



**01 - Arctic Polar Bear.jpg**

*Dick Light*

Wonderful subject and how lucky you were to be able to see one of these endangered bears. Nice capture with the paw up giving the image a bit of action. Two things brought this down for me. One is that it is underexposed. The other is that while the bear is looking towards us, we are not able to make “eye contact” with it due to the elevated position of the photographer (completely understandable position given the subject). A way to help shift that perspective since I’m assuming getting physically eye level with the animal wasn’t an option, would be to crop in a bit on the left and the top. This brings the viewer in closer and raises the eye level of the animal in the frame creating the illusion of it being more contact than it actually was.

\*\*\*\*



**02 - Ardea herodias.jpg**

*Betsy Collins*

This image is unique in that you don’t usually see great blue herons photographed in the snow. However, on the technical side, there doesn’t seem to be any part of the image that is sharp. The subject being in the center of the image creates a static composition rather than one with more interest. If this is not already cropped, consider cropping in a bit tighter so that the image goes from a GBH in snow to the relationship between the GBH and its shadow potentially.

\*



**03 - Black-crowned night heron gathering nesting material(Nycticorax nycticorax).jpg**

*John Drum*

Nice shot with a good story presented. I think this may have been cropped a bit as, while the details in the face and throughout the image show as details, they are a bit grainy. The place there isn’t detail is on that bit of white on the heron’s forehead. That has been overexposed as well as the highlights on the stick. I think the composition and the story are good though.

\*\*



**04 - California Poppy with Bumble Bee.jpg**

*Dale Thies*

Bumble bee butts can be cute sometimes, but in this image the bee just looks uncooperative, unfortunately. Try waiting until the bee turns around to depart the flower next time so the viewers can get a look at its face. The image is also underexposed. This can easily happen when trying to photograph insects because we want a fast shutter speed, but make sure to compensate with a higher ISO if the lighting conditions are overcast or low. I think because the focus was on the bee in the flower that the camera focused just behind as the leaves are in focus but not the petal edge and this draws the viewer past the subject and off the image.

\*



**05 - Condor 92 suns himself along side Condor Trail Pinnacles National Park.jpg**

*Dennis Giuffre*

While this bird may never win a beauty contest, you did a great job capturing a flattering portrait of it. Good focus on the eyes with a bit of catch light in each one. The fact that you can see both eyes is a great achievement since birds often position themselves, so you get one or the other. I like the crop points used and the position of the bird in the frame. Small tweaks I might suggest would be to try to bring down the highlights on the head just a bit and bring up the shadows around the neck. These would only need to be very minor adjustments so if you do this, be judicious with it. Excellent work!

\*\*\*\*\*



**06 - Coyote resting on Dune.jpg**

*Brooks Leffler*

Great spotting, and I do like the composition. Yet, there are some technical issues. I think you could have used a faster shutter speed so as to capture more of the paw movement while avoiding overexposing the hot spots on the coyote's back and hip. Harsh uneven lighting is challenging to work with for sure. There is also a softness to its face and eye whereas the back and hip fur is more in focus, so I think the focus was missed somewhat.

\*\*



**07 - Elephant Seal (*M. angustirostris*) weanling.jpg**

*Karen Schofield*

How adorable! This is a great image from both a technical and aesthetic aspect. Well exposed, I love the choice of such a shallow depth of field where the eyes are in focus but the ground the pup is on is soft which helps add separation between the subject and its environment. I also love the expression and the composition. Personally, I would be thrilled to have this in my portfolio. Bravo!

\*\*\*\*\*



**08 - Gentoo Penguin Rock Thief.jpg**

*Dick Light*

Good story as told by both the action in the image along with the help from the title. Yet the technical issues with this image detract from that story. The biggest fault is that the image suffers from an overabundance of motion blur. A higher shutter speed should have been used to freeze the motion of the bird or, if doing a creative pan, the perspective would need to be at the penguin's eye level to show it traveling across the land and allow the viewer to connect to the eye contact when there is nothing else in focus. But its nice and even lighting and the whites were not overexposed, and it is a good story of a thieving penguin.

