

PSA Code

Ethical Considerations in Nature Photography

The Photographic Society of America has adopted a Code of Practice to serve as a guideline for the photography of nature subjects and the environment. In summary:

- Be considerate of your subject – animal, vegetable or mineral. Killing or injuring any living thing is improper conduct.
- Be courteous to your fellow photographers. Obtain permission before entering on land where free access is not customary.
- Be familiar with the life history and the geographic setting of your subjects. Complex life forms and rare species call for greater knowledge and respect.
- Be abiding of requests and signage by rangers or wardens in national and state parks or wildlife refuges.
- Be protective of all wildflowers, not only those protected by statutory law. A competent photographer never picks a wildflower.
- If rocks, logs, or natural things are brought in to enhance the scientific background of a picture, they should be returned to their original place.
- Simplifying or gardening the immediate area of a picture does not include pulling up, cutting off, or otherwise destroying other plants. Knee holes and toe scuffing should be prevented.
- Avoid trampling fragile habitats such as grasslands, marshes and wildflower patches. Damage to an ecosystem affects all of its resident species.
- No techniques that add to, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are permitted. Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photography without changing the nature story or the pictorial content are permitted. All adjustments must appear natural.