

TIN CAN BAY CAMERA CLUB_2026 DIGITAL COMP_POINTS AWARDS & JUDGE'S CRITIQUE/COMMENTS					
MONTH: January					
SUBJECT: Nature					
JUDGE: Stephen Labuschagne					
Member ID	Member Name	Image Title	Points	Award	Judge's Comments
A GRADE					
21A	John	A Mouthful	4	Bronze	The Water dragon is enjoying its meal and the sun. Focus is nice and sharp throughout with a soft background. Exposure is very good with no blown out highlights or overly dark areas. The composition works for me, if you include the complete animal it will be much smaller in the frame due to the length of its body and tail. You did well with the crop and the most interesting part of the animal in this story is what it is eating and you showed us that. It is very important that we look at our main subject and our background in any photo. Even though the background is out of focus, the branch to the right of the Water dragon does take some of the attention away from the main subject. A small step to your right could have eliminated the branch from the image and make the main subject even more prominent with its colours and skin textures.
03A	Mary	Agnus Waters	5	Silver	The water creates really interesting patterns in the sand, the brown sand, orange and white stones with the black patterns all work well together to create a pleasing image. The focus is nice and sharp with the exposure well handled. The black inflow from top right creates a leading line and we follow it around the rocks in the middle. The two rocks on the sides stops the viewers eye from leaving the scene and overall it is a simple yet very effective image of what happens in nature every day. Playing around with contrast and maybe slightly lowering the exposure would create a more dramatic look. Well seen and photographed.
21A	John	Azure Kingfisher	5	Silver	Nice and sharp image of the Kingfisher. The depth of field is very shallow and the result is a nice out of focus background and most of the foliage around the bird is also out of focus. The sharp bird contrasts against the soft focus areas and holds our attention. The branches and leaves surrounding the Kingfisher does creates some distraction but this is where the bird was perched and we cannot control it. I do think that the exposure is slightly on the dark side, we loose detail in the blues and browns and a slight lift in exposure without creating over exposed areas will improve the feather details and lift the image higher. The composition works well, there is enough space infant of the Kingfisher. A slight crop to remove the branch top right can also help.

06A	Leanne	Banksia	5	<b>Silver</b>	A view of the flower from the top shows us the integrate inner parts of the flower. The orange centre with the yellow stems ring brown and then the fine frills and yellow outer parts of the flower, all very beautiful and perfectly shaped by nature. The focus is very good with the most important parts nice and sharp with a slight falloff towards the edges. The exposure is slightly dark and by lifting the exposure and adding colour contrast the colours will be greatly enhanced and make them contrast each other even more. Now I am not a big advocate for square cropping, but I think in this case it would work very well. By cropping square and by leaving just the four corners with the green leaves will create another colour contrast and you get a almost macro feel of the image. Really well seen and photographed
26A	Leigh	Black Beauty	3	<b>Merit</b>	The Satin Bowerbird is one of the most difficult birds to photograph. They prefer the dark rainforests and light is always at a premium. The photographer did well capturing the male with its violet-blue eyes and deep shiny blue feathers. Focus is on the branch in-front and the bird itself is slightly soft. Apart from being in a forested area it looks like an overcast day and the combination lead to a very flat lighted image with no real contrast. The bird is slightly dark while the branches are lighter and our eyes will go to the brighter areas in the photo and with the branch obstructing part of the bird we loose the bird in the scene. A step to the left would have reduced the blocking bright branch and made the bird more prominent.
04A	Julie	Blue Sky Cloudburst	1	<b>Entry</b>	A very well taken image with lovely blue skies and cloud formations forming into what looks like and thunderstorm. Focus and exposure is done well. Unfortunately the human elements in the image is too big to ignore, the fences and green fields are not permissible in nature. In a landscape category the image will do good, but unfortunately it is not nature
04A	Julie	Bullrushes	4	<b>Bronze</b>	A very simplistic image with just the two cattail seed heads that is about to burst open. The image is sharp with a very clean and well out of focus background that make the two seed pods standout. The exposure is well handled as no part of the white fluffy areas are over exposed. The lighting is flat due to what look like overcast conditions. The conditions contributed to not have blown out whites, but also caused the image to be slightly dark and low in contrast. Try and open up the shade areas slightly, but be sure to protect the highlights, add a small amount of contrast and vibrance. The composition is good, the two lines going through the image with the one seed head just off centre to the bottom and the other slightly higher. Good image
01A	Cathy	Cooperation	4	<b>Bronze</b>	The white of the Royal Spoonbills are very easy to over expose. The slight over cast conditions worked in your favour, apart from a slight bright spot on the one wing the photographer did well not to overexpose them. There is very good interaction between the two birds and the stick creates a connection between the two. Focus is nice and sharp and with the sky behind them the depth of field is irrelevant. The image is slightly on the dark side, try lifting the shadows very slightly to brighten the foreground and the birds would help. The crop works well and overall a pleasing image.

