

## Nelson Nature Competition

### A Grade

#### Australasian Crested Grebe with Eggs

This is a stunning image showing detail of the bird's feathers, colours and even the droplets of water on it. The plain background shows up the bird well. It is an added bonus to be able to see the eggs in the nest before the grebe sits on them. Well seen Honours

#### Australasian Brush Turkey

This is well composed of a turkey on a log looking into the frame. The background is showing me it is in Australian bush where it comes from. The definition of its feathers and head are excellent. The bird is well focused. A suggestion is that I feel this bird has too much of a red tone through it, otherwise a good effort. Merit

#### Blue Bottle Physalia physalis

A good find seeing these on the beach. I love the detail of the righthand one showing me its patterns, markings and colours. What lets this image down is the out of focus blue bottle on the left. The foreground could be cropped and nearly half this image has nothing of interest. I suggest you crop hard leaving the one blue bottle only showing the structure and detail of it. NA

#### Bombus.

This bee is heading for the lavender flowers, it isn't easy to photograph a bee flying and to get it well focused. What lets this down in a nature competition is your subject should take up at least half the space in your frame and be sharply focused. Here you have much of the lavender out of focus as well as the bee. The naming of your nature subject is important such as 'Honey Bee' NA

#### Bracket Fungus *Gymnopilus* sp.

There are a lot of different bracket fungi around at present in the bush. I suggest to photograph fungi in the dark forest is to use a tripod put your F-stop up to say F16 or F18 to get a good depth of field which will give you a long exposure. This will give you a good image showing its colour and patterns all in focus. Sadly, this image is mainly black and what I can see is not in focus for a nature competition. NA

#### California Quail

You were lucky to have seen a male, female and chick together, well spotted. They are well composed standing in order of height. I would like to see this cropped more tightly and suggest 5cms from the right and 2cms from the left. ACC

#### *Danaus plexippus* emerging from the chrysalis

This is well placed in the frame with an excellent plain background. The center area around its head is well-focused showing me interesting detail. What lets this down is the wing in the center is out of focus. Merit

#### Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa*

I find fantails are one of the hardest birds to photograph as they flit around continuously. The detail of its feathers and eye are well seen. What lets this down is the background especially the white area of light that distracts you from the fantail. NA

*Favolascia calocera*

These very small fungi are often seen in our forests, they are an introduced fungus and spreading rapidly in NZ. I enjoy seeing the underside of these *Favolascia* showing the beautiful patterns that look like honeycomb. There are 2 different fungi here in this image and I feel the white one distracts you from the gold coloured one and suggest you crop 5cms off the bottom. Merit

Fungi Association

You have seen 2 different clumps of fungi growing through bark on the ground. I like the idea of seeing them in their environment. However, for a nature competition the subject which is your fungi should be in good condition not going over. You need to find them and photograph them when they are at their best. NA

Great Spotted Crane.

Who put this in for me to judge, for a laugh I expect? A sandhill crane is grey but not large as this. NOT NATURE NA

*Leptinella atrata*

You have photographed this special alpine plant well. What a shame the name is incorrect. It is *Leptinella dendyi*. I would like to be able to see all the leaves in the foreground so it doesn't have a cut-off look and if you lightened it up it would give more impact. ACC

Male *Danus plexippus*

What a perfect Monarch this is without any damage to its wings. It is well focused, however what lets this down is the background especially the white areas which is very distracting. My eye keeps going to the large white area on the lower right. Watch the background for all nature subjects for nature competitions. ACC

Mallard Duck and Ducklings

You have captured the Mother duck and her ducklings well. I see the ducklings are wet so they must have just come out of the water. I suggest you crop 4cms off the top to give the subject more balance. Well Done Merit

Mantis *Mantodea*

You have a good plain green background without any distractions for this mantis. You have got in close showing its markings and patterns. What lets this down is the out of focus rock in the foreground which hits you in the eye as soon as you open this photo. The back legs are out of focus. For a nature competition the subject must be in focus. NA

*Melanostome fasciatum*

The bee is well placed in the frame looking into these white flowers. The bee is sharply focused showing me detail and texture. The markings especially on its wing are well defined. A good effort, Merit

Misumena vatia Flower Crab Spider

What a great find in spotting this on a white background. I can see the hairs on its legs and the markings on its head. The abdomen is not focused; however, you have done well photographing a difficult subject. Merit

Nesting Sunbird.

