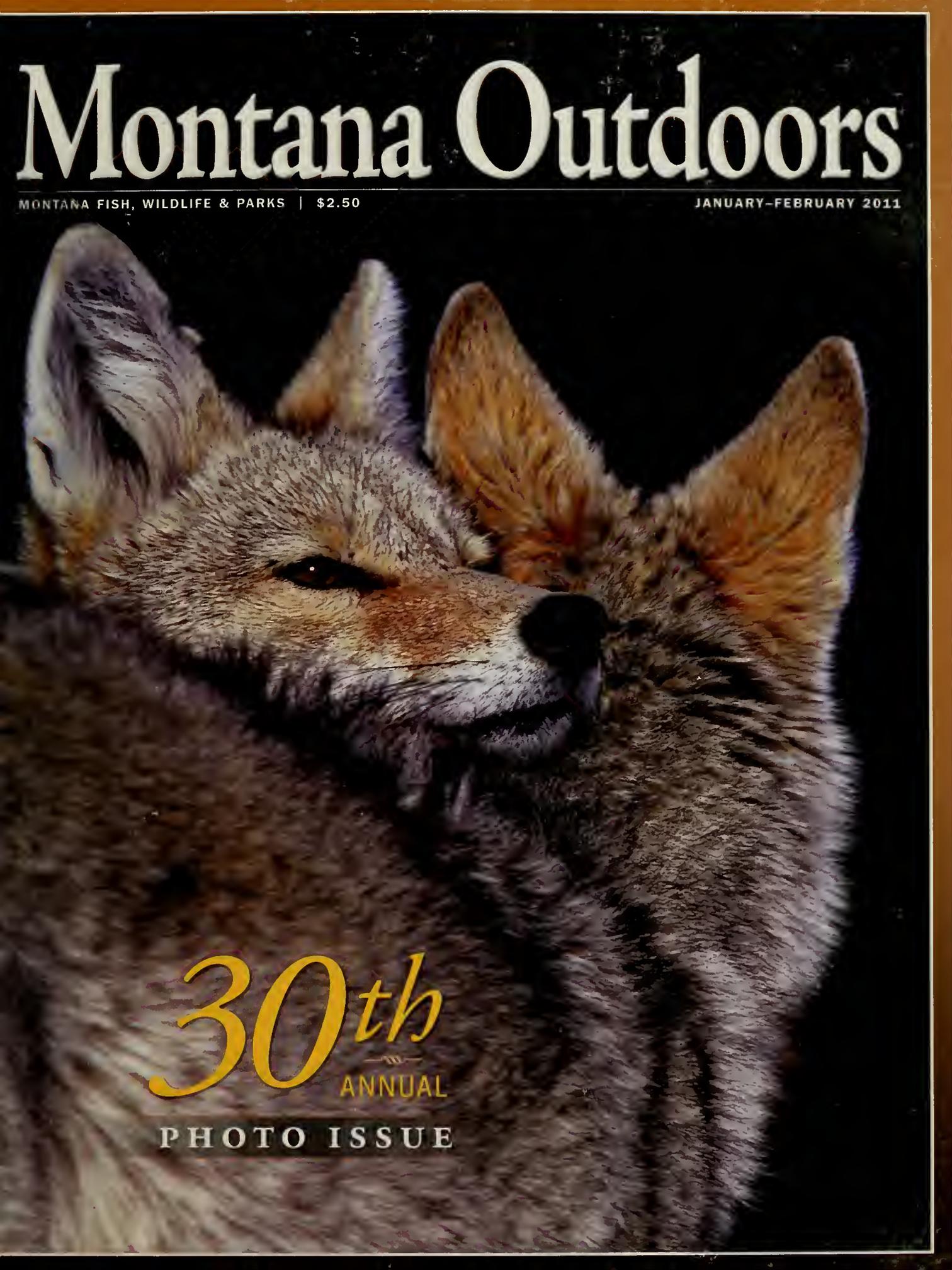


Montana Outdoors

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JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011



30th
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Montana Outdoors

*M*ontana Outdoors is known for its strong content—relevant news, comprehensive articles, and insightful essays. Yet many subscribers tell us what they enjoy most about the magazine is the photography. That's why for the past 30 years we've showcased the best of the best in our annual photo issue.

Great photographs don't just happen. They are earned and created. From years of observation, nature photographers know wildlife intimately. They can anticipate a grizzly bear's yawn, a trout's rise, or the moment a mountain goat leaps from a rocky perch. Photographers set their alarm clocks to go off while it's still technically night, then drive miles in the dark before hiking in from the road to be in position at sunup. While the rest of us waddle around in pajamas with our first cup of coffee, they're out chasing the morning light, peering over ledges and across valleys until they spot something spectacular. Then the pressure is on. Not only must photographers capture the image with perfect lighting and exposure at the best possible angle, but they also have to compose the shot in a way that adds drama, harmony, or visual excitement. Photographic artistry is not commonplace. But it happens enough that readers regularly tell us they have gasped in surprise or delight at a particularly marvelous image.

