

CPS 2ND NATURAL HISTORY COMPETITION 2010
Projected Images

1. **Acaena inermis – Bidly bidly** An interesting photograph of a colourful native groundcover plant. The three heads of flowers and what are usually barbed spikes, are well placed – the left one not quite as critically sharp as the others. The background plants are out of focus enough not to be distracting. Well done.
2. **Active andesite stratovolcano** Taken at just the right angle and with superb lighting the strata and colours of this volcano have to be appreciated and couldn't really be done any better.
3. **Algae** I can't be absolutely certain from this photo that you really have algae as your main subject – there is probably some in the green underwater areas. The colouring is good judging by the pine needle but the focus is on the water level rather the green areas above that appear to me to be moss.
4. **Amphicnophorus gigantea – NZ Native Slug** A very good shot of this native slug showing the veining pattern throughout its body and also the texture of the skin. Soft lighting has been very suitable. The antennae are just a fraction unsharp – possibly from its movement.
5. **Anas platyrhynchos** Nice colouring and good water patterns in this shot of the duck. Showing the tongue is good – don't know that I have seen this before on a duck. Focus on the bill and breast is great but the head and eye don't share quite the same quality.
6. **Auricularia Cornea** Good sharp and clear photo of this fungi showing the gills and also some small hairs on the upper surface. It is obviously growing on some old decaying wood so the habitat is shown and the lighting has been even – not too harsh.
7. **Australasian Harrier, Circus approximans (shielding kill from attack)** This photo tells the story of the hawk with prey in a natural habitat. There are bits of rabbit fur lying about to the right where the prey has been ripped apart. Beautiful colouring in the birds feathers – it looks deeper than the ones around here. Nicely handled.
8. **Bald Eagles** And what action has been caught here! Wonderful wing spreads, hooked beaks ready to attack and those talons ready for battle. The diagonal line through the format is also very good – well done!
9. **Black-naped Monarch (male)** A beautiful little bird feeding the chick with an insect. The flash or flashes used have given a perfect lighting balance to show all the details clearly without burning anything out. My only niggle would be that I would prefer a little more detail in the background to be sure we're not looking at cardboard. Well done though.

10. **Boyle Fungi** An amazing group of toadstools in a great background and in ideal soft lighting conditions. You've taken them from the correct low angle to show the cap edges well and also the stalks with their shaggy patterns. The important nearer specimens are sharp and as to be expected in this situation the ones beyond fall off in focus. Well handled. I hope you can get a defining name for them.

11. **Branta canadensis (Canada Geese)** This is an interesting pattern shot showing a limited colour range in the group of resting geese and the water. Every bird is slightly different in this resting mode although there might be a little grooming going on. We should be able to recognize this goose after seeing these photos.

12. **Bumble Bee (on Lambs ear Flower)** There is very good detail in the bee's head and front legs but he is a bit overwhelmed by all the furry lambs ear. The flash used has given wonderful detail to the plant but the photo could be cropped a lot to give the bee more prominence. A slightly more angled approach to the bee would show a little more of its body.

13. **Chroicocephalus scopulinus** A really nice flight shot of this gull with the red bill, legs and sharp eye all standing out clearly. The tail spread is good and the movement shows in the wings. Great lighting and very suitable sky background. Appealing photo.

14. **Cirrus cloud, Mares tails at Lake Clearwater.** The southern winds must be spreading this cloud far and wide to make this great pattern. Just enough of the hills has been included to give the shot a base and some contrast. Good composition.

15. **Cortinarius rotundisporus** The shiny slimy surface of this group of fungi has been perfectly captured. They stand out from the moss so well that we could almost reach out and touch them and they don't need bright colouring to achieve this effect. Well done.

16. **Cygnus atratus** Very good feather detail on the bird's rear end but unfortunately the neck and head are showing too much movement to be acceptable. Good clear background.

17. **Cygnus atratus Head study** The red bill and eye stand out well on this Black swan and there is a little detail in the head feathers. The white band and tip of the bill are just out of the zone of sharp focus. The flash used hasn't extended far enough to give any further information unfortunately.

18. **Cygnus atratus - head detail** To conclude this trio of Black swan shots we have one with a great composition and amazing background to suit the subject. The lighting is so good on the head and feathers and the habitat, although subdued, is perfect. I would like to own this one!

