

The American Birds Salon of Photography 1982

This is the eleventh annual salon; the tenth was published two years ago in the September, 1980 issue of *American Birds*. In 1981 we featured in its place a special exhibit of the photographs of Frans Lanting; this year we return to the original format. Response to our announcement was slightly more than two years ago, with a total of 360+ color photographs from 61 entrants from which to select our winners. This year an expanded judging panel spent many hours going through the various elimination procedures that finally resulted in a selection of about 30 excellent entries, from which the winners were chosen. It should be noted that the photographs, when judged are so anonymous, and we are so honest, that we have an embarrassing three double winners this year, proving only that quality will out.

For a more thorough discussion of how we judge photographs, what makes for good photographs and what we think detracts from others, see *American Birds* 34(5) 715. Once again, our congratulations to the winners, and our thanks to winners and non-winners alike. We think it's a good show.

Famous is not a bad name for the Grand Prize winner in our competition, and Norm Famous, of Machias, Maine, walked off with the honors and the September front cover, with his beautiful, evocative composition entitled "April Blizzard." The birds are Common Redpolls, no strangers to snow, and they are patiently and puffedly waiting their turn at a nearby bird feeder. Famous is a professional photographer of one year's standing, although he has been photographing birds, among other subjects, for about ten years. His locus is mostly New England, and this is the biggest award he has yet won. When we telephoned for information, we talked to the distaff Famous, Nona, who laughingly informed us that she and Norm were competitive, and while she was happy for him, she would have preferred a call about her own entries. Perhaps next year will be Nona's year!

The date was April 7, 1982 (see "Changing Seasons," this issue), the camera a Nikkormat with 85 mm Nikor lens, the film Ektachrome, and the exposure data probably f.4 at 1/125th second. Available light, no filter. The winning exposure was one of only four taken, but after he snapped this one, the excited photographer said "this is the one—everything looked just right!" And it does!



Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, one of New York City's premier ornithological attractions, was the site for the Mockingbird photograph which won Georges Dremeaux of Forest Hills, New York, second prize in this year's salon. Dremeaux, who says that he has been photographing birds as an amateur for only four-and-a-half years, already has a photo list that tops 300 species. His birding travels have taken him across North America and to England, France, and Spain, during which he also photographs mammals if the opportunity presents itself. The Mockingbird pictured here on April 10, 1982 was free, establishing its territory, and "standing his ground." The camera was a Canon F-1N, the lens a Canon 400 mm, the film Kodachrome 64. Exposure data f.5.6 or f.8 at 1/500th second, with ambient light.

A mood picture wins Third Prize this year: gray gulls against a gray sea, which somehow catches one of the infinite images of this ever-changing environment. The photographer is Richard L. Ditch, of Freehold, New Jersey, a young amateur who has specialized in bird photography, but admits to an interest in wildflowers and historic buildings. Ditch is a member of the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Audubon Society, and is beginning to see his photographs published. The winning trio of Laughing Gulls was taken from a moving boat in the Atlantic Ocean off Cape May, New Jersey, October, 1981, as the gulls flew alongside. The Nikon FE was hand held, with a Nikkor 300 mm lens; the film was Kodachrome 64, the auto-exposure wide open at f.4.5, at 1/250th second.

