

PTCC: Nature #2 Backyard Nature
July 29, 2018

Group AAA

21 Images from 7 members

01-Corallina officinalis-132030.jpg

What an interesting type of seaweed! I don't think I've ever seen this one before. You've created a superb composition! The curved diagonal line and the loop in the lower left compliment the lines in the sand beautifully. The sharpness and detail are perfect. Great exposure too. My only suggestion would be to position the red portion in the upper right thirds intersection. Think of dividing your frame with a tic-tac-toe board, into thirds both horizontally and vertically. The strongest points of visual interest in an image will tend towards the intersections of those lines. So, to draw emphasis to a portion of your image, place it in one of those thirds intersections. This "rule" of composition is called the "Rule of Thirds."

02-Elephant Bath.jpg

This is an interesting subject matter for a photo. However, there's nothing to really connect the viewer to the image. You can't see detail on either of the elephant's faces or the human's faces. None of the image appears particularly sharp. You did get a good exposure in a tough situation, with very white portions of the water and very dark portions of the elephant. It looks like perhaps you were shooting at too slow a shutter speed to be hand-holding the camera. One of the best things you can do is to shoot as much as possible from a tripod. It may be more cumbersome to lug around with you, but it will steady your camera and allow you to get sharper images. A tripod also gives you the opportunity to fine-tune your compositions. You can compose, lock the camera in that position on the tripod, then look around the edges and make sure there are no distracting elements poking into or out of the frame, etc.

03-Garland Park forest-9895.jpg

This is a very creative and interesting photo, however, I'm just not sure what I'm looking at. It appears that you used a slow shutter speed, triggered the shutter, and then moved the camera downward to create the upward streaks. I'm assuming this was intentional. Regardless of intent, I think an abstract/creative image like this would do better in a straight color pictorial competition, rather than a nature competition. It just doesn't show enough detail of anything natural to provide information to the viewer. I don't want to discourage you, or anybody else, from experimenting. I think that's a really important part of the creative process. You just need to make sure what you submit in competition is appropriate to the category.

04-Global Parenting Arctic.jpg

Very cute image. Good exposure on the polar bears themselves. I like the diagonal line

created by the division between the ice and the water. Since a lot of the lower left of the image is overexposed, it might have created a stronger composition to move your camera up and to the right when shooting. That way, the bears would be more towards the lower left thirds intersection and it would eliminate a lot of the overexposed area.

05-Gull_on_Piling.jpg

Silhouettes can be very strong visual subjects in nature photography. This shot has a lot of potential, however, the main subject is so tiny in the overall frame, it loses its impact. I would suggest a longer focal length or moving closer to the subject. Another option might be to crop the image in the computer to create a stronger composition. Also, try offsetting the main subject from the center, as I described in the Rule of Thirds explanation previously. Keep trying! There are LOTS of circumstances when you can work on getting good silhouette nature shots.

06-Hummingbird feeding.jpg

Getting good “hummingbird in flight” photos is very challenging. You obviously shot this at a fast enough shutter speed to stop the motion of the wings, however, it appears you shot at a super high ISO. That really high ISO leads to the “grainy” digital noise appearance, with muted colors and light. Lower ISOs definitely yield higher-quality images. Given that everything in the image is in focus, I’d say that you used a very small aperture as well, giving you that extensive depth of field. In a shot like this, the main subject is the hummingbird. You really don’t need anything else in focus so you could have used a much wider aperture. The wider aperture would allow more light into the camera and, subsequently, you wouldn’t have needed to use such a high ISO. I would suggest changing your position so the background behind the hummingbird isn’t quite as distracting as well.

07-Roped Grass.jpg

Beautiful lines, texture, and contrast in this photo. You did a very nice job converting the image to B&W. The background is visible yet not distracting. The fencepost is right along the right thirds line, which adds impact to the composition. Nice job!

08-Still Water.jpg

Good placement of the rocks in the foreground to “anchor” the image. The rocks also create a bit of a leading line, leading the viewer’s eye into the image. The only problem is once my eye is led into the photo, there’s not much there of interest. The sailboat is so far away and tiny that there’s not enough detail to really hold the viewer’s attention. The shot also appears very dark so there’s not much detail in the rocks or the water. I would suggest either working with the rocks in the foreground and emphasizing their patterns and texture against the water, OR using a longer focal length lens and isolating the boat in the distance and creating an image with that. This is a tough situation to include both and do either justice.

09-Petal Pushers.jpg

This is a very creative shot of the Kalanchoe succulents. Shooting from above like that is very different from what you typically see. It really works with these plants and creates a nice flow of lines through the composition. The shot is full of texture, both on the plants and on the background material. Great sharpness all the way through the image and a wonderful exposure. The vivid colors really grab the attention of the viewer.

10-Koalas Sydney, Australia.jpg

They're so darned cute! This is a very nice shot showing the two of them. Any time you can include two or more of a critter, especially if they're interacting in some way, it usually creates a stronger image than just a portrait of a single animal. The background in this image is pretty overexposed and distracting. Also, the tent structure in the background creates a distraction from the main subjects as well. Perhaps moving a little to your left when shooting could have hidden the tent structure behind the koalas.

11-Lion.jpg

Beautiful warm light on this lion! Your focus is tack sharp and the image is perfectly exposed. It's a very thoughtful pose, however, the shot overall is rather static. Animal portraits can be very nice, and this one is, however, having some action or interesting behavior going on usually creates a stronger image. Even waiting for the lion to yawn and show its tongue and teeth would add drama. I do realize that your options are limited if the animal is just "lion" around.

