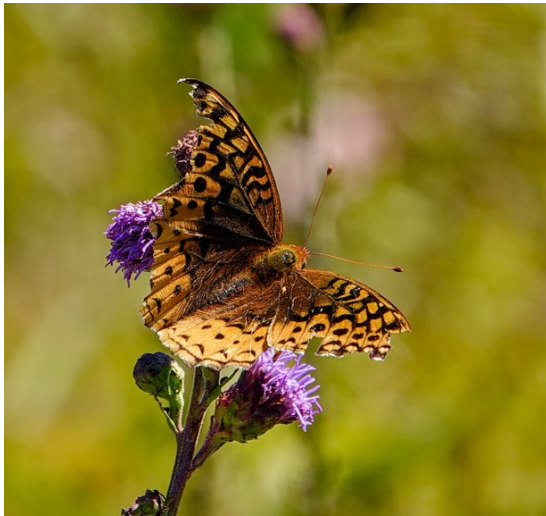


Intermediate Guide to Point and Shoot Nature Photography with the Sony RX10 V:

using Memories and the Star Modes.



Remember: Point and Shoot Nature Photography means: letting the camera do everything it can for you—especially focusing and determining correct exposure—so that you can spend your time and energy finding your subjects, seeing the image that needs taking, framing it effectively, and pressing the shutter. And of course sharing your images. It means learning to trust the camera to do what it does best, so that you can do what you do best—in fact the parts *only* you can do.

Wouldn't it be nice, once you have figured out some basic adjustments to Auto (or any other shooting mode) that suit your eye and your subjects, if the camera could remember them so that you do not have to make those same adjustments every time you pick up the camera, or every time you switch from the mode you use for Birds and Wildlife to the mode you use for Birds in Flight and Action.

And of course, in theory, there is. The Sony RX10 V has 10 in-camera Memories for photo shooting where you can store your custom settings and shooting modes.

Let's assume that you have been working with Auto as recommended in the Beginners Guide to Point and Shoot Nature Photography with the RX10 V, and have learned that when shooting Birds and Wildlife you like to set My Styles to darken each image slightly, and you use the Vivid Creative Look.

I will admit that when I started writing this intermediate guide I assumed that it would be as easy as making your few changes to Auto and saving the settings to one of the memories. Unfortunately Sony does not save My Style settings to memory. While you can save the limits

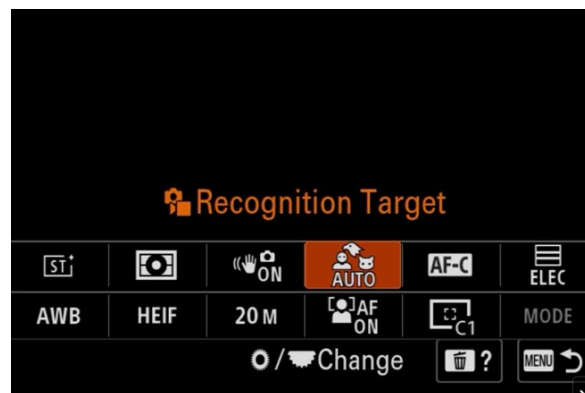
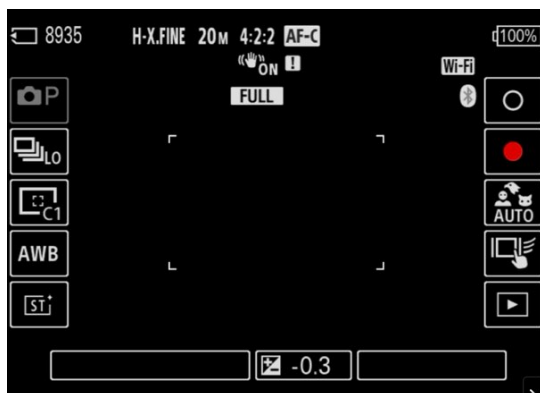
to Subject Recognition and the changes to Drive and Focus mode—if you have made My Style adjustments to Brightness, Defocus, or Creative Looks, those do not get saved.

Since we have to live with that, I have decided, in this intermediate guide to help you to create a more carefully and usefully tailored custom shooting mode specifically for birds and wildlife—including insects.

We will do it, where possible, without too many deep menu dives. :)

Your base shooting mode is going to be Program Auto: the P position on the main mode dial. Program does almost exactly the same thing as Auto except that it does not have the Scene Selection modes. In exchange, you get control over way more of the options and features of the camera.

