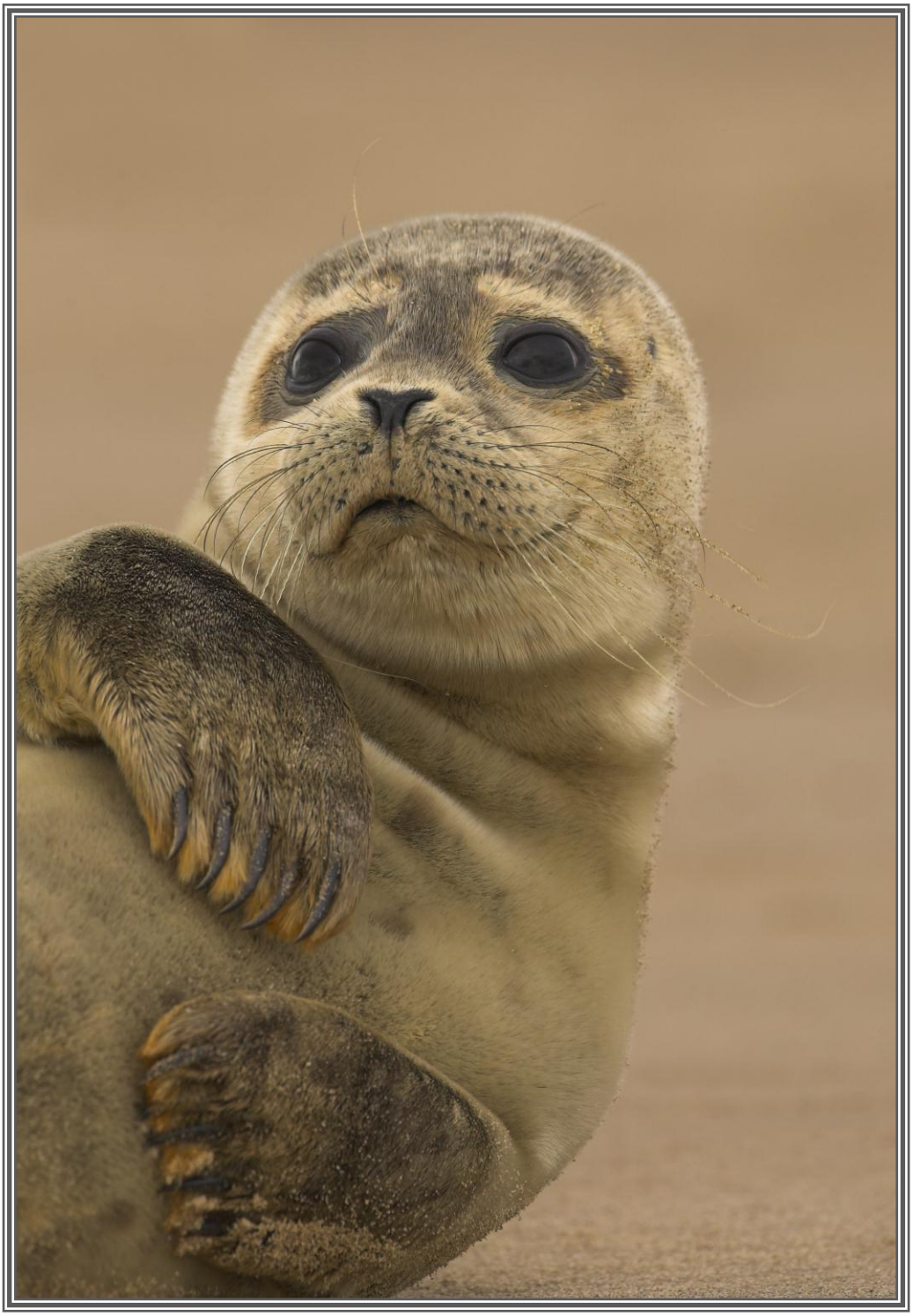
Natures Images

Seals and Birds of Prey - 28th to 30th September 2012



Itinerary

Tour Leader: Mark Sisson

Day 1: We will rendezvous at Danny's home address for 10.00am. This will be easier than the location we will be photographing at as the parking is limited. We will then transfer to our location for the captive bird of prey session which is only ten minutes away. We will be working until late with a number of birds that might include Eagle Owl, Golden Eagle, Barn Owl, and Peregrine but this list is not finalised and our falconer Richard might have something else for us on the day. We make the images and the birds look as natural subjects and we have worked with Richard for many years so he knows what to expect working with photographers. The end of the afternoon we will all drive to our guest house in Louth, Lincolnshire. The address is The Traveller's Rest, Upgate, Louth, LN11 9HG. It takes about two hours to get to the hotel from Leicestershire. Once we have checked in we will have our evening meal.

Day 2: After Breakfast we will be heading off for our first visit to spend the day on the sand flats of Donna Nook. We have timed this weekend break so there is no disturbance to Grey seal breeding season as we are 4-6 weeks before the start of the females giving birth. There will be no chance whatsoever of young grey seal pups and the pregnant females will not be arriving back at the colony either. We shall be concentrating on getting images both on the land and in the water. Adolescent grey seals can be very playful so hopefully we get the chance to capture this behaviour as they play fight in the Surf. Young common Seals should also be around at this time of the year as they were born in the summer months and are completely independent now. Also along the tide line we could get opportunities to photograph waders like Sanderling as well. Depending on the weather we could be out on the Sand banks until dusk so please be prepared for a long day.

Day 3: Again it's an early start in morning to try and get the best light and activity and the day will be more or less a repeat of the previous day and will go on until dusk, but if you have a long drive home you are free to go when you please throughout the day. You will have to bring your luggage with you though because we won't be going back to the guest house.

What to Bring

