

Through My Electronic Viewfinder

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With the lack of snow and the cold weather that we've had for the past month, many of us are beginning to suffer from cabin fever. Outdoor photo opportunities seem to be difficult to find and even harder to capture at this time of the year in Westchester.

I normally shoot at least 500 photos per week on my daily walks around the county. However, looking over my files, I've made less than 200 outdoor images since Christmas and half of them have been fuzzy shots of birds taken through the windows of my apartment.

Actually, I haven't been totally inactive during this time. I've used the time to begin converting some of my old 35mm slides to digital images. It's a good rainy day project that I've been avoiding for years. Particularly after I discovered my film scanner needed fifteen minutes to scan a single slide. Time for a different approach. In frustration, I tried just re-photographing my slides with my digital camera fitted with a +3 and a +1 Hoya close up lens. I simply taped a black card over my light box, cut out a hole big enough to hold a 35mm slide, put my camera with the attached close-up lenses on a tripod and photographed the slides. The good news was that I could copy hundreds of slides in an evening. The bad news was that the images were all fuzzy.

The built-in zoom lens on my digital camera is very sharp but the single element close-up lenses gave a very soft image in the corners. It took me two days of searching the Internet to find a high quality, overpriced, two element, +4 diopter, close-up lens that would fit my camera. It was worth the effort and the cost. The resulting image quality exceeded what I was getting from my film scanner.

So far I've used this approach successfully to copy over a thousand image for one of my customers and an additional thousand of my old slides for myself. Just another hundred thousand or so more slides to go before Spring arrives.

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