

SVNP NEWSLETTER, APRIL, 2025

INCLUDING MINUTES OF THE APRIL 10 MEETING

There are currently opportunities to give presentations starting as soon as July, 2025. As usual, any suggestions you may have for programs – especially of a how-to nature – would be appreciated. Please email (wah@waynehallphotography.com) or call (978-443-9226) Wayne if you are willing to give a presentation yourself or if you know of someone to recommend.

This meeting was held over Zoom.

Costa Rica – Jean Fain and Nicole Mordecai

Title: *Nicole & Jean's Costa Rica Adventure, February 2025*

Nicole Moredcai and **Jean Fain** took ten days in February of this year to leave New England winter behind and travel to Costa Rica. They first flew to San Jose and spent one night there at the Bougainvillea Hotel. This hotel has a botanical park within its grounds with birds galore and birders to match. A few of the species seen there were a hummingbird (of which there were relatively few in evidence, perhaps due to the rather cold weather in San Juan at the time), a Kiskadee (flycatcher) and a cuckoo with a gloriously long tail, as well as a small owl hidden in a stand of bamboo.

They spent the rest of their time in and around Puerto Jimenez on the Osa peninsula (southwest from San Juan), staying at the Botanica hotel. This journey was achieved by a single-engine small plane which landed next to both the hotel and a colorful cemetery. It came out that Jean had made most of the travel arrangements and that it, “took forever to put the trip together”. It was a DIY trip involving not tour groups but hired guides. For her part, Nicole commented that the trip progressed at a human pace unlike some photo trips in which she had previously participated. These she found grueling.

The Botanica Hotel on the Osa Peninsula is part of the Crocodile Bay resort. Activities there included kayaking through mangroves, walks through the forest and along the beach and, prime directive, avoiding crocodiles. These included visits from Puerto Jiménez to Matapalo, located at the mouth of the bay. Their photography there

<http://www.svnpweb.com/>

consisted of both planned shoots in expected times of good light as well as more opportunistic shooting. Some of the latter produced images of, among others, whimbrels in silhouette, frigate birds, a ruddy turnstone, catfish thronging to eat waste cuttings of tuna being tossed overboard from a sport fishing boat as well as videos of pelicans fishing.

On a visit to Corcovado NP, Nicole encountered an unexpectedly intriguing subject at the bathroom in the Jungle Bar (which served as her virtual background for at least part of the evening). Such are the vagaries of photography. Of the subjects Nicole had in mind for her Costa Rican experience, that is to say sloths and monkeys, they were in evidence but they tended to hang out well within the canopy in lighting conditions that were dim and resistant to capturing print-worthy images. Likewise, they encountered scarlet macaws perched within the canopy which made exposure balancing with the random patches of sky visible almost impossible. One large part of the problem was that the animals were typically situated far from the camera, necessitating long focal lengths (which means small apertures except for the heaviest and most expensive lenses) which are further reduced one stop when using a 1.4x teleconverter, as Nicole was. As the light flux diminishes, it becomes progressively more difficult for the available light to obscure and overwhelm the noise floor of the equipment.

Nicole showed a video (captured on iPhone) of capuchin monkeys feeding on bananas. Several individuals displayed just as many strategies for gathering and feeding on the fruit provided.

There followed a long parade of diverse species including an Egret, another Kiskadee, a Tropical Kingbird, a Vulture, a Crested Cara-Cara, a Great Curaçao plus many more. Nicole and Jean agreed that they found the diversity of species to be as advertised but the photography to be more difficult than they experienced in Florida which may have only been a bit less fulsome in its offerings but much better light.

With the problem posed by the generally low light levels encountered under the canopy in mind, Nicole spent several minutes

demonstrating three increasingly demanding processes for sharpening while dealing with noise reduction. When processing subjects shot at distance, the primary object must be to sharpen the subject but not the noise. This becomes critical when the light levels are low. The first two methods Nicole demonstrated are confined to within Lightroom, while the last involves a round-trip to Topaz Photo AI. For the simplest images, images for which noise is not an overall concern and the subject's sharpness is already nearly acceptable, one can simply apply sharpening to a masked area (e.g., subject mask) in the local adjustment tools. (I would add, don't neglect the possibility of inverting the mask for the purpose of de-emphasizing extraneous detail.) For noisier images, Nicole suggested that one can limit sharpening to prominent edge details that are already reasonably sharp by using the masking facilities in the Details panel. This helps to eliminate small-scale noise from being a candidate for sharpening. For noisy images, Topaz Photo AI can mitigate noise while sharpening what it has been trained to regard as likely detail. It will not restore detail where it has been obscured by noise so it can only do demi-magic. This last was demonstrated by the jowls of a capuchin monkey. The noise in the original capture had obscured the detail in the fur. Consequently, the program did not have a clue as to what detail it should supply.

This brought the program to a close. Jean and Nicole clearly enjoyed their time and experiences in Costa Rica despite the small number of photographic difficulties encountered. It remains a truism that, with sufficient time, most adverse experiences morph into Good Stories. The story told this evening was entertaining and enlightening and well worth sharing. No doubt it will get better as it ages.

