

Hokkaido Winter Landscape Tour 2023 Part 2

Jan 27, 2023



Today we pick up the trail as I walk you through the eleventh to the twentieth image I selected to talk about from my recent Hokkaido Winter Landscape Adventure, which I ran for the first time in three years, ending last Friday. We started in part one in the beautiful town of Biei, and we have a few more images from that area to look at before we move on.



Snow Cloud Sunset

The bright sunlight that caused beautiful shadows in some of the shots we looked at in the previous episode gave way to a very subtle sunset that painted the snow cloud pink as we ended day two of the tour. My images from this area are usually so monotone that it is not difficult to convert them to black and white, but the color in this image was impossible for me to throw away.

Mount Asahi Trees

The following morning we drove around to Mount Asahi, where we walked a short way up the ski slope to photograph this kind of scene (following page). As I said last week, I realize that if you have been following my antics over the years, this is pretty much the same image that I've shot many times before, but it is always fun to shoot again with a new group of talented photographers.

I cloned out the cable car cables in the photo, but you can see the cables in an

iPhone Slo-mo video which I have posted to [Vimeo, here](#), as I love to see falling

snow in slow motion, and the iPhone does this stuff so well.







Winter Tree and Plants

In the afternoon, we went back to Biei, and I want to share this final image from that area for this series. This is a lone tree, but I pulled out a little to include some plants sticking through the snow on the left side of the frame. We also have that subtle line along the top of the hill as the snow clouds rolled back in.



Sea with Tetrapods

The following day, we spent most of the morning driving to the coast and up to Haboro, where we'd spend the next two nights. On the way, we stopped at one of my favorite beaches with some rocks and tetrapods strategically positioned. Two-second exposures with a six-stop Neutral Density filter recorded the movement in the waves that you can see in this next image. At most other times for landscape work, I use a two-second timer so that I don't touch the camera

during the exposure, but it's essential to use a cable release or remote control to release the shutter for shots like this because you have to start the exposure at the optimal time to capture the movement of the waves.

For this shot, I caught several waves rolling in at the same time as the previous high wave rolled out, leaving that streaky pattern on the beach, aided by a stream of melted snow that was crossing the scene from the bottom edge to the right side of the frame.

The Sun Sets

At the end of this day, we photographed the Shinto Gate in the sea, and despite it being a relatively high tide, the clear sky, meaning high atmospheric pressure, kept the sea level pretty low. It was nice to capture the sun on the horizon with the Torii gate, though, so I couldn't resist shooting this.



Gonpira Shinto Gate

The following morning we went back to the gate as soon as we could after breakfast, and it was very close to high tide, so the sea was covering most of the low rock formations around the gate, but it was not high enough to cover the concrete base. I've only seen that base covered a few times in a snowstorm, so very low atmospheric pressure and high winds to whip that sea into a frenzy.



Waves and Tetrapods

Later that day, we went back to the beach that we'd visited on the first day in this area, and I shot this other image of the tetrapods that I was happy with. This time I used a one-second exposure, so I captured half the slice of time of the earlier image, but it's enough to capture full waves as they roll and start to crash into the sea. It's also possible to get the water splashing up after hitting the tetrapods.

Another thing that appeals to me in this shot, and it's quite by chance, but I was able to get just about equal amounts of wet sand in front of that wave on the beach as the slither of sky that I left at the top of the frame. Of course, I decided how much sky to include, but the amount of black sand on the bottom edge was pretty much out of my control.

Broken Golf Balls

The following morning we started our drive up to Wakkanai, where we'd spend the next two nights, and on the way, stopped at a spot where there were some concrete balls with holes in them, with the same job as the tetrapods, which is to stop the coast from being washed into the sea. These things look like plastic practice golf balls to me, and I love that there is now a second row of these balls that have broken and are gradually being worn away by the waves. It would seem they are not as strong as the regular tetrapods, which seem to be hardly affected by the sea that continuously bashes against them.

Boat Graveyard 2023

I was happy to see that what I have affectionately named the Boat Graveyard was still there, although given the amount of snow that we saw around Biei, I was surprised that there was not a lot of snow around the boats this year. Still, it was nice to see these boats again, and capture them with some details in the winter sky.



Noshappu Fishing Boats

Up in Wakkanai, there was almost no snow around the fishing boats at Cape Noshappu. An exciting sky saved this photo to a degree, but we would luckily get some boats with snow around them in the coming days, so at this point, this was more an insurance shot, although I do like that sky.

That is the twentieth image of the thirty I want to share, so we'll start to wrap up this second episode. I'll pick up the trail in part three, the final episode of this series, when I share images from the rest of the trip, including an image that I was emotionally moved by, as we were presented with a sunset-lit bank of snow cloud and a millpond-like sea during an unplanned visit to the northernmost tip of Japan. I hope to record the final episode before leaving for the first of my two Japan Winter Wildlife tours today, and I'll release that as I travel.

If this tour is of interest to you, we still have spaces on the 2024 tour, so check our [tours & workshops page](#) for a quick check of availability and click on the graphic to jump to the details for each tour directly from there.





MARTIN BAILEY PHOTOGRAPHY K.K.

This article was first published on Jan 27, 2023

See You Online!

Check out our Tours & Workshops, eBooks and fine art prints and other products and services, or listen to the audio of our articles on our website!

<https://martinbaileyphotography.com>

Notice of Rights

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Copyright © 2023 - All Rights Reserved