

Nelson Camera Club – Nature – June 2023

Judge John Reid APSNZ ANPSNZ AFIAP

A grade prints

Amanitaceae Genus

I think that this Amanitaceae has been described really well. The photographer has been able to get really low, enabling the viewer to see every aspect of this fungi, while also allowing the habitat to be described as to where the fungi is growing. The detail of the fungi throughout is tack sharp with excellent colour rendition. The story is enhanced by being able to include emerging specimens at the bottom of the cluster. The background is nicely out of focus and without distractions. The printing and matting compliments the colour and soft even lighting of the composition. Honours Jon Coe

Australasian Crested Grebes courting

This courting ritual has been really well captured as the pair of grebe's surface from underneath the water with nesting material to be added to their nest. The image helps to tell the story of the grebes courting ritual and we can see the synchronization achieved as both birds simultaneously rise from the water presenting the nesting material to each other, before the material is placed on the nest which will be nearby. The side lighting falling from the right helps to define the pair against the water in the background. In my view the strip of bright light appearing on the left bird, running from the breast and up the side of the neck is a slight distraction. Both birds are tack sharp with excellent colour rendition and feather detail throughout, the reds of the eyes is prominent and evident in both birds. The tone of background water adds a pleasing element to this composition. Merit

Caroline Foster

Australasian Gannets

One certainly gets the story of the sheer numbers of gannets that are in a nesting colony as shown in this composition. I think the arrangement of the elements within the story works quite well with the lone bird coming into land creating some tension in what otherwise would be a featureless sky. The focal point is on this lone bird, but I suggest that this element has compromised the story that is being told in the foreground as these birds are all out of focus and this is where my eye ends up as this is where I think the story is really being told, with the nests, the chicks and the adult birds. The print is bright and colourful. Accepted

Bumble Bee on Globethistle

I think the lighting on this subject is superb as it brings out that beautiful tonal range of the flower. The bee is nicely placed on the top third and is really sharp with some great detail in the outstretched wings and through the body of the bee. I think that there is another bee in the background, top right, partially obscured and I suggest that it may have been worth waiting for this bee to completely disappear as I feel it adds an unwanted element in what is a pretty clean nicely blurred out background as it just draws the eye from the main subject. Another nicely presented print, with the semi-gloss paper being effective with this presentation. Merit Barry Doig

Common Basket Stinkhorn *Ileodictyon* sp

I think the print describes the species quite well. The subject is well lit, and the viewer can appreciate the structure of this fungi. In my view the composition of the subject is quite tight within the matt and I feel that had there been more space around the subject the composition would have been stronger. This would have also allowed more of the habitat that this specimen is found to be visible to the viewer. The exposure has been correctly set for the whites with just enough of the background still visible to contribute to the story. Accepted

Flying Fox Camp

I think the story of the Flying Fox's roosting has been told reasonably well, of course they are all asleep as they probably should be as they are nocturnal and are at rest during the day. The lighting has brought out the colour of the fur that describes these bats quite well. I suggest that the composition could have been stronger had the photographer either eliminated the bats not hanging from the same perch as those in the line with a tighter composition or taken a wider composition allowing the viewer to see more of the roost site, I find the partially obscured bat bottom left becomes a distraction and pulls the eye away from those interesting subjects hanging in a line. Having patience in these situations if you can, may have rewarded the photographer with a bat having a sneaky look as I always find that if you can capture the head and eyes of these bats to be very rewarding. Accepted

Gliophorus viridis

I'm always intrigued by the translucent appearance of the caps of these fungi. In this print this is quite evident as we can see the pattern of the gills appearing through the cap. There has been quite a wide depth of field used in this composition as the subject matter and the fern habitat in the foreground is very sharp. I suggest that a little bit more light could have been added to the stem of the fungi, maybe using a reflector as I feel that this area of the print is quite dark and just lacks the detail that I want to see. The greens are a very strong element within this composition, telling us something about the habitat that this species of fungi grows in and perhaps why it is so cryptic and often hard to spot. The high gloss print works well to present this specimen and helps to bring out the detail and sharpness that has been captured here. Merit
Heather Knapp

Honey Bee Nest

This print wasn't named, and I found it quite difficult to work out what orientation it should be displayed at. Please name your prints with the label placed on the top edge. I could understand the story and perhaps what was happening, I suggest that more space is needed around the subject matter as the edge of the swarm has ended up very close to the matt. In my view the bees appear very soft and slightly blurred. Good lighting and nice exposure for the available light. Not Accepted