I have seen these small birds in their hanging nests in Queensland a few times, the male in particular is beautiful. I like seeing the nesting material closeup and having the bird staying there looking at you was good, often they fly out when someone is around. What lets this down is the nest on the left is out of focus and I would like to have seen more of the nest showing me how it hangs. ACC

Odanata

Here is a Dragonfly in green and brown tones with a similar toned background. It is well placed in the frame. Sadly, it is not in focus to give impact. As it is it merges into the background without any point of interest. NA

Ourisia caespitosa

These little Ourisias are perfect in flower. Often, they are marked from the wind and rain. I like seeing their environment where they are growing. For an improved balance to the image I would crop 3cms off the right side. Also, I would suggest to tidy the area up before you take the photo, that is remove all the dead tussock grass that is lying on the plants. ACC

Piwakawaka

Fantails are really difficult to photograph as they flit around all the time. You have captured it with a good plain background. What lets this down is most of the image has nothing of interest. For a nature competition the subject should fill at least half the frame. NA

Tawny Frogmouth

I have only seen this bird once in Queensland so you were lucky to have spotted it. You have captured it well, in focus showing the stunning markings and patterns on its feathers. The eye and beak are in focus and the lighting is excellent. Good work Merit

Buller's Mollymawk

You have placed this bird well in the frame flying to the right. The dark sea is a good background without any distractions. What lets this down is all the white feathers are burnt out completely not allowing me to see any detail. Watch the sunlight especially on a white nature subject. NA

Thaumetopoea pityocampa

You have seen an unusual mass of caterpillars with beautiful coloured stripes on them and their hairs are amazing as well. If you had used a tripod with a larger F-stop you would have more caterpillars in focus. As it is the lower third are all out of focus. ACC

#### The Moon

You have placed the moon well just off center in the frame. It is clear showing the patterns and markings well. A different idea to enter this subject into this competition. Merit

#### Tui

You have seen this Tui on a tree with its back to the sun giving it a dark toned look. What lets this down is the bright sunlight in the background that distracts you from the Tui. When you first look at this image my eye goes straight to the bright sunny areas. The Tui is not in focus. Watch your lighting when taking nature images, I suggest photographing Tuis on an overcast day. NA

#### Tui in a Flax Bush

You have done well seeing a Tui on flax showing the Flax flowers and seeing the pollen on the Tuis beak. What lets this image down is the Tui is completely out of focus and the sun has burnt out its feathers. Watch the lighting on your subject. I only take photos of Tuis on an overcast day, to be able to get them sharply focused. NA

#### White Egret

We only see a few egrets in Nelson, they are common in Australia. I can see the definition of its feathers well; however, I want to see more of the egret. As it is the foreground on the left is the birds back side which is not an interesting angle. I need to see the front of the bird to give more interest especially in a nature competition. NA

#### White-faced Heron in full flight

When I first saw this image, it looked like a painting. The plain blue sky is an excellent background which shows the heron well. What lets this down is the heron is flying away from you and all I get is a back view. For a bird photo in a nature competition you must be able to see its eye and head in focus. I feel you have post processed this too much which has made it look unnatural. NA

#### B Grade

##### Aeonium schwarzkopf

This is a succulent garden plant that grows well in Nelson in a frost-free area. You have placed the head of it well in the frame. However, the sunlight has burnt out the leaves. I suggest you photograph this on an overcast day to prevent the shine on the leaves. Another suggestion is to look around your subject first and clean up any grasses that are around before your take the photo. Garden plants are not allowed in this nature competition. NA

##### Cyclops Jumping Spider

What stunning colours and patterns on this spider. A good find. It is well positioned on the edge of the leaf. I can see the hairs all over it well. A good effort Merit

*Egretta novaehollandiae* White-faced Heron

You have done well taking this image on a calm day showing its reflection. I can see the droplets of water well and the detail of its feathers and seeing its eye are good. What lets this down, there is too much space in the frame with no interest, crop harder top and bottom to give more impact to the subject. ACC

Flesh Fly

A good idea to photograph a fly except when they move. The orange eye is interesting along with the patterns and markings on the fly. What lets this down is most of the image is out of focus. I would like to see more of the fly so it doesn't have the cut off look. NA

Sacred Kingfisher

What a great capture seeing this kingfisher taking off with a crab in its beak, well spotted. What lets this down is all the space in the frame without any interest. Try to crop tightly or get closer to your subject. ACC

*Zantedeschia aethiopica*

The green goddess arum lily is a great subject to photograph. It is well placed in the frame with the green leaves surrounding it. The green area on the flower is not in focus and that is when a tripod is useful. Just to let you know that garden plants are not allowed in a nature competition. ACC