



*Australian Photographic Society Inc*

*Decisions*

*In Relation to Clarification of the Nature Definition*

*And*

*A Review of Procedures in relation to Nature Exhibitions as  
recommended by a Special Sub Committee Chaired by*

*Roy Killen AFIAP FAPS PPSA*

*26th June 2013*

# **AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY INC**

## **INTERPRETATION OF**

### **THE FIAP NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY DEFINITION**

#### **AS ADOPTED BY THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AUGUST 2012**

Nature images in all APS approved national and international competitions are required to comply with the FIAP Nature Photography definition. That definition is:

Nature photography depicts living, untamed animals and uncultivated plants in a natural habitat, geology and the wide diversity of natural phenomena, from insects to icebergs.

Photographs of animals that are domesticated, caged or under any form of restraint, as well as photographs of cultivated plants are ineligible.

Minimal evidence of humans is acceptable for nature subjects, such as barn owls or storks, adapting to an environment modified by humans, or natural forces, like hurricanes or tidal waves, reclaiming it.

The original image must have been taken by the photographer, whatever photographic medium is used. Any manipulation or modification to the original image is limited to minor retouching of blemishes and must not alter the content of the original scene.

After satisfying the above requirements, every effort should be made to ensure the highest level of artistic skill in all nature photographs.

[Taken from FIAP document "INFO 2001/341" dated July 2001.]

Any attempt to define Nature photography will inevitably use terminology that is open to different interpretations. This can lead to misunderstandings by competitors and inconsistent decisions by judges. To minimise these problems, APS is proposing the guidelines presented in this document as its official interpretation of the FIAP Nature definition.

In setting out to clarify the definition, APS has attempted to preserve both the spirit and intent of the FIAP Nature definition. In particular, APS was cognisant of the core premise of Nature photography, that Nature images should be truthful depictions of animate and inanimate subjects in the natural environment. The proposed interpretation also acknowledges the realities of modern digital photography.

The FIAP Nature definition attempts to define or limit three things:

1. The subject matter that is acceptable in Nature images.
2. The circumstances under which legitimate Nature images can be captured.
3. The extent to which Nature images can be modified after capture.

In order for photographers to comply with the FIAP Nature definition they must:

- (a) Interpret the definition in an acceptable way.
- (b) Capture images under acceptable circumstances.
- (c) Process their digital images in acceptable ways.

In relation to all of these issues there can be debate about what is or is not acceptable. It is not possible, nor is it desirable, to stop this debate. However, there are good reasons for attempting to establish a set of guidelines that will provide clarity at this point in time, in full knowledge of the fact that future debate may result in these guidelines being modified.

The following guidelines provide a common basis for interpreting the FIAP Nature definition. They explain the key concepts in the definition and indicate the types of images that are acceptable and unacceptable in Nature competitions.

## **Clarification of the subject matter that is acceptable in Nature images.**

Acceptable subjects for Nature images can be divided into two broad categories—living (such as mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and plants) and inanimate (such as geological features and natural phenomena). Many Nature images will contain both living and inanimate subject matter.

### ***The definition requires animals in Nature images to be “living”.***

While it is true that death is part of the “life cycle” of all animals it is clear that dead animals are not living. Because the definition is very specific on this issue, this means:

- Images in which the principal subject is a dead animal (whether the death was from natural causes or otherwise) are excluded by the definition.
- Images that show live animals and their dead prey are acceptable if the living animal or its behaviour is the principal subject of the image.

### ***The definition requires animals in nature images to be “untamed”.***

The definition specifically excludes images of domesticated animals. It is important here to consider the specific animal in the image, not a general class of animals. For example, while cats in general are domesticated, a feral cat (one born in the wild) would not be considered tame. However a stray or abandoned cat would still be considered tame.

Some wild animals become habituated to humans and, for example, will accept food from humans. Provided those animals are free to choose whether or not they interact with humans they should still be considered untamed.

Therefore:

- Any animal (including birds, reptiles and insects) that is the principal subject of a Nature image should be living free, not under the control of humans and not dependent upon humans for food or shelter.
- Feral animals (that is, descendants of domesticated animals that have returned to the wild) are acceptable nature subjects.
- Images of normally wild animals that have been made pets are unacceptable.

### ***The definition requires plants in Nature images to be “living”.***

There will be some situations in which an image contains both living and dead vegetation. For such images to be acceptable, the principal subject should be the living vegetation or a living animal that is using the dead vegetation as its habitat.

