Photographic Society of America

A GUIDE FOR NATURE PHOTOGRAPHERS and JUDGES

This guide will be in effect for PSA recognized Nature exhibitions with closing dates of 1 January 2022 or later.

PSA STATEMENT ON SUBJECT MATTER

The following statement applies to all images entered in *all sections* of PSA recognized exhibitions:

> *The fundamental rule that must be observed at all times and* ***applies to all sections*** *offered in exhibitions with FIAP patronage or PSA recognition is that* ***the welfare of living creatures is more important than any photograph****. This means that practices such as baiting of subjects with a living creature and removal of birds from nests, for the purpose of obtaining a photograph, are highly unethical, and such photographs are not allowed in any exhibition with FIAP patronage or PSA recognition. Under no circumstances may a living creature be placed in a situation where it will be killed, injured or stressed for the purpose of obtaining a photograph. This rule applies regardless of whether or not the creature being killed, injured or stressed is visible in the captured image.*

The PSA Exhibition Standards also state that aerial photography from drones, helicopters and low flying aircraft should not cause any interference with individuals or animals, disturb their normal activity or disrupt the way they interact with their environment.

DEFINITION OF NATURE AND WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

From 1 January 2022 the Photographic Society of America (PSA) and the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) will use the following definition for Nature and Wildlife categories in the competitions and exhibitions that they recognize.

Nature Definition

Nature photography records all branches of natural history except anthropology and archaeology. This includes all aspects of the physical world, both animate and inanimate, that have not been made or modified by humans.

Nature images must convey the truth of the scene that was photographed. A well-informed person should be able to identify the subject of the image and be satisfied that it has been presented honestly and that no unethical practices have been used to control the subject or capture the image. Images that directly or indirectly show any human activity that threatens the life or welfare of a living organism are not allowed.

The most important part of a Nature image is the nature story it tells.

High technical standards are expected, and the image must look natural. Adding a vignette or blurring the background during processing is not allowed.

Objects created by humans, and evidence of human activity, are allowed in Nature images only when they are a necessary part of the Nature story.

Photographs of human-created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domesticated animals, human-created hybrid animals and mounted or preserved zoological specimens are not allowed.

Images taken with subjects under controlled conditions, such as zoos, are allowed.

Controlling live subjects by chilling, anaesthetic or any other method of restricting natural movement for the purpose of a photograph is not allowed.

No modification that changes the truth of a Nature image is allowed. Images may be cropped but no other technique that removes, adds or moves any part of the image is allowed.

Techniques that remove elements added by the camera, such as dust spots, digital noise and lens flare are allowed.

Complete conversion of colour images to greyscale monochrome is allowed. Partial conversion, toning and infrared captures or conversions are not allowed.

Images of the same subject that are combined in camera, or with software, by focus stacking or exposure blending are allowed. Multiple images with overlapping fields of view that are taken consecutively and combined in camera or with software (image stitching) are allowed.

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

In addition to the restrictions on Nature photography, images in Wildlife sections of exhibitions must meet the following conditions:

(a) Zoological organisms must be living free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat of their own choosing.
(b) Images of zoological organisms that have been removed from their natural habitat, are in any form of captivity or are being controlled by humans for the purpose of photography are not allowed.
(c) Botanical organisms may not be removed from their natural environment for the purpose of photography.
(d) Images that have been staged for the purpose of photography are not allowed.

ETHICAL PRACTICES WHEN CAPTURING NATURE IMAGES

Photographers are expected to behave honestly and ethically and not engage either directly or indirectly in any activities that threaten the life or welfare of a living organism whether it is fauna or flora. This is the fundamental principle behind the ***PSA Statement on Subject Matter*** that is reproduced at the beginning of this Guide. It is also the basis of the ***PSA Nature Division Code of Practice*** that is available on the PSA website.

Photographers should make every effort to leave as small a footprint as possible in the pursuit of obtaining an image. Do not distress the subject; if in doubt, stop photographing and leave the subject. Be very aware of the time that you are spending with the subject and keep that time to a minimum. The photographer should make themselves aware of any laws or guides relevant to the area in which they are photographing.

The following list provides example of practices that are considered unethical. If judges believe that an image shows that any of these practices have been used, the image should be disqualified.

