

PHOTOGRAPHY MASTERCLASS



with professional wildlife photographer, **MICHAEL SNEDIC**

The Pacific Gull featured here was photographed recently at Coles Bay, on the east coast of Tasmania. Walking along the shoreline with my camera and zoom lens, I noticed the gull up ahead. I took my Nikon SLR camera (single lens reflex) and 80-200 mm zoom lens out and changed the settings, in preparation for some possible bird-in-flight photos. An aperture of f5.6 was used to blur out any background and an ISO setting of 400, which gave me a faster shutter speed. At 1/ 5000th of a second, the bird would be 'frozen' mid-flight. Spot metering was also used, so that the gull would be exposed correctly.

Walking slowly along the beach, the gull also walked away the exact same distance—there seemed to be an 'invisible barrier' between us. We continued like this for a short while and then, without warning, the gull took off and started flying over the waves, quite close to the shore. This was my cue! I locked the focus point of my camera on the bird's head (it is very important to focus on the eyes if possible), all the while following it. Since continuous focus was being used, I held down my finger on the shutter button and as long as the focus point was kept on the bird's head as it flew, it continued to stay in focus. Once the gull was in a favourable position, with no distractions in the distance, the shutter button was pressed. With the camera set on continuous shot, I ended up with a series of images, each slightly different, with this one being my favourite.

Michael Snedic is a professional wildlife photographer and tutor. He is presenting an eight-day birding and bird photography workshop at Bowra Sanctuary in July 2012, with birding guide, Barry Davies. For more details, please visit www.michaelsnedic.com



Do you have a question for our photography columnist? Email the Editor at sean.dooley@birdlife.org.au, write to The Editor, Australian BirdLife, Suite 2-05, 60 Leicester Street, Carlton, VIC 3053 or visit our blog at www.birdlife.org.au/australian-birdlife