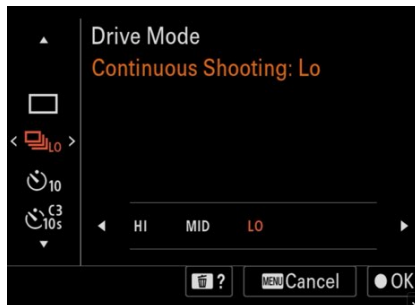
I am going to assume that you either have already worked through the Beginner's Guide to Point and Shoot Nature Photography with the RX10 V or are familiar enough with making changes on the RX10 V to be comfortable with the touch screen, the function button menu, and at least a tiny bit of deep menu work. Many of these changes can be made via the touch screen. Most can be made via the function menu. Only a few will require the main menus of the camera.



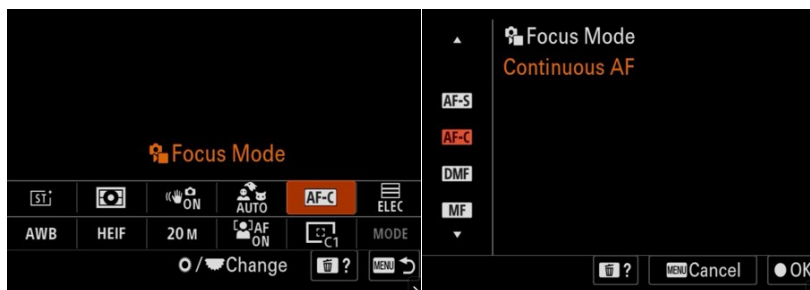
So let's begin.

Place the main Mode Dial in the P position (Program Auto) and turn the camera on. You will see the icons for the various settings up and down both the right and left side of the LCD. Either pull up the Function Menu by dragging your finger from the bottom of the LCD or press the Function Button (Fn, tucked in just above the 5 way control wheel). You will see the same (or a

similar) set of icons in two rows. If you are making settings on the LCD directly, you are limited to touch. If you call up the Function Menu, you can also use the 5-way control wheel and its center button to make changes. (You can also use touch on the Function Menu.) Your choice.



The first set of changes we are going to make are basic. As we did in the Beginner's Guide we need to set the Focus to Continuous and the Drive Mode to Continuous Lo (5 frames per second). Touch or select the Drive Mode icon, second from the top left on the LCD, or press the left edge of the 5-way control. You will see the options on the left. Choose the second one from the top, Continuous, and then choose Lo from the options across the bottom of the screen.



To change the Focus Mode, you need to open the Function Menu. There is no Focus Mode icon on the main LCD display. Either drag the Function Menu up from the bottom of the LCD or press the

Function Button. Focus Mode is one in from the right on the top row. Select it. Again, you will see the options down the left side of the display. Choose AF-C (continuous).

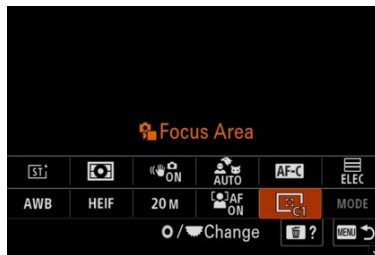
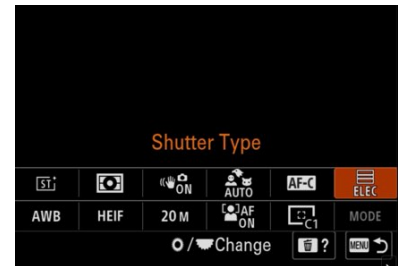


Open the Function Menu again if it closed. Select the Subject Recognition icon—the one with the human, cat, and eagle. It should be already in Auto. Press the little arrow next to Auto, or use the right edge of the 5-way control wheel to open your options. Uncheck all but Animal, Bird, and Insect. Select the left arrow at the edge of the LCD or scroll left with the 5-way control. Select OK. As we discussed in the Beginner's Guide, limiting Subject Recognition to the targets you are actually after will speed up recognition and make tracking more accurate.

