



# 15 SIMPLE BUT POWERFUL TIPS *that instantly elevate your* NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

**Easy-to-implement** ways to make **high-impact photos**  
*without struggling up a steep learning curve*





# Hey there!

## I'm Jaymi Heimbuch

Look at you, so fired up and ready to see the wild world with fresh eyes!

I'm thrilled you're excited to learn these simple yet incredibly effective photography skills because they'll truly open up new photographic opportunities for you.

I'm Jaymi. I've been a professional nature conservation photographer and photo editor for over 15 years.

From the time I first picked up a camera to document wildlife, I've felt the need to put images to work for the benefit of the natural world.

So that pull you feel? The one that drives you to make inspiring, beautiful images of nature and do something wonderful and impactful with them?

Yeah, I am right there with you.

That's why I created **Conservation Visual Storytellers Academy** - to help fellow photographers like yourself get the ongoing creative and professional development you need to hit the ambitious goals you have for your photography practice.

And I'm fired UP to be working with you, starting right now!

Seemingly simple tricks can truly transform your photos from "meh" to professional and polished. It's these uncomplicated yet potent strategies that make a world of difference in the final frame.

These tips aren't about you mastering every nuance of your camera or learning complex theories. Instead, it's about understanding key principles and techniques that can yield the MOST powerful results right away. So, ready to roll?



