

# Learn to Shoot Spectacular Close-up Photographs

with John Gerlach & Dixie Calderone

[www.gerlachnaturephoto.com](http://www.gerlachnaturephoto.com)

Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield Hotel

, 375 South Moorland Road, Brookfield, WI, 53005 (262) 364-1100

**March 8, 2020 9 am to 5 pm**

Limited to 20 Participants \* **\$150** per person

To enroll, contact: [johngerlachphotography@gmail.com](mailto:johngerlachphotography@gmail.com)

We will email you the enrollment application form!



FIGURE 1 - A BUTTERFLY POSES QUIETLY ON A COOL MORNING IN THE WARMING DAWN RAYS OF SUNSHINE. THE WORKING DISTANCE OF JOHN'S CANON 180MM MACRO LENS MAKES IT EASY TO PHOTOGRAPH AND THE NARROW ANGLE OF VIEW PROVIDES A DIFFUSED BACKGROUND.

## What you will learn:

- Achieve the optimum exposure easily
  - RGB histogram
  - Highlight alert
  - The precision and ease of manual exposure
- Shoot super sharp images
  - Tripod
  - Remote release or touch shutter
  - Solid tripod head
  - Plamps-what they are and do
- The benefits of Live View
  - Best way to focus manually
  - Eliminates camera vibrations
  - Live histogram
  - Touch shutter
- Focus stacking with Helicon Focus
  - The sharpest aperture
  - Shoot the photo STACK
  - Mark the stack in-camera
- Why autofocus fails for close-ups
- Tripods, ballheads, and L-brackets
  - The ideal tripod
  - Best ballheads and why they are so good
  - Camera quick release plates
  - L-brackets
- Seven ways to capture diffused backgrounds
  - Aperture selection
  - Magnification
  - Shooting angle
  - Lens choice
  - Focus stacking
  - Artificial backgrounds
  - Lighting
- Using artificial light
  - Fill flash
  - The power of main flash
  - When balanced flash is effective
  - The effective use of LEDs
- The difference between close-up photography and macro
  - The ideal lens for macro – 50mm, 100mm, or 200mm?
- Basic photo processing and running Helicon Focus to stack the images
- Image format choices – JPEG and RAW
- Composition guidelines that help enormously
- Setting up the indoor close-up studio
  - Learn what it takes to make the ideal indoor macro studio



FIGURE 2 – LEDs PROVIDES ADDITIONAL LIGHT TO ADD SOFT SHADOWS IN THIS SUNFLOWER ON A DARK CLOUDY DAY. WITHOUT THE SHADOWS, THE FLOWER WOULD BE TOO FLAT AND WITHOUT DEPTH.



FIGURE 3 – THIS IMAGE IS MADE AT F/11. NOTICE THE WING TIPS ON THE RIGHT ARE FAR OUT OF FOCUS. THE DEPTH OF FIELD AT F/11 ISN'T ENOUGH TO SHARPLY FOCUS EVERYTHING.

