



My mom often says, “Life is what happens when you’re making other plans,” and as with all of her wisdom, there’s a lot of truth in her words. This was definitely the case for photographer and *Journal* contributor Alyce Bender, who went to Yellowstone National Park last June to work on an article for this issue about the park’s pika. Within hours of her arrival, however, she

found herself in the middle of a 500-year flood event. The rivers, engorged with massive amounts of rain and snowmelt, washed out entire buildings and multiple sections of critical roadways. Entire communities were cut off. Park staff evacuated more than 10,000 visitors, including Bender, and closed the entire park for more than a week. She got out safely, but needless to say, she wasn’t able to complete the assignment she had planned.

However, she didn’t want the entire trip to go to waste, and she also didn’t want to bail on her commitment to write a useful, educational article we were counting on. By the time she reached out to let me know about her situation, she already had another idea in mind for an article. The result starts on page 13: “Making Molehills Out of Mountains: How to overcome obstacles in wildlife photography and keep creativity flowing.”

Nature is unpredictable — it’s just part of the reality of being a

wildlife photographer. For better or worse, it acts on whims outside of our individual control, and all we can do is respond to what it dishes out. That said, with proper research, there are some circumstances we can anticipate and prepare for, and doing so can make your photo excursions more successful and fulfilling.

In his article “Telling a Story Through the Lens,” photographer Greg Basco shares his account of photographing a Baird’s tapir in the Costa Rican rainforest. This elusive nocturnal mammal is difficult to capture on camera, and Greg needed to create a high-quality photograph of one near a particular kind of tree for his project. If Greg had just wandered out into the forest at night with a camera and hoped for the best, he never would have gotten the image he sought. But he did his homework, and he learned how to respond to this animal’s known behavior. Greg scouted for the most appealing trees in an area known as habitat for tapir, and he set up a professional camera trap based on his knowledge of how the tapir would likely approach the tree and how he wanted the image to appear. You can see the results for yourself on page 78.

“We got a bit lucky, for sure,” he acknowledges. “But without knowledge of our subjects and their relationship to other members of the ecosystem, we wouldn’t have known where to start.”

Yes, successful wildlife photography involves some serendipity, but planning for what you can and rolling with the punches with what you can’t will serve you well. Plus, the most memorable experiences are often the ones that didn’t go as you expected.

As with every issue of the *Journal of Wildlife Photography*, this issue also includes a variety of other perspectives from photographers in different parts of the globe. Joe McDonald shares his lessons from the Galápagos, and Moses Sparks tells how he photographed some intriguing white bats hiding under leaves in Honduras. Ruth Hoyt talks about winter bird feeding from her home near the U.S./Mexico border, and Tamara Blazquez Haik shares her wisdom about working with locals for your photography projects, drawing on her experiences in Mexico, Spain, and the Dominican Republic.

The whole team behind the *Journal of Wildlife Photography* works hard to bring you workshop-level education in every issue we produce, and we're beefing up our offerings in 2023 to give you an extensive online education platform centered on wildlife photography. As part of that effort, we're doing an audience survey to learn how we can serve you better. Look to the right to learn how you can help us help you, and enter to win a \$250 gift card to B&H Photo!

To your photographic success,



Danielle Phillippi
Editor

HOW CAN WE SERVE YOU BETTER?

The *Journal of Wildlife Photography* would like to get to know you better so we can serve you better!

We're conducting an audience survey, and we invite you to tell us about yourself and let us know what kind of wildlife photography education would be most useful to you. When you submit your responses, you'll be entered into a drawing to **win one of three \$250 gift cards to B&H Photo!**

To enter, complete this quick 12-question survey:
journalofwildlifephotography.com/survey.

Upon submitting your final response, you will be automatically entered into the gift card drawing. The survey will close on March 20 at 11:59 p.m. EDT and the drawing will be held on March 21, so enter soon!

We appreciate your insights and look forward to serving you through 2023 and beyond.

