

PTCC Nature #3 – August 16 2017

Group AAA

8 images from 3 members

01-Corral de Tierra Common Pheasant (Phasianus colchicus).jpg

Also known as the Ring-necked Pheasant. I think the males of this species have some of the prettiest plumage of any North American species. Your image shows the plumage and colors beautifully, especially contrasted against the green grass. The photo appears sharp and well exposed. I like the way you left negative space in the direction the pheasant is facing. That's a good compositional technique. I like the longer crop, or aspect ratio, because it fits the long shape of the bird.

02-Corral de Tierra Mallard Couple (Anas platyrhynchos).jpg

Very nice ID shot. Showing the sexual dimorphism (difference between the male and female) in plumage. Although it's sharp and well exposed, the composition is rather static and, since the duck butts are closer to the camera than the heads are, it makes it feel like the ducks are leaving the image. Good portrait of the two but no real interaction or story to the image. Maybe if you followed the ducks around a bit, you could catch them facing each other or facing the camera and interacting more. As common as Mallards are, they are great birds to work with and the colors and detail on their plumage is spectacular.

003-Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos) Duckling Swimming on El Estero.jpg

How absolutely adorable! Beautiful light, tack sharp, perfectly exposed, and exquisitely composed! The perfect reflection of the duckling's head is wonderful. The pattern of the water in the wake creates the sense of motion and prevents this from being a static image. Nice negative space in the direction the duckling is swimming. Oh, and did I mention that the little duckling so absolutely adorable? Certainly a compelling and very engaging image.

04-Moss Landing Harbor Seal (Phoca vitulina).jpg

Harbor Seals are always so photogenic and quite endearing. Getting the two of them in the frame makes for a more interesting composition showing interaction. It would be nice to see more of the seal that's behind the front one. That's where patience comes into play as a nature/wildlife photographer. If you can't alter your own position, sometimes you have to wait and wait for the critters to move into a better position for the ideal composition. This is very well exposed, which is usually difficult to achieve when photographing seals on a beach because you often have very light and glaring areas contrasting with very dark areas. This is nice and sharp too.

05-Snowy Egret (Egretta thula) Feeding at Asilomar State Beach.jpg

Beautiful and intimate action shot. Very sharp and crisp where it counts at the egret's eye, bill, and fish. Really tough exposure situation but you did a great job with it. Just slightly overexposed on some of the white feathers but it's not objectionable and doesn't distract too much from the main area of interest. Perhaps on the computer, you could selectively dodge (lightened) the fish a little bit to make it pop more from the background. I love the diffused highlights in the background too.

06-Snowy Plovers (Charadrius nivosus) on Carmel River Beach in February.jpg

Outstanding image! Super sharp on the little plover in the foreground. Really well exposed throughout the image. Great composition! Love the low angle. I'm sure you had to get sand out

of your pants after working with these birds. The plovers in the background provide more info and interaction in the image. They're all facing in the right directions for a perfect composition. Well done!

07-Beetle New Mexico.jpg

I think this would be a stronger image if we could see more of the beetle and less of the rocks. The beetle itself looks sharp and well-exposed. It would be nice to have the species of beetle included in the title. It's definitely a type of long-horned beetle, of which there are literally thousands of species. This looks most like a species of Sawyer in the genus Monochamus. However, you can narrow it down to those found in New Mexico and possibly seek assistance from entomologists in New Mexico to help ID it to species. A good resource on the internet for insect ID is BugGuide.net. This would be a good photo situation in which to use a diffuser so the shadows of the beetle's antennae aren't quite as distracting.

08-Making a cocoon.jpg

Good macro image and great story-telling aspect to the photo. Ideally, I'd like to see a title that identifies the larva and the plant on which it's making its cocoon. It would be nice to know if this is a host plant for the insect, what the larva turns into, etc. I don't know the ID of this plant or the larva. I'd have to research it. However, in circumstances like that, when I can't ID something I've photographed, I will often send the photo to experts in that particular field. For this one, perhaps you could email it to an entomologist with your county ag dept or UC Santa Cruz, etc. Regarding the photo itself, it's a bit contrasty. The light and dark patterns on the petals distract my attention from the larva. An easy way to avoid this is to use a diffuser. You can diffusers that fold up into a little pouch and then "pop" open into a large disk. Then compose your photo, hold the diffuser in place to even out the light in the frame and click the shutter release. It helps to have your camera and lens on a tripod. I will often use a diffuser and then hold a reflector to bounce some even light where I want it. Of course, it also helps to have 8 hands to hold everything in place.

Winning Image: (Only first place awarded due to less than 9 images submitted):

003-Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos) Duckling Swimming on El Estero.jpg