01A	Cathy	Feed Me	4	<b>Bronze</b>	Very sharp and colourful image of the Cattle egret in breeding plumage feeding its chick. The focus is on the eye and both birds are sharp with a softer background and the exposure is also good. The interaction between the parent and the young tells us a story of raising the next generation of egrets. The crop is very tight, a lot has been cropped out form the scene and I want to see a bit more of the open wings of the parent. Even though the story is about the feeding action, the inclusion of the parents wings and possible body would have completed the image. The foliage in-front of the birds is part of where they breed, even though it takes attention away from the two birds it is part of where they breed and we have to accept it and work around it. A good story telling and well photographed image.
20A	Cheryl	Fishing Heron	6	<b>Gold</b>	Lovely image of the White-faced Heron, there is action with the foot out of the water and a fish in the mouth. It tells a story and the light adds to the overall mood of the image. Focus is nice and sharp on the eye and the exposure is spot on with the white in the face very well handled. The lower angle created a background that is further away from the camera and thus softer and more pleasing, try going even lower for an even more dramatic eye level image. I would crop the rocks out, they take attention away from the heron and the more panoramic crop will emphasise the movement. Just have a look at the colour in the fish, the blue looks a bit unnatural.
06A	Leanne	Golden Wings	5	<b>Silver</b>	I do like the colours in the image, the greens and dark browns in the background work well and the dragonfly is placed strategically on the green between the browns. This make the orange dragonfly stand out. The exposure is slightly dark, try lifting the overall exposure and shadows, but still protect your highlights on the wings to not over expose. The dragonfly is almost in the middle of the frame. Try to crop a very small amount from the top and the right to have it even more in the centre of the frame, this will break the rule of not having your subject in the centre, but I think in this case it will be a very strong composition. The focus is slightly soft but acceptable.
19A	Jacquie	Got My Eye on Something	2	<b>Acceptance</b>	A very difficult situation for any cameras light meter to handle, the contest is just to great with parts of the Egret in the bright sun and parts in the shade. Blown out highlights and clipped blacks are inevitable in this situation. The focus is slightly soft on the bird while the trees in the back are sharp. The location where the bird is photographed make it very difficult to improve the image and mayby waiting few minutes the bird might have moved into clear sun away form trees and exposure would have been mush easier for the camera to handle. During post processing have a look at the colours in your image, the white area of the bird that are in the shadows have a blue colour cast, these can be fixed in post processing and is allowed in nature