Let's get started! >>>



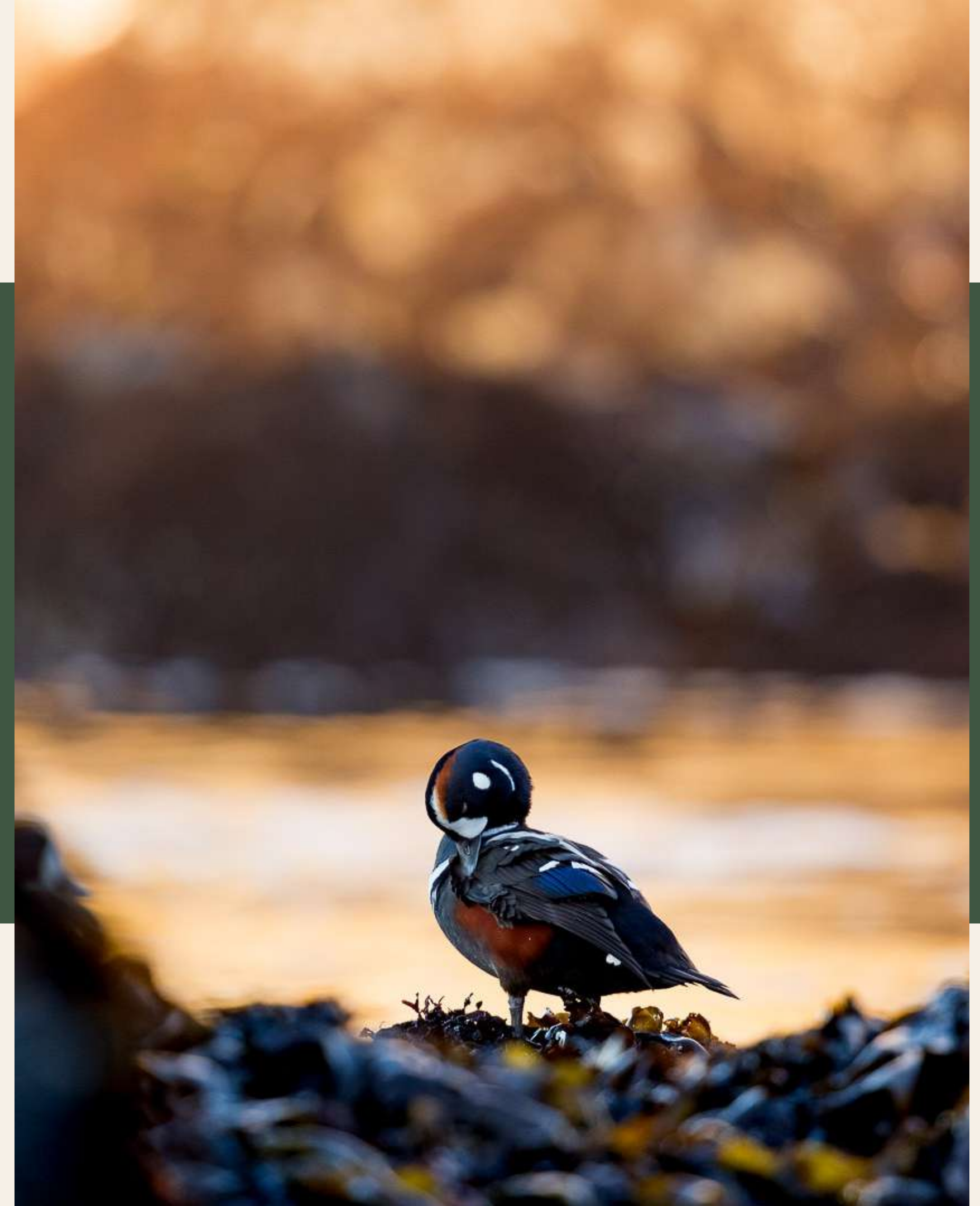
# 1. Embrace the Golden Hour

Light makes all the difference in nature photography. It's what determines mood, contrast, color, even composition.

So, simply changing when you're out with your camera can make a big impact on your final images.

The magical moments of sunrise and sunset, known as the 'Golden Hour,' bathe everything in a soft, warm light. This illumination is ideal for capturing striking images with less contrast, longer shadows, and stunningly saturated colors.

To make the most of it, plan your shoots around these times and observe how the changing light transforms your subject.





## 2. Get Eye Level

A simple yet powerful way to create an intimate and engaging image is to shoot from the eye level of your subject.

This perspective brings viewers into the world of your subject, be it a bird or a flower, fostering a deeper connection.

Try crouching down, lying on your belly, or propping your camera up to match your subject's height.

Next time you're out in the field, experiment with changing your position to match your subject's eye level and notice how it instantly transforms your shot.