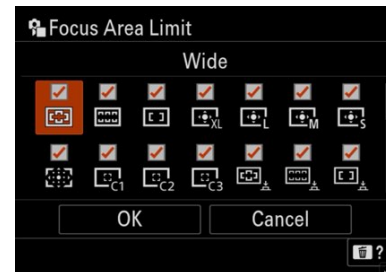


Back in the Function Menu again or on the LCD, check that the Subject Recognition Auto Focus is set to ON. The icon is a human figure with a box around the head, and either AF ON or AF Off. If it happens to be Off, set it to ON.

Back in the Function Menu, select the Shutter Icon (far right top row). Auto is limited to the Mechanical Shutter. In Program, you can choose Electronic as well. The practical differences are that Electronic gives you faster shutter speeds in more situations to stop action, and it gives you higher frame rates. It is also silent. For those reasons, it is the best choice for Birds and Wildlife. Set the Shutter to Elec. and select OK.



Back in the Function Menu again, select the Focus Target Area icon (second from the left on the bottom—also on the LCD main display in the center of the left column of icons).



Down the left side of the display, you will see a bewildering number of options. As you scroll through them, you will see that there are two groups. The icons at the top begin with wide, and progressively get smaller until you come to C1 (custom 1), and then there is an icon for Tracking Wide. This one has a little arrow next to it, which means there are more options to choose across the bottom of the screen—everything from Tracking Wide to all of the other smaller areas, only in their Tracking state.

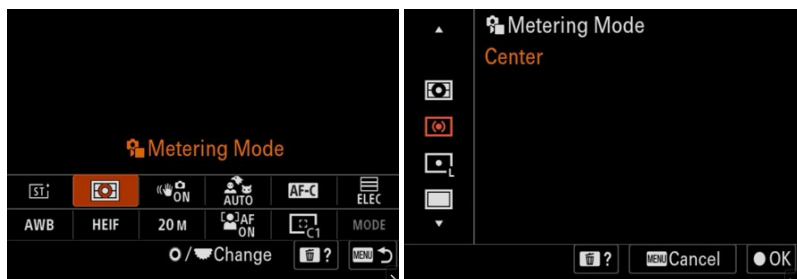
In my experience, Tracking Focus Areas tend to interfere with Subject Recognition Tracking. The two tracking systems are very different, and both use the same computing power of the processor. Having them both on at the same time does not work well for me, except perhaps for birds in flight. I think they probably work together much more smoothly for human beings and human shapes. Not so much for birds and wildlife.

For birds and wildlife, I start with the standard, non-tracking XL-Spot. In most situations, especially when there is any clutter around your subject, or other confusing objects in the view, it helps to give the Subject Recognition some help in finding your subject by placing the

subject in a smaller focus target area. I tend to automatically move with the subject to keep it centered in the frame anyway, so the camera has no problem keeping its focus lock on the eye (or head, or body). At the same time, making the Focus Target Area too small just makes it harder to keep the Area on your subject. XL-Spot is a good compromise.

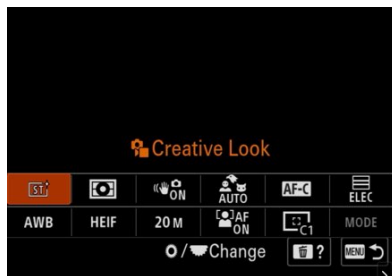
Select OK when you have made your choices and set the size of your custom area.

Tip: if the camera tells you it cannot set the Focus Area while Tracking is engaged, it means that you have inadvertently touched the screen somewhere outside the borders of an icon, and started object tracking. Easy to do. Press the center button of the 5-way control to cancel tracking, and you will be able to set the Focus Target Area.



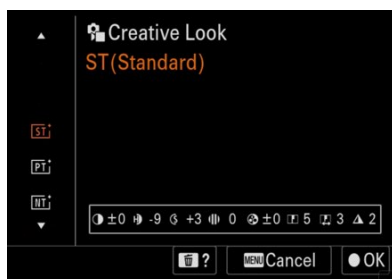
Back in the Function Menu, choose the Metering Mode icon (second from the left, top row). Again, you will have options down the left side. On other Sony Cameras I use Multi

with good success. Not so much on the RX10 V. On the RX10 V I use Center. Choose it and select OK.



This next one is more complicated. Back in the Function Menu, choose the top far right icon. This is Creative Looks, and this is where you get to tailor the look of your finished JPEGs or HEIFs to suit your eye and your subject.