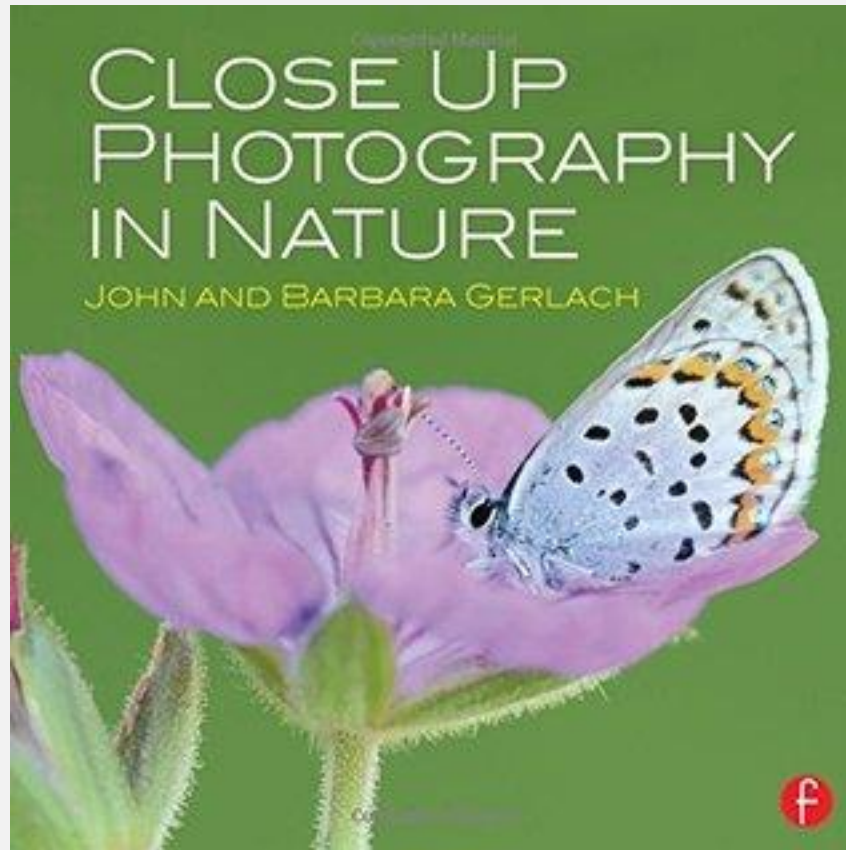


FIGURE 4 - FIVE IMAGES ARE SHOT USING F/8. EACH IMAGE IS FOCUSED AT A DIFFERENT DISTANCE TO COVER THE DEPTH OF FIELD AND THEN ALL FIVE IMAGES ARE COMBINED WITH HELICON FOCUS.

## *Your Instructors*

John Gerlach began his career as a professional wildlife biologist before switching gears in 1978 to pursue a full-time career in nature photography. Growing up in Michigan, his first love was photographing wildflowers and insects. Close-up photography launched his photo career and that remains a passion, although he is an accomplished wildlife and landscape photographer too. John has taught photo workshops, seminars, and led tours to all corners of the earth over four decades. In addition to teaching thousands of photo enthusiasts over the years, John is an avid writer with hundreds of nature photography articles published in various magazines, writes a regular column for Nature Photographer magazine, and five of John's detailed articles appear on the Canon website. John has authored five best-selling books on nature photography. These books include ***Digital Nature Photography: The Art and the Science***, ***Digital Landscape Photography***, ***Digital Wildlife Photography***, ***Outdoor Flash Photography***, and ***Close-up Photography in Nature!***

Dixie Calderone has been avidly shooting photos all of her life. Recently John and Dixie have joined together to present incredibly informative photo workshops throughout the world. Dixie has a unique talent for creating wonderful close-up opportunities.



*I wrote the book on close-up photography – literally! This highly-rated book has profoundly changed the way many shoot outstanding close-up images today.*

### **Workshop Goals**

John teaches with an amazing passion for nature photography. His enthusiasm, incredible camera knowledge, experience, and ability to explain photo techniques in an easy-to-understand manner makes him a highly effective teacher. John shoots Canon cameras and thoroughly investigates them to use the camera easily to achieve outstanding close-up images. John's teaches precisely what you need to know to be an outstanding close-up photographer! In this workshop, while there may be several ways to do things, John **teaches you** the best and easiest way to shoot superb close-up photographs.

And with Dixie working hard to create splendid subjects for you to practice your new-found close-up skills, this indoor photo workshop guarantees you will learn a lot and make fine images! And Dixie is a life-time Nikon user!