Because photographers have been so instrumental in creating *Montana Outdoors*, we are trying something new in this year's photo issue. Along with a dazzling display of images selected from more than 1,200 submissions, we're profiling a cross section of extraordinary photographers. We selected five whose images consistently appear in this magazine and help shape its presence and personality. Our aim is to shed some light on the mysterious process of creating great nature photographs. Maybe we'll even inspire the next Don Jones or Chuck Haney. If nothing else, we hope these glimpses into the lives and minds of photographers will make the wonderful images you regularly see in *Montana Outdoors* even more enjoyable.

—TOM DICKSON, *Editor*

HELPFUL NEW DIGITAL CAMERA GUIDE

Readers looking to buy a digital camera for nature photography should check out "The Audubon Guide to Cameras" in the November-December 2010 issue of *Audubon*. The guide explains the difference between single-lens reflex (SLR) cameras (the larger models with interchangeable lenses) and the compact digitals (point-and-shoots) that most of us own. It also demystifies the pixel puzzle and explains which lenses work best for various situations. Included are recommendations for cameras in every price range from professional models costing up to \$7,000 to compact digitals as low as \$450.

Good news whatever your budget: The guide's author, camera expert David Schloss, says technological advances have reached the point where "it's almost impossible to buy a 'bad' camera these days."

Visit audubonmagazine.org/features1011/guidetocameras.html



The Panasonic DMC-G2, an Audubon-recommended SLR camera in the mid-price range.

JOHN R. SHARKEY

above: Merlin

DUŠAN SMETANA

cover: Dryntas





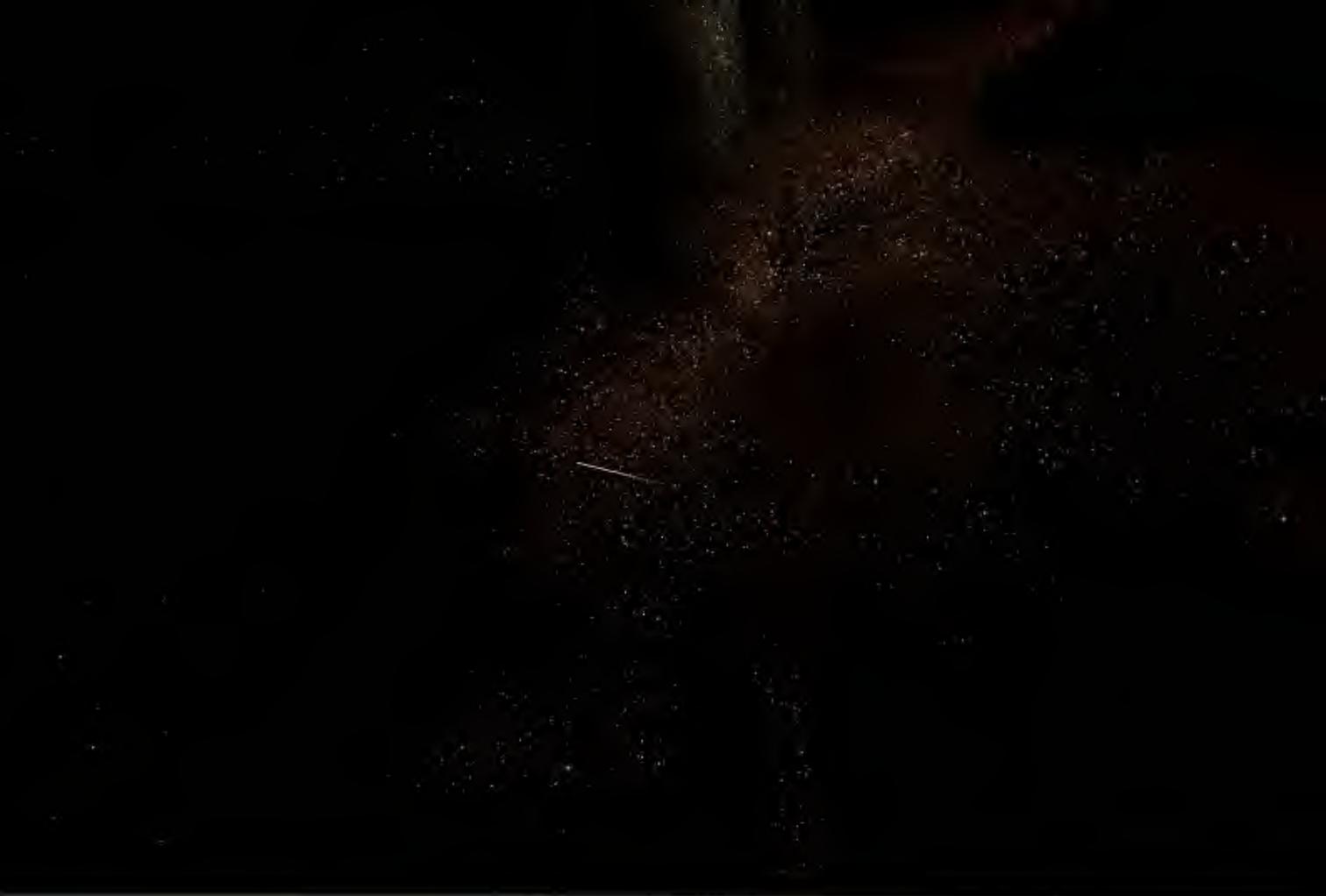
Clockwise from top left:

RONAN DONOVAN
Horned lark chick in nest.