Member Images

Barbara Peskin showed photos of, severally, a toad in the hole (of a tree), a Snowy Owl at Plum Island/Parker River, two mallards, a flock of turkeys and two chickadees (one just launched into flight) in the company of a cardinal on snow. As part of the discussion of this last image, Nicole started to direct Barbara through the steps of de-emphasizing the background using the Camera Raw Filter in

<http://www.svnpweb.com/>

Photoshop. The restricted bandwidth through Zoom seems to have been responsible for a substantial slowing down of the process to a minutes-long standstill but the problem finally resolved.

Jean Fain offered a short video of beavers found in a pond close to home, near to Red Rail Farm she titled *To Every Beaver – Turn, Turn, Slap.*

Upcoming SVNPN Programs

May 8 (N)	Wayne Hall	Exploring Some Favorite Sudbury Valley Trustees Properties with a Camera
June 12 (Z)	Eric Smith	Guest speaker: wildlife photographer
July10 (Z)		Member Images Night - subject TBA

*N=Live at Newbury Court Only; Z=Zoom Only; H=Hybrid

Please Note – All meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of the month, at 7:00 pm, either via Zoom or at our location (or both):

Great Room, Newbury Court
100 Newbury Court, Concord, MA

[http://svnp.homestead.com/files/Directions to Newbury Court Great Room.pdf](http://svnp.homestead.com/files/Directions%20to%20Newbury%20Court%20Great%20Room.pdf)

<http://www.svnpweb.com/>

SVNP EXHIBIT CALENDAR

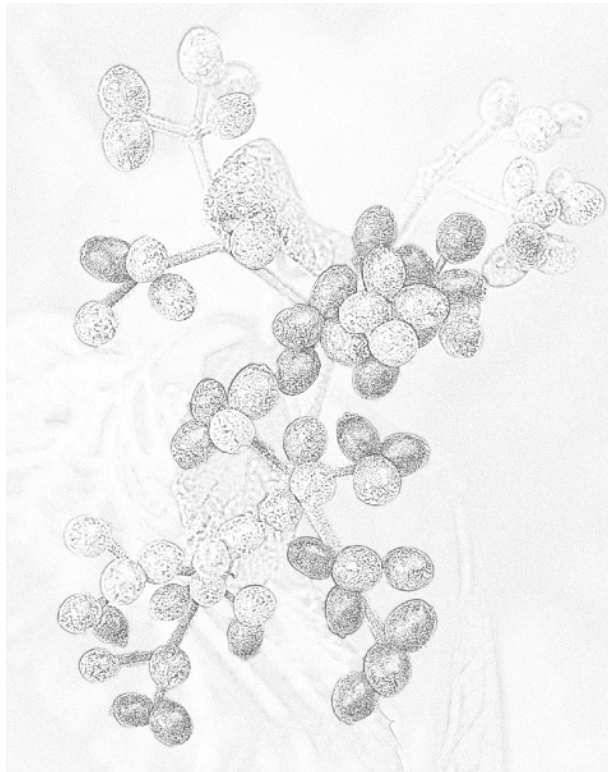
Group Exhibits

January, 2026	Goodnow Library, Sudbury, MA
Spring, 2026	Newbury Court (South Galleries), Concord, MA

Individual Member Exhibits

SVNP members - please notify Wayne Hall (wah@waynehallphotography.com) of your upcoming individual exhibits for posting on the SVNP website.

Date	Member	Exhibit Location
------	--------	------------------

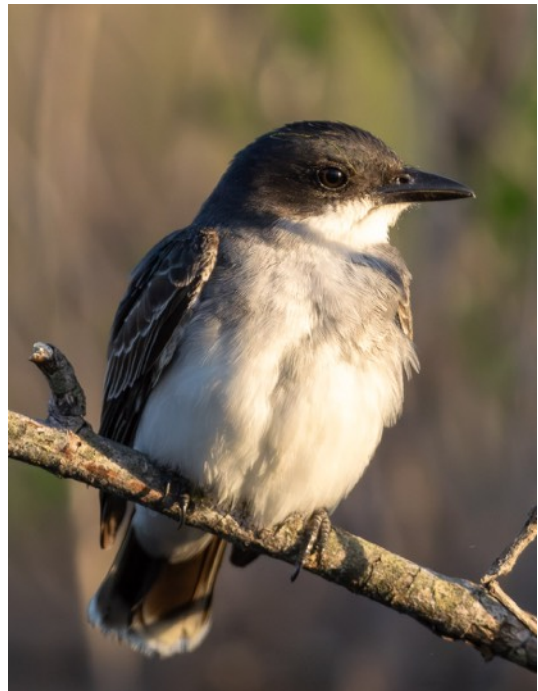


An Invitation from your Editor

If having a meatier monthly read is of interest to you then, please, I invite you to send anything you may wish to contribute to future newsletters (a précis of an upcoming presentation, photos, personal news, reviews, neat tricks you find worth sharing, etc.) to me at henkbroekman@gmail.com. Please include SVNP in the subject line.

I especially invite presenters and members sharing images to select and submit files for illustrative purposes. I expect it would be possible to accommodate two images or so for main presenters and one each for after-presentation sharing. Generally, expect to see half-column layout along the lines of this example. If you have photos you may wish to share, please submit jpg files sized no smaller than 1200 px on the long side. Submission deadline will be 11:59 pm on the Monday following the meeting. Inclusion in any particular newsletter will be at my discretion based on newsletter length, distribution file weight, current workload, etc.

Hendrik Broekman



*Eastern Kingbird in evening;
photo, Hendrik Broekman*