

NorthStarNerd.Org

Dedicated to open access sharing of knowledge - Your host: [Rich Hoeg](#)

This web site is archived content. Please visit my new web site which focuses upon the North Woods as viewed through the eyes of my camera. <http://www.365DaysOfBirds.Com/>

NorthStar Nerd Wildlife Photography

This blog is maintained as an archive to my 28+ years as a web development / software project manager with Honeywell. However in the Spring of 2014 I decided to retire at the early age of 57. I have never looked back. I am now a Duluth based outdoor photographer / naturalist.

Here is one image ... see more via my web site: 365DaysOfBirds.Com.

You may also want to visit my [Flickr account](#).

Northern Hawk Owl After the Storm



Posted at 06:09 AM in [Android](#) | [iPad](#) | [Kindle Fire](#), [China](#), [College Search](#), [Economy 2.0](#), [Legos](#), [Northern Life](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

March 23, 2015

An Aurora Borealis Social Media Case Study

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This case study starts in the wee hours of the morning on St. Patrick's Day 2015. Yours truly was on the frozen ice of a remote lake in northern Minnesota (Boulder Lake ... 25 miles north of Duluth). During the cold night I was watching what would turn out to be one of the strongest Northern Lights Display of the last ten years. I was recording the event with my camera.

Actually, this story / case study started at 1:45 am as I lay fast asleep in bed. Although NASA and NOAA had forecast for an Aurora to start the following night, it was not expected the night of March 16/17. Suddenly the quiet of our bedroom was broken by a fierce alarm ... Bing Bong, Bing Bong, Bing Bong! My Android smartphone app, [Aurora Alert](#) from Eagle's Orbit was sounding off. Groggily I check my app which I had customized based upon my exact location on the planet Earth to ring if the Aurora was expected to exceed a Kp of 4.33. I woke up quickly when I read the Kp was expected to reach 8.0 in one hour!

At this point I reached for my Google Nexus 10 tablet and logged into Facebook. Please understand I am a member of the [Great Lakes Aurora Hunters](#). Thus Facebook enters into the equation. This group which now exceeds a membership of 4,000 gave me an easy place to check what was happening in real time. Yup, several members from near Ely and Grand Marais, Minnesota were already outside and reporting great displays. It's now 1:50 am; I bound out of bed and throw on my long johns! Remember, this is northern Minnesota in the winter time. I am about to head for a frozen windblown lake on a cold winter night, and stand for hours. In short, I will have a fantastic time!

After 3+ hours of watching one of the best displays I had ever seen, I head home. Arriving at the old homestead I wake my wife up at 6:00 a.m. with a tale of "wows"! Read Molly's tale of woe via her blog, Superior Footprints, "[An Aurora Hunter's Wife](#)"! At this point, you may be thinking ... okay Facebook, but why a case study?? Take a look at the photo taken that night, and then read on below ...



Getting home I naturally processed my photos. Now remember it was St. Patrick's Day. Realizing that a photo showing the heavens as green would have some traction, I now posted the image via the following methods:

- Flickr: My account & album - [Northern Lights](#)

By 1pm that afternoon, I know that my photo had already been posted (with my permission) on Destination Duluth, The Pioneer Press (St. Paul, Minnesota newspaper) and the Smithsonian website! By Thursday the combined groups had been combined groups had been kind enough to let me know the St. Patrick's Day Aurora Selfie had been seen by over 250,000 people!

Now you should understand the power of social media ... thus a case study. Some important items to remember. I had content that fit the day / news (green in the heavens on St. Patrick's Day), and I took action quickly upon realizing the value of my image.

Here are more photos from that morning.



[bookending the north woods night](#)

[Project](#)

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[Giving Away your Skills!](#)

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[Northern Lights shine for the NorthStar Nerd!](#)



If you're still reading, and would like to see a few photos from the second night out, browse to my other blog, [365 Days Of Birds](#). Yup! The Aurora lasted for days, and I kept going out at night to watch nature's fireworks!



Posted at 03:19 PM in Android | iPad | Kindle Fire, Economy 2.0, Northern Life | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

February 06, 2015

Review: Canon SX60 Super Zoom Bridge Camera

Tired of lugging around your DSLR and all its lenses? Perhaps you may wish to consider the purchase of a super zoom camera. Many manufacturers have entered this market, including both Nikon and Canon. I recently completed a 365 day bird photography project where my camera was either a Canon sx40 or Canon sx60. The SX60 gives one a 60x magnification, which is very helpful when trying to get close enough for bird photos. Our fine feathered friends often spook quite easily. See [my full review](#) via my 365 Days of Birds web site.

Here is just one photo I took with the SX60, a Northern Hawk Owl.



Posted at 01:38 PM in Economy 2.0, Northern Life | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

New Mobile Friendly Design for NorthStarNerd.Org

Long time readers of my blog will notice a different design implemented as of today. As in the past, my design is simple without much "frills". Under the hood of the implementation is a design which will automatically adjust to render the best experience for the reader depending upon the device they use to browse the web ... a full sized computer, tablet, or smartphone.

I hope this design works. It is likely that I will tweak the design over the days and weeks ahead as I better understand its features.



Posted at 11:51 AM in Android | iPad | Kindle Fire, Economy 2.0 | Permalink | Comments (0)

Bookending the North Woods Night

We had a full moon this week with beautiful, crisp, clear and cold conditions to view the lunar display. I grabbed my camera and drove up to [Hawk Ridge](#) in Duluth. These two photographs were taken 13 hours apart ... bookending the North Woods night.

Moon Rise Over Lake Superior from Hawk Ridge



October 17, 2014

The Benefits of a 365 Day Photography Project

Many of my long time NorthStarNerd readers will have noticed I have not posted frequently on this web site. In truth, I have been busy blogging, but over on my [365DaysOfBirds](#) web site. This past January 23, coincidentally on my wife's birthday, I began a 365 day photography project. My goal was to become a better photographer, and get consistently off the "auto" setting on my camera. By selecting birds as my subject matter I knew I would be choosing a difficult topic. After all, it's easy to take a photograph of anything for one year, but here in northern Minnesota even finding birds during the cold harsh winter days of January can be difficult. In addition, I knew photographing birds during the June fog that rolls in off Lake Superior would also be a challenge.

Now in mid October I have reached day number 268 of my effort. This experiment has been a success. Here are some photos I have taken just in the last week. In addition to my "bird photography" I have learned how to take photos in low light, and the dark of night. Are you a photographer who wants to improve? Try out a 365 day project and push your own limits.

My own equipment is not expensive. My investment is a Canon SX40 camera (\$365: a bridging camera ... not a consumer camera, nor a DSLR) and Photoshop Elements 12 (\$75)

(click upon any image to view at full size / resolutions)

Northern Lights at Knife River, Minnesota

 266-Birds-365-Knife-River-Northern-Lights

Sunrise at the InterState Bridge (circa 1895)



Rich Hood (365DaysOfBirds.Com)

Our nation's symbol, a bald eagle!

 [262-Birds-365-Bald-Eagle](#)



Posted at 01:16 PM in Northern Life | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

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