- ***Live baiting.*** This is the practice of using a live creature to attract a predator so that the predator can be photographed. (Examples: Using a live mouse to attract an owl. Using a snake to attract a raptor. Placing fish in a pond so that they can be caught by a kingfisher.)
- ***Live feeding.*** This is the practice of feeding a living creature to a captive animal or reptile so that the attack or feeding activity can be photographed. (Examples: Feeding live chickens to captive tigers. Releasing a young antelope so that it can be attacked by a big cat. Feeding insects to captive lizards.)
- ***Sacrificing a living creature.*** This is the practice of killing a creature so that it can be used to attract a predator. (Example: Killing a pigeon or mouse and placing it on a 'feeding post' to attract raptors.)
- ***Removing birds or animals from a nest.*** Under no circumstances should a bird or animal be removed from its nest for the purpose of photography.
- ***Disturbing birds in nests.*** This includes practices such as removing branches to reveal nests and frightening birds nesting on the ground so that eggs will be revealed.
- ***Artificial restraints.*** This includes using any means to secure or restrain insects, amphibians, reptiles or any other animal so that they can be photographed.
- ***Reducing natural movement.*** This includes any means of reducing the temperature of a creature (such as an insect or reptile) or anaesthetizing it so that it becomes less active.
- ***Stressing.*** This includes removing any creature from its natural environment so that it can be photographed, particularly if the creature is placed in an unusual situation. (Example: Placing a frog inside a flower that would not be a normal part of the environment for the frog.) Stressing may also occur when a photographer approaches a subject too closely or too rapidly. Photographers are expected to carefully observe the behavior of their chosen subject and to back away from or even abandon a subject whose behavior indicates it is reacting adversely to the photographer's presence. Those pursuing nature photography in an ethical manner should know enough about the subject and its behavior to ensure the subject is not stressed and the photographer is not placed in danger by a response from the subject
- ***Disturbing the natural environment.*** Photographers are not to engage in any form of "clean up" around a subject (such as botanical subjects) where the removal of debris involves cutting or damaging live growth. If natural detritus is removed from around a subject that material should be returned to as close an approximation of the original conditions as possible to avoid undue exposure of the subject.

RESPONSIBILITY OF EXHIBITION ENTRANTS

Entrants in Nature or Wildlife sections of all exhibitions recognized by PSA are expected to:

- Read and understand the PSA Statement on Subject Matter and use ethical practices when capturing images.
- Read and understand the PSA/FIAP Nature definition.
- Read and understand the PSA Nature Division Code of Practice.
- Be honest and comply with the spirit of these rules.

Entrants who are found to have deliberately breached any of these rules may be subject to sanctions by PSA.

RESPONSIBILITY OF EXHIBITION JUDGES

When assessing Nature and Wildlife images judges MUST take into account:

The PSA Statement of Subject Matter. *If there is there any evidence that a living creature was killed, injured or stressed by humans so that the image could be captured, the image should be disqualified.*

The PSA Nature Division Code of Practice. *If there is any evidence that this code was broken when the image was being captured the image should be disqualified.*

Allowed subject matter. *If the image contains anything that is not allowed by the Nature definition it should be disqualified*

The PSA policy on aerial photography. *If there is evidence that the image breaches the PSA policy on aerial photography in a way that would threaten the welfare of the nature subject it should be disqualified.*

The editing/processing of the image. *If there is any evidence that the image has been modified in ways that are not allowed by the Nature definition it should be disqualified.*

The nature story. *If the image does not illustrate a strong nature story it should be given a low mark/score.*

The technical qualities. *If the image has obvious technical faults that take attention away from the nature story it should be given a low mark/score.*

Wildlife images. *If there is insufficient evidence that the subject of the image was free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat the image should be given a low mark/score.*

INTERPRETTING THE NATURE DEFINITION

The Nature definition defines and limits four general things:

a) The subject matter that is allowed in images.
b) The circumstances under which images may be captured.
c) The processing/editing that is allowed.
d) The special requirements for Wildlife images.

