

Andenes-Norway

At this time of the year (winter), climatic conditions are generally challenging, water is in the 2-3celcius (35 to 37F), visibility goes from average to sub average and the wind can pick up and creates choppy conditions. Add to this the very short window of daylight (an average of about 2 hrs. in mid-January. You can really use lighting, strobe or constant, so shooting wide angle and opening up the aperture, along with a camera that lets you crank up the ISO without too much sacrifice on quality, is was would be recommended.

So you now understand, encounters do get quite difficult to predict and chance start to seriously come into play at that point. This is exactly what I experienced on this January day under a cloudy and rainy day. Our group had just slipped into the water over a huge school of herrings located in a sandy and shallow area. Orcas typically will push herring toward the shallows in order to hunt them more efficiently.

Luck prevailed because of that sandy patch, light was bouncing up its surface and contributed much needed light to the scene. For twenty minutes, I hovered over the school of herrings, hoping to photograph an orca, when suddenly, the school parted and in its mist was a humpback whale in full hunting mode. What a surprise and what an encounter! I was very lucky to be there at the right time and place. Photographing this humpback whale in action in theses cold Norwegian water will remain one of my best souvenirs

Shot using a Canon 5D Mk III, EF 16-35mm f/4L USM at 1/160th @ ISO 2500, protected by an Aquatica A5D Mk III housing equipped with an 8" dome port and 45° Aqua View Finder

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