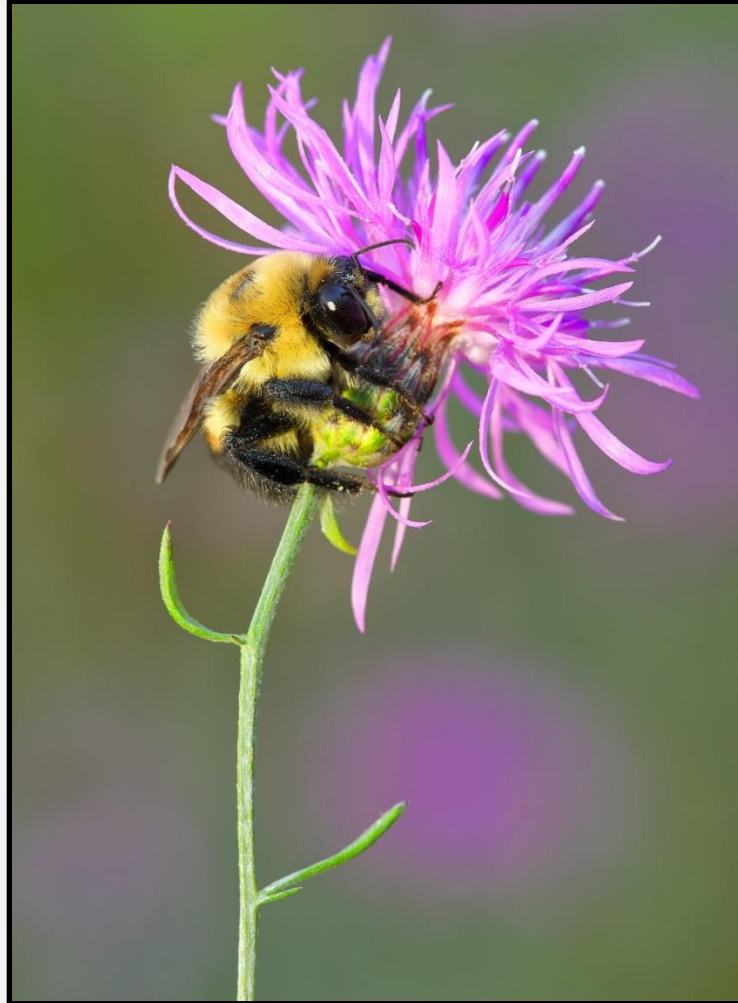


FIGURE 5 - THIS BUMBLEBEE SPENT THE NIGHT SLEEPING ON THE SPOTTED KNAWEED FLOWER. JOHN'S 180MM CANON MACRO LENS NICELY ISOLATES THE BEE AGAINST THE OUT-OF-FOCUS FLOWERS IN THE BACKGROUND. A TRIPOD SUPPORTS THE CAMERA WHILE A PLAMP HOLDS THE FLOWER WITH THE BEE PERFECTLY STILL. WHEN SHOOTING CLOSE-UPS USING THE LONG SHUTTER SPEEDS THAT ARE NECESSARY, THE SUBJECT MUST BE COMPLETELY STILL – NOT ALMOST STILL!

## ***The Schedule***

9 – 10:30 am

John introduces the class and presents an instructional slide program on close-up photography

10:30 – 10:45 am

Break

11:00 – 12:00pm

John and Dixie demonstrate key photo skills using their equipment. They will cover tripod handling, L-brackets and quick release plates, exposure determination with the live histogram and the highlight alert, and how to fire the camera to produce sharp images. A key demonstration is shooting a focus stack that delivers incredible sharpness and covers any depth

of field, and how to process the stack using Helicon Focus. This is a game-changing technique you can easily master with our guidance. John will actually process a stack of images using Canon's free Digital Photo Professional software, and then stack the images together using Helicon Focus. You can follow his easy step-by-step procedure by viewing the process on the TV.

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch Break

1:00 – 5:00

It's time for you to use your gear to shoot photos. We'll have everyone shooting and rotating through the many photo stations with wonderful subjects to photograph against attractive backgrounds. Each station offers a different subject and background to give you variety as you practice the skills John explained earlier. Potted flowers, feathers, shells, pinecones, and many other subjects are used to provide you with appealing subjects that produce nice images while mastering the skills explained in this workshop. Both John and Dixie are helping you to achieve fabulous results during the afternoon session.



FIGURE 6 WE HAVE ROWS OF SUBJECTS WITH BACKGROUNDS AND LED LIGHTS FOR YOU TO USE



FIGURE 7 – CALYPSO ORCHID



FIGURE 8 – BALTIMORE CHECKERSPOT

### *What to do before the Workshop*

1. Clean the lens you will use
2. Make sure you have everything you need to connect the camera to the tripod. If your lens has a tripod collar, make sure you have the proper plate on it to attach it to the tripod.
3. If you use a cable or remote release to trip the shutter, bring it.
4. Make sure you have the highlight alert active. Photographers often call these the “blinkies,” and every camera we have seen has the capability to show them, but often they must be activated. These are the flashing areas that appear when you view an image that might be overexposed.
5. To learn how to process a focus stack, you can download the Helicon Focus software at <https://heliconsoft.com>. It is a free trial period. You can do this after the workshop too. John teaches you how to shoot the stack and process it during the morning session.



FIGURE 9 - A WHITE ADMIRAL BUTTERFLY WAITS PATIENTLY TO WARM UP BEFORE BECOMING WHAT I CALL A "FLUTTER-BYE!"