Within that broad framework, there is an over-riding requirement that "***Nature images must convey the truth of the scene that was photographed***". There are two aspects to this – images must record things that happened naturally, and image adjustments should not change the truth of what was captured. Judges must be satisfied that the image complies with all parts of the Nature definition and that it has been captured in an ethical manner. It would, for example, be dishonest to present an image of a very young bird sitting on a branch when the photographer knew that the bird had been removed from a nest so that it could be photographed. Any image in which live prey has been used to attract a predator (either in the wild or in captivity) is clearly not a truthful representation of a natural event. It would, for example, be dishonest to present an image of a raptor attacking a snake if the movement of the snake had been restricted so that the image could be captured. Such images are an obvious breach of the rule that ***the welfare of living creatures is more important than any photograph*** *and should be disqualified.* Anything done by the photographer, or by anyone creating situations for photographers, or any editing that results in an image that is not a truthful representation of some natural situation is not allowed.

WHAT SUBJECT MATTER IS ACCEPTABLE IN NATURE IMAGES?

The Nature definition limits the subject matter of Nature images to "**all branches of natural history**" and that includes images from the fields of invertebrate and vertebrate zoology, botany, geology and astronomy. Basically, this means that anything in the physical world that has not been made or modified by humans is allowed in Nature images. However, the Nature definition

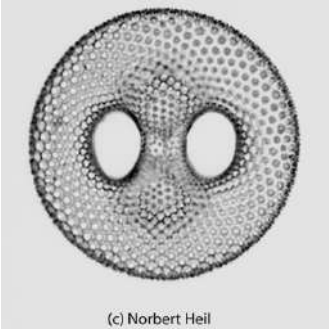
specifically **excludes images from the fields of anthropology and archaeology,** which means that any image that is a study of humankind, past or present, is not allowed in Nature competitions. Any image that contains people is not allowed.

Although most Nature images will depict living organisms, the definition does not require the principal subject of an image to be alive. However, the Wildlife definition (dealt with later in these notes) requires the subject to be "living free". Wildlife images that tell a predator-prey story will frequently show both a living creature and dead prey and that is allowed.

The Nature definition requires the subject matter to be **identifiable** by a "well-informed" person. This does not mean that judges have to be able to make a scientifically accurate identification of the subject in every image they view. There is a limit to the specialised knowledge that can be expected of judges, but it is important that the subject can be identified sufficiently for the judges to believe that it is a legitimate Nature image and that it has been presented honestly. Some situations in which the subject may *not* be identifiable include:

- Extreme close-up images of parts of an organism.
- Images that have been deliberately blurred during capture or processing to create an artistic effect.
- Images in which the subject is shown as a very dark silhouette.

If the subject cannot be identified the image should not be given a high score. For example:



Judges should not be expected to recognise the subject in images such as this, or to know whether the subject has been presented honestly, or if the image has been manipulated in ways that are not allowed by the Nature definition.

Entrants are advised not to enter images such as these and judges are advised not to give such images high scores unless the judge is certain they can identify the subject.

THE NATURE DEFINITION EXCLUDES SOME TYPES OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS.

The definition excludes images of animals or plants that were created by humans (hybrids that have not occurred naturally) or which exist in their present form because of human intervention (cultivated plants, domesticated animals or mounted specimens for example).

- Images of **domesticated animals**, including those that have gone feral, are not allowed. Domesticated animals are animals such as horses, cats, dogs, poultry, cattle, goats and sheep that have been tamed and kept by humans as work animals, food sources, or pets, especially members of those species that have become notably different from their wild ancestors through selective breeding.
- A **feral animal** is one that has escaped from domestication (or was deliberately released) and is living wild. The descendants of such animals are also regarded as feral. For example, in many countries there are feral cats, pigs, horses, donkeys, camels, goats, water buffalo, deer and various bird species.
- This particular restriction does eliminate just about all the "wild" horses in the world since those in the Americas, Europe, Australia and Western Asia are **feral** domestic horses, not true wild horses. The only eligible horse is the rare Przewalski's Horse also known as the Mongolian Wild Horse. Zebras, kiangs and onagers (wild asses) are members of the horse family that are allowed in Nature because they are not considered to be domesticated or feral.