We are going to tailor the Standard Creative Look for birds and wildlife, so choose the ST icon on the left. Across the bottom, you will see options: Contrast, Highlights, Shadows, Fade, Saturation, Sharpness, Sharpness Range, and Clarity.



The RX10 V sensor and processor tends to run hot: that is to say, it preserves shadow detail, sometimes at the expense of highlight detail. Often at the expense of highlight detail (highlight headroom is limited in the Type 1 Stacked Sensor that the RX10 V uses). For that reason, I begin by setting Highlight as low as it will go: to -9. I set Shadows to +3 to

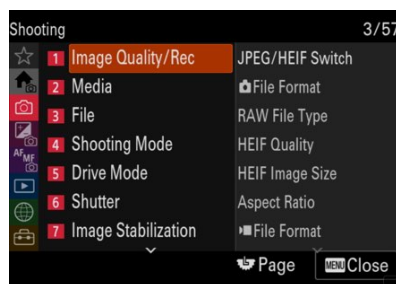
preserve even more shadow detail. Because it is better to sharpen the data right off the sensor than to attempt to sharpen in post-processing, I increase the sharpness to 6. I also increase Clarity to 2 to emphasize the fine detail of feathers and fur. When I have made those changes, I choose OK.

Those are just my settings. You may find that you prefer the Vivid Creative Look. Many do. It adds a bit of pop to the images. Marks them more colorful and contrasty. Gives them a bit of a post card look. Vivid2 does the same, only more. (You can, by the way, actually see the effects of the different Looks as you change them. Just pick a colorful, detailed scene to point the camera at while you are making changes and decisions.) Some, mostly RAW shooters transitioning to JPEG or HEIF, prefer Neutral, as it produces the kind of slightly flat look they are used to in viewing unprocessed RAW. The remainder of the Looks are really special purpose, from film looks to black and white. Experiment. And you do not have to settle on any one of the Looks as it is. Remember you can adjust each parameter of each Look to suit your eye and your subjects. The camera will remember your choice and your adjustments.



Those are all the changes we are going to make using the Function Menu or the LCD display.

Now we are going to open the main Menus. Sony Menus have a reputation for being complex and difficult. I have been working with them so long that I think they are perfectly rational (for the most part) but they have to be taken on their own terms. If you are coming from another camera, even the RX10 IV, do not expect the settings to be where your last saw them. Learn the logic of this camera's menus.



Open the Menus with the Menu button to the left of the viewfinder. The first menu to deal with is the Camera Menu, third from the top, little camera icon. Select it. We are going to make a decision as to what file type we will use, as we did in the Beginner's Guide. If you made the decision then, it will still be set to your choice). I shoot in HEIF 4.2.2. I do not shoot in

RAW since I see no benefit with this camera and sensor especially. I choose HEIF over JPEG for its smaller file sizes, more efficient compression, and because, in theory, it preserves more of the original detail and color of the original RAW file; It is the higher quality choice but it is not the safe choice. There are some computers and some

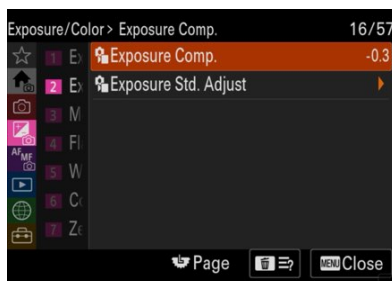
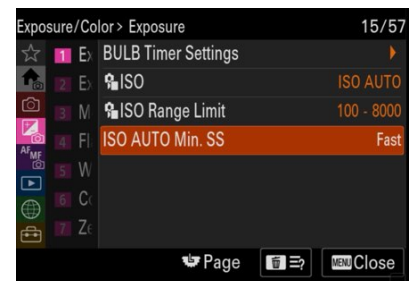
applications that do not play nicely with HEIF, especially if you are not in the Apple universe. HEIF is the native file format for all Apple devices. In the Windows world, there are still many apps that do not recognize HEIF, but are perfectly happy with JPEG.

To make this choice, select Camera, Image Quality/Rec. and JPEG/HEIF Switch. Set to HEIF 4.2.2 if you dare—to JPEG if not. Now select File Format and choose HEIF (or JPEG). Then select HEIF Quality (it will say JPEG quality if you made that choice) and set it to Extra Fine. Your files will be a bit larger but retain maximum detail and color.



