

SYNOPSIS FROM THE PSA JOURNAL
MAY 2009
NATURE DEFINITIONS

John Davis wrote a 3-series article on Nature Photography to help with definitions, editing and the ethics of wildlife and nature photography. I shall try to highlight the important points. The phrases in quotes and bold print are parts of PSA definitions.

DEFINITIONS –

Nature photography includes images from all branches of natural history except anthropology and archeology. While plants and animals are the most common subjects, the disciplines of botany, zoology, geology, astronomy, mineralogy, ecology and metallurgy are also included. These photographs must be taken **“in such a fashion that a well informed person will be able to identify the subject material and certify as to its honest presentation.”**

“Wildlife is defined as one or more organisms living free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat. Therefore, photographs of zoo or game farm animals are not eligible for entry in Wildlife competitions.”

ILLUSTRATIONS AND COMMENTS

Closeups which obscure habitat could cause a judge to question the honesty of the photographer and to judge accordingly.

“The story telling value of the photograph must be weighed more than the pictorial quality.” For example, a photograph showing natural behavior such as feeding is superior to a photograph of the bird just standing.

“Human elements shall not be present except on the rare occasion when those human elements enhance the nature story....” A sea bird perched on a piling or an osprey on a pole might be examples. However, it is up to the discretion of the judge.

Scientific bands are acceptable. Tethers are not.

“Photographs of artificially produced hybrid plants or animals, mounted specimens or obviously set arrangements are ineligible....”

“...as is any form of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement...The image must be truthful from capture to presentation whether film or digital. If an image does not appear “Natural” to a judge, it risks being scored down or disqualified.”

Supplemental light may be used. However, there should be no harsh shadows, no double lights in the eyes and images should not be over polarized.