- Llamas and alpacas are considered as domesticated or feral as their ancestors were domesticated thousands of years ago.
- The Nature definition does not exclude images of **introduced species** that have never been domesticated but which now exist in locations other than where their ancestors occurred naturally. For example, brush-tailed possums (which are native to Australia) were released into the wild in New Zealand in the 19th century. They were not domesticated animals, so they are not regarded as feral for purposes of the Nature definition.
- A **hybrid** is an offspring from genetically dissimilar parents such as different species, sub-species or varieties. A mule (offspring of a cross between a horse and a donkey) is an example of an animal hybrid. All koi and goldfish are hybrids and are not allowed. Hybrids that occur naturally in the wild without human intervention (such as Scottish wild cats) are allowed. Most decorative flowers and cereal crops are examples of hybrid plants.
- **Cultivated plants** are those that have been planted by humans rather than emerging naturally in the environment. The plants may be decorative (such as flowers grown in a garden) or they may be grown for food (such as cereal crops) or grown for some other purpose (such as trees planted in a forest). Wildflowers growing in botanical gardens are allowed subjects in Nature (not Wildlife) in the same manner that non-domesticated animals in zoos are allowed as Nature subjects. Where a plant species is known to occur in the wild and the image is taken in a manner that gives no indication of the involvement of humans in its placement or growing, judges should give the image the benefit of the doubt and score it on the basis of it being a valid Nature subject.
- **Mounted** specimens (taxidermy and display specimens) are not allowed.

Domesticated animals such as dogs, cats, horses, cattle, camels, sheep and goats are not allowed.

Cultivated plants such as this canola crop are not allowed.

Hybrid plants such as this rose are not allowed. It would also be excluded because it is a cultivated plant.

Images of wild horses (other than Przewalski horses) are not allowed because their ancestors were domesticated - they are regarded as **feral**.

Mounted specimens of animals, birds, reptiles or insects are not allowed.

Images of naturally occurring 'landscapes' are allowed.
Landscapes and similar scenes that have not been "made or modified by humans" are acceptable Nature subjects. This includes landscapes, rock structures and landforms resulting from natural weathering and erosion, seascapes, icebergs, waves, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, volcanoes, lava, boiling mud pools and geysers, minerals and naturally formed crystals. For example:

Images of gemstones, crystals, rocks or other geological objects that have been modified by humans are not allowed. For example:

Images of atmospheric and weather phenomena are allowed.

Atmospheric and weather events (including rainbows, lightning, cloud formations, auroras, rain, snow, etc) are natural phenomena and they are allowed in Nature images.

In images of extreme weather events such as heavy seas, floods, storms, dust storms, cyclones, tornadoes earthquakes and tsunamis it is acceptable to include objects created by humans or evidence of human activity if those elements are a necessary part of the nature story.

Images that show the aftermath of natural forces rather than the natural force in action should not be entered in Nature and would be more suitable in Photojournalism. For example:

THE NATURE DEFINITION LIMITS THE SITUATIONS IN WHICH THINGS CREATED OR MODIFIED BY HUMANS ARE ALLOWED IN IMAGES.

The basic requirement is that any evidence of human activity in an image MUST be "**a necessary part of the Nature story**". A simple way of looking at this is to ask the question: If the human element was not present, would there be an image that told a nature story? If the answer is "No" then the human element is a *necessary* part of the nature story – without the human element there would be no story to capture. The following examples illustrate how the wasp and the bird have adapted their nest-building behavior to take advantage of human-made structures. Without the human-made structures, the nests would not exist, so these human elements can be considered as a *necessary* part of the nature story and such images are allowed.

© Andrew Hayes

Many birds, especially ospreys, make use of structures provided by humans for nesting sites, or take advantage of structures (such as power poles) that were created for other purposes. The human elements in these images are a necessary part of the nature story and these images are allowed.

Osprey and other birds may use human-made objects as part of their nest structure and such images are allowed.

Some birds, such as Australian bower birds, use human-made objects to help attract mates. The human elements in such images are a necessary part of the nature story and the images are allowed.

© Neville Foster

In many parts of the world, birds take advantage of crops planted by humans. Bosque del Apache (in the USA) is an example of a location where cornfields planted by humans provide birds with winter forage. The cornfield is a necessary part of the story of why the snow geese and sandhill cranes come to Bosque del Apache, so images such as this are allowed in Nature.

There are three particular situations in which human elements are allowed in Nature images even when they may not be seen as a necessary part of the Nature story - scientific bands or tags on birds or animals and tracking collars on wild animals.

Scientific bands on birds are allowed.

Scientific tags on birds or animals are allowed.

Radio collars on wild animals are allowed.

There are many ways in which an animal/bird can take advantage of an environment that has been modified by humans and make the human element a necessary part of a nature story.

