

NATIONAL CONVENTION AND SHORT COURSE

*by John M. Mullin
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The North American Game Breeders & Shooting Preserve Association, Inc. is holding a National Convention and Short Course Jan. 8-12, 1979 at Hilton Airport Plaza Inn, Kansas City, Missouri. This organization has members in 49 states, from many provinces in Canada and such other countries as Mexico, England, France, Spain, Lebanon, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Australia.

The general public is invited to attend. Anyone interested in game bird propagation, improved wildlife habitat, improved hunting and outdoor recreational opportunities is cordially invited. NAGB&SPA's meetings and short courses are attended by some of the most knowledgeable and experienced people in upland game bird and waterfowl propagation. In addition to the private game farms, hunting resorts and outdoor recreation enterprises, there will be representatives of many State Conservation Departments, State Game Farms, State Universities, the U.S. Bureau of Sports Fisheries & Wildlife, National Rifle Association, National Shooting Sports Foundation and several Conservation Organizations, including the Izaak Walton League.

Each year there is increased interest and increased need for the cooperation of private-enterprise in improved hunting, conservation and outdoor recreation. Even though PUBLIC lands, PUBLIC parks and PUBLIC HUNTING AREAS GET MOST OF THE PUBLICITY, the fact remains that 80% of the land in this Nation is privately-owned. Modern technology, developments and CLEAN FARMING, leave very little cover for game.

The combination of too little public land, the shortage of adequate wildlife and the resulting shortage of game and hunting areas near the centers of population, have pushed the private-enter-

prise game farm and hunting & conservation areas into nationwide popularity and remarkable growth. Thousands of game farms produce game birds for legal sale to anyone wishing to purchase them. Almost 3,200 private hunting & conservation preserves provide tailor-made wildlife habitat for both game species and non-game species. They continuously restock the areas with full-feathered, hard-flying game birds. Because they provide their own land, plant their own wildlife habitat and stock their own game birds, these hunting preserves are licensed by the State Conservation Departments to provide extended seasons for hunting. They provide "bag limits" set by the individual hunter who is willing to support such conservation practices.

The American sportsman is finally realizing that he's not living in the days of Daniel Boone. The true sportsman is getting over the erroneous, prejudicial assumption that MOTHER NATURE is obligated to furnish all his recreational demands. He's getting over the idea of harvesting a crop he's had no part in producing. The good sportsman is now realizing that not everyone can harvest that crop on someone else's land. The good sportsman is happy to support his own improved hunting area that he helps develop into a Conservation Showcase. They're proud to be a part of such a worthwhile, self-supporting movement in improved hunting, conservation and healthy outdoor recreation.

All interested persons are invited to the Missouri Convention, Jan. 8-12, 1979. Complete information, and registration material can be obtained from Gary Norris, GAME HILL, INC., 645 Main, Weston, MO 64098. Ph. 816/386-5614; or Dr. Glenn Geiger, State Extension Poultry Specialist, Poultry Bldg. T-14, Columbia, MO 65201. Ph. 314/882-6658.

PHOTO BOX

by Steve Clause

This article begins a series of articles, a regular feature of the Watchbird really, dealing with avian photography. In the coming months I will answer your questions and hopefully help you solve any problems you may be having with your photography. I hope that you will feel free to drop me a line c/o Watchbird and ask any questions dealing with photographing birds or regarding types of equipment you may need or are thinking of buying. No question is stupid or embarrassing.

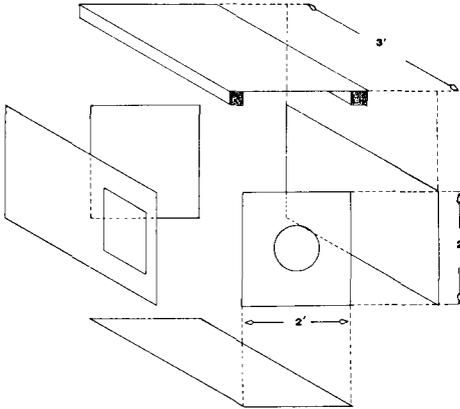
Because there was so much interest in the photo box at the AFA convention in Dallas (I gave workshops dealing with avian photography) I decided to open a series of articles with the Photo Box.

The idea of the photo box developed out of a need to control the subject as much as possible, and to have precise control over the lighting of the subject. Also, the photo box, allows for a greater variety of background color and composition.

The box that I made is completely portable so as to allow me to go into small aviaries as well as permitting me to take it on an airplane (my box went from California to Dallas, Texas, for the 1978 AFA convention). This photo box folds down to a flat package about 6" thick and 2' x 3'. When deciding what size and type of box you will need be sure to carefully consider just what you will use your box for and where it will have to go. My feelings are that a good photo box should not be larger than 2' high x 2' wide x 3' long. The top should be removable and a small door in one of the sides will allow for placing the removing the subject. One end of the box should have an 8" diameter hole for camera lens access. This hole should be draped with black cloth so that when the camera is not inserted the cloth will drop over the hole and close it off. The top of the box should have an opening large enough to allow for either natural or artificial light to illuminate the insides of the box. Naturally, wire (1/4x1/2 welded wire) should cover this opening. The photo box should be painted outside and inside with flat white paint and the camera end of the box should be painted a flat black on the inside only. The black will allow for the camera lens and strobe to blend in and reduce any dis-

traction they might otherwise cause.

Now that you have your box you must decide on what type of flash you will need and just where it should be placed within your photo box. Placement of the strobe is very important since it can make or break any picture. For two strobe systems, placement should be at the camera



end in each corner at a 45 degree angle and level with the subject. That is, each light vector from the flash will intersect at a point near the middle of the box. For

the single flash system (mine) the strobe is placed directly over the camera lens with the light vector angling toward the roof of the box bouncing and then vectoring directly towards the subject. Actually with bounce flash there are several simultaneous light vectors which actually fill the box with an even light, thus eliminating shadows.

Subject control is the most difficult problem the avian photographer has to face. Although subject control is easier in the box, it is still rather difficult. Most of the time the bird will choose to be where you do not want it to be. Each photographer will have to develop his or her technique. My techniques for subject control are simple: make the area that I want the bird to be in as comfortable as possible for the bird, and make all other areas of the box as uncomfortable as possible. A moveable perch is always in order as well as portable foliage and backgrounds.

On the subject of backgrounds I would like to state that creativity, improvisation and ingenuity are the key ingredients to interesting and often spectacular avian photographs.

Finally, I would like to discuss the technicalities of taking the picture, that is, what f stop and shutter speed your camera should be set on.

In determining the aperture opening and shutter speed, one has to do much experimentation. The photo box does not allow for us to use standard photographic rules.

The results of my experimentation are as follows (remember, my box is 2'w x 2'h x 3'l); when the subject is very close to my lens (6 inches I will use an f stop of 5.6 and a shutter speed of 100th of a second since this is the proper strobe synchronization for my camera. When the distance increases another 6 inches (now my subject is 12 inches from the front of my lens) I will increase my aperture opening by one f stop. My shutter speed remains the same as long as I use a strobe for my light source.

As a final note, a word of caution. Be aware of the fact that different colors will absorb light at different rates, thereby causing changes in the light contrast of your pictures. There is no help for this and only experience will insure good quality pictures.



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