

interview to Magnus Carlsson.

“learning to see”

Knowing every month new photographers, today we travel to the Arctic Circle to know more about Magnus Carlsson (Skellefteå, Sweden 1982) Freelance photographer specializing in sports and wildlife. With exhibitions among other in Spain, France, Switzerland and Sweden, Magnus tells us the secret beauty of the wildlife up north.



Capercaillie: © Magnus Carlsson - taigavision.com

GFM. How did you begin to be a professional photographer, and how did you turn your career into wildlife photography?

MC. Living close to nature ever since childhood has turned an interested into a passion of the very same. Following the footsteps of Diana I soon learned to read tracks, and to find my way in nature. One day, when out on one of my longer training rounds, I stumbled over a magnificent black grouse lek - some 70 birds - imagine getting to photograph that. Alas, I didn't have a camera at the time. By a coincidence I, later that week, stumbled over a used analog Canon EOS 1000 with a 28-80mm f4-5.6 and a 80-200mm f4-5.6 lens in a store, down town. After walking out with that camera in my hand a new world opened!

Why are you interested in show the amazing animals and landscapes of Sweden's North?

Northern Sweden is a place of contrasts. During winter time the mercury not seldom drop to -30 degrees Celsius with a thick blanket of glistening white snow covering the ground while a sparkling and breathtaking northern light play from one side to the other on the clear sky.

In spring time the woods are absolutely teeming with activity as the winter is loosening its grip. Large numbers of migrating birds is typical and it is busy days on the lek site for ruff, capercaillie and black grouse. Woodcock fly to and fro in the sky, moose come out on to the fields to eat the first sprouting grass, the calls of lynx and eagle owls can be heard in the late evenings.

During summer time the midnight sun makes northern Sweden an Eldorado for any photographer interested in nature photography - soft blue and red light for hours and hours, lots of owls, moose, lynx, reindeer, eagles, roaring rivers and untouched wilderness.

During the fall the autumn leaves glow with color, the moose have their rutting period and salmon force the rivers in daring jumps, striving to spawn upstream. Waxwings move around in large numbers eating rowanberries and the first night frost soon covers the ground.

I have traveled quite a lot in my days and there are many beautiful places to see and visit worldwide but, take my word for it; northern Sweden is one of them!

Tell us something about your workshops :

During spring time I offer a capercaillie and black grouse workshop. A winter landscape / northern light workshop in January - February and, in the summer, I provide opportunities to take photos of red throated divers, other water fowl and beavers. More information is to be found on my website: www.taigavision.com and don't hesitate to contact me for more information.



We can see in your photos the north of Sweden. But have you worked lately on other places doing wildlife or other photography?

My latest photo trip was to the Alps and before that the USA but I have chosen to focus on Scandinavian wildlife for a period of time in order to gather material for my future book.



Reindeer: © Magnus Carlsson - taigavision.com

What places of your country would you recommend to a south European photographers like us, to photography?

Southern Sweden is characterized by large rapeseed fields, oak and beech woods, and beautiful archipelagos and is more densely populated than the northern half. The latter offers beautiful small lakes, marshlands and forests – lots of it. Wildlife probably outnumber the number of inhabitants. Head up north for midnight sun and rolling landscapes and down south for shopping, museum visits, sailing and crab fishing etc. – there's no one answer, it all depends on your preferences.

What do you think makes Skellefteå, and all the taiga and polar circle land, so special to take photos?

The abundance of wildlife and the unique duration of the low/red sunlight.

How is an ordinary day for a wildlife photographer like you?

Wildlife photography is easy...when you are at the right place at the right time. For this reason I try to plan ahead. Assume I want to photograph dippers. I then start out by learning what I can about the specie; when are they active, what do they eat, where can they find food and when is this likely done during the day? It then remains nothing but finding a biotope that fits the criteria and to be there at the right time.

How many hours can you be inside the hide, what hour do you enter to this? and what temperatures are you working?

I like it hot, and cold. Really cold that is. My preferred photographic condition is when weather shows its' worst. I have tried staying in a hide for several days (consecutive) but I usually head to the hide late in the evening the day before and leave the day after.

What are the biggest advantages and disadvantages of work in this amazing & sometimes no habited places like you do?

The advantage is that there are so few people and instead so much wildlife! Disadvantage? Possibly that there is no one to ask where to find the wildlife.

What camera, lens, tripod, do you use?

Camera bodies:

Canon 1Ds mkII & Canon 1D mkIII.

Lenses:

Canon 300/2.8L IS USM, 300/4L IS USM, 600/4L IS USM, 180/3.5L USM, 16-35L USM, 24-70/2.8L USM.

Tripods:

Gitzo 1325 and a Gitzo 1548 (to support the 600mm lens).

“My preferred photographic condition is when weather shows its' worst.”



Black grouse: © Magnus Carlsson - taigavision.com

Which do you think are the qualities that a nature/wildlife photographer should have?

Everyone that can see can photograph nature and wildlife. What is difficult is learning to see. I believe that passion for the outdoors is a necessity for the later.

Tell us something about your job of action sports photographer are you focused in some special sport?

I love the extremes which possibly explain my preference for action sports.

What are you working on actually?

Current project is a coffee-table book on Scandinavian wildlife.

Which are your future projects?

Alaska and South Africa are the two destinations topping my travel-wish list.

**“passion for
the outdoors is
a necessity”**



Playing arctic fox: © Magnus Carlsson - taigavision.com

Action sports gallery:



Speedflying: © Magnus Carlsson - taigavision.com



Eagle Man: © Magnus Carlsson - taigavision.com



Kayaking: © Magnus Carlsson - taigavision.com

To know more about Magnus Carlsson (biography, galleries, workshops) visit:

<http://www.taigavision.com/>

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