

Moose Podcast #453

Moose Peterson Howdy, folks, and welcome to the Moose Podcast, number 453. The White Tailed Deer Trust. You guys are doing really well. Had a great week. Had some really good conversations with a couple of you folks. Sherry, that was great. I appreciate all the all the information that you shared as well as insights and questions. Uh, I am here for you folks. You can find me many places, so please don't hesitate to reach out. I actually do all this to try to help you folks avoid reinvent the wheel that I've already gone thump thump over a few times, and I do enjoy talking with you folks, so thanks ever so much. This episode of The Moose Podcast is being recorded on Adobe Podcast, and when I logged in, it said beta again, so I'm not sure why it went back to beta. Other than the fact that the voice enhancement is not in the page right now, so it'll be interesting to hear what this sounds like when I get done. But the Adobe podcast does a really nice job and you can hear the podcast. And of course, I say this every time realizing that you are hearing this because you are listening to it, but you can find it on Spotify, Amazon, iTunes, all those places. But on Spotify, you are able to have a conversation about the podcast or any other questions you might have with the Spotify comment section, so be sure to check that out. And remember, you can head to the website. There is a blog post dedicated to each individual podcast. There you'll see a photograph from the podcast as well as an ability to email, ask your own questions or or anything else you might want to do. Now, when it comes to news and it's kind of, I have to admit, it's making me smile, laugh quite a bit. I'm kind of back on Facebook. There was a number of years where I am still a gray account, but I managed to get back on and some of you folks are starting to come there and ask questions and have a conversation, and I'm kind of grateful for that. Um, so to me, my being back on Facebook in itself is kind of a noteworthy, uh, scenario. Uh, it's really quite surprising to me. So, hey, come on by. And of course you can find me also on blue Sky and X and all those other places as well. But, uh, Facebook, I'm back on a little bit more when it comes to, uh, book recommendations. I am still working my way through Sea of Grass. Really a great read. Um. Been gone. So I don't take those big books with me to read, but, uh. Hey, it's, uh, I really enjoy that book, so I haven't checked out Sea of Grass that got released into May. Uh, you really should want to thank my good friends at Bedford, Bedfordshire Dot, for sponsoring the moose podcast. They have the Nikon Instant, uh, Father's Day rebates going until the 22nd of June. So you have, uh, what, another basically two weeks? I'm sure you've heard that some things, uh, items of Nikon's are going to have a price increase with the tariffs. Well, the guys at Bedford. So they're going to help you through that whole process. Get what you can now I guess you could say before prices go up. They do have a really stunning inventory. I keep pinging them for small little things. His last was some pieces for from Benro, which is still my favorite. Favorite place for a support monopod? I just got the super duper. I got to write that up. Other tripods, heads and bedfords. They've got it all. They've got it in stock. So you got questions? Hey, give them a call. You want to see something in person? They got seven stores head on in. You'll see that gear and put it in your hands. Check it out. And if you don't want to do any of those things, you know exactly what you need. Just head to the website bedfords.com. But whatever you do, whether you call in person or on the web, make sure you say you want the moose discount. So you see that 5% after you check out Bedfords. Thank you so much for all you do and for sponsoring the Moose podcast. Well, I had a number of

