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Careful attention to lighting turns ordinary behaviour such as a simple scratch into a luminous image.

Grey kangaroo

The sun had just risen as I walked around a series of sand dunes in northern New South Wales looking for grey kangaroos to photograph. A female stood warming herself in a sunny spot. I moved very slowly into position with my camera, lens and tripod, and waited. There wasn't much activity for quite a while. Suddenly, she started to scratch. Since I had already composed my photo and focused on my subject, I was able to capture the moment in a series of quick shots. Had I not been in position, ready to press the shutter, I would have missed the opportunity.

When photographing a live subject, such as kangaroos, at a distance, a zoom lens with a decent focal length is recommended (for example, 70-300mm or 80-400mm). This enables you to zoom in on your subject and compose your photo without the need to get too close and risk frightening the animal away.

Early mornings and late afternoons are the best times to photograph many wildlife species. Not only are they more likely to be active, but the light is ever-so-subtle. You don't end up with photos that are washed-out and overexposed.

I also wanted the kangaroo's fur delicately lit and accentuated. This can be achieved through 'back-lighting', positioning yourself so that the sun is in front of rather than behind you and using the subject (in this case, the kangaroo) to block the sun from entering straight into the lens and causing 'flaring' on the photo.

Happy Photography!

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