

5 Amazing Nature & Wildlife Photo Contests You Simply Can't Miss

If you spend any time at all outdoors with a camera, you should try your luck in one (or all) of these contests. Even though the competition may be daunting, it's always worth a try, and there are some really nice prizes up for grabs.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition Held by BBC Wildlife Magazine and the National History Museum in London, this prestigious competition is now in its 45th year. They welcome pros, amateurs and youths to enter in the 9 main (3 for youths) and 3 special categories. The cost to enter is 20/3 images, and the jury picks one winner and one runner-up in each category. The winners in the adult categories are awarded 500, and the runners-up 250.

Those under 18 may submit up to 10 photos, at no cost, in the youth categories ("10 years and younger", "11-14 years", and "15-17 years"). Acceptable subjects are wild animals, landscapes and plants, and the winner and runner-up in each category are awarded 250 and 100, respectively. The "Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year" gets to spend a day out with an acclaimed wildlife photographer, and also receives a cash prize of 500.

In the three special awards, the requirements are a bit more specific. For The Gerard Durrell Award for Endangered Wildlife award, you need to submit photos of species listed as critically endangered, vulnerable or near-threatened on the 2008 IUCN Red List. The Eric Hosking Award is open to photographers aged 18-26, and participants are required to enter a 10-image portfolio. The One Earth Award focuses on conservation, and they are looking for images that encourages respect for nature. The winner of each category is awarded 1,000.

The Wildlife Photographer of the Year winner gets 10,000, presented at a ceremony at the National History Museum in London. Deadline for 2009 is March 27, but if you don't make it, don't worry. Remember, it is an annual event, so you always have next year.

Nature's Best Photography Windland Smith Rice International Awards Named in memory of photographer and conservation advocate Windland Smith Rice, this annual contest, held by Nature's Best Magazine and the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History, is open to amateurs, pros and youths (under 18). The 16 categories include some that you don't see in every competition: People In Nature, Small World Spectaculars, Zoos & Aquariums, Creative Digital, and Camera Club, where your club enter the contest as a group. The Grand Prize winner, category winners, and "Highly Honored Images" receive cash prizes and their photo(s) included in an exhibit at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC. For an entry fee of \$25 you may submit up to 20 photos, and the deadline is May 4, 2009.

National Wildlife's 2009 Photo Contest Open to everyone over the age of 17, this annual competition is looking for photos of mammals, birds, people & nature, backyard habitats, landscapes & plant life, other wildlife and global warming & wildlife. Pros, amateurs and youths are judged separately. The winner of each category is awarded \$1,000, and two Grand Prize winners receive \$5,000 each. You can enter up to 20 images for \$15, and that also gives you a year's subscription to National Wildlife Magazine. The deadline for 2009 is July 20.

The Great Outdoors Photo Contest Sponsored by Photo District News and National Geographic, this contest is open to everyone (except residents of Arizona, New Jersey, and Vermont) and the categories are: "Scenes of the Natural World", "Parks & Safaris", "Beaches", "Underwater", "Islands", "Plants", "Animals", "Insects & Gardens", and "Outdoor Sports & Activities". With so much to choose from, you're bound to find at least one category that fits your style. For amateurs, it's \$12/image or photo essay to enter (a photo essay consists of up to six images that convey a story around a particular theme, and you can submit as many photos and photo essays as you like. Prizes include gift certificates, a five-night stay at the Mandarin Oriental Riviera Maya Hotel in Mexico, camera equipment, and more. The deadline is April 20, 2009, but for an extra \$10/image, you can enter until May 4.

Nature Treasures in Europe The 16th nature photography competition, held by The EuroNatur-Foundation, wants your best photos of European landscapes, plants and animals. There is no submission fee, and you can enter up to 5 images. First prize is 7 days for 2 people in the Cantabrian Mountains in northern Spain, and other prizes include camera equipment, shorter trips (for 2), and your photo(s) in an exhibit at a castle in Bavaria as well as in print in numerous publications (natur + kosmos", EuroNatur magazine, on the hosts' Internet pages and in a large-sized wall calendar called "Nature Treasures in Europe 2010"). The 2009 deadline is March 31.

About the Author

DeeDee Dobson encourages everyone to enter their photos in contests. On her blog, she talks about [brilliant pink digital cameras](#) and the [different brands and new releases](#).