In this image the bird is using the wire as a high point from which to make its mating call. It has adapted to an environment modified by humans. The fence can be considered a necessary part of the nature story because without the fence the bird would not be there (it would not have a high place from which to make its mating call). Images such as this are allowed. If the bird was simply sitting on the wire (not making a call) it would still be taking advantage of its adopted habitat so the image would be allowed, but the story would not be as strong, and the image would not score highly.

SOME HUMAN-MADE THINGS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN NATURE IMAGES.

Nature images are ***not allowed to contain people*** or things created by people unless the objects are a necessary part of the nature story (as described in the previous section). Examples of things that have been created by people of modified by people and are *not allowed* in nature images include but are not limited to:

- Roads, paths or trails that are not a necessary part of the nature story.
- Vehicle tracks.
- Fences that are not being used directly by an animal or bird as part of the nature story.
- Signs.
- Power poles and wires.
- Vehicles.
- Buildings or parts of buildings that are not being used directly by an animal or bird as part of the nature story.
- Walls or parts of walls.
- Cultivated farmland or mowing and ploughing patterns in fields.
- Cut tree stumps, cut-off limbs, branches or stems that are not a necessary part of the nature story.
- Jesses and thongs on legs of raptors and other birds (these are *not* scientific banding).

If the human element is not a necessary part of the nature story, the image is not allowed in Nature and should be disqualified. In this example, the deer is not taking advantage of something created by humans and the drums, and other objects are not a necessary part of the nature story.

Landscape images should not include any human elements such as roads or buildings because those human elements are not a necessary part of the nature story. Images containing these elements should be disqualified even when the human element is a small part of the image.

The towers and power lines in this image are not a necessary part of the nature story, they are purely incidental and images such as this should be disqualified in Nature.

Fences and similar structures in landscape images are not a necessary part of the nature story. Images containing these elements should be disqualified.

One of the most frequently overlooked human elements are vehicle tracks. Not all are as obvious as in this image, but such tracks are not a necessary part of the nature story. Images with vehicle tracks should be disqualified.

NATURE IMAGES MUST TELL A STORY

The Nature definition specifies that ***"the most important part of a nature image is the nature story it tells"***. Every image that satisfies the Nature definition will tell a story, but judges will have to decide how strong and detailed the story is. Judges must look beyond the pictorial qualities of the image and consider what the image tells viewers about the subject.

Not every image will have the same depth of meaning, so it is useful to have some framework for helping to decide how strong the story is in a Nature image. The following guidelines suggest *one way* of evaluating the strength of nature stories when the subject of the image is a living creature. ***The Levels of storytelling described below are intended only as a guide to help judges distinguish between weak and strong nature stories. Judges should not assume that each level is equivalent to a score (for example, '5' for a Level 4 image, '4' for a Level 3 image, and so on).*** Other ways of interpreting the strength of nature stories are possible.

Level 1 - Descriptive stories. These are images that are limited to descriptive information about the subject - shape, color, size and so on – often with the subject in a static position as in these examples:

Images such as these tell a limited nature story and should not be given the highest scores in a Nature competition even if they have outstanding pictorial qualities.

Level 2 - Behaviour and life cycle stories. These are images that illustrate typical behaviour of the subject or tell a story about part of its life cycle - as in these examples:

The image on the left shows typical behaviour (flying). It is more than just a description of the crane, but it is still not a strong nature story. The image on the right illustrates the same typical behaviour (flying) and adds to the nature story by showing that the spoonbill is gathering nest material - this gives a stronger story.

Several stages of the life cycle of the wasp are illustrated in this image, giving a stronger nature story than an image of a wasp alone.

Nature stories at this level are often about food gathering.

Level 3 - Same species interactions. Images at this level illustrate how creatures of the same species (mates, parents/offspring, group members, and so on) interact - as in these examples:

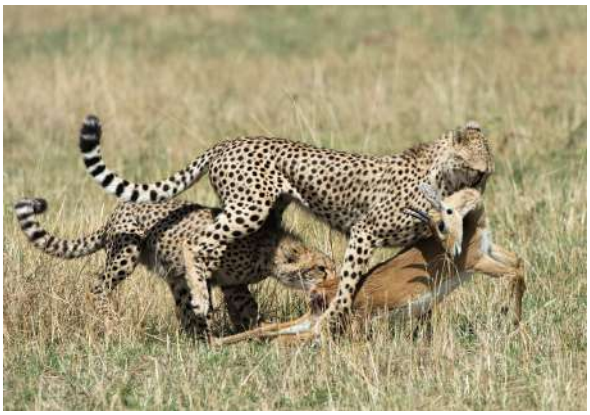
The nature story is about fighting for food and dominance. It is more than just a description of the vultures.

