

IRISH PHOTOGRAPHIC FEDERATION

NATIONAL
N&W
NATIONAL
NATURE &
WILDLIFE
PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION



HANDBOOK

NNWPC IMAGE OF THE COMPETITION, 2025



LIONESS CHASING A ZEBRA WITH A DRY LAKE AMBOSELI IN THE
BACKGROUND, KENYA - ALEX MCCLEAN , DUBLIN CC

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1. The Competition

Encouraging the highest standards in Irish photography

Entry to the NNWPC is open to all members of clubs, societies and groups affiliated to the Irish Photographic Federation. The competition opens Monday August 24th at mid-day and will be open until Monday September 14th (9 PM).

The NNWPC will be held in The Westgrove Hotel, Clane Co.Kildare on **Sunday, 20th September 2026**

Competition Format

- The 2026 NNWPC is a mixed print/digital image event, that will provide overall and non-advanced (N) awards.
- Images must be entered through the IPF Competition Management System (CMS) at: <https://ipfhost.org/main/main.php>
- The competition will be judged live as a one day event.

Competition Categories and Sections

Print Category: Open Nature and Wildlife Section, Natural Landscapes Section, Macro Section, Ireland's Waders & Wetland Birds Section

PDI Category: Flora and Fungi Section; Nature Next Door Section. The sections and rules are set out in Chapter 2.

Entrants are limited to a maximum of 24 images across the six sections (up six (6) images in any individual section).

Competition Awards

- The national final will result in IPF Gold, Silver and Bronze medals, together with two Honourable Mentions (HMs) per section.
- Separate IPF Gold, Silver and Bronze awards, together with three HMs, will be presented for the non-advanced (N) competition with the final six images chosen from the top N image in each section.
- The NNWPC Image of the Year will be selected by the judges from the section gold medal winners and the winner will be awarded a trophy.
- The NNWPC Photographer of the Year will be awarded to the photographer achieving the highest cumulative score from their top 15 images across all sections and will be awarded a gold medal.

The Competition Continued...

The Competition

Non-Advanced Competition

This year's competition is structured to recognise the work of non-advanced (N) photographers. Non-advanced photographers who wish to be considered separately for non-advanced awards **must** indicate their non-advanced status in the '**edit details**' tab of the competition system (second row to the right, click the checkbox 'novice') AND write the capital letter N on the back of their prints. Details provided in the 'entering the competition' section. If photographers do not click this check box and add the N to the back of the print, they cannot be considered for the non-advanced awards.

The top N image from each section will compete for gold, silver and bronze medals and three honourable mentions.

Nominating themselves as non-advanced (N) does not impact on the photographer's participation in the overall competition.

If you do not meet any of the criteria for advanced set out below you are eligible to nominate yourself as non-advanced and to compete for this additional set of awards. Advanced photographers are defined by the IPF, for the purpose of this competition as:

- (a) photographers who have received any IPF distinction or similar, i.e., FIAP, PSA, RPS or any other distinctions;
- (b) photographers who have been awarded more than one IPF medal in IPF national competitions;
- (c) photographers who have produced image(s) that have represented the IPF in international competitions;
- (d) photographers who have received an acceptance or acceptances with five or more image titles, or one or more awards, including a ribbon, in FIAP and/or PSA recognized salons.
- (e) photographers whose club considers them to be of advanced standard in any disciplines of photography (e.g., monochrome print, colour print, digital image, AV etc.);
- (f) photographers who, in the opinion of the IPF, are of advanced standard.

The Competition

Image Creation and Ownership/Copyright

- All content of each image entered must be the work of the photographer.
- All images entered in the National Nature & Wildlife Photography Competition across all sections must comply with the 2026 updated FIAP definitions.
- Images created in whole or in part by artificial intelligence (AI) software are **not** allowed in any category.
- Your entry remains your copyright. It is, however, a condition of entry that the IPF may use your entered images for inclusion in competition brochures and/or for the purpose of promoting photography in Ireland and abroad.
- Competitors are strictly forbidden from using the same image that has been entered in previous IPF national nature competitions. Any such image will be disqualified.
- A particular image can be entered in one section only.
- Images entered can be either colour or monochrome. Mono and colour versions of an image will be considered the same image.

General Considerations

It is the competitor's responsibility to read and understand section definitions and photography/editing rules. Submission of entries is deemed to confirm acceptance.

Interpretation and implementation of the rules shall be at the discretion of the competition co-ordinator who shall be honour-bound to adjudicate all disputes fairly and without favour.

The co-ordinator may request to see original images as part of this process.

Any form of canvassing of any judge or organiser is strictly forbidden.

