

GREG DOWNING

PHOTOGRAPHY

FALL 2002 NEWSLETTER

Produced by Greg Downing and Heather Forcier



Arctic Tern in Flight, Churchill, Manitoba © Greg Downing

CONTENTS

NEW LIST

UPDATES TO WEBSITE

MAGEE MARSH, OHIO AND
POINT PELEE, ONTARIO TRIP REPORT

LAST MINUTE CHURCHILL INFORMATION

DATES SET FOR CAPE MAY, NJ WORKSHOP

ST PAUL ISLAND, PRIBILOFS, ALASKA

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Dear Friends!

Hope all is well in your lives. Everything is fine and busy as always here.

NEW LIST

First of all, this is the beginning of the new list and new newsletter since the launching of the updated website almost a month ago. Some of you receiving this may not have signed up via the website but were added to the list because some contact had been made in the past regarding interest in the subject matter.

So, if you receive this in error or otherwise wish to be removed from the list, please reply with the word "Unsubscribe" in the subject line, or go here to unsubscribe:

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UPDATES TO WEBSITE

I want to thank you all for the comments and suggestions on my newly updated website! I have recently added some dates for new workshops which are also covered in this letter. I will be adding images from Magee Marsh soon.

Being one who is never totally satisfied with his own work, I still have much work to do on it but it is now functional and operating. If you haven't already done so, please feel free to peruse the site and let me know what you think. Of course, if you find any spelling errors be sure to point them out to me! I have to give much of the credit to Ben Horne who I was wise to hire to take care of all the hand coding, ordering scripts and forms etc. I surely could not have done it without all his hard work - thank you, Ben!

The ability to show my work to the public is a great joy. There is just a small, hand-picked sampling of about one hundred of my images in the galleries, all of which are available to purchase as prints right from my site. I will be adding many more as time goes on and will be informing you of updates via these newsletters, as well as updates to my tour and travel schedule.

MAGEE MARSH, OHIO POINT PELEE, ONTARIO TRIP REPORT

Having totally struck out with the warblers last year while visiting Magee Marsh near Oregon, Ohio, I decided to take ten days this year and hoped to have at least a "wave" day or two. I also added a day trip to Pelee which turned into an overnight stay thanks to the generosity of a friend.



Female Baltimore Oriole, Ohio

© Greg Downing

All in all the trip was pretty successful with one Monday in particular being the biggest wave day. The warblers were literally all over the place, but getting a clean shot was another story. Shooting warblers is not for the impatient. First of all you are not guaranteed to have birds on any given day. Everything is based on weather patterns and just plain luck.

When you do see birds they move so fast and rarely sit still for more than an instant. Having them come down from the tops of the trees depends much on wind and rain and where the bugs are. In fact, the best opportunities are during a slight

drizzle because this pushes the bugs down and the birds follow, looking for food. Finding a flitty, hyperactive and bug-hungry warbler in the viewfinder of a super-telephoto lens is a challenge. Composing a good shot and making a pleasing, sharp image is another.

I shot several hundred images of warblers in the ten days I was in the area, and I am thrilled with perhaps as many as ten. The rest are appropriate for identification purposes. This is actually much better than I expected, believe it or not. Remember, last year I spent seven days at Magee and came away with one mediocre image of a yellow warbler. And I was there the same dates. There were just no birds moving.

Typically when doing this type of photography, skilled shooters should be happy with one really good warbler image in a week of shooting. There are back-up subjects when the warblers aren't moving through. I shot copulating tree swallows, baby goslings, orioles, robins, mourning doves, some shorebirds and several other more reliable species in my "down time". All in all it was a pretty successful trip and I will be returning next year, perhaps even to offer a workshop on warblers. I'll keep you posted.

LAST MINUTE CHURCHILL INFORMATION

There are still last minute openings for the upcoming Churchill workshop!

Join me for a week with the birds of the tundra and boreal forest in Churchill, Manitoba. The birds display in their fabulous breeding plumage on the vast and open arctic tundra, making this the opportunity of a lifetime for anyone interested in bird photography!

