



VCC Competition Guidelines

2017-2018

INDEX

Internal Club Competitions	1
Competition Entry Eligibility	1
Competition Skill Levels	1
Level Advancement Process	2
Monthly & Annual Competition Categories and Definitions	3
Wildlife and Natural World Examples	5
Sensitive Content	6
Detailed Entry Requirements for Monthly Competition	7
Print Image Requirements.....	8

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Definition of Internal Competition Nature categories: Checklist for Wildlife versus Natural World	11
Appendix 2 – Sensitive Content & Figure Photography	12
Appendix 3 – CAPA Definition of Nature for External Competitions	14
Appendix 4 – VCC Competition Awards	16

What Competitions are there?

The club holds 6 rounds of monthly competitions – in September, October, November, January, February and March. Each competition has 3 skill levels – Novice, Intermediate and Advanced. The annual year-end competition in April is based on the placed images from the 6 monthly competitions.

Who can enter?

Any registered and paid-up active member can compete. In order to be a competing member, you must have a unique email address listed on the club's website and be set up as a competing member. Contact the membership coordinator or the competitions committee to set up or change your competition level.

What are the levels?

The three competition skill levels are as follows. A member will commence at the appropriate level as described below. They will remain in that level throughout the year.

Novice

Novice is recommended for those that are new to photography, but open to any member except those that must be in Intermediate or Advanced. **Novice does not mean new to the club.** Novice competitors are still learning to use their camera and working on getting off the automatic settings. New members are expected to honestly self-assess themselves and contact the membership or competitions manager to set up the correct level. If you are unsure about what level you should be at, contact the competitions committee and they will view your photos and recommend a level.

Intermediate

Intermediate is for any member who is comfortable using their camera in manual or semi manual modes and understands the basics of composition. Intermediate is also for any member who has been promoted from Novice, or who has consistently placed images in competitions at a comparative level outside of the club.

Advanced

Advanced is for any member who consistently produces superior images and has a good understanding of the technical and artistic aspects of photography. Advanced is also for any member who has been promoted from Intermediate, or who has consistently placed images in competitions at a comparative level outside of the club. Any member who is, or has been, a professional photographer must enter at this level.

How do you advance to the next level?

Members are welcome to self-assess their skill level and voluntarily request to be moved up to the next level before the beginning of the competition year (September). Contact the membership coordinator or the competitions committee to set up or change your competition level.

At the end of the competition year (May), the competitions committee will review the images and aggregate scores of all competitors and recommend which Novice and Intermediate members will move up to the next level for the following season starting in September.

Competition Categories by Level

There are different categories based on the competition level.

Category	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
DIGITAL - Natural World	✓	✓	✓
- Wildlife	✓	✓	✓
- Open	✓	✓	✓
- Altered Reality		✓	✓
- Theme	✓	✓	✓

Category	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
PRINT - Advanced Nature (Combined Natural World & Wildlife)			✓
- Advanced Monochrome			✓
- Advanced Open (includes Altered Reality)			✓
- Intermediate/Novice Open* (Prints may be Monochrome, Nature, Open or Altered Reality)		✓	

* Novice and Intermediate members will enter all prints in the combined Intermediate/Novice Open Print category.

Category Definitions

i) Open

Images of any subject are acceptable in open but **do not** include natural world or wildlife images as defined in Appendix 1.

Open category does not include images that meet the criteria for Altered Reality, except in Open Prints.

ii) Monochrome

Monochrome images with various tones of only one colour, such as black & white. Other single tones such as sepia, cyanotype, selenium etc. are also acceptable.

- *Split toning is not acceptable in this category.*

iii) Theme Category

'Theme' is the making of an image that is an interpretation of the stated theme for the current month. There are no restrictions on techniques or post-processing. Theme does not apply to other categories such as Open or Altered Reality. In each month, the subject of the theme is defined.

iv) Altered Reality

Altered reality is defined as "allowing the photographer freedom to explore the possibilities of photographic art through the extensive manipulation of images and combination of images".

An Altered Reality photograph should depart from reality and must be noticeably different from a scene viewed through a camera lens.

Altered reality images must have been obviously manipulated or modified during or after exposure. All elements of the image, including textures, must be of the authors own making and the image must have a photographic base.