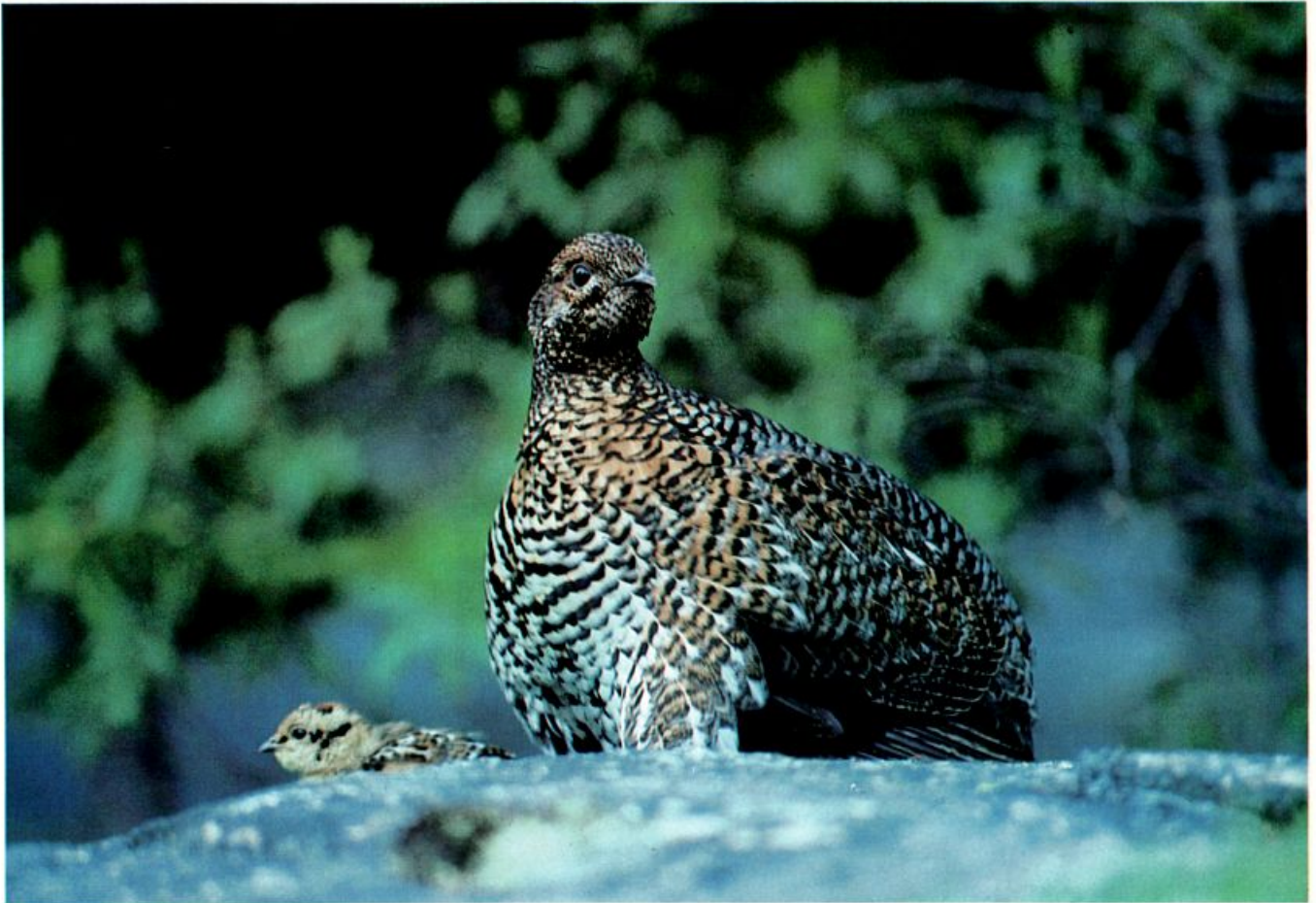


The Farallon Islands, a National Wildlife Refuge 35 miles west of the Golden Gate, are justly famous. Home of thousands of seabirds and a resident research team from the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, they are also the site of California's most renowned migrant trap, or last-ditch sanctuary, for an amazing variety of eastern strays. Shown here, in stark contrast, are two of its ever-changing faces, and together they have won Kevin Schafer, of Seattle, two Honorable Mentions in our salon. Schafer is now a professional photographer specializing in mammals and in scenery; he has traveled to Antarctica in his quest, and says that "most of the birds I've photographed have been easy to get close to. My favorites, penguins, will stand and model for hours. It almost doesn't seem sporting."



Both photographs by Schafer show Western Gulls on Southeast Farallon Island, where Schafer was employed as a biologist. On the left, the gulls in fog and mist in April, 1982. The camera was a Canon FT, with a 50 mm lens, but the photographer is a bit foggy about the exposure data. On the right, a more panoramic view, in beautiful sunset light, also in April, 1982. The camera was the same Canon FT, the film for both photographs was Kodachrome 64, and this time with a 28 mm lens. No exposure data are available. This is the largest Western Gull colony anywhere, (20,000 individuals) and the photographs were taken from one of the few paths permitted to observers during the breeding season. "Although the birds are cautious, they are relatively easy to photograph. They also have a darling habit of dive bombing photographers."

