PSSA Conditions of Entry for Salons and Competitions

Including category definitions and the Nature Photographer's Code of Ethics

Version 2027.2, updated 31 August 2026. Reformatted for F-Stop members.

> **About this copy.** This is the F-Stop Photographic Society's reformatted copy of the PSSA document *PSSA Conditions of Entry for Salons and Competitions, including Category Definitions and Nature Code of Ethics*, Version 2027.2, updated 31 August 2026. The wording of the rules is unchanged. Only the layout has been reworked so that it is easier to read on a screen. If anything here differs from the official PSSA document, the PSSA document applies.

At a glance

The points members ask about most often. The full conditions follow below.

> **AI-created images are not allowed.** Every part of the image must have been photographed by you. AI tools for de-noising, masking, sharpening, selecting and upsizing are fine. AI sky replacement is fine only if you photographed the new sky.

> **No manipulation** in Nature, Photo Travel, Street, Sport and Photojournalism. Only cropping, straightening, global and selective tonal adjustments, dust-spot removal and a full conversion to grayscale monochrome.

> **Keep your RAW or unretouched JPG files** with EXIF data intact. They can be requested for any category and you have 4 days to supply them. DNG files are not accepted as originals.

> **One image, one title, once per salon.** An image may be entered only once in a salon, and its title may never change afterwards. Colour and mono versions count as the same image.

> **Entry limits:** up to four images per PDI category and six per print category in a national salon.

> **Attach proof of payment** as a PDF to your PhotoVault Online entry. Entries without it are rejected.

> **Appeals** against a disqualification must reach the PSSA Salon Administrator at admin@pssa.co.za within 14 days of the results email.

Which categories allow manipulation?

Category	Manipulation
Abstract, Altered Reality, Creative or Visual Art	**Allowed**
Portraiture (animal and human)	**Allowed**
Scapes	**Allowed**
Panorama	**Allowed**
Macro	**Allowed, except when entered in a Nature section**
Open and Open Monochrome	**Allowed**
Still Life and Tabletop	**Allowed**
Prints Open Colour and Prints Open Monochrome	**Allowed**
Nature (all sections, including Birds, No Birds, Landscapes and Macro)	**Not allowed**
Photojournalism, PJ and Sport, Street, Photo Travel, Sports	**Not allowed**

Part 1. Conditions of entry

1. **Artificial intelligence.** AI-created images are **not allowed** in this salon. Images created or altered by artificial intelligence are banned in PSSA Salons and Competitions. All parts of the image must be photographed by the author, who must hold the copyright and retain the original RAW or unretouched JPG files with EXIF data intact. RAW files may be requested for any category. DNG files are not accepted as original RAW files.

   Generative AI technology consists of:

   - In-painting, where AI fills in generated elements not captured by the photographer, or removes and replaces elements from a photograph with AI-generated content.
   - Out-painting, where AI extends beyond the original boundaries of the photograph using generated elements.
   - Image-to-image AI, where AI transforms an entire photograph based on text prompts or style references.
   - Text-to-image, where images are generated from scratch based on text entered into a prompt description.

AI features like clearing, de-noising, masking, sharpening, subject selection, tone adjustments and upsizing are allowed in our competitions if they follow editing criteria and only include elements captured by the entrant. AI sky replacement is allowed if the entrant captured the new sky.

Taking inspiration from other photographers or artists is acceptable, but copying the original work's colour, composition, elements, perspective, angle, subject and tone is not. Photographers must not capture screen images or photograph images found online and use them in their composite images for submission to salons, panels or competitions. All post-processing of submitted images must be done by the entrant, except for scanning negatives and printing. Copying any part of someone else's image or artwork by tracing, sketching, etc. is prohibited.

2. **Manipulation.** Manipulation is **strictly prohibited** in the Nature, Photo Travel, Street, Sport and Photojournalism categories, as well as in any categories defined accordingly. Processing or editing must be limited to making the image look as close to the original scene as possible, apart from conversion to grayscale monochrome, which is permitted. Over-processed images will be disqualified.

   Editing techniques that are not allowed:

   - Removing, adding to, moving or changing any part of an image, except for cropping and straightening.
   - In Nature and Wildlife, **no** vignette may be added.
   - 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 oversaturation of colour.

