

Hi. My name is David Rosen. Thanks so much for the opportunity to judge your nature photos again for the Padre Trails Camera Club! You all have such wonderful work and it's a pleasure to have the opportunity to view it. Let me take a minute or two and introduce myself to you and share some information about how I judged your images.

I'm a naturalist, environmental educator, and photographer, by passion and profession. I've been photographing nature and wildlife for over 40 years. I started in my mid-teens because I was passionate about birds and birding. I love bird photography, however, my photographic interests range from high-magnification macro work with tiny aquatic invertebrates to broad sweeping landscapes and panoramas, plus everything in between.

My work's been published in numerous national magazines including *Audubon*, *Ducks Unlimited*, and *National Wildlife*. Many book publishers have used my photos including National Geographic Society, John Muir Publications, Grolier Educational Publishing, Chanticleer Press, and Falcon Press Books. Lots of conservation agencies and organizations have used my photos to illustrate their brochures, calendars, post cards, exhibits, reports, etc. I've also shot specific assignments for Audubon magazine, Tamron Inc., CA Rice Commission, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), and guided a film crew from the BBC's Natural History Film Unit around the Sacramento region so they could get footage of Burrowing Owls.

My philosophies regarding nature and wildlife photography:

1. To be a better nature and wildlife photographer, be a better naturalist. The more you know about your subjects, the better you'll be able to represent them photographically.
2. No photo you get is worth jeopardizing the welfare of your subject. Be sensitive to an animal's "personal space" so you don't make it deviate from its normal behavior. For example, keeping a mother bird away from the nest too long can leave the chicks in the nest vulnerable to heat, cold, or predators. Making a bison in Yellowstone National Park during the winter move away from you because you're too close causes it to use valuable calories that it needs to stay warm and survive the winter. Try not to trample a hundred wildflowers to get a good shot of one of them.
3. No photo you get is worth jeopardizing your own welfare. Don't put yourself at risk by getting too close to wildlife. Even deer can cause serious injury and any animal will react aggressively if cornered, or if you get between an adult and its young. Know your subject and watch for signs that it's becoming agitated by your presence. Don't stand on the edge of a cliff just to get that perfect angle for a scenic shot. Rocks can crumble when you least expect it. Watch for Poison Oak, rattlesnakes, beehives, etc. Be aware of your surroundings and stay safe!
4. To be a better nature and wildlife photographer, look at more nature and wildlife photography! Your camera club is a great forum for this. See how others photograph certain subjects. If you see something you like, try it!

5. Be creative and have fun with your photography! Don't be afraid to try something new with your angles, composition, focal length, or subject matter. You need to keep it fresh to keep yourself excited about photographing.

Here's how I judged your images:

1. All photos were viewed on my 27", high-resolution, color calibrated, iMac. I have really good eyesight too. I imported photos into Apple Aperture for viewing because I can see them full screen surrounded by nothing but a black background on the monitor. Rest assured that I have deleted your images from my computer after judging them.
2. I only judged photos against the others the others within the same group. For example I didn't look at an image in the Red Group and think, "It's not as good as this one in the Blue Group." They were only compared to the others within that particular group.
3. For nature and wildlife images, I normally place a lot of emphasis on the story-telling value of the image. Typically, a shot showing interactions between animals, or a critter engaged in an interesting behavior, will rank higher than a beautiful, yet static, portrait of the same animal. **However, since this competition is focusing on patterns in nature, I did not consider the storytelling value as heavily.**
4. For nature and wildlife photos, I place a great deal of value on the title of the image. In nature competition, cutesy titles aren't as appropriate as informative titles. I also feel like the subject in the photo should be identified correctly. We now live in an age where the resources we have available at our fingertips to properly identify plants and animals leave little excuse for misidentified subjects.
5. I tend to consider the difficulty of creating a particular image. For example, being a wildlife photographer, I have hiked my butt off following Pronghorn for an entire day, sat many a morning in a freezing blind photographing waterfowl, driven myself crazy with high-magnification macro work on little invertebrates that just won't stay still, laid in a mosquito-ridden wet meadow waiting an hour for a lull in the breeze so I can get a wildflower photo, and rented a 40-foot boom lift so I can photograph hawks in a nest. It can be WAY easier to pull up to an overlook and snap a scenic shot at Yosemite. So, I tend to favor images that probably took more effort to create, whether they be macro, telephoto, or anything in between.
6. I've provided more in-depth comments for newer photographers in the Red Group and fewer comments for the more experienced photographers in the Green and Blue groups.

Thanks again for the opportunity to enjoy and judge your beautiful images! I hope our paths cross in person out in the field someday. Happy shooting!

David