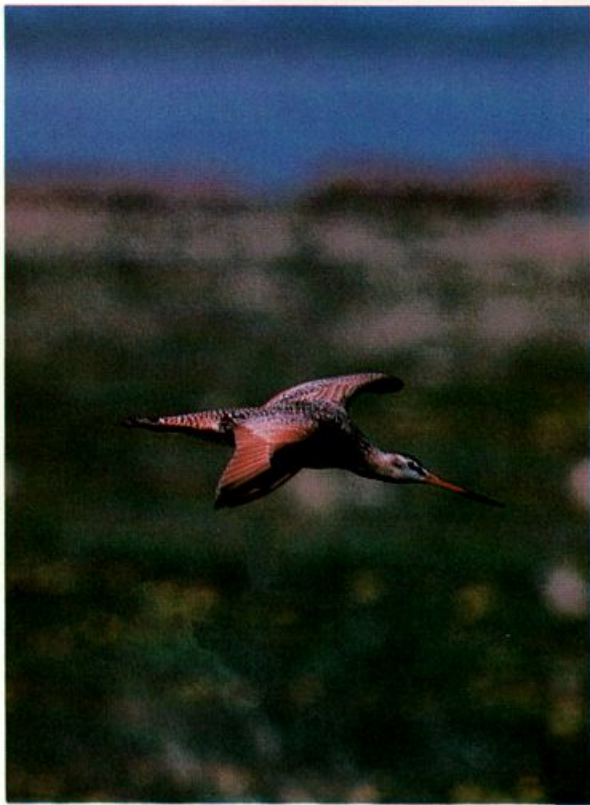




In spite of the editor, who firmly believes that there is no such bird as the Spruce Grouse, having searched in vain for birds from Maine to Manitoba that were "here ten minutes ago," or "we always get it up this road," or "you should have been here last week," we must nevertheless award an Honorable Mention to Norm Famous, his second award, for this whatever-it-is. Admittedly, it is an attractive photograph of watchful hen and one of her five chicks. The photograph was taken at Petit Manan Point, Steuben, Maine, in June, 1982. The camera, once again, a Nikkormat, with Nikkor 200 mm lens, Kodachrome 64 film, a slow exposure of 1/30th second at f.4. The bird was free and there were no problems, except for the feat of photographing a mythical bird.

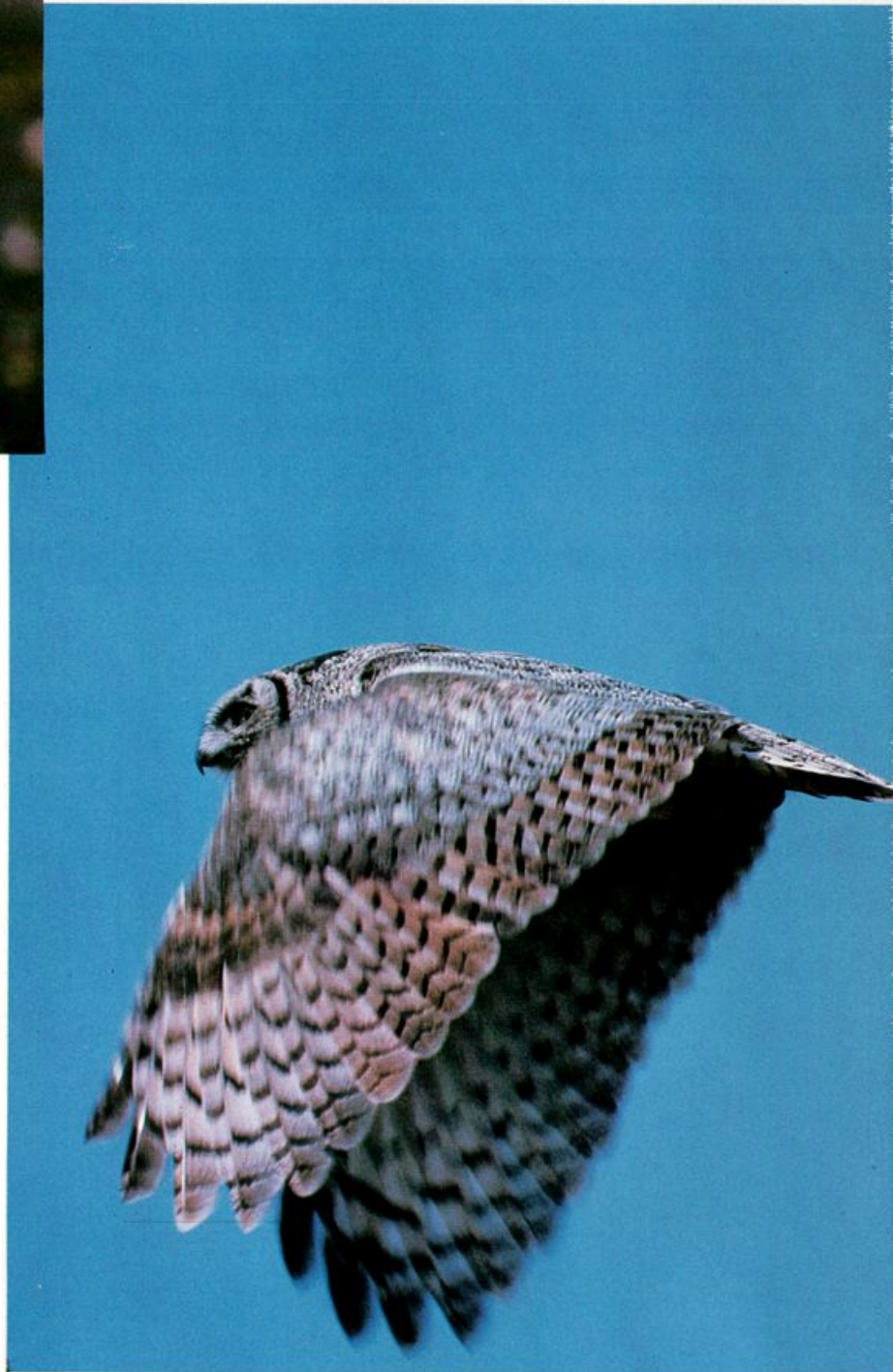
Surely there's nothing particularly difficult about photographing a Killdeer chick, except that you must first locate the chick, catch it at a rare moment of repose, arrange the light to fall over your shoulder, find a harmonizing foreground and an uncluttered background, and shoot. James F. Parnell, of Wilmington, North Carolina, seems to have done all this with his Honorable Mention winner. A veteran birder, this biology professor at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington uses his photographs of birds, mammals, and habitats especially wetlands, as teaching aids. The chick was captured on Kodachrome 64 film in May, 1981 at Wilmington by a Nikon FE camera with a 400 mm Novoflex follow-focus lens. Natural light. The exposure was at f.8 but the exposure time was "on automatic."