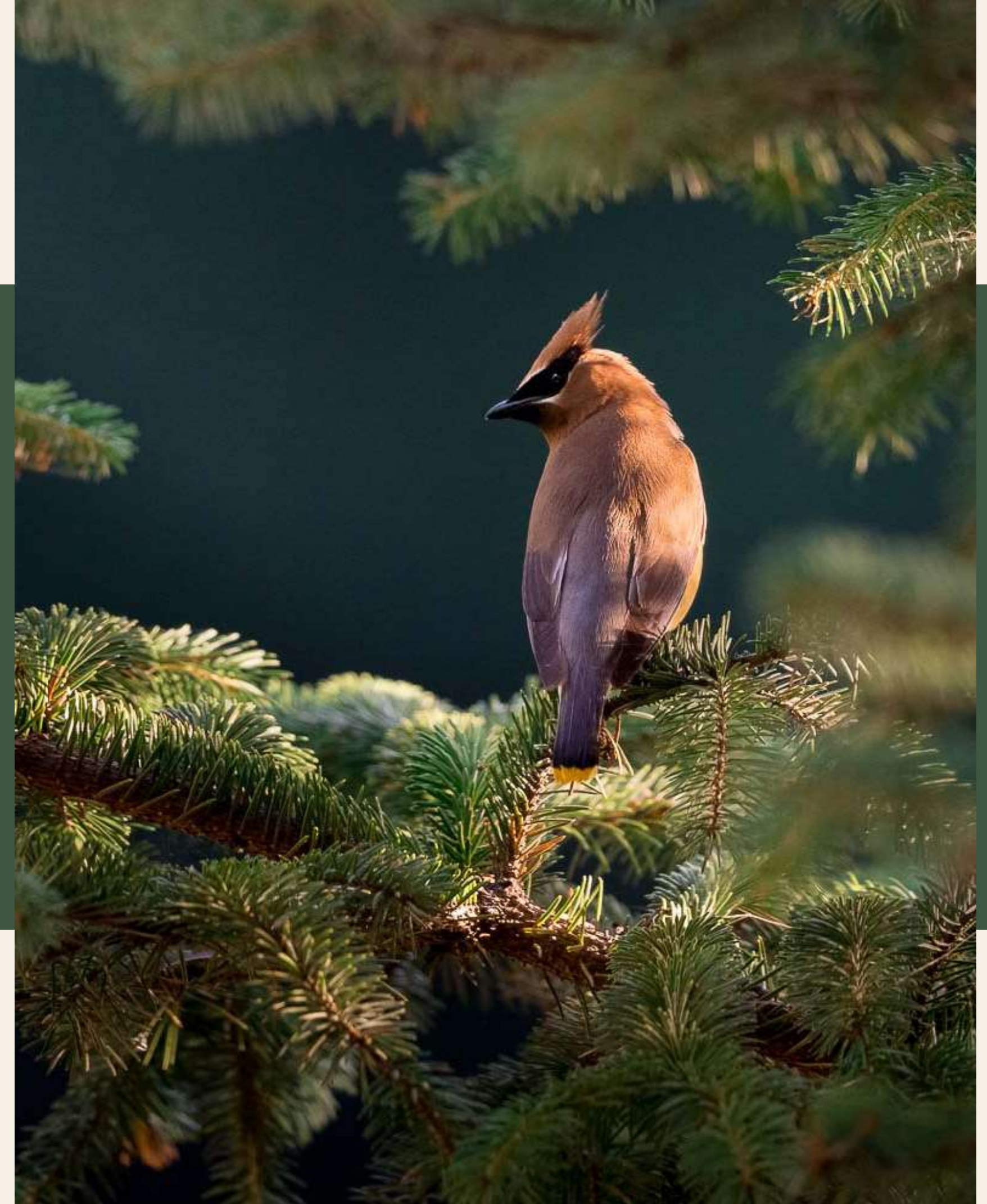
### 3. Mind Your Background

The background of your image plays a crucial role in its overall impact. It can either accentuate your subject or detract from it.

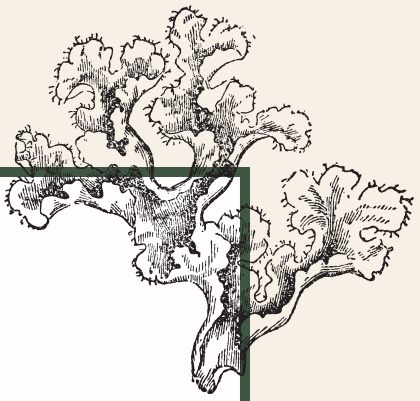
A cluttered background can be distracting, while a simple background can really make your subject pop.

Train your eye to notice what lies behind your subject - *especially* things like sticks, branches, poles or even horizon lines cutting through your main subject at awkward angles - and adjust your position or angle if needed to get a nice, clean background.

You'll see how quickly just a step or two to the left or right can make an instant difference in the quality of your photo's composition.







## 4. Watch Your Edges

The edges of your frame are just as important as the center.

Just as a cluttered background distracts from your subject, unwanted elements creeping into the frame are not only distracting but can feel flat-out annoying to viewers.

The eye is constantly being pulled to the edge of the frame, rather than allowed to stay focused on the content of the photo.

So, always scan the boundaries of your frame for things like sticks, rocks, or even unwanted highlights or shadows before clicking the shutter.

A lightning-quick scan will ensure that nothing unwanted is creeping into - and ruining - your shot.



## 5. Try Different Perspectives

Variety is the spice of life, and the same goes for photography.

A slight shift in your camera's position can dramatically alter the mood and impact of your shot, or even the story you tell within your composition.

Getting low, climbing high, or even tilting your camera can offer fresh perspectives and breathe new life into your images.

So don't hesitate to change your position - or even your lens choice - and experiment with unconventional angles to create unique compositions.







## 6. Know Your Gear

Every tool in a craftsman's kit has a purpose, and knowing how to use them effectively makes all the difference.

From understanding the purpose of each button to tweaking settings on-the-go, being in sync with your gear can turn fleeting moments into fantastic shots.

It's not just about reading the manual or watching tutorials (though they help!), it's about practicing until the camera feels like an extension of yourself.

So, take some time to bond with your camera.

Familiarize yourself with your camera's features and settings and practice using them until they become second nature so you can make quick, on-the-spot adjustments.