This image is telling a story about bonding between parent and offspring. It is more than just a description of the lions.

This image shows a nature story about the parent feeding the chick and there is the additional story about the nest.

This image is illustrating interactions within the group of baboons of different ages and there are several dimensions to the nature story.

Level 4 - Different species interactions. At this level the nature story is often more complex because it involves more than one species. It may show the result of an interaction, such as in the cheetah example, or it may show the interaction taking place, as in the other examples here of competition for food and a symbiotic relationship.



The nature story here is about the crow taking advantage of the eagle's catch.

This nature story here is about the symbiotic relationship between the oxpecker and the buffalo.

In nature images at all levels, the nature story will be stronger if the image includes an appropriate amount of the environment - as in this example where the wider view shows the environment in which the hornbill found the food:

STORIES IN NATURE IMAGES WITH INANIMATE SUBJECTS

When the subject of a nature image is not a living creature, it is still important for the image to tell a nature story. At a basic level, that story will be descriptive – this is what the nature subject looks like. Examples of how more complex stories can be told include:

- Landscapes that show how geological forces or weather phenomena have shaped the terrain.
- Landscapes that show seasonal variations in vegetation.
- Images that show the environment in which botanical subjects are growing.
- Images that show several stages in the life cycle of a botanical subject.
- Images that show the symbiotic relationship between fungi and a host.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF NATURE IMAGES

The Nature definition requires images to be of a "**high technical standard**" and "**the image must look natural**". Therefore, as a minimum requirement, images should satisfy the following:

- Appropriate exposure
- Important elements in focus
- Not over-sharpened
- Natural colour (or greyscale monochrome) – not over saturated or partially desaturated
- No excessive noise
- Suitable composition.

POST-CAPTURE ALTERATIONS TO NATURE IMAGES

The fundamental principle is that Nature images must be truthful. Therefore, "**no modification that changes the truth of a Nature image is allowed**". The following image editing techniques ***are*** allowed:

- **Cropping**.
- **Adjustments that enable an accurate reproduction of the captured scene,** including: exposure (globally and selectively), color balance, contrast, dodging and burning, sharpening (globally and selectively), noise reduction, and straightening.
- **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).
- **Adjustments that compensate for lens deficiencies** such as distortion, chromatic aberration, and lens flare.
- **Adjustments that compensate for camera limitations:**
  - **Exposure blending of images with the same content** – to compensate for the limited dynamic range that could be captured in a single image.
  - **Focus stacking of multiple exposures of the same subject** - to compensate for the limited depth of field that could be captured in a single image.
  - **Stitching** (joining multiple images with overlapping fields of view that are taken consecutively) – to compensate for the limited field of view that could be captured in a single image.
- **Conversion to greyscale monochrome**.
- **Reversing** (flipping the image horizontally).

The overriding requirement for any of the allowed adjustments is that ***the final image must appear natural*** to the viewer (the maker is not the viewer – the viewer is the judge!) Judges should not give high scores to images in which the allowed adjustments (such as sharpening) are excessive or produce an image that does not look natural.

A special note on stitching of images.
The stitching that is permitted in Nature images involves combining two or more images that were taken consecutively and have overlapping content – as in this example:

The final image is a truthful reproduction of the scene in front of the photographer – it is equivalent to the scene that could have been captured with a wider-angle lens.

Stitching is NOT allowed when the images being combined contain content that has changed in the time between the captures - as in this example:

THE FOLLOWING IMAGE EDITING TECHNIQUES ARE NOT ALLOWED:

- Any form of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement.
- Cloning.
- Removing image elements by any means other than cropping (including content-aware fill).
- Adding image elements (including clip art or images created by someone else).
- Duplicating image elements.
- Replacing image elements (such as the sky).
- Moving elements within an image (including content-aware move).
- Blurring the background to obscure elements in the original scene.
- Darkening the background to obscure elements in the original scene.
- Adding a vignette not produced by the camera.
- Adding textures or artistic filters.