ideas that I want to talk about for this week. And then I realized it's the second week of the month, and it's time to talk about a critter, which is really kind of what I should be doing, maybe more often, especially these days, but so picking critters. You might think that finding a podcast subject could be challenging. Finding one critter talked about for myself is really challenging. There's so many I like to talk about, but as normal life events dictated what I was going to talk about, our first find was dropped here at the ranch last Wednesday, which is about ten days earlier than we normally would see them. Now they're predicting a hot and dry summer for us, so maybe that's why it did it. But with that new life bouncing around out. Well, yeah, we'll say bouncing around. I thought this would be a good time to talk about white tailed deer. Now, white tailed deer, um, depending upon where you are in the on the in North America, you might never see them or you might see them way too much. Uh, there could be, uh, that pendulum swings very wide with these guys where I spent most of my time for the first, uh, many years of my shooting career, there were no whitetail deer. All we had were mule deer. Then I met this incredible gentleman, Leonard LaRue, the third, uh, great photographer. Uh, he he at this point, he is elderly, but he wrote literally the book back in 1978. The his book, *The Deer of North America An Illustrated Guide to Their Lives, Their World, Their Relations with man* was published. This book. I have an autographed copy that is well. Page worn and a little bit yellowed. And it is really the. I should, I should say simply the the photographer's Bible to dear. I mean the the one chapter that has a bookmark in it even to this day is chapter 23, *The Problems of Artificial Feeding*. I mean, he has gone through and laid out for you so much of their biology that it's a great way to help you learn how to photograph deer, be it blacktail, whitetail, mule deer, um, Roman nose, whatever you know the subspecies might be. This book is a great guide. So let's just start off with some of the basics. Getting close enough so you don't have to use a 5,000,000 millimeter lens to photograph them. Now, deer, mule or whitetail if they haven't seen a person getting close, is pert near impossible. They just know the bolt and getting close physically. Once you understand a couple of tricks, you could say, you'll see that going after wild ones. Unless they just happen to give you this great opportunity, it's not the best use of your time. Now, when we moved to Montana, we have both white tailed and mules here. And the very thing that's just really fascinates us is that our home is in a slight, uh, they call it a valley, but it's really just kind of a depression on the hillside, but on top of the valley, on the ridges on both sides of us, we've got huge bands of mule deer, but they stay up there and down where our home is. We have whitetail deer and they stay down here. They don't go up there. So we have lots of whitetail. And we first got here, we had 1 or 2. Then we encouraged them throughout apples, which technically is not a good thing for them. That's what the book says. But I've never had one of these deer throw the apple back at me and say, Pooh, this is bad for us. Uh, rather, they they they kind of follow us around. And slowly but surely we have gotten them to the point where, uh, even when we're out with Maggie, our beagle, they don't even raise their heads to look at Get myself or Sharon or Maggie. So there. There lies the first kind of, I must say, trick to photographing deer. There are many regions in North America where there are homes like ours that have deer, and they become habituated. And it's just like it's a the only thing you need to be really cautious of is to not pointing. You're not pointing your lens at some deer with somebody's house in the background who could take offence or concern that you are doing just that. So if you understand just where some of these little enclaves are of homes and deer, because deer need open range. So you're going to find

homes that aren't, you know, two feet apart from each other. They're going to have some distance. That's how you can start to get close to deer. And working from your vehicle is a really, really great idea. And the key to that is that you need to remember that your window reflects things. So when you come up to a deer or any big game, you want to have that window down already, because that window traveling down into the door, it will change the reflections that will catch their attention. And you don't want them paying attention to you. So you have your window down and have the lens already sticking out of that window. Now photographing deer ungulates, those four legs. Got to consider a couple of things. One, um, if you photograph the deer and these are these are just roundabouts, right. But you've got a period of time from let's say mid to end February until beginning of May, where everybody looks like a doe because there ain't no antlers yet. Okay. Then you have the buttons start coming out and you'll see the velvet on them as they grow bigger and bigger to when they actually shed that velvet. And the bucks look like the majestic game kind of super portrait you want in most regions around September, especially October. So during this time you have to think of one. Do you want doe shots, a deer without any antlers, whether it's a male or female, because it's going to look like a doe? Two. What color pelt you want? And white tailed deer like right now have this gorgeous reddish pelt. It's really just gorgeous. And it turns more into a red kind of tannish color by wintertime. And their fur gets really long for the wintertime. So you want them so they're not molting. You want to have that gorgeous coat and you want to have them looking as majestic as possible. So with photographing the bucks, having them in the fall when their necks are swollen, they've got their big racks. That's when you get the great shots. Here's the challenge. The proportions of a buck just doesn't really fit super easily in the constraints of our viewfinder. Now they're a little bit smaller in the frame, which is kind of my preference. Then you don't have really quite the same issues. You use other elements to arrange in the frame and arrange them. So the buck is what smacks of you between the eyes, but you don't have to worry about legs and antlers and cutting off body parts, which you really you don't want to cut off. Like the hooves that you know you can leave. They don't have to be present. So you leave a suggestion of them being there, but you just can't have the legs, you know, four sticks going into the bottom of the frame. That's what you know. That's just wrong. Another thing that you got to be careful of, and this is the hardest part, is the awkward crop. Now what's an awkward crop? I've been saying that for a long time, and I still don't have the perfect verbal definition. But an awkward crop is is where you've you've cropped the animal. Let's say you want to. You want a pretty nice shot of the. Just like the front torso, the swollen neck and the head and the antlers. And you want a horizontal, let's say you need it for a magazine spread a double track. Well, you can't crop too close to the front shoulders because that's going to be an awkward crop. And you can't crop too far near the the hindquarters because that's a awkward crop. So there's just this little zone around the center that you can crop comfortably and doesn't look like, you know, it's some two men in a horse costume kind of thing. Uh, that's one of the kind of things you want to avoid. You want to avoid having it look like you went into somebody's game room and took their live mount off the wall and hung it on an easel and took that picture, and you might say, why would you come up with that? Because there was a guy who actually did that back in film days, and she made a lot of money selling those images as posters, uh, until it was found out that, uh, actually, they were live mounts on easels that he went and photographed. So you don't want to really be, you know, in that category. So there is that it's

