



01 - Wild Puma Stalks Prey in Patagonia.jpg

Karen Schofield

Such a beautiful animal, and you were so lucky to capture him stalking something. He gaze is intent. I'm wondering if he was successful. It is a lovely image. My only suggestion would be that if you have any room in this image at all, I would suggest re-composing so that you crop off a little from the top and move him up so that his eye is near a power point on the rule of thirds grid. ****



02 - Anna's Hummingbird (Calypte anna).jpg

Jared Ikeda

He's posing for this picture. I like the catch light in his eye. The overall image feels a little dark for me, perhaps simply bringing out more detail in the shadows is all that is necessary. The background is a little distracting due in part to the contrast of color variations, but the most important thing for me is the lack of sharpness. I'm not seeing any one point in the image that appears sharp, so it could be that your focus was just a little off here. *



03 - Atlantic Puffin (Fratercula arctica) feeding in Iceland. jpg

Bill Shewchuk

So much fun to capture puffins with little fish in their mouths. Good story, nice composition. You have him looking into the frame with room to spare. The details are sharp. Perhaps warm it up a little with the yellow slider. ****



04 - Birth of an Elephant Seal (Mirounga angustirostris). jpg

Judi H Clayton

The timing is great on this capture. Mom is checking out her baby and the image is composed in a way that includes the afterbirth, so the viewer realizes right away that this is a brand new baby. But I think it's the gesture between mother and baby make this so good. The expression in the eyes, the contact between the two, establishing that bond that will remain until the baby is big enough to be on his own. *****



05 - Brown Pelican.jpg

Jerry Heisel

Lovely light, it must be late afternoon. I really like this composition. I think this is a very good example of positioning or composing a bird in flight. You're allowing room for the pelican to fly through the frame, while still showing just enough of the lovely background so that it tells a story. ****



06 - Cooper Hawk Sentry.jpg

Lillie Grossman

Although this is a portrait, it is a very good portrait. I like the diagonal lines of the upper branch and the hawk running parallel with each other. The background is nicely blurred and the eye is tack sharp. ****



07 - Egrets in breeding plumage mating.JPG

Margret Cordts

Another nature image where timing is everything. Both egrets are nicely visible and their expressions are a key part of the story. I would not be afraid to crop in more, or get closer. The exposure is slightly underexposed, so I would bring that up a bit more to reduce the shadows. ****



08 - Elephant Seals (Mirounga angustirostris) Battle over Newborn as California Gulls Battle over Afterbirth.jpg

Judi H Clayton

I look at this and I see a struggle for life. Lots of action going on here, with the two elephant seals engaged in an argument, while one can only wonder what is happening to the baby (which looks to me like he is positioned between the two). The seagulls are grabbing for anything they can and more seem to be flying in to help themselves. I like the composition of the image, it is very dynamic. *****



09 - Elk Bull Strutting in Fall Rut_Cervus canadensis.jpg
A Bender

I love the way this image is composed. The aspect ratio that was chosen clearly helps to tell the story of fall. With the elk up front and framed against this simple yet effective background, I almost feel like I am there watching him.



10 - Great Blue Heron(Ardea herodias) with Catch.jpg
John Drum

From start to finish, these four images tell the complete story of this heron eating a fish. It is a good sequence. However, I am seeing some post processing issues that not only affect the look of this sequence, but could potentially disqualify it from the Nature division. In the Nature division, manipulations are not allowed. Removing dust spots is fine, but when parts of the image that are inherent in the original image get cloned out, you are then altering the contents of that image. The same rule applies to Photojournalism. *



11 - Great egret (A. alba) at Point Lobos State Reserve.jpg
Frank Penner

This egret is in his element, near the water, waiting for something. I like seeing a little wave action going on which helps to define his environment. He's positioned well in the composition. However, the angle in which the image was shot looking down on him may not be the most flattering for this guy. The photographer may be in a tough spot and not able to change the angle. Eye level would be great, but even a little lower angle would help. ***



12 - Honey Bee (Apis mellifera) collecting pollen.jpg

Jared Ikeda

Honey bees are always great to catch with pollen on their feet and body. I consider honey bees a vital element in our natural world and I believe they can make an excellent story. That said, I do see a lot of honey bee photos, and it's rare I see one that is much different from another. For me, honey bee photography is harder than it seems. In this image, I would like to see greater depth of field and sharpness throughout most of the bee and the flower. One way to achieve better DOF is to perhaps use a shorter lens and a smaller aperture, get in close but not too close, capture the image and then crop in post. Or use fill-in flash. Its all about compromise, experimenting with different techniques and practice. ***



13 - Hummingbird in Costa Rican Rain .jpg

Carol Fuessenich

This little guy looks like something may have scared him. It's definitely raining and I like the atmosphere that the rain is creating. The branch is running diagonally through the image, which is nice. It is also very sharp, maybe because the hummingbird was sitting on it just before taking off and that's where you had the camera focused. The hummingbird however, is quite blurry. I have no idea what camera settings you may have been using, but don't be afraid of using a higher ISO in order to use a smaller aperture or a faster shutter speed. *



14 - Least Sandpiper with Marbled Godwit reflection.jpg

Bill Brown

An interesting capture. My eye did not settle on the sandpiper right away, he is so well camouflaged in the godwit's reflection. This image has a natural symmetry, yet it feels somewhat off balance. I feel that could be enhanced with one correction. The rocks in the background are sloping down to the right, so that makes the horizon feel off balance. Just like when we hang a picture on the wall, we usually always make sure it's straight on top. The same is true in nature. It would be odd to see a crooked horizon in nature. I would simply straighten the horizon and create even more symmetry in the image. ***