Since this tour has not filled up, participants of all skill levels will have an even better opportunity for individualized learning!

The workshop runs from June 15 to 22, 2002, and the fee includes all ground transportation as well as pick-up and drop-off at the Churchill Airport.

The itinerary includes seven days of extensive photographic instruction, slide presentations, critique sessions, transportation in and around Churchill and pickup/drop-off at the airport. Lodging is arranged for but is to be paid for by the participant. Meals are not included.

Possible subjects include:

Hudsonian Godwit
 Semi-palmated Plover
 American Golden-Plover
 Killdeer
 Whimbrel
 Stilt Sandpiper
 Short-billed Dowitcher
 Red-necked Phalarope
 Arctic Tern
 Bonaparte's Gull
 Parasitic Jaeger
 Pacific Loon
 Savannah Sparrow
 Yellow Warbler
 Northern Waterthrush
 Ross's Gull (rare), and many others.

For details and registration click here:

[Churchill Workshop](#)



Arctic Tern, Churchill, Manitoba, Canada
 © Greg Downing

DATES SET FOR CAPE MAY, NJ WORKSHOP

Many of you are already aware of my upcoming fall Cape May, New Jersey workshop and some are already signed up.

The workshop runs from September 28 to 29, 2002 (two days) and has a limit six participants. There will be a slide show with orientation at 7:00pm on Friday September 27th in my hotel room. Additional dates will be added if this workshop fills up.

The workshop fee includes breakfast and lunch both days. Lodging and other expenses are not included. A deposit is required to reserve your spot.

This is an extensive two-day workshop designed for anyone needing a boost in their bird photography skills, even if you don't have a super-telephoto lens. Lenses of 300mm or higher are required. This workshop is designed to focus on the basics with some fairly cooperative subjects in easy-to-shoot situations. We will discuss the fundamentals of composition, exposure, lighting, flash use, depth of field, perspective and how to see and set-up shots in the field.

We will also have an opportunity to learn flight photography. While the main subjects will be flocks of Skimmers, several species of terns and gulls as well as some lingering shorebirds, swans and possibly even migrant warblers, the focus will be on how to make pleasing artistic images of even the most common subjects.

To register for this workshop click here:

[Cape May Workshop](#)



Royal Tern, Cape May, New Jersey

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ST. PAUL ISLAND, THE PRIBILOFS, ALASKA WORKSHOP

St. Paul Island is at the top of the list of my favorite places to photograph birds. While my trip to Africa precludes me from going this year, a workshop is already in the planning stages for the summer of 2003.

Here's your opportunity to photograph at close-range the colorful and comical Horned and Tufted Puffins, Red-faced Cormorants, Common and Thick-billed Murres, Kittiwakes, three species of Auklets and much more! You will also be sure to see and even photograph arctic foxes or spend some time in the seal blind photographing fur seal pups and adults if you desire. Also featured is a huge variety of tiny wildflowers nestled in lush tundra.

This trip will run, but the dates have not been finalized yet, although the workshop should be scheduled around July 2003, with a limit of twelve participants.

There are two fees for this trip, a workshop fee and a tour fee.

The workshop fee includes eight days (seven full and two half days) of extensive photographic instruction, slide presentations and critiques as well as getting you in the right locations at the right times to ensure you are making the best use of conditions and weather.

The tour fee includes the cost of lodging, food and the St. Paul Island Tour fee with guide and exclusive use of their bus. It also includes the flight from Anchorage Alaska to the island of St. Paul.

Since there is a great deal of interest in this trip already, I am offering preregistration so people can hold their spots. For more details, please see



Horned Puffin, St. Paul Island, The Pribilofs, Alaska

© Greg Downing

my website, but an advanced deposit will guarantee your spot. The remaining fees won't be due until just months before the actual workshop is scheduled.

For more information or to register for this workshop, please see this link:

[St. Paul Island Workshop](#)

I welcome feedback on my website and newsletters. Please don't hesitate to send me comments, I'd like to hear from you!

Until next time, happy, healthy, and safe shooting!

Greg Downing