

## 2017 Migration Celebration Nature Photography Contest Official Rules and Guidelines

The nature photography contest is sponsored by the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges and the Texas Mid-Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex and is a program of the Migration Celebration. The 2017 Photo contest is coordinated by a Migration Celebration Photo Committee.

Nature photography is one of six legislated public uses of national wildlife refuges (NWR) along with wildlife observation, interpretation, environmental education, hunting, and fishing.

Email: [photocontest@migrationcelebration.org](mailto:photocontest@migrationcelebration.org)

2017 PHOTO CONTEST SCHEDULE		
March 20, 2017	Contest deadline; all photos must be submitted by this date.	See Contest Rules, page 3.
March 31, 2017, 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.	AgriLife Extension, 21017 Country Road 171, Angleton	See An Evening with the Judges, page 4.
April 7, 2017	Kickoff dinner, Freeport RiverPlace, City Park Road at Old River St., Freeport	All entered photos will be exhibited for visitors.
April 22-23, 2017	Migration Celebration, San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge	All entered photos will be exhibited for visitors.
N/A – gallery display will be done again in 2018	Brazosport Art League Gallery at the Center for Arts and Sciences, 400 College Drive, Clute	

### Categories

NOTE: The categories for the 2017 Photo Contest are changed from 2016. Instead of separate Texas Mid-Coast photos and Refuge categories, ALL categories are combined. In addition, the photo contest categories have been broadened to include photos taken **anywhere in the state of Texas**, not just the Texas Mid-Coast.

Texas Nature Photography Categories	
For all the categories below, all photos must have been taken in the state of Texas. No photos of domestic, farm, ranch or zoo animals are allowed. No photos of cultivated vegetable garden plants are allowed. It is the intent of this contest to focus on plant and animal species seen in <u>the wild</u> . Photos taken in your backyard of native plants or bird, butterfly or other species that 'visit' are acceptable.	
1	<b>Wildlife Vertebrates of Texas.</b> Includes images of mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles or other vertebrates photographed in their natural habitats. Does not include photos where birds are the primary subject.
2	<b>Wildlife Invertebrates of Texas.</b> Includes images of insects, mollusks, crustaceans, millipedes, worms, or other invertebrates photographed in their natural habitats.
3	<b>Birds of Texas.</b> Includes images of birds photographed in their natural habitats.
4	<b>Plant Life or Fungi of Texas.</b> Includes images of flowers, trees, and other flora in their natural habitats or images of mushrooms or other fungi. Does not include broad landscape or scenery photos.

5	<b>Landscape/Scenery of Texas.</b> Includes images of landscapes, scenery, skyscapes (such as sunsets, sunrise, or night sky), seascapes, or ponds in Texas where elements of land, water, sky or other <b>natural elements</b> are the primary subject. Includes panorama photos of a natural area; excludes close-ups or small focal points of nature. Ships, buildings or other man-structures should not provide the main focus in this category.
6	<b>Nature-themed Photo/Digital Art.</b> Includes nature as art, a single or composite image that has been digitally manipulated using tools such as Photoshop®, an image greatly manipulated with digital filters, HDR photos, etc. The photographer must note the digital techniques used to create the picture. This category is intended to show how the elements of nature can be expanded to create unique photographic images that become art. <b>Note – this is the only category in which significant digital manipulation is allowed.</b>

