

## Apogee Photo Magazine



# The Photo List: Your Personal Bucket List of Places or Subjects to Photograph

by Andy Long



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**Seeing the sky dancing all above  
you makes you beg for more.**

from my looking through old magazines, tearing out articles of interest to file, and coming across several articles about a location and/or subject that spoke to me. One entry came from seeing a book about a subject that completely captivated my interest. Others came from seeing pictures or talking to people about different locations or seeing something on television that piqued my adventurous side.

Every photographer has one. In fact, most people have one. It might contain one thing, ten, or who knows how many. How it's generated is up to the individual person. What is this thing that every photographer has--or should have? It's a list of photography locations or particular subjects that should be added to the image library.

Is it *important* to have a list of must-see shots or must-see locations? Yes. No one with a camera who takes his hobby seriously just wanders from place to place to take pictures. He has a list of places to visit. This listing concept is so common there are even books and a movie detailing the top things to do at places to see before you die.

How is a list built? Each person may do it differently. For me, items that have been included on my list have come from my looking through old magazines, tearing out articles of interest to file, and coming across several articles about a location and/or subject that spoke to me. One entry came from seeing a book about a subject that completely captivated my interest. Others came from seeing pictures or talking to people about different locations or seeing something on television that piqued my adventurous side.

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The good thing about maintaining a list of places or subjects is that while the lists differ, there is no right or wrong list. Each one is right for the individual who created it. Over time, the list can change as its owner changes, replacing one destination with another or adding new interests. The following represents one person's list of "Really Have-To" places or subjects that must be photographed before my camera is set down for the last time. Hopefully, I'll be able to get all of them. Right now, the items not checked off on my list include about twenty locations. The entries I've checked give me a feeling of accomplishment—the same feeling anyone can have as they work with their own list.

### **1. Photographing the Northern Lights:**

One year, while in Alaska to photograph bears, I stopped in a museum/gift shop that had a book on the subject. The photos were amazing, and I knew I had to see and photograph *the Lights*. No matter whose list you examine, viewing the Aurora is included for good reason. Having the night sky come alive is a sight to behold. There's absolutely nothing like it. I'm lucky that I get to go back year after year to view this spectacle.

Everyone who has been on one of these workshops can tell you it's a highlight of life just to experience them. Seeing them once only whets your appetite for wanting to see them again. STATUS: Checked off.



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**When taking northern lights photos, you never know what the end result is until you review your images later.**

**2. Canadian Rockies:** A quick visit here when going to the Winter Olympics in my sports writing/photography days made me want to go back to concentrate on the wildlife and landscapes of the area. Banff and Jasper are the main areas on my list, but more will probably be added once my planning kicks into high gear. The beauty of this area is unlike that in any other place in North America. The combination of accessible large mammals, beautiful blue lakes, waterfalls, majestic mountains, and different wildflowers make this a spot that has to be visited at least once, because there's probably no way to capture all off of its beauty in one short trip. STATUS: Have yet to do.

**3. Maine Coast:** While the main emphasis of this trip would be to concentrate on the uniqueness of the coastal part of the state, more areas are also included on my list. I'll need to visit this area in two phases, as I want to get shots of fall color in the state (and probably another state or two

in New England), as well as the puffin rookery on Machias Island in early June. The first visit will probably be in June to get to the rookery island as well as the quaint villages and towns along the coast. A stop in Acadia National Park will also have to be included on this leg. While there are two parts of this item on the list, once one part is completed, a check mark can be added, as the first trip will be include the primary desire. STATUS: Have yet to do.

**4. Colorado Fall Color:** Having had the opportunity to live in Colorado for close to eighteen years, I never tired of fall. Plenty of calendar photos, images in photo books, and fine art prints utilize fall color in Colorado. The best thing about this subject/location is that there are plenty of great opportunities and they're easy to reach. The variety of subjects or how each photographer can bring out a particular scene differently makes Colorado in the fall something that should be on almost every photographer's list. Anyone who does landscape photography wants to have great fall color shots in the files, and once some are added, more ideas come to mind that necessitate another trip. Close-ups of a group of trees, leaves on the ground, incredible light on a hillside, fresh snow on the ground, trees and rugged peaks, trees and water--the list of shots goes on and on. STATUS: Checked off.



