

# The Adobe DNG File Format Advantage

## Setting Your DNG Preferences:

Press **Command-,** (comma; PC: **Ctrl-,**) to bring up Lightroom's Preferences dialog, then click on the File Handling tab (as shown here). In the Import DNG Creation section at the top here, you can see the settings I use for DNG conversion. Although you can embed the original proprietary RAW file, I don't (it adds to the file size, and pretty much kills Advantage #1 below). By the way, you choose Copy as DNG at the top center of the Import window (as shown below).

## Advantage #1: DNG files are smaller

RAW files usually have a pretty large file size, so they eat up hard disk space pretty quickly, but when you convert a file to DNG, it's generally about 20% smaller.

## Advantage #2: DNG files don't need a separate sidecar

When you edit a RAW file, that metadata is actually stored in a separate file called an XMP sidecar file. If you want to give someone your RAW file and have it include the metadata and changes you applied to it in Lightroom, you'd have to give them two files: (1) the RAW file itself, and (2) the XMP sidecar file, which holds the metadata and edit info. But with a DNG, if you press **Command-S** (PC: **Ctrl-S**), that info is embedded right into the DNG file itself. So, before you give somebody your DNG file, just remember to use that shortcut so it writes the metadata to the file first.

I mentioned that you have the option of having your photos converted to DNG (Digital Negative) format as they're imported. DNG was created by Adobe because today each camera manufacturer has its own proprietary RAW file format, and Adobe is concerned that, one day, one or more manufacturers might abandon an older format for something new. With DNG, it's not proprietary—Adobe made it an open format, so anyone can write to that specification. While ensuring that your negatives could be opened in the future was the main goal, DNG brings other advantages, as well.