10A	Maureen	Love Dance	5	<b>Silver</b>	Truly a love dance by the two swans. Well seen and captured at the right time to form a heart. Focus is sharp on both faces and both eyes. The exposure is slightly over exposed and the result is that the water looks dull and the black swans almost grey in certain areas. A slight reduction in exposure to bring colour in the water as well as reducing the highlights a small amount with an increase in contrast will create colours that just pop with the the bright red beaks and eye completing the love heart. The square crop works here and a lovely image.
20A	Cheryl	Mutual Courting	6	<b>Gold</b>	Story , mood, impact and emotion. The courtship of the Crested Terns are captured very well and having both with fish is a great bonus. Focus is sharp throughout and with the light slightly on the flat side the exposure on the whites are easier to manage. By adding a small amount of vibrance and exposure but take care to still protect the highlights it will elevate the image to a even high level.
08A	Maree	Natural Bridge	3	<b>Merit</b>	A very interesting natural phenomena. Everything front to back is in focus and the correct bigger aperture was most probably used to get a decent depth of field. It is difficult to get the exposure correct with a big dark part at the bottom while the rocks and waves are much lighter and the camera will struggle to get the exposure correct. Try to make the image slightly darker and add some contrast on the rocks and boost your colours a small amount. Don't be afraid to have the bottom part slightly dark, as long as you can see some details it would be fine and the darker area will be your base where you work from with the lighter area attracting most of the attention. The rock formation is very interesting but my eye keeps on looking for something strong to rest on. The rocks to the top right is just to small to keep your eyes for a longer period. Maybe a slightly lower angle, a step left or right, longer or wider lens. Don't be afraid to experiment in the field and in post processing. I do like the image, it just miss that something extra
26A	Leigh	Nature's Art	5	<b>Silver</b>	Beautiful flower captured here by the photographer. The angle from above works well to separate the in focus flowers from the softer background and the exposure is done well. The luminosity and colour of the background and flower are very similar and work against the shallow depth of field. A slight change in either colour, contrast or luminosity between the subject and background will emphasise the flowers more and make them pop. The square crop works in this image and the green stem from top left acts as a leading line to help the composition. With a very small change the image can do very well

03A	Mary	Rainbow Bee-eater	3	Merit	A really nice image of the Rainbow Bee-eater, the bird is well focused with the eye clearly visible and the blink or highlight in the eye is an essential part of the image. The time of day is not optimal, as we can see the shadow is directly below the bird indicating mid day and this caused areas of high contrast and unflattering light. Lower angled light such as early mornings or late afternoons creates softer more vibrant colours and allows for more pleasing contrast. Despite the time of day the exposure isn't overly bright and the photographer did well to not over expose the image. The composition can be improved by cropping into a landscape format, thus removing most of the uninteresting background and foreground.
19A	Jacquie	Ready to Take Off	3	Merit	The Cattle egret in its breeding plumage is a strikingly coloured bird, The yellow, orange, and red bill leads you to its bright red eye across the brown, yellow feathers to its white body. Exposure is never easy with them and the photographer did well to not over expose the body, it is slightly bright, but still okay. The focus is good enough on the bird with the eye clearly visible and in focus. The surroundings are not ideal with lots of foliage around the bird. It does look like it is about to take off and a second or two later might have been the ideal photo with lots of movement and more of the body visible and the wings covering the leaves of the tree. The green of the leaves are dull and the overall saturation can be increased. The bird is also in the centre of the frame, by cropping a small amount from the bottom and from the left, the bird will be positioned such that it has more space in-front of it to move into.
10A	Maureen	Still Hungry	3	Merit	The rookery is a very busy place during the breeding season and the chicks can never get enough food. As always one is begging for food. The focus on the parent is nice and sharp and even though there is a slight fall off towards the chicks they are still sharp enough for me. The light is rather flat with little contrast and this helped to not have the whites over exposed. It also make colour fairly dull and lifeless. A small amount of contrast a very slight lift in shadows and vibrance will enhance the colours and make the bright orange plumage of the Cattle egret stand out. The square crop is very tight and there is no space for the birds. A more landscape orientation will work better as it will allow space in-front of the parent and it will definitely add value to the image.
08A	Maree	Water Lillies	5	Silver	The pink lilies contrast nicely against the green of the water and the browns of the leaves in the water. The image is nice and sharp throughout with some falloff towards the back but sharp enough where either matters. Exposure is well handled, blacks are not overly dark and the few white areas are not over exposed. Well done. My eyes keep on moving between the three Lillies on the left and the one on the right. The one in the centre stops you for a moment and then I move between the bigger ones constantly. Maybe concentrate on the three on the left only, zoom in, go lower, use a shallow depth of field. Try different techniques to make the image different. As is the image is still good, a small amount of vibrance and a slight crop from the top can add to the overall pleasant look and feel of the image.