## 7. Use Manual Mode

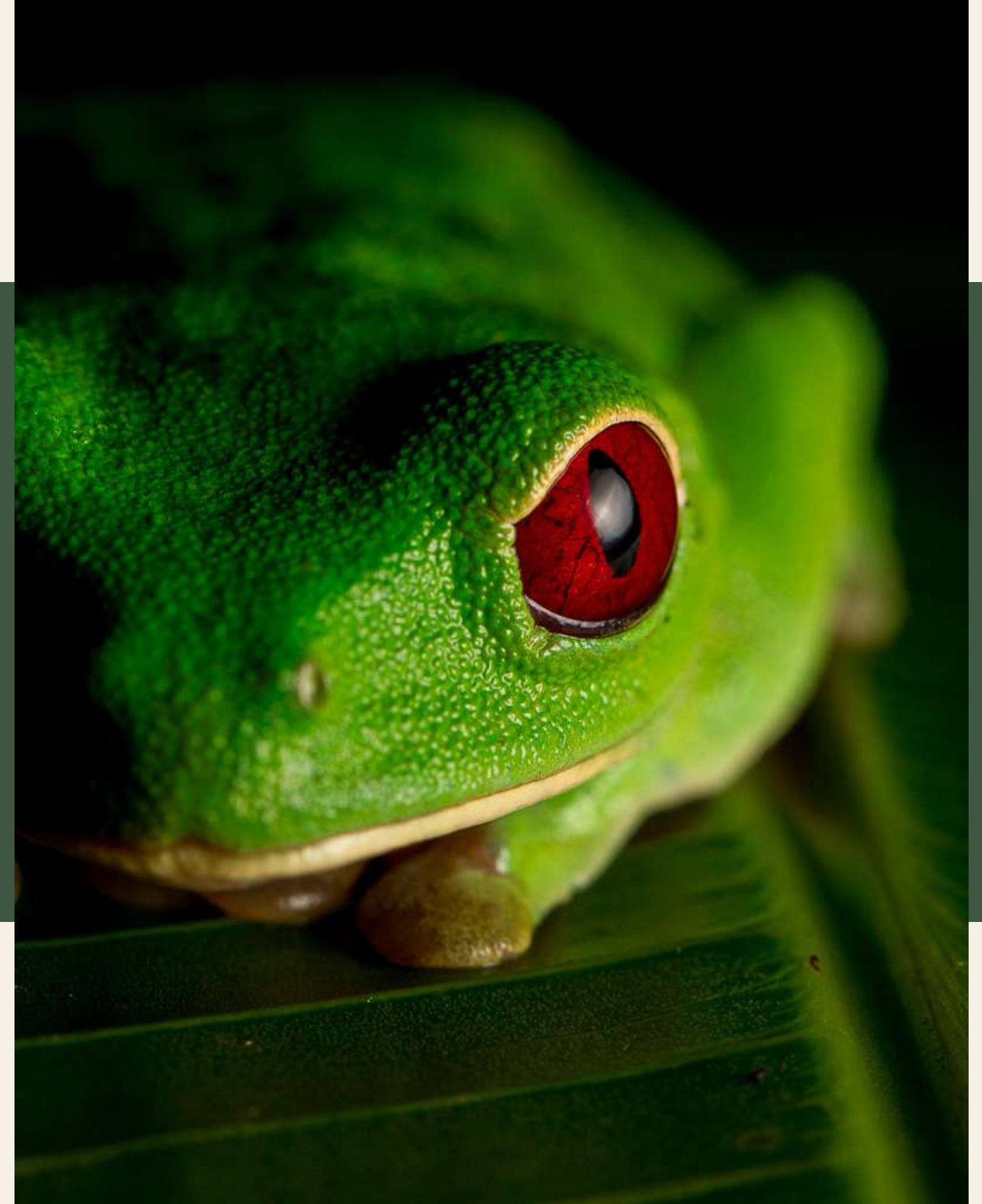
While automatic modes can be handy, shooting in manual mode gives you complete control over your image's exposure.

It allows you to independently adjust aperture, shutter speed, and ISO, helping you tailor your exposure precisely to your scene.

Start by playing around with different settings in varying light conditions.

Experiment with seeing what adjusting aperture does, then shutter speed, then ISO.

Feel free to switch back to semi-auto modes when you need, but never stop playing with manual settings. Gradually you'll master the art of manual shooting.







