

WHAT SUBJECT MATTER IS ACCEPTABLE IN NATURE IMAGES?

The “primary subject matter” of acceptable Nature images can be divided into two broad categories—organisms (such as mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and plants) and inanimate things (such as geological features and natural phenomena). Some of these subjects are not acceptable in Wildlife images.

The definition limits the subject matter of Nature images to “natural history”.

There is no universally accepted definition of “natural history”, although it is often considered to be the study of plants and animals in their natural environment. However, the Nature definition allows images from “all branches of natural history” so it permits images from fields such as botany, zoology, geology and astronomy. However, the Nature definition specifically excludes images from the fields of anthropology and archaeology.

Anthropology is the study of humankind (including culture, society and difference). Archaeology is the study of human activity in the past. So any image that is a study of humankind, past or present, is not acceptable in Nature competitions.

The definition requires organisms in Nature images to be “extant”.

Extant means “still existing”. It is a term commonly used in biology to refer to groups of organisms (such as species or families) that are still alive as opposed to being extinct. For example, the Tasmanian devil is extant, the Tasmanian tiger is extinct.

Although most Nature images will depict living organisms, the definition does not require an individual organism in an image to be alive and the Wildlife definition specifically allows images of “carcasses of extant species”.



The definition requires the subject matter to be identifiable.

The way in which an image is captured and presented must render the subject identifiable by a “well-informed” person (for example, someone familiar with the

type of plant being photographed). It must also be possible for such a person to verify that the image is an “honest presentation” of the subject matter.

Although there is no requirement for Nature images to show a complete organism, extreme close-up images of parts of an organism may not be readily identifiable and, if so, would not be permitted.

The definition requires the subject matter to be presented honestly.

Any photographic process that results in a dishonest presentation of the subject matter is unacceptable. It would, for example, be dishonest to deliberately change the colour of a bird in a nature image.

The definition excludes certain types of plants and animals.

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

Hybrid plants or animals are those created by humans from two or more different species.

Hybrid plants are not permitted.



Cultivated plants are those that exist because their ancestors were taken from the wild and grown under some form of controlled conditions (usually for the purpose of decoration or food) that may have included careful breeding and selection.

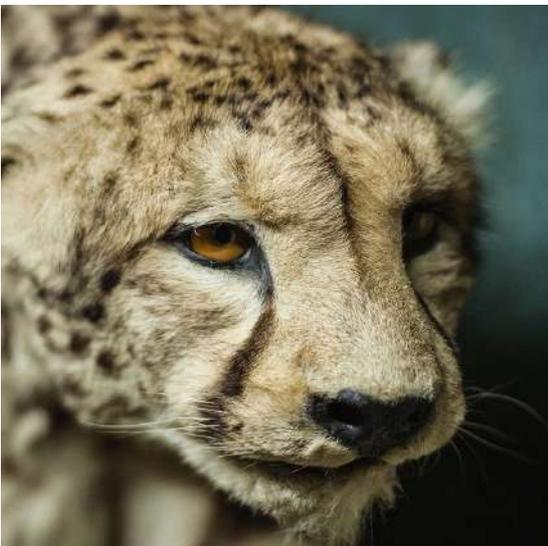


Cultivated plants are not permitted. However, wildflowers planted in botanical gardens are permitted.

Domestic animals are those that are kept by humans as a pet, work animal, food source, or source of fibre such as wool.



Domestic animals are not permitted.



Mounted specimens are not permitted.

The definition excludes feral animals.

A **feral animal** is one that has escaped from a domestic situation and is living wild; or one that is descended from such animals. For example, in Australia there are feral dogs, cats, pigs, horses, cattle, donkeys, camels, goats, buffalo, deer, pigeons, and other species.

Zoologists make a distinction between feral animals and **introduced species**. Introduced species are those that were never domesticated but which now exist in locations other than where they originated, often because they were brought there by humans. Examples in Australia are foxes, rabbits and cane toads. It is quite common for many introduced species (such as rabbits and foxes) to be referred to as "feral" but, strictly speaking they are not feral if they are not descendant from domesticated ancestors. The Nature definition does not exclude images of introduced species.

The definition allows images of landscapes and geologic formations.

Geology has many sub-fields of study and there is nothing in the definition to suggest that any areas of geology should be excluded.

Therefore, acceptable subjects include:

- Landscapes and seascapes (that do not contain any human elements unrelated to the nature story).
- Landforms resulting from natural weathering and erosion.
- Rivers, lakes and waterfalls.
- Rock structures.
- Volcanoes, various forms of lava, boiling mud pools and geysers.
- Minerals and naturally formed crystals.

Images of gemstones, crystals, rocks or other geological objects that have been reshaped by humans are not acceptable.



The definition allows images of natural forces and weather phenomena.

The definition gives hurricanes and tidal waves as examples of natural forces. Other examples could include:

- Atmospheric and weather phenomena (including rainbows, lightning, cloud formations and auroras).
- Extreme weather events such as heavy seas, floods, storms, dust storms, cyclones, tornadoes and waterspouts.
- Earthquakes and tsunamis.
- Rain, snow or hail.



The definition limits the presence of human elements.

The definition permits “human elements” in Nature images under just three circumstances:

- (a) When the human elements are “integral parts of the nature story”.
- (b) When the human elements are present in an image depicting natural forces.
- (c) Scientific banding, tagging and radio collars.

This image is acceptable because the brick wall is an integral part of the nature story. The image shows how the wasp has adapted its behaviour to utilise the human structure.





The scientific banding on the cranes is acceptable.

The extent to which a human element is considered an integral part of the nature story in an image is likely to be an issue of debate for images such as this:



Images that show the aftermath of natural forces (such as a cyclone) should not be entered in Nature. (Images such as this are more suited to Photojournalism.)



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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.

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