

July 2026 Newsletter



Hi to Everyone,

I'm creating a new format for my newsletters that can be downloaded off my website. The program that I have been using, Mailchimp, has become very expensive to use, and with limited size and scalability I have decided to create my own pdf format. I will no longer be e-mailing them, but they will be linked to my website and downloaded and viewed at your convenience. By viewing them in a pdf format, the images will be sharper and have more clarity, and not be downsized to fit a certain format or size. The links from this new pdf newsletter should work exactly like the old links worked, but there might be a learning curve for me to get everything running smoothly.

July has been a great month for bird and butterfly photography. All my trips have been to Sequoia National Park (SNP) and to Mineral King, the newest addition to SNP since November 1978. Road construction has improved the road between Three Rivers and Mineral King, though the final 7-8 miles is still a bit rough. It takes me about the same amount of time driving to get to either the Giant Forest and Lodgepole, as it does to the Mineral King Valley. The café at Lodgepole isn't as quaint as the café at the Silver City Lodge – but both are adequate for lunch. So, I hope you enjoy the gallery of bird and butterfly images- for me, the highlight was finally getting an encounter with a male Hermit Warbler in SNP, and we had a good encounter with a Sooty Grouse hen and her four chicks.

I wrote an article that was published decades ago called "Jewels on the Wind" about photographing these brilliant, colorful butterflies. Since then, I have learned a great deal about them through studying several books I own on butterflies, and also the struggles in identifying them. While the order Lepidoptera has 200,00 species - 14,750 are butterflies, with about 850 species found just in North America. Thousands more are found in the America's tropical regions, with other regions of the world having fewer total species. When compared to identifying butterflies, birds are simple and easy. Since butterflies aren't my primary subject on safaris, I doubt I will ever photograph more than 200. My count today stands at a paltry 128. But, like birds or mammals, photographing them is addictive. So here are some tips to getting great images.

1). You don't need a 1:1 macro lens. Most of the butterflies I've photographed have come with either a 70-200mm lens (a lens I no longer own) or a 100-400mm lens. Why? Because working distance with a macro lens is so close that you will frighten most butterflies away – constantly chasing them from one perch to another. My 100-400mm lens is ideal because I can shoot nearly full-sensor images of them from 3 to 5 feet away, using the zoom to frame and compose the images. Longer telephoto lens, like my old 500mm or even my newer 600mm – require me to back away at times to get to its minimum focusing distance. Which is annoying to say the least, and time consuming. Working distance is an important consideration in all wildlife photography. I don't want to photograph dangerous

animals with a wide-angle lens because it forces me to get closer for a reasonable image. A long telephoto lens keeps me safe; it is the best insurance you can have in the field.

2). Getting lower angle images is usually better, though when a butterfly has its wings open providing a “dorsal view” or top view, the higher angle down is better. My knees have required me to buy thick plumbers knee pads if I want to kneel in the rocks and thorns, so I don’t go down on my knees as often as I used to. The advantage of the “ventral view” or side view, with the wings up and parallel, is that the best identification comes from the spot/cell pattern and colors of the under wings. Butterflies have a set of wings on each side of their thorax, a forewing and a hindwing. There is usually more color on the dorsal view, but more identification spots, dashes, and vein details on the ventral view. Without getting into too much detail, in good butterfly identification books the identifying marks (spots, etc) are identified right to the actual wing cell they are located in.

3). There are sub-species to nearly all butterfly species that are defined by location, elevation, etc. A common species I have photographed many times is the Lupine Blue, *Plebejus icarioides*. There are six sub-species, such as *P.i.pardalis*, which ranges from Santa Clara County through Contra Costa County in California. Males and females can have different colors, such as a male being blue on the dorsal view, while females can be either blue or brown on the dorsal view (from above). Yes, potentially very confusing. The book I primarily use for identification is The Butterflies of North America, A Natural History and Field Guide, by James A. Scott, published by the Stanford University Press. Expensive, and a bit dated, but the most reliable guide I’ve ever found. Using the scientific nomenclature is the surest way to know what species you are dealing with, as I have done here. *Plebejus* is the genus, *icarioides* is the species, with the abbreviation *P.i.pardalis* being the sub-species.