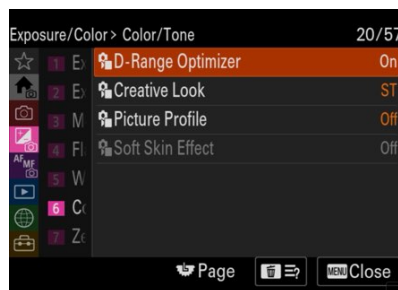
Next choose the Exposure Menu (one below the camera menu). Here we are going to set our minimum and maximum ISO and tell the camera what shutter speed to try to maintain when shooting birds and wildlife. The RX10 V, in my tests, handles ISOs between 100 and 8000 well—better at the lower numbers—acceptable with noise reduction at the upper numbers. And I want the shutter speed, whenever possible, to remain above 1/250th to avoid blur due to camera and subject motion. Birds and wildlife (and insects even more so) are rarely still. And the Image Stabilization (Steady Shot) in the RX10 V is very good, but to handhold a shot below 1/250th carries some risk of camera movement.

Choose Exposure, Exposure, ISO, ISO and set it to Auto. Choose ISO Range Limit and set the minimum to ISO 100 (no 64 is not better) and the maximum to 8000. Choose ISO Auto Min. SS and set it either to Fast (top choice and Fast across the bottom) or scroll down and set it to 1/250th. The advantage of setting it to Fast is that the shutter speed will vary with the focal length of the zoom, while setting it to 1/250th will peg it at that even when shooting at shorter focal lengths where 1/250 might not be needed. I should mention that the RX10 V will take this setting as a firm suggestion but not as a rule. If the camera can not compute a usable exposure at your minimum shutter speed, it will override your setting and choose a slower shutter speed.



Return to the Exposure Menu. Choose Exposure Comp. Because, as I mentioned in the Creative Looks section, this sensor tends to run hot, I find that I get better exposures and better colors if I run the RX10 V at a slight negative Exposure

Compensation most of the time. Set Exposure Comp to -3 EV.

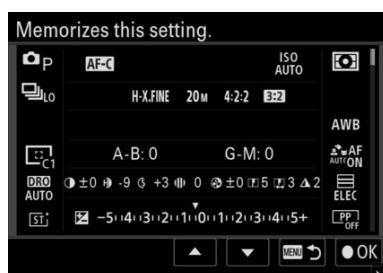
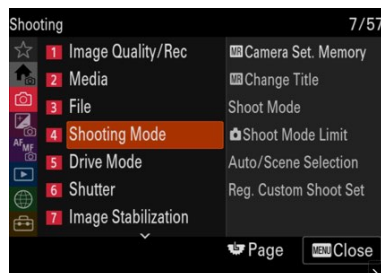


Return to the Exposure Menu. Choose Color/Tone. We have already dealt with Creative Looks above, but here we will turn on Dynamic Range Optimization. DRO is another Sony feature that divides the image into zones and attempts to produce an image with enough detail in the shadow without blowing out the highlights. There is no reason not to use it. There are settings for Auto and 8 levels. For birds and wildlife in ever changing light Auto is the best. So choose D-Range Optimizer, and Auto (it is probably already selected). Should you want to try some of the 8 levels, notice the little arrows next to Auto, and the choices across the bottom of the display, but I highly recommend Auto.

And that is basically it for your custom birds and wildlife mode.

Now we have to save it.

Turn the menus off for a moment and set your zoom to 600mm. The camera will remember that setting when you turn the camera off and return to it when you turn the camera back on. It will also remember the setting when you save you settings, so that when you turn the camera on in your birds and wildlife mode, or return to that mode after using another, the zoom will automatically extend to 600mm. The Camera actually remembers the zoom setting each time you turn off the camera, so if you are shooting birds and wildlife at a shorter focal length when you turn the camera off, it will only return to that focal length when you turn the camera back on. If you want to reset it, you don't have to do anything but zoom out to 600mm and turn the camera off and back on.



