

# Aurora Photography — Recommended DSLR Settings and Field Technique



Extract from Presentation by James Norman

**Photographing the Northern Lights**

Northern Virginia Photographic Society — November 25, 2014

# Set-up

- Use **Manual** mode — both the camera and the lens.
- Save your images in **RAW** format.
- If you have the option —
  - ◆ Use **mirror-up (M<sub>UP</sub>)** mode.
  - ◆ Electronic front-curtain shutter: **on**.
- **Initial** settings — know **your** camera, adjust to taste —
  - ◆ White balance: **daylight**.
  - ◆ ISO: **≤ 1000**.
  - ◆ Exposure: **≤ 8 seconds** (coordinate with ISO)
  - ◆ Long-exposure noise reduction: **off**.
  - ◆ High-ISO noise reduction: **off**.
- Lens —
  - ◆ **disable** vibration reduction / image stabilization.
  - ◆ **wide-open aperture** (e.g.,  $f/1.4$ ).

# Technique

- *Focus at infinity* (pinpoint stars) for best aurora image; *don't assume* that your lens has a reliable “hard infinity.”
- *Use Live View* when focusing — Zoom in on a bright star; focus; *confirm sharp focus* with test shots.
- Use a *cable release* or remote, or exposure delay mode.
- Periodically check your images to *confirm sharp focus*. Recheck after *every* move.
- *Include foreground objects* in your composition to show scale, add interest.

# Questions?

Feel free to contact me . . .

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