



## Lightroom Color Correction: Beyond White Balance

### Description

The morning light on this nyala is a nice touch, but the image could use a bit more contrast and the warm light is making all the colors in the image a bit off. The White Balance tool in Lightroom will help, but using a few more advanced tools will really make this image look great.

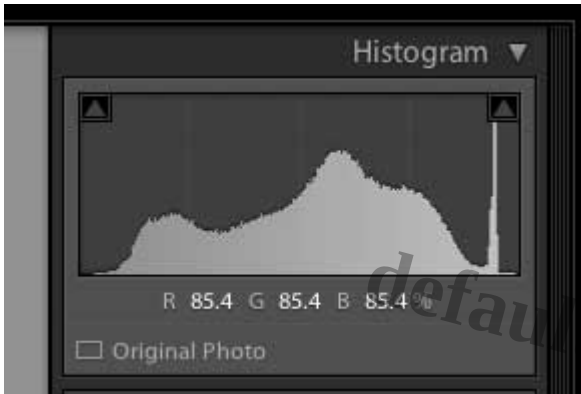


this image needs midtone contrast and removal of a color cast

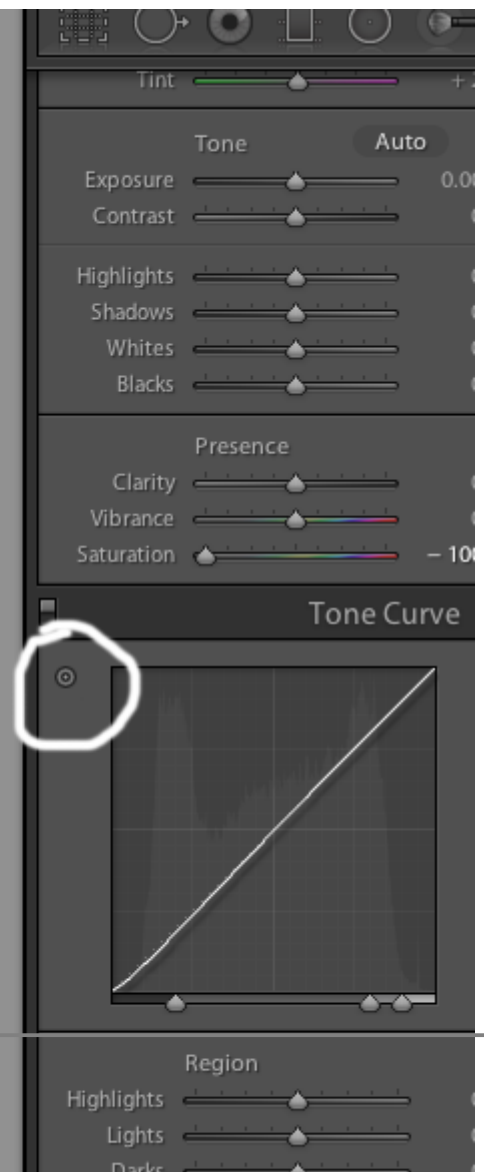
I want to fine tune the exposure and true up the colors while keeping a little bit of the warm character of the light on the nyala. I always work on the exposure first.

## Fixing Contrast and Exposure

From the histogram we can see a pretty good spread of tones from dark to light, but there is no pure black to serve as the darkest point.



To help me evaluate the image exposure without distraction from color I temporarily desaturate the image with the Saturation Slider (move to -100)



## Selecting areas to darken to black

I picked two spots I thought should be the darkest in the photo: under the nyala's chin and under the trees in the background. I will use the Curves Tool because I can use the target tool right on the spots in the photo I want to darken. Next I want to bring out details in the fur. Using the same target tool under the Tone Curve Panel, I concentrate on the different tones of fur on the neck: drag the tool up to brighten some of the darker tones in the neck. Now there is more detail. Now to brighten some of the lighter tones such as the fur fringe on the back. Use the tool to push these tones brighter. The over all result is the "lights" and "darks" of the curve have both been brightened. A final touch is to increase the Clarity slider a little bit. This will pop out the details in the fur.