   Allowed editing techniques:

   - Cropping, straightening and perspective correction.
   - Flipping an image horizontally or vertically.
   - 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.
   - A very subtle vignette is allowed except in Nature and Wildlife.
   - Complete conversion of colour images to grayscale monochrome.
   - Blending of multiple images of the same subject and combining them in camera or with software (exposure blending, HDR or focus stacking). In the case of Nature, exposure blending, HDR and focus stacking will not be considered as manipulation and may be used provided that the end result is a faithful representation of the original scene. Exposure blending, HDR and focus stacking are **not** allowed in Photojournalism.
   - Image stitching: combining multiple images with overlapping fields of view that are taken consecutively (panoramas).

In Open categories and those where manipulation is permitted, there are no limits on how authors may choose to post-process an image, except for the use of brushes, actions, overlays, backgrounds or any other element that is not the original work of the author.

The Salon Director will always request the original RAW or JPG files with the EXIF data intact from those entrants who have been initially selected for the Medals and COMs in the "no manipulation" categories. If the PSSA Salon Committee confirms that the image has not been manipulated, the award will stand for those entrants. The Salon Director and the judging team for that category will decide on the replacement images for the Medals and COMs in line with the recommended acceptance levels. Entrants will be allowed 4 days to provide the original RAW or JPG files, after which the entrant will not be eligible for Medals or COMs. Refusal to submit these will result in referral to the PSSA Salon Committee and inclusion on the transgression list.

3. The entrant accepts without exception and with no objection the following terms:
    - that PSSA can request and investigate any or all submitted images to establish if these adhere to PSSA regulations and definitions, even if the entrant is not a member of PSSA;
    - failure to provide these will result in referral to the PSSA Salon Committee and inclusion on the transgression list.
4. Attach proof of payment (POP) in PDF format to your PhotoVault Online entry. **Entries with insufficient fees or without POP will be rejected.**
5. An image may be used only once in a specific salon, panel or competition, regardless of the category or whether the image is in colour or monochrome. Similar images are not permitted. If an image appears in more than one category, the second instance of the image will be disqualified. Monochrome and colour variations originating from a single image are considered identical unless there is a substantial difference in artistic treatment. Additionally, similarity may occur when elements are replicated across different composite images.
6. Each image must have a unique name. The name of the image may **not** be altered, as acceptance records are based on the image name. Titles such as "Untitled" and "No Title" are not acceptable, nor are titles consisting solely of camera filenames or numbers. Sanctions will be imposed if an accepted image or print is re-titled, or if different titles are used for Colour and Monochrome versions or Print and Projected Digital Image versions of the same image. Both images will be disqualified.

    In addition, so-called "sister images", where there is very little discernible difference between two images, will be regarded as the same or substantially similar image. Such images may not be entered under different titles unless there is a clear and significant difference in composition and/or artistic treatment between them.
7. Entrants may submit up to four images in each PDI category and six in each print category of a national salon.
8. Images that were accepted previously in a National Salon by the hosting club or society cannot be entered again into their National Salon, but may be submitted to an International Salon hosted by the same club or society. This rule also applies to International Salons.
9. Images that do not meet the category's definition or criteria will be disqualified by the judges.

10. The image must not display any title, watermark or identification of the creator.
11. The salon does not assume responsibility for any copyright violations by the entrant.
12. Judges are not allowed to enter categories in which they are judging. If a judge enters any category they are responsible for, the images will be disqualified.
13. Family members (spouse, partner, parents, grandparents, siblings, children and grandchildren) can enter categories judged by relatives but cannot win medals (winner or runner-up).
14. Members of the judging club are not eligible for top awards (winner and runner-up medals), but can receive certificates of merit and/or special club awards for categories judged by their club. A club is classified as a judging club if its members make up most of the judging panel for the category in question.
15. The Salon Director and anyone involved in processing or accessing images may **not** serve as judges for the salon.
16. Entrants' images will be randomly distributed among categories for judging.
17. **No** late entries will be accepted.
18. **Data protection.** By entering this salon, you consent to the personal details you have provided, including email addresses, being held, processed and used by the salon organisers for purposes related to this salon. You also consent to such information being sent to organisations that have granted official recognition, patronage or accreditation to this salon. You acknowledge and accept that the status and results of your entry may be made public.
19. **Breach of conditions of entry.** The Salon Director can disqualify entries that do not meet the Conditions of Entry, including Definitions, before, during or after judging, and void any acceptance or awards. Fees will be forfeited. Entries violating ethics will be investigated by the PSSA Salon Committee, who may impose sanctions, list the entrant on a sanction registry, and share findings with FIAP and PSA. The final decision to disqualify an image lies with the PSSA Salon Committee. **Entrants agree to these terms.**
20. You are entitled to appeal against a disqualification within 14 days after receiving your results. Appeals must be sent to the PSSA Salon Administrator at admin@pssa.co.za.
21. **Submission of entries signifies acceptance of these Conditions of Entry.**

Part 2. Image repetition, transgressions and disqualification

Image repetition

PSSA applies a cumulative limit of 3 acceptances per image as defined in the respective Impala and Diamond Rating rules. It is recommended that clubs apply a similar standard in their club competitions and promotion rules.

