

Canon EOS 40D, Sigma 150mm f/2.8 Macro EX DG HSM, ISO 400, f/4.0, 1/60".  
Forest on Vorskla, Belogorie nature reserve.  
© Gregory Pozhvanov, 2011.



Макро  
КЛАСС • ФОТО

Macroclass. Wildlife close up photography

# MACRO CLASS

## wildlife close up photography



Gregory Pozhvanov  

Biologist, photographer, Ph.D., Adobe Certified Associate. Finalist of wildlife photography contests, such as “Golden Turtle”, Global Arctic Awards, National Geographic Russia. Gregory photographs landscapes and flora in Belogorie nature reserve, Karelia, skerries of Ladoga Lake, and in Russian North beyond the Arctic Circle.

*“Our goal is to promote your passion to wildlife close up photography and to teach how to convey nature’s intriguing image into photographs that blend technical quality with artistic taste.”*



Yulia Vtyurina  

Wildlife photographer specializing in art macro photography. Jury board member (2013) and numerous winner and laureate of “Golden Turtle” nature photography contest, GDT European Wildlife Photographer of the Year finalist. Yulia works on her art projects in Valday National Park, Belogorie nature reserve and in protected areas in St. Petersburg region.

# photography workshops by Gregory Pozhvanov and Yulia Vtyurina

Developing our own macro photography in several directions, we have launched a new non-profit project called Macroclass.

Our goal is to promote the passion to wildlife close up photography and to teach how to convey nature's intriguing image into photographs that blend technical quality with artistic taste. To facilitate that, we organize Macroclass in unique and remote landscapes. This allows to break from pace of contemporary life and to focus on photography looking for promising subjects in various ecosystems, so that every participant would have opportunities to photograph plants and animals in natural conditions and to connect with the conservation of pristine and vulnerable nature.

In 2019 Macroclass became an open educational project to meet photographers and nature reserves or protected wilderness areas.

## 11 locations

from Arctic region  
to Caucasus mountains

## >80 participants

of workshops in the field and in the studio

## 12 talks

at International and all-Russian  
festivals of nature photography

IN COLLABORATION WITH:



## RUSSIAN UNION OF WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHERS



# MACRO CLASS

## wildlife close up photography: project portfolio

Plants somehow became our main subjects. They look different and they live their life the way absolutely different from our's. 'Macro' is often understood as 'the bigger the better', however our interpretation of 'Macro' in nature photography is focused more on the approach than on the scale. And that 'macro' approach influences not only the look, but also the mood and the content in our photography. Elusive details behind the subject transform into the background comprising the overall image of the habitat or dissolve completely and disappear. Plants themselves appear bold and beautiful like being portrayed, or their close details serve as a foundation for a macro abstraction in which plants just provide a starting point for the creative process. Sometimes an object dissolves completely in the space of the photograph, joining its background in a coloristic unity. It is a birth of a photograph in which not the plant itself is the subject, but an image of nature—color, pattern or environment.

Photographs on this opening are made in united style but in various locations over the years of the running project, depict rare and endangered plant species, and convey our vision of the world of flora.



### Sunny rain

Sometimes nature gifts you ideal conditions for an interesting picture, your task is just to catch the right moment. This time, a rainstorm started during our photo session at campion clump. Setting sun highlighted all the droplets, converting them to a handful of almonds. I could hide from the cold rain shower, but does it worth missing the chance to photograph this magic? So I sheltered my equipment with a jacket and continued shooting despite having feet already wet.

Sticky catchfly, or clammy campion, *Viscaria vulgaris*.

Valday national park, Novgorod region.



### Autumn crocus' delicacy

Autumn crocus admires with its freshness in front of sad fallen foliage on the ground. Despite being poisonous, flowers emanate thin and delightful scent which is very hard to smell. Anyway, everybody will be excited with perfect shape of petals and their nice colors that vary from warm violet-blue to pink-red.

*Colchicum autumnale* flower,  
St. Petersburg region.



### Mist of the spring

It's fairy tale time comes when sparse trees in steppe begin to dress in foliage in young April. You just need to lay down into grasses and look around. It's all about abundance of light and air in yet transparent thickets, it's about numerous shades and colors. It's a perfect daydream in Kalmykia.





### About sundew

It's my favorite plant to photograph. Much fun to photograph, despite a number of challenges. First of all, it's a 'breathing' soil underneath, and clouds of hungry mosquitos. From aside, sundew shooting looks a bit weird: you set the tripod, capture a picture, then pull out a leg from the bog, pour off the bog from your waders, pull out the sinking tripod, then set up the tripod, and so on...

Plant: round-leaved sundew, *Drosera rotundifolia*.

St. Petersburg region, Vyborg district.



### Fritillary flower

You hardly notice fritillary during early spring and may easily trample it down before fritillaries open their beautiful dark red flowers with yellow spots. Fritillaries became almost extinct from nature and survived only in nature reserves and rarely visited places. I learned to recognize their narrow lily-like leaves and curvy tendrils next to flowers, and in the next morning was excited with the number of fritillaries actually grewed safe and sound in the lawn. Belogorie nature reserve, Belgorod region.



### Lady's slipper orchid

Lady's slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus*) is a large orchid that combines various features in its image while flowering. Its fleshy leaves are as large as ones of hostia, and its flowers have an unusual shape: yellow bast shoe (accreted petals) with a gorgeous bright red bow made of another four petals.

Found in shady places like spruce tree forest or its edges, Lady's slippers shine under random sun rays on a dark forest background. Exactly that was the idea behind this photograph of Lady's slipper under backlight.