The Use of Drones

The use of images taken from drones is permitted. However, the drone should not cause any interference with other individuals or animals, a disturbance in their normal activity, or disrupt the way any individuals or animals interact with their environment.

Entrants should comply with all relevant laws and regulations, associated with aerial photography, in the country in which the image was taken.

Disturbance of People and Wildlife

Photographers must respect the laws of the relevant country in regard to the taking/presenting of wildlife images and the prevention of harm to animals in captivity or in the wild. By entering a IPF event, photographers warrant that they have followed relevant codes of practice and ethical practices.

2. Competition Sections

The 2026 NNWPC provides six sections to entrants:

Section Title	Format	Rules
Open Nature and Wildlife	Print	FIAP Definitions
Natural Landscapes	Print	FIAP Definitions
Macro	Print	FIAP Definitions
Ireland's Waders and Wetland Birds	Print	FIAP Definitions
Flora and Fungi	PDI (Projected Image)	FIAP Definitions
Nature Next Door	PDI (Projected Image)	FIAP Definitions

Competition Sections Notes

FIAP Nature Definitions Apply to All Sections (See Appendix)

Section 1. Open Nature and Wildlife (Print)

This open section invites photographers to showcase the diversity and wonder of the natural world through images of wildlife and nature in all its forms. "Open Nature & Wildlife" has no restrictions on species; entries may include all aspects of the natural world as described in the FIAP rules.

The emphasis is on portraying authentic behaviour and character, as well as interaction with the environment. Whether it is a fleeting moment of action, an intimate portrait, or a wider scene that tells a story, entrants are encouraged to present images that reflect originality and visual storytelling while upholding ethical standards and respect for wildlife.

Photographs may range from dramatic encounters in the wild to quieter, observational moments that reveal detail, mood, or connection. Judges will be looking for strong composition, effective use of light, technical quality, and the ability to evoke emotion or curiosity.

Above all, this section celebrates the beauty, diversity, and fragility of wildlife across the world, encouraging photographers to share images that inspire appreciation and awareness of the natural environment.

Section 2. Natural Landscapes (Print)

This section celebrates the raw, untamed beauty of natural landscapes. Entrants are invited to capture the essence of the environment in its purest form, from dramatic coastal cliffs and rolling green hills to quiet lakes, mist-covered mountains, and distinctive habitats.

"Natural Landscapes" focuses on scenes shaped by nature rather than human influence. Images can highlight unique geology, weather, light, night skies, and seasonal character, conveying a strong sense of place and atmosphere. Whether it is the soft glow of dawn, the shifting moods of the sky, or the textures of habitats or geological formations, photographers are encouraged to tell a visual story rooted in authenticity.

Minimal human impact may be present, but the emphasis should remain firmly on the natural environment. Judges will be looking for compelling compositions, effective use of light, and a clear artistic vision that captures the spirit and diversity of landscapes and habitats.

Competition Sections Notes

Section 3. Macro (Print)

Macro photography depicts a small subject at larger-than-life size. It uses extreme close-ups to reveal fine detail. Examples could include insects, arachnids, animal features in macro detail, minerals and rock textures, and natural formations such as ice and snowflakes (the list is not exhaustive).

Images entered must be true macro images.

Section 4. Ireland's Waders and Wetland Birds (Print)

This section celebrates the rich and diverse world of Ireland's wetlands and the remarkable birdlife that inhabits them. From estuaries and mudflats to tranquil lakes, marshes, and boglands, entrants are invited to capture the beauty, behaviour, and diversity of wading birds and other wetland species found across the Irish landscape. Migratory visitors are permitted.

Photographers are encouraged to go beyond simple documentation and instead tell a story with a strong sense of place and ecological awareness. This category offers an opportunity to showcase Ireland's natural heritage while raising awareness of the importance of preserving wetlands, one of the country's most vital and vulnerable ecosystems.

Section 5. Flora and Fungi (PDI)

This section invites photographers to explore and celebrate the intricate beauty of flora and fungi. For the purpose of this competition, flora refers strictly to naturally occurring plant life: native, wild species growing in their natural environments. This includes subjects such as wildflowers, grasses, mosses, and uncultivated plants. Cultivated plants, garden varieties, and human-created hybrids are not permitted.

Fungi are defined as spore-producing organisms that feed on organic matter. This includes mushrooms, toadstools, moulds, and yeasts found in natural settings. Often overlooked, fungi offer a fascinating range of textures, colours, and forms, making them compelling photographic subjects.

Entrants are encouraged to capture these subjects in a way that highlights their natural context and visual appeal, whether focusing on fine detail, patterns, seasonal changes, or wider environmental scenes.

