

Photographic Society of America (PSA) Nature Competition Process CamNats Image Selection Procedure (2023-2024)

Our Goal for the 2023-2024 Season: REPEAT!!!!



To achieve this goal, we rely on CamNats members to submit their best Zoology and Ornithology images, and on our PSA panel – six CamNats Salon-level members to select and submit the strongest member images.

Background: PSA holds an annual Nature interclub competition that Camera Naturalist participates in. The competition has three rounds per season (15th of November, February, and April) and allows for up to six entries from six different photographers per round of competition. The photographers score points for their individual entries, and they can be awarded an HM, Merit, or Medal for their entries. After all club entries are scored in each round the total points make up the club score. While the photographers win for photos, the club gets points each round and at the end of the season, clubs are ranked based on points. In addition, there is an end of year competition where individual winners of all rounds are judged and the top images receive awards. **We want our club members to win individual awards, and for CamNats to finish in 1st place once again.**

Schedule and Process:

Each club member can submit one image per round of competition to be considered for selection by the panel. Club members from all 3 club competition groups are encouraged to participate. Last season, members from the B group submitted images that received HM awards from PSA! If the club does not receive enough images to provide a strong selection set for a competition round, the one image limit could be lifted to gather more images. Regardless of how many can be submitted within CamNats, PSA limits image submission to no more than one image per photographer per round of competition. Images will be submitted via Photo Contest Pro. The images submitted will be all grouped together, regardless of club competition group, and reviewed by the CamNats PSA panel.

CamNats PSA Panelist for the 2023-2024 season: The panelist remain the same as last year - Lora Lekos, Roman Kurywczak, Nick Palmieri, Phil Witt, Butch VanSeters & Committee Chair, Natalie Gregorio. (Lora Lekos stepped down as the chair, but remains on the panel; Natalie Gregorio replaced Lora Lekos as the chair)

The submission schedule for the season is as follows:

PSA Round # & Deadline for member submission on PCP:

- 1 15 October
- 2 15 January
- 3 15 March

PSA Round # & Date image selection to be completed by CamNats Panel:

- 1 9 November
- 2 9 February
- 3 9 April

PSA Round # & Date 6 Images submitted to PSA on or before:

- 1 14 November
- 2 14 February
- 3 14 April

PSA Round # & Date Selected 6 Images Announced:

- 1 17 November
- 2 17 February
- 3 17 April

Competitions have been opened in Photo Contest Pro (PCP) for all three rounds. Members can submit to any round prior to the deadline. Images from a previous round can be resubmitted providing the image has NOT received an award from PSA.

CamNats Scoring process and image submission guidance:

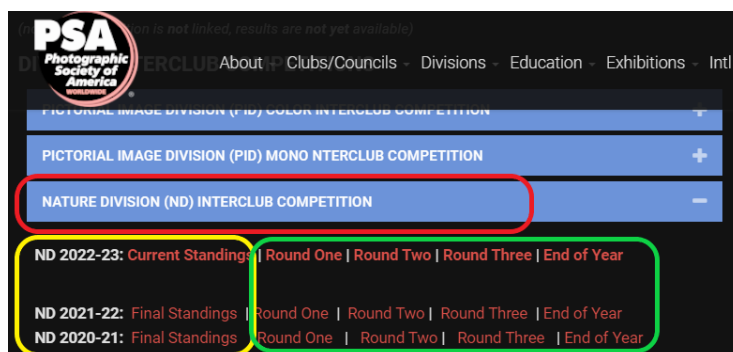
The panel will evaluate each image based on PSA guidelines (detailed below) and use the procedures (outlined below) to select the 6 images that will be submitted to represent CamNats in each round.

The panel will use the following documents to guide their evaluations:

- PSA Artificial Intelligence (AI) Statement; Subject Matter Statement; and Nature Division Definition: ([Addendum A at the end of this document](#))
- General Interclub guidelines:
<https://cdn.ymaws.com/psa-photo.org/resource/resmgr/pdf/divisions/general-ic-guidelines.pdf>
- Guide for Nature Division judges
<https://cdn.ymaws.com/psa-photo.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/pdf/divisions/nd/nd-judges-guide.pdf>
- PSA Ethics Policy:
https://cdn.ymaws.com/psa-photo.org/resource/resmgr/pdf/policies_/2022-ethics-policy.pdf

It is strongly recommended that prior to submitting an image for consideration, club members should review the documents noted above as well as the slideshows of winning images from previous years. The images can be viewed here:

<https://psa-photo.org/page/competition-results>



- Click on “Nature Division”
- “Current and Final Standings” – **a list** of all nature division clubs by competition group and points score
- “Round One, Two, Three, End of Year” – **[this is where to find images receiving HM’s, Merit Awards and Medals.](#)**

Submitted image guidelines:

- Zoology and Ornithology images only. PSA scores images based on story telling – the stronger the story, the better the score. In addition, the image should be technically strong. Images should feature one of the following - members of the same species interacting with each other (e.g. parents feeding their young), two or more species interacting with each other, (e.g. lioness chasing an antelope, multiple species feeding on a kill, a red winged blackbird dive bombing an osprey taking off with a fish in it’s talons, a praying mantis devouring a butterfly). Unless the image depicts an uncommon scene, (e.g. a dragonfly covered in morning dew) a static animal or bird typically do not score well. Please do not submit botany or landscape images.
- Must comply with the PSA image size requirements - 1080x1920 on the long edge.
- Must be in sRGB color space
- A single, 3 pixel white border is generally considered OK. (Do not use any border unless it is absolutely necessary). Colored borders and decorative borders are not considered appropriate.
- Image titles **can be** no more than 35 characters. Titles should describe what is happening in the image and species (e.g. an image of a fox with a skunk it killed in its mouth should be titled “Red Fox with Kill” instead of a “cute” title such as “Got Skunk?”) Titles may not consist of personal identifiers. Titles may not be words such as “Untitled or No Title”.

CamNats Selection Procedure:

1. For the initial image review, the panel will be provided with the images and the image names - all identifying tags are removed from the file.
2. The panel will be provided with a link to view all the submitted images online.
3. Panelists will be given approximately a week to review and score the images. They are provided with a spreadsheet containing the image names, a “score” column and a “comments” column. Panelists are to score each image with either a “1” – (image selected) or a “0” (image not selected). Panelists are asked

to provide feedback and comments for each image. Panelists email their completed spreadsheet to the committee chair, who creates a spreadsheet containing the image names and a column with each panelist's name and their score for each image. The scores are added together for each image resulting in a total image score. The panel will discuss the results on a zoom call, using the total image score as a starting point. **Most of the time**, the panel will complete the selection process during this zoom call. Six images in total will be selected.

4. Once the top 6 are selected, the panel will provide, if needed, any recommendations to make the images stronger. The image makers will be provided with the panel suggestions and asked to resubmit their image for final review. It will be completely up to the image maker whether to make changes or to make no change to the original image.
5. Once the submissions are returned, the panel will review the images. The image makers will be notified of the panel's decision. If their image is selected, the image maker must agree to have their image submitted through CamNats and sign a PSA Image Release Form.
6. The final images will be submitted before the due date and once the submission deadline has passed, the selections will be announced to the club.
7. This season, we will try our best to provide feedback for **all** images, however, due to the lack of a chair dedicated only to PSA, this may prove to be difficult, since the PSA chair is also the club president. The maker can reach out to one or more panel members to inquire about their submission once the selected images are announced.

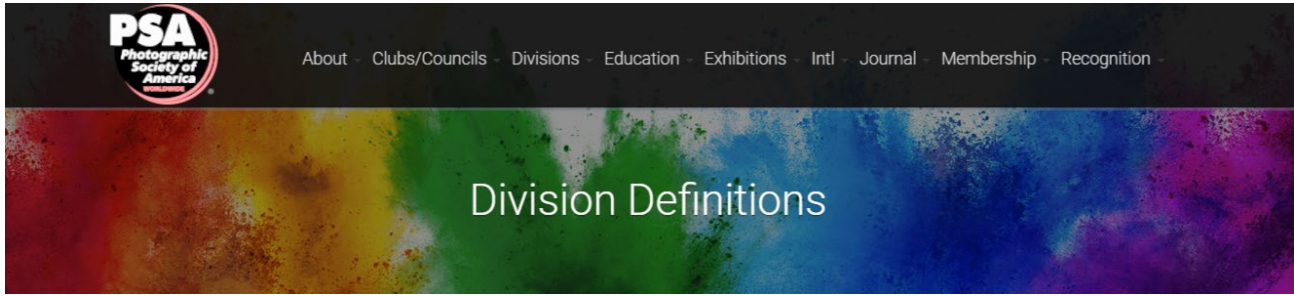
Announcement of results:

Once the results for each round of competition are finalized, they will first be communicated to the makers and then to the overall club.

PSA submissions through more than one club: The general guidance is that once you submit a photo through a club for a particular PSA interclub competition (e.g. Nature), you are committed to participate with that club for that competition and that season (e.g. 2023-2024). This only applies within a particular competition (e.g. Nature) so you can still submit through one club (e.g. CamNats) for Nature and submit through another club (e.g. Club B) for another PSA interclub competition (e.g. PID).

Questions/Comments/Suggestions: Any questions, comments or suggestions about this process can be directed to the Committee Chair, Natalie Gregorio (nattony@optonline.net) who will provide what answers she can and reach out to the PSA Interclub Nature Competition Director for more information.