St. Petersburg region.



### Grimms' fairy tales

Hellebore flowers got their Russian name "Moroznik" ("Frosty") from their early flowering start which happens, depending on weather, even in February and is continued up to April. This plant was hard to understand and not easy to work with. It took time to find an approach to photograph it. Finally, when I saw these curvy mossy trunks of trees and the abundance of thorny bushes and lianas around, I recalled some stories from dark fairy tales of Old Europe. Does a witch house hide in that thickets?.. Hellebore flower (*Helleborus*).

Cape Agria,

Black Sea coast of Western Caucasus, Krasnodar region.



## Open educational project for photographers and protected areas\*

The idea of Macroclass as an open educational project is to make the process of learning macro photography and wildlife photography as fruitful as possible for everybody involved: participating photographers, workshop leaders and national park that hosts the event. Coincidence of our common interests, not the intersection of them, allows participating photographers to work in a positive way, and stimulates a national parks to enrich their photo banks\*\* with new high quality visuals by invited volunteer photographers.

Photographers who eager to learn close up work, have modern workshop programme that is well adapted to the specific location, season and a set of subjects according to their background and interests in photography. Diving deep into photography on location works best as a quick start conditions for beginner photographers in a group with more advanced colleagues who continue their work on personal creative projects. At the same time, a national park is supplied with a workshop and learning event almost ready to be conducted. Of course, we always welcome national park employees to be involved into photography workshop themselves.

We introduce workshop participants to creative and technical sides of wildlife close up photography during two seminars. Backed up with these knowledge and ideas, participants have a faster and easier way to employ their ideas into picture. In addition to that, we include on demand workshops into Macroclass according to participants' requests, including RAW processing, accurate color rendition, creative approach secrets, personal photo library organisation, and more.

In what follows, we introduce three types of workshop agenda, ranging from simple and short to long and complex programme, however the most advanced and fruitful.

 **SHORT  
AGENDA**      **2 DAYS**

- » accomodation + getting known to the location
- » brief seminar
- » macro photography in the field
- » review of participants' work

 **FULL  
AGENDA**      **4-6 DAYS**

- » accomodation + getting known to the location
- » seminar: art of macro photography
- » macro photography in the field
- » technical seminar
- » macro photography in the field (additional locations)
- » on demand seminar
- » participants' personal projects
- » macro photography + other genres
- » review of participants' work

 **EXTENDED  
AGENDA**      **7-9 DAYS**

- » accomodation + getting known to the location
- » seminar: art of macro photography
- » macro photography in the field
- » technical seminar
- » macro photography in the field (additional locations)
- » on demand seminar
- » participants' personal projects
- » macro photography + other genres
- » radial expedition trails to 1-2 remote locations
- » joint discussions with colleagues from protected area
- » review of participants' work

\* protected areas are considered in a broad sense, including national parks, wildlife and nature reserves (Zapovedniks in Russia), and local conservation areas.

\*\* depends on details of our agreement with the office of the given protected area and with workshop participants.



Macro photographer and pasqueflowers, *Pulsatilla patens*.  
Biologie nature reserve, Yamskaya Steppe. © Alexander Kovalevich, 2013.



*“We organize Macroclass workshops  
in unique natural environments”*

# MACRO CLASS

wildlife close up  
photography: follow spring

## Belogorie

Here, in the land of steppe and oak forests, we have launched the Macroclass project. Still we can't wait to return here with new ideas in the following seasons.

«Wind». Yamskaya Steppe. © Gregory Pozhvanov, 2014.



## Black Sea coast

Here in deep ravines along the sea coast, in thorny liana thickets between mossy trunks of centenary trees, macro subjects are still hiding in enormous amounts.

«Grimms' fairy tales». Agria. © Yulia Vtyurina, 2015.

# Kalmykia

A vast territory of steppes and semi-deserts, Kalmykia is seriously underestimated in relation to close up photography. The region features striking diversity of textures in various scales located in seemingly empty landscape.



© Gregory Pozhvanov, 2018.

Caucasus nature reserve. © Gregory Pozhvanov, 2017.

# Caucasus

It's hard to imagine macro photographer got bored by Caucasus, but even in that unlikely case everyone has always an option to switch to another genre of wildlife photography. Commonly, Macroclass participants and leaders creatively combine these two approaches.

# MACRO CLASS

## wildlife close up photography: follow spring

Macroclass is always more than just practice in close up photography, it's a little journey. In February we are in a hurry to meet the very early spring at Black Sea coast of Caucasus. While Moscow and St. Petersburg are covered in snow, we enjoy cyclamens and hellebores. A month later, we will breathe rich honey scents in flowering oak forests in Belogorie, listen to bees and birds, and photograph flowers and vast landscape of the steppe. Back to home in May, it's nice to catch the spring once more in pine forests and skerries of Ladoga lake. This way, changing locations, we prolong the most charming season – the Spring. Macroclass participants met new friends, subjects and landscapes to apply new ideas in their own projects few weeks later at their homes.

From the very beginning, Macroclass combined workshop or seminar style learning with field practice, personal work of participants and results review—by workshop leaders as well as by peers. We are always happy to learn from each other and encourage our participants to deliver a seminar on their field of photography expertise.

Pictures on this opening report on how Macroclass looks like when takes place in national park, zapovednik or as a field expedition to a remote area.





Canon EOS 5DMkII, EF 300mm f/4L IS USM, ISO 50, f/4, 1/500",  
Valday national park.  
© Yulia Vtyurina, 2014.

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