

* NEC – Photo Contest Rules 2024*

Photo Contest Chair, Richard Pierce

Pick up your camera and start shooting! Below are the Photo Competition Rules followed by helpful tips for new photographers. If you have never entered a photo in a competition, this is a great time to do so.

Eligibility: The competition is open to all members of NEC member clubs. You do not have to be present to participate. All convention attendees are also welcome to participate. Some past participants may be invited to participate at the Chair's discretion.

Classes:

1. Individual Fish / Fish Identification – Advanced Class*
2. Individual Fish / Fish Identification – Open Class
3. Underwater Life (Group or Tank Photos) – Advanced Class*
4. Underwater Life (Group or Tank Photos) – Open Class
5. NEC Activities, People Pictures – Open Class
6. Pond and Water Garden – Open Class

*The advanced class is for anyone who has ever received a first place award in any aquarium related photo competition or who has ever been paid for any photographic aquarium related subject. If you have previously won a first place in the NEC photo contest, you are entitled to enter in the advanced class, but are not required to do so.

The term “fish” in classes 1 and 2 refers to any aquatic animal that may be kept in an aquarium. Invertebrates such as shrimp and animals such as axolotls are eligible for inclusion. If you have any questions, contact the contest chair.

Limit of Entries: Three in either class 1 or 2, three in either class 3 or 4, three in class 5 and three in class 6 – twelve entries maximum.

Photo Format:

All entries must be digital. Prints or slides will not be accepted. Images must be in jpeg format and between 1600 pixels and 3600 pixels in the greatest dimension. Each digital file submitted should be composed of the actual photograph only. No borders, other decorative effects or text should be added to the image.

There are no restrictions on post-exposure editing and / or image manipulation. It is understood that that photographers may take creative liberties with digital files. It is up to the judges to detect and determine when such manipulations are unnatural or obtrusive, and evaluate images accordingly.

File Name: The file name for each entry should include the entrant's last name, first name, species name or brief description, and class and entry number (per class) as per the following examples:

doe_john_corydoras_sterbai_C1_E1 or doe_jane_planted_aquarium_C4_E2

Method of Delivery: Entries should be e-mailed as file attachments to Richard Pierce: cyprinodont@gmail.com by **11:59 PM April 3, 2024**. Each e-mail should not exceed 5 Mb in size and may contain multiple photos. Send photos over several e-mails if necessary. The body of the e-mail should include the entrant's name, mailing address, e-mail address and phone number. A list of files sent should also be included giving the file name, description of the photo, class and entry number. The contest chairman will reply by e-mail within 72 hours indicating the files have been received. If you do not hear back within 72 hours you should follow up with another e-mail or phone call to be sure that the files were received.

All entries will be archived, renamed and cross-referenced so that the judges will not see the entrant's name as part of the judging. The judges' decisions will be final.

Use of Entries: The entrant agrees to allow unrestricted publication of images by the NEC whether for editorial or promotional purposes. Notwithstanding the NEC's unrestricted use of submitted images, entrant retains ownership/copyright of submitted images, whether published or not, and merely grants the NEC permission to reproduce images. A photo credit and/or copyright notice shall accompany any image reproduced in any context. Pursuant to the above, the NEC stipulates that entrant claims ownership/copyright for all images submitted (i.e., entrant is presumed to own the intellectual property rights for all images he or she submits under his or her name).

Display of Entries: It is expected that winning entries will be displayed on the NEC web site or presented at future conventions on a digital picture frame or other digital device. This display may include the entrant's name and other text on each photograph. Other entries may be displayed at the NEC's discretion.

Review of Entries and Judging: On the evening of Friday, April 5, 2024, the first night of the convention, from 6:00 to 7:30 we will hold an open public review and critique of the entries. All convention attendees are welcome to attend. Refer to your convention program for the time of this event. This will be the judges' first look at the photographic entries and the judges will be asked to critique each photograph, pointing out the strong points and weak points of each. The purpose of this session is education. The judges will be asked to give honest constructive criticism on the photographic entries. If you are not ready to hear such criticism of your photographs, please do not attend. The audience is expected to remain respectful during this session. From this session, observers should get a better idea of what makes a strong photograph, in the opinion of the judges. After all the photographs have been critiqued the judges will make their selections for the winning photos in private.

Awards: Cash awards will presented at the Awards Breakfast. If the winner is not present the awards will be mailed or digitally transferred to the winners.

\$20 for 1st, \$10 for 2nd, and \$5 for 3rd.

Technical support: If entrants have questions pertaining to preparing their photographs for submission they are welcome to contact the Contest Chair for help. The Chair will provide help and advice in resizing, formatting and submitting the photographs only. The Contest Chair will not give advice on artistic issues, post work, or other issues not pertaining to getting the photographs in the correct size and file format for submission.

Contest Chair:

Richard Pierce
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A Few Tips for New Photographers:

It is expected that an image editing program will be used to clean up the photo. White specs, small scratches, etc. should be removed. Most digital photos can also use a slight boost to contrast, color correction and light sharpening, but don't overdo it. The eye of the main subject animal should be in sharp focus.

The judges generally do not like to see evidence that the fish are in an aquarium, so be careful of showing filters, heaters, airline, and the side of the aquarium. The background of an image can make or break an image. It should complement the image and not distract from the subject.

Composition is important. Don't be afraid to use vertical format if it suits the subject better. You can get lots of tips on composition online.

Behavior is always interesting but doesn't supersede other factors. A sharp, well-exposed photo of a guppy will always do better than an out of focus, poorly exposed photo of a breeding pair of rare cichlids. This is a photo contest first. Photos do not have to be taken during the past year, but resubmission of previously-submitted photos is discouraged.

Be careful of camera phones, especially older models. They often produce grainy photos. We have seen photos that could have been winners, but were too noisy. If you have to use a camera phone increase the amount of light if possible. These phones typically produce noisier photos in darker conditions.

Finally, photos taken in public aquaria, aquarium stores, in other people's aquaria and in the field are also eligible for the contest. You don't have to own the fish or aquarium, but just have taken the photo.

Guidelines for photos for Class 5, NEC Activities People Pictures, are relaxed compared to other categories. Photos may be posed or candid. Photos taken at NEC events or at events of NEC member clubs are eligible for consideration.