

# Carolinas' Nature Photography Association 2019 Members' Choice Contest

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Being a nature photography organization, the Carolinas' Nature Photographers Association Members' Choice Contest is intended to showcase members' work and allow members to choose the best photos in each of two tiers and 7 categories; Landscape, Wildlife, Birds, Captive, Plants, Small Stuff and a new category this year, Conservation.

The CNPA 2019 Members' Choice Contest is open to all current CNPA members (Members' Choice Contest committee members are excluded from entering). This is a digital only contest. Members may submit a maximum of 7 images in any combination of categories the member chooses. The entry fee is \$7.50 per image.

## **Tiers**

Two Tiers are defined as follows:

**Tier One** includes any member who has won a Best of Show, Top of Tier, First, Second or Third place prize in any previous CNPA Members' Choice Contest or any member who describes him/herself, or is generally recognized, as a professional photographer or workshop leader.

**Tier Two** includes any member who has never won a Best of Show, Top of Tier, First, Second or Third Place prize in any previous CNPA Members' Choice Contest, and who does not describe him/herself, or is not generally recognized, as a professional photographer or workshop leader.

A member who has entered in Tier One may not enter in Tier Two in subsequent years

While any member may choose to enter in Tier One, the Contest Committee may require that a particular member enter in Tier One.

## **Categories**

### **Landscapes**

Images of landscape, scenery, sky, oceans or lakes taken in any part of the world.

### **Wildlife**

Wild animals, generally the size of chipmunks and larger, including mammals, and large reptiles living freely and unrestrained in a natural habitat. Animals found in large wildlife parks such as found in Africa are entered in this category. Animals found in drive-through wildlife parks, such as are found in the US, belong in the Captive category.

### **Birds**

Birds of all species living freely and unrestrained in a natural habitat.

### **Captive**

Wildlife restrained behind bars, fences or in cages, etc., in zoos, drive-through wildlife parks, aviaries, butterfly houses, rehabilitation facilities or any other restricted environment or controlled by a handler. Domesticated animals and pets are not permitted.

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### **Plants**

Plants, flowers, fungi and lichens. Trees should be in this category if the tree itself is the subject of the photo. Otherwise, trees as part of a landscape are in the Landscapes category. A leaf, or portion of a leaf, should be entered in this category.

### **Small Stuff**

Insects, spiders, caterpillars, small reptiles, snails, crustaceans, and other organisms smaller than a chipmunk. Also, macro/close up images of inanimate objects such as shells, pebbles, etc. photographed in their original setting. Still life arrangements and images made using studio props are specifically excluded. Images of plants & flowers, regardless of size, should be entered in the Plants Category.

### **Conservation**

Images of threatened and endangered species (as defined by the Endangered Species Act of 1973) and images illustrating habitat destruction and restoration. Photos of plants/animals that are considered threatened or endangered are allowed as long as the photographer adequately explains the reason for placement in this category. The web site, <https://www.fws.gov/Endangered/species/us-species.html> can be used for qualifying photos in this category. Man-made objects and people are allowed provided they are directly relevant to the Conservation theme of the image.

In all categories, pets are not allowed. Barnyard animals are permitted in the Landscape category, provided they are incidental to the main subject.

## **Rules and Restrictions**

### **Copyright Ownership:**

- Images must be the original work of the member submitting them.

### **Human Element must be Minor and have No Impact**

- Human elements (including structures and other man-made objects, humans and other signs of humans) are allowed in the image, **so long as the nature subject is the main element** and the human element is incidental to the main element.
- Bird bands, ear tags and radio collars on wildlife are permitted.

Such things as posts, wire, small boats on lakes and buildings in the “background” as well as people are allowed. If the human element is a significant element of the image, the image will be rejected. (Self-test: if the human element were removed, would the image have the same impact?)

In disqualifying images with unacceptable human elements, the decision of the contest committee will be final.

