



WILDLIFE

IN NORTH CAROLINA

2008 PHOTO COMPETITION

In late 2007, Jared Lloyd was on holiday break from Appalachian State University. For him, that meant more time for photography. Lloyd woke before dawn on Christmas Eve and drove from his parents' home in Moyock to nearby Tulls Creek to photograph the sunrise. But Lloyd wasn't wandering aimlessly in the wintry predawn gloom: He knew that the weather conditions might result in fog over the Currituck County creek, and he knew that if he positioned himself in the right spot, he could capture a great image.

"There are a lot of boat docks along the creek," Lloyd said. "I knew that the sun rose through the trees over the creek, and if I positioned myself in front of those pilings, it would simplify the composition."

Several of the photo competition's judges identified these elements among their reasons for selecting this photo as the grand prize winner. "The image has a nice, clean, simple composition without any distracting elements," said professional photographer Kevin Adams. "Its ethereal atmosphere evokes a sense of calm and stability, while at the same time possessing a remarkable 'wow' factor."

"This image likely required some planning and reflects a photographer's vision as well as an extraordinary moment in the outdoors," said Charlie Peek of the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation. "It's just the right vantage point at just the right instant."

"It has a mystical quality to it," said Mike Dunn of the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences. "The colors, the fog and the contrast with the stark posts in the foreground all appealed to me. I thought it captured the magic of sunrise better than any image I have seen."

The competition is intended to encourage high-quality nature photography and to identify talented wildlife photographers working in North Carolina. This year's field totaled 6,368 photographs—our largest number of entries ever. In the competition's fourth year, 1,160 photographers took part, including 156 young shutterbugs in the two youth categories.

The most popular subject was Birds (1,069 entries), followed closely by Invertebrates (919) and the landscape category, Peaks, Valleys & Plains (910). Wild Plants received 809 entries and Reptiles & Amphibians 660, Animal Behavior 615, Outdoor Recreation 576, Mammals 481, Youth 13–17 167 and Youth 12 & Under 162.

Our judges included *Wildlife in North Carolina* art director Vickie Cumbee; WINC photographer Melissa McGaw; Dunn, coordinator of teacher education for the museum; Adams, author of "North Carolina Then & Now" (Westcliffe Publishers, 2007) and books on waterfalls, hiking and wildflowers; and Peek, public information officer for Parks and Recreation and a former photojournalist.

We thank our corporate sponsor, Great Outdoor Provision Co., for its generous participation in this year's competition. Valuable support was provided by our co-sponsors, the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences and the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation. All winning photographs may be seen on exhibit through March at the museum. Various North Carolina state parks will exhibit selected photos from the competition throughout the year. Details and rules for the 2009 competition will be posted on www.ncwildlife.org in May, and entries will open on June 1.

—Greg Jenkins

GRAND PRIZE WILDLIFE IN NORTH CAROLINA 2008 PHOTO COMPETITION



Jared Lloyd, Kitty Hawk
Sunrise over Tulls Creek, Moyock

Lloyd scouted out the perfect location to capture the sunrise through the trees, then waited for a foggy, still morning to take this image. The beams of sunlight, combined with the mirrorlike water and the interesting pilings, transform a commonly taken photograph into an exceptional image.



BIRDS FIRST PLACE

Wesley Gubitz, Wilmington

Brown pelican, Carolina Beach

Bathed in quickly fading sunlight, Gubitz found this pelican behind a local fish house in the Carolina Beach Yacht Basin. He noted that the local boat crews are used to seeing him with his camera as he has been shooting there for the past three years. This shot, taken just as the sun was going down, is one of his favorites.

BIRDS SECOND PLACE

Gene Furr, Raleigh

Ring-billed gulls, Carolina Beach

While walking on the beach on New Year's Day morning, 2007, the photographer happened upon this scene while looking for shells in the surf to photograph. Once he noticed these ring-billed gulls flying above his head, he snapped this shot. It turned out to be the only image he got that morning, but it was a good one.



BIRDS THIRD PLACE

John Stroud, Raleigh

Red-winged blackbirds, Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

Taken in January of 2008, this photo was the result of a morning spent in fields near Pungo Lake. Although Stroud initially set out to photograph snow geese, once they left he noticed great swarms of blackbirds in an adjacent field. It was not until he got closer and the sun caught just the right angle that he realized they had red on their wings.