Reopen the menus. Choose Camera, Shooting Mode, and the top item on the right, Camera Set. Memory. You will get a screen of icons, each showing your current setting. Choose OK. On the next screen you have the option to give your custom shooting mode a name. I highly

recommend you do that. The default is going to MR1 (or 2-10) and it is easy to forget, when you put the camera down for a month, which memory is which. Touch or select the MR title. You will be presented with an old fashioned key pad from the bad old days of flip phones. The kind with multiple letters on each key, where you have to press the key the right number of times to select the letter. it is not impossible once you get the hang of it, but it takes some patience. Enter something simple and memorable. I use "BW". Use the OK to set your title. The next screen is a list to the 10 available Memories. The simplest choice here is to just use MR1. That will give you access to your BW shooting mode by putting the main Mode Dial in the 1 position. In the Advanced Guide we will use Memory 3 in order to program an instant change from BW to your Flight and Action mode, but that is beyond what we are doing here.

Choose MR1 and then OK. You will have to choose OKAY one more time on the next screen.

And there you have it. A customized, tailored shooting mode for birds and wildlife, all safety saved in MR1.

As mentioned, you can easily recall this whole shooting mode by placing the main Mode Dial in the 1 position.

And you can still use Sports for Flight and Action, Landscape, and Macro as your other main shooting modes by using Scene Select Auto to select them. And you can use use Auto to shoot people. That takes one more step though. If you set up your camera using the Beginner's Guide to Point and Shoot Photography, chances are Human, Airplane and Car/Train are still turned off under Subject Recognition. Put the main Control Dial back in Auto. Open the Function Menu. Choose the Subject Recognition Icon. Choose Auto and then scroll right to open the options and recheck all the ones you want to use under Auto. At least recheck Human.

Now the fun part. Let's talk about what all the buttons and dials do in Program mode, and therefor in your new BW mode.

We will start with the dials.

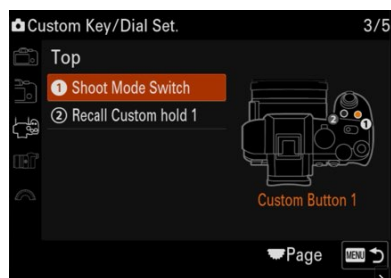
The top right dial, the one with the locking button, is Exposure Compensation. Remember we set Exposure Compensation to -.3 to help tame the highlights. And Exposure Compensation is the same as the Brightness control in My Styles. Rotating the dial will open the Exposure

Compensation scale. This brightens or darkens the whole scene. Positive numbers brighter. Negative numbers darker. And once more this is useful to control the balance between shadows and highlights in the scene, especially with dark subjects against a bright background (requiring positive EV) or bright subjects against a dark background (requiring negative EV).

The second dial on the top controls the shutter speed and works effectively as a Program Shift. This allows you to temporarily alter the balance between shutter speed and aperture while maintains correct exposure. You might want a faster shutter speed for action or a smaller aperture for a group of subjects to keep all of them in focus. There is a limited amount, on the camera that this control can do, and if you don't understand shutter speed and aperture, don't worry about it.

The edges of the 5 way control wheel on the back of the camera each are buttons. The top edge cycles through the different information displays on the LCD and in the finder. The right edge opens the ISO settings should you want to change them (never in my experience: auto with the limits we have programmed works just fine). The left edge opens the Drive Mode options, but again there is little reason to change your Drive Mode, and the bottom edge opens the Exposure Compensation Scale (why? we have a dial for that already).

On the top of the camera we have two more interesting buttons C1 and C2. C2 opens the Focus Target Area settings, and is very useful in the field, if you need to change Focus areas to accommodate your subject and situation. We are going to program C1 to be even more powerful and work with Star position (* or ☀) on the main Mode Dial. When the Mode Dial is in

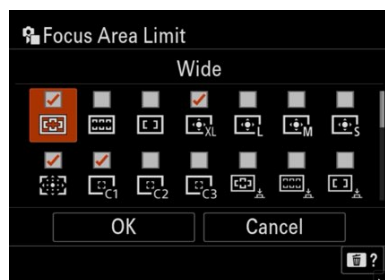


Star, C1 will flip through all the available Shooting Modes, beginning with Auto, then each Scene Selection Mode, then Program, Shutter, Aperture, Manual, and each of the 10 memories. As fast as you can press the button.

To achieve this, you need to open the Menus with the Menu button. Go to Toolbox, Operation Customize, Keys/Dials Customize and locate the buttons on the top of the camera. Choose C1 and navigate back through the menus to the Camera Menu, Shooting Mode, Shoot Mode Switch and set it to that.