\*



**09 - Great Blue Heron chicks(*Ardea herodias*).jpg**

*John Drum*

These chicks are getting close to leaving the nest for sure. Nice capture of the daily sibling interaction. While there is some sharpness in places like the eyes, there is a lot of noise/grain throughout the image. Some of the white highlights have been overexposed, such as on the furthest back chick's face. There is a white object on the bottom left edge that is distracting as well.

\*\*



**10 - Great white egret (Ardea alba) displaying breeding plumage and green face.jpg**

*Margret Cordts*

Great capture of this egret displaying during sunset. Wonderful warm tones and sharp details in the feathers and face. Well done!

\*\*\*\*\*



**11 - Gymnogyps californianus in Flight.jpg**

*Betsy Collins*

Another sighting of these rare birds. Unfortunately, the focus was missed here due to what I suspect is a heavy crop combined with a bit of motion blur.

\*



**12 - Hunting great blue heron ardea herodias.jpg**

*Ken Jones*

Nice shot of a great blue heron. Good choice in depth of field and tone control. These birds, while common, are usually hard to photograph in a pleasing position. The 45degree stance to the camera was well captured but I would have like to see a bit more of a story/action/dynamic lighting as the composition is rather static at the moment. In post-production there seems to have been a few issued with edits done around the head, giving it a halo appearance and the neck is a bit soft while the body and head are sharp.

\*\*\*



**13 - Munching Brush Rabbit (Sylvilagus bachmani).jpg**

*Karen Schofield*

Nice shot of a great blue heron. Good choice in depth of field and tone control. These birds, while common, are usually hard to photograph in a pleasing position. The 45degree stance to the camera was well captured but I would have like to see a bit more of a story/action/dynamic lighting as the composition is rather static at the moment. In post-production there seems to have been a few issued with edits done around the head, giving it a halo appearance and the neck is a bit soft while the body and head are sharp.

\*\*\*



**14 - Osprey with catch over Del Monte Beach.jpg**

*Dennis Giuffre*

Wow! What a great capture. Great detail throughout the osprey's face and the fish. Well done on preserving most, if not all the detail in the white highlights along the bird and fish. Might tone down the saturation a bit and allow some of the shadow to come back under the wings as I feel the details are a bit soft, especially the one to the left. Very well done overall!

\*\*\*\*\*



**15 - Parent and Juvenile Trumpeter Swan on Yellowstone River.jpg**

*Joni Zabala*

I really like the placement of these birds in the frame and the crop used to help tell the story. Unfortunately, the birds are really soft as is most of the scene. There is also a problem of underexposure. Again, I like the way the scene is composed but the technical flaws let it down.

\*\*



**16 - Pelicanus occidentalis in flight.jpg**

*Joni Zabala*

Well captured! Good eye catchlight, sharp where it needs to be sharp and a nicely captured background that gives the pelican place other than a blue sky. The fog/atmosphere does seem a bit grainy, so if it were me, I would try using noise reduction to see if I couldn't soften that grain a bit. Other then that great in-flight shot!

\*\*\*\*\*



**17 - Puffin grouping-fratercula arctica-iceland.jpg**

*Ken Jones*

Puffins, a favorite subject of mine. I like the color and the pose of the two birds on the right, however the out of focus face of the bird in the front left keeps drawing my attention in not a good way as it has the brightest highlight in the scene. There is also a strong line of chromatic aberration along that puffin's face as well. It looks as if the focus point in this image ended up being somewhere in the grass below the puffins on the right, leading to them being almost sharp. If this image has not already been cropped significantly, I would maybe suggest seeing about doing a heavy crop to isolate those two on the right and see how that turns out so far as picture quality. That would be a much stronger image.

