

Tips for Nature Park shooting:

In most 'Nature Parks', we may shoot a lot under a roof or inside a cage; hence, the birds/animals will be visible without the net! This is an excellent benefit/opportunity. But at the same time, the birds and animals get a lot of freedom to move and photography becomes, very challenging.

I have included points under two headings in this article; read it fully to get a full grip.

Photography Tips:

- In most situations, (provided sufficient light is available) with modern/advanced mobile cameras, your 'Auto' Mode may work well.
- Try to use 'Optical Zoom' to the maximum extent possible; then only try 'Digital Zoom'.
- A well-captured, optical zoom shot can be cropped for a better shot than a digitally zoomed shot.
- Even in digital zoom, try to use zoom within 50 per cent of its maximum capacity - if the digital zoom available is 10X, then use 5X.
- If available, switch on the "Precision Stabilisation" (this feature is available only on some mobiles/cameras) - of course, this may drain your battery a bit more.
- Consciously use digital zoom, as a very small hand-shake can render your shot useless - hold the camera very steady.
- Avoid using your camera facing the backlight/highlight! This will make your objects darker; also, autofocus will struggle.
- If the HDR feature is available, keep it ON, especially for shots with high backlight.
- Remember, though we are inside, the birds will always be moving; so look for time close to the still position, especially the beaks.
- Take your time with such shootings - don't be in a hurry; wait & capture the best frame possible.
- Focussing may be tricky, so take multiple shots - unwanted shots can be deleted later.
- While the bird eats food, a shot may have a slightly shaky beak, but the body may be close to still.
- If 'Manual Mode' is available, go for a shutter speed above 1/400 sec (Ex: 1/500 may be even better); this may make the shot a little darker - but, we can edit it easily.
- If the 'Animal Eye' focussing feature is available on your camera, switch it ON; this will help to get a sharper face of the birds/animals.
- After clicking, check & ensure your captured shot is what you want, before moving away from the spot; especially when the birds are on your body.
- Kindly stand with proper lighting on your hands and face (without high backlight) before offering the food to the birds; once you start feeding, and then if you move, the birds may fly off.
- Video clips can also save some sensitive shots (when birds are eating from your hands, etc.)
- In my experience, take the help of experienced photographers/caretakers for shots for preservation - Like birds on your body.
- Try for selfie shots (when birds are on your body), only after taking other shots; mostly, your shaking hands may drive away the birds.

- Except for closeups, try to include a stem/tree/leaves in the frame (if possible) which will give more life/naturality to your shots.
- Don't be prejudiced with Vertical (Portrait) Mode alone - some Horizontal (Landscape) shots may provide much higher coverage and '**naturality**'.
- A 'bird in flight' shot needs shutter speeds above 1/2,500 - 1/3,500 or more (in Manual or Pro Mode only); there are advanced mobiles which can capture even at 1/12,000 in Pro Mode! (Ex: Mobile iQoo 12) - lighting will be the major issue here.
- Ensure bright light when you are using high shutter speeds.
- Objects behind an obstacle (stem/Leaf) will need manual focusing, which may need practising (Manual Mode).
- One can use touch focusing for a nearby object (avoiding the obstacle) and bring the main object into the frame, later.
- Important for indoor shots: Usually, we avoid 11 am to 3 pm time for outdoor shoots because of the harsh light; but if the animals are under a roof, these times are the best - because the reflected light will produce better even-lighting of the objects.
- Avoid using flashlights in such areas.

General/Important:

- Ensure the camera lens is clean before starting shooting and during shooting, as the lens can get clogged for many reasons. (Ex: while you hand over the mobile to another person, fingerprints can happen).
- Observe all hygiene and safety procedures recommended by the authorities; some parks ask you to sanitise your legs and hands before entering the aviary - strictly follow them.
- From my experience, in early morning sessions, birds/animals will be active and smart; by afternoon/evening, they get tired & also lazy by overfeeding.
- Although the birds are tamed, fast movements may frighten them and they may move away - move very carefully and extremely slowly.
- Don't try to move closer - a distant photo is better than a fully shaky bird flying away shot.
- Keep maximum silence as possible (from our end) including the shutter being in the most silent mode (in some mobiles/cameras, the shutter sound can be turned off).
- Avoid Bright colour clothes and strong perfumes.
- Carry a separate dress in case your dress gets dirty in the park due to the birds/animals' excretion.
- Touching animals can harm them & you; try to avoid it if it is not contextually required.
- Feed only the food provided by the park authorities.

End. (I shall add a few more & publish these as a separate post, later).