



photography
Monte Nagler

Thursday, May 22, 1980

(S-13A, F-15A, Ro-12A)(O)19A

Get best zoo pictures on weekday morning

Modern zoos are doing away with cages as much as possible, designing habitats closely resembling the actual environment of the animals on exhibit.

This presents a tremendous opportunity to the photographer who wishes to capture an animal on film in his natural surroundings.

Let's start with equipment. Try to take only what you think you'll use.

In addition to your camera body, a long telephoto (300-400mm) and a short telephoto (100-135mm) will be adequate. A tripod and flash (for indoor exhibits and outdoor fill-in) round out the essential equipment.

Folks staying closer to home

Lots of folks will be going to the Detroit Zoo and spots near home this weekend. The Michigan Department of Transportation predicts holiday driving this weekend will be the lightest in five years.

Michigan motorists are expected to log 686 million miles over the four-day holiday — from noon Friday to noon Tuesday. That's 5 percent below the 722 million miles they drove in the 1979 Memorial Day weekend.

MDOT Director John P. Woodford has ordered all highway construction activity suspended from 3 p.m. Friday until working hours Tuesday.

The only metropolitan area detour is on I-75 freeway's northbound and southbound ramps to eastbound I-94 (Ford) freeway in Detroit. Those ramps are closed for bridge repair. A detour is posted.

SLOWDOWNS may occur at these points:

- I-96 in west Oakland County — the left lane in both directions is closed between I-275 and Novi Road for median barrier construction.

- US-24 (Telegraph) — intermittent closures in both directions between 12 Mile in Southfield and Maple Road in Bloomfield Township for reconstruction work.

- M-150 (Rochester Road) from Big Beaver to South Blvd. in Troy — periodic lane closures in both directions for widening and reconstruction.

- I-75 from Eight Mile to 12 Mile in southeast Oakland County — left lanes in both directions are closed for construction of median barriers.

Provisions for close-up photography will come in handy too.

THE BEST TIME for zoo photography is on a weekday morning when schools are in session. The animals will be rested, alert and free from the distractions of a noisy crowd, and you will be able to set up and shoot at leisure.

Like people, animals have distinct personalities. Some animals are active, some lazy; some are interested in us "humans" peering at them, and some are totally bored with us. Take time to study their movements and habits.

Watch their routines — animals tend to be very repetitious. Focus in on the part of the act you like, and shoot. Animals are active, and most alert, right before feeding, but mealtime can also result in interesting pictures. Shortly after feeding, most animals clean and groom themselves, and then it's siesta time. Each of these phases of animal behavior can offer rewarding photos.

CHECK THE BACKGROUND in your zoo pictures. Make them as natural as possible, avoiding telephone poles, fences and other zoo visitors.

If you have to deal with shooting through a fence, don't worry. Just place the lens right against the wire and use a wide lens opening to minimize depth of field. In the final picture, the fence won't even be there.

For outdoor shots in shadowed areas or with indoor exhibits, use your flash.

And don't let those snakes and lizards behind glass scare you off either. If you press the camera lens against the glass, all will be well, and unwanted natural and flash reflections will be eliminated.

Did you know zoos can offer much more than animal photography? Go on a weekend when there are swarms of people and observe other zoo visitors, especially the kids.

Children and their reactions to the different kinds of animals can result in prize-winning candid pictures showing amazement, humor and surprise.

What are we waiting for? Let's go to the zoo!

The writer is a West Bloomfield resident, area businessman and president of the Greater Detroit Camera Club Council. After a few weeks, he will resume his column on a periodic basis. Send questions to: Monte Nagler, 6916 Alderley Way, West Bloomfield 48033.



Take a long telephoto and focus in on a single animal, like this lioness, when you go to the zoo.

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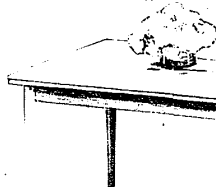
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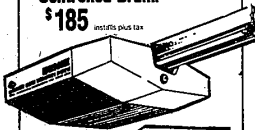
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