## Contest Rules

Guideline	Notes
1. Summary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Select, print, mount and label photos per instructions.</b></li> <li>2. <b>Fill out entry form including name and location of photos. For youth, entry forms must be signed by a parent of legal guardian.</b></li> <li>3. <b>Mail or drop off photos, entry form, photo release form, entry fees, and digital copies of images to designated locations.</b></li> <li>4. <b>Note: contest is open to people of all ages.</b></li> </ol>
2. Entry fees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An entry fee of \$2.50 <u>per photo</u> must accompany entry forms. Payment may be made by check or money order made payable to “Migration Celebration.”</li> </ol>
3. Entry form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fill out one entry form per entrant.</li> <li>2. Select appropriate category for each photo.</li> <li>3. Fill out title of each photo.</li> <li>4. Identify location where photo was taken.</li> <li>5. Write in the file name of the digital photo. This may be different from the title of the photo, but it is helpful if they are the same. Preferred digital file name format is: <b>[Your last name]_[Your first name]_[Photo name]</b>.</li> <li>6. Calculate the entry fee amount that is owed.</li> </ol>
4. USFWS Photo Release Form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete and sign USFWS photo release form. The contest signature page is now USFWS FWS Form 3-2259 Copyright Release Agreement where restrictions for photo uses are entered into the form. On this form, photographers may instead choose “Grant Full Copyright Release” that allows the Refuge, Friends, or Migration Celebration committee any use of photos, but also releases photos into the public domain. .</li> </ol>
5. Photo Alterations Categories 1-5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All photographs should accurately reflect the subject matter and the scene as it appeared.</li> <li>2. Photos that have been digitally altered beyond standard optimization will be disqualified. Acceptable digital alterations are adjustments to color, contrast, brightness and sharpness; removal of dust and scratches; cropping; black and white conversions; and use of HDRI/HDR (high dynamic range imaging).</li> <li>3. Panoramas shot in-camera or assembled (stitched) in software will be accepted in the Landscape/Scenery category only.</li> <li>4. Focus stacked images will be accepted for close-up or macro photos, e.g. in plant or invertebrate categories.</li> <li>5. Not acceptable are photo composites (combination of two or more photos that are not of the same scene, the addition, duplication, deletion or moving of objects in the photos; or the use of artistic digital filters and effects. Examples of artistic filters and effects NOT accepted are watercolor, neon glow, posterizing, stained glass, and others which do not show the scene in its natural way.</li> </ol>

6. Photo Alterations Category 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Photos digitally manipulated with post-processing techniques are acceptable. Images may be greatly manipulated with digital filters, HDR techniques, etc. to create a graphic or artistic effect.</li> <li>2. Examples of artistic filters and effects that ARE accepted are watercolor, neon glow, posterizing, stained glass. These effects may alter how the image would look in its natural way. You may also use photo composites or double exposures such as the combination of two or more photos that are not of the same scene. (In this case, all locations must be stated.)</li> </ol>
7. Dates when photos may be taken	3. Photos entered in the 2017 contest may be taken from January 2016 to March 2017. Photos taken prior to 2016 should not be entered.
8. Acceptable sizes of photos	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Each print may be 8x10 inches, 8x12 inches, or 8.5x11 inches.</li> <li>2. Exception: Panorama photos will be accepted for the "Landscape/Scenery" category only. Panorama photos must be 4 inches high x12 inches wide or 4 inches high x10 inches wide.</li> <li>3. Photos should be printed to the edge of the print with no white borders.</li> </ol>
9. Mounting photos	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All prints must be permanently mounted on heavy matte board material, foam board, or pressed wood.</li> <li>2. The mounting material should not extend beyond the edges of the print. <b>EXCEPTION:</b> If a 4x10 or 4x12 panorama photo is submitted in the Landscape/Scenery Category, it should be center-mounted on an 8x12 inch matte board so it will display better on the contest easels.</li> </ol>
10. Labeling photos	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>DO NOT</b> put a date, text or a signature on the front of the prints.</li> <li>2. Label the back of each photo with the following information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The category</li> <li>b. Title of the photo</li> <li>c. Location where photo was taken</li> <li>d. If photo was taken on the Refuge, list Refuge and Unit</li> <li>e. Enter your name and phone number</li> <li>f. (For Category 6, list digital alteration techniques used)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
11. Digital copies of photos	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Save all photos as <u>jpeg files</u> at 300 dpi or better resolution. Submitted jpeg files should be for the photo printed and not the original if photo was cropped or edited. Do not submit camera raw files.</li> <li>2. Rename each digital photo. Preferred digital file name format is: <b>[Your last name]_[Your first name]_[Photo name]</b>. Please do not use your camera assigned photo name such as IMG_2345 or DSC_4567.</li> <li>3. Save all digital files on a flash drive (thumb drive), CD or DVD and submit with photo prints.</li> <li>4. If you need help to produce or send the digital images, please contact the Contest Coordinator. Johnny Dwyer 979-799-5063</li> </ol>
12. Mail and Drop-off Locations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Drop off or mail your entries to either of the following addresses by the contest deadline date. Individuals at these two locations cannot answer questions about the contest. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Migration Celebration Photo Contest c/o Texas Mid-coast NWR Refuge Complex 2547 County Road 316 Brazoria, Texas 77422</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Migration Celebration Photo Contest, c/o Brazosport Area Chamber of Commerce 300 Abner Jackson Parkway Lake Jackson, Texas 77566</p> </li> </ol>

## **Other Guidelines:**

- **Use of Photos:** Photo files are required because photos may be used by Texas Mid - coast NWR Complex or the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges according to the uses described in these rules. By entering photos in the Migration Celebration photo contest, entrants grant Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges or Texas Mid - Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex royalty - free and non - exclusive right to use with full credit given to the photographer, as follows: (i) on Migration Celebration, Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges, or refuge publications, websites, display panels, or promotional products, (ii) in promoting the Migration Celebration photo contest, and (iii) for display at refuge facilities. Entrants waive the right to inspect or approve the final use of their photographs by the entities and for the uses stated above. Additional permission will be requested for using photographs for purposes other than listed above.
- **Use of Submitted Prints:** All submitted prints remain the property of the photographer. On the entry form photographers may indicate if they want to donate their prints. All other prints not selected for display may be picked up after 4:00 p.m. on Sunday of the Migration Celebration. Photographers may also pay an optional \$2 fee per print to have their prints mailed back to them.
- The selected Texas Mid - Coast Complex National Wildlife Refuge Photos of Merit will be on display for one year. Photos placed on display will be returned by mail at the entrant's expense or may be picked up at Migration Celebration in the next contest year.
- **Judging:** The contest will be judged by two professional nature photographers. Photographs will be evaluated on image impact, technical excellence, print quality and originality/creativity. The Texas Mid-Coast Complex Photos of Merit will be selected by staff of the USFWS.
- The Migration Celebration Photo Committee has the right to disqualify entries not complying with the Official Contest Rules and Guidelines. Such disqualified entries may be displayed, but will not be included in the judging.

## **Awards and Recognition**

Winning photographs will be announced and displayed April 7th at the Migration Celebration kickoff dinner. All submitted prints will be on display at the Migration Celebration, San Bernard NWR, on April 22-23.

Winning entries are awarded custom contest ribbons as follows:

- Best of Show
- Contest Category Awards – first place, second place, third place, and honorable mentions.
- Youth Participation Awards – a ribbon is awarded to all youth participants.
- People's Choice Award – a ribbon is awarded to the photo that receives the most votes by attendees of the Migration Celebration kickoff dinner and the Migration Celebration.
- Texas Mid-coast Complex Photos of Merit - Exceptional photographs that depict wildlife and habitat found in the areas of Brazoria, San Bernard, and Big Boggy Refuges and Units will be selected for display for the next year at the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge office at 2546 County Road 316, Brazoria, and at the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge Field Office at 24907 FM 2004, Angleton. The selected photos also are awarded a special ribbon.

## **Privacy Statement**

Address, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses collected on the contest entry form will be used only for purposes related to the photo contest and for contacting photographers about use of photos.

## **An Evening with the Judges**

All photographers who enter the 2017 Migration Celebration photo contest will receive an invitation for a late afternoon or evening with contest judges to go through and discuss entered photographs. As many of the entered photographs as possible will be included, but if it is not possible to include all photos, the work of all photographers will be represented.