

Nature Section Specific Requirements - Images are restricted to natural history, except anthropology and archeology, in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject matter and to certify to its honest presentation. Titles should accurately describe the plant, animal or scene. The story-telling value of the photograph should be given primary weight in evaluating the image, however, technical and pictorial quality are still important elements for evaluating and judging images. Human elements should not be present in nature images except where the inclusion of the human elements enhances the nature story, i.e. Barn Owls are often found in man-made structures and could be shown in that venue. However, the inclusion of the hand-of-man should be an unobtrusive element in the image. The final decision on the inclusion of human elements in the nature image shall be at the sole discretion of the judge. Photographs including domestic animals, mounted specimens or obviously set arrangements are ineligible and should not be submitted. Scientific tags or banding, visible on wild animals, are acceptable.

Image Editing – All adjustments must be made in such a manner that the image reflects the actual scene.

Allowable Image Adjustments

- A. Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content are permitted.
- B. Sharpening, including selective sharpening, of an image is acceptable.
- C. The use of the clone stamp or similar tools shall be limited to removal of dust spots and scratches only.
- D. Cropping and horizontal flipping are allowed.
- E. (a) Processing of multiple exposures of a single scene (HDR) or the processing of multiple versions of a single RAW capture for exposure control is allowed.
(b) Processing of multiple captures of a single scene employing different focus points to achieve focus control is permitted. This process is commonly referred to as "focus stacking," "focal plane merging," or "focus blending".

CAUTION: Excessive use of even an allowable technique that causes the image to look “over processed” may cause the judge to “pass” the image.