STEFAN EKERNAS
Shoreline and bird tracks,
Grus Ventre River, Bridger-Teton
National Forest

JEFF VAN TINE
Fall colors, Badger-Two Medicine
area, southwest of the Blackfeet
Reservation

MIKE EBINGER
Aspen leaf detail







Elk Flume from top left.

JOHN LAMBING

Devil's Glen on the
Dearborn River, Lewis and
Clark National Forest

JOHN WINNIE JR.

Spawning arctic grayling,
Rogers Lake, west of Kalispell

JOSHUA BERGAN

Mottled sculpin, Gallatin River

KAREN LEMCKE

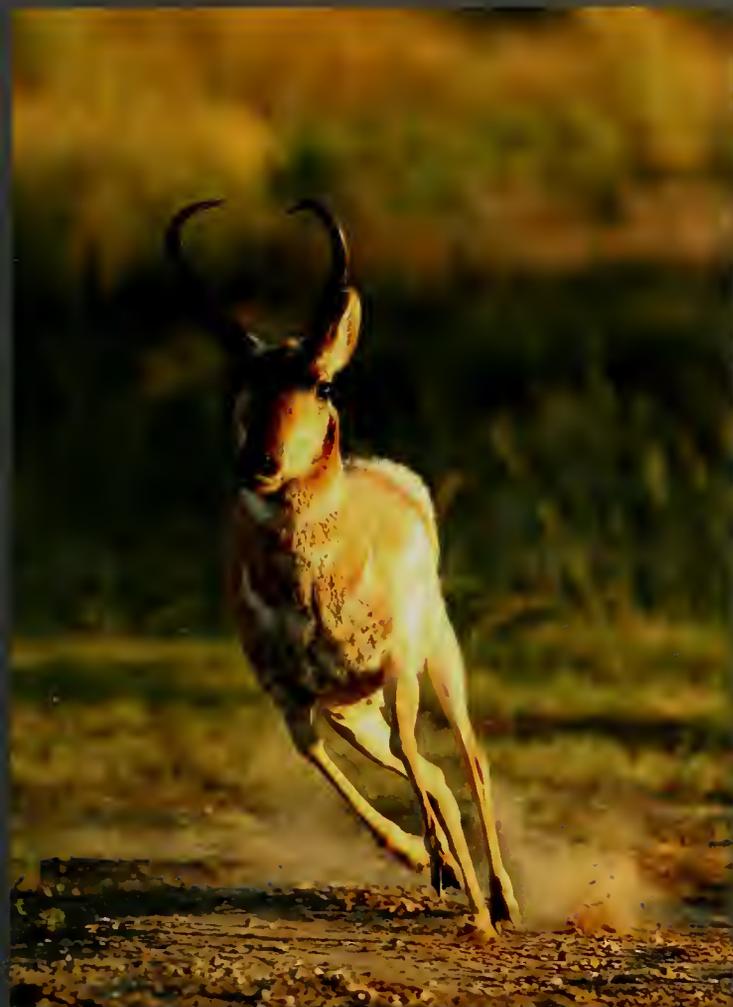
Kinlla Creek, Glacier National Park

THERESA JOHNSON

Natural debris, Milk River near
Hinsdale







TODD KLASSY

Opposite page: Stand of aspens, near Babb

SAM & STEPH ZIERKE

Left: Pronghorn buck, near Billings

NICK FUCCI

Below: Savannah sparrow against a field of canola







Clockwise from top left:

MICHAEL MCCANN
Forest floor, West Fork
of the Stillwater River

JEFF SATTLER
Natural rock garden

MICHAEL MCCANN
American bullfrog, Two
Moons Park, Billings

JEREMY ROBERTS
Lake Josephine, Glacier
National Park

JUSTIN OLTHOFF
Western blue iris



While other outdoors photographers are searching for grand landscapes and elusive wildlife, Erik Petersen focuses on the human element—the surprise in a rafter’s eyes while negotiating white water, an angler’s concentration on a dry fly, the joy of a disabled teenage hunter posing proudly with his first whitetail.

“Erik is one of the first people we think of when we need someone to photograph people engaging in the outdoors,” says Luke Duran, *Montana Outdoors* art director. “He’s so good at capturing the essence of their story. Maybe it’s because he’s from a small town himself, but he seems to really understand small-town life in Montana.”

Petersen, 35, grew up and attended college in rural central Minnesota. One day when the university newspaper where he worked as a reporter was short on photographers, someone handed Petersen a camera. By the end of the day, the journalism major was hooked. “I found it was a lot more fun to tell a story with photographs than with words,” he says.

Petersen, who lives east of Bozeman in Clyde Park with his wife and two small boys, moved to Montana in 1999. He worked in construction before landing a staff photographer position, first with the *Livingston Enterprise* and then the *Bozeman Chronicle*. At the newspaper he covers everything from professional rodeos to high school soccer. On the side he shoots weddings, wildlife, and outdoors activities and scenery.

