

## Safety guidelines for members of NDPS participating in Nature and Wildlife Group Shoots and other outdoor field trips.

The health and safety of all members is the Society's top priority and through the provision of practical guidance and pre-planning aims to reduce risks to the lowest practical level. However, the Society is unable to accept liability for any member who chooses to participate in Nature & Wildlife Group Shoots and other outdoor field trips.

Members who participate in Nature & Wildlife Group shoots and any other similar outdoor activity are responsible for their own health and safety and in addition should not do anything that has the potential to jeopardise the safety of others (including NDPS colleagues and members of the general public).

One of the reasons why Nature & Wildlife/outdoor photography is so popular is because, even aside from the photography, just being out in nature can be a great experience. But Nature & Wildlife/outdoor photography can often take you to places that are rather remote or rugged, so it is important to take the appropriate safety precautions to prevent injury.

The following safety tips are recommended to help keep everyone safe:

- 1) Put safety and wildlife ahead of photography - Do not do anything that will put your safety (or anyone else's safety) in jeopardy during the shoot. Making sure you do not disturb wildlife in their natural habitat should also be a priority.

### On coastal locations:

- \* Wear appropriate footwear and be careful on slippery surfaces
- \* Check the tide timetables, so that you know when high and low tides are
- \* Make sure that you know how to safely retreat so that you do not get cut-off by an incoming tide
- \* Stay away from cliff edges, especially if it is windy or the ground is wet

- \* Avoid walking below cliffs as many are unstable
- \* Consider leaving a change of clothing in the car to change into if you get soaking wet
- \* It might be necessary to walk in the dark to and from the shoot so make sure you have a fully-charged head torch to illuminate the path

### On marshy ground –the Broads and Fens:

- \* Wear appropriate footwear and be careful on slippery surfaces close to any stretches of water
- \* Do not stray off boardwalks
- \* If ice has formed on bodies of water, stay off as it is unlikely to support your body weight

### In forests and other wooded areas:

- \* Observe all notices, signs and grading of trails as they show the expected levels of difficulty
- \* Be particularly cautious in high winds and obey any instructions from forest staff
- \* Keep your distance from work sites and obey all signs
- \* Do not approach any working machinery
- \* Do not climb on timber stacks
- \* Respect nature and wildlife

If you do get wet, clean your hands with antiseptic wipes before eating and drinking. Cover all cuts and grazes with waterproof plasters.

- 2) Research Locations - Before going on a nature & wildlife/outdoor shoot, be sure to sufficiently research the area being visited. There is a lot of information available online and you should be able to get a good feel for a location beforehand. Also remember if the shoot is being held at a designated National Park Area or Nature Reserve there will almost certainly be

additional byelaws and rules you will be expected to observe particularly about observing wild animals etc from a safe distance.

- \* If travelling by car, make sure you know exactly where you can park safely
- \* Use SatNav (or a map) to direct you to the correct location if it is unfamiliar to you
- \* Take a fully charged mobile phone with you
- \* Consider leaving a change of clothing in the car to change into if you get soaking wet
- \* It might be necessary to walk in the dark to and from the shoot so make sure you have a fully-charged head torch to illuminate the path

3) Check the weather forecast before going on a landscape/outdoor shoot to ensure you wear and/or bring the appropriate clothing with you including:

- \* Windproof and waterproof outer-clothing
- \* Appropriate footwear for the conditions that are likely to be encountered during the shoot
- \* Head covering
- \* Gloves
- \* Remember to layer appropriately
- \* Hot drink and food

Remember it is better to wear layers rather than one garment.

4) Let someone know where you are going and at what time you plan to return

- \* When on a nature & wildlife/outdoor shoot with other members of the Society make sure you arrive in good time and in the event, you are delayed know how you can meet up with the rest of the group safely
- \* Equally, do not leave the shoot before everyone else finishes without letting one of the party know you are leaving

5) You are responsible for your own camera gear and other equipment you choose to bring on a shoot so keep it safe

- \* Buy a good camera bag
- \* Buy a camera rain cover
- \* Beware of temperature differentials

- \* Keep your eye on your camera bag
- \* Make sure your tripod is well maintained
- \* Get insurance

In addition, during wet weather or at coastal locations

- \* Cover your camera with rain gear
- \* Protect your lens with a filter
- \* Minimise lens changes
- \* Wipe moisture off quickly
- \* Clean your gear after the shoot

6) Remember to be respectful – as photography becomes more popular some locations and viewing areas (designed to allow wildlife to be viewed by the public) can become very busy at times, especially during holiday times and when there is good light. In some circumstances this can cause conflict between photographers as they look for the best place to compose their shot. If you arrive at a location and there is already someone there give them space and do not get in their way. Equally, when on a shoot with colleagues do not try and 'hog' the best spots.

Talking and negotiating often helps –they may let you share the space or move on once they have got their shot. However, if there is a crowd it is often best to just find another spot to shoot from.

Finally, remember to enjoy yourself and observe the following principles of 'Leave no Trace'

- \* Plan ahead and prepare
- \* Travel (walk) on durable surfaces
- \* Dispose of waste properly
- \* Leave what you find
- \* Respect nature and wildlife
- \* Be considerate of others.