

The Nature Photographers Network™ Presents...

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As you know, on October 29 we put in place a change on the NPN website - only members of the Nature Photographers Network™ are able to post in our forums and galleries. Within the greater context of how we envision NPN moving forward from here, this change is indeed a necessary one, but one that is really only an administrative detail. The purpose of this article to describe our vision of how NPN will continue to evolve into something greater than it already is.

NPN Today

The membership already recognizes what NPN is today - an extraordinary resource for amateur and professional nature photographers to share their passion and expertise in the art and technique of nature photography. The atmosphere in which NPN was created over ten years ago, a climate of civil discourse and mutual respect, has not only attracted the most talented nature photographers, but also those who are serious about maintaining this professional setting. It doesn't take long, even just by perusing our forums and galleries as a guest, to recognize this incredible, *collective* accomplishment. It's not just the founding vision, it's not just the eschewing of blatant commercialism, it's not just the tireless work of the staff and contributors, it's not just the quality of participation by the members - the net result is even greater than the sum of these very substantial parts. In this regard, NPN has no peer.

The Unseen Audience

Though it has been mentioned occasionally in the past, another important aspect of understanding "the power of NPN" is to appreciate the high level of traffic the site attracts - something that may not be immediately obvious to the membership. Since the beginning of the year, the site has attracted on average 95,690 unique visitors each month. These visitors on average spend over 15 minutes on the site per visit, viewing on average 16 pages per visit for a total of 1.44 million page views on average per month. Bounce rate - landing on the first page and then going no further - remains under 20 percent. Top search phrases for the site are as follows;

- Nature photography - 12.2%
- Bird photography - 2.9%
- NPN - 2.8%
- Nature magazine - 2.5%

The strength of these *key, broad-interest* search phrases and the many others we have purposely cultivated over the years has resulted in a high level of well-targeted traffic and a high level of interest once on the site. For anyone who is searching for anything related to "nature photography" there is a very good chance they will find NPN. Based on our site stats, it appears that the vast majority like what they see when they get here.

Moving Forward

Based on our collective successes described above - creating an extraordinary nature photography website and attracting tens-of-thousands of visitors to it each month - there's no doubt that we have a very successful model on which to build. The Nature Photographers Network™ will always remain dedicated to the *art and technique of nature photography*, a resource for our members to take their photography skills to new heights. What we must now add to this formula is the awareness of the attention we attract - there are large numbers of *non-photographers* visiting us every month who enjoy the incredible nature photography we post on the NPN website.

Top Search Queries for Naturephotographers.net

Query	Percent of Search Traffic
1 nature photography	12.22%
2 bird photography	2.90%
3 npn	2.79%
4 nature magazine	2.51%
5 image protection	1.02%
6 orton effect	0.80%
7 nature photographers	0.73%

[View the complete Search Analytics](#)

A case in point - last year as an experiment, Bill Fach and I put together a [Free Wallpaper Gallery](#). Since then, the eight files we posted for anyone to freely use have been collectively downloaded on average over 1,000 times each month. This much activity on a somewhat obscure page on the NPN website has not only generated a sizeable amount of activity, but has also proven a critical point - *there is an interest in our work beyond just a 15 minute Internet session*. Thus, moving ahead, our new additional goal is to create the means for us to promote our work to this enthusiastic, non-photographer audience.

This is where our work begins. Along with possibly expanding/improving the Free Wallpaper Gallery, there are other products that we can better promote to our guests, including prints, calendars, local slide show presentations, photo tours, etc. All of this will take some time and careful planning, but will certainly offer a win-win situation for both our members and those who visit us each month as guests to enjoy our photography.

Nature Photographers Online Magazine will always remain free of blatant commercialism. But at the same time, we will subtly evolve the site to better enable our guests to purchase a print, a calendar or other nature photography product from our members. Thus, the NPN website will also serve as a conduit for our members (who are interested in doing so) to offer their nature photography products to our very substantial group of monthly visitors. We have already begun to move in this direction on the [Front Page](#), with the addition of the **Nature Photography Products & Services** section at the top of the page and the re-vamping of the Shop menu in the header navigation to direct our visitors towards these products and services. Now it's simply a matter of developing new sections on the site to market our products and services to this audience and add them to the Shop menu.

The original vision for NPN has succeeded well beyond what we had originally hoped for. We will now build on our collective success and begin our journey of sharing our passion for the art and technique of nature photography with non-photographers as well. As we turn from an inward-looking group to an outward one - and the possibilities that presents - Donna and I very much look forward to making this journey with you!

Note - we invite our members to freely discuss ideas on how we can market our work to our monthly visitors in the comments thread below. We look forward to hearing your ideas and suggestions!

Comments on NPN nature photography articles? Send them to the [editor](#). NPN members may also log in and leave their comments below.