This category does not include images whose sole creativity is infrared, monochrome, High Dynamic Range (HDR), wide angle or fish-eye lens. Images created totally electronically (with no photographic origin) are specifically excluded.

** Since there is no Altered Reality category at the Novice level, Novice members may enter altered reality images in the Novice Open Category.*

The Theme Competition Subjects for 2017 – 2018 are:

September 10, 2017	Boats and Ships
October 5, 2017	Solitude
November 2, 2017	Night Photography
January 4, 2018	Geometric Shapes
February 1, 2018	Monochrome Landscape
March 1, 2018	Portrait of a Person in Their Environment

Information about each Theme is provided in the Close-Up magazine a few months before the competition deadline.

Nature

v) Natural World

Examples of Natural World include: landscapes, geologic formations, weather phenomena, wild flowers and un-cultivated plants. Limited editing and minimal hand-of-man is acceptable. “Minimal hand-of-man” means that the human elements must not improve or contribute to the image. For example, if a small building in the far distance is not noticeable at first glance, the image would be acceptable.

The maker could also choose to clone out the building. If retouching is chosen, close attention is needed to technique as poorly done editing will be noticed by the judges and will affect the image score. See the checklist in Appendix 1 for more details.

** Note: Images entered in Natural World under our rules may not qualify for external nature competitions.*

vi) Wildlife

Examples of Wildlife include: wild birds, animals, insects, marine creatures, reptile and amphibians.

Limited editing and minimal hand-of-man is acceptable. “Minimal hand-of-man” means that the human elements must not improve or contribute to the image. For example, if a fence is out of focus in the background and it is part of the animal’s natural environment, then the image be acceptable. The maker could also choose to clone out the fence.

If retouching is chosen, close attention is needed to technique as poorly done editing will be noticed by the judges and will affect the images score.

See the checklist in Appendix 1 for more details.

** Note: Images entered in Wildlife under our rules may not qualify for external nature competitions.*

Wildlife Examples

ORIGINAL



ALLOWED



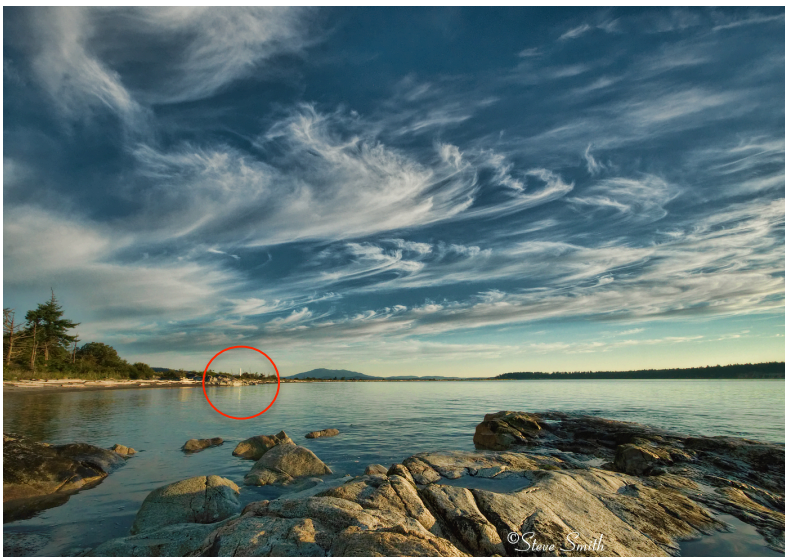
NOT ALLOWED



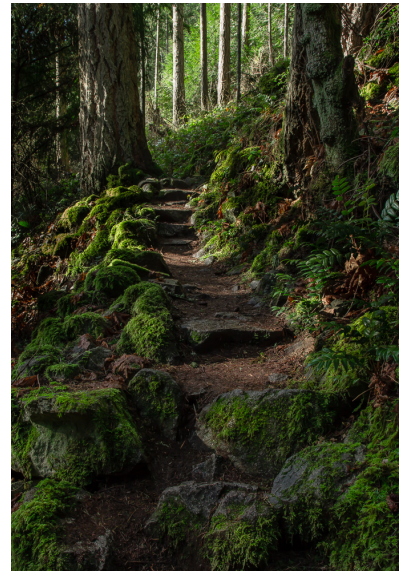
Allowed - Blurred pinecone in bottom right was removed.
Not allowed – baby bird was added

Natural World Examples

ALLOWED



NOT ALLOWED



Allowed – White pole in distance does neither contribute to, nor improve the image. The maker could choose to clone out the pole and the image would still qualify as Natural World.