Removal of image elements by cloning or other means is not allowed:

Original

Cloning not allowed

Adding image elements is not allowed:

Original

Adding an image element is not allowed

Duplicating image elements is not tallowed:

Original

Duplicating an image element is not allowed

Moving image elements is not allowed:

Original

Image element moved – not allowed

Blurring the background during processing is not allowed, particularly when it is done for the purpose of obscuring human-made objects or when it creates an unnatural looking image. For example,

Original, with some blurring due to limited depth of field.

Unacceptable blurring during processing.

Darkening the background to hide unwanted image elements or to produce an unnatural looking image is not allowed.

Original

Darkening background not allowed

Dark or light vignettes applied in processing are not allowed.

Replacing image elements (such as the sky) is not allowed.

Original

Sky replacement not allowed.

Textures applied in processing are not allowed.

MONOCHROME IMAGES

The Nature definition allows only one type of monochrome image. ***Complete conversion of colour images to greyscale is allowed***. *Partial conversion, toning and infrared captures or conversions are not allowed.*

In this example, the original color capture and the greyscale conversion are allowed. The greyscale image with a spot of color and the sepia toned monochrome image are not allowed.

Infrared images, either direct captures or software conversions, are not allowed.

WILDLIFE IMAGES

Some exhibitions recognized by PSA will have Wildlife sections or Wildlife awards in Nature sections. *Images entered in Wildlife sections must satisfy the Nature definition and in addition they must satisfy the additional restrictions stated in the Wildlife definition*. Wildlife images may be entered in open or themed nature sections

To qualify as wildlife, zoological specimens must be "***living free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat of their own choosing***". The subject must not be under any form of restraint or restriction by humans. Animals in large nature reserves (such as Kruger National Park in South Africa) are suitable wildlife subjects. However, animals in zoos, on game farms or in any situation where their movement or food supply is controlled by humans are not suitable wildlife subjects.

For some wildlife, the adopted habitat may be an environment that has been modified by humans but the wildlife must be in that location of its own free will.

Zoological subjects (any form of fauna) must not be removed from their natural habitat for the purpose of wildlife photography, nor should they be under any form of control or restraint by humans. This includes reptiles, amphibians and insects.

Botanical specimens (any form of flora) are allowed in wildlife provided they have not been removed from their natural environment.

Images or events must not be staged for the purpose of wildlife photography regardless of who is controlling or influencing the subject. This includes situations in which live prey has been used to attract predators.

Images in Wildlife sections should not be given high scores unless there is *clear evi*dence that the subject is "free and unrestrained". This will be obvious in images such as the following two:

With this image it is impossible to tell if the lion is free and unrestrained, so images such as this should not score highly in a Wildlife section.

It is not sufficient for the photographer to know that the lion is in the wild, the judge of a Wildlife section must be able to tell that the lion is not in captivity.

BORDERS ON IMAGES

Entrants are strongly advised not to put borders on Nature images. A border can draw attention away from the nature story and thereby weaken the effectiveness of the story. Judges are allowed to score down an image where they feel the border constitutes a distraction from the story. If a maker wishes to offset their work from the background, the PSA Exhibition Standards recommend use of a single border of no more than 5 pixels and that it is either white or grey for digital images or black for prints.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS GUIDE

Main Author: Dr Roy Killen, APSA, GMPSA/B, EFIAP, APSEM

With assistance and contributions from:

Daniel Charbonnet, HonPSA, EPSA
Norbert Heil, APSA, MPSA
Richard Cloran, HonPSA, GMPSA
Brian Magor, APSA, MPSA
Jim Bodkin, APSA, PPSA
Andrew Hayes, ARPS, DPAGB, EFIAP/g, PPSA
Dr Kui C Lam
Shane Walter

Distribution of this guide has been approved by the Chair of PSA's Nature Division, who may be contacted at nd-chair@psa-photo.org.

Notes:

a) All images in this guide are copyright and may not be reproduced without permission of the copyright owner. Unless otherwise indicated they are copyrighted by Roy Killen who may be contacted at roykillen@mac.com.
b) If this guide is printed it should be printed in colour to preserve the information in the monochrome examples.
c) For permission to translate this guide into languages other than English please contact the Chair of PSA Nature Division at nd-chair@psa-photo.org.