just it's awkward because, you know, it's if you're photographing a person, right. There's, it's it's given where you crop them in their body to tell their stories in a portrait. Well, it's not so obvious with deer now in the fall, which is really when you want to photograph them. Oh, the other time I better give them due note. The other time is when you have fawns, because fawns are really cute, and if you got a little touch of sparkly light on them and they've got that cute little Bambi face and just, you know, Walt Disney's Bambi is based on white tailed deer, uh, your cartoon trivia for the day. Um, you know, there's just that little, little speckle of light on them, and, you know, you can't you can't help but go wrong. And even with fawns, and if you can get that close to get an awkward crop, uh, there's no awkward crop to fawns. People just go mushy when they see a fawn. So there's that time. But that window is really short. You know, after about two weeks, they're not they're still got their spots and they still have curious looks, but they're not as cute as that first two weeks of life. But the buck, that buck, you've got those antlers. Keep in mind a couple things. One, you can't crop them if you have antlers, you got to show them all. Two if you look straight down the nose and you've got that both sets of antlers in the frame, you're going to find that looser is going to be better than tighter when it comes to arranging elements. As you get tighter it the symmetry perfect symmetry in a deer is, believe it or not, kind of rare. Asymmetrical or racks are really kind of another interesting proposition because a lot of things will change the way they grow. You might have five tines on one side and four on another. You might have fungus. So they're all bumpy. The irregulars are just. That's a whole nother class. But you want to photograph them, so you want to kind of almost when you're photographing those bucks, not really think about it so much as the, the muzzle and the eyes and the ears as you really want to make those that rack look its best. And then if you can get it with the ears forward, that's huge. That makes a major difference in that photograph. And then you get them to look as, uh, stately or masculine as possible, which means maybe using a little bit longer lens, being back a little ways and then being down low, um, not being higher than eye level with them, because if you look up a tad on them, then they get this real majestic kind of appearance, and that's really what grabs people's attention. Lastly, when it comes to photographing whitetail deer, slow wins the day. Slow movement slow everything. And one thing they're going to watch is they're going to watch your feet. And if they don't like you, they're going to do a couple things. They might one stomp one of their front legs. They'll just stomp on the ground. Another is especially females. If there's a fawn around, they'll make this funny kind of noise. Uh, pronghorn kind of do the same thing. That's another sign. They're not happy. And you got to understand that they are a whole lot faster than we are. And you're usually working in situations with lower lights. So panning if they're running is a challenge. So you don't want them running. You want them just totally fine with your presence. And then you just you just have fun. Um, last, last, last thing is I want to encourage you to take that real intimate headshot where you just have a jawline, a muzzle and ears, uh, especially with those those years really talk and their eyes are very, very expressive. So if you can get in tight, like with a 600 millimeter lens, man, you can really have some cool, cool images from it. So, you know, get the opportunity. Check them out. Some places in the East, whitetail deer are considered a pest. There's so many of them, which to me is just screaming for photographer to to make use of that and just have some really quality time with some of our wild heritage. The whitetail deer. You folks have a really fine week. Stay cool. The heat is coming. It's going to be warm. Uh, makes it hard to shoot, but that's okay. If it was easy, anybody would take

pictures. You guys take care. Remember to make every click your story.