ADDENDUM A



These entries have been updated to apply to all PSA recognized exhibitions in 2023, and for all internal PSA competitions with immediate effect.

Statement on Artificial Intelligence (AI) - Image Creation and Ownership

In all sections of the exhibition, images must originate as photographs made by the entrant. They may not incorporate identifiable images produced by anyone else (for example: clip art, replacement skies, or stock images). Images created in whole or in part by image creation software (frequently called 'AI' images) are not allowed. Editing or alteration of images is permitted within the limits specified in the relevant section definitions that are available here <https://psa-photo.org/page/division-definitions>

Any person submitting or attempting to submit a totally AI generated image that does not begin with a light capture from the maker, from any Photographic Society of America exhibition, social media, event, or publication, other than for editorial purposes, shall be prohibited from PSA for a period of from 3 to 5 years.

Statement on Subject Matter - applicable to all sections

The fundamental rule that must be observed at all times and applies to all sections offered in exhibitions with PSA recognition is that the welfare of living creatures is more important than any photograph. This means that practices such as baiting of subjects with a living creature and removal of birds from nests, for the purpose of obtaining a photograph, are highly unethical, and such photographs are not allowed in any exhibition with PSA recognition. Under no circumstances may a living creature be placed in a situation where it will be killed, injured, or stressed for the purpose of obtaining a photograph. Images that show live creatures being fed to captive animals, birds or reptiles are not permitted under any circumstances.

There are also concerns about the use of aerial photography, drones, helicopters, low flying aircraft. These should not cause any interference with other individuals or animals which causes a disturbance in their normal activity or disrupt the way any individuals or animals interact with their environment. Entrants in PSA recognized exhibitions must comply with all relevant laws and regulations, associated with aerial photography, in the country in which the image was taken.

Entry into PSA recognized exhibitions is conditional on accepting these policies. The content of images must comply with the General Conditions and with the Division and Section definitions listed in these conditions. Images that - in the sole opinion of the judges or the Exhibition Organizers - do not comply, will be disqualified so the entrant may be aware of the problem when considering entry into other exhibitions with PSA recognition.

PSA/FIAP Nature Division

Content Guidelines

Nature photography records all branches of natural history except anthropology and archaeology. This includes all aspects of the physical world, both animate and inanimate, that have not been made or modified by humans.

- Nature images must convey the truth of the scene that was photographed. A well-informed person should be able to identify the subject of the image and be satisfied that it has been presented honestly and that no unethical practices have been used to control the subject or capture the image. Images that directly or indirectly show any human activity that threatens the life or welfare of a living organism are not allowed.
- The most important part of a Nature image is the nature story it tells. High technical standards are expected, and the image must look natural.

- Objects created by humans, and evidence of human activity, are allowed in Nature images only when they are a necessary part of the Nature story.
- Photographs of human-created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domesticated animals, human-created hybrid animals and mounted or preserved zoological specimens are not allowed.
- Images taken with subjects under controlled conditions, such as zoos, are allowed.
- Controlling live subjects by chilling, anesthetic or any other method of restricting natural movement for the purpose of a photograph is not allowed.

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

In addition to the restrictions on Nature photography, to be eligible for any Wildlife award, images must meet the following conditions:

- (a) Zoological organisms must be living free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat of their own choosing.
- (b) Images of zoological organisms that have been removed from their natural habitat, are in any form of captivity or are being controlled by humans for the purpose of photography are not allowed.
- (c) Botanical organisms may not be removed from their natural environment for the purpose of photography.
- (d) Images that have been staged for the purpose of photography are not allowed.

Attention is drawn to the PSA Statements on Artificial Intelligence and Subject Matter which apply to all sections and to the Editing Guidelines for Nature, Photojournalism and Photo Travel

Editing Guidelines

Processing or editing must be limited to making the image look as close to the original scene as possible, except that conversion to grayscale monochrome is allowed.

Allowed editing techniques:

Cropping, straightening and perspective correction.

Removal or correction of elements added by the camera or lens, such as dust spots, noise, chromatic aberration and lens distortion.

Global and selective adjustments such as brightness, hue, saturation and contrast to restore the appearance of the original scene. Complete conversion of color images to grayscale monochrome.

Blending of multiple images of the same subject and combining them in camera or with software (exposure blending or focus stacking); Image stitching - combining multiple images with overlapping fields of view that are taken consecutively (panoramas);

Editing techniques that are not allowed:

Removing, adding to, moving, or changing any part of an image, except for cropping and straightening.

Adding a vignette during processing.

Blurring parts of the image during processing to hide elements in the original scene. Darkening parts of the image during processing to hide elements in the original scene. All conversions other than to complete grayscale monochrome.

Conversion of parts of an image to monochrome, or partial toning, desaturation, or over-saturation of color

Attention is drawn to the PSA Statement on Subject Matter which applies to all sections.