19. **Cynomis (Prairie Dog)** A cute little animal and one that is probably quite tricky to get. The lighting here has been very harsh and hasn't given the best of effects, particularly in out of focus areas. Its good to see a catchlight in the eye though.

20. **Datura Angels Trumpet-Bridesmaid (Brugmansia candida)** We've certainly got all the names known to this very large flower in this title. It is not an easy flower to photograph and to get good light into this open end of the tubular arrangement a good reflector or fill in flash would have been used.

21. **Decayed log** Nature is gradually breaking down the structure of this wood and at this stage we can see where the grain of the wood has been. The lower left area could be darkened a little but the textures and patterns make for a good composition.

22. **Domedia exulas – Wandering albatross** A repetition of shapes is interesting here where the albatross are holding their wings out of the water. Good water area and lighting but neither of the birds are quite sharp – maybe boat movement has taken place.

23. **Euphrasia cockaynei** A nice group of this euphrasia flowers and the right colouring. I thought that an angled composition avoiding the celmisia leaf at bottom left and the shrub stems upper right could have been better. It seems that the flowers are just beyond the zone of sharp focus too.

24. **Fantail in Hokitika** – re Every whisker and feather on this delightful little bird stand out well against the tree trunk or whatever is in the background. I like the angled branch through the area too – it does appear to have had a little pruning to simplify the area of expected arrival. I suggest you make cuts that slope back under the stem so they don't show up so much. Great shot –good eye highlights from flash.

25. **Female Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos)** Good simple composition with no distractions showing a resting mallard duck. Detail in the feathers is good and she has her eye on the camera. I can remember the late Geoff Moon advising us that something more of the bird's typical behaviour is needed rather than one just standing. This one would be good in a series on Mallard ducks.

26. **Flowering Gorse at Lake Coleridge** This is a very pictorial rendition of gorse, but it could well be used to show this introduced weed spreading in one of our beautiful natural areas. I don't know of course whether it is flourishing on private or DOC managed land but no doubt you Chch members do. The detail in the flowers and prickly foliage is good and the colouring great.

27. **Fringillidae – Fringilla coelebs male sm** A fat little chaffinch certainly is a temptation for the camera. I like the simple background, although the chain is a bit demanding. We can see the typical white on the wings, although a more angled view of the bird would show this better. The beak is a trifle soft in focus.

28. Fur Seal at Kaika beach The angle this shot was taken from was good to show the head detail as well as the flippers, the large body and the rock habitat. It is just a little too dark with no real light showing in the eye of the beast. The light sky beyond has probably given you a false exposure reading.

29. Gannet The flying gannet is well placed within the format of a beautiful coloured sea background. The lighting on the birds is good to show feather and body details.

30. Gentoo Penguin gathering nesting material A good shot of this gentoo pottering along as they do with what is probably a stone for the nest. The light has caught his shoulder feathers well but it is unfortunate that his beak and the nesting material are against a shadowy background area of the snow.

31. Glacier detail There just doesn't seem to be enough sharp detail in this photo to really tell us what we are looking at. I imagine that there is a lot of gravel in some areas of the ice layers but we can't really see it unfortunately.

32. Gliophorus pallidus (Pink wax gill fungi) This is a very delicate looking fungi and it has been treated accordingly with suitable lighting and nothing to detract. Well done.

I'm quite envious of the range of attractive fungi that you folk have in your beech forests.

33. Goldfinch One of my favourite small birds that I like to see in the garden. This one appears to have a seed in its beak – they are very busy seed gatherers. Good colouring and the inclusion of the seed head helps to tell the story.

34. H2O at Minus 10 This is a fascinating shot obviously taken in extremely cold conditions. The ice stalactites appear to have dripped a little and then refrozen at the base where the different shapes are catching the light. Intriguing stuff and well captured.

35. Heron with Bullfish An excellent shot of a heron in action. It is clear and sharp and tells the story of the way these birds fish and feed themselves. The inclusion of the rocks shows that fishing is done close to the shoreline. Great natural history.

36. Horseshoe Bend Erosion Very good viewpoint and colour rendition of this spectacular river bed – probably the Murchison River in Kalbarri National Park. Many thousands of years of heat, floods and rain have combined to erode this river valley – well recorded here in our time.