Competition Sections Notes

Section 6. Nature Next Door (PDI)

This section celebrates nature that exists right outside your door, often overlooked yet full of wonder. "Nature Next Door" invites entrants to turn their attention to the everyday environments we inhabit: gardens, balconies, parks, hedgerows, rivers, and urban green spaces.

The focus is on capturing images in familiar, accessible settings. From a robin in a garden to bees pollinating flowers, dew on a spider's web, or urban-adapted wildlife such as hedgehogs, foxes, and birds, this category highlights the richness of biodiversity close to our daily lives.

Photographers are encouraged to look closely and creatively, finding beauty in small moments and ordinary places. Strong entries will demonstrate observation, timing, and the ability to transform the commonplace into something visually striking and meaningful.

This category is not about travelling far or seeking rare subjects; it is about seeing differently. It offers an opportunity to reveal the hidden life and quiet magic of nature that thrives all around us, reminding us that a connection to the natural world can begin just beyond our own doorstep.

3. Judging

Encouraging the highest standards in photography

- The competition will be judged by three qualified judges selected by the IPF Judges' Committee.
- The judges for the 2026 NNWPC are:
 - Karen Berry (UK) – FRPS AFIAP
 - Kieran O'Mahony (IRELAND) – AIPF
 - Bill Hall (UK) – DPAGB EFIAP FBPE
- The IPF Competition Management System will be used to run and score the competition.
- The judges will view the images in random order.
- Judging will be conducted in accordance with good judging practices.
- Judging of PDI rounds will be conducted on a properly calibrated monitor.
- Print images will be viewed under appropriate lighting conditions.
- Judging will be anonymous.
- Images will be scored out of five points per judge.
- Judges may not consult with each other until all three have submitted their scores.
- Judges may consult when adjudicating on tied images for awards.
- Prize-winning images will be chosen from the top scoring images in each category.
- Results will be announced at the final and prize-winners will be presented at the final in an awards ceremony. All results will be posted by email within two days.
- All images entered to the NNWPC Final will be compiled in a digital catalogue that will be made available to entrants.

4. Entering the Competition



Entry Process

- Entries must be made via the IPF online competition management system at: <https://ipfhost.org/main/main.php>. The system must be used to enter a digital version of your print so that it can be scored on the system. There is no other entry system or process.
- First time users are required to register on this site in advance of entering images. It is advised to register and ensure your account is up and running in a separate session from your image upload session. Affiliated club members can register on this system at any time, even when there is no competition running. Previous users do not need to register again.
- Updating your details: Once you login, go to your personal information in the **'edit details'** tab. Please check to see that your email, address, distinctions and club roles are up to date. Please enter LIPF, AIPF or FIPF in the merit or distinctions section where relevant.
- **Non-advanced entrants:** Those who want to be included in the non-advanced competition should use the **'edit details'** tab of the competition system to update their personal details and tick the box to indicate non-advanced using the **'novice'** tick box. If this box is not ticked, the entrant will remain in the overall competition but will not be considered for the separate non-advanced awards. See Section 1 for advanced criteria, if you do not meet any of these advanced criteria you are eligible to nominate yourself as non-advanced.

Entering the Competition continued...

Entering the Competition

Entering the Competition:

- For all entrants, use the 'competitions' tab, select 'competitions for 'YOUR NAME' and available competitions will become visible. Please select *National Nature & Wildlife Competition 2026*.
- Once in the competition upload page, you will see the relevant sections. You may enter up to six images in any one section, but there is a maximum of 24 entries in total across all the sections. For example if your specialist subject is Macro, you may enter 6 and use your entries like credits across the remaining categories until your max of 24 is used up.
- If you inadvertently uploaded more than 24 images, the system will warn you that you have uploaded too many and you will need to delete your excess.
- Entry fees must be paid by PayPal to complete your entry. There is no other payment method available.
- If you do not receive notification by email within a few minutes, your entry is not complete, please check that all is in order and try again.
- If you have issues with the entry system, use the 'contact us' button on the top right of the system's page. This 'help' function is delivered by people, not AI, so we will respond ASAP.
- Fees: The entry fee is €25 and it will be €2 per image thereafter. The first 4 images are free.