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**Above: A mix of color, great light and a nice sky brings everything together in Colorado's high country.**

**Right: A different view of a very photographed area can make a shot more appealing than the typical shot everyone takes.**



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**5. Penguins of the Falkland Islands:** Going through old magazines to tear out and file articles of interest for reference, I came across several articles related to the Falkland Islands penguins. The two articles were in back-to-back magazines several years apart. I figured that oddity meant something. The more I read, the more I wanted to visit. Some web searching that day and the next had me

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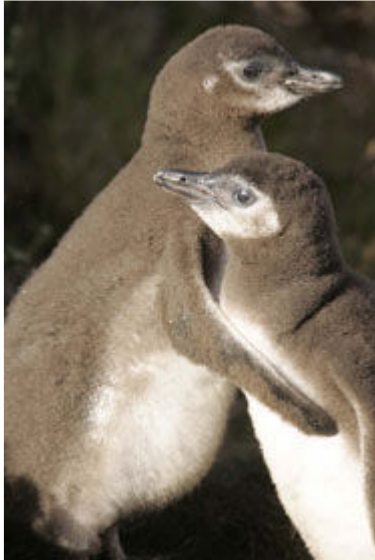
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making plans for my first trip there. Each return has revealed the same subjects engaging in vastly different behaviors. One great aspect of a trip to the Falkland is that there are five varieties of penguins and numerous other birds and mammals to keep you busy all day long.  
STATUS: Checked off.



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**There is more than enough behavior all around when there are hundreds and even thousands of subjects right around you.**



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**A touching moment between a mother and baby Black Browed Albatross will keep you clicked on that camera button.**

**6. Torres del Paine:** When you go to the Falkland Islands, you have to fly over a part of Patagonia. The view from the air is incredible. A little bit of web searching and seeing a television show on the area made Patagonia an essential addition to my list. This trip would focus primarily on landscape, as the sheer beauty of the mountains and glaciers is--in a word, "amazing!" The glacial shaped peaks and the beautiful light that hits them have produced some incredible images that I want to create for my library.  
STATUS: Have yet to do.

**7. Star trails:** This is a subject that came to mind after witnessing a full moon during a few visits to Arches National Park. I had played with a star trails shot one time and wasn't impressed with it. However, after having led quite a few workshops to Arches, I needed a new twist to make the trip new and exciting for myself as well as for the people joining me. Seeing some nice star trails shots reinvigorated me and made the thought of trying for my own new and exciting. Learning new techniques makes me want to go to new places or try for something other than the products I already have. The lighting technique I've developed for Arches has also found its way onto

other trips to add a new twist to some otherwise nice shots. STATUS: Checked off.



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**Above: As with northern lights, you never know exactly what your image will turn out to be until well after taking the shot.**

**Right: Using special lighting brings everything together with the stars and the foreground subject.**



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**8. Central European Alps:** My primary goal is to travel through Switzerland, but Austria and possibly northern Italy would also be included in this adventure. I have done a little bit of traveling in this area while in the military in the '70s and again for the Winter Olympics in Sarajevo, but I want to go back in the summer to experience the beauty of the mountains and see what wildflowers I can find. STATUS: Have yet to do.

**9. Alaska Bering Sea birds:** I found out about the opportunities in this area when I was invited on a trip by the Watchable Wildlife program director for the Alaska Fish and Game Department. The timing did not work out for me to go, but the discussions then and later made me add this location to my list of places. There are quite a few birds here that can't be found anywhere else in the United States. Another plus for this location is that it's in Alaska, and I can't get enough of this photogenic state. Both the variety of birds and the rarity of numerous species make this a spot I would really like to explore in the coming years. STATUS: Have yet to do.

**10. Polar bear:** For anyone who likes to photograph large mammals, this animal tops the list in North America. There are several places to find this top predator, so this item is more of a subject than a location. Churchill is the most known destination, and Spitsbergen has become a new hot spot for polar bears, but an island off the north coast of Alaska is also a very productive location for finding and photographing the magnificent animals. After getting just a taste of this adventure a year ago, I can't wait to go back

at a more optimum season. STATUS: Checked off.



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**Above: The first appearance of what you're after on your list brings a new level of excitement and interest.**

**Right: While you might not get the perfect shots of a dream subject or location, you can still enjoy the fact you have checked another one off the list.**



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Just because an item on your list has been checked off, that doesn't mean you can't return again and again. If a subject or place is important enough to put on the list in the first place, and you had a great time, go back for more. My thought is that you never have enough great shots of a particular subject. There is always a better one waiting to be taken.

Sit down and take a look at your list, or make one if you haven't done so. It's alright to include places you've gone if you really wanted to go there again. You can create two lists--one of places you'd like to go for photography and one of places you simply want to get to more than anywhere else. The second is the list you should concentrate on, as this is your main wish list--which shouldn't be confused with your *equipment wish list*, another list that almost everyone with camera equipment has.

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