

In Clear View

During our field trip to Hollywild last week, a question was raised about being unable to get a clean shot of the animals because they were obscured by the cages. I suggested using a long lens to shoot through the cage grid, since it would be too close to the lens to be in focus. I took the shot below to demonstrate what I meant.

The tiger was far enough back from the front of the cage that I focused on him with an aperture setting of $f/4.8$. Had he been closer to the front of the cage, as most other animals were, it would not have worked. In this instance the very limited depth of field at $f/4.8$ worked to my advantage such that the front of the cage was completely out of focus and invisible even though it was about 10 feet in front of me. Smaller apertures with broader DOF would have definitely included the bars. At $f/16$ or higher they would have been clearly visible.

This approach does require a long lens. I used my Nikkor 70 – 200 $f/2.8$ zoom at the maximum extension. My “normal” lens, a 24 -120 $f/3.5-5.6$, would not have worked as the aperture on the long end is $f/5.6$ and the 120 focal length would have been too short to get the composition. The bright sunlight (and the Vibration Reduction feature on the lens) allowed me to hand hold the camera at ISO 200. Well, I did brace it on the railing to steady it a bit.

The positioning on the pile of rocks made for a nice composition, the lighting was perfect and the subject was appeared very regal, and I was pleased with the result.

Bob Coffey