Not Allowed – The man-made path/steps in the forest is the subject of the image and therefore does not qualify as Natural World. This image was entered in the Open category.

Sensitive Content

Sensitive content includes subjects such as nude figure photography and bloody nature kills. Fine art nude/figure photography is one genre of fine-art photography that depicts the human body with an emphasis on form, composition and other aesthetic qualities.

The Competitions Committee will review all images having sensitive content and will decide if an image can be entered into a Club competition. See Appendix 2 for more details.

Model Releases

Any model release form that may be required by jurisdictional law is the responsibility of the photographer. A model release may be needed for a photo in which a person is recognizable, depending on the situation. A model release is required for nude models or any image displaying a person in a compromising position. In general “Street photography” images do not require a model release unless they include the situations noted above but be mindful and respectful when on public property. Note: just because a property is open to the public doesn’t necessarily make it public property.

Images of Minors: Images of minors do not need a model release IF the subject in the image is the maker’s own dependent(s.) In most other cases, it is the responsibility of the photographer to obtain permission with a model release from the parent or guardian of the minor in the image in order to submit the image to competition or display the image on the Victoria Camera Club website or in the Close-Up newsletter. Parent/Guardian of minors permission is NOT required if the image was taken in a public place or at a public event. However, it is recommended that permission be sought out if at all possible. As noted above, not all property that is open to the public is actually public property.

Images depicting other people’s work (such as sculptures, statues, paintings, and other copyrightable works) may need to obtain a release from the rights holder. When photographing the work of others, it must be as an object in its environment and not a full-frame close-up of another person’s creation.

Entering Monthly Competitions

Members may enter one (1) image in each of the categories.

Images must not have been entered in a previous VCC competition. Once submitted, the “Same” image may not be re-submitted in another format. “Same” includes identical, or virtually the same, which have been edited differently by cropping, digital editing, or print manipulation.

All print and digital images must have been processed within the past two calendar years.

Digital Image Requirements

All submitted digital images shall be:

- In JPG format
- To a maximum 1400 pixels wide and 1050 pixels tall
- Without makers name, watermark or title on the image

How to Enter Digital Images

All digital images are entered through the club’s website. Members must be logged into the website to upload images into a competition.

Click on “Competitions” on the menu on the main page of the website. When the dropdown menu appears, click on “Submit Images to a Competition”.

If you need assistance, there is a video available showing how to upload an image for competition. Click on the button “Video: How to Submit Images to a Competition”.

Members then select the competition to enter. All future available competitions are shown so ensure you are entering the correct month’s competition.

** Note: Novices have separate competition categories.*

Titles for Images

After the image has been uploaded, click on “Save Images & Proceed to Edit Page”. The default title is the filename, but that should be changed to a proper title for the image. The maximum size for a title is 100 characters. The title must not have the maker’s name in it because the judges will see the title of the image.

The purpose of a title is to guide the viewer to see the photo in a particular way and supply some context. If you give your image a silly, jokey or flippant title, the chances are good that your image will not be taken seriously. When in doubt, keep titles simple and neutral. Titles become a part of your art. Make sure your title makes a contribution to effectively communicate what you want to say with your image.

Print Requirements

Members should bring the prints for competition to the 1st Thursday night meeting of the month (competition deadline). Labeled print cases are set out to collect the print entries for the month.

Prints can be printed by the member with a home printer or by a professional printer.

In order to make handling of the prints manageable and to keep the prints safe, please follow these guidelines.

All prints shall comply with the following requirements:

- Print and mat must not exceed 16" x 20"
- Minimum print size is 5" x 7"
- Mounted on conventional 4-ply single window mat board (no canvas wrapped images)
- Firmly attached to backing, but must not use foam core
- Mat board may be any colour
- No makers name or title may appear on the front of the mat or image
- A label can be printed from the website when uploading the digital version of your print. OR, alternatively, a hand-made label can be prepared and affixed in the **top right corner** with:
 - Category
 - Competition Date
 - Image Title
 - Photographer's name
 - Print orientation (indicate with an arrow)
- A digital version of the print must be uploaded into the competition gallery following the requirements for digital images in order to track the print and its associated score and comments and for display in the competitions slide show. If there is no uploaded digital version of the image in the monthly competition gallery, the print cannot be judged.
- We cannot guarantee your cellophane sleeve will be returned to you after judging unless you have your name or the title of the image on the sleeve.
- **Do not** use tape or any sticky substance to close an envelope or cellophane sleeve for a print. Prints are easily damaged if they come in contact with the glue.