To make life easier in the field we are going to slightly customize both these button actions. Each of them have a corresponding limiter in the menu system that allows you to remove the options you are not going to use from the Star rotation or from the Focus Area rotation. This

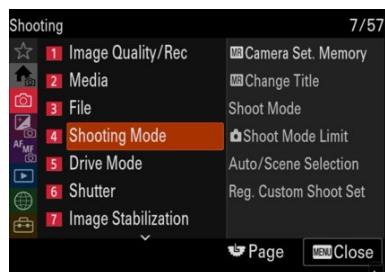
makes it much easier to use the controls in the field since you do not have to scroll or flip through options that you are not going to use to get to the one you actually need.



Lets start with the top button 2, Focus Area. Put the main Mode Dial in position 1 to call up your BW mode. Open the menus. Choose the Focus Menu (AF/MF). Choose Focus Area. Choose Focus Area Limit. You will be presented with a screen with every possible Focus Area option. They don't actually all fit on one screen. You have to scroll down past the edge of the screen to see the last options. They will all be checked, which

means they will all be options when you press C2 on the top. I only leave 3 checked for birds and wildlife. Wide in case I want to use it. Either XL-Spot or C1 depending on my choice back in setting my primary Focus Area (or leave both checked), and Expanded Spot. That gives me a choice for when my subject is pretty much all alone against a plain background or bouncing around all over, a choice for normal day to day shooting, and a choice then all else fails—for when the bird is buried in brush or too far way for any larger target area to recognize it. Uncheck all but those, or at least the ones you want to use. Select OK.

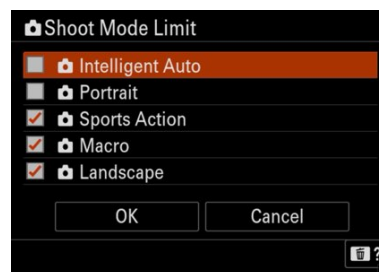
Now when you press C2 on the top, you will only have these options to choose from and you can quickly choose the one you need.



Then lets program top C1. Go to Camera, Shooting Mode, Shoot Mode Limit. Again you will be presented with a long list of all the possible shooting modes. Uncheck all of them that you are not going to use in your current setup. This is a global change. You can not save different sets in different Memories, so think about this long and hard. Not too long though because

your choice here only effects the modes that are available in the Star position on the main Mode Dial. Removing them from this list does not shut them off. They are still accessible from their dedicated positions on the main Mode Dial. Auto and all its Scene Modes in the Auto position. Program, Shutter, Aperture, Manual in their positions. Memory 1 and 2 in their positions.

For our current set up, where we have created only a birds and wildlife custom mode, and are still using Sports, Landscape, and Macro Scene Selection modes. it is safe to uncheck all



except Sports, Landscape, Macro and MR1. Also uncheck Memories 2 through 10. Select OK to lock your choices in.

Now return to Camera, Shooting Mode, Camera Set. Memory and resave this change as part of your BW (like I said it does not matter for the Star mode set, but it does for the Focus Areas. You can, in fact, have different sets of Focus Target Areas for your different custom shooting modes.)

If you now put the main Mode Dial in the Star position, pressing top button 1 will cycle through your chosen Shooting Modes—and only your chosen shooting modes—so that you can quickly choose BW, Sport, Landscape or Macro.

How slick is that?

Just two more buttons and we are done. The AF-On button engages focus without half pressing the shutter release. This can be useful when you want to prefocus on an area where you expect your subject to appear.

And finally, the joystick control will move your selected Focus Target Area around the field when you need it off center, perhaps for compositional reasons. Pressing in on the control recenters your focus area. (You can also move the focus area by touching the LCD (even with your nose, so pay attention to where it is).

In the Advanced Guide to Point and Shoot Nature Photography with the Sony RX10 V we will set up custom Flight and Action, Landscape and Macro modes, and do a lot more button and dial customization. That, however, requires a deeper dive into the menus and a deeper understanding of the potential of the RX10 V.

When you are ready to go there, the Advanced Guides are on my website at https://psnp.info/psnp/?page_id=2021.

In the meantime, get out and Point and Shoot. The RX10 V is an amazing camera and you will undoubtedly bring back a lot of photos you are satisfied with, and happy to share.

And do download the **Point and Shoot Nature Photography with the Sony RX10 V: In The Field Guide**, (also on my website) for tips and tricks that will make your time in the field with the camera more satisfying.

And that is the whole point of Point and Shoot Nature Photography with the Sony RX10 V.