



#### INSECTS

*Both the bee and hoverfly shots were taken using a dedicated Canon macro lens. As you can see from the hoverfly image, DOF tails off very quickly when you are in this close. Sometimes it's possible to get only some of the subject sharp, in which case I'll nearly always aim to keep my focus point on the eye. I still remember taking the photograph of the bee (I called it 'don't stop bee leaving') as it taught me the value of patience when, try as I might, I kept getting blurred wings (or even no bee; just empty space). Many shots, different techniques, and the occasional theatrical sigh later, I finally worked out how to ensure fast-moving insects could be kept pin sharp as they flew about their business. This sense of accomplishment, in the middle of a period of deep depression, proved to be another key piece of the puzzle on my journey to recovery.*

#### Sand lizard

▲ One of the UK's rarest reptiles – although recent conservation programmes may improve this situation – the sand lizard can only be found on sandy heathland – amongst sand dunes, where he lives on insects, spiders and grasshoppers. This is a male in full breeding colours.

Following pages:

- ▶ Hoverfly on red valerian
- ▶ Ruby-tailed wasp
- ▶ Blue damselfly

**Brownsea Lagoon**

The lagoon on Brownsea Island is recognised as an internationally important refuge for thousands of birds who come to breed and overwinter. Brackish and non-tidal, the lagoon provides food and shelter for a wide variety of birds, including terns, avocets, godwits, and spoonbills. It might just be me (it usually is) but I still think this elegant spoonbill looks like he's wearing black stockings as he comes in to land ...





◀ **A brief falling out**

One of those one in a million shots you often hope for but rarely get to see never mind photograph. Here, the female sparrowhawk (left of the scene) has taken exception to the male eating the prey, and dealt with him accordingly. Initially I wanted this image to be pin sharp everywhere, but the blur, to me, has added movement to what was a very dynamic, over in a split-second event I only captured as a result of being mindful and rooted in the moment.