TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPETITION IMAGES

JScott rev Mar 2025

1	Have I decided in which competition category I will enter the image? (Check rules on editing for nature/travel/pj.)
2	Is the image tack sharp (unless deliberately blurred)?
3	Have I rotated the image to ensure that the horizon and/or other important vertical or horizontal lines are straight?
4	Have I cropped the image to eliminate unnecessary space?
5	Have I cropped the image to concentrate the viewer's eyes on the subject?
6	Have I cropped the image to avoid having the horizon right in the middle?
7	Have I cropped the image to avoid having the subject right in the center (unless I want it there)?
8	Have I cropped the image to ensure that objects do not merge with the edge of the image (e.g., a branch, a wing)?
9	Have I cropped the image to avoid having elements of the image coming exactly out of a corner?
10	Have I cropped the image to leave more room in front of a moving subject than behind it?
11	Should I rotate the image so that people face left? (This is not an absolute, but is often more visually pleasing.)
12	If I am processing the background to be a solid color, have I considered a color other than black?
13	Have I straightened the walls of buildings to correct perspective distortion?
14	Should any bright spots be darkened, since viewers' eyes usually go to the lightest areas of the image?
15	Is the image free of all visible sensor dust spots?
16	Would my image be improved if I added more intensity to the sky?
17	Are the edges and corners of the image clear of distracting elements? Do border patrol!
18	Would a subtle vignette help to draw the viewer's eye into the photo?
19	Should I add a little saturation to boost the colors in the image?
20	Did I add some sharpening (but not so much as to create halos)?
21	If the image has very dark edges, did I add a 3-5 pixel border to separate the image from the screen?
22	Is the border subtle enough to not draw too much attention to it?