**Enhancement is permitted.** Enhancement includes post-processing techniques to improve color, brightness, dynamic range (HDR), focus stacking, etc.

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**Manipulation is not permitted.** Manipulation means adding anything not in the original image, removing anything from the original image (except as allowed below) or moving anything within an image.

### Permitted:

- Post-processing correction to eliminate elements not part of the original scene such as sensor spots, dust, stray hairs, etc.
- High Dynamic Range (HDR) images.
- Focus Stacking of multiple images of the same subject to increase depth of field.
- Panoramic images composed of multiple exposures stitched together. However, bear in mind that panoramas will not display well on screens during voting nor will they look good when printed at the size specified for winning images.
- Black and White images, whether captured in camera or converted in post processing.
- Time Lapse images, where many images of the same scene (typically star trails) taken over a period of time and combined into a single image.
- Multiple Images **of the same subject** taken with slight movement of camera between frames and combined into a single image.
- Infrared images.
- Selective or global lightening or darkening, color correction, sharpening, noise reduction and the use of creative processing tools and techniques such as Nik Filters, Viveza, painter programs and other artistic filters are permitted. However, an image that has been creatively processed to the extent that the emphasis is no longer on the original nature subject may be disqualified.

### Not Permitted:

- Man-made objects and structures in the original image may not be deleted.
- Elements that were part of the original scene may not be moved, cloned (that is, taken from one image and inserted into another), or rearranged. With the exception of panorama stitching, HDR processing, time lapse, multiple image with camera movement and focus stacking, elements from multiple exposures may not be combined (composited) into a single image. Where any doubt exists, the member will be given the opportunity to submit the original camera RAW image for scrutiny. If the image was not captured in RAW, then at the discretion of the contest committee, a series of similar images from the same shoot may be substituted.
- Any member who knowingly submits a cloned or composite image will have all their entries disqualified, will forfeit their entry fees and may be barred from future competitions.
- Images taken in a studio environment (such as high-speed capture of water droplets,

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etc.) are specifically excluded.

- Borders, visible watermarks, copyright notices and photographer's names or any other added text is not permitted.
- Living creatures in all categories must be photographed in their natural or adopted habitat and specifically may not be moved to another setting or background.
- Images where any living creature appears to be stressed or harassed by humans in any way will be disqualified.
- Images winning prizes in previous Members' Choice contests may not be entered again.
- Pets are not allowed. Barnyard animals are permitted in the landscape category provided they are incidental to the main subject.

Images not conforming to these rules may be disqualified. If time permits, the member may submit another image without an additional fee. However, **entry fees will not be refunded under any circumstances.**

Provided that they conform to the above rules, images taken with smartphones, tablets etc. and images processed using Smartphone Applications are permitted in all categories.

### Submission Guidelines

Images must be the original work of the member submitting them and the submitter must own the copyright.

The image data **must** include the following information:

- Title: a brief descriptive title for the image.
- Caption: Descriptive information including location where taken.
- Copyright: Photographer's name and year taken.

There must be no copyright or other added text visible on the image.

### Size

- Images must be between 3000 and 6000 pixels on the **long side**
- File size **must not exceed 15 Mb.**

### Images must be

- **sRGB Color Profile**
- **JPEG format**
- maximum quality allowed by the dimensions above.

During the submission process members will be required to verify that their images conform to these rules and guidelines.

The winning images will be printed and displayed at the Annual Meeting. Winners may take their prints at the end of the meeting.

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**As a condition of entering the contest, the member grants to CNPA a perpetual, non-exclusive license to reproduce and publish the image(s) in printed and/or electronic form for promotional purposes only.**

### Voting

All CNPA members may vote for first, second and third place in each Category and Tier.

The Annual Meeting keynote speaker will choose a **Best of Show** image from the gallery of winning images from the two tiers. Two other guest speakers will choose a **Top of Tier** image from each of the two tiers.

Individual results cannot be provided.