Therefore:

- Images in which the principal subject is dead vegetation (whether its death was from natural causes or the result of human activity) are unacceptable.

### ***The definition requires plants in nature images to be “uncultivated”.***

The essential meaning of the word "cultivate" is to grow and/or improve by labour and attention. The general biological meaning is that cultivated plants are those that exist because their ancestors were taken from the wild and grown under some form of controlled conditions. Some books on biology actually refer to "domesticated plants and their wild ancestors". Over time many of these plants changed so that the current versions of them are quite different from their wild ancestors. Most cereal crops (such as wheat and rice) have been grown and developed (cultivated) in this sense. All hybrid plants (such as most roses) are also

cultivated in this sense. If we apply this interpretation, then the only plants that would be acceptable in nature images would be those where the plant being photographed is in a wild state and where it is a variety whose ancestors have not been altered by human intervention.

A more liberal interpretation of the definition accepts images in which the individual plant being photographed has grown without human assistance or intervention. That is the interpretation that APS proposes and as a consequence:

- Any plant that is the principal subject of a nature image should have germinated and grown without any human assistance.
- Plants of a variety that is normally cultivated are acceptable nature subjects if the particular plant in the image is growing wild.

***The definition allows images of “geology”.***

Geology has many sub-fields of study and there is nothing in the FIAP definition to suggest that any areas of geology should be excluded. Consequently, acceptable images of a geological nature include:

- Landscapes and seascapes (that show only minimal evidence of humans).
- Landforms resulting from natural weathering and erosion.
- Rock structures.
- Volcanoes, various forms of lava, boiling mud pools and geysers.
- Minerals and naturally formed crystals.

Images of gemstones, crystals, rocks or other geological objects that have been reshaped by humans are not acceptable.

***The definition allows images of “a wide diversity of natural phenomena”.***

Therefore, the subject matter for nature photography could include:

- Planets, stars and astronomical events (such as lunar and solar eclipses).
- Atmospheric and weather phenomena (including rainbows, lightning, cloud formations and auroras).
- Extreme weather events such as heavy seas, floods, hail storms, dust storms, cyclones, tornadoes and waterspouts.
- Earthquakes, tsunamis and tidal waves.
- Bubbles and other surface tension phenomena, snowflakes and raindrops.

***The definition allows images of “natural forces” (such as tidal waves) reclaiming the natural environment.***

The definition emphasises the action of these natural forces. Therefore:

- Such images should show the natural forces (e.g., a hurricane) in action, not simply show the aftermath of the natural event (such as a destroyed village).
- Vegetation reclaiming an area previously occupied by humans can be considered a natural force.

***The definition allows Nature images to contain “minimal evidence” of humans.***

This evidence will normally be in the form of “non-natural” (man-made) elements. This section of the FIAP Nature definition is controversial because of the difficulty of establishing a common understanding of the term “minimal”. However, it is clear that the critical issue is that the principal subject matter of any Nature image should be natural rather than man-made. Therefore:

- Images should not be excluded from Nature competitions on the basis of showing evidence of humans when the human elements are part of the environment in which the animal or plant being photographed normally lives or has adapted. For example, it is acceptable to photograph a bird sitting on a fence post.
- Any evidence of humans should not dominate a Nature image.

## **Clarification of the circumstances under which Nature images can be captured.**

### ***The definition requires animals and plants in Nature images to be in a “natural habitat”.***

A natural habitat is any place where the subject of the image (animal or plant) lives or grows without being forced to do so by humans. The habitat does not have to be a place where animals or plants of the species photographed usually live or grow. It may be an unusual environment to which the particular animal or plant in the image has adapted of its own free will. This environment may show human influences, subject to the “minimal evidence of humans” requirement.

Therefore:

- Areas such as regenerated forests or parks in urban areas are considered natural environments for the animals and plants that occur in them without human intervention.
- It is unacceptable to relocate animals or plants to an artificial environment for the purpose of nature photography.
- Environments such as aquariums, traditional zoos, open-range zoos, game farms or other areas in which animals are enclosed are not considered natural environments for the purpose of Nature photography.

For purposes of Nature photography, the animal being photographed should be living free in an environment where its life, behaviour and death are determined by natural forces. The animal should not be under any direct control of humans. Therefore, photographs of animals in areas such as Kruger National Park (South Africa) are acceptable but photographs of animals that are confined on game farms for purposes of sale or controlled hunting are not acceptable.