### *Who is this Workshop For?*

This workshop is perfect for anyone seeking to improve their close-up photos with a DSLR or mirrorless camera. It is not suitable for phones and basic cameras that don't provide manual exposure and focus.

Items to bring:

- Camera with fully-charged batteries and memory card
- A lens that can focus very close. John uses his Canon 180mm and Dixie a Nikon 105mm macro lens, but any macro lens will work. The more common 100mm macro is super for this. There are many other ways to get close. Just contact us for ideas. Using extension tubes on a short zoom lens works fine too.
- Tripod with head and mounting plate on your camera to attach the camera
- Flash is handy, but certainly not necessary. To use flash, though, you must use flash gear that allows you to do off-camera flash. Flash mounted on the camera doesn't do you much good. You need wired or wireless off-camera flash and know where your flash exposure compensation (FEC) control is located. Sometimes that is on the flash, or on the camera, or both.
- We will have two LED lamps at every station to provide excellent light for the close-up objects provided, so you probably don't need to bring one.



## *John's Gear*

If I were a participant, I would bring the following:

- Canon 5D Mark IV camera
- Canon 180mm macro lens with a Kirk quick-release plate attached and the **hood** for the lens
- Gitzo tripod with a Kirk BH-1 ballhead
- Canon 600 EX-RT Speedlite with an ST-E3-RT radio controller



FIGURE 10 - NINETEEN IMAGES ARE STACKED TOGETHER TO SHARPLY FOCUS EVERY SPOT IN THIS CLUMP OF NORTHERN PITCHER PLANTS! I WILL TEACH YOU HOW I SHOOT AND PROCESS THE STACK, AND THEN MERGE THEM TOGETHER USING HELICON FOCUS.