Monthly Competition Judging

Novice Level

The Novice categories will be judged by a panel of intermediate and advanced club members. Images are judged on technical ability at the appropriate level (focus, exposure, depth of field, appropriate shutter speed, post processing, etc.), composition, achieving purpose, visual impact, and subject matter.

Intermediate and Advanced Levels – Digital Images

Whenever possible, Intermediate and Advanced level images will be judged by certified photographic judges or artists who are not members of the club. Whenever possible, experienced nature photographers will be used to judge the natural world and wildlife categories.

Images will be judged on technique; content; clearly defined subjects; good use of colour, tone, or hue; lighting; layering; creativity; photographic vision; subject impact (wow factor) etc.

Each image will be scored using a 20-point system.

External Competitions

The Victoria Camera Club enters many national and international competitions during the year. The club puts together its submissions to these competitions (anywhere from 6 – 15 images) from images submitted by the members. Eligibility rules for these competitions may differ from VCC's own internal competitions.

External Competitions include:

- CAPA (Canadian Association of Photographic Art) – many different competitions based on Themes (digital and print)
- PSA (Photographic Society of America)
- North Shore Challenge
- Eastwood versus Victoria is a friendly competition between the Eastwood Photographic Society of Glasgow, Scotland and the Victoria Camera Club. A total of 30 images from each club are entered.
- Lion's Gate Camera Club Celebration of Nature

Check the club calendar or watch for emails concerning the specific competitions.

Annual Competition Awards

The Victoria Camera Club holds a year-end competition each year and announces the winners at the meeting held on the first Thursday in May. See Appendix 4 for more details.

Two sets of awards will be presented:

- 'Year End "Best of" Competition Awards' is a competition between all the placed images over the competition season (September – March). Awards are presented at each competition level.
- 'Distinguished Photographer Awards' are awarded for outstanding achievement in the competition year based on a point system. Awards are presented at each competition level.

Appendix 1. Natural World versus Wildlife Checklist for VCC Internal Competitions

Our club has chosen to split nature images into 2 categories and define what is acceptable in each category. See Appendix 3 for CAPA rules governing most External Nature competitions.

NATURAL WORLD	
ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED
Wild flowers & un-cultivated plants including fungi and algae	Cultivated Plants – eg. Garden flowers , images of farm land should be entered in Open Category
Landscapes , Geological Formations	
Weather Phenomena	
Astronomy – Night-time sky including time-lapse	
Adjustments to colour, contrast, white balance etc. All adjustments must appear natural.	
Remove pictorial elements. e.g., stray leaf or twig, blurring of background	Adding new pictorial elements to image is not allowed
Cropping – any amount	
HDR , Focus Stacking	Filters adding texture or special effects
Stitched Images – e.g., panoramas	
Colour converted to Monochrome	Infrared – either direct capture or derivations
Removal of dust spots, digital noise	
Blurring of clouds or water due to slow shutter speed (not camera movement)	
Minimal hand-of-man or human elements may be present but nature elements must dominate. Human elements must not add to story or impact the image. .	Hand of Man – see full description with examples on page 5
WILDLIFE	
ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED
All wild animals, birds, insects, reptiles, sea creatures	Domestic Animals, Farm animals, Pets
Insect on cultivated flower is allowed if insect is primary subject of image.	
Living wild creatures in controlled conditions; zoos, game farms, aquariums	Feral Animals
Scientific tags or radio collars on wild animals are permissible	
Adjustments to colour, contrast, white balance etc. All adjustments must appear natural.	
Remove pictorial elements. e.g., stray leaf or twig, blurring of background	Add new pictorial elements to image is not allowed
Cropping – any amount	.
HDR , Focus Stacking	Filters adding texture or special effects
Stitched Images – e.g., panoramas	
Colour converted to Monochrome	Infrared – either direct capture or derivations
Removal of dust spots, digital noise	
Blurring of clouds or water dues to slow shutter speed (not camera movement)	
Minimal hand-of-man may be present but Wildlife elements must dominate. Human element can only be part of creature's natural or adapted environment – e.g., Barn owls in barn; raptor on fence post, bugs on garden flower. The human elements must not add to story or impact the image	Hand of Man – see full description with examples on page 5

Appendix 2. Sensitive Content & Figure Photography

The Victoria Camera Club supports the goal of its members to pursue fine art photography, but also recognizes that we are a club of diverse members, some of which are children. We expect that all images and discussion for use on the club's website (including competitions, galleries and Close-Up) will be in good taste.