## 8. Shoot in RAW

Consider RAW files like the raw clay from which you can mold your final image during editing.

Shooting in RAW format captures all the data from your camera sensor, giving you a wider range of colors, better detail, and more flexibility in post-processing.

JPEG compresses the information, which is a benefit for saving space on a memory card, but you lose out on how much control you have for shaping that final image.

So if your memory card permits, always choose to shoot in RAW for maximum control over your images.



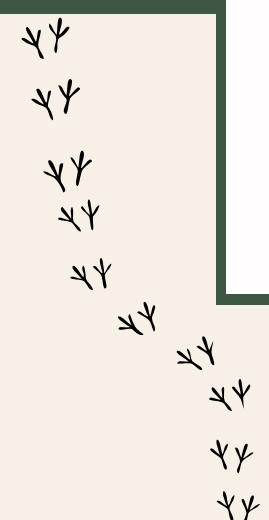
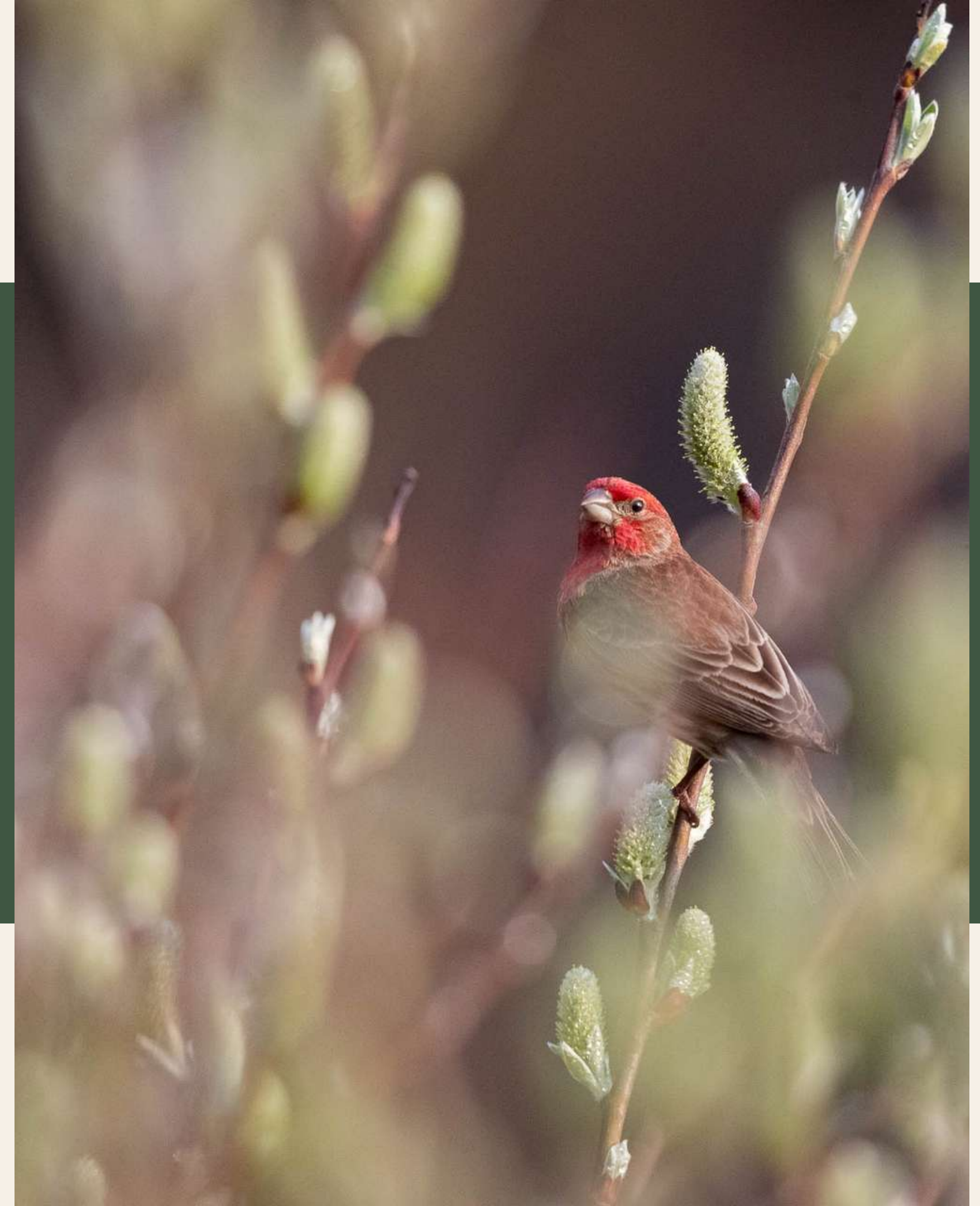
## 9. Master Depth of Field

