



# Nautilus Scuba Club Photo Competition Rules

## CONDITIONS OF ENTRY - 2026

### OVERVIEW

**Entries are open to financial members of the Nautilus Scuba Club.**

**Entries will be accepted from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026 and close at midnight on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026. No entries will be accepted after this date.**

All images and video clips must have been taken between May 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 and May 14<sup>th</sup> 2026.

All images must have been captured in natural water environments such as the ocean or lakes. Images taken in pools, aquariums or any other controlled environments are not permitted.

Any image with content or behaviour deemed to be caused by human intervention will not be accepted (e.g. Shark feeds, puffed pufferfish, shark cage, inked octopus/cephalopods, moved nudibranch, etc.)

Images previously entered in a Nautilus Underwater Photography competition, or that have won a prize in any other competition, are not permitted.

Entrants agree that their submitted images may be used by the Nautilus Scuba Club and prize sponsors for promotional purposes.

This is a club competition, aimed at hobby and enthusiast photographers. It is not open for entries from professional photographers. For the purpose of this competition, a professional photographer is defined as a person who:

- Earns a significant portion of their income from photography, or
- Regularly sells photographs or photographic services, or
- Is employed or contracted as a photographer.

This definition applies regardless of whether the photography is conducted above or below water.

Individuals who have occasionally sold images or received minor compensation for photography, but whose primary income comes from another profession, may still enter the competition. The final determination of eligibility will be at the discretion of the competition committee.



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## IMAGE PREPARATION

This competition focuses on photographic skill rather than image manipulation; this is not a Photoshop competition. Judges may request the original file to verify that the image represents what was captured.

### Permitted adjustments

- Colour balance
- Brightness and contrast adjustments
- Sharpening and noise reduction (including standard AI-assisted noise reduction)
- Manual Backscatter removal
- Cropping. **Note:** Excessive cropping that significantly reduces image quality or simulates a macro shot will not be accepted.

### Not-permitted

- Generative AI (producing artefacts that did not exist in the original image)
- Composite images (in-camera or post-processing)
- Cloning
- Artificial lighting effects
- Excessive blurring or darkening of backgrounds
- Watermarks
- Removal of natural elements such as bubbles, fish, divers, ropes, etc.
- Use of AI assisted backscatter removal tools.

## ENTRY PROCESS

Entrants must be financial members of the Nautilus Scuba Club.

There is a maximum of 3 image entries for each photo category.

Each image may only be entered into one competition category. Please do not submit near identical images into other categories (e.g. photos taken as part of a sequence of capture).

Entry fee: \$50 per person (paid during the online entry process).

- The fee is the same regardless of the number of images submitted.
- There is no entry fee for junior members.

Refer to the **Entry Process** Guide for a guide on how to submit your entries.



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## FILE SPECIFICATIONS

Refer to the [Photo Preparation & Sizing Guideline](#) document for more detailed information.

All images will be printed at A3 size.

For optimal print quality please submit images with the following specifications:

- Resolution: minimum of 240 dpi (dots/pixels per inch) up to 300 dpi
- Size: Minimum 2800 pixels on the longest edge
- Format: JPEG/JPG (at 90% quality if given the option in your editing software)

**Please prepare your images for printing.** As a guide and final check, view the image with your monitor/screen brightness reduced to 50%, to get an idea of how it will look when printed. In general, the image may need to be made slightly “brighter” than for simple viewing on a monitor or screen, otherwise it may be darker than expected when printed. Judges will be asked to assess images under similar viewing conditions to ensure consistency, including guidance to view them at approximately 50% screen brightness.

Metadata (EXIF information) is to remain embedded in your image file; if the photographer’s name appears in that metadata, it should be removed. Please remove any star or number rating.

## PHOTO DESCRIPTION REQUIREMENTS

Each image must include the following information:

- **Description** (maximum 10 words):
  - For example, include the main subject and/or the behaviour being shown (if known)
- **Location:**
  - If taken on the Great Barrier Reef – include the reef name.
  - If taken overseas – include the general location (e.g. Raja Ampat, Lembeh, Maldives).
- **Camera / Housing / Strobes or lights**

Do not include any information that identifies the photographer.

These descriptions may be displayed alongside the image at the exhibition.

## JUDGING AND POINTS SYSTEM

Judging will be conducted blindly (photographer unknown) by professional photographers who are not members of the club. Judges' decisions are final.



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For each category the judges will select:

- Winner
- Runner-up
- Up to three Highly Commended entries

This year we have shifted to a **points-based system** instead of awarding prizes for each category. Points will be awarded as follows:

Winner – 5 points

Runner-up – 3 points

Highly Commended – 1 point

This change effectively shifts the competition toward a portfolio-style evaluation, recognising strong performance across several categories. As a result, **there will not be a portfolio category** this year.