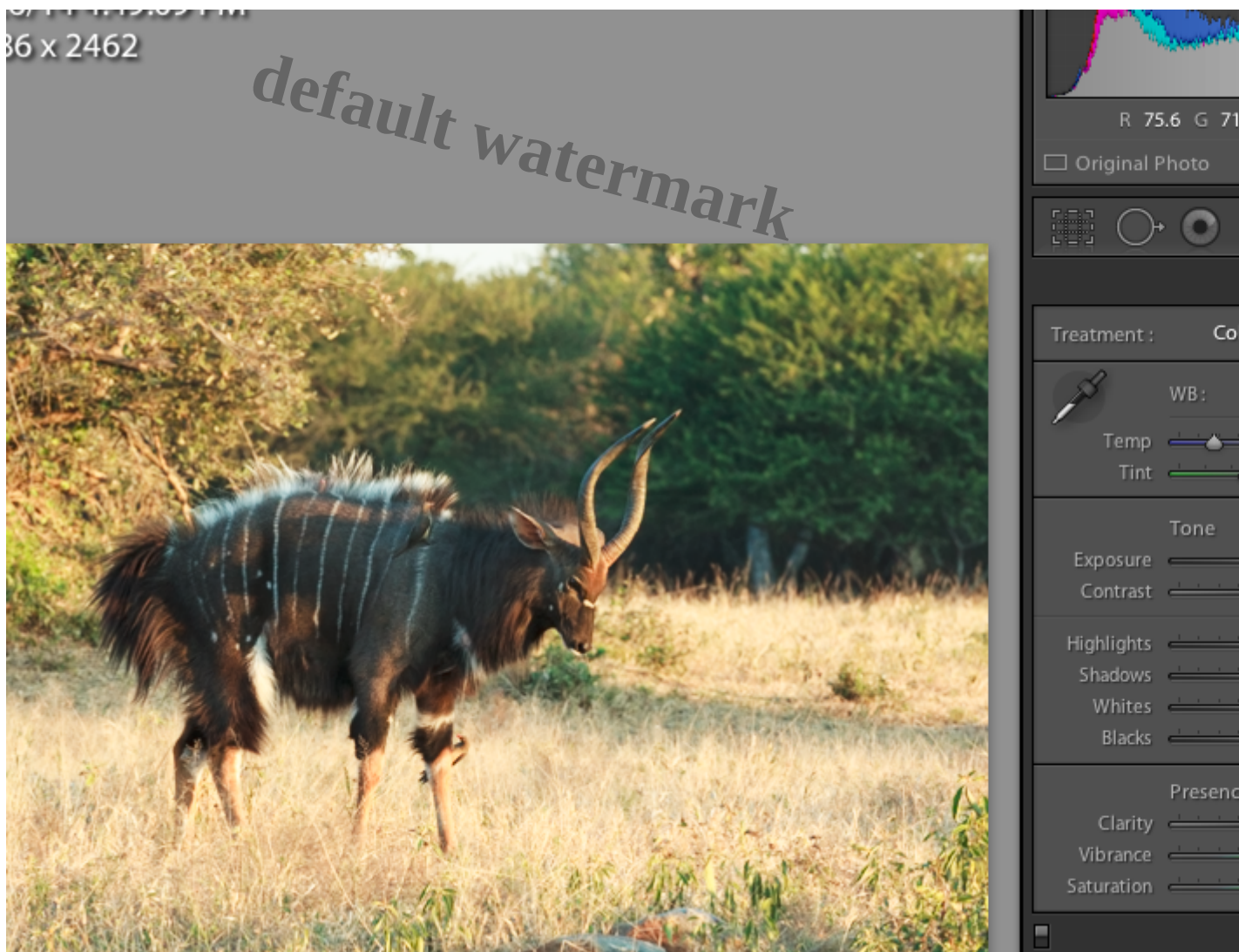


Adjust the midtones

Now there is more details on the subject and the grass is brighter. The adjustments to exposure are done so it is time to turn to color. Place the Saturation slider back to 0.

### Adjusting the White Balance

The color cast is still present. First I will try some adjustments with the White Balance tool. The grass is way too red and the leaves on the trees are not a nice shade of green so this is my clue to start with the Tint slider. I move it left away from the red end and toward the green. While I slide it I am watching for a realistic color in the grass and trees. Now I want to take some of the warm yellow tones away – just enough to give a more accurate color to the fur without losing the morning light feel to the light on the face. I move the Temperature far enough to the left to make the fur less red but not too much as to make the foliage go blue green.



Reduce the red cast by adjusting the Tint slider

Now the colors seem accurate but the white accent fur on the nyala™s back is very blue looking – the result of being in the shadows. I can use a more advanced tool to target and correct this area.

## Refining the Color Correction

Scrolling down to the HSL/Color/B&W panel, I like to set the panel by clicking on Color then selecting All to show all the attributes under each color. In this photo there is no other area with blue tones other than the shadow area we are wanting to alter, so I can use the Color panel tools to globally eliminate blues from the whole image. I move the Saturation of both Blue and Aqua to -100 and it clears up the cold shadow tone nicely. Nothing else in the photo seems to be negatively impacted by this change. I can also add more subtle color changes such as darkening the Luminance in the Yellow tones to restore a touch of the warm morning light.



Desaturate the blues and aquas from the shadow areas of the photo

If this image had other areas that were blue that we did not want to alter, I would have to use the Adjustment Brush to do a spot White Balance or Saturation adjustment or for more exact control bring it into Photoshop to correct it. Luckily this image works well just in Lightroom. The image now has improved contrast and color while still preserving some of the morning golden light qualities.



The image after adjustments

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