Transgressions in a salon with PSSA patronage

Version 2027.1 (2026-08-31), approved by the PSSA Board of Directors on 2026-08-13.

These rules include, but are not limited to:

- **Renaming an image** by using a different name for a mono and a colour version of the same image, or using a different name for an image previously entered in a salon under a different name.
- **Removing an element** from the original in a non-manipulation category, by various methods including cloning, darkening or excessive dodging and burning or vignetting.
- **Adding an element** to the original image in a non-manipulation category.
- **Moving an element** in the original image in a non-manipulation category.
- **Using an AI-generated image** as an image or part of a composite image, or the use of AI features that contain any elements which were not captured by the entrant.
- Using any **images or overlays not captured by the author**.
- **Not submitting a RAW file** in response to the request of a Salon Director or the PSSA Salon Administrator, for whatever reason.

Salon DQ sliding scale model

There are 3 categories of transgressions that will attract different and proportionate sanctions. These transgressions range from the most serious (Category 1) to serious (Category 2) to the least serious (Category 3).

- **Category 1, most serious.** Deliberate or potentially deliberate actions that compromise image authenticity, ownership or verification. These attract the highest level of sanction: DISQ06 Manipulation, DISQ12 Not own work, DISQ13 No RAW file submitted.
- **Category 2, serious.** Transgressions relating to image title integrity and acceptance history tracking: DISQ11 Image title change.
- **Category 3, least serious.** Administrative or technical transgressions that do not attract additional sanctions beyond the salon disqualification itself.

Below are the DQ codes and reasons as used in each PSSA patronaged salon. These codes and reasons appear on the official PVO salon results emailed to each entrant after the results have been finalised and verified by the PSSA Salon Committee.

Code	Reason	Severity	Action
DISQ01	Duplicate entry	3	Not serious, no further action
DISQ02	Accepted in previous salon	3	Not serious, no further action
DISQ03	Non-payment	3	Not serious, no further action
DISQ04	Colour in mono	3	Not serious, no further action
DISQ05	Mono in colour	3	Not serious, no further action
DISQ06	**Manipulation**	**1**	**Very serious, DQ sliding scale applies**
DISQ07	Wrong category	3	Not serious, no further action
DISQ08	Judge's entry	3	Not serious, no further action
DISQ09	Writing on image	3	Not serious, no further action
DISQ10	Same or similar image	3	Not serious, no further action
DISQ11	**Image title changed**	**2**	**Serious, DQ sliding scale applies**
DISQ12	**Not own work**	**1**	**Very serious, DQ sliding scale applies**
DISQ13	**No RAW submitted**	**1**	**Very serious, DQ sliding scale applies**
DISQ14	Image withdrawn	3	Not serious, no further action

Coupled with this, the **number of transgressions plays a key role**. The PSSA Salon Committee will track all transgressions, which will be recorded in the official PSSA Salon DQ Database. This information is shared with each Salon Director, who will run all the images against the DQ Database to ascertain if any of the images in the database appear in the salon. Should they appear, these images will be examined by the Salon Director and will be DQ'd prior to the salon judging taking place. Any queries from the Salon Director will be referred to the PSSA Salon Committee for review and decision, managed by the PSSA Salon Administrator. This forms the basis for tracking all Category 1 and Category 2 transgressions, including the cumulative number of transgressions.

A DQ sliding scale has been introduced that progressively penalises the entrant who continues to transgress the Category 1 and Category 2 rules. For up to two transgressions the penalty is the same, but thereafter the additional penalty increases. There is a differential between Categories 1 and 2 that applies a proportionate sanction for the type of transgression.

