

NEW DEFINITION OF NATURE TO BE USED IN PAGB COMPETITIONS

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FIAP have recently agreed a coordinated definition of Nature with PSA and RPS and the PAGB, in the interest of commonality, will adopt it, for the 2014 Inter-Club Print Championship and, subject to final ratification in October, for all PAGB Competitions from January 2015, including the GB Cup Nature which opens in 2014.

Nature photography is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archeology, in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject material and certify its honest presentation.

The story telling value of a photograph must be weighed more than the pictorial quality while maintaining high technical quality. Human elements shall not be present, except where those human elements are integral parts of the nature story such as nature subjects, like barn owls or storks, adapted to an environment modified by humans, or where those human elements are in situations depicting natural forces, like hurricanes or tidal waves.

Scientific bands, scientific tags or radio collars on wild animals are permissible. Photographs of human created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domestic animals, or mounted specimens are ineligible, as is any form of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement.

No techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are permitted. Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content, or without altering the content of the original scene, are permitted including HDR, focus stacking and dodging/burning. Techniques that remove elements added by the camera, such as dust spots, digital noise, and film scratches, are allowed. Stitched images are not permitted. All allowed adjustments must appear natural. Colour images can be converted to greyscale monochrome. Infrared images, either direct-captures or derivations, are not allowed.

**Images used in Nature Photography competitions may be divided in two classes:
Nature and Wildlife.**

Images entered in Nature sections meeting the Nature Photography Definition above can have landscapes, geologic formations, weather phenomena, and extant organisms as the primary subject matter. This includes images taken with the subjects in controlled conditions, such as zoos, game farms, botanical gardens, aquariums and any enclosure where the subjects are totally dependent on man for food.

Images entered in Wildlife sections meeting the Nature Photography Definition above are further defined as one or more extant zoological or botanical organisms free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat. Landscapes, geologic formations, photographs of zoo or game farm animals, or of any extant zoological or botanical species taken under controlled conditions are not eligible in Wildlife sections. Wildlife is not limited to animals, birds and insects. Marine subjects and botanical subjects (including fungi and algae) taken in the wild are suitable wildlife subjects, as are carcasses of extant species. Wildlife images may be entered in Nature sections of Exhibitions.

Note. The GB Cup (Nature), and the Inter-Federation (Nature) Annual Competition are the only Nature Competitions organised by the PAGB. In all other competitions, and the Awards for Photographic Merit, nature rules do not apply except where there is an individual award for Nature and the photographer has specified eligibility. Similarly there is no Wildlife Competition but this definition will be used where a specific Wildlife Award is made.

THE NATURE DEFINITION AND INTERNATIONALS – A CAUTIONARY NOTE

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With the introduction of the new definition for Nature, adopted and launched jointly by FIAP, RPS and PSA, and its adoption by the PAGB, this is an opportune time to look at a particular related issue.

There are aspects of the definition that could be argued about, but that is not the point. FIAP, PSA and RPS are responsible for patronising or recognising the vast bulk of international salons around the world. They have the right to decide the rules under which they give patronage, just as salons have the right to choose whether to seek patronage.

A unified definition has to be welcome to nature photographers. For too long we have had varying definitions, which has often lead to confusion. Let us hope that this spirit of co-operation between these bodies will lead to greater commonality in the exhibition rules, for example in the case of Monochrome. FIAP have one definition but PSA have three!

The differing definitions of Nature have enabled differing interpretations. One issue has been about what modifications can be made to a nature photograph during post processing. I am not expressing agreement or disagreement with the definition, I am simply stating what the position is. The matter, despite what some might say, is not open for dispute and what follows has been cleared with FIAP.

I have been present when it has been advocated that, during post processing, you can remove inconvenient items, such as bits of grass or inconvenient twigs, or even more. That is wrong. You are not allowed to alter the content of a nature photograph (except by cropping). To put it simply, you can “garden” before you press the shutter release, but you may NOT do so afterwards. You can remove camera created artefacts. You can also apply changes that improve the quality and appearance of the photograph, but anything you do must look natural and must not change the picture content. *(See the full definition-e-news 120 en120120714.Clark.APMworks.JackW.NatDef.pdf)*

What is more concerning is that, on more than one occasion recently, I have been faced with ‘up and coming’ exhibitors who have been given guidance by recognised ‘experts’. The guidance has been so wrong that, if the recipient had followed it, it could have resulted in them being banned for life from International Exhibitions.

FIAP and PSA, and the PAGB for that matter, maintain lists of persons who are banned from entering salons under their patronage. These are circulated to salon chairmen and applying the ban is compulsory. The reasons include plagiarism, using more than one title for the same photograph as well as other deliberate breaches of the definitions and the rules of entry.

In the case of PSA the length and extent of bans varies but can be for life. FIAP maintain the “Red List” and anyone placed on it is banned for life. Both organisations go to some lengths to give a person under suspicion chance to justify their actions and FIAP have appointed an officer dedicated solely to chasing up and enquiring into suspect cases. Where suspicions arise the original camera image will be sought, and also a sequence of original images taken immediately before and after the one in question. Pleading ignorance to the rules is unlikely to be accepted and failure to respond will be taken as a sign of guilt. It is also apparent that the number of bans being imposed has been increasing substantially over the last couple of years.

You should also be aware that most salons in the UK co-operate and circulate information between themselves, even in advance of an official ban by FIAP or PSA. UK Salons may also make similar requests for original files where they have suspicions. Please also bear in mind that these procedures are not just limited to nature sections but, where relevant, to any other sections of international salons.

No-one is expecting salons to vet every photograph in minute detail; clearly that would be impractical. Salon chairmen and their volunteers are not there to police the system, and the international organisations must not try to push them in this direction. However, I draw the parallel of camera club competitions. When was the last time, entering a club competition, that you were asked to confirm that you had actually taken the picture? This is our hobby and we start out on the basis of trust. But, just as would happen at your club, where a cheat (and let’s be clear that is what we are talking about) does come to light before, during or at any time after the event, then the full force of the rules and/or regulations can be brought to bear.

After all, it is only fair to those entrants who do abide by the rules.



PAGB President, Leo Rich DPAGB EFIAP/g ARPS APAGB, with Jan Cawley EFIAP/S, Hon FWPF, President of the Welsh Photographic Federation at the opening of the 2014 Inter-Fed Exhibition in Newport.



The exhibition can now be seen at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast until 29 August, Mon–Sat 10 am–5 pm. Closed ON Sundays.

<http://www.waterfront.co.uk/whatson/exhibitiondetails.aspx?id=42800>