Of course it will generally be impossible for a judge to tell whether a photograph of, say, a zebra was taken on a game farm or in a national park. Judges have to accept the integrity of the exhibitor.

The FIAP Nature definition makes no reference to the country of origin of the plant or animal being photographed. For plants, the critical issue is whether or not the particular plant being photographed has been cultivated (grown as the result of direct human activity). For animals, the critical issue is whether or not the particular animal being photographed is living free. Again, judges have to rely on the integrity of the photographer.

Therefore:

- There is no requirement that the animal or plant being photographed is indigenous to the country in which the image is captured.
- Images of feral animals are acceptable provided they are not under any form of restraint.
- Images of exotic plants are acceptable provided they are not cultivated.

### ***The definition specifically excludes images of animals that are “caged or under any form of restraint”.***

This is an expansion of the requirement that animals must be in a natural habitat. The definition does not qualify this with any reference to the size or nature of the enclosure in which the animal is held. In addition to the points made about the habitat in which animals are photographed, this means:

- Animals in Nature images should be free to come and go from the location in which they are photographed.
- It is unacceptable to temporarily relocate and restrict the freedom of animals (including insects and reptiles) for the purpose of nature photography.
- It is unacceptable to use techniques such as cooling or the application of chemicals to temporarily restrict the movement of animals (including reptiles and insects).

### **Clarification of the extent to which Nature images are allowed to be modified after capture.**

Developments in digital technology are continually expanding the ways in which images can be manipulated. However, for now, the definition places clear limits on what modifications to Nature images are acceptable.

***The definition limits manipulation and modification to “minor retouching of blemishes” that “does not alter the content of the original scene”.***

In relation to the Nature definition, image modifications can be grouped under two headings:

- (a) adjustments that optimise image quality, and
- (b) modifications that alter the content of the original scene.

Broadly speaking, modification of type (a) are permitted and modifications of type (b) are not.

Therefore:

- The full range of measures available in image-processing software to improve image quality without altering content are permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, adjustments such as exposure, levels, curves, contrast, saturation, sharpening and noise removal.
- Editing that removes small elements that were not part of the original scene (such as spots caused by dust on a digital sensor or scratches on a scanned image) is permitted.
- Any technique that removes, moves or adds pictorial elements in an image is not permitted. For example, cloning and content-aware filling or patching are not permitted.
- Cropping of images is permitted since this does not alter the content of the section of the original scene that is presented as the final image.

***The definition refers to modifications to “the original image”.***

A narrow interpretation of this phrase would restrict all Nature images to those resulting from a single exposure (the “original image”). However, this may not be appropriate when the combining of two or more images changes the image quality without changing the content of the scene being captured. The imperfections of optical and digital technology can result, for example, in extremely shallow depth of field in a macro image, or barrel distortion when a wide-angle lens is used, or limited dynamic range under certain lighting conditions. A more liberal interpretation of the definition allows modifications that rectify such aberrations in order to produce a final image that renders the “original scene” as closely as possible to what was seen by the photographer. This approach recognises that digital manipulation of images can still preserve their integrity as Nature images. Therefore:

- Focus stacking as a means of increasing depth of field is permitted.

- HDR processing as a means of increasing dynamic range is permitted.
- Stitching as a means of increasing the subject matter covered by the image is permitted.
- Techniques that combine different images (such as replacing the sky in an image) are not permitted.

***The definition refers to the use of “the highest level of artistic skill in all nature photographs”.***

To satisfy this requirement, Nature photographers should make every effort to ensure that their photographs not only demonstrate appropriate technical skills, but also evoke, within the viewer, a deeper appreciation or understanding of the nature of the subject itself—its life, situation, or place in the natural world. If this approach is taken, Nature images will demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Artistic Nature images will show evidence of a high level of technical skill appropriate to the subject or action depicted. However, they will not be dominated by an adherence to conventions of composition, sharpness and focus when the artistic value of the image could be enhanced by showing, for example, such things as motion blur.
- Artistic Nature images will go beyond accurately documenting the subject. They will show creative expression that evokes a sense of wonder at the nature or behaviour of the subject; or reveal an insight into the true character, mood, or life cycle of the subject.

### **Some additional points of clarification**

The points presented in this report provide specific guidelines for interpreting the language of the FIAP Nature definition. The following points are made in order to provide further clarification.

- It is acceptable to use any in-camera technique to capture a Nature image; for example, slow shutter speed that blurs movement is acceptable.
- It is acceptable to use flash or other forms of artificial lighting to assist in the capture of Nature images.
- Images of animals do not necessarily have to show the complete animal.

**MOTION 4464 PASSED BY MC 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

That the Nature Division Council be given responsibility for assisting exhibitors and judges to apply the "The APS adopted Interpretation of the FIAP Nature Definition".

**MOTION 4465 PASSED BY MC 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

That the Nature Division Council encourage and assist members of Nature Division to participate in Nature Folios as a means of deepening their understanding of Nature photography and producing images that comply with the "The APS adopted Interpretation of the FIAP Nature Definition".

**MOTION 4466 PASSED BY MC 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

That the Nature Division Council be requested to allocate funds for the establishment of a web-based network (website, email group, chat group, etc.) for members of APS Nature Division. This network should be monitored and mentored by experienced nature photographers and judges who would submit articles, discussion papers, comments, answer questions, etc., on a broad range of nature photography topics including the application of the "The APS adopted Interpretation of the FIAP Nature Definition".

**1. What difficulties confront judges when assessing Nature images (print or projected) that have been produced from digital files?**

As image editing software has improved and as exhibitors have become more skilled in the use of such software it has become increasingly difficult for judges to detect when an image has been modified beyond what is permissible under the FIAP Nature definition. Judges need to have a very good knowledge of digital processing in order to identify images that have been skillfully manipulated in ways that break the rules.

This problem is compounded under typical judging conditions where judges are expected to evaluate each image within seconds and where any discussion among judges is discouraged prior to the consideration of awards.

This has led to the situation in which most judges rely on the integrity of the exhibitors and accept that all submitted images satisfy the rules. In an ideal world, this trust would not be breached. Unfortunately, it appears that some competitors are willing to take advantage of this situation and deliberately break the rules in order to gain a competitive advantage. The view could be taken that such actions are a matter for the individual competitor's conscience; however, such actions are unfair to other competitors and can become the subject of complaints.

It is unreasonable to expect that all three judges on a Nature panel will have equal knowledge of Nature subjects and of image processing techniques. Therefore, it is inevitable that from time-to-time one judge will identify a problem with a Nature image that other judges do not see. This problem may relate to the subject matter or to the manipulation of the image. In typical judging situations at Nationals and Internationals the judges are discouraged from communicating with one another even when a member of the judging panel suspects that an image does not comply with the rules. A judge may give a suspect image a low score but the image could still gain acceptance if the other judges give it high scores. Of course, any concerns are usually raised if the image somehow makes it to the point of being considered for an award.

The lack of communication between judges can have two consequences. It can mean that a legitimate image is rejected or not considered for an award because of a low score awarded by one judge who has doubts about that image. It can also mean that an image that breaches the rules is accepted because, although one judge had doubts and gave a low score, high scores given by the other judges counteracted the low score.



Perhaps it is time to admit that the current system of judging used for most APS approved Nationals and Internationals is designed for convenience, rather than being designed to produce results that are fair to all competitors. Efficiency in the judging process (getting the job done in the minimum amount of time) should not take precedence over achieving valid, reliable and fair results. This is an important criticism of current judging practices (where three judges view and score the images simultaneously) because validity, reliability and fairness are the cornerstones of all quality judgements. Ignoring these principles limits the ability of judges to make high-quality decisions.

As the number of images being entered in exhibitions increases, the calls for greater efficiency in judging also tend to increase. However, the benefits to exhibition organisers of rapid judging should not totally outweigh the disadvantages to competitors. Other approaches should be considered, such as the spreading the judging over a longer period of time. For example, the judging at the Sydney International will be spread over four days in 2012, rather than the two days utilised in 2011.

**Recommendation 5:** That the Nature Division Council be asked to investigate possible ways of modifying the judging procedures in Nature exhibitions so that the validity, reliability and fairness of the judging decisions are improved.

**Recommendation 6:** That judges in APS approved Nature exhibitions be instructed that they may confer with one another before scoring an image if they have any doubts about the eligibility or quality of the image being considered.

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The discussion and recommendations 5 & 6 relate to procedures which are the responsibility of the ESSC and as such should be considered by them . This request has already been made and it would now be appropriate for the discussion and recommendations to be formally referred to ESSC for report .

#### **MOTION 4467 PASSED BY MC 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

The discussion paper in respect of judging procedures for Nature Images in Exhibitions be referred to the ESSC for consideration and report to MC by the 1<sup>st</sup> August ,

If a Nature image does not satisfy the rules of an exhibition it should be disqualified rather than simply being given a low score. There are basically two situations in which this might occur. The first is when the rule breach is accidental—for example, an inexperienced exhibitor might misinterpret the Nature definition and submit an image of a domesticated animal. The second is a deliberate breach—for example, an image might be deliberately manipulated to remove evidence that the subject animal was in captivity. These two types of breaches of the rules call for different responses from the judges and from the exhibition organisers.

In the case of an apparently accidental breach, the judges should confer and, if they agree that the image does not meet the rules, allocate a score of zero. The conference organisers should show this zero score on the report card sent to the exhibitor and give a brief reason such as “Disqualified because image shows a domesticated animal”. Such feedback would be based on the judges’ reason for disqualifying the image and would help to educate the exhibitor. No further action would be required.

In the case of suspected deliberate breaching of the rules, the judges should confer and, if they agree that the image does not meet the rules, allocate a score of zero. This is obviously a much more serious situation because the integrity of the exhibitor is being questioned. The over-zealous manipulation will

fall somewhere on a scale from ‘obvious but relatively minor’ to ‘carefully disguised but seriously deceptive’. The judges’ task is to raise their concerns about such images and agree that they should be disqualified. Beyond that, the responsibility falls on the exhibition organisers and/or MC to establish the seriousness of the breach and the appropriate action to take against the exhibitor. In the first instance, the conference organisers should show the zero score on the report card sent to the exhibitor and give a brief reason such as “Disqualified because the judges considered the modification of the image exceeded that which is allowed under the exhibition rules”. The exhibitor could then be offered a chance to defend the image.

It is impractical and undesirable to expect exhibition organisers to formally check the authenticity of Nature images that judges have identified as breaching the rules. It is preferable that this task be allocated to a group of suitably qualified people who can perform the task competently and consistently. It might require the establishment of a small subcommittee that could ask for evidence (such as RAW files or original unprocessed JPEG files of suspect images) and for an explanation from the owner of the image. A recommendation could then be made to MC.

There may be some reluctance for judges and exhibition organisers to take the steps suggested above, perhaps through concern that their actions might be challenged. However, if the APS is to encourage and assist competitors to follow the rules of Nature competitions there is a need for action and transparency. Simply giving an image a low score is neither educative for the exhibitor making an honest mistake nor a deterrent for those deliberately breaking the rules.

For this system to work effectively, suitable statements need to be included in the rules of each APS approved exhibition. Examples of statements that have recently appeared in exhibition rules are: “The organisers may reject any entry or image for any reason at their sole discretion. An image may be rejected if it does not conform to competition rules or is deemed unsuitable” (Oxford International Salon); “If there is any question raised about the authenticity of an entry in the Nature section then the organizers reserve the right to request a copy of the RAW file” (Sydney International); “Decisions of the jury are final” (Danish International); and “The judges' decisions are irrevocable” (Chung Ai International Salon of Photography, Canada). The Exhibition Services Subcommittee should be consulted on this matter.

**Recommendation 7:** That the Exhibition Services Subcommittee be asked to direct exhibition organisers to ask judges to formally identify images that are suspected of breaching the rules of Nature competitions and to disqualify those images that the majority of judges consider to have breached the rules.

This recommendation relates to the disqualification of images suspected of breaching the rules of Nature Definition. This type of action will no doubt result in a dispute with the author and will be very difficult to defend whereas to use the scoring to indicate whether the image complied does not raise any opportunities for disputes .

**Recommendation 8:** That the Exhibition Services Subcommittee be asked to direct exhibition organisers to allocate scores of zero to Nature images that are disqualified by judges on the basis of not meeting the exhibition rules.

The general Minimum score is 1 and that speaks for itself and all entrants accept the judges decision and as setout above if a reason is applied to a particular score that will leave the matter open to dispute .

**Recommendation 9:** That the Exhibition Services Subcommittee be asked to establish procedures to be used by exhibition organisers for formally advising entrants whose images have been disqualified for breaching the rules of Nature exhibitions.

As setout above to advise entrants of the reason for non compliance with Nature rules will undoubtedly result in disputes and make the running of Exhibitions more difficult.