Offence	Category 1, most serious DISQ06 Manipulated, DISQ12 Not own work, DISQ13 No RAW submitted		Category 2, serious DISQ11 Image title changed		Category 3, least serious All other DQ reasons
	Points	Cumulative	Points	Cumulative	Points
1st offence	10	**10**	5	**5**	0
2nd offence	10	**20**	5	**10**	0
3rd offence	15	**35**	10	**20**	0
4th offence	15	**50**	10	**30**	0
5th offence	15	**65**	10	**40**	0
6th offence	15	**80**	10	**50**	0

Salon rules in application

1. First recorded transgression

1. **No notification letter will be issued.** The transgression will be noted on the PSSA DQ Database. The entrant will have **14 days** in which **to appeal** the DQ decision with the PSSA Salon Committee (directed through the PSSA Salon Administrator) from the **date that the official PVO results have been emailed** to all entrants.
2. The **image will be DQ'd**. No points will be recorded against the image.
3. **Additional points as per the DQ sliding scale will be deducted** based on the severity of the DQ transgression.
4. **Any AI transgression will be referred to the PSSA Salon Committee** for review, discussion and decision on the sanction to be imposed.

2. Second recorded transgression

1. **A formal notification letter will be issued.** The entrant will be advised of the first and second transgression in the formal notification letter. The transgression will be noted on the PSSA DQ Database. The entrant will have **14 days** in which **to appeal** the DQ decision for a new transgression with the PSSA Salon Committee (directed through the PSSA Salon Administrator) from the **date that the official PVO results have been emailed** to all entrants. If the transgression is for a previously DQ'd image, no appeal process will be entertained, as the decision by the PSSA Salon Committee has been made.

2. The **image will be DQ'd and all other previous acceptance points in the Impala Trophy year for that specific image will be lost.**
3. **Additional points as per the DQ sliding scale will be deducted** based on the severity of the DQ transgression.
4. **Any AI transgression will be referred to the PSSA Salon Committee** for review, discussion and decision on the sanction to be imposed.

3. Third recorded transgression

1. **A final notification letter will be issued.** The entrant will be advised of the first, second and third transgression in the final notification letter. The transgression will be noted on the PSSA DQ Database. The entrant will have **14 days** in which **to appeal** the DQ decision for a new transgression with the PSSA Salon Committee (directed through the PSSA Salon Administrator) from the **date that the official PVO results have been emailed** to all entrants. If the transgression is for a previously DQ'd image, no appeal process will be entertained, as the decision by the PSSA Salon Committee has been made.
2. The **image will be DQ'd.**
3. **Additional points as per the DQ sliding scale will be deducted** based on the severity of the DQ transgression.
4. **Any AI transgression will be referred to the PSSA Salon Committee** for review, discussion and decision on the sanction to be imposed.
5. **The entrant will not be allowed to finish in the Top 10 of the Impala Trophy (IT) log.** Additionally, the entrant cannot win any of the IT category gold medals, being Open, Nature and Mono. Should the mathematical calculations of the various transgressions up to this point in the IT log not move the entrant out of the Top 10, the entrant will be placed in 11th position on the IT log, reflecting their full points but not qualifying for a Top 10 position.
6. **The entrant will be called into a meeting with the PSSA Regional Director (and a member of the PSSA Salon Committee if so required)** to discuss the severity of the transgressions and to try to establish the reason for the continual transgressions. This allows dialogue between the parties to take place, which hopefully brings an understanding of the process so that the entrant can correct their actions going forward.

4. Fourth recorded transgression

1. Upon a fourth recorded Category 1 or Category 2 transgression, the PSSA Salon Committee will review the entrant's complete transgression history and make a **recommendation to PSSA EXCOM**, whose decision regarding any additional sanction shall be final.

5. Other key DQ rules

1. **Transgressions.** A recorded transgression is counted per entry per salon.
2. **1st recorded transgression (Category 1 and 2).** The entrant's name will be placed on the DQ Database for a period of 12 months from the date of the DQ from the salon's official PVO results, provided that there are no further transgressions during this period.

3. **2nd recorded transgression (Category 1 and 2).** The entrant's name will be placed on the DQ Database for a period of 18 months from the date of the formal notification letter, provided that there are no further transgressions during this period.
4. **3rd recorded transgression (Category 1 and 2).** The entrant's name will be placed on the DQ Database for a period of 24 months from the date of the final notification letter, provided that there are no further transgressions during this period.
5. **4th and further recorded transgressions (Category 1 and 2).** All transgression history will be reinstated for a period of 36 months from the date of the 4th transgression, as witnessed by the salon's PVO results, final notification letter and PSSA Salon Committee's recommendation.

6. General IT rule updates

6.1 IT and DQ rules

- The IT rules, including the DQ rules, will be reviewed annually prior to the new IT calendar year. Any changes will be updated on the PSSA website and will contain a version control number and document date.
- The Salon Director's pack will also be updated where applicable, including the salon brochure template.
- There will be no changes to the IT and DQ rules whilst the competition is taking place.
- If there are any changes to these rules, this will be effected before the new IT calendar year.

6.2 Transgression validity periods

- The transgression validity period only pertains to the period in which the transgression shall remain in force on the DQ database.
- Despite any transgressions by an entrant, an entrant may enter any salon they so wish in the IT salon calendar. There are no restrictions placed on any entrant.
- If there are no further transgressions in an entrant's transgression period, the entrant's name and DQ'd image will be removed from the DQ database once the transgression period has ended.
- Subsequently, should there be further transgressions by an entrant, the entrant's name and DQ'd image will be added to the DQ database and the validity period as stated above will be invoked.

6.3 DQ and transgression notice

- A DQ notice takes the form of a salon's official PVO results that are sent to each and every salon entrant. The image that has the DQ is noted, and the DQ code and reason is stated on the official PVO results email.
- All entrants with a DQ have the right to appeal the DQ **within 14 days of the date that the PVO results have been sent out**.
- For clarity, the official starting date of the **14-day DQ appeal process** is the date from which the Salon Director issues the emails to all entrants.
- ***Appeals received after the 14-day appeal period will not be considered unless exceptional circumstances exist and are accepted by the PSSA Salon Committee.***

- All DQ appeals need to be addressed to the PSSA Salon Administrator, who will in turn advise the PSSA Salon Committee of the appeal.
- The PSSA Salon Committee will review the appeal, make a determination on the merits of the case, and advise the entrant of its decision.
- The PSSA Salon Committee's decision is final, and no further appeal will be allowed or entertained.
- Based on the outcome of the 14-day appeal process, the severity of the DQ and the number of previous transgressions, the PSSA Salon Committee will issue the relevant notification letter as per the process mentioned above.

6.4 Title name changes

> *Where the same image is entered under different titles, the re-titled (second) image will be disqualified under "DISQ11: Image Title Change". The original title remains the recognised title for acceptance and award history purposes. Both titles will be recorded in the PSSA DQ Database to facilitate future verification and prevent further re-submission under alternative titles.*

- Each image must have a unique name. The name of the image may not be altered, as acceptance records are based on the image name or title.
- Sanctions will be imposed if a previously accepted image or print is re-titled, or if different titles are used for colour and monochrome versions, or if there are print and PDI versions of the same image.
- The re-titled image will receive a DQ.
- An "Image Title Change" DQ can only happen to an image that has received an acceptance in any previous salon. In this scenario the second entry (where the image title was changed) will receive a DQ ("DISQ11, Image Title Changed").
- If the same image with a different image title is entered into the same salon, **both images** will be DQ'd ("DISQ11, Image Title Changed").

Part 3. Definitions

For the purposes of competitions, salons and specialist honours applications, all images entered in any of the two media (Prints and Projected Digital Images) are each divided into three categories: **Nature**, **Open** and **Photojournalism (PJ)**. There are two categories for Audio-Visual: **Open** and **Documentary**.

- Any event choosing to run with any of the defined categories in this document must abide by these PSSA definitions.
- Salons and competitions may choose to have one other section as well, and for this they may make their own definition. However, the definition must be clear and precise.
- Disqualifications should only be made when the salon director and/or judges are sure of their facts and are approved by the PSSA Salon Committee.
- PSSA reserves the right to withhold or disqualify any image which is considered to infringe the common laws of decency and copyright. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.
- The final decision to disqualify an image lies with the PSSA Salon Committee.
- Members are reminded that they should read the rules of all events very carefully, as the rules may differ.

Monochrome

Monochrome is a black and white image.

- A black and white work fitting from the very dark grey (black) to the truly clear grey (white) is a monochrome work with the various shades of grey.
- A black and white work toned entirely in a single colour will remain a monochrome work, able to stand in the black and white category.
- A black and white work modified by a partial toning or by the addition of one colour becomes a colour work (polychrome), to stand in the colour category.

Category definitions

1. Abstract, Altered Reality, Creative or Visual Art MANIPULATION IS ALLOWED

Abstract. An exercise in composition for the sake of art. The real identity of the abstractionist's subject is not important, and the result is not intended to *be* anything.

Altered Reality. An image created by altering reality in an obvious manner, created digitally or in camera. The intention is the creation of an image that conveys a feeling or message or tells a story.