Definition of Sensitive Content

Sensitive content includes subjects such as fully or partially nude figure photography and bloody nature kills.

Definition of Fine Art Nude Photography

Fine art nude/figure photography is one genre of fine-art photography that depicts the human body with an emphasis on form, composition and other aesthetic qualities. Lighting of the model is of critical importance in fine art photography.

Glamour Photography

Glamour photographs emphasize the subject, usually female, in a romantic and attractive, sexually alluring manner. The subject may be fully clothed or semi-nude, but glamour photography stops short of intentionally sexually arousing the viewer and being pornographic. For some people, the difference between fine art and glamour is in the gaze of the model; with glamour models looking into the camera, while art models do not.

Model Releases

A model release **must** be obtained by the photographer for fully or partially nude figure models. The photographer is responsible to verify the model's identity and age to ensure the model is of legal age. A copy of the model release may be requested by the club prior to the image being displayed on the website, at an event sponsored by the club or published in Close-Up.

Acceptable Content

- Nude model posed in such a way as to not display genitalia
- Purpose of the image is not for sexual excitement

Content Not Acceptable

Images containing the following will not be accepted for competition or display in club galleries and Close-Up.

- abuse or violence
- sexually explicit images; visually explicit genitalia
- racially or religiously offensive images
- defamatory content
- unclothed children

Who Decides?

All competition images are reviewed by the Competitions Committee to ensure they meet the category guidelines and meet the club's definition of acceptable content, including this policy on Sensitive Content and Figure Photography. Images submitted to club galleries or forums, and for publication in Close-Up are bound by the same guidelines and policies as competitions. Club members should report images that may not meet the guidelines and policies to the Webmaster. The galleries and forums having to do with figure photography will be limited to members only – the public will not be able to view these galleries or forums. The Victoria Camera Club reserves the right to review all images submitted and will decide if an image can be entered into a club competition or for display on the website or in Close-Up.

Appendix 3. Definition of Nature for Most External Competitions

CAPA COMPETITION DEFINITIONS for NATURE COMPETITIONS

In 2014, CAPA adopted the New International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) nature definition as follows:

Definition of Nature

Nature photography is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archaeology, 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.

Manipulation / Post Processing

- 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.
- Color images can be converted to grey-scale 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.

Authentic Wildlife

Images entered in Authentic 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. The photographer, whatever photographic medium is used, must have taken the original image.

Botany – includes images that portray uncultivated plant life such as trees, flowering and nonflowering plants, ferns, algae, fungi, etc. in their natural habitat. Photographs of domestic plants, artificially produced hybrid plants, flower arrangements etc are **ineligible**.

Appendix 4. Annual Competition Awards

The Victoria Camera Club holds a year-end competition each year and announces the winners at the meeting held of the first Thursday in May.

Distinguished Photographer Awards

At the year-end meeting in May, annual recognition will be awarded for outstanding achievement in the competition year at each competition level (novice, intermediate and advanced).

Points are assigned for the placements earned by members in the monthly competitions.

- 4 points for 1st place
- 3 points for 2nd place
- 2 points for 3rd place
- 1 point for an Honourable Mention

Year End “Best of” Competitions Awards

After the last monthly competition in March has been judged, the placed images (1st, 2nd, 3rd and HM) from each of the monthly competitions of the year (September to March) are automatically loaded into the year-end competition. No action is required by members for digital images. If a member wishes to have a previously placed print entered in the year-end competition, then the print must be brought to a club meeting by the deadline.

The categories for this competition are the same as monthly competitions. There is no specific theme for the year-end so the monthly Theme category images are judged together.

Images are judged in April by three external judges to determine winning year-end images (i.e., 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Honorable Mention) in each category.

The awards are presented at the Year End Awards Night in May.