B GRADE					
16B	Philippa	Good Morning	5	Silver	This image captures a striking view of the dolphin in the shallows. The focus is sharp and well-handled, exposure is also well handled despite the bright areas of the dolphin's head. The dolphin is angled from left to right breaking the square frame. A slight crop on the left and top would create more space and position the dolphin's head on a third of the frame. It would be very difficult to change the perspective, by going lower you will lose the body of the Dolphin in the water and not enough of the head is outside of the water to make a stronger image. A good image of the Dolphin and having the eye visible even under water is very good.
25B	Greg	Gull Friends	3	Merit	The exposure on the birds is well handled, with no overly bright areas on either of the two gulls. Having more than one bird in the photo works well and the depth of field is effectively used to have both in focus. The eye of the front gull is sharp and clearly visible while the other's eye is a bit dark and hidden, which could be enhanced in post-processing. The front gull's head is grey and appears slightly darkened in post-processing, making it look unnatural. This difference in colour and luminosity is accentuated by the presence of the second gull, which detracts from the overall quality of the image. The composition could be improved by reducing about half of the water. There's enough space for the birds to move into and a lower angle of view would help blur the background, creating a better separation between the subjects and the background. While it's a good image, with a few small changes it could be even better.
17B	Wendy	Kangaroo Test	2	Acceptance	This beautifully captures typical kangaroo behaviour, with a clear interaction between the two. The focus is soft on both animals and there are overly bright areas that reduce detail. Cloning is evident in front of the left kangaroo and to the right of the right-hand side kangaroo. This is not allowed in nature and while I understand the background might have been distracting, it's better to leave it as is than resort to cloning. To avoid distracting backgrounds try a wider aperture or adjust the angle by lowering the camera or moving it left or right.
07B	Lynn	Long Legs	5	Silver	The green insect stands out sharply against the black background and white flower. It's well-composed with enough depth of field to keep all the insect in focus. A slight exposure lift without blowing out the whites would enhance the image further. While the background is dark and mostly out of focus, the red at the top draws attention away from the insect. A different crop would be beneficial; cropping out the red at the top and most of the large white flower would shift focus from the prominent white area to the more delicate green insect. This would also reduce the visibility of the cultivated lily.

17B	Wendy	Pheasant	2	Acceptance	The Pheasant Coucal boasts stunning colours and intricate feather patterns, complemented by a distinctive call. Captured in its natural habitat amidst dense vegetation, this image presents a challenge for photographer. The photographer's success in capturing the bird is commendable. However, the overcast conditions resulted in a dark exposure of the bird itself, obscuring fine details and with the bird out of focus the overall quality of the image is reduced. Nature photography demands patience, luck and persistence. By waiting a few minutes, the bird might have repositioned itself, reducing obstructions and improving the overall composition.
07B	Lynn	Twisted Trunk	4	Bronze	The image is sharp and well-composed despite the flat lighting. There's a nice contrast between light and dark areas within the photo. The story revolves around the twisted trunk and its growth, evident in the shapes, colour variations and changes in luminosity throughout the tree. Is the man-made structure essential to the narrative? I believe so. Without the wall, the tree wouldn't have grown in that specific way. By slightly altering the composition to show more of the trunk and foliage and less of the wall, the composition and natural elements would be enhanced. A slight increase in exposure and contrast would further elevate the image.
16B	Philippa	Who Are You?	4	Bronze	A sharp image of the kookaburra captures the bird against a slightly blurred background. The exposure is well-balanced, with the kookaburra bright and almost overexposed on one side, creating an overexposed area of highlights on the head. Review your histogram and highlights after taking a few shots and use your camera's exposure compensation to avoid overexposing white areas. Recovering dark areas and noise is easier than fixing blown-out highlights. The upward angle isn't ideal, a more eye level image creates better eye contact with animal and photographer. It can also reduce the blue sky, making the image feel more natural. However, this isn't always possible. The left eye is sharp and colourful, and a slight lift in shadows could make the right eye more visible, enhancing the image.
25B	Greg	Wombat	2	Acceptance	The image, taken under cloudy conditions, resulted in soft light with minimal contrast. This allowed the photographer to achieve a good exposure of the animal. The grass across its body is perfectly natural and part of its environment. However, there are signs that the photographer removed the grass from the animal's head. The most obvious indication is the wombat's teeth and the misplaced grasses in the foreground. These techniques are not permitted in nature. To avoid obstructions, try a different angle, closer to the front. Wait until it walks a few steps and most importantly ensure you can see its eye.