37. Housefly A really good close-up of this small fly – resting or even feeding on something that could be a euphorbia stem. There is very good detail in the head and eye and down the wings, although the body slips away a little in shadow but the shape is still obvious. Good dedicated work.

38. Ice Cave Fox Glacier Good colouring and detail of the glacier base with the stream and rocks that have come clear of the ice all shown.

39. Icicle There really isn't enough sharpness throughout this photo to hold the interest or tell the story. The dark fuzzy areas might be moss, some of it embedded in the ice. Perhaps you need to use a tripod to get a greater depth of field in this type of work.

40. Juvenile Brown Falcon with prey A very wary looking bird guards the well eaten prey – possibly a hare. His outstretched wings probably shield his feast from the view of other carrion feeders flying above. The photo isn't crisply sharp, but nevertheless good story telling work.

41. Juvenile Brown pelican in flight This bird has been very well placed within the format – there is room for its flight forward over that placid looking sea. The wing structures are clearly shown and reflected light from the sea has lit up his underbelly – almost too much in fact. Good head detail.

42. Juvenile Pied Shag with Flounder Good action shot here with this Juvenile shag bringing up his prize catch. He's obviously a good learner and won't starve. There is a little movement blur in the flounder – to be expected in a skewered fish. Well captured.

43. Kea (*Nestor notabilis*) feeding on *Hebe pauciramosa* The beautiful feather colours of this cheeky bird show up to perfection in this photograph. Raindrops on the feathers add a lot to the texture bringing a little sparkle to the photo and I believe there are rain drop streaks showing in the background. His wet head, eye and beak details are good but I can't go along with the name of the plant he is eating. It is an Anisotome rather than a Hebe.

44. Kekenos (*Arctocephalus forsteri*) What a pity that the eyes and whiskers aren't as sharp as we would like to see. Otherwise the frontal approach and muted background are all great.

45. King penguin feeding chick A good story telling shot of the ugly young King Penguin and the parent. I'm always amazed that such a fat fluffy thing can grow into such an elegant adult!

46. King Penguins Courting Ritual 'I'll show you mine if you show me yours' could be the title of this one! They go through some delightful antics and look so human in many ways. The bright sunlight has given a little harshness to the birds and grass, but not too much. The silver plumage looks great. There is some smudging of areas up each vertical edge of the photograph – possibly cloning not done well.

47. Lichen in Beech Forest This photograph has grown on me after many viewings of them all. The outstanding tree and closeup lichens are really good and of course, show many different lichens against the out of focus background of lichens hanging over many

branches. It would be advisable to name the hanging one – I think it is Usnea. Well seen.

48. Lichens at Arthur's Pass This is a nice specimen of the flat circular type and sometimes they are not as easy to photograph as it would seem because the background isn't always on the same level. The colouring is very good and I like the radiating treelike patterns.

49. Limestone Rocks Castle Hill Good clear shot of these rounded rocks but to me there wasn't quite enough information shown to warrant a high placing. The image would be a very useful one to add to a group explaining the geology of the area.

50. Magellanic oyster catcher A very good identification shot of this oyster catcher which is a South American species. The plumage colouring is the same as the Pied oyster catcher but this yellow eye ring separates it from those with a red eye ring. The open coastal or riverside background is well suited.

51. Monarch Butterfly emerging Wonderful colouring in the emerging butterfly wing and it is really sharp and clear. I note that the stem the chrysalis hangs from has been introduced to the branch of the swan plant – a good idea to have the food plant in view. It is strange though that the caterpillars often crawl away from the food plant to pupate – it might be a safety precaution as the plant is often stripped and the chrysalis would be left without foliage screening from birds.

52. Morris serrators on cliff edge A really nice study of these gannets set against the sea as a background. The head and eye detail on the nearer bird is very good and I wonder whether, overall, a little less exposure would have brought up a little more detail in the white feathers of both birds.

53. Native Bee This must have been a very busy little bee judging from the amount of pollen he has gathered. Those rear legs are really loaded – perhaps the weight is causing him to rest. Sharp detail all over the body is great – in fact a slight crop all round would be possible. Nice work.

54. Nestor meridonalis or Kaka An extremely colourful shot of the kaka and foliage – in fact I think it is a little over the top for colour. There is a certain harshness that is not quite natural, particularly in the greens. However for certain publicity purposes this would be eye-catching of the bird, so suppose it depends what we use our photos for in the end. I find the light overhead blobs a bit demanding, but the bird details are all very good.

55. Nestor notabilis (Kea) As a total contrast we have very subdued colouring and foliage for Kea and it is very appealing and so natural. The yellow bit in his beak is probably food he has been given or even stolen and being taken from a low viewpoint the breast feathers show up well.

56. New Zealand Fur Seal A delightful study of this young fur seal resting on the rocks. The lighting is perfect to show a flipper, his fur and facial details well, while still giving a glimpse of the coastal scenery beyond. Well arranged in the view finder.

57. Night Sky over Tekapo An amazing photo of our night sky that doesn't show any movement! I don't know how you can get so much detail without using a long time exposure. Perhaps you have the best telescopes available at Tekapo where I've heard you get the clearest skies. Great shot.

58. N.Z. Katydid This looks like a juvenile katydid to me since the wings haven't grown out yet. There is plenty of length in the legs and antennae though and you've done well to keep those within the frame. The high light source has been good to cover most of it well – maybe a reflector at lower right could have brought a little more into the mandible area. Good work.

59. Paxillus I like the diagonal line of these fungi through the area and commend the photographer for moving in close. The gilled area in very good on the near specimen but the upper surface beyond has received just too much light and is a distraction. The light green leaf lower right and something lower left are both annoying and could probably have been removed prior to clicking that shutter.

60. Pikao (*Desmoschoenus spiralis*) A very attractive shot – a landscape in fact – including the colourful native plant which I call Pingao. Maybe Maori names differ in different areas. We can certainly see the style of this grass and its flower heads and the way it grows in pure sand. It is really a colonizer in this sort of situation. Nicely recorded in very natural colourings.

61. *Ranunculus lyallii* Beautiful flowers at a perfect stage on this marvelous ranunculus. Why **they**, the indefinable **they**, persist in calling it a lily I can't work out. Because these are taken in a sinkhole situation probably, it is hard to get angled light on the petals to see more of the wonderful texture they have. Leaf shape is visible too.

62. *Ranunculus monroi* A really nice diagonal group of this ranunculus showing the typical shiny buttercup gloss on the petals. The lighting has been good to show the leaf hairs as well, an identifying feature of this buttercup. Neat tidy work.

63. Red fungi *Hygrocybe rubro-carnosa* This was a good find to locate the red fungus. You've recorded the colouring very well and shown the gills from a good angle. It is a pity that the base of this fungi is cut off and that we can only partially see the smaller one. Include it all next time.

64. Red Cap A really good effort to capture this Goldfinch so closeup – they're not a very big bird. The colouring is great and we could easily recognize it from this photo. I like the background and perch and feel that the bird has probably moved its head a little as you took this shot softening the focus on the beak and head a little.

65. Red-billed Gull (*Chroicocephalus scopulinus*) in flight There is something unusual about this photograph – shadows don't usually form in the sky! I feel there is a trick somewhere – maybe you can let me know what has been done thanks!

66. *Rhipidura fuliginosa* (NZ Fantail) A very good fantail shot – you people must have more patience and probably more fantails than I see. This one is posed in a good position, sharp in most areas, and with a sparkle in the eye. A few of the outer light background areas could be toned down a little to improve it even further. Nice work.

67. *Rhipidura fuliginosa* or Fantail It is unfortunate that your fantail follows others that have been taken a little closer in and with slightly better backgrounds. I'm sure that you will be able to see that this bird is smaller in the area and that the background is a bit more demanding. It is still a better fantail than I've got though!

68. Royal Spoonbill pair at Lake Ellesmere These are a charming pair with good lighting, sharp focus, nice clear water area with no distractions, but they are a bit small in the area. I suggest a little cropping to bring them a bit closer and then we could see that magnificent head dress that the male is wearing to advantage.

69. Sally lightfoot crab feeding, Galapagos Islands. Well Sally is showing an amazing range of colour – in fact a little overdone from what I have been able to check out. However the angle of taking has been great. Getting low enough down to look into those lovely blue eyes and the mouth where one claw is stuffing food is really impressive. Bright sunlight and a flash as well have given a huge depth of field. I see there are hairlike things protruding from the front legs- probably sensors of some kind. Fascinating!