Hypholoma brunneum

The placement of these fungi on the left third of this print is a strong aspect of this composition. The fungi are sharp and the colour rendition is accurate. The inclusion of quite a big piece of the habitat that these fungi are growing on adds to this nature story. I suggest that the reflective light shining off the caps and the green plant right is a slight distraction and perhaps this could have been eliminated with screening out the reflective light source or waiting for the lighting conditions to change. In my view the stems just needed to be a bit lighter to bring out some more detail, hence the reason for

looking for a more even light source. Having a cluster of three always works well as shown here.
Merit Roger Ball

Ice formations

I thought that this was a well-balanced composition, nicely exposed, with a meaningful story. The icicles have the detail that we want to see and stand out within the composition. There is just enough detail at the top of the print to work out where the water is coming from off the edge of the overhang, while the bottom tells the story of the ice encasing the foliage as the water worked its way to the ground, not making it as it froze on the way. The black matt with the white core frames the print up nicely, adding emphasis to the ice. Merit Irene Callaghan

Lachnella villosa

This group of fungi have been really well composed, the fungi cluster is placed on a diagonal from bottom right to top left, leaving triangular spaces without any fungi in the top right and bottom left corners, this sense of space I think accentuates the story being told here as the eye stays with the group of fungi. The fungi are all tack sharp, showing all the detail that we need to see with this species. The whites are perfectly exposed with just enough light on the trunk of the tree that they are growing to accurately describe the habitat. The white matt and semi-gloss finish of the print compliment the whites of this fungi. Honours Carolyn Hope

Lady Bird Nest

This print has a blank label on it and no title, it is the only print that tells the story of a lady bird nest, so I'm presuming I have the correct print. I have viewed it in the landscape mode as the label should indicate the top. I think the story is informative showing the normally solitary lady bird beetle in an aggregation, this normally happens in the winter months. This nest seems to be in the crack amongst some timber palings. I think the habitat has been exposed quite well, but this has just left the subject matter a little under exposed. I also wonder about the empty space on the right as my eye gets drawn to this and in my view, this doesn't add anything to the story. Everything in the print is sharp and the print has been nicely presented. Accepted

Lewis Tarn

I think this print is telling a part of the story about this alpine tarn. There has been a recent snowfall and the photographer has taken an image that captures the snowy scene. As a landscape image and the treatment, it has been given I think it is quite arty in style. In my view a different composition perhaps would be stronger as my eye rests on the far edge of the tarn and it is this section of the tarn that really tells the nature story, being edge of two different habitats. Being centred in the middle of the print doesn't work for me as I want to see what this area is about. The print almost has a nostalgic feel to it as the tones appear to be almost slightly sepia. Accepted

Lobelia macrodon

This print very accurately describes this species of herb. The white flowers have been perfectly exposed and the cluster is completely sharp with enough depth of field to also include and describe the green foliage of the herb as well as some more emerging flowers. The boulders help to describe the habitat where this herb is growing. The composition works for me, there is enough space around

the subject matter with nothing being eliminated by the edge of the matt. The white matt and semi-gloss media help to show case this. Honours
Don Pittham

Mycena subviscosa

The yellow stipe as seen in this print helps to describe this species of Mycena. I enjoyed the composition and the story being told, as we can see some different stages in the sequence and stages of this particular fungi. They are growing on a tree trunk and we can see this in the print. I think the lighting of these specimens is a very strong element of the composition and it has been used to really show case the fungi against the dark background. I feel I need to comment on the very thin spider web evident running across the subject on the right and then out to the edge of the matt. This can look distracting as it appears as a line, it is part of this nature story and I commend the photographer for leaving it there. Another really nicely presented print. Honours

Irene Callaghan

Okarei Korako Hot Springs

This print has a lot of information and I encourage people to have a good look at it. I think the composition has been well thought out, with the key elements being placed quite strategically within the composition. The colours shown really help describe what is going on with this particular spring, it must be quite hot as we can also see steam rising as the water leaves the vent and meanders across the bare surface of the earth to a cooler pool at the bottom of the print. The colour also helps to describe the minerals that have been deposited. The bigger vegetation left just helps to describe the edge of this spring, perhaps we could have seen more of this, as I feel it has been cut off just slightly. The lighting has been well handled enabling the photographer to produce a very dramatic print. Merit
John Miles

Red bill gulls

The lighting on these red bill gulls nesting is a strong element in this print, the whites are perfectly exposed allowing us to see some beautiful colour and feather detail on the birds. The photographer has decided to use a wide depth of field here and I think this was the right thing to do as the habitat could be described as chaotic, keeping everything sharp I think helps to tell this story and to describe what these gulls are nesting in. Three is always a good number to depict in an image but in this case I don't think it has worked that well, the gull top left tends to draw the eye out of the image and I think perhaps there was a stronger composition to eliminate this. The eye detail in the two birds closest is superb. The black matt with the white core is effective. Merit
Jean Willis