15 - Lesser Sandhill Crane Feeding Young A Worm.jpg

Jeff Hobbs

Great story. An intimate shot of these cranes feeding on worms. It appears the adult crane is showing the young where the tasty worms are hiding. Once again, the expressions, or the gestures is what gives the viewer that connection to the story, and this one is lovely. Great choice of camera settings. *****



16 - Mating Disturbance Of The Green Darner Dragonfly.

jpg
Jeff Hobbs

Two is company, three is a crowd. Tangled wings, there is even some disturbance in the water. It's interesting to note that the dragonflies themselves are forming this triangular shape which really makes for a wonderful and dynamic composition. A good story and the colors are great. *****



17 - Mom takes a break. Black-crowned Night-Heron and chicks. (Nycticorax nycticorax).jpg

Gerry Gifford

The chicks do not seem too happy that mom has nothing for them. Here, we get a pretty good view of the chicks with one red eye visible on mom. I love the story. My eye continually goes to that circle of interest where the mom is making eye contact with the chicks. I'm not sure we need to see so much of the rocks below mom, and I would consider getting in closer by cropping, maintaining the same aspect ratio, and just push up from the lower right and in more. ***



18 - Monarch butterfly (D. plexippus) wings folded while feeding on bottlebrush.jpg

Frank Penner

Nice and sharp where the body and the flower meet. There is some fall off of sharpness on the lower part of the wings, and I wish a smaller aperture had been used to keep them sharp, but it doesn't bother me too much because you have a nice composition. The direct sun tends to make the image contrasty, but you've handled the background well. ***



19 - Morning Hunt of Ezo Red Fox_ *Vulpes vulpes schrencki.jpg*

A Bender

Love this. Having the golden grasses in there not only help to give the image scale and perspective, the golden color is repeated in the fox. Perfect timing on capturing the fox. The simplicity of this image is striking. Nicely done. *****



20 - Osprey Parent Delivers Live Prey to 3 Hungry Chicks.jpg

Karen Schofield

Focusing on the action and including just enough habitat of the nest makes this a simple and effective story. The chicks are clearly visible. Mom and dad are both present. Camera settings are well chosen for maximum depth of field and freezing the action. *****



21 - Point Lobos Landmark Cypress as Fog Comes In.jpg

Carol Fuessench

Roots and trees growing out of rock, with the ocean as a backdrop is a great example of nature's tenacity. I think you could enhance that feeling even more by simply eliminating the dark shadows in the trees. It would be great if the viewer could see the texture and color in the tree. Perhaps pull back the camera as well to allow the viewer to feel the influence of the incoming fog. **



22 - Purple Sea Urchin (*Strongylocentrotus purpuratus*) in tide pool at Point Lobos.jpg

Bill Shewchuk

Very colorful and vivid. I love the blend of colors and the graphic shapes they create. Very sharp throughout. *****



23 - Sea Otters walk and relax on the beach. (Enhydra lutris).jpg

Gerry Gifford

They look a lot different huddled up on the beach than when they are doing acrobatics in the water. My interest here is mostly centered on the otter that is walking, but he is centered in the image and therefore the composition feels static. The foreground otters are all slightly out of focus, so I would put the emphasis on the walking otter and recompose this so that he gets moved to the right. Not to worry if there is a little cropping on the sleepy otters, the story is still intact. ***



24 - Sleepy Brown Pelicans, Point Lobos - Pelicanus occidentalis.jpg

Brooks Leffler

Their body language really tells the story of how relaxed these guys are. Although there are two subjects, one is dominant because his head is raised and he's in the foreground, so the two really don't compete with each other. Technically very well done. ****



25 - Snow Skunk.jpg

Lillie Grossman

Photographing a black and white animal on bright white snow can be challenging, but you've handled it very well. You've kept detail in the shadows, and the claws are an amazing detail. Nicely composed, and you've kept some of that nice long shadow of his body in the image as well. How nice you got him to walk towards you! ****



26 - Snowy Egret (Egretta thula) landing in morning light. jpg

Chris Johnson

Backlighting on this egret makes for a beautiful shot, especially with the wings outstretched. Maybe intentionally underexposed to enhance the highlights? But I think you might try brightening up the whites and see what happens. ****



27 - South Side of Little Lies Rock.jpg

Bill Brown

Very effective, using a slow shutter speed to capture this huge wave hitting the rocks. I like the cormmorants on the rocks.

This has an ethereal feeling to it, yet it is nature captured in a unique way. ****



28 - White-faced ibis(Plegadis chihi).jpg

John Drum

A portrait of a white faced ibis in late afternoon, well positioned with beautiful light, but the story is not so strong.

Because this is a portrait, I would like to see him just a little bit sharper. I do like that you got a nice catch light in the eye.



29 - White-tailed Kite (Elanus leucurus) protecting fresh kill from crow.jpg

Chris Johnson

Crows and ravens can be persistent in harrassing other birds with fresh kills. It looks like the kite is doing a pretty good job of keeping him at bay. I like the story. Technically well done.



30 - Yellow Sand Verbena (Abronia latifolia) and Artemisia.jpg

Brooks Leffler

Sand verbena grows wild, and I like the depth in the image you've created by getting in close to the foreground, building layers of interest as the viewer's eye travels into the image.

Cloudy days are wonderful for photographing flowers. ****

Winning Images:

Honorable Mentions:

Purple Sea Urchin
Bill Shewchuk



Mating Disturbance of the Green Darner Dragonfly
Jeff Hobbs



Osprey Parent Delivers Live Prey to Three Hungry Chicks
Karen Schofield

3rd Place:



Morning Hunt of Ezo Red Fox
A Bender

2nd Place:



**Lesser Sandhill Crane Feeding Young A
Worm**
Jeff Hobbs

First Place:



**Elephant Seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*) Battle over
Newborn as California Gulls Battle over Afterbirth**
Judi H Clayton