Petersen is one of the Northwest’s top newspaper photographers. He won first-place regional awards in 2004 and 2005 from the National Press Photographers Association, and *Time* hired him to photograph media mogul Ted Turner. He brings that talent to his outdoors photography. “I strive to capture the peak emotional moment, whether it’s a person or an animal,” he says. “I’ve learned to do that from years of shooting for a newspaper, where every day you have to make a good photograph out of the situation as it is.”



Petersen says he is always on the lookout for an image or moment that tells a story—whether he’s trout fishing along the Yellowstone River or bowhunting in the Gallatin Range. “In photojournalism, it’s drummed into your head that your photos have to have a ‘heart-beat,’ a life,” he explains. “Even when I’m shooting a beautiful landscape, I try to have a deer or a hunter in the corner to add that extra element of emotion.”



Camera: Nikon D700

Photography tip: “Practice, practice, practice. I’m lucky, because I get to do that as part of my job at the newspaper.” And would-be outdoors photographers not so fortunate? “Get out there and shoot every day. That’s the only way you get better.”



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: HUNTERS BOY AND BRANDON RENKIN; BLACK BEARS IN A COTTONWOOD TREE IN BOZEMAN; FRED HAPPEL OF HAPPEL'S CLEAN-CUT MEATS; YDUNG SWIMMER AND HER BEAGLE AT BOZEMAN'S ANNUAL LABOR DAY OOG SWIM