BIRDS HONORABLE MENTION

Mark Rustin, Bristow, Va.

Great blue heron, Currituck Heritage Park

Rustin and his wife decided to head out to Currituck Heritage Park to snap some shots of birds in the sound. Upon arriving, they saw this great blue heron landing in the water, and Rustin snapped this shot.



BIRDS HONORABLE MENTION

Alexandra Houston, Beaufort

Royal terns, Sandbag Island in Carteret County

This image was one in a series of photographs that Houston took while attempting to herd terns into a pen to band them. While some photos captured the chaos of the moment with all the heads pointing in different directions, this one marked a moment when all of the chicks began to move together toward the pen. She noted that she really liked the sense of unity and direction in the photo.



MAMMALS FIRST PLACE

Wesley Gubitz, Wilmington

Wild horses, Shackleford Banks

Gubitz describes Shackleford Banks, which is part of Cape Lookout National Seashore, as an “amazing place to visit” because the island provides a unique look into the lives of its wild horses. Although some “Banker ponies” are acclimated to people, those with foals can be skittish. He noted that capturing the mare resting her nose on her foal as it passed in front of her was especially fortunate, and fulfilling.



MAMMALS SECOND PLACE

Jessica Maceda, Boone

White-tailed fawn, Blue Ridge Parkway

After having seen many deer along the Blue Ridge Parkway, Maceda stopped at an overlook loop that she had hiked through the night before and spotted this fawn. After a bit of quiet stalking and some hide-and-seek, Maceda was able to flush the fawn and snap this shot of it out in the open. She described it as the highlight of her weekend.



MAMMALS HONORABLE MENTION

Culley Wilson, Hampstead

Black bear, Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

Taken in June 2008 during the massive fire at the refuge, Wilson crawled on his belly for more than 300 yards to get this shot of a black bear feeding in a wheat field with the burned refuge in the background. Coming within 45 yards of the bear, Wilson sat for nearly an hour before snapping this shot.



MAMMALS THIRD PLACE

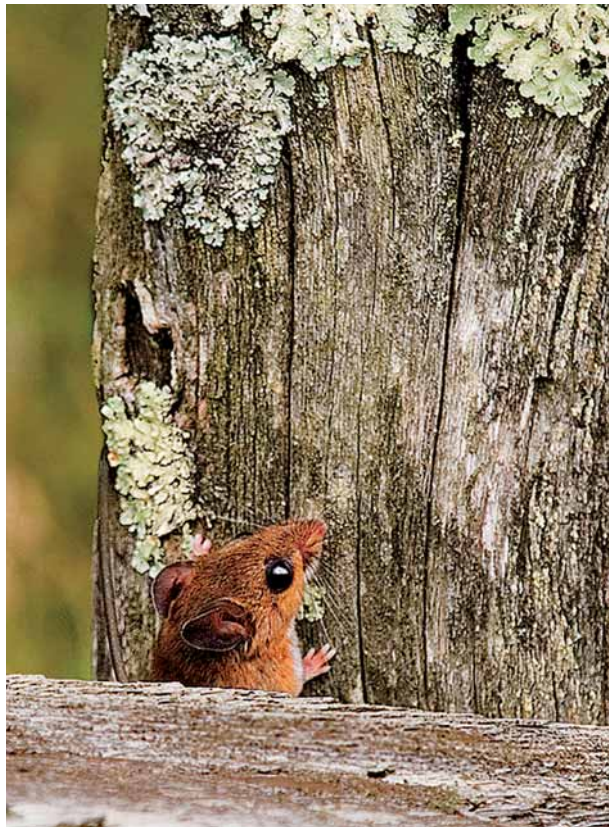
Wesley Gubitz, Wilmington
Wild horse, Shackleford Banks

On his many day and overnight trips to Shackleford Banks, Gubitz gets to observe these wild horses in their natural habitat. Noting that patience is key to getting natural shots, he spends a lot of time just observing them. This shot was of one of the stallions on the island.

MAMMALS HONORABLE MENTION

Phillip Stith, Winston-Salem
Mouse, Blue Ridge Parkway

While in the process of setting up his tripod to shoot some wildflowers against a fence in the summer of 2007, some movement caught Stith's eye. A mouse scampering up the fence-post paused just long enough in Stith's view-finder for him to take this picture. Stith said that the mouse gