



## On Choosing Your Camera

I usually do not very much discuss cameras and technical things. I am really not that interested in technique in itself. I often say that the camera is just a tool, that you can take fine pictures with almost any camera. And that is how I think it is.

But at the same time I did go over from Nikon to Canon for a reason. It was at the turn of the year, 1999–2000. Before then I had, for a couple of years, used Nikon F5, mostly under water. I loved my F5, so it was not an easy decision. But when Canon introduced its Image Stabilizer, for the long telephoto lenses in the 300–600mm series, and at the same time brought out the analogous camera body EOS-3 (which was presently followed by the top

model EOS-1V), there was no longer anything to stop me.

As I said before, the crucial thing is rather how the pictures are taken, in which way and not with what. Who asks the author which computer model he uses? But at the same time, there are superior and inferior tools. And it is rather nice to have a kit that functions like you want it to do.

From time to time, cameras are introduced that really make it easier for the photographer, especially the bird photographer, to take those pictures that you have longed for so long to take. When Canon's former "big" camera, 1Ds Mark II, came, it was a big step; suddenly I could take pictures in worse light than before, and still I could blow up the image more than ever before.

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*Recent picture of a White-tailed Eagle (not in *The Kingdom of the Eagles*). Canon 1D Mark III, EF 300/2,8 IS, 1/1000 s., aperture 7,1, ISO 400 (manual exposure), August 2007.*

*Canon 1D Mark III, EF 70-200/2,8 IS,  
at 160 mm, ISO 320, 1/1000 s., aperture  
7,1 (manual exposure), August 2007.*



But 1Ds Mark II had a snag. With its speed of 4 pictures/sec, I couldn't get some shots. For birds in flight it was too slow at times. The wing-beats were sometimes photographed in the same position all of them, wings up or down in all pictures of a series. And after twenty pictures in a row, the camera had to download before you could take any more pictures. There were occasions when I could only stand there frustrated, just looking on while things happened – without being able to take a single picture!

Of course I used the faster camera body 1D Mark II, when the light was good enough. But there was a limit at about ISO 500, after that the noise was often a little bit too high on that camera. (Still, even that camera was a big improvement compared to the analogue cameras. In fact, I changed to digital when Mark II came three years ago.)

But this year, in May, I got the new Canon camera body, 1D Mark III – I had registered for queuing up already a year ago (I had heard rumours about the camera).



*Canon 1D Mark III, EF 70-200/2,8 IS plus 1,4 converter, at full length 280 mm, 1/1000 s., aperture 7,1, ISO 400 (manual exposure), August 2007.*





*Golden Eagle with Fox. This picture, from March of this year, was one of the last to be included in The Kingdom of the Eagles. Canon 1Ds Mark II, EF 600/4, ISO 500, 1/320 s., aperture 5, automatic shutter time.*

Using the Mark III with its ten pictures per second and its additional performance at a higher ISO, my work is made considerably easier. Instead of waiting for better light, I could, this summer, take pictures in a light that would earlier have forced me to throw a

great deal more pictures into the wastepaper basket. And with an almost non-existent noise, even at ISO 1600, you can just go straight ahead. I have also used ISO 2000-2500 – with amazing success.

And suddenly I could follow what happened, better than before

and for a longer time. Because I had also, in many cases, gone over from the RAW format to JPG (the JPG quality being nowadays so good), the camera did not either stop after some twenty pictures to process and download them. I could go on photographing for quite some time, if something more happened.

So many photos of birds in flight, and action pictures, as I have taken this summer, I have probably not taken any time before. The pictures from Hungary in my first newsletter were all taken with Canon's new Mark III, most of them in JPG format.

JPG may have a drawback for those who want to compete with their nature photos. If you send

pictures to some nature photo competitions, the RAW format is sometimes called for. But I myself have not had the time for that, I have not sent any pictures to any competitions for some years – with one exception: this September I did send a collection for the competition which is held only every second year, concerning the title "Nature Photographer of Scandinavia".

Maybe someone noticed that I had been using manual focus for the flying rollers in my last newsletter. I got a question about that, if I had problems with the autofocus on my Mark III. The answer is, I haven't experienced any problem with the Mark III, rather the opposite. But I have to be a realist, there are limits for what an autofocus can do, and no way the AF could catch the extremely fast roller flying directly towards you at a distance of 4-6 meters (15-20 feet). Therefore I prefocused and shot 10 frames per second, and the amazing speed of frames saved me some sharp images.