Close-up from top left

STEVEN GNAM

Prairie rattlesnake

RONAN DONOVAN

Plains spadefoot toad
buried in sand

CHUCK & GALE ROBBINS

Bull snake raiding a cliff
swallow colony, Big Hole River

BECCA WOOD

Cat-faced spider

THERESA JOHNSON

Turkey vulture near Hinsdale

LAURA ROADY

Forest snail

CAL BEBEE

Raven



KURT REINHART

Sage: Foothill bladderwort,
near Miles City

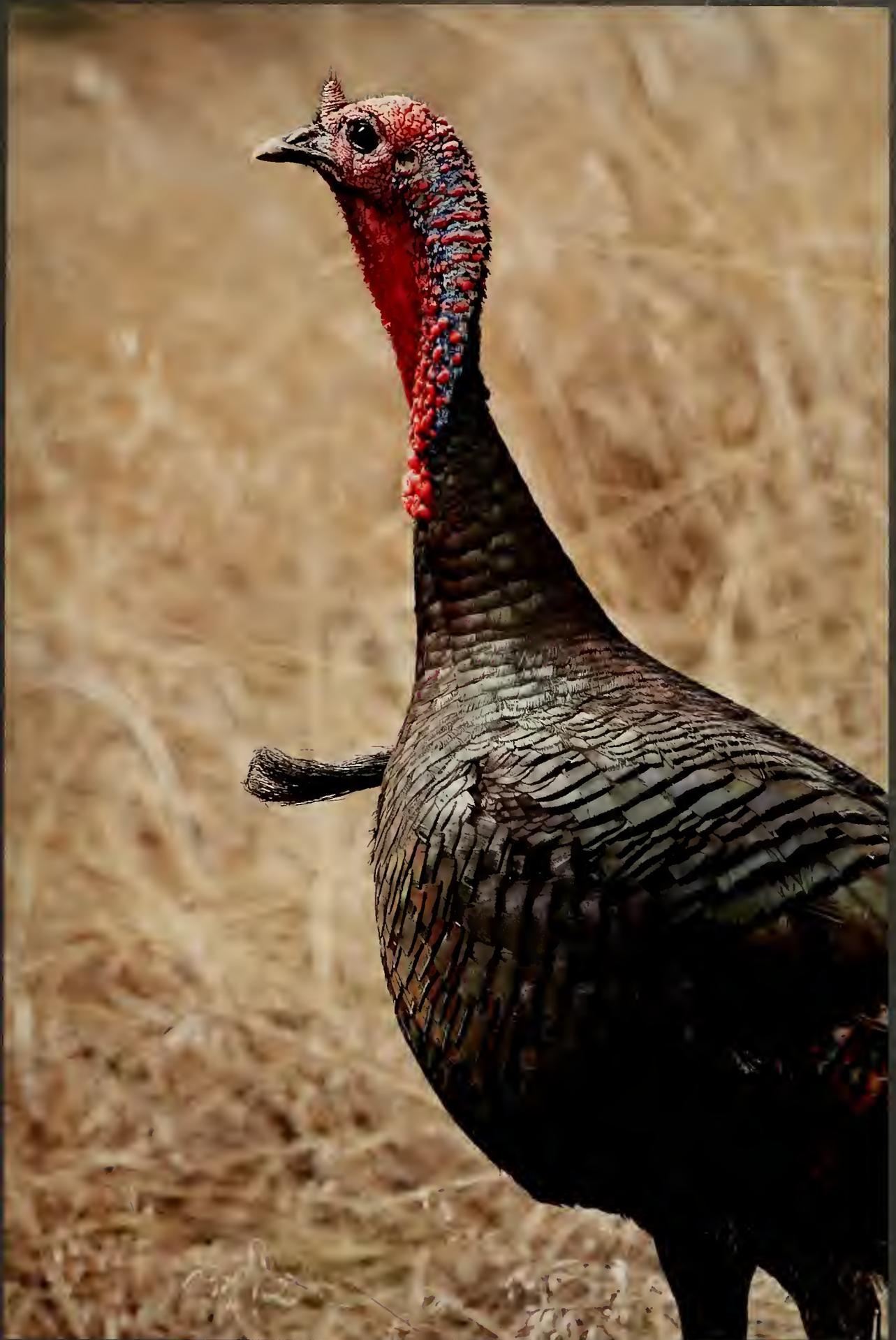
PAUL QUENEAU

Opposite page: Wild tom
turkey, near Missoula

GARY BEELER

Below: Desert cottontail
rabbit, Fryer Mountains





Kenton Rowe didn't set out to become a professional photographer. The 35-year-old Helena resident first worked as an occupational safety manager, Spanish language translator, and house builder. He also trained as a paramedic and even rode bulls in rodeos. One day he started taking pictures as a hobby and quickly found he had a talent for capturing dynamic images.

A big break came in 2006 when, while in his home state of Nebraska, Rowe sold a photograph to the state's conservation magazine. That led to an assignment with a nonprofit group, through which he met Joel Sartore, a *National Geographic* photographer. The two Nebraskans hit it off, and Rowe ended up remodeling Sartore's basement for six months while his new friend offered photography tips.

In 2007 Rowe and his wife, a Montana native, moved to Helena. "At the time, photography was still pretty much a hobby, but I thought maybe I could make it a career," Rowe says. Over the past four years, with a combination of good luck and hustle, he has built a solid photography résumé.

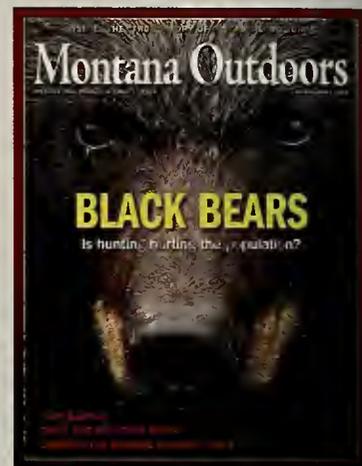
Rowe says being a professional photographer requires as much networking as it does camera work. Once while on assignment photographing Wayfarer State Park on Flathead Lake, he met a fellow who told him about a youth elk hunt on a private ranch in the Bitterroot

Valley. Rowe called the ranch manager and offered to take photos of the young hunters. Soon he was being paid to photograph that and other ranches for commercial publications.

In fall 2009 he accompanied several young elk hunters from the Bitterroot Valley ranch to a nearby FWP hunter check station, where he saw a hunter registering a wolf. Rowe's were the only professional photographs of a wolf killed during Montana's first regulated wolf hunt, earning him a sale to *Outdoor Life*.

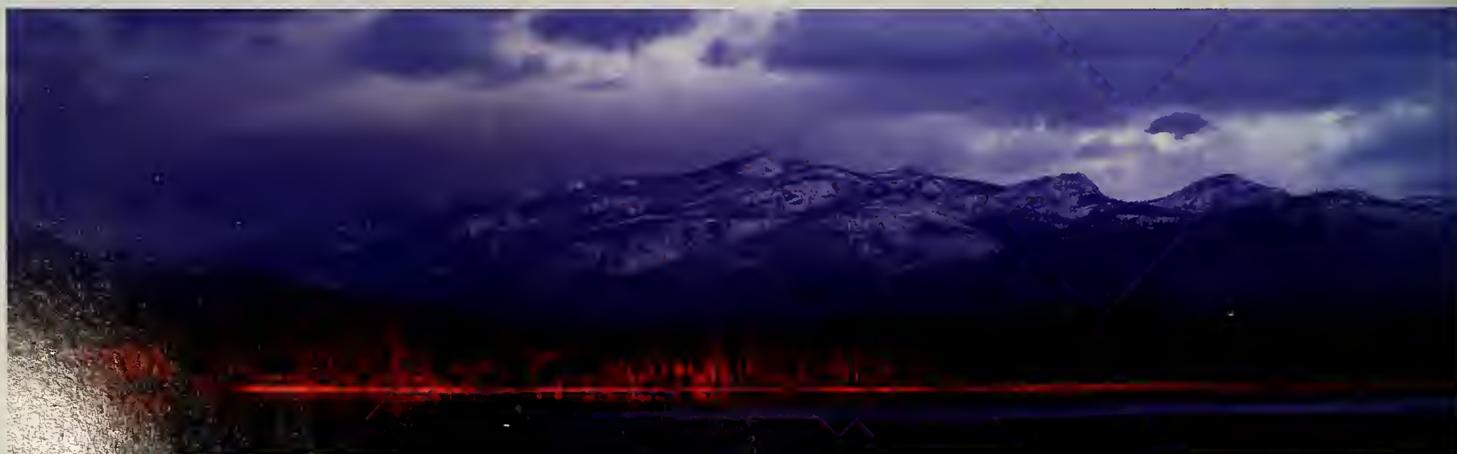
Networking also created the chance to take photographs of a nursing mountain lion, discovered by hunters Rowe met through a co-worker. One of his shots of the lioness and her cubs won an international award from the National Wildlife Federation.

