

Stalking Stags

We are now into the start of the rutting season, a great time to get images of stags. The days are getting shorter so we don't need to get up so early for post-dawn photography, and trees are thinning out making it a little easier to find stags in woodland. They can also be found in some large parks, such as Bushy Park in London (where this image was captured), where they are more used to people. However, during the rutting season stags can be dangerous, so it is important to keep a good distance away. Do also watch out for and comply with warning and safety notices.



Because of this you really need a telephoto lens to reasonably fill the frame, and this in turn usually means a heavy lens needing a tripod or monopod for support. A large aperture lens is ideal to make your subject stand out from the background.

The best time to capture action is soon after dawn, and particularly in woodland light will be low so you need a wide aperture and a fast shutter speed to get crisp images. Preferably set the camera to manual, and set ISO to auto.

Focus is best set to single spot focus, and if you can set the back button on the camera for pre-focussing this will be advantageous. Then use burst mode

on continuous high so you don't miss any of the action. Stay downwind if you can.

It's good to capture close-up images of stags, but also see if you can capture some of the surroundings with their herds, to show their social behaviour, as with these two alternatives. Finally, do stay aware of your surroundings, as you could easily find yourself surrounded by animals who do not welcome your intrusion!

If you have any questions or need help with anything photographic during this time, do feel free to contact us through the website at www.overtonphoto.club.

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