There will also be a club **“Members Choice Award”**. Each financial Club Member will be able to place one vote for their favourite entry online. The Award will be given to the entry with the most votes received.

Points from all categories will be accumulated to determine the overall competition ranking.

Prize selection order will follow the total points ranking:

- 1st place chooses their preferred prize first
- 2nd place chooses from the remaining prizes
- 3rd place chooses next, and so on.

In the event of a tie, positions will be determined based on the number of category wins (e.g. highest number of 1st-place finishes), followed by runner-up and highly commended results if required. If participants remain tied and select the same prize, the allocation will be decided at random.

The winning entries will be announced at the Awards night on **11<sup>th</sup> July** at the [Junior Eisteddfod Hall at 67 Greenslopes St, Edge Hill](#).

In the event that entries exceed the capacity of the Exhibition venue, the Judges may be requested to shortlist images to be displayed at the exhibition.

## CAMERA TYPES AND ELIGIBILITY

**dSLR/Mirrorless** – Full or cropped sensor cameras with interchangeable lenses, including mirrorless micro 4/3 cameras.



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**Compact cameras** – “Point and shoot” cameras with non-interchangeable lens (wet lenses are allowed). Examples are Olympus TG series, Sony RX100 etc.

**Smartphone / Action Cameras** – Devices such as iPhones, GoPro cameras and similar.

Most categories are “Open”, which means they are open to all camera types. However, certain categories are restricted to participants that exclusively use that camera type. For example:

- Entrants who submit any images taken with a dSLR or Mirrorless camera are not permitted to enter the following categories:
  - Compact Macro & Compact Wide Angle
  - Smartphone/Action Camera
  
- Entrants who submit any images taken with a Compact (or a dSLR/Mirrorless) camera are not permitted to enter the following categories:
  - Smartphone/Action Camera

These restrictions are aimed to ensure that participants compete within appropriate equipment and photography skills levels. Participants are still allowed to enter images taken with any camera system in the ‘Open’ categories.

## CATEGORIES

### **WIDE ANGLE Cat 1: dSLR/Mirrorless**

#### **WIDE ANGLE Cat 2: Compact**

Entrants can submit up to 3 images in their camera category.

Any image that shows a wider angle of view than the human eye (35mm focal length). Over/under photos are permitted in this category.

### **MACRO Cat 1: dSLR/Mirrorless**

#### **MACRO Cat 2: Compact**

Entrants can submit up to 3 images in their camera category.

Any image that shows a smaller angle of view than the human eye. As a guideline, macro subjects are generally smaller than 6 inches (15cm) across.

Images should not be excessively cropped to simulate a macro shot.

### **PORTRAIT - Open**

Entrants can submit up to 3 images.

A portrait shot usually focuses on one subject. It could be a full body shot, or for example, just focusing on the head/face, or perhaps one subject against a backdrop of many, but the main subject should occupy the majority of the frame.



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## **BEHAVIOUR - Open**

Entrants can submit up to 3 images.

Any image that shows natural behaviour of an underwater animal.

## **VIDEO - Open**

Entrants can submit 1 entry, which can be taken with any camera system.

A video of up to 3 minutes. Can be edited with music and/or voice over. May include clips filmed above water, e.g. with a drone, or on a boat etc., but must have majority (70%) of content filmed below water.

Any soundtrack used must be free of copyrighted material.

Refer to the [Video Entry Guide](#) for further information on how to enter this category.

## **BLACK AND WHITE - Open**

Entrants can submit 1 image.

Any underwater style. Use this category to accentuate light and shadows. Images can be shot in black and white in camera or processed from original colour images.

## **SMARTPHONE/ACTION CAMERA**

This category can only be entered by Smartphone/Action Cameras and is aimed at showcasing the ever-improving capabilities of this camera type.

Entrants can submit up to 3 images of any style.

(note that Smartphone/Action cameras can also be used in other categories and are considered part of the Compact camera family, meaning they can also enter the 'Compact' specific categories).

## **SPECIAL CATEGORY – GREAT BARRIER REEF**

Entrants can submit up to 3 images.

This category is sponsored by **Mike Ball Dive Expeditions**.

Images in this category should reflect the beauty of the Great Barrier Reef. All areas of the Great Barrier Reef will be accepted as well as the Coral Sea Reefs including Flinders, Holmes, Flora, Bougainville and Osprey.

The winner, runner-up and highly commended of this category will still receive competition points. However, the winner will not be eligible to select another major prize\* from the overall competition ranking.

\*A major prize is defined as an overseas trip or liveaboard trip.

**Images that, in the Judges view, do not meet the criteria of the Category that they have been entered in, will not be judged.**