When asked about his skills with a camera, Rowe compares photography to music: "I'm not very musical, but I know all the notes are out there. A good musician plays the notes in a way that makes compelling music. That's how it is with photography. The elements of life are all around us. What I'm doing is capturing them with my camera in a way that makes those elements compelling to others."

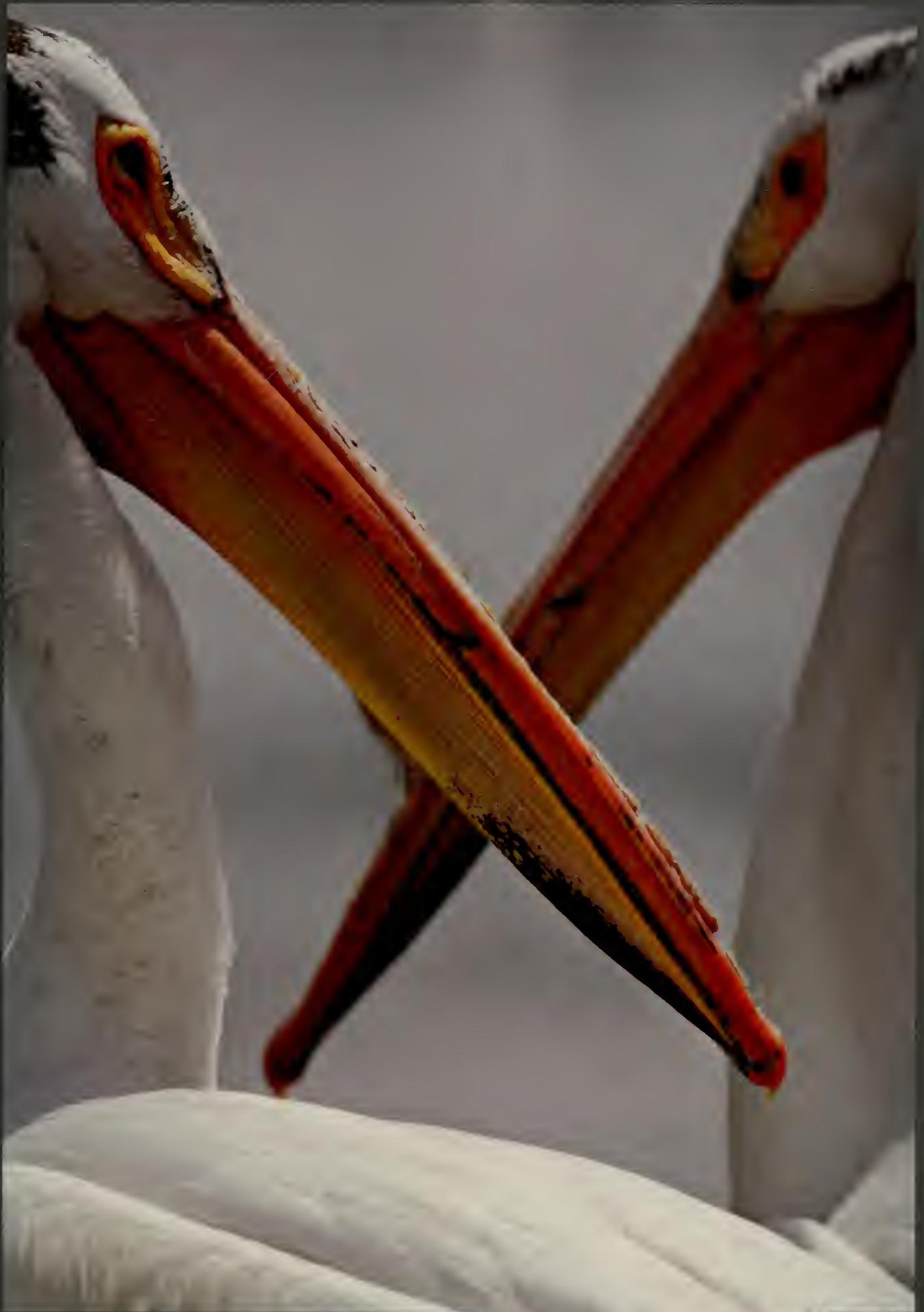


Camera: Canon 7D

Photography tip: "Always be ready and open to photographic opportunities. Some of the neatest pictures I get are while I'm on my way somewhere to take other photographs. I've learned that you can't pass up a good photo opportunity when it comes your way."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BLACK BEAR; PELICANS AT CANYON FERRY LAKE; PLACIO LAKE STATE PARK NEAR MISSOULA; COYOTE



VICTOR SCENDEL

Red-tailed hawk and hummingbird







Clockwise from top left:

STEVEN AKRE

Calf and cow moose in the Bitterroot Range, near Victor

TONY BYNUM

Bighorn rams, Glacier National Park

TIM CHRISTIE

Red fox

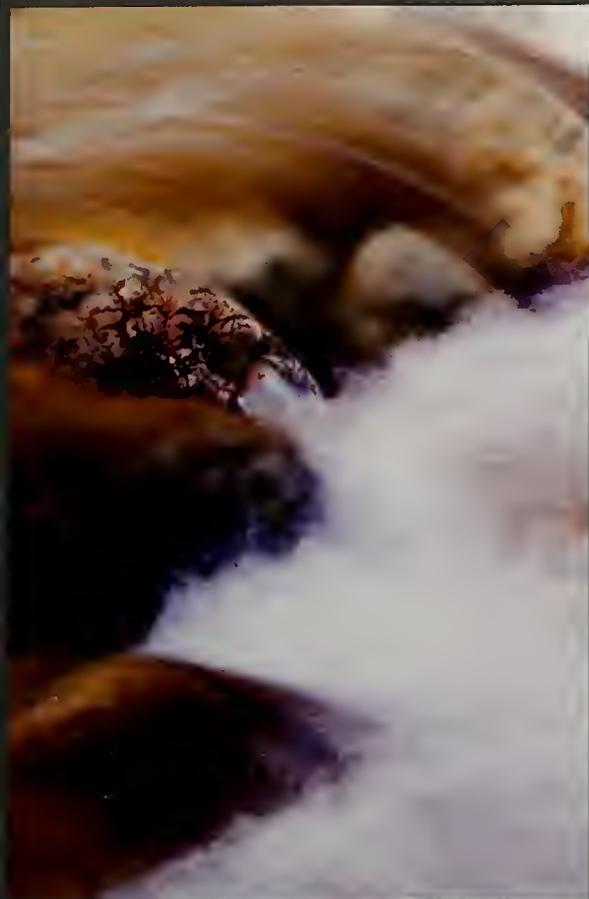
BILL SCHAFER

Pull moose









JAIME & LISA JOHNSON

Upper: Splash in Beaver Creek, near Lincoln

JIM STREETER

Left: Granite Creek, near Libby

PASQUALE R MINGARELLI

Right: Surface reflection on Gunsight Lake, Glacier National Park

KAREN LEMCKE

Bottom: Sunlit ridge reflected in Kintla Lake, Glacier National Park



Click here for more

JOHN WINNIE JR.

American pika

KARL KRIEGER

Pine marten

**FRANCIS &
JANICE BERGQUIST**

Long-tailed weasel in
winter coat

CINDY GOEDEL

Burrpiper

MICHAEL HARING

Striped skunk





“I walk and talk a mile a minute, I know,” says Judy Wantulok, who owns Joe’s Parkway Market, a Bozeman store that sells beer, wine, and gourmet foods. “People here at work can’t believe I can sit still for hours waiting to get a good photograph of wildlife.” But it’s true. And that unlikely ability has allowed Wantulok to see and photograph wild animals unseen by most other people.

Like so many top-notch nature photographers, Wantulok came to the craft by chance. “Photography was never something I looked at as a profession,” she says. “I’d get outdoors a lot with my husband, Jim, who’s a wildlife artist, but usually I’d sit in the car and read a book while he was taking pictures for his paintings. Then in 1996 we were out and he had this mother bear and all her cubs up in a tree and running all over. I looked up from my book and said, ‘I need to get in on that action.’ So a few weeks later I bought my own camera, and that’s how it started.”

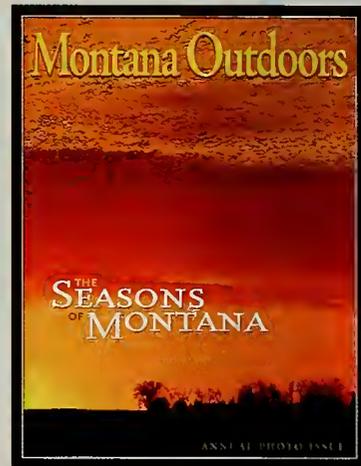
Though her photos have graced magazine covers and won several awards, Wantulok shrugs off any praise. “Jim taught me pretty much everything I know—composition, lighting, wildlife. He’s the artist and the nature expert, not me.” Always self-effacing, the 60-year-old photographer says some of her best pictures have come by accident. “I won an award for a bison shot I took with a polarized lens I’d been using on ducks the day before but forgot to remove. That happens a lot. I call it ‘doing a Judy.’ But, you know, sometimes my lack of deliberation pays off.”

Wantulok, who says she and her husband are afield 150 to 200 days each year, admits that one of the hardest things for her to do is wait patiently when she begins photographing an animal. “I’m the kind of person who wants to rush off down the road to the next spot,” she says. “But I’ve learned that if you just stop in one place and stay with an animal until it eventually leaves, you’ll be surprised

what you end up seeing.”

Wantulok appears to move effortlessly between the mercantile and outdoors worlds. “At the beginning of the week, I’m putting in orders for specialty items and groceries,” she says. “And at the end of the week, I’m back in nature trying to fulfill my dream of becoming a better naturalist and photographer.”

Wantulok says the main reason she enjoys her work as a nature photographer is that it allows her to spend time outdoors among Montana’s diverse wildlife. “A lot of times you don’t get the shot you want,” she says, “but you still get to see the animal and see the action. It beats reading a book in the car.”



