

A Practical Nature Photography Hiking Setup

Dr. John A. Allocca
www.DrJohnPhotography.com
10/20/22

Some people have difficulty hiking miles through the wilderness with heavy photographic equipment. They also don't want to change lenses in the field for wildlife and for landscape photography, especially when it is windy. Therefore, two cameras would be ideal. One with the 70-300 mm lens and one with a 24 mm prime lens. Lenses larger than 300 mm will be much heavier and difficult to carry on long hikes. There are limits of how much weight can be carried comfortably on the shoulder and on the waist. Many many hours of trial and error produced the recommendations below. There are hundreds of cameras, lenses, cases, and configurations. Below is one configuration. Many substitutions can be made depending upon the user's preference. Furthermore, many photographers want to keep their equipment protected from tree branches in the wilderness and therefore want to carry them in a case.

1. Sling Pack. The easiest way to carry a heavy camera and lens is with a backpack with wide and padded shoulder straps. However, backpacks don't provide quick access to the camera. Sling packs with a wide and padded shoulder straps are second best. The Lowepro Slingshot SL 250 AW III Camera Bag (1.5 pounds) is comfortable and provides fairly quick access to the camera. Note, this sling pack is made to sling over the right shoulder with access to the camera on the left side. Most manufactures make sling packs that sling over the left shoulder with access to the camera on the right side. This is a personal choice. A Sony A1 with 70-300 mm lens (3.5 pounds) plus accessories (1.5 pounds) are put into the sling pack. The total weight is 6.5 pounds.

2. Waist pack. There are many different waist packs available for camera equipment. The Think Tank Photo Pro Speed Belt V3.0 (modified) (0.6 oz) and Think Tank Photo SKIN CHANGER POP DOWN V3.0 (9.6 oz) will provide enough space for a small camera (Sony A7C with 24 mm prime lens) (18 oz) and a 9 ounce hot/cold bottle with hot or cold liquid (17.0 oz). The total weight is 45.2 oz (2.8 pounds).

Think Tank Photo Pro Speed Belt V3.0 modifications. The speed belt normally uses quick connect buckles with metal keepers in the adjusting mechanism. It takes a considerable amount of time to make the adjustment, which may be often as different clothing and jackets may be used. However, the belt does provide a significant amount of cushioning. This author cut off the buckle and short nylon strip that attaches to the buckle. Then, used a 1.5 inch wide nylon web belt. The web belt was attached to the Think Tank belt with 0.75" wide velcro strips connected to the molle loops on the Think Tank belt. The belt can now be adjusted quickly and easily while providing good cushioning.