70. Self Saucing Pigeon The pigeon is certainly stuffing itself with the plums from the prunus tree. Good exposure over the front half of the bird but the rear end is totally burnt out in the harsh sunlight. Do try your pigeons in much softer lighting conditions.

71. Shaped by the elements Nature has certainly sculptured the area photographed and it is impressive stuff with a pictorial element as well. The angle of light has helped show up the fluting and sculpting of the rocks – without that they could look very flat.

72. Signit in profile This is a really good shot of a Cygnet's profile, all wet and dripping as one would expect, and such great blue water. The ripples add to it too. But, please learn how to spell Cygnet before entering again!

73. Silver Gull Feeding Yes, these gulls are real scavengers and do line up for any pickings the fishermen have left. The shot is clear – shows a bit of flesh on the gull's bill and could be used as evidence if needed against fishermen.

74. Spotted shag *Stictocarbo punctatus* (showing breeding plumage) And wow – what an eye colouring. The colours look as though someone has been doing some smart

tiling in the area around and below the eye. Beautiful feather detail as well – the silver fine ones and the grey black tipped feathers are shown so well. An amazing shot.

75. *Stegastyla aff. Alpina* This looks like the native orchid formerly called *Caladenia lyallii* and in this shot the column detail is very good. However, because the sunlight or even a flash, has been very bright, little detail comes out in the white petals. A softer more even light is better.

76. Swallow feeding its chick Good action shot here with the adult bird feeding the young while on the wing. Great spread of the wings and very good colouring and detail in the parent's head. The swallow shaped tail can be seen in the chick and behind the legs of the parent. Well achieved.

77. Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura jota*) about to takeoff A massive wingspan on this rather ugly bird is ready to soar into the air. The head is not quite as sharp as it might be although the wings, which are further forward do seem sharp. Exposure on the wing feathers is good, but no detail shows in the darker body area.

78. Velvet shank (*Flammulina velutipes*) Although taken from a high angle, we do see the gills since this species turns them upwards. The upper surface could well hold water in wet conditions. The background mosses provide a good natural setting and the colouring seems perfect.

79. *Vindula arsinoe* A butterfly makes a nice change of subject matter, this one resting on a palm frond which reflects a little light back into the body of the butterfly. There is just enough light to see the eyes and the curled proboscis and the lower wing shows a couple of blue 'eye' spots. The legs are nicely positioned and backlighting on the wings show the patterning well.

80. White birdsnest *Nidula candida* with peridioles or Eggs You found a very nice specimen to photograph here and have handled it well. Detail and texture in the fungi are shown very clearly and the moss is the natural perfect background with true colouring. Well recorded.

81. White-faced Heron at Lake Ellesmere A good record of a white faced heron wading in the lake and balanced by the old stump or post. We see many very good shots of these birds now that digital is with us and it has come to pass that something more than wading is needed for higher awards. This would team well with a group on Heron activities.

82. Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby

A good pose on the rock – the right sort of setting for a Wallaby. It is interesting to see that his paws don't touch the rock – he balances on the heels. The rock colouring looks Australian – maybe he is in his homeland. Well taken

83. Yellow-eyed Penguin (*Megadyptes antipodes*) Taken by flash, probably late in the day, has left the background very dark, although the penguin is sharp and clear, apart from his footwear that is hidden in the grass. Good head detail, the yellow eye is there and some of the dark feathers show up.

84. Zitting Cisticola with grasshopper Another of these perfect bird studies with good lighting behind the bird and in front to bring every detail to life. The single highlight in the eye indicates one fill in flash this side of the bird and even the grasshopper could be identified from this photograph. Extremely well organized, but I would again like to see something of natural tree growth in the background rather than this flat green area.

85. Bracket Fungus (slide) This shows a good tiered group of Bracket fungi, the light edges on them helping to show them clearly as the light falls away lower down. The droplets of liquid – not sure if it is rain water or ooze from the fungi – give a little sparkle to the shot.

86. Snapping Turtle (slide) The eye of this turtle is clear and part of the shell can be seen but not much idea of the size or even shape can be read from this angle. Perhaps a shot from further back showing the carapace as well would teach us more about this crustacean.

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