Camera: Canon EOS 1D Mark IV

Photography tip: “Learn as much as you can about wildlife behavior. Like when you see raptors in a tree, they almost always poop right before they fly. Whenever I see that, I have a second or two to get ready for the shot of them flying. The more you observe wildlife, the better you get at anticipating what they will do.”



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SNOW GEESSE NEAR FREEZOUT LAKE; BISON IN GARDINER; SUMMERTIME MOUNTAIN GOAT IN THE ABSAROKA BEARTOOTH RANGE; AMERICAN GOLDFINCH







Clockwise from top left:

BOB SEARS

Windmill, near
Box Elder

CHUCK HANEY

Snow geese over
Frognot Lake WMA,
near Choteau

AARON ROTH

Misty morning along
the Yellowstone River,
near Miles City

STEVE LOVAS

Late-season pheasants
on hay bales at Reese
Creek, near Bolgrade



DAN HARBOUR
Light: Mountain bluebird

MICHAEL H. FRANCIS
Edwin: Western tanager
on juniper





STEVE MITCHELL

Above: Ring-billed gull

RON BOGGS

Left: Northern flicker and carrion





ALLEN RUSSELL

Above: Red-tailed hawk perched near Sphinx Mountain, Lee Metcalf Wilderness

BOB MARTINKA

Above right: Sandhill crane and chick

DEE LINNELL BLANK

Right: Pussywillows on willows and red-osier dogwood





KEVIN R. FREDENBERG

Left: Fall reflection, near Thompson Falls

KEN ARCHER

Below: American avocets in courtship

ELIZABETH CLAIRE ROSE

below left: Fall foliage in the Bitterroot Mountains



Photographers dream of seeing one of their shots on a magazine cover. But that's old hat to Don Jones, of Libby, whose images have appeared on more than 500 covers, including many of *Montana Outdoors*.

Jones, 51, grew up in suburban Chicago and became fascinated with photographing birds while still a boy. "My mom took me to buy my first camera because I was still too young to drive," he says. After moving to Missoula and graduating from college, Jones began working part-time on a U.S. Forest Service fire crew. To make ends meet, he tried selling wildlife photographs on the side. Sales were slow at first, but steadily increased. "After 11 years, it got to the point where the fire fighting was getting in the way of my photography business, so that's when I decided to go full time," he says.

Jones regularly receives calls and e-mails from people hoping to trade in their existing job for a life photographing wildlife. "I tell them they really need to think twice about giving up the benefits and the health care," he says. "This is a grueling business. Getting published is easy; making a living is a killer."

Yet Jones has done just that, supporting himself, his wife, and their two sons. He succeeds because he's one of the best wildlife photographers in the business. If you see a big-antlered whitetail buck or trophy bull elk on the cover of *Field & Stream* or *Sports Afield*, there's a good chance it's one of his. "Don is one of a handful of 'go-to' photographers we call when we need a great shot of big game or big game hunting," says Luke Duran, *Montana Outdoors* art director.

Jones also specializes in birds. "That's my real love," he says. "If I could make a living just shooting birds, I'd do it in a heartbeat."

What makes a Don Jones photograph stand out from the rest? "His exposure, sharpness, and composition are all perfect," says Duran. "But then he adds an extra feature, like an interesting position of a ptarmigan's head, or the way the sunshine hits a moose's antlers."

Jones says he pays particular attention to light. "Today I saw a big

whitetail buck coming off a ridge, and I could see he was going to walk through a spot where the light shadowed the ridge but was still on him and would make his head stand out even more," he says. "I waited for that, and then I also tried to get a shot with him lifting his leg, so you also have that little bit of action."

In recent years, Jones has been taking what he calls "landscape wildlife" photographs—images of mountains or forests with an elk, mountain goat, or other animal tucked into the corner. "I get really excited about those shots," he says. "They don't sell as well as the portraits, but I love doing them because they are so different. I specialize in shooting wild animals—no wildlife in zoos or game farms. And when you see my landscape wildlife photographs you know those animals are wild, because you could never get shots like that if there were cages or fences."



Camera: Canon Mark III and Mark IV

Photography tip: "Do your work behind the camera, not in front of a computer. By that I mean you should enjoy being outside working on composition and exposure to get great shots instead of taking mediocre shots and spending all your time afterward back in your office doing post-production work."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MULE DEER; GRAY WOLF; WHITE-TAILED PTARMIGAN; WESTERN BLUEBIRD







Click here from top left.

DENVER BRYAN

Winter mallards

TROY BATZLER

Setting sun over an angler
on the Missouri River

JUAN DE SANTA ANNA

Frosted fishing spoon, Big Sky
Lake, near Salmon Lake

BARRY & CATHY BECK

Parachute Adams dry fly

CRAIG & LIZ LARCOM

Mallard drake

JUAN DE SANTA ANNA

Pond reflection, Seeley-Swan Valley





VICTOR SCENDEL
Bull elk among falling aspen leaves



SHAWN T. STEWART
Whitetail doe and fawn

PARTING SHOT



TOM REICHNER

Bighorn rams at Thompson Falls



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