\*\*\*



**18 - Pupal stage ladybug (after larval and before adult stage) family Coccinellidae.jpg**

*Margret Cordts*

How unique! I can honestly say I have never seen a ladybug pupa before! Beautifully captured with good depth of field to make sure the pupa was in focus but shallow enough to have great bokeh in the background. The background does seem a bit noisy so you might try to reduce that. Otherwise, it is just a really great image of a rarely seen lifecycle stage of a common insect. Well done!

\*\*\*\*\*



**19 - Rain Forest Bog - Glacier Bay NP.jpg**

*Brooks Leffler*

Forests can be so hard to photograph due to the chaos of details. While this image is well exposed and has plenty of detail, it is missing a focal subject for the story of the image. What is it that I am supposed to be looking at? What is the story?

\*\*

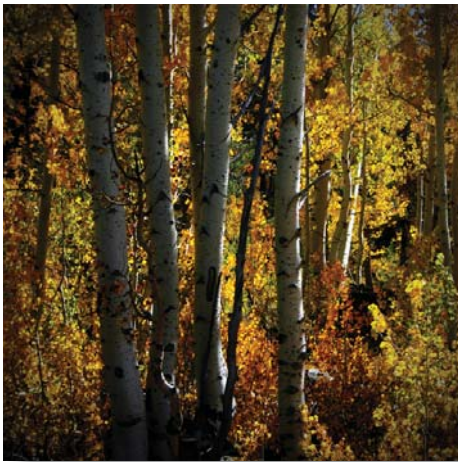


**20 - Snowy Egret Catches Breakfast.jpg**

*Christina Parsons*

Excellent image! Great timing on the shot with the position of the fish as well as the bird's foot. The depth of field used was perfect as you have detail in both the fish and throughout the bird. The shot does seem a bit underexposed but if you do decide to fix that watch the highlight on the back of the bird, so you don't overexpose that area. Well done!

\*\*\*\*\*



### **21 - Tahoe Aspens.jpg**

*Dale Thies*

Good detail in a tough lighting situation. Harsh backlighting takes considerable skill to photograph well. Here the shadows are really dark while some of the highlights have been overexposed. It also looks like there was a heavy vignetting used on the image that only enhances the underexposed portions of the image. The best way for capturing scenes like this would be to use HDR techniques. Good subject and tones in the golden leaves though.

\*\*



### **22 - Thistled Thorn.jpg**

*Charlie Gibson*

Good detail and I like the unique subject. Many people would have just walked by. Really sharp details in the dried thistle however the background is also still in focus a bit too much and it muddles the subject. The two grass seeds that are out of focus in the upper right also detract from the scene. I think just moving in closer to the subject may have helped alleviate some of these issues. Good eye for Nature's details though as it is a very interesting subject.

\*\*



### **23 - Waved Albatross and Chick Galapagos.jpg**

*Christina Parsons*

What a precious scene to observe. While the adult's face looks in focus, I think this image has been heavily cropped as the details throughout are blurred somewhat. A deeper depth of field would have had the chick in focus as well and that would have just added to the image. Try recomposing the image if you can with a looser crop. That should help with the quality of the sharpness. Great story and moment captured though!

\*\*\*

---

**Winning Images:**

**Honorable Mentions:**

**Great white egret (*Ardea alba*)  
displaying breeding plumage  
and green face**  
*Margret Cordts*



**Osprey with catch over Del Monte  
Beach**  
*Dennis Giuffre*



**Snowy Egret Catches Breakfast**  
*Christina Parsons*





Third Place:

**Pupal stage ladybug (after  
larval and before adult stage)**  
**family Coccinellidae**  
*Margret Cordts*



2nd Place:

**Condor 92 suns himself along  
side Condor Trail Pinnacles  
National Park**  
*Dennis Giuffre*



First Place:

**Elephant Seal (*M.  
angustirostris*) weanling**  
*Karen Schofield*