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
White Peacock Butterfly | Texas Wildlife Safari
amwestphoto.com

Dorsal View of Butterfly Wings



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Sister Butterfly - Mineral King Safari
amwestphoto.com

Ventral View of Butterfly Wings

As you look at these two butterfly images, notice how the wings are divided up into individual cells. On the Sister Butterfly the orange area at the wing tips shows the wing veins clearly (black lines) that divide up the orange area into cells. On the White Peacock the spots are in specific cells. These are the code words that are used to identify butterflies. The beauty of butterflies is never more evident than when you get a clean, sharp image of one – doesn’t matter the species. The cool looking colors and intricate patterns make for a valuable subject that makes the final image desirable.

When I first started shooting butterflies in Utah, when I lived in St. George, the subjects were all high desert species, and there weren’t a whole lot – maybe 20 or so. I photographed a few that I have never seen since. One in particular was the great Blue Hairstreak I captured on a Yerba Santa bush. A gorgeous blue and orange butterfly that flies so fast you can’t see it, only hear the clicking of the wings as it goes by. Other keys to finding butterflies is to go to areas with water, vegetation, and wildflowers to feed on. The first butterfly I shot after moving to Tulare was a common Buckeye butterfly in the main wash area in Pinnacles National Park.

QUOTE

“What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly.” Richard Bach

WALLPAPER

MacGillivray's Warbler in Sequoia National Park

Click the link above to download the wallpaper in a new window, then right-click and copy it to your computer. You can see all **FREE** Wallpaper here: ([LINK](#)) The wallpaper is sized to 1980px by 1080px to easily fit most computer screens.



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MacGillivray's Warbler | Bears-Birds-Butterflies Safari

www.am

2026-2027 Upcoming Safari Schedule

August 4-5	Black Bear / Sooty Grouse Safari – Link
August 18	Kingwood, TX Camera Club Show
August 19	Black Bear Safari – Link
August 25	Lancaster, CA Camera Club Show
August 26	Black Bear Safari – Link
September 2	Black Bear Safari – Link
September 7-12	Yellowstone Fall Wildlife Safari – Link
September 13	Utah Wild Horse Safari – Link
September 22	Sequoia Landscape Safari - Link
September 25-Oct 2	San Juan Mtns (CO) Landscape Safari – Link

October 8	Mineral King Landscape Safari - Link
October 13-14	Bobcat Safari – Link
October 20	Bobcat Safari – Link
October 27-30	Southern Utah Fall Colors Safari – Link
November 10-11	Bobcat Safari – Link
November 12	Bobcat Safari – Link
December 3	Bobcat Safari – Link
December 8-9	Bobcat Safari – Link
December 15-17	Bosque del Apache (NM) Bird Safari – Link
December 29	Bobcat Safari – Link
January 4	Bobcat Safari – Link
January 6-7	Bobcat Safari – Link
January 14-21	Yellowstone Winter Wildlife Safari – Link
January 22	Utah Wild Horse Safari – Link
February 2	Bobcat Safari – Link
February 9-10	Bobcat Safari – Link
February 14-20	Yellowstone Winter Wildlife Safari – Link
February 21	Utah Wild Horse Safari – Link
February 25	Bobcat Safari – Link
March 3	Bobcat Safari - Link
March 24-25	Utah Wild Horse Safari – Link
April 13-14	Eastern Sierras Spring Landscape Safari – Link
April 26-29	Southern Utah Spring Safari – Link
May 5-7	San Juan Island (WA) Fox Safari – Link
May 18-20	Magee Marsh (OH) Bird Safari – Link
June 1-7	Yellowstone Spring Wildlife Safari – Link
June 8	Utah Wild Horse Safari – Link

GALLERY of some of my Favorites so far in 2026



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4x4 Mule Deer Buck | Bosque del Apache NWR Safari amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Male Oryx | White Sands NP Safari amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Snow Goose landing | Bosque del Apache NWR Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Snow Goose landing | Bosque del Apache NWR Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Bobcat stalking | Bobcat Wildlife Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Young Male Bobcat - Morongo Bird Safari
amwestphoto.com



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Black-crested Titmouse | Texas Wildlife Safari
amwestphoto.com



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Black Red Fox kit | San Juan Island Fox Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Black Red Fox Kits playing | San Juan Island Fox Safari
amwestphoto.com



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Great Gray Owl vs. Raven interaction | Spring Yellowstone Wildlife Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Harlequin Drake at Le Hardy Rapids | Spring Yellowstone Wildlife Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Red Fox kit | Yellowstone Spring Wildlife Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Grizzly | Yellowstone Spring Wildlife Safari amwestphoto.com



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Hermit Warbler | Sequoia Black Bear Safari amwestphoto.com



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Brown Creeper | Sequoia Black Bear Safari amwestphoto.com



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Lazuli Bunting | Mineral King Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Osprey nearing Nest with Jewelry | Eastern Sierra Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Beaver Ponds above Lundy Lake | Eastern Sierra Safari
amwestphoto.com



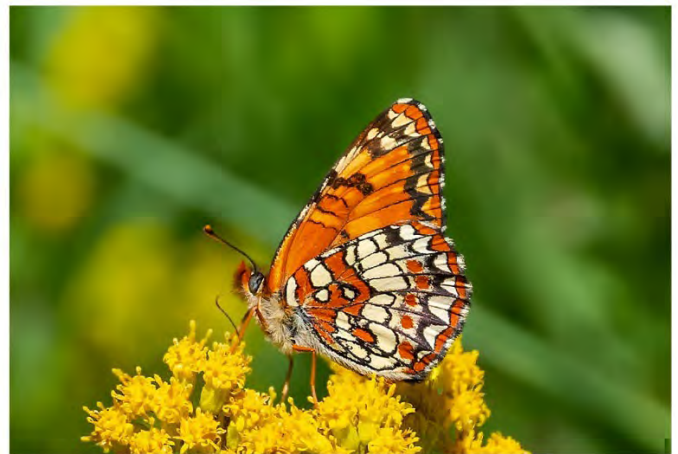
BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
The Grand Tetons | Yellowstone Winter Wildlife Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Spring Snowfall - Bryce Canyon NP | Southern Utah Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Lustrous Copper Butterflies on Pussy Paws | Mineral King (Sequoia) Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Pacific Checkerspot | Sequoia Bear-Birds-Butterfly Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Long-billed Thrasher | Texas Wildlife Safari
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BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Ermine | Yellowstone Winter Wildlife Safari
amwestphoto.com



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Wild Horses | Utah Wild Horse Safari
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BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY
Wild Stallion | Utah Wild Horse Safari
amwestphoto.com



BRENT PAULL PHOTOGRAPHY

Black-coated Gray Wolf | Yellowstone Winter Wildlife Safari

amwestphoto.com

Last Call Notes:

I saved my favorite photograph for last. On the winter Yellowstone Wildlife Safari we had a wolf encounter that was really as good as it gets. Wolves were feeding on a bison carcass that was just out-of-sight off the road about 70 yards in Lamar Valley. We spent several hours photographing their comings-and-goings when this wolf exited the group, dropping to the ridge and out-of-sight. On a hunch a couple of us walked west on the road about 200 yards and was lucky enough to intersect this wolf as it headed across the road and eventually going uphill to the north. It came over the ridge about 40 yards away and came right towards us, pausing for about 20 seconds just 20 yards away – trying to decide what angle to take across the road. My finger never left the shutter-release button. I was focusing with a small-dynamic grid setting – with the grid right over the face of the wolf. It was nice to see all the expensive equipment work perfectly. The wolf made his decision, moved at an angle away from me, crossing the road and heading up the mountain. I will never forget that moment.

Kind Regards,

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Please forward this newsletter to your photographer friends, maybe we can make a connection that otherwise would never happen. The world of photography is vast and only getting bigger. Also, I can sometimes change safari dates to accommodate folks, so if you would like to do a custom date, or see if I can switch a date, just let me know.