*White tailed Eagle at the Golden Eagle hide: I had been trying out the brand new hide in the mountains for a week in October to begin with, then another four days in November 2005 – but with no luck; there was no Golden Eagle coming, but – the White-tailed Eagle landed for a few minutes on the tree, and I got rare White-tailed Eagle pictures in the first snowfall, pictures that were later published in a number of magazines. Then, finally, in December 2005, the Golden Eagle at last landed. And since last Winter the Golden Eagle is a regular guest, and the hide is now hired out during January through March by Ole Martin Dable to prospective bird photographers.*

*Canon 1Ds Mark II, 500/4, ISO 125, 1/40 s., aperture 4.5.*

*For this shot I used a low ISO to both get a slow shuttertime to get the snowfall as lines and achieve a small depth of field. The background is another mountain 1 mile away. After taking the portraits I went to a higher ISO to be prepared for flight shots, and I got a series of shots when the White-tailed Eagle flew away a few minutes later.*



## The Art – or Difficulty – of Making a book about the Golden and White-tailed Eagles

A new book of your own is of course fun. But every time I have had a new book of mine in my hand, I have had my doubts – I have thought that the pictures do

not come up to standard, and emotionally I have wanted to take the whole edition to the dump. It was like that this time too; a few weeks ago I got the first copy of *Örnar-*

*nas rike* / "The Kingdom of the Eagles", for which the Swedish poet, and Professor in writing, Staffan Söderblom had written the text.

But after some time you get

used to your own book, even though you of course want to do the next one better.

*The Kingdom of the Eagles* was in a way the most difficult book to produce. To make a book with just two species – the Golden Eagle and the White-tailed Eagle – without risking that it will feel boring after the first one hundred or one hundred and fifty pages, is a real challenge.

I do not know if we finally did succeed. But anyway, it was exciting to collaborate with Nisse Degerman, an editor at Norstedts Publishing House, and with freelance layouter Carl Åkesson. Beginning with around 250 pictures which I had initially chosen, they made a preliminary design with a selection of 90–95 pictures. I rejected some thirty of these, and with some agony we agreed on other pictures – simultaneously, I snapped quite a lot of new pictures



Canon 1 D Mark III, EF 300/2,8 IS, 1/1000 s., aperture 6,3 (manuell exponering), ISO 320, August 2007.



during winter, which I felt must be included. Fact is that one fourth of the pictures were taken as late as in January through March of this year – when the book was actually supposed to be complete.

As a photographer, you are never satisfied with your own photos. But to substitute a photo in the final stage proved not to be so easy, either. In May there were some pictures left, but to change any of them was not easy; for the one we managed to change we tried twelve new pictures, all of which felt a good deal better. But one of these pictures turned out to resemble that on page XX at the beginning of the book, another was perhaps too like that on page Y, and did not this picture result in us having too many ... and so on. We went on like this till we, anyway, found a picture that all of us thought might do.

The dedicated Nisse Degerman of the Norstedts Publishing House was responsible for the texts. Together with the writer

Staffan Söderblom, he combined the texts with the pictures that we had selected.

Anyway, the book is to be found in the bookshops in Sweden since early September. If you want to have a copy signed by the photographer, you can order the book by mailing to: [order@symposion.se](mailto:order@symposion.se). Please note if you want it dedicated to someone.

Last not least: a Finnish edition of *The Kingdom of the Eagles*: *Kotka – ilm-ojen kuningas* was express translated and published just a few weeks after the book was published in Sweden, and a UK edition is forthcoming next spring.

I am also enormously happy. The Swedish edition of

*The Kingdom of the Eagles* was recently awarded the price of the Swedish WWF for this year's best nature photobook in Sweden. The Prize includes that WWF buys at least 10.000 copies of the book, this time they bought a little bit more than the double.

I would like to use this opportunity to ask the readers of this newsletter to support WWF in their work. WWF really accomplish things around the world, and they rouse public opinion in favour of important environmental issues, here and elsewhere.



*Canon 1-D Mark III, EF 70-200/2,8 IS, at 153 mm, ISO 640, 1/1000 s., aperture 6,3 (manual exposure), August 2007.*

Brutus Östling (photo)  
Staffan Söderblom (text)

# ÖRNARNAS RIKE

[The Kingdom of the Eagles]

Hardcover. Height: 33 cm.  
160 pp.

Order for SEK 299,-, plus delivery (postal)  
The books are delivered signed by the photographer.

E-mail: [order@symposion.se](mailto:order@symposion.se)

Read some of the reviews at: [www.brutusostling.com](http://www.brutusostling.com)

Some of the Swedish text is translated into English. If someone wishes, I will be more than happy to send the RAW-translation by e-mail to anyone interested. Please send an e-mail to; [brutus@symposion.se](mailto:brutus@symposion.se)

The Kingdom of the Eagles will also be published in UK forthcoming Spring.