The depth of field, controlled by the aperture, determines what part of your image is in focus. A shallow depth of field can isolate your subject, while a large one keeps everything sharp.

A wide aperture (ex: f/2) results in a shallow depth of field, beautifully blurring the background, while a small aperture (ex: f/18) keeps more of the foreground and background in focus.

Experiment with different apertures to see how they influence your image and use that knowledge to create your desired effect.

The more you know the effect you'll get from different depths of field, the easier it is to make savvy compositional adjustments on the fly.







## 10. Use Natural Frames

Incorporating natural elements such as trees, arches, or even rocks can serve as frames within your images, directing the viewer's attention toward your chosen subject.

It's a technique that enhances your image's depth, making it more three-dimensional and inviting the viewer to explore further. Plus, it can give your composition a unique twist.

Seek out these 'frames' in your environment—be it the gnarled branches of a tree, a hollow in a rock, or a natural archway formed by foliage - and experiment with how you can integrate it into your composition.

The goal is to use the frame to draw attention to your subject, so ensure it serves that purpose and doesn't detract from the subject itself.



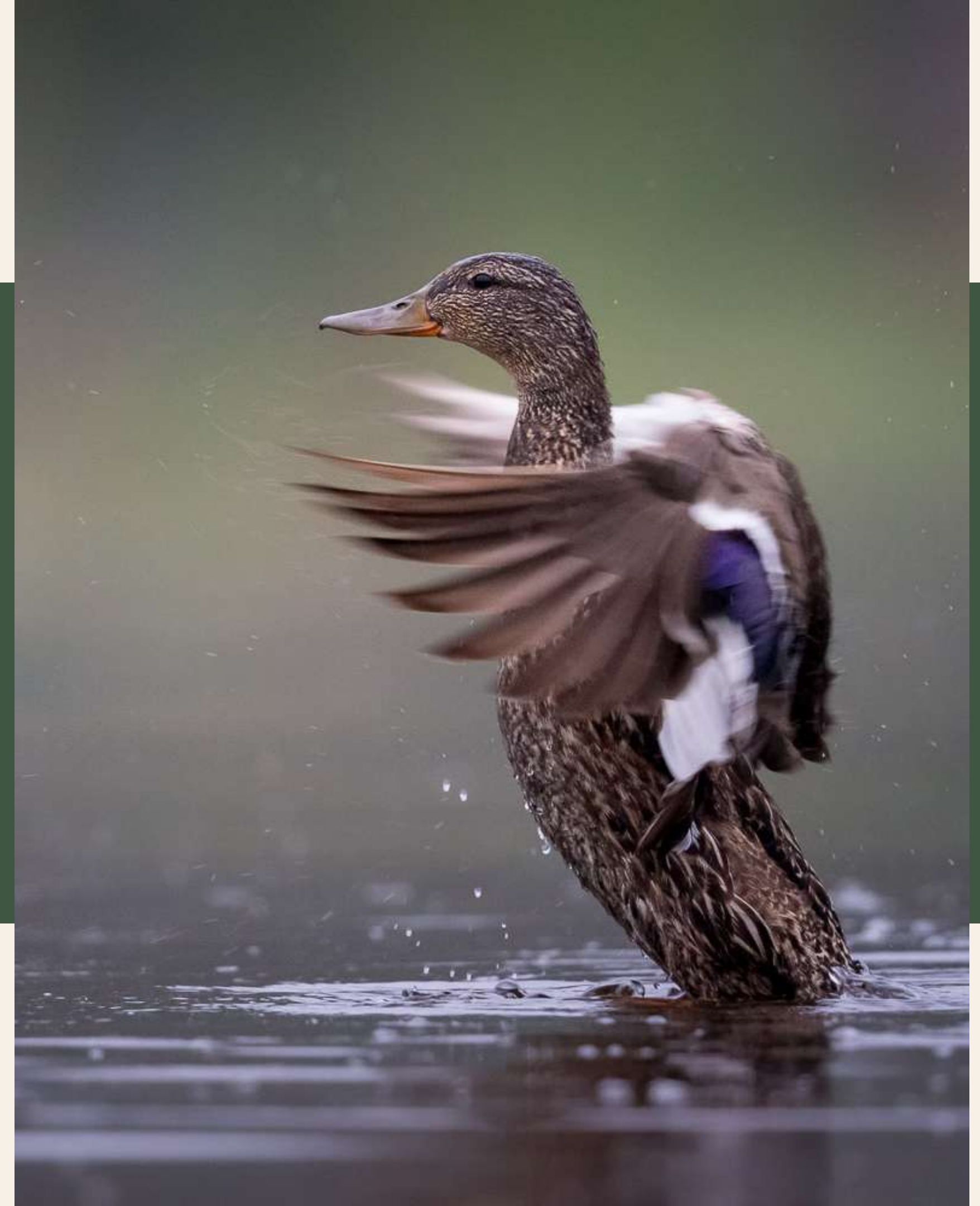
## 11. Get Purposeful with Shutter Speed

