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Pick your subject, compose your shot, check your settings and you'll be ready when that brief moment of action occurs.

Australian sea lion

With a qualified ranger/guide and a small group of people, I was on the beach at Seal Bay, Kangaroo Island, in South Australia, thrilled at the opportunity to photograph Australian sea lions. I watched one group interacting while others slept peacefully. They seemed totally unconcerned about a group of humans standing nearby. Before I took any photos, I observed them closely, watching for any interesting behaviours. Nothing out of the ordinary happened for a while – until this juvenile moved towards me, appearing quite 'bouncy' and energetic. I immediately focused on it, composing my shot and waiting for something to develop. After a few minutes of playing around, the young sea lion finally turned in my direction and started to scratch. This was my moment. I recomposed my shot, focused on the sea lion's eye and took several shots, using the continuous shutter mode on my camera. I made sure there was room in the direction the animal was facing, an important part of wildlife photography composition. Fortunately for me, there were light grey clouds in the sky,

creating perfect, diffused light. This type of lighting is preferable to bright sun, which tends to cause annoying highlights that blow out any light areas on your subject and also creates harsh background shadows.

The Australian sea lion is Australia's only endemic sea lion and is listed as a threatened (vulnerable) under the Federal Government's *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (1999). The population is estimated at 10,000 to 12,000.

Photographing this beautiful mammal was a real joy and an experience I thoroughly recommend to anyone.

Happy photography!

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