EDITING YOUR SMARTPHONE PHOTOGRAPHS

Edit photos on your smartphone with apps like Snapseed, free for iOS and Android. Crop, adjust light, contrast, and reveal detail. Each edit is saved as a layer for easy undo or redo. There are various apps available that let you do just this.

One last tip: remember to tap to focus! You will be surprised how many experienced photographers do not do it.

5. TIPS TO CAPTURE AMAZING PHOTOS ON PHONE

Here are tips that you need to keep in mind:

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Photograph anytime, but the best natural light is in the morning and evening, especially with cloud formations at sunset. Natural light can be too strong, so shade is ideal for flowers to prevent washed-out images and show their true colours. Shading them enhances the full colour of the flower.

FROM DUSK 'TIL DAWN

If you are interested in wildlife, and often visit national parks, remember, the hour around dawn and dusk is the best. It can be very opportunistic to observe and photograph the animals here and sometimes you come across them when you least expect to.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Locations are very important when you want to take some serious photos, so study the areas around you based on the subject you want to photograph and set a list of various locations based on it.

FINISHING TOUCHES

A very nice Instagram filter is Lo-Fi for enhancing natural colours without appearing too artificial. Don't be afraid to try different filters and hues - natural colours are according to your preference.

6. PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

Nature photography is a wonderful way to explore and capture the beauty of the natural world. Here are five practice activities for nature photography that can help you improve your skills and create stunning images:

1. Experiment with different lighting: Lighting is a crucial element in photography, and experimenting with different lighting conditions can help you create more interesting and dynamic photos. Try shooting during the golden hour (the first or last hour of sunlight), or in different weather conditions such as fog or rain.
2. Focus on a specific subject: Choosing a specific subject, such as birds or flowers, can help you develop your skills in a particular area. This will also help you to hone your observation skills and improve your ability to capture the essence of your chosen subject.
3. Practice different compositional techniques: Composition is a key element of photography, and practicing different compositional techniques can help you create more interesting and dynamic compositions. Experiment with the rule of thirds, leading lines, and framing to create more visually appealing images.
4. Use different lenses and equipment: Experimenting with different lenses and equipment can help you create more diverse and unique photos. Try using a macro lens to capture close-up shots of flowers and insects, or a wide-angle lens to capture expansive landscapes.
5. Take a daily or weekly photo challenge: Setting yourself a challenge to take a new nature photo every day or every week can help you develop a regular photography habit and encourage you to explore new subjects and techniques.
6. Edit and critique your own work: Taking the time to review and critique your own work can be a valuable practice activity. This will help you to identify areas for improvement and refine your style over time. Additionally, experimenting with different editing techniques can help you bring out the best in your photos and make them stand out.

Remember, the key to improving your nature photography skills is to practice regularly and experiment with different techniques and styles. So, grab your camera, head outdoors, and start exploring the natural world!

7. LINKS TO MORE INFORMATION ON THE TOPIC

Here are some links to websites and resources that can help beginners learn about nature photography:

1. Outdoor Photographer: This website has a "Beginner's Guide to Nature Photography" section that covers topics such as equipment, composition, and lighting. <https://www.outdoorphotographer.com/photo-tips/beginners/>
2. Digital Photography School: This website has a variety of resources for beginner nature photographers, including articles, tutorials, and courses. <https://digital-photography-school.com/category/landscape-photography/>
3. Nature TTL: This website features articles and tutorials on a wide range of nature photography topics, including landscape, wildlife, and macro photography. <https://www.naturettl.com/>
4. National Geographic: The National Geographic website has a "Photography" section with articles, tutorials, and tips on nature and wildlife photography. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/>
5. Photography Life: This website offers a beginner's guide to nature photography, covering topics such as composition, lighting, and camera settings. <https://photographylife.com/landscape-photography-tips-for-beginners>
6. The Nature Conservancy: The Nature Conservancy offers a guide to nature photography with tips on capturing the natural world in photographs. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/camera-trap-photography-guide/>
7. Canon: Canon has a "Learning Photography" section on their website that includes tutorials on nature and landscape photography. <https://www.usa.canon.com/internet/portal/us/home/learn/education/to-pics/photography/landscape>
8. How to take hand held photos of insects <https://www.naturettl.com/macro-photography-handheld-insects/>
9. Africa- Media - This website has vast information on nature photography <https://africa-media.org/careers/nature-photography/>

These resources offer a wealth of information for beginners looking to improve their nature photography skills.



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