ETHICAL NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY IN TASMANIA

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE – CLOSE APPROACH DISTURBS WILDLIFE, LET THE ANIMALS COME TO YOU

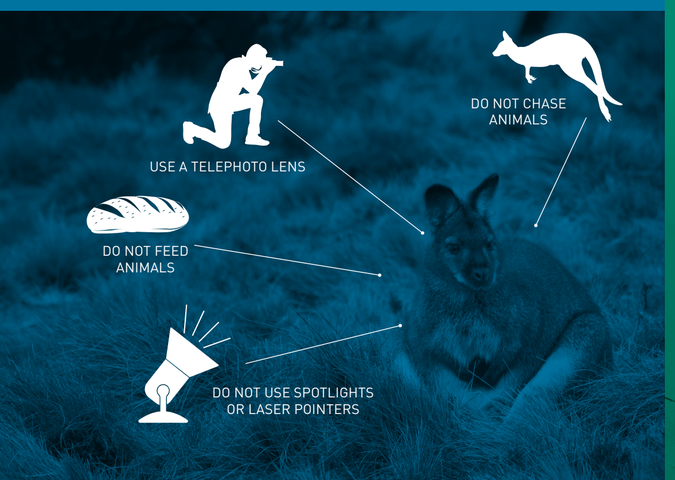
- Use telephoto lenses or digital zoom to reduce disturbance.
- If you influence the behaviour of an animal, you are too close and should distance yourself at once.
- Follow whale and dolphin viewing guidelines when photographing marine mammals.

LEARN ANIMAL BEHAVIOURS THAT INDICATE DISTRESS AND DISTURBANCE

- Mammals will typically pause and tense their body for running when threatened by the approach of people.
- Some species may attack if they feel threatened.

DO NOT MANIPULATE OR INFLUENCE BEHAVIOURS OF WILDLIFE INTO MORE AESTHETIC OR VISIBLE SCENARIOS, INCLUDING:

- Picking animals up and moving them.
- Deliberately flushing, startling or chasing animals.
- Using call playback, spotlights, laser pointers, etc.
- Feeding or baiting animals.
- Animals can waste valuable energy responding to these disturbances.



BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

DON'T SEARCH FOR NESTS OR DISTURB BIRDS ON THEIR NESTS

- Raptors will hunker down in their nests when threatened and are wary of being approached or photographed from above (e.g. from adjacent hills, aircraft, drones).
- Nest predators such as ravens and currawongs often watch people. Stopping to observe a nest can alert a predator to its location.
- Within some nesting colonies, adults will kill chicks of other pairs if they leave their nest when a colony is disturbed.
- Publicly available images of nests, eggs, chicks, etc., are often taken by trained researchers under permit.

WHAT'S THE POTENTIAL CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF YOUR DISTURBANCE?

- Consider your actions in the context of the potential impacts if everyone did the same thing.

DON'T 'GARDEN' YOUR INTENDED PHOTO

- Even small alterations around your subject will make them more exposed to predators and weather.

WATCH YOUR STEP AND RESPECT PROPERTY BOUNDARIES

- Stay on formed tracks, hard ground or bare rocks.
- Walk softly and avoid delicate soils and plants.
- Ensure you have explicit permission before entering a property.
- Never enter prohibited areas cordoned off and designated for rehabilitation or protection by conservation groups, Councils, etc.

APPLY BEST PRACTICE ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE

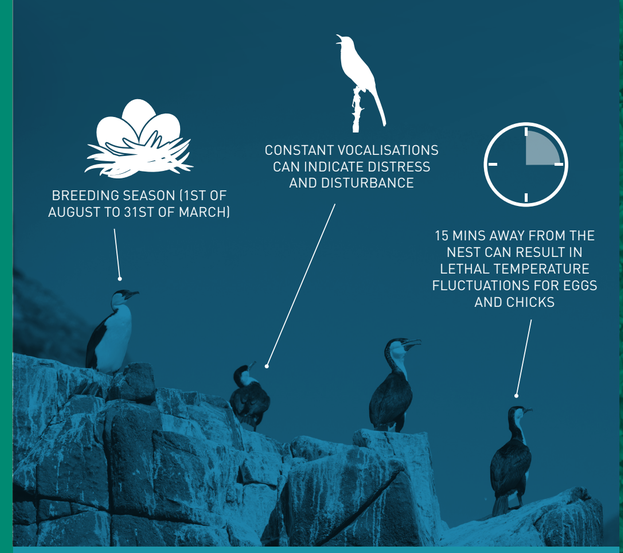
- Avoid spreading weeds and pathogens. Make sure your clothing and equipment are thoroughly clean of soil, water, plants and animal material (tripod legs, Velcro, shoe laces, vehicle, etc).
- Don't handle your subjects; e.g. handling frogs can spread the lethal chytrid fungus.
- Follow Tasmanian best practice guidelines for environmental hygiene:

www.nrmsouth.org.au/biosecurity

www.nrmsouth.org.au/walkclean

SHOREBIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

- Shorebirds are highly sensitive to disturbance – particularly during breeding season (1 August – 31 March). Disturbance can lead to nest abandonment and brood failure (death of chicks).
- Shorebirds can be disturbed well before you notice them and may suffer physiological stress before behavioural reactions are apparent.
- Shorebirds leaving their nests for just 15 minutes can result in lethal temperature changes for their eggs and chicks – but when disturbed by humans, they can abandon their nests for over two hours.



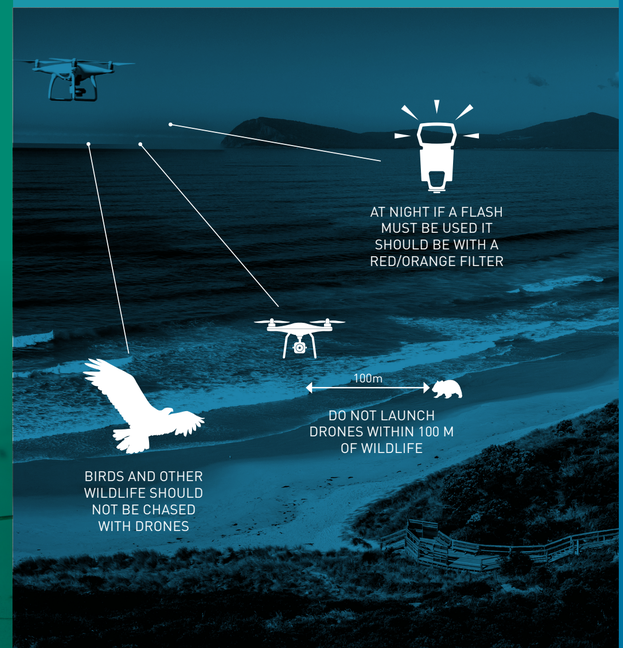
DO NOT DISTURB

LEARN THE SIGNS THAT INDICATE BIRDS ARE UNDER STRESS

- Frantic running and/or flying, particularly towards shelter.
- Constant vocalisations to partner and/or chick(s).
- Overhead or nearby swooping, with or without vocalisations.
- Stopping feeding, including slight crouches/pauses to prepare for running.
- Mock injury displays (e.g. limp wings) and playing dead.
- Sitting very upright on nests/eggs – shows high vigilance.
- Hiding behind vegetation/trying to camouflage.
- Attempting to distract observers and draw attention away from nests/chicks.

In addition, shorebirds may display:

- Head bobbing.
- Preening (can indicate birds are conflicted between leaving and staying on nest).



FLORA AND LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

UNDERSTAND SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEMS AND LEARN TO IDENTIFY NON-TARGET SPECIES

- Photogenic habitats such as cushion plant mosaics and other alpine habitats suffer dieback and death from trampling.
- Some natural formations (such as karst) are so fragile they can be damaged just by breathing on them.
- Other threatened and/or delicate plant species are often trampled where they occur around frequently visited photogenic orchids, as are seedlings and non-flowering plants of the same species.

UNDERSTAND THE POTENTIAL FLOW-ON AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF YOUR DISTURBANCE

- Leaving prominent markers around orchids, such as fluorescent flagging tape, leads to increased visits from other observers.
- Long focal length lenses and digital zoom are advisable for small subjects, including popular orchids in high traffic areas. Multiple people getting close to an orchid increases the likelihood of accidental physical damage, and will concentrate the impacts of trampling and soil compaction around the plant – negatively affecting soil biology and the mycorrhizal fungi on which orchids rely.

SOCIAL MEDIA CULTURE

It's tempting to collect images to share online or add to your collection – but only a few images make a real contribution to conservation, art, general awareness or appreciation.

If you share your nature images, think about how you could use them to raise awareness about conservation issues and threats to the subject of your photos.

Consider property owners' rights before sharing images from their land – do they want images made public?

Increased knowledge of a sensitive species or location means more people visiting the site. This is particularly important within declared nature reserves, which are there to protect threatened species and communities, and are not intended as recreation areas.

Don't assume that photos shared from private land means that other people can access the site without the landowner's permission.

Locations of threatened species, including rare nesting birds and orchids, should only be shared with the Threatened Species Section at the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, who will determine what to do with the data.

Even publicising a general location is inadvisable for species with prominent, easy to find nests in predictable locations, such as eagles, colonial seabirds and shorebirds.

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