Creative or Visual Art. Images that go beyond the straightforward pictorial rendering of a scene. The image does not have to employ derivative or manipulative techniques to be Creative or Visual Art.

2. Portraiture MANIPULATION IS ALLOWED

Animal Portraits. A likeness, personality and mood of a living animal where the subject is dominant in the image. Portraiture is not restricted to head and shoulders and may include just a part of the face, a

back view or even a full-length study.

Human Portraits. A likeness, personality and mood of a living human where the subject is dominant in the image. Portraiture is not restricted to head and shoulders and may include just a part of the face, a back view or even a full-length study.

3. Scapes MANIPULATION IS ALLOWED

Scapes photography shows the spaces within the world, sometimes vast and unending, but other times microscopic, with or without people. Scape photographs typically capture the presence of nature but can also focus on man-made features or disturbances of landscapes, including sea, water and underwater scapes, desert, mountain, forest and city scapes. The most common thing is to recall a personal observation or experience while outdoors.

4. Panorama MANIPULATION IS ALLOWED

A panorama is an image with elongated fields of view, with an aspect ratio of 2:1 or larger, the image being at least twice as wide as its height.

5. Macro MANIPULATION IS ALLOWED*

Macro photography is extremely close-up photography, where you get close to a small subject by physical or optical means. The size of the subject in the finished photograph is usually greater than life size and reveals details which cannot easily be seen with the naked eye.

*Macro fits as a subsection of Open as well as Nature. When entered in a Nature section, manipulation is **not** allowed.

6. Open Monochrome MANIPULATION IS ALLOWED

In this category the subject is totally open. Colour images will be disqualified.

7. Open MANIPULATION IS ALLOWED

In this category the subject is totally open. Monochrome images will be disqualified.

8. Nature MANIPULATION IS NOT ALLOWED

Nature photography records all branches of natural history except anthropology and archaeology. This includes all aspects of the physical world, both overwater and underwater. Nature images must convey the truth of the scene. 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 threatening a living organism's life or welfare 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.

- Photographs made where the scene is natural and the animal is unharmed in a carefully managed environment, such as zoos, rescue centres and ethically managed natural environment farms, are permitted.
- Attracting or controlling subjects using food or sound for the purpose of photographing them is not allowed. Maintained situations, such as supplemental food provided due to hardship caused by weather conditions or other conditions beyond the animals' control, where photography is incidental to the feeding of the animal, do not fall under this provision.
- Controlling live subjects by chilling, anaesthetic or any other method of restricting natural movement for a photograph is not allowed.
- Human-made elements shall be permitted under the following circumstances: when they are an integral part of the nature story, such as a songbird singing atop a fence post, a man-made object used as nest material, or a weather phenomenon destroying a man-made structure; when they are a small but unavoidable part of the scene, such as an unobtrusive footprint or track in the background; and scientific tags, collars and bands, which are specifically allowed.
- When photographing at a zoo, sanctuary or rehabilitation centre, it would be construed that the photographer ensured that it is properly accredited and conforms to best practices.

Nature Birds Only. Nature images of birds. Subjects may be in controlled conditions. Photographs of feral, domestic or farm birds or mounted specimens are ineligible. Human elements, if present, should not detract from or overpower the subject. If other animals are present, the bird or birds must be the main feature.

Nature No Birds. The full Nature definition above applies, with one addition: if birds are present, the birds must be the secondary feature.

Nature Landscapes. A genre intended to show different spaces within the world, usually vast and unending, but which can also be microscopic. A landscape comprises the visible features of an area and physical elements such as landforms, water, living elements of flora and fauna, and abstract elements like lightning and weather conditions. It could be pure nature and may include animals. Man-made or cultivated subjects may not be included.

Nature Macro. Macro photography is extremely close-up nature photography, where you get close to a small subject by physical or optical means. The size of the subject in the finished photograph is usually greater than life size and reveals details which cannot easily be seen with the naked eye.

9. Photojournalism (PJ) MANIPULATION IS NOT ALLOWED

Photojournalism entries are images with informative content reflecting the human presence in our world and emotional impact, which usually include human interest, documentary, news or sport. The journalistic value of the image shall receive priority over the pictorial quality. In the interest of credibility, PJ images that misrepresent the truth, and model or staged set-ups, are not permitted.

PJ and Sport. Entries in this category should have informative content and emotional impact. In the interest of credibility, images that misrepresent the truth, and model or staged set-ups, are not permitted.