Shutter speed can be your magic wand when it comes to capturing motion, with purpose. You likely already know that a fast shutter speed freezes action, while a slow one creates an artistic blur, conveying movement.

Choosing the right shutter speed purposefully for the effect you want takes your images from happy accidents to works of art.

While it's tempting to always freeze motion in nature photography, using slower shutter speeds for purposeful blur can be a game-changer.

Play around with different shutter speeds to see how they impact your image, and use this tool to add a dynamic touch to your shots.







## 12. Capture Behaviors

Portraits of plants and animals are wonderful - but there's so much more to powerful images than a static pose. Capturing a species in action tells a compelling story.

It requires keen observation, patience, and understanding of behaviors. This involves not just observing your subjects, but immersing yourself in their world, learning their patterns, and preparing to capture those fleeting, decisive moments that truly encapsulate the spirit of the wilderness.

And honestly, that's WHY behavior shots are so much more powerful - they're peeks into the lives of nature that most people don't see.

Spend time studying your subjects, anticipate their actions, and be ready to capture that decisive moment that turns a static portrait into an engaging story.



## 13. Become a Naturalist

To capture the essence of the wilderness, you need to understand it. Not only can you capture behaviors more easily, as mentioned in the last tip, but you're able to come up with far more creative ideas for photos as a whole.

So build up your naturalist skills. Read books, watch documentaries, or even join local nature or wildlife tracking groups to deepen your knowledge and become a better nature photographer.

I have **an in-depth free guide** that walks you through 5 naturalist skills, including activities and resources, so you can learn exactly *how* to study nature and get those impressive shots.

Download it at [ConservationVisuals.com/Skills](https://ConservationVisuals.com/Skills)







## 14. Plan Your Shoots

Planning is half the battle won in photography.

Researching locations, understanding the best times to shoot, and knowing what gear to carry can make your shoot smoother and more productive.

Use online resources, photography apps, and local knowledge to plan your shoots and maximize your chances of getting great shots. Consider keeping a journal or Google Drive folder with details from your research and planning notes so you can find everything in one place.

Just as a painter sketches before painting, a photographer scouts and plans in order to maximize the odds of capturing winning shots.



