

urban JUNGLE

Part 1: SHOOT INSECTS IN THE CITY

NEW SERIES

Elliott Neep reveals just how he gets up close and personal with his very small neighbours to capture incredible images, in this first part of a fascinating new series on how to shoot urban wildlife.



ABOUT ELLIOTT NEEP

Elliott works as a commercial photographer, although his passion is for wildlife. Along with British mammals, he also travels further afield to shoot images of the natural world. Check out www.enwp.co.uk



I LIVE IN LONDON, the most densely populated city in Europe. Yet in spite of this, it is also one of the greenest. London offers a wealth of parks and open spaces that contain a surprising diversity of wildlife, and as a consequence of the high-density, 24-hour population, much of the wildlife has become habituated to human traffic. For any experienced wildlife photographer, this is a welcome gift, but if you're just getting to grips with wildlife photography, it's a genuine bonus.

Almost every city in Britain has these green spaces. A quick search on Google with 'parks+city+uk' throws up a great list of local authority websites with their parks and woodlands all conveniently listed with useful maps and guides.

Living in a large city can be a real bind. It can take an awful lot of time and effort to leave the place. For

instance, if I need to reach a location in the Home Counties before dawn, then I have to leave in the middle of the night to avoid traffic or road works. However, for particular subjects, staying local can actually be more productive.

Within 15 minutes of my home are Hampstead Heath, Hyde Park, Regent's Park, Primrose Hill, St James's Park, and a great many more local nature reserves and communal parks and gardens. Combined, these hold an unbelievable variety of approachable

wildlife. Just some of the subjects you could photograph include squirrels, foxes, wildfowl, woodland birds, grey herons, deer, insects, and other invertebrates... not to mention the copious number of planted gardens and borders that adorn our city parks and even the roundabouts.

City wildlife is perfect for all levels of photographer, including a very picky pro! In this series, I'm going to show you what I managed to photograph over a few days and, more importantly, how I did it.

KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED

Just walking down a street can yield results. I found this fly close to a tiny patch of overgrown land on an intersection, basking on a concrete post. On closer inspection, it was remarkable how the wing colours exactly matched the flecks of colour in the concrete. The weather was bright but overcast and as the noon fly was absolutely still, I managed a high depth-of-field with just the ambient light illuminating the subject.



CARDINAL BEETLE

I discovered this cardinal beetle resting on long grass mid-morning, and had to approach cautiously to avoid disturbing it. I managed to position the tripod over the top to achieve this dorsal view and really liked the way the blades of grass intersect in a crossed 'A'.

Location Nature reserve in Camden, London | **Camera** Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II | **Lens** Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 Macro USM | **Flash** Fill-in -2.0 & Stolen diffuser | **Tripod** Gitzo 1325 & BSS BH-55 ball head | **Exposure details** AV, ISO 200, 1/20sec at f/8, -0.7 stop