Entering the Competition

Entry Requirements

- Digital entries and digital copies of prints must be exported/saved in the sRGB colour space. Entrants are advised to review their exported sRGB files and, where necessary, make minor adjustments to ensure the image appears as intended when viewed in sRGB.
- Image upload files must be JPG. All other file types will be rejected by the software.
- Images must be sized correctly in order to be accepted by the online system. Images must be a maximum 1,600 pixels wide and 1,600 pixels high. Images smaller than these maximums will be accepted to the digital sections but will be judged at the size submitted. Small images may be at a disadvantage.
- Individual images should be a maximum of 2.016 KB (2.0 MB).
- Each image should be titled with a unique title that will prevent duplication of titles. Titles such as 'butterfly' will not be appropriate. 'Painted Lady Hillside, Cloonfad' is more likely to be unique.
- Identifying marks, such as your name or logo, will result in the image being automatically disqualified.
- An entry may be rejected if, at the reasonable discretion of the IPF, it believes the entry does not conform to the competition rules and requirements.
- The organisers reserve the right to contact the entrant should they feel the image has been entered in the wrong section.
- The organisers have the right to request the original unedited RAW or unedited JPEG file. Non-compliance with such a request may result in the image being disqualified.
- Competitors are strictly forbidden from using the same or extremely similar image (close proximity from the same shoot) that has been entered in previous NNWPC competitions. Any such image may be disqualified.

Entering the Competition

Print Requirements

- A digital copy of your print image must be uploaded and entered on the online software system.
- Entrants must generate a barcode label from the software, this is done by pressing the "print labels" option located beside the checkout (shopping trolley) icon.
- The barcode must be attached to the rear of the print, ensuring not to obstruct the barcode with tape or to mark it with pen. Printing your barcodes in draft mode is best for scanning. For non-advanced (N) entrants who have ticked the 'novice' box in the edit details tab, you must add a capital N to the back of your print so it can be identified from among the general images.
- Please ensure you match the correct barcode with the correct print, double check the title and details on your barcode and affix to the matching print. If, for any reason, you have changed or replaced an image after finalising your entry you must ensure you reprint your barcodes as a new barcode will have been generated on the system for your replacement image.
- Printed images for sections 1 to 4 may be any size/orientation, as long as they fit in/on the maximum mount board size of 20"x16" (50 x 40 cm). The most important consideration when choosing a print size is that it should be sympathetic to your image.
- Poorly mounted prints or framed prints will not be accepted. Entrants may use their own choice of paper and choice of mount colour. No identifying marks should be on the front of the print.
- Entrants should be aware that judges will be seated a minimum of 1.5mtrs from the lightbox when judging the initial round of prints, therefore very small prints may be at a disadvantage.
- Entrants should present their prints to the print receipt desk from 9.15AM – 10.15 AM. Prints will not be accepted after 10.15 AM on the morning of the competition.
- Please organise your prints per section as there will be 4 separate receipt desks.
- All prints should be collected after the competition is completed. Images not collected will not be stored by the IPF. If you can not be there for collection please arrange this with an attending club member, etc.

Calendar

Opening date for entries	Monday August 24th 2026	12 Noon
Closing date for entries	Monday September 14th 2026	9 PM
Live Competition	Sunday September 20th, 2026 (Judging 11 AM)	Westgrove Hotel, Clane



FIAP DEFINITIONS 2025

FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'ART PHOTOGRAPHIQUE

The International Federation of Photographic Art

INFO 313 / 2025 E

The text provided below must be included in the salon rules of events organized under FIAP patronage which contain a "Nature" section.

The new definition which has been worked out together with officials of respective departments of PSA, takes effect immediately.



FIAP Nature definition

Content Guidelines

Nature photography records all branches of natural history except anthropology and archaeology. This includes all aspects of the physical world, both over water 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 Zoo, rescue centers, and ethically managed natural environment farms are permitted.
- Attracting or controlling subjects through the use of food or sound for the purpose of photographing them is not allowed. Maintained situations such as provided supplemental food due to hardship caused by weather conditions or other conditions beyond the animals' control, where photography is incidental to the feeding of the animal does 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:
 - a) When they are an integral part of the nature story, such as a songbird singing atop a fence post a manmade object used as nest material, or a weather phenomenon destroying a man-made structure.

FIAP NATURE DEFINITIONS CONTINUED..

- **Human-made elements shall be permitted under the following circumstances:**

a) When they are an integral part of the nature story, such as a songbird singing atop a fence post a manmade object used as nest material, or a weather phenomenon destroying a man-made structure.

b) When they are a small but unavoidable part of the scene, such as an unobtrusive footprint or track in the background.

c) Scientific tags, collars, and bands are specifically allowed.

When photographing at a zoo, sanctuary, or rehabilitation centre, it would be construed that the photographer ensured that it's properly accredited and conforms to best practices.

Wildlife Photography

In addition to the restrictions on nature photography, to be eligible for any Wildlife award and acceptance,

images must meet the following conditions:

- Zoological organisms must be living free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat of their own choosing.
- 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.
- Botanical organisms may not be removed from their natural environment for the purpose of photography.
- Images that have been staged for the purpose of photography are not allowed.

EDITING TECHNIQUES CONTINUED ...

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 colour 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 colour

