



Pro wildlife photographer Andy Rouse tests the EF 200-400mm lens

“You are going to bring out what? What do you mean it will have a 1.4x Extender INSIDE it?”

These were two of the questions I posed last summer when I was asked to participate in testing a new prototype lens, the Canon 200-400mm. Since then I have tested it around the world. I have had it out and about for six months and here is what I found...

You might think that most wildlife photographers use fixed 500mm and 600mm lenses. Well, it used to be like that, especially in the days of small sensor sizes when we did not have much latitude to crop. These days the size of the image is less important as most DSLRs produce images that are big enough to crop to some degree.

So what really counts now? In my opinion, flexibility is the key. There is no doubt that my 600mm lens comes into its own with small birds or subjects that are very shy, especially with a 1.4x Extender. But it is heavy and using it greatly limits my creative options.

Once a moving subject comes too close there is nothing I can do, grabbing a second body with a 300mm attached is the usual

reaction, but this wastes valuable time which usually equates to a missed shot. For some of us that means money. With the big 500mm or 600mm lenses I can only take one kind of shot and the composition is determined for me, I am not in complete control. And, trust me, I hate being out of control.

The flexibility of having an effective range of 200 to 560mm is a wonderful tool for the creative photographer. It has helped me get shots that otherwise I would have missed. It puts me in control of the composition and the AF speed suffers very little slowdown compared to a normal converter.

I just love this lens. I have really used it hard in a variety of situations and it has simply done everything that I have asked. No failures. Nothing to complain about. I have inspected all of the images that I have taken for any distortion or chromatic aberration and I did not find any.

These are just a few of the comments and photographs from Andy. For the full review go to: www.andyrouse.co.uk/index.php?page_id=174



Top I shot with the 1.4x Extender activated. Beautiful light, but there is no margin for error when it comes to focus, it has to be precise as the detail is vital here.

Above I took a variety of shots throughout the whole 200-560mm range. In the end I settled for this shot at 200mm as it showed the whole window. This is an example where shooting with a fixed focal length 500mm or 600mm lens would greatly limit the composition options.