

## PTCC - 2015 - NATURE #3 - GROUP AA

*21 images from seven members*

---

### **01. Aggregating Anemone, Asilomar Beach**

Pretty shot of a unique animal. I love seeing photos of lesser-known and underappreciated organisms. You all live in a wonderful area for tidepool photography. Shooting in tidepools can be difficult due to reflections off the water. You did a good job avoiding or eliminating those reflections, perhaps by using a polarizing filter, or maybe by actually shooting under the water? Regardless, a shot well done.

### **02. Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) juvenile responding to parent flying in with food**

Excellent shot! Sharp. Good action. Using flash created nice catch light in the eyes. I would digitally increase the exposure slightly to brighten it up overall. The barn wood is a human element but integral to the nature story, so it's OK. I could see this image on the front of a birthday card, where they're singing, "Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you..."

### **03. Break in Clouds after Rainfall at Lake Crescent, Olympic NP, Washington**

Pretty scenic shot, however, it lacks a main point of interest. The branches in the foreground are distracting and could be cropped out. The branches at the top left aren't as distracting because they somewhat frame the top of the photo. To me, the clouds are the most visually interesting part of this image. Perhaps using a longer focal length and getting less water in the foreground and focusing more attention on the clouds would help add "punch" to the shot.

### **04. Bumble Bee (*Bombus* spp) on yellow flower**

Nice composition with the bee in the upper right thirds of the frame. The bee, and the part of the flower on which it's feeding, looks sharp. However, the part of the flower that pokes out in front towards the viewer is not sharp and draws my eye away from the subject. Using flash on subjects like this will allow you to use a smaller aperture for greater depth-of-field. Flash will also create a little catchlight in the eye of the bee.

### **05. Coastal Waterfall**

Beautiful photo. Very soothing. Good use of a slow shutter speed (probably 1/4 to 1/2 sec.) to give the water that soft flowing look. The composition is fantastic. The angles and curves of the waterfall create a nice "flow" to the composition. The plants on the right side balance the waterfall towards the left side. Perfect exposure for a shot of this type.

### **06. Cypress Cove at Point Lobos - once memorialized by artist Francis McComas**

Very nice coastal shot, however, I think it needs more of the scene visible. Usually, I'm a proponent of isolating the main point of interest and focusing on it. In this situation, I think it would be a stronger image to include a wider angle.

### **07. Eucalyptus Forest Roots**

Very interesting photo! The roots create excellent leading lines drawing the eye further back into the image. Good use of a small aperture for extensive depth-of-field so everything is sharp from foreground to background.

### **08. Glacier Point View, Yosemite**

An iconic view for sure. Given that it's one of the most photographed spots in the world, you really have to do something unique to make your image of this scene stand out from the rest. Light makes all the difference. Here the sky is very overcast and washed out, yet you included lots of sky in the image. I would use a slightly longer focal length, eliminate the top half of the sky and the trees on the right side. That will leave the diagonal log in the lower right corner of the frame and focus more attention on Half Dome. Ideally, going back during a time when there's better light would certainly help.

### **09. Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) in Key West**

A very regal looking portrait of an elegant bird. Unique perspective to see it totally against a blue sky. That makes it different from lots of other Great Blue Heron shots out there. Good use of negative space in the direction the bird is facing. It is, however, a nice portrait that doesn't really incorporate a nature story. It would be nice to have that same angle of view but have the bird doing something more interesting than just posing for the camera.

### **10. Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*) at Asilomar Beach**

One of my all-time favorite shorebirds. I love the angle of its head. The specular highlights in the background are nice. It's slightly overexposed, perhaps by ½ stop. My main suggestion is to leave more negative space in the direction the bird is heading than behind the bird. This holds true for photographing any animal. You want the critter to look like its coming into the frame and being part of the image, as opposed to leaving the frame.

### **11. Morning sunshine rays through trees and fog**

Exquisite image! Use of the small aperture is what creates the starburst effect you achieved. Well-balanced exposure. I can see this as an inspirational poster.

### **12. Mushroom (*Tricholoma fracticum*)**

Nice composition showing the detail of the gills of the mushroom. It's a bit dark underneath though. When I photograph mushrooms, I often use a little reflector to hit the underside with a bit more light. It makes the gills pop out a little more and shows more detail between the gills. For a nature competition image, I'd like to see a little more of the mushroom and maybe even some of the habitat in which it grows.

### **13. Nature's Mixmaster, Antelope Canyon, AZ**

Great composition! The rock debris at an angle in the foreground adds interest, as does the plant remains. Very soothing curved lines on the scoured sandstone walls. Very sharp, good depth-of-field, and perfect exposure. My only suggestion is to make the title more descriptive of the story itself, such as, "Eroded sandstone walls of Antelope Canyon, AZ."

### **14. Oak Creek Canyon limestone and rust red sandstone layers**

Nice geology photo. Sharp. Perfect exposure. Good texture. My only suggestion would be to include something more prominent in the foreground to anchor the image.

### **15. Rainfall Erosion in Sandstone Hillside at Garrapata State Park**

Excellent geology story. Love the texture, the lines and the warm tones.

### **16. Seaside Painted Cup (*Castilleja latifolia*)**

Great angle on the stem and flower. That really creates a good composition. Nice use of a relatively shallow depth-of-field to isolate the subject from the background. My only suggestion is to crop the right side slightly to eliminate the reddish flower intruding on the right. That will focus the viewers attention solely on the main subject.

### **17. Sierra Marmot**

They are such endearing critters. It's technically called a Yellow-bellied Marmot. Your shot is very sharp and well exposed. That nice catchlight in the eye really gives it life. It's neat to see one by the water like that. My only suggestion is regarding the composition. Rarely do you want to place the main subject dead center in the frame. Here I would shifted the camera to the left slightly so there was more negative space in the direction in which the marmot is heading. Or you could use a longer focal length. Or you could crop it a bit to achieve a better composition.

### **18. Skylight over Antelope Canyon, AZ**

The clouds are overexposed and the sandstone walls are underexposed. This is a prime situation for creating a HDR composite image, as I described on one of the images in AAA Group. Remember to shoot from a tripod, which is tough in a tight slot canyon, but it will make combining the images a lot easier later. Otherwise nice composition.

### **19. Thistle (*Cirsium*) in Pine Valley**

Beautifully sharp photo (in more ways than one)! Nice isolation of the subject from the background using a wider aperture. Enough of the subject is in focus to be interesting yet the background is out of focus. Backgrounds are so important in flower photography. My only suggestion here would be to have removed the diagonal reddish stem just to the lower left of the thistle head. That's the only part of the background I find distracting my eye from the subject.

### **20. Trunks of *Araucaria* spp**

This is a great composition showing the uniqueness of this conifer. Your choice of composition gives the viewer information about the trees and how they grow, yet is very visually appealing as well. It draws my eye further back into the image and creates a mysterious mood.

### **21. Water-worn edges, Lower Antelope Canyon, AZ**

Wonderful erosion story and beautiful composition and light. I love how the image has layers that lead you further back into the slot canyon. Those rocks right in front on the sides anchor the image nicely. Perfect exposure.

---

**First Place: 15. Rainfall Erosion in Sandstone Hillside at Garrapata State Park**

**Second Place: 02. Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) juvenile responding to parent flying in with food**

**Third Place: 07. Eucalyptus Forest Roots**

**HM: 21. Water-worn edges, Lower Antelope Canyon, AZ**

**HM: 01. Aggregating Anemone, Asilomar Beach**

**HM: 05. Coastal Waterfall**