**Learn the close-up photography skills to make images  
like these quickly and easily!**

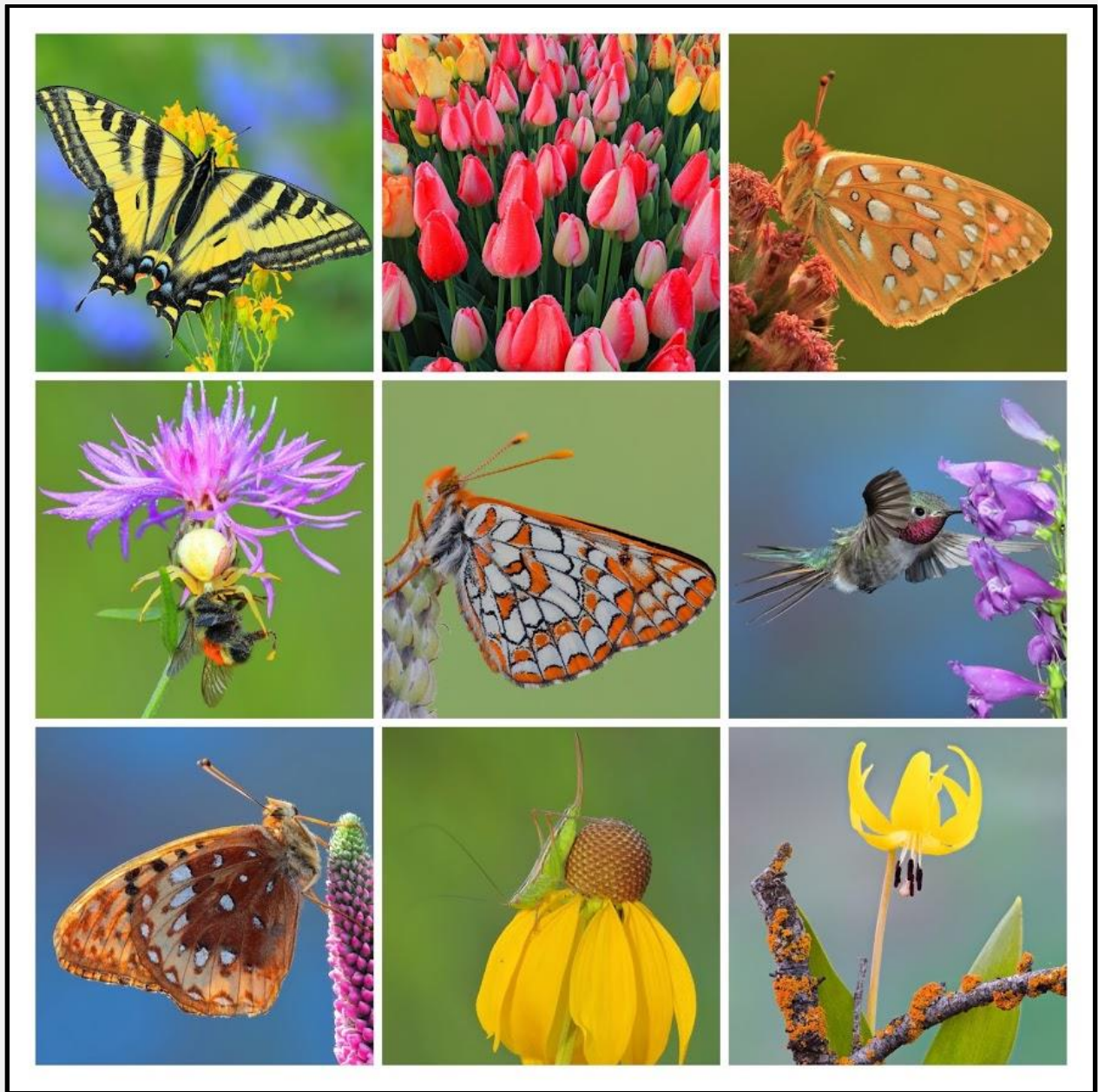


FIGURE 11 - WITH FORTY YEARS OF SHOOTING NATURE PHOTOGRAPHS FOR A LIVING, JOHN IS INCREDIBLY EXPERIENCED AND KNOWLEDGEABLE. HE KNOWS ALL THE DIFFERENT WAYS TO SHOOT CLOSE-UPS BUT TEACHES ONLY THE VERY BEST METHODS TO MAKE CAPTIVATING HIGH-QUALITY IMAGES. WITH HIS GUIDANCE, THE ENTIRE PROCESS BECOMES EASY FOR ALL.

### **What you will photograph**

This close-up photography class is conducted entirely indoors to eliminate the problem of uncooperative weather. By shooting indoors, there is no wind, rain, or bright sun to prevent you from shooting beautiful images, and more importantly, you are able to use the new photo skills you learn to capture outstanding images.



We have more than a dozen photo stations where superb images are ready to be made, and you will rotate through them while Dixie and I help you master photo techniques! All LED lights, backgrounds, and attractive subjects are provided.

Types of photo stations to expect:

1. Flowers – a few stations have potted flowers where we emphasize focus stacking and exposure. From single blossoms to small groups of flowers, learn to light them well, use a pleasing background, and focus stack them for tremendous depth of field. The equipment we use in our flower setups is inexpensive and you can buy your own to use at home to photograph indoors all year long! After this class, you will be able to stay productive all winter long!
2. Feathers – peacock feathers are gorgeous, especially the eyespot on the tail feathers. They photograph best with sidelight to reveal the texture in the feathers.
3. Shells – colorful shells always make excellent pattern images
4. Stones – brightly colored stones make fine patterns too
5. Cacti – a small group of ornamental cacti make challenging compositions
6. Fruit – colorful fruit make appealing images
7. Working with mirrors and their reflections
8. Belt buckles



FIGURE 12 - NUMEROUS SUBJECTS AWAIT YOU IN YOUR CLOSE-UP ADVENTURES



FIGURE 13 TWO PEACOCK FEATHERS MADE IN OUR MACRO CLASS



FIGURE 14 LEARN TO WORK WITH MIRRORS AND BACKGROUNDS TO MAKE FASCINATING REFLECTION IMAGES





FIGURE 15 A SHELL THAT IS FOCUS STACKED USING 17 IMAGES AT F/8. NOTICE EVERYTHING IS SHARP!!!!



FIGURE 16 OLD BARNWOOD MAKES AN APPEALING BACKGROUND





FIGURE 17 A CACTUS PATTERN AT HIGH MAGNIFICATION USING THE MAGNIFICENT FOCUS STACKING TECHNIQUE





FIGURE 18 AN ORCHID SHOT WITH THE TWO LIGHT MACRO SETUP YOU WILL USE.



FIGURE 19 PINECONE AND ACORNS ON A MIRROR WITH THE 2-LIGHT SETUP