

**The key focus for pictorial images** should be on expressing an idea, creating a mood, or evoking an emotion. The primary criterion for evaluation is the artistic quality of the image. This category covers a wide range of subjects, including landscapes, seascapes, sunsets, architecture, industry, and agriculture. It also includes photographs of cultivated plants, domesticated animals, and nature scenes that incorporate human elements or demonstrate the impact of human activities. Additionally, portraits and candid images of people are considered part of this "general" classification.

**Nature photography** in this context focuses on depicting observations from natural history, excluding anthropology and archeology. The primary goal is to accurately capture subjects in their natural environment, ensuring the image appears natural. Techniques like HDR and focus stacking are allowed if they maintain a natural look. Full monochrome images are permitted. Titles should include scientific or common names and may include a descriptive element but should avoid catchy or overly general titles.

Only 1- or 2-pixel keyline borders in a lighter or complementary color are acceptable. Subjects include various natural elements like wild plants, geological formations, astronomical phenomena, wild animals, and more. Scientific bands on wild animals are acceptable. Human elements and impacts should be avoided, except when integral to the nature story (limited to 10% of the image area). Backgrounds should not overshadow the subject unless showing habitat. Extreme close-ups are acceptable but should maintain realism.

Basic computer adjustments like exposure, saturation, and sharpness are allowed, along with removal of minor distractions, but major alterations are not. Nature subjects that meet these criteria belong in the nature category; otherwise, they should be entered in pictorial or creative categories if they fit those criteria.

Respect for wildlife is vital, with photographers encouraged to maintain good manners and a genuine respect for nature. Close-up photography of nests and young animals is discouraged to avoid disturbing nesting areas and endangering young animals. Long telephoto lenses are recommended for such photography.

**The creative category** involves the use of various techniques, both during the photo shoot and in post-processing, to create images that depart from reality, emphasizing imagination and originality. The image's title should enhance or contribute to the message conveyed.

This category is open to any subject or topic, provided the photographer took the original image and owns the copyright. The entrant must also be responsible for creating all elements of the final image and conducting all post-processing work.

Entrants have the freedom to use any in-camera or post-processing techniques, which can include combining multiple images and elements into one final composition. Digital frames, pin line borders, and mats are allowed in this category.

While entrants can incorporate their artwork or computer-generated graphics, the images must not be entirely computer-generated, and the photographic origin of the image should be apparent. In essence, the final image should demonstrate a fusion of photographic elements and creative manipulation.