

YOUR WILD NEIGHBOURHOOD

Introduction to Wildlife
Photography in Urban Habitats





About us

Hi, we are Lea & Anskar, two passionate **nature photographers** and **wildlife ecologists** from Northern Germany. Our mutual journey started in 2014 when we met during our wildlife management studies in the Netherlands. Since then, we have been discovering nature and wildlife on our doorstep and around the world. Always with us: our cameras.

During our studies we had the opportunity to do long-term internships in different countries around the world. From the dense jungle in Ecuador to the vast savannah of Africa, we got to know the most diverse habitats and their fascinating wildlife. But over time we have come to realise that there is also incredible nature waiting for us to discover right on our own doorstep.

Our dream is to combine our scientific background with our passion for nature photography. That is why we launched "**Zwei Zebras**" in 2022 - our own little project that combines photography, conservation and environmental education. This **e-book** is part of our project and we hope that we can inspire and encourage you to find your own (visual) voice for our beautiful and diverse nature.

We hope you enjoy reading, learning, testing, and growing!

Anskar & Lea



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Explanation

To help you find your way around faster and easier we have briefly broken down our formatting for you.

Bold text is used to highlight important statements and key words for you.

This is how we highlight **ecological terms** that we further explain in [Eco 101](#). These are important and help you to understand the context. They are linked to a definition in Eco 101 and can be clicked on!

Words that are underlined, are always hyperlinks and you can click on them to get to the right place!



Tip:

In these boxes you will find valuable tips & tricks!



Attention:

In these boxes you will find important notes that you should definitely follow!



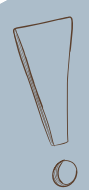
Settings

Both of us primarily rely on intuition when taking photos before getting lost in the technical aspects and settings. While we do pay attention to getting the "right" settings, such as achieving a proper exposure, we understand that a "perfect" photo entails more than just using the correct set parameters. Our main emphasis is placed on finding the appropriate lighting and a unique perspective because these are the key elements that elevate a picture. Even if a photo is technically flawless, it can appear dull without these additional elements. That said, you still need to have a grasp of the basic settings and not only comprehend their relationships but also practice them consistently. This e-book aims to aid you in gaining a better understanding of individual components and how they work together. The better you comprehend the connections between settings and parameters, the more efficiently you can achieve your objectives and bring your creative ideas and visions to life.

RAW vs. JPEG

Before taking a closer look at all the possible camera settings, there is a crucial choice to make: Do you want a ready-made picture or a "blank canvas" image (known as RAW format) that you can shape into your final photo? Most photo guides might tell you to go straight for RAW, but we have got a slightly different perspective.

Photographing in RAW format does come with some impressive perks, but we also want to shed light on the downsides. As the name suggests, RAW files are like the unprocessed, raw data of a photo. They are much larger in size compared to JPEGs and require some processing and converting, but here is the biggest advantage – they hold a wealth of extra information within the image. Think of them as a "digital negative." This means you get extensive editing freedom when it comes to adjusting lighting, white balance, and colours, far beyond what you can do with a JPEG. Plus, they offer a broader dynamic range, so if your shot is a bit too dark or too bright, it is not a total tragedy (although, of course, aiming for the "right" exposure is always a good goal).



Attention:

RAW files are edited by **YOU**, so **YOU** decide how your image will look!



Tip:

In the beginning, take pictures in both RAW and JPEG format.

Photographing in RAW implies that you will be eventually end up with some post-processing work, especially photo editing. Every RAW image requires editing (or at least conversion to JPEG), as it tends to look unfinished, pale, and somewhat colourless straight out of the camera. Additionally, RAW files are significantly larger than regular JPEG files. Storage space is cheaper (and smaller) than ever these days, but it can still be a deciding factor for aspiring photographers and should be factored into the decision.

If you are not keen on investing substantial time or effort into post-processing, it is perfectly fine to stick with shooting in JPEG format. Just remember that your camera handles most of the photo editing for you in this case. You will also need to focus more on capturing a flawless image, as JPEG shots are less forgiving when it comes to mistakes. However, it is worth noting that even a JPEG can undergo some level of editing. RAW photos, though, allow even grave mistakes and let you to salvage things like a "wrong" white balance or a failed exposure.

If you are unsure which format is best for you, we recommend capturing both a JPEG and a RAW image with each shot. This way, you can compare them afterward and observe the changes your camera's internal photo editing makes. If you have the time and inclination, you can then decide whether you want to further edit the RAW image yourself.

Pros and Cons of RAW files

Pros

- More creative editing options (especially white balance, exposure and colours)
- Higher dynamic range
- Full control
- More effective noise reduction

Cons

- Large files (more storage space!)
- Need for editing and conversion (more time!)