Snakeskin Chiton

The colour as depicted on this shellfish is a very strong aspect to the story and draws the viewer in to perhaps work out what this is. In my view the focal point of the print has been set on the mid to bottom left of the specimen, this area is very sharp allowing us to see some great detail, I would like to this over the whole of the shellfish as I want to see the shellfish as a whole to be described, as well as the surrounding habitat. The right-hand side of the print is all out of focus, I think it should look the same as the left-hand side. Beautifully printed and the white matt really does highlight this subject well. Accepted

Starfish

The detail on this starfish is really well described and I think the colour is pretty much spot on. These starfish always fascinate me as they are reasonably big and quite powerful. We can see some evidence of this in this print as the starfish has been feeding from right to left, crushing and pulverising everything in its path. This is evident as we can see the bare earth after it has moved over it, just to the right of the subject and some crushed shell appearing underneath it. Perhaps if the photographer had used a wider angle we would seem more of this evidence and maybe an even stronger story being told through the print. A lovely exposure, with the high-gloss media setting this one off. Merit
Margaret Harris

Tara - Sterna Striata chick

This print tells the story of this chick in the early stages of developing its primary feathers. The colouring almost matching the habitat enabling the chick to be more or less cryptic amongst the boulders of the nest site. In my view the composition of the subject is quite central and I suggest that had the subject been placed more strategically on the junction of one of the thirds the print would be stronger. Everything is sharp with a wide depth of field being used, the backlighting adds some nice definition through the breast and head area. The nesting site is well described.
Acceptance

Tawny Frogmouth with chick

The focal point is clearly set on both main subjects, with the depth of field set to keep everything about these Tawny Frogmouths tack sharp, leaving the background and the immediate foreground nice and soft. What this has done is to help hold the viewers' attention on the parent bird and the chick, with the eyes indicating that the chick is there, as it is almost perfectly camouflaged against the adult. The touch of side lighting has brought out all the detail and colour of the birds. The structure of the nest helps to tell the story. I suggest that a crop off the top about halfway down through the blue would just help eliminate some of the background clutter, enabling the viewer to really concentrate on the main subjects without the eye being pulled up into the top of the print. Another beautifully presented print. Merit
Carolyn Hope

Thelymitra pulchella

This beautiful striped sun orchid flower has been nicely isolated from the background allowing the viewer to appreciate the colour and the beauty of the flower. The flower is partially back lit, with some light falling across the anther, highlighting the distinctive yellow. The stripes of the petals are clearly evident. The slight shadows appear as being quite soft and for me this hasn't caused any distraction. The hint of an emerging flower top right did make me perhaps want to see more of the orchid and I think the print could be stronger if this was the case. The print feels warm, and I think this is due to the overall toning, this adds a pleasant element. Merit
Don Pittham

Tui

Well caught, I think the print tells a nice story of this tui as it flies through the flax. The eye and the neck area is very sharp and I think the slightly blurred appearance and curve of the primary wing feathers gives a feeling of power and speed of the Tui. The yellow pollen on the birds head tells us perhaps what it has been feeding on. I think the composition of the print is quite strong as there is just enough space on the right for the bird to fly into and space either side of the wings and tail. The black matt and white core compliment the colours of the subject. Honours
Roger Ball

Whio - Blue Duck

The colour and feather detail of this Who is really well described. In my view the composition could be stronger if the subject was placed at the junction of the bottom left thirds, I say this a I feel this composition feels quite central leaving the subject perhaps just to dominate within the habitat. The photographer has gotten down really low, this has given the duck some nice profile and making it appear as we would want to see it. The lighting is very even and not harsh, this has helped describe the colour very accurately. The print doesn't quite fit the matt on the edges and I feel that this has become a distraction. Acceptance

White fronted terns (Sterna striata)

I think the nature story being told here is quite a strong one, with the chick on the nest about to be fed. A wide depth of field has been used and this has helped to really accurately describe the birds and the surrounding habitat. The parent bird top, and the chick are perfectly lit in the strong side lighting. The adult bird bottom though is only partially lit, leaving the important part of this story in the shadow, that is the head of the bird and the fish that is about to be offered up to the chick. The colour of the chick is really well described. I think the high-gloss media suits the lighting and the black matt with the white core compliments the subjects. Merit Heather Knapp

White-faced Heron

This white-faced heron looks to be pretty relaxed. The exposure has been nicely handled to compensate the light appearing on the bird and the dark background, allowing the viewer to appreciate the colour and fine texture of the feathers. The placement of the heron slightly left of centre is a strong element. In my view a crop off the bottom just to the bottom of the perch and then a crop off the top eliminating the branch top left would make this composition overall to be stronger. Merit Tom Young