### Prizes

Cash prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place in each category and tier. One or more honorable mentions will also be awarded in each category. The photographer whose image is selected as Best of Show will receive a cash prize of \$150 and a significant prize from one of our sponsors. The photographers whose images are selected as Top of Tier will receive \$100 and a prize from one of our sponsors.

Prizes will be awarded as follows:

Best of Show	\$150, 24x36 print, Contest Winner ribbon and Rosette
Top of Tier (each Tier)	\$100, 24x36 print, Contest Winner ribbon and Rosette
First Place (each Category)	\$75, 16x24 print and Contest Winner ribbon
Second Place (each Category)	\$50, 12x18 print and Contest Winner ribbon
Third Place (each Category)	\$25, 8x12 print and Contest Winner ribbon
Honorable Mention (each Category)	8x12 print and Contest Winner ribbon

### Schedule

- **Entry Submission:** 8 am October 1 to 6 pm October 31.  
**Note:** The submission system will close automatically at 6 pm Oct 31. **Entries still in process at that time will be rejected. No extension will be allowed.**  
In each category, entries will be displayed for voting in the order in which they were submitted. The earlier an entry is submitted, the closer to the top it will appear for voting.
- **Member Voting:** Opens approximately 1 week after close of submission period and closes Midnight, December 2.
- **Announcement of Results:** Annual Meeting

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Why must entry be sRGB?

sRGB is the color profile universally used for online display of images. Images uploaded with any other profile (Adobe RGB, ProPhoto RGB etc) will not display correctly.

**Why is there no category for Black and White images?**

The categories represent subject matter (Landscape, Wildlife etc.). Black & White, HDR, Infra Red, etc. are techniques, not Categories. If we introduced a Black and White category we might also be required to have separate categories for Infra Red, HDR, Panorama, Time Lapse etc. Black and White images may be entered in any category and will be judged on their merits.

**Why is there an entry fee? I pay an annual membership fee, the contest should be free.**

Every year we award over \$2,000 in prize money. There are other expenses associated with the contest including printing, software development, gallery room rental etc. Since not every member enters the contest it would be unfair to take the contest expenses from the annual membership fees, which are used to provide many other benefits for all members.

**My camera does not capture RAW images. Can I still enter the contest?**

A RAW image will only be requested if the Contest Committee have a reason to suspect that an image is a clone or composite. If you cannot submit a RAW image for scrutiny, you may be allowed to submit several other images shot at the same time.

**Why do we no longer have a Print contest?**

The logistics of the print contest were proving unmanageable and the display board and lighting setup gave unfair advantage depending on where a member's print was displayed. Also since many photographers use external print services rather than doing their own printing, there is no additional skill involved.

**I don't possess an editing program. How can I remove sensor spots, stray hairs etc. from my images?**

There are many low cost or free editing programs available. However, the best advice is to keep your camera clean and you shouldn't have the problem in the first place.

**I am a beginner and I don't know how to prepare my images for submission. Can you help?**

The members of CNPA collectively have a wealth of knowledge and are usually willing to share it. You should ask members in your Region for assistance. The Contest Committee cannot show bias by assisting individual members.

**Can I email my entries? Can I mail a CD?**

We do not have a mechanism for accepting images by email or on CD. The CNPA website software must be used to submit images.

**Ansel Adams did his best work in the darkroom. Why should I not be allowed to submit images that have been extensively post processed?**

CNPA is a nature photography organization. Images are judged on the merits of the nature related subject and the skill of the photographer in capturing the image. There

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are other contests where skill in post processing techniques can be demonstrated.

### **Can I enter images in both Tiers?**

No. Before you upload images, you will be asked to select your Tier, and all your entries will be in that Tier.

### **In the Small Stuff category, can I enter an image of an arrangement of shells that I collected from a beach?**

No. This would be considered a studio or still life setup. Shooting the shells in their natural environment on the beach is perfectly permissible.