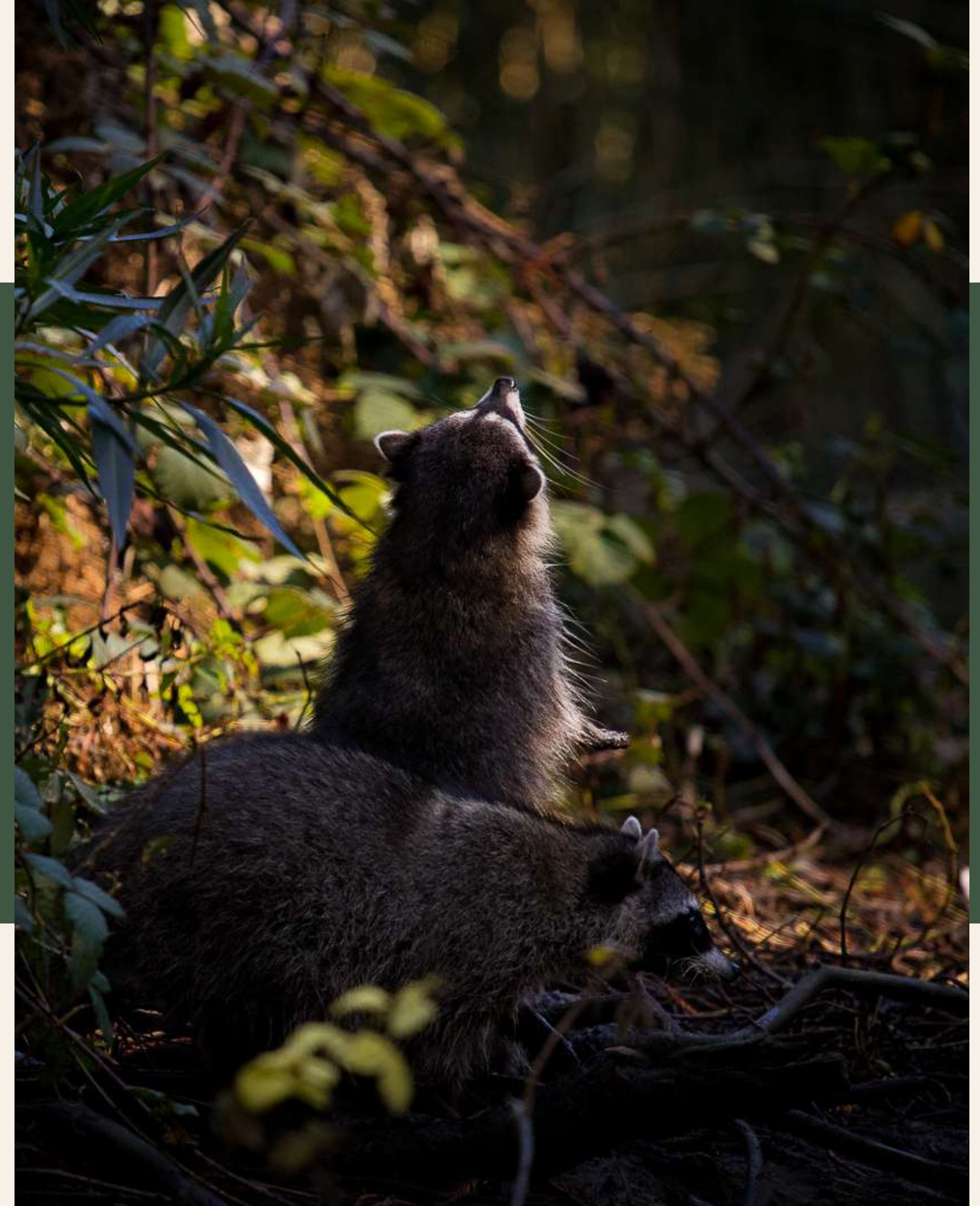
## 15. Tell a Story

Perhaps the most important tip in this guide is to consider each frame a story, a visual narrative capturing a moment in the vast timeline of nature.

Conveying emotion, a sense of place, or context adds depth to your images, making them more than just a pretty snapshot. This storytelling content can even outweigh the importance of technical precision.

As you compose your photo, think about the story it tells and how it contributes to the larger narrative of our natural world.

Also, consider going beyond stand-alone shots to craft complete photo stories. Learn how to do this and the types of shots needed for any photo story at [ConservationVisuals.com/6Shots](https://ConservationVisuals.com/6Shots)







# Ready for more?

## *The Nature Photographer's* 52 WEEK CREATIVITY KIT

A year of weekly bite-sized nature photography concepts and challenges that strengthen your camera skills and provide endless inspiration.

Enroll here >> [ConservationVisuals.com/Kit](https://ConservationVisuals.com/Kit)



Everything you need to **build your creative muscle memory** so you can consistently and easily **translate what you see** and experience in nature to the final photograph.