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# PHOTOGRAPHER FROM DUNNVILLE FEATURED IN CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC



Above are a collection of photographs taken by Norrie Franko. The photo of the blue bird is featured in the May/June 2020 issue of Canadian Geographic, which Franko is shown holding below.

**By Charlene Papasodaro**  
The Haldimand Press

DUNNVILLE—Norrie Franko was ecstatic to see one of her photographs featured in the Exposure section of The Canadian Geographic magazine recently. While Franko had a photo of hers in the magazine's Best Wildlife Photography publication last year, it was her goal to be published again this year and she never expected to receive a full-page feature. She expressed, "I am thrilled to say the least.... (It's) a great honour."

Franko has also had photos featured on the Canadian Geographic's Instagram account. In addition, she has just learned that 11 of her photos have been shortlisted for The Canadian Geographic's next edition of Best Wildlife Photography.

"I am over the moon over all of this," Franko said. "My passion is wildlife photography. I have always loved creatures of all shapes and sizes."

The first photos Franko took were at about seven years old on a trip to Black Creek Pioneer Village with a Brownie camera. Due to the cost of development, she was only able to take four photographs. Of those four, three were of horses pulling the wagon. She later got a point and shoot camera. Then at 19, after seeing a friend take a photograph of a butterfly and win an award, she said, "I was hooked."

Her friend helped her find a second-hand SLR camera and learn how to adjust the settings for greater control over her photos. Franko said, "I

have been very lucky to have had excellent mentors over the years, but the kindness of that friend so many years ago started me on this journey."

After retiring from teaching in 2015, Franko spent three years honing her skills before taking her first photography trip in August of 2018 when she went to Alaska to shoot grizzly bears. She has since returned to that area once. She has also photographed polar bears in Churchill, Manitoba, along with Kermode and black bears in the Great Bear Rain Forest in British Columbia and at Yellowstone. Most of her time, however, is spent shooting in Algonquin Park and locally.

"The most amazing encounter I've had was with a Kermode bear," Franko said. Kermode bears, also sometimes called spirit bears, are black bears that carry a recessive gene that causes their fur to be completely white; they live only in the coastal rainforests of British Columbia. There are few of these bears in existence, so Franko found the ability "to capture these incredible creatures on film was a dream."

However, Franko also stresses the importance of "exploring local places and enjoying the area" around you.

Franko, who previously lived in Dunnville, took the photo that Canadian Geographic featured right in her backyard in nearby West Lincoln: "Something to remember in these times (is) you can find things to do locally that you might normally overlook."

She believes shooting locally is a good way to experiment and practice. When living in Dunnville,



Franko spent days walking along the lake taking pictures: "You just never know what you may see."

Franko will continue exploring around her home, looking for opportunities to photograph wildlife.

She always appreciates tips with this and can be reached through private message on her Facebook page Tabby Press or you can follow her work on Facebook at God's Paint Brush/Tabby Press.