**Recommendation 10:** That entrants to APS approved Nature exhibition be required to sign the entry form (or acknowledge online) to indicate that they have read, understood and complied with all the rules of the exhibition and that they understand that an image may be disqualified if in the opinion of the majority of judges (whose decisions will be final) the image has breached the rules.

The basic issue remains the same a competent judge would be aware that an image does not comply with the Nature rules and mark it accordingly and there is no opportunity for objection whereas any process to disqualify an image will result some sort of review process to challenge this type of decision .

The most likely result of any such process will be that to avoid the hassle that organisers will not include Nature sections in their Exhibitions.

#### **MOTION 4468 PASSED BY MC 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

The Nature Review S/C be advised that MC does not support Recommendations 7-10 as the introduction of a disqualification process for images deemed to not comply with Nature Definition will need to be accompanied by some sort of dispute resolution process which will most likely result in organisers not providing Nature Sections in Exhibitions.

#### **1. Is it appropriate for the FIAP nature definition to continue to be used in APS approved national and international exhibitions?**

APS is a member of FIAP and this carries with it an obligation for APS approved National exhibitions to use the FIAP Nature Photography definition.

The only arguments presented to the SC for APS adopting a different Nature definition for National Exhibitions were based on the perceived lack of clarity in the FIAP Nature definition. This problem will be minimised once the “Proposed Interpretation of the FIAP Nature Photography Definition” prepared by the SC and approved by MC is placed on the APS website.

The issue of Nature definitions in International exhibitions is dealt with in Section 7 of this report.

**Recommendation 11:** That APS continue to use the FIAP Nature Photography definition for approved Nature sections in National exhibitions.

#### **MOTION 4469 PASSED BY MC 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

**That APS continue to use the FIAP Nature Photography definition for approved Nature sections in National exhibitions**

#### **1. How could APS assist judges to apply the FIAP nature definition in a fair and impartial way?**

The first requirement is to have a clear set of guidelines for interpreting the Nature definition. This is provided in the “Proposed Interpretation of the FIAP Nature Photography Definition” prepared by the SC and approved by MC.

**Recommendation 12:** That exhibition organisers be required to send a copy of the “Proposed Interpretation of the FIAP Nature Photography Definition” approved by MC to each Nature judge in APS approved exhibitions at the time their judging appointment is confirmed.

**MOTION 4470 PASSED BY MC 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

**That ESSC send a copy of the “APS Adopted Interpretation of the FIAP Nature Photography Definition” to each Nature judge in APS approved exhibitions at the time their Exhibition is granted approval.**

**1. How can APS assist judges to make fair and impartial decisions in nature exhibitions that use both the FIAP and PSA nature/wildlife definitions?**

International exhibitions that have both FIAP and PSA approval are required to publish both the FIAP Nature definition and the PSA Nature/Wildlife definitions on their entry forms. In these cases, entrants are invited to indicate which of their Nature images are to be considered eligible for PSA Wildlife awards. This creates the potential for confusion by exhibitors and difficulties for exhibition organisers and judges.

The distinction between Nature and Wildlife under the PSA definitions is clear and *most* (but not all) images meeting the PSA Wildlife definition will also meet the FIAP Nature definition. However:

- a) Images of animal carcasses are permitted under the PSA Wildlife definition but they do not fit the “living” requirement of the FIAP Nature definition.
- b) Images of animals that are confined (e.g. in zoos) are permitted under the PSA Nature definition but not under the FIAP Nature definition.
- c) The FIAP Nature definition permits all forms of monochrome image that meet the FIAP monochrome definition and does not exclude toned images or infrared images. However, the PSA Nature definition allows only grayscale monochrome images and specifically excludes infrared images.
- d) Images of ‘domesticated’ animals and ‘cultivated’ plants are excluded under the FIAP Nature definition, whereas the PSA Nature definition excludes ‘hybrid’ animals and plants. The intention behind these two definitions may be the same, but the potential for confusion and disagreement is great.
- e) The FIAP Nature definition allows “minimal evidence of humans” whereas the PSA Nature definition allows human elements only when they “enhance the nature story”. Again, the intention may be the same but the potential for confusion is considerable.
- f) The PSA Nature definition allows adjustments that “enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content” whereas the FIAP Nature definition restricts adjustments to “minor retouching of blemishes (that) must not alter the content of the original scene”. Again there is potential for confusion.

These differences, particularly those identified in points (a), (b) and (c) mean that some Nature images simply cannot satisfy *both* the FIAP and PSA definitions. The possibilities are:

- i. The image satisfies the FIAP definition but not the PSA Nature definition (e.g. a toned monochrome image).
- ii. The image satisfies the PSA Nature definition but not the FIAP definition (e.g. an animal in a zoo).
- iii. The image satisfies the PSA Wildlife definition but not the FIAP definition (e.g. an animal carcass).

If there is to be any certainty and fairness for exhibitors, the decision of how to deal with images that appear to meet the FIAP definition but not the PSA definitions, or vice versa, cannot be left to the discretion of individual judges. One solution to this problem is for exhibition entry forms to contain the following statements:

- All entries in the Nature section must satisfy the FIAP Nature definition regardless of whether or not they satisfy the PSA Nature/Wildlife definitions.

- Only accepted Nature entries that satisfy the PSA Wildlife definition will be considered for wildlife awards.

This is clearly giving precedence to the FIAP definition and would make many images (e.g. animals in zoos) ineligible even though they satisfied the PSA Nature definition. This may limit the number of entries that come from people (including APS members) who normally choose to enter PSA (rather than FIAP) approved exhibitions. It may also be unacceptable to the PSA since their reasonable assumption would be that a PSA approved Nature exhibition would accept all entries that satisfied the PSA Nature definition. Informal advice from the Chair of the PSA Nature Division indicated that the PSA currently has no formal policy on how exhibition organisers should deal with this conflict of definitions issue.

If exhibitions are to genuinely allow Nature entries that satisfy either the FIAP or PSA definitions there should be separation of entries. Those designated as “PSA Nature/Wildlife” should be judged separately from those designated “FIAP Nature”. This would probably create unacceptable work for exhibition organisers. It may also be unacceptable to FIAP because they give approval to complete exhibitions rather than sections of exhibitions.

Another possibility is for exhibition rules to contain the following statements:

- All entries in the Nature section must satisfy either the FIAP Nature definition or the PSA Nature definition.
- To be considered for a FIAP Nature award (e.g. FIAP medal) the image must satisfy the FIAP Nature definition.
- To be considered for a PSA Nature or Wildlife award an image must satisfy the relevant PSA Nature or Wildlife definitions.

This approach would ensure that images gaining designated awards (e.g., FIAP gold medal or PSA medal for best Nature image) satisfied the requirements of the organization giving the award (FIAP or PSA). However, it still leaves open possibility that some images would be accepted (and possibly even gain a PSA award) when they did not meet the FIAP Nature definition (e.g., images of animals in zoos) and this might be unacceptable to FIAP. Some images might also be accepted (and possibly even gain a FIAP award) when they did not meet the PSA Nature definition (e.g., toned monochrome images) and this might not be acceptable to PSA.

**Recommendation 13:** That MC write to FIAP and PSA to formally request advice on how those organisations would like exhibition organisers to deal with the potential conflicts that arise in the Nature sections of exhibitions that have both FIAP and PSA approval.

#### **Motion 4471 PASSED BY MC 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

**As the matter in conflicts in the Nature Definitions is already under discussion with both FIAP and PSA this matter be referred to Graeme Watson for consideration as the MC member responsible .**

The purpose of this recommendation is to encourage FIAP and PSA to acknowledge that there is a problem. The current practices of these two organisations of Details of how judges qualified to be placed on the list are also hazy. There have been several suggestions that whatever the past process was, it was not considered fair by all those who applied to be placed on the list.

Regardless of the history of this list, there have been many suggestions that there would be great value in having an up-to-date list of suitably qualified judges. This would involve establishing suitable criteria and procedures for placing judges on the list, and mechanisms for keeping the list up-to-date and expanding it in future. The list could then be utilized with confidence by organisers of both National and International exhibitions. The criteria for being “suitably qualified” to be placed on the list should not be too strict or narrow (otherwise it will be very short list). Nor should the criteria be so trivial that it becomes pointless having a list.

**Recommendation 14:** That the Nature Division Council be asked to develop a set of criteria and procedures by which suitably qualified judges could be placed on an “APS List of Approved Nature Judges” with a view to publishing the first version of that list by June 30, 2013.

**Recommendation 15:** That the Nature Division Council appoint one of its members as the Coordinator of the “APS List of Approved Nature Judges”.

