

Tips for Exposure Aperture

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Exposure is the basic element of any photograph. It is how much light your photo was exposed to, and this will reflect on what is produced in your final image. Exposure is determined by three essential elements; Aperture, Shutter Speed and ISO. This is one of three fact sheets discussing each element individually.



Aperture is the setting which controls the size of the lens opening on your camera. Aperture is measured in what we call F-Stops. The various F-Stops measure the amount of Depth of Field (DOF) your photo will have. **The most important thing to remember is the higher the F-Stop (Ex. F-16) the more DOF you have.**



In Landscape Photography you will probably want as much DOF you can get. To achieve this, you will want to focus approximately 1/3 into your subject and you will want to use a high DOF (F-16 or F22).



If you are taking a picture of a flower and you want to blur everything around the flower, you will want to use a low DOF (F 2.8 or as low as your lens will allow). Or you want to blur the foreground as well as the background, use a low DOF.



In a photo where DOF does not matter, use F-8 or F11. This is what is known as the Sweet Spot of the lens. This is where the lens has the sharpest focus.



Other factors that can determine DOF are Lens Length, Subject Distance, Shutter Speed and ISO speed.



Lens Length is inversely proportional to the focal length of the lens. The shorter the lens is, the more DOF you will get (Ex. 18-35mm (wide angle lens) vs. 100-400 mm (telephoto lens)- gives you less DOF.



Subject Distance – this is where DOF is directly proportional to the distance from your subject. The greater the distance, the more DOF you will have whereas with a short distance, less DOF.



Most Nature photographers will set their camera to **Aperture Priority**. This means that you will select the DOF (F-stop) wanted and the camera will determine Shutter Speed. Your ISO should always be set to the lowest speed possible depending on lighting conditions.

Remember – the Higher the F-Stop, the more DOF you will have!