Our accommodation is clean and comfortable with all bedding and towels provided. In terms of clothing you'll obviously need some warm and weatherproof clothing. The vast majority of your time will involve spending time outside and the weather can change and can be cold at this time of the year, particularly as we are on a very exposed coastline where conditions can change quickly and we will be a good 20 minute or so walk away from any shelter .

The following items are very much recommended - a good pair of wellingtons for the beach, good walking boots for the bird of prey day and good waterproof overtrousers. For the top half it's very much a question of having several layers - I tend to go for a t-shirt, thin jumper, fleece and then my waterproof coat with a spare jumper or two at hand as well, you'll know your own cold thresholds but it really is a question of build it up in layers. Don't forget a good hat and some fingerless mittens and gloves. It's also a good idea to bring a thermos flask for tea and coffee which you can fill up at the hotel before we leave in the mornings.

Camera Equipment

In terms of camera kit you'll need the longest lens you have (300mm or 500mm would be my recommendation/choice) and then some supplementary lenses for other opportunities such as a 24-70mm for landscapes and then maybe an intermediate zoom (70-200 or 100-400) so that you don't miss anything in terms of opportunity. My main lens will be a 500mm F4 because it is absolutely vital that we work at a respectful distance from the seals and we will also get more natural shots by being that little further away. I always use a tripod so bring one if you have one. Bring plenty of compact flash cards with you as well because if we get a good day you will take alot of images. Please also be aware of the conditions that we could be working under, it is exposed out on the sand flats and if it is rainy or windy then you will need to protect your camera and lens, you can buy stuff especially made for this job (wildlife watching supplies have a good online offer) or you can make do; it is suprising how good a black bin bag is at this job, but you will need some protection for sure as sand is your camera and lenses worst enemy.

All meals are provided throughout the three days and also a packed lunch is provided on all three days.

My contact number in the build up to and for the duration of the trip is 07905 569685, and my landline office number is 01952 411436. Please don't hesitate to contact me even if you think it is a minor question I am here to help.

I have spent many years visiting Donna Nook and know it well; it is a fantastic experience to witness the Seals at such close quarters and I am really looking forward to showing you around this unique location.

Mark

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