Street Photography. Street photography records unposed scenes in public places. The primary subject is people and/or symbols of people, at rest or in motion, alone or with others, going about their everyday activities.

Photo Travel and Street Photography. The primary subject is people and/or symbols of people, at rest or in motion, alone or with others, going about their everyday activities. Close-up pictures of people or objects should include features that provide information about the environment.

Sports Photography. Sports photography covers any aspect of a sporting event. Images must depict an active pastime or recreation involving physical exertion and/or skill that is governed by a set of rules or customs and is often of a competitive nature. The level of sport can range from children playing a sport to the Olympic Games. Images in this section could include the spectators, judge or umpire in a sporting event. Dance productions like ballet, and air shows, are deemed not to be sport and hence are not allowed in this category.

Photo Travel. A Photo Travel image expresses the characteristic features or culture of a land as they are found naturally. There are no geographic limitations.

10. Still Life MANIPULATION IS ALLOWED

A still life features an arrangement of inanimate objects as its subject. The subjects may be man-made or natural and may be set up or found, indoors or out.

11. Tabletop MANIPULATION IS ALLOWED

An arrangement of inanimate objects on a tabletop.

12. Prints Open Colour MANIPULATION IS ALLOWED

In this category the subject is totally open. Monochrome images will be disqualified.

13. Prints Open Monochrome MANIPULATION IS ALLOWED

In this category the subject is totally open. Colour images will be disqualified.

Appendix 1. The Nature Photographer's Code of Ethics

Compiled by the Photographic Society of South Africa to promote the conservation and awareness of our natural heritage through observation and exhibition.

Introduction

The Photographic Society of South Africa has, in order to help protect all nature's subjects and the environment, proposed a code of ethics for all nature enthusiasts to follow, whether in national parks, wilderness areas or even in your own garden. Acknowledgement must go to the Association of Natural History of Great Britain, the Nature Division of the Photographic Society of America and all naturalist photographers from whose codes of practice this code of ethics is derived.

Always remember that the welfare of the natural history subject is of prime importance. You are an intruder and as such must respect both the creatures and the ecosystem. Our aim must be to preserve our heritage, and by following the guidelines set out here each of you can help. Social courtesy and respect must be shown to all around us, be they animals, vegetables, minerals or human beings.

Respect encompasses a knowledge and understanding of your subject, as well as being sufficiently familiar with other natural history specialities to be able to avoid damaging their interests accidentally. The law as it affects all nature subjects must always be observed.

Whatever your interest in nature, be it to photograph or to observe, you will only achieve your aim and be able to consider yourself a true naturalist when you become one with your surroundings.

Feeding

While feeding of animals and/or birds is, in certain instances, an acceptable practice, such as the supply of bones to the vultures in Giant's Castle, the use of live bait is not acceptable in any circumstances.

Common courtesy

In national parks you are generally restricted to your vehicle, and as a driver you should observe common courtesy and obey all rules and regulations of the park. Do not speed up to or past a stopped vehicle. Slow down, wait a short distance off and make sure that you will not disturb anything before driving on, or wait to be waved on. Do not drive in such a way as to box other cars in, particularly when near dangerous animals such as elephants, nor park in such a way that you block the road.

Your passengers too should observe normal safety precautions and common courtesies, such as not hanging out of windows or playing music. Nature has wonderful sounds all on its own. Stop and listen, and enjoy all facets of our natural history.

If any creature shows uneasiness caused by your presence, you should move off rather than force the creature to move. It is totally unethical to throw anything at a creature to cause it to change its position or area.

Birds at nests and creatures at dens

It is particularly important that photography and/or viewing of breeding creatures only be undertaken by people with a good knowledge of the creatures' breeding behaviour. Books, study groups and the like

will help to further your knowledge.

It is generally best to use a hide in order not to disturb the creatures. When erecting a hide, do not erect it on a regularly used approach line, nor where the attention of the public or predators is likely to endanger the subject. You should not approach a nest or den too closely; careful judgement is necessary. No part of the occupant or their equipment should be visible through or from outside the hide. Do not keep a hide set up if the parents do not return within approximately half an hour, especially on very cold or very hot days.

"Gardening", meaning interference with surrounding vegetation, is sometimes necessary for photography of nesting birds. This should be kept to a minimum, not exposing the subject to predators, people or adverse weather conditions. Gardening should be carried out by tying back and not cutting off branches and grasses. In between each shooting session and at the conclusion of any session, everything should be returned to the way it was, and tracks to and from the area should be very inconspicuous.

