

WHAT POST-CAPTURE ALTERATIONS ARE PERMITTED IN NATURE IMAGES?

One of the most controversial aspects of Nature photography is the extent to which images (particularly digital images) can be altered after capture. Alterations to images can be grouped into two basic categories:

- (a) adjustments that optimise image quality without altering the pictorial content of the image, and
- (b) modifications that alter the content of the original scene, other than by cropping.

Broadly speaking, adjustments of type (a) are permitted and modifications of type (b), other than cropping, are not.

Put simply:

Any form of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement is **not permitted.**

The following image editing techniques are permitted:

1. Cropping.



2. Adjustments that improve image quality without altering the content of the original scene - e.g. exposure, contrast, saturation, sharpening and noise reduction.



3. Dodging and burning.



4. Editing that removes small elements that were not part of the original scene (such as spots caused by dust on a digital sensor or scratches on a scanned image).

5. High dynamic range (HDR) techniques are permitted because the pictorial content of the individual images and the combined image is the same.

6. Focus stacking of images with the same pictorial content is permitted because although this involves the combining of several images the pictorial content is not being changed.

7. Adjustments that compensate for lens deficiencies such as distortion or chromatic aberration are permitted because they do not change the pictorial content.

The definition requires all adjustments to appear natural.

The permitted adjustments to Nature images must leave the image looking “natural” rather than manipulated. Therefore:

- Adjustments such as contrast, saturation and sharpening must not be excessive.
- The application of filters that produce images that appear unnatural is not permitted.

In this image the adjustments are excessive and the image no longer looks natural.

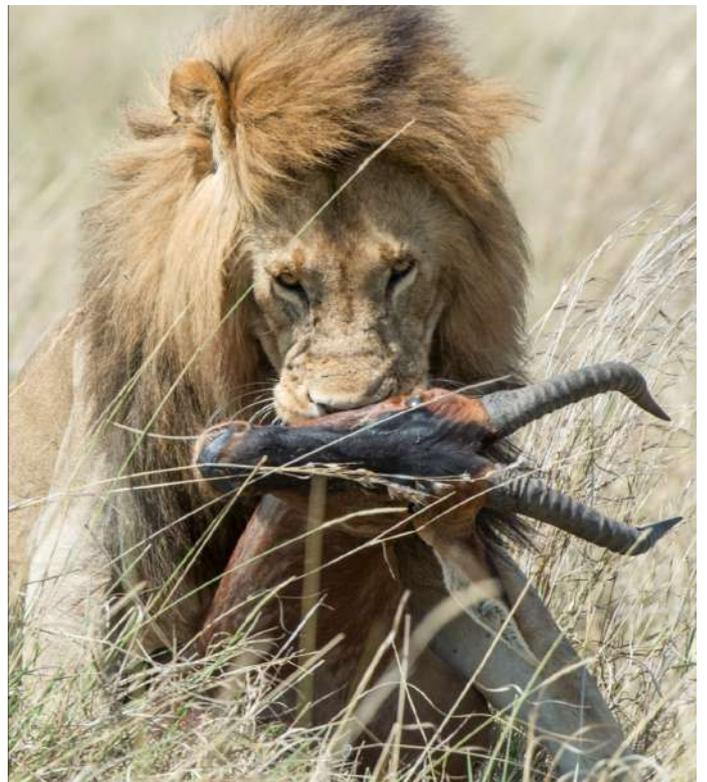


The definition prohibits the use of all editing techniques that remove, move, add or replace pictorial elements in an image.

Basically this means that whatever is in the captured image must be shown in the edited Nature image, unless the image has been cropped. It does not matter whether the element you are tempted to remove is large or small - if you change the content of the scene the image is no longer eligible as a Nature image.



Cloning to remove unwanted elements is not permitted.



Removing elements with a "healing brush" is not permitted.

Adding elements by cloning is not permitted.



Duplicating elements in an image is not permitted.



Replacing image elements is not permitted.



Combining images by stitching is not permitted.



The definition allows only one type of monochrome image.



Grey-scale monochrome images are permitted.



Toned monochrome images are not permitted.



Infrared images, either direct captures or conversions, are not permitted.

All images in this document are copyrighted by Roy Killen.

roykillen@mac.com

www.roykillen.photography

This document was last updated on 23 August 2018. Please email me if you find any errors or wish to make any suggestions for improvement.

Roy Killen

Email: roykillen@mac.com