

NIGHT *moves*

Nature often reveals itself fleetingly and a wildlife photographer needs to be prepared for those moments.

On the first evening of a camping trip at the Okavango River in Botswana, I noticed a Fiery-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus pectoralis* perched on a stick, on the outskirts of the camp. I ran to fetch my camera and tried to compose a shot in which the moon was positioned behind the bird, but it had already risen quite high, and a buffalo thorn tree was thwarting my bid to get the perfect angle.

The following night, I was prepared. Knowing the predictable behaviour of the species, I anticipated that the nightjar would settle on the same stick at approximately the same time, and calculated that the moon would be in just the right position to be behind the bird. Wildlife photographers need to have high levels of optimism!

I had my camera set up and at the ready and, for once, everything fell into place. Right on time, the nightjar glided in and landed on the branch, ready to begin its nocturnal hawking session, the moon was poised perfectly behind it and we lit the bird softly from below with torchlight.

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