Although the best time for viewing and for photography is at the time of the hatch or birth, this is not the time to start erecting a hide, nor when eggs are newly laid. You must wait until the parents' reaction to the situation is firmly established.

Nestlings should never be handled or removed from the nest, nor may you restrict their movement while photographing them in situ.

Scientific banding is accepted in nature photographs.

Insects, snakes and reptiles

The removal of these creatures to a studio for photography is an accepted practice, provided that their subsequent release is in the original habitat as soon as it is practical. These creatures should only be photographed in surroundings and on perches where they would naturally occur.

Chilling, freezing, light anaesthesia or any other action aimed at subduing the creature is not acceptable. You may not endanger the life of any specimen.

Diurnal creatures should be photographed in the early morning or late afternoon, or when the weather is colder, when they will be more torpid. Likewise for nocturnal creatures.

Recording these creatures in the field would probably tell a more accurate story.

Tide pool subjects

Tide pool animals have a definite role in our ecology, and creatures living on top of or below rocks will die if those rocks are turned over and not replaced the way they were found.

Geology

The appearance of pictographs and petroglyphs should never be altered by applying any substance, even the simplest compounds. Cave formations and crystals should never be moved, broken or tampered with. These ancient arts can never be restored.

Botany

It is most important that the preparations to photograph or view one specimen do not involve treading on other specimens. Avoid trampling on fragile habitats, especially grasslands, marshes and wildflower patches, as damage to the habitat affects all species in the ecosystem.

A competent photographer or botanist need never pick wildflowers. No rarity should be picked, let alone dug up, for studio photography, or to facilitate the in-situ photography of another specimen, nor should any part be removed to facilitate the photography of another part.

If rocks or logs or other objects natural to the area are brought in to provide a scientifically correct and more photogenic background, these should be returned to their original place.

Conclusion

Thoughtless conduct could force a creature to leave its accustomed surroundings because it finds you an unbearable nuisance, and in doing so the whole ecosystem can become unbalanced.

In conclusion, we can only suggest that both the recording and viewing of any natural history subject can only be enhanced by doing so in its natural surroundings.

Appendix 2. PSSA breach of rules procedure

1. PSSA authorities regarding breach of rules or procedures can only directly apply where such breach relates to PSSA competitions, events enjoying PSSA patronage or the PSSA awards.
2. It is possible that PSSA may receive advice from another body that an individual has been found guilty of an offence, and that such information may require PSSA to act.
3. Initial action in relation to any breach of rules or procedures is the responsibility of the organising authority for the competition or event in question, who should endeavour to resolve the issue without reference to the PSSA. It is possible that the organising authority may request guidance from the PSSA, which in general will be given where appropriate. However, such guidance will not relieve the organising authority of its responsibility to resolve the matter locally.
4. Subject to paragraph 3, anyone wishing to pursue a complaint, or provide other information about an alleged breach of the rules or procedures, needs to supply full and substantiated proof of the complaint in writing to the Company Secretary of the PSSA, outlining the details and requesting that the PSSA take appropriate action to investigate.
5. On receipt of such a communication, the Company Secretary will refer the matter to the Chairman of the Executive Committee (Excom), who will propose a course of action to be followed to investigate the issue. Such an action will vary depending on the nature of the complaint, but may include convening a panel of up to 3 elected members of Excom to assist in the investigation. The panel will be free to call for additional information from anyone likely to be able to assist in their deliberations.
6. If a complaint is upheld, levels of sanction could include a warning, disqualification or removal of awards, and it will be for the investigation to recommend suitable action in each individual case.

7. Regarding restitution, if the complaint is upheld then, wherever possible, efforts should be made to return the situation to the position that would have prevailed if the offence had not been committed, or any offending images had not been submitted.
8. Excom will report on their findings and recommendations without undue delay. Once a final decision has been agreed, it will be communicated to the original complainant and any others that it is deemed suitable to inform, paying due regard to the possibility that there may be an appeal.
9. Any appeal against any decision taken under the above procedure must be communicated within 30 days of the date of notification of the decision. Such appeal will be considered by a panel chaired by the President of the PSSA together with the two Vice Presidents. The decision of this panel will be final.

Source: PSSA Approved Salon Definitions and Conditions of Entry, Version 2027.2, 31 August 2026. Reformatted for members of the F-Stop Photographic Society, Kempton Park.