**Recommendation 16:** That the Exhibition Services Subcommittee be asked to amend the ‘Schedule of Information and Requirements for Approved Exhibitions’ so that, from July 1, 2013, APS Approval for International Exhibitions in Australia is to be granted only to those Exhibitions that list at least two of the three judges for Nature sections from the APS Approved Nature Judges List; and APS Approval for National Exhibitions in Australia is to be granted only to those Exhibitions that list at least one of the three judges for Nature sections from the APS Approved Nature

**MOTION 4472 PASSED BY MC 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

**That the Nature Division Council be asked to develop a set of criteria and procedures by which suitably qualified judges could be placed on an “APS List of Approved Nature Judges” with a view to publishing the first version of that list by June 30, 2014.**

**MOTION 4473 PASSED BY MC 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

**That the Nature Division Council appoint one of its members as the Coordinator of the “APS List of Approved Nature Judges”.**

**MOTION 4474 PASSED BY MC 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

**That the Exhibition Services Subcommittee be asked to amend the Schedule of Information and Requirements for Approved Exhibitions’ so that, from July 1, 2014, APS Approval for International Exhibitions in Australia is to be granted only to those Exhibitions that list at least two of the three judges for Nature sections from the APS Approved Nature Judges List; and APS Approval for National Exhibitions in Australia is to be granted only to those Exhibitions that list at least one of the three judges for Nature sections from the APS Approved Nature**

The establishment of a List of Approved Nature Judges should also lead to the establishment of an appropriate form of training and/or mentoring for those who wish to become Nature judges.

**Recommendation 17:** That the Nature Division Council be asked to commission the development of a training course for prospective Nature judges. This course should be in a format that makes it available to APS members throughout Australia.

Dr Roy Killen AFIAP PPSA FAPS  
Chair, Nature Review Subcommittee  
30<sup>th</sup> August, 2012

**MOTION 4475 PASSED BY MC 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

**That the Nature Division Council to commission the development of a training course for prospective Nature judges. This course should be in a format that makes it available to APS members throughout Australia.**



1.

**What impact has digital technology had on the submission of nature images to national and international exhibitions?**

The most obvious impact has been the increase in the number of images submitted to exhibitions. On the positive side, advances in camera technology and software have made it possible to produce digital images (for projection) of exhibition standard from subject matter that was impractical for producing large exhibition prints. However, the rapid increase in the number of digital images being submitted has been accompanied by the demise of slides and, for some exhibitions, a decline in the number of print entries. There are multiple reasons for this. The most significant appear to be the convenience and relatively small cost of submitting digital images rather than prints. This phenomenon is not restricted to Nature images. Some concern was expressed that the opportunities for APS members to exhibit prints are diminishing. For example, the Sutherland National has become a “projected image only” competition, as are the recently revived Sydney International and the new Sydney Harbour International.

**Recommendation 1:** That MC request the Exhibition Services Subcommittee to recommend ways in which APS could encourage exhibition organisers to continue to provide opportunities for APS members to enter prints in National and International exhibitions in Australia.

*The ESSC is already doing this but the individual organizers will make any decision in relation to prints and there is no need for a specific Motion .*

**1. How could APS assist members to capture, prepare and present digital nature images that comply with the FIAP nature definition?**

The first step in this process is for APS to help members interpret and apply the FIAP Nature definition. To this end, the SC previously submitted to MC a “Proposed Interpretation of the FIAP Nature Photography Definition”. This document has been accepted by MC and will be placed on the APS website. A condensed version of the document has been forwarded by MC to the Exhibition Services Subcommittee with a request that it be incorporated in the rules for APS approved exhibitions. The document will also be forwarded to FIAP for comment and/or endorsement.

What is now needed is a sustained education programme that will help exhibitors and judges to apply the FIAP definition in ways that are consistent with the endorsed interpretation.

**Recommendation 2:** That the Nature Division Council be given responsibility for assisting exhibitors and judges to apply the “Proposed Interpretation of the FIAP Nature Definition”.

**Recommendation 3:** That the Nature Division Council encourage and assist members of Nature Division to participate in Nature Folios as a means of deepening their understanding of Nature photography and producing images that comply with the “Proposed Interpretation of the FIAP Nature Definition”.

**Recommendation 4:** That the Nature Division Council be requested to allocate funds for the establishment of a web-based network (website, email group, chat group, etc.) for members of APS Nature Division. This network should be monitored and mentored by experienced nature photographers and judges who would submit articles, discussion papers, comments, answer questions, etc., on a broad range of nature photography topics including the application of the “Proposed Interpretation of the FIAP Nature Definition”.