

# NATURE IMAGES MUST TELL A STORY

The Nature definition specifies that the “story telling value of a photograph must be weighed more than the pictorial quality while maintaining high technical quality”.

The term “pictorial quality” usually refers to the result of the photographer using techniques (of capture or processing) that transform an image from a straight documentary record to something more expressive. Therefore, it is expected that nature images will be well composed, have appropriate lighting and show the subject to best advantage.

To be of “high technical quality” the image should be correctly exposed, in focus, suitably sharp, have correct colour reproduction, and not suffer any major technical deficiencies such as excessive noise.

When the subject of the Nature image is a living organism (particularly a zoological one rather than a botanical one), there are several obvious possibilities for telling a story. All creatures eat, reproduce, interact with others, and engage in typical activities (such as birds flying). Capturing such activities tells part of their life story and has the potential to produce more engaging images that those that simply record the characteristics of the creature.

Here is one way of thinking about the story-telling potential of a Nature image:

## STORY TELLING POTENTIAL OF AN IMAGE

**A single nature image can convey factual information about:**

- *the appearance of an animal* - it’s size, shape, colours, characteristics, etc.
- *aspects of its life cycle and behaviour* - how it feeds, moves, reproduces, etc.
- *how it interacts with others of its kind* - mates, parents, offspring, group members, etc.
- *how it interacts with other species* - predators, prey, competitors, those with a symbiotic relationship, etc.

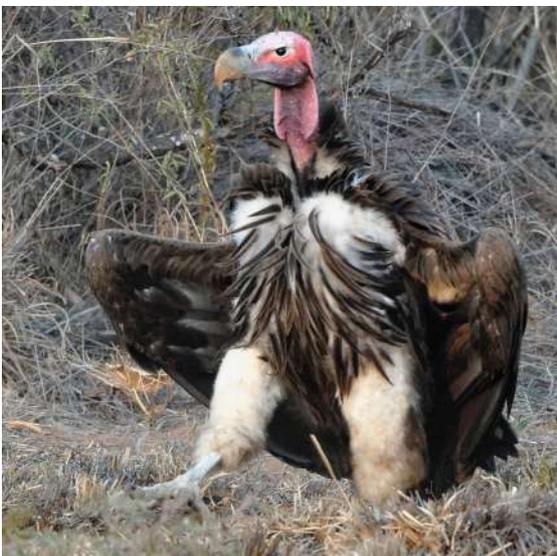
That same image can also place the animal in a context or habitat.

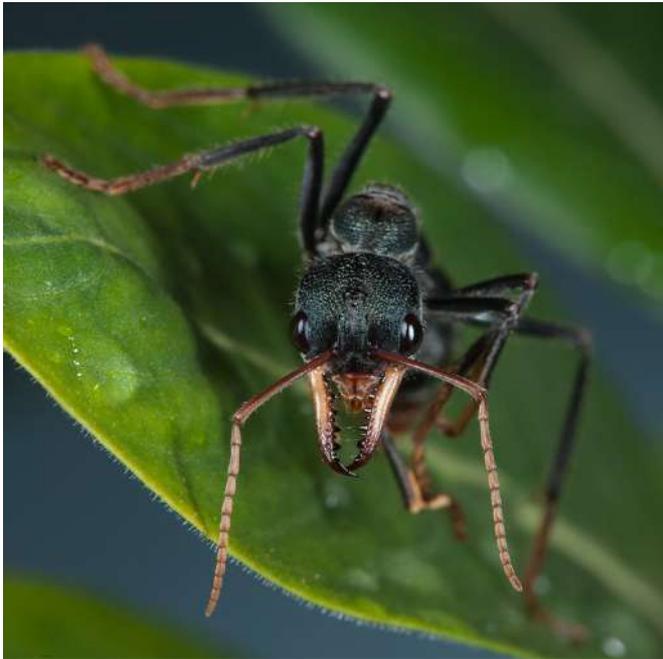
Weak



Strong

Here are some examples. Each image conveys a story, but in each pair of images the one on the right has a much stronger or more obvious story than the one on the left.







Capturing a strong nature story requires more than just being in the right place at the right time. It requires you to think about the possibilities and deliberately try to emphasise the story.

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