12-Look At Me!.jpg

This is a super cute shot. Quite endearing. It appears very sharp. There are a lot of distracting elements in the frame that pull my eye away from the panda's face. I think shooting at a longer focal length to include just the upper part of the animals body might focus the viewer's attention more and eliminate the distracting elements. It also would eliminate the overexposed panda belly. Or, if you can't shoot at a longer focal length, perhaps you could move closer by entering the enclosure with the animal. WAIT! Never mind, that would certainly cause panda-monium at the zoo!

13-Peking Ducks out for a Ride - Anas platyrhynchos.jpg

Hmmm. I'm guessing that these ducks aren't just out for a joy ride. I'm thinking that the end of the ride will truly be the end of the line for them. This is a wonderful photo! Great job panning with the motorcyclist to keep him and the ducks sharp, yet blurring the background. That's a great effect! Good negative space in the direction they are heading. It just really adds to the interest and drama of the image that the guy is texting on his cell phone while he's driving. Good story telling component to the image as well.

14-Ruddy_Turnstone_at_Pier.jpg

Your photo is nice and sharp and the bird is well exposed, even though it's on a really bright part of the pier. When photographing animals or people, it usually creates a stronger composition if you leave more negative space in the direction the subject is

heading. That way, it “feels” more like the subject is becoming part of the image, rather than leaving the image. Also, as mentioned previously regarding the Rule of Thirds, you’ll typically get a more appealing composition if you place the subject off center, ideally in one of the thirds intersections. So, in your photo, for example, I would shoot at a longer focal length so the bird is more prominent and I would place the bird in the lower left thirds intersection.

15-Sea Anemones.jpg

Amazing light on these anemones! Very dramatic image because of the light and the interesting subject matter. Your composition is great as well, with no distracting elements drawing your eye away from the main subject(s). My only suggestion here would be to make sure the anemone right in front is sharp. It’s slightly out of focus at the top. When photographing a bunch of something like this, if you can’t get all of them in focus, it’s always important to make sure that the front ones are sharp, since that’s where the viewer’s eye goes first.

16-Seagull.jpg

This species of gull is the Western Gull. Seagull is just a colloquial collective term. There are dozens of different species of gulls but there technically is no bird called a seagull. It’s nice that you have the bird off of center so there is more negative space in the direction the gull is facing. Much of the stuff at the top of the frame is distracting so I would probably use a longer focal length to crop out the stuff at the top, thus placing the gull in the upper right thirds intersection of the frame. That would draw more attention to the bird itself. Nice exposure and good sharpness on the subject. One of the great things about gulls is you can always find them and practice lots of different techniques in different lighting situations, etc. Keep shooting!

17-silver solitude-143516.jpg

Beautiful photo! The lines and the texture provide so much interest in the image. The transitions in light are exquisite. The exposure is perfect and it’s super sharp throughout the shot. My only suggestion would be to shift the composition slightly to place the rock off center a bit, rather than having it bulls-eyed in the image.

18-Sumatran_Rhino_Ipuh.jpg

I like the slow shutter speed to photograph moving critters to create a dynamic feel to the photo. Very creative! However, when doing this, it’s important that you keep the animal’s eye in focus. The eye is where the connection with the viewer happens. Shooting at a slightly shorter focal length would increase the depth of field at any given aperture, therefore allowing more of the rhino’s face to be in focus.

19-Thre Moon over the Palm.jpg

Incorporating the moon into a landscape photo can be a very effective way of adding interest to the image. When doing so, it’s pretty important to have other strong visual elements in the landscape. If you really want the emphasis to be on the moon itself, the

moon has to be significantly larger than it is here so the viewer can see more detail. To create a really large moon, you typically need to shoot it at 400mm to 800mm focal length. To do that, you DEFINITELY need to shoot from a tripod, use your mirror lockup feature, and trigger that camera with a remote to minimize vibrations. The out of focus palm fronds here don't really add much to this image. I think you could have a much stronger image if you shot at a shorter focal length and included something in focus in the foreground of interest, leading to the focused palm trees, with the moon in the background.

20-two tangerines.jpg

Always keep in mind that when you create a composition, there needs to be a place for the viewer's eye to settle. There needs to be something to draw the viewer into the image. The upper tangerine here is partially obscured by the leaves and the bottom tangerine is on the verge of leaving the image, really close to the edge of the frame. I would suggest just focusing on the bottom tangerine. You could get a little closer to it, place it in one of the thirds intersections, make sure it's the main point of sharp focus (it's a bit soft right now), and increase the exposure so there's more detail on it. Sometimes it helps to photograph things when the light is not so contrasty. As you can see, there are really dark shadowed areas and light areas. If it was more overcast, or if you could use a big, pop-open, diffuser disk between your subject and the light source, that would even out the light and provide a much more pleasing exposure. Keep experimenting! I hope the tangerines were tasty!

21-White Stork with Classical Tastes, in Morocco.jpg

Nice placement of the stork in the upper left thirds intersection of the frame. It would nice to see more detail on the bird and the nest, perhaps by using a longer focal length lens. I understand this is sometimes unavoidable if the subject is really far away and you don't have a longer focal length lens. The shot looks pretty "grainy" as if it was shot at a pretty high ISO.

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