

TIPS FOR SCORING WELL IN NATURE COMPETITIONS

by Mary A. Root

Winning images start with an interesting nature story and are presented with a combination of strong impact combined with faultless technique.

Consequently, the photographer should:

1. Select strong subject material.
2. Decide which elements of the subject are to be emphasized.
3. Determine the best use of light for the purpose:
 - a. Cross-light for texture
 - b. Diffused light for shadow control
 - c. Fill-flash for backlit subjects
 - d. Back-light
4. Select appropriate background.
5. Choose shutter speed and f-stop appropriate to the subject as it is to be presented.
6. Consider the compositional elements:
 - a. Placement of center of interest
 - b. Elimination of distracting elements, such as “hot spots,” unattractive amputations or competitive secondary subject
 - c. Horizon lines level and placed above or below center
 - d. Use of leading lines and repetition of like forms
7. Avoid the temptation to over enhance or change color hues, tones and values. Nature has made those decisions.