

# Birds In Flight Photography Hints

from

Brian Blinkhorn

## **ISO** set to 'Auto'

Maximum 'Auto-ISO' is camera dependent (*in some cameras the maximum may be limited by the photographer.*)

I allow up to **3200**

Bear in mind that anything much above **ISO 400** may show considerable noise and could require a lot of work to achieve a print quality image.

**Shutter Priority (Tv)** I usually set the camera to between **1/1200** and **1/4000 sec**

depending on lighting conditions.

Camera will be hand held and panned to capture a moving, but largely unpredictable, subject.

**Aperture** Let the camera decide – Usually between **f 2.8** and **f 6.3**

This will depend on the lens.

**More recently** I have, with experience, determined the optimal aperture of each of my lenses and, with the Canon EOS 7D MK 2, can set the min/max aperture of the current lens on the body.

**Turn on 'Continuous Shooting' mode**

**Spot metering mode**

**Exposure Comp. [Av +/-]** I usually increase exposure against the sky **+1 2/3** stops *or more*

**BUT** subject can 'washout' if the background changes – land or water

This is something that comes with practice

**Lens** Good results with **Canon 55 – 250mm** (f 4.5, f 5.6 kit lens) a good and relatively inexpensive lens.

**Excellent results with Canon 70 – 200mm f 2.8 L, Canon 400mm f5.6 L and Canon 100 – 400mm f5.6 IS (Mk 1 and Mk 2) L lenses.**

Very good results with **Sigma 150 – 600mm (IS) lens.**

Not as good (optically) , and not as fast as the Canon L lenses

BUT the longer focal length means images require less enlargement.

Approx half the price of the Canon 70 – 200mm (and approx 10% the price of a Canon 500mm)

**Set lens to autofocus**

**Turn off image stabiliser (unless lens has a 'panning mode')**

**Centre Auto Focussing point with AF point extension** (a bit like cross hairs) – the extension points will become active if initial centre point has locked focus first – with 'AI Servo' focussing mode – **not available on all cameras.** Since getting the 7D Mk2 I have been inclined to select a block of 9 or 15 focus points for 'bird in flight' photography. **Again, this is not available on all cameras.**

**Focussing mode** – depends on the lens. I usually use 'AI – Servo' **BUT** some lenses tend to *hunt* too much – in such case I use 'one shot' and then hope for the best!

I always shoot **RAW** (plus jpg for image thumbnail view)

## **Practice makes Perfect!**

**Gulls and eagles in flight are challenging, but practising on pigeons and sand martins will drive you insane!**

See Brian's images of White-tailed Eagles at:

<http://www.blinkhorn.org.uk/isle-of-mull/mull-white-tailed-eagles/>