The second award to Rudi Butot, another Honorable Mention, was won by this Marbled Godwit, sailing in for a landing at Beaverhill Lake, Alberta, on May 20, 1981. All exposure details are identical to those for the owl: same camera, lens, film, f stop, and shutter speed. It's obviously a magic setting for Rudi Butot.

Honorable Mention for his Great Horned Owl, caught in the act of trying to drive him away from a fledged young nearby, goes to Rudi Butot of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Butot, a dedicated birder, considers himself an amateur photographer of all wildlife, but his "photo list" is now about 250 species. His photographs have found their way into books about Calgary and Alberta wildlife, and he uses them in adult and school-age educational programs. Rudi is one of our three double winners. This photograph was taken at Irricana, Alberta, on May 18, 1981, with a Canon F-1, 400 mm lens, on Kodachrome 64 film, at f.5.6 at 1/500th second.



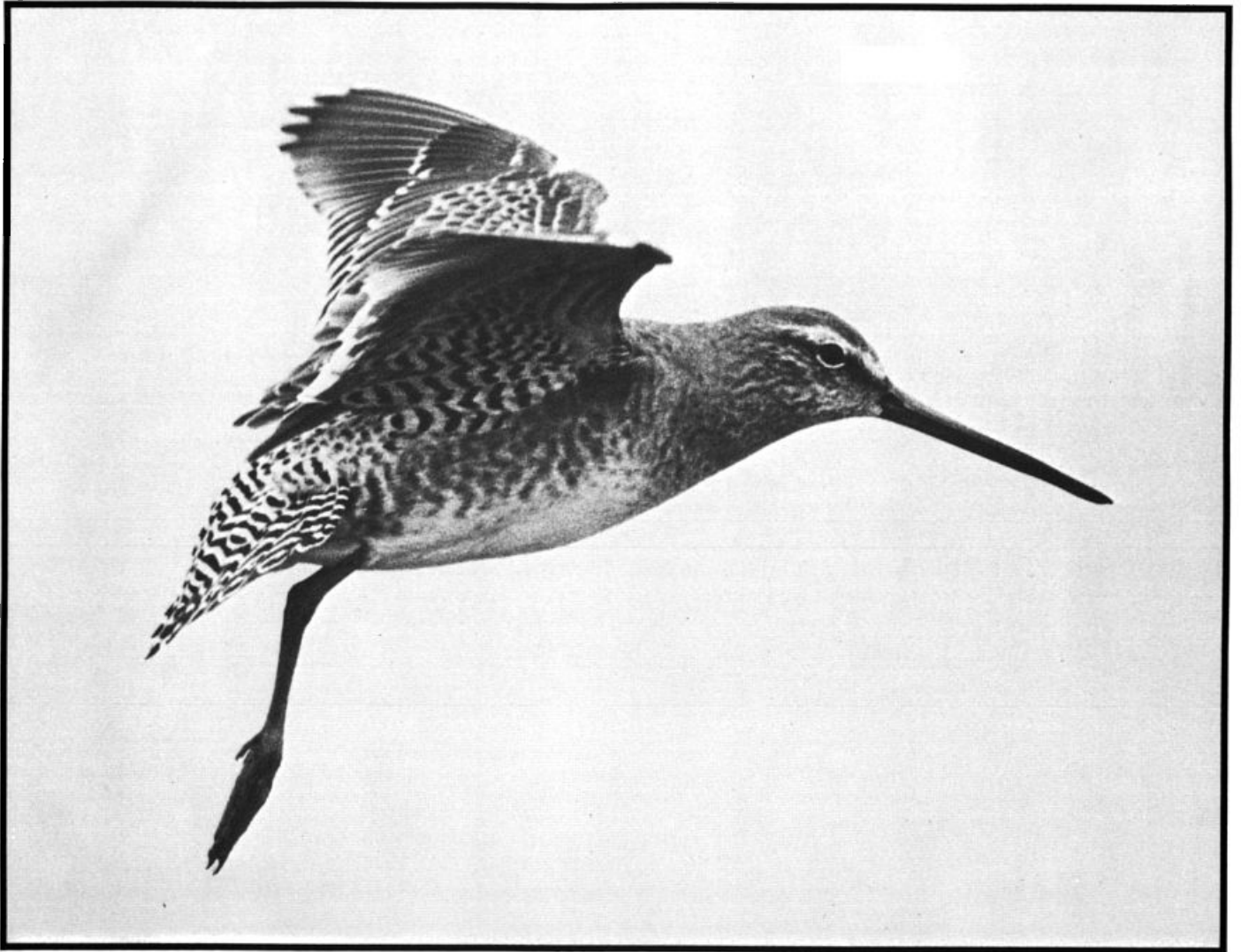


Nothing spectacular, nothing

startling, but a rather neat, indeed immaculate, portrait of a Western Flycatcher wins Peter La Tourette, of Los Altos, California, an Honorable Mention this year. Although flash was used to fill in the light, there is no trace of overexposure, and the fine details are all clear, from eye ring to bill color. The little *Empidonax* was caught at Yaqui Well in Anza-Borego State Park in southern California, in early May, 1981. The Nikon FE with Vivitar 365 strobe was mounted on a tripod. The lens was a Nikon 400 mm with a W/TC-14 attachment, making it 560 mm power. The film was Kodachrome 64, a UV filter was used, the exposure was f.11 at 1/125th second. The only other ingredient was patience: "I stayed in the same spot for 2-3 hours." La Tourette reveals that he has been photographing birds for about four years, is interested in "birding in general", and has travelled widely—from Hawaii to Finland, in this pursuit.

Although heron photographs are under certain handicaps, because the birds begin with a photogenic advantage, we couldn't resist this rather unorthodox pose of a Louisiana Heron, which wins Ed Hagen, of Woodbury, Connecticut, an Honorable Mention. Some of the judges felt that the stump in the foreground detracted from an otherwise attractive composition, but we think that it adds a mark of punctuation in wood, turning what would otherwise seem unreal into a believable setting. Hagen is a birder who takes photographs when opportunities present themselves; his other favorite subjects are landscapes. The setting for this one was Everglades National Park, Florida, the camera a Canon F1N, the lens a Vivitar 300 mm, the film Ektachrome 400, available light, at 1/100th second. The bird was free and wild and Hagen had to position the camera at ground level to get the winning shot.





We don't know whether Ken Gardiner has so intimidated other photographers that they leave the black-and-white field entirely to him, or whether the interest in color is now so overwhelming that he is the only practitioner left, but his were our only entries this year in this category. Just to show that there is still room for great artistry without color, we print this dowitcher, with a Special Award for excellence in black-and-white photography. The bird was photographed at Palo Alto Baylands, California, in October, 1981, with a Nikon F-2, a Nikon 400 mm EDIF lens, and Tri-X film. You catch motion like this only with high speed film and exposure settings of f.11 at 1/2000th second. Gardiner, whose work we have honored before, is a senior research engineer at SRI International, and has had a recent exhibit in the Aeronautics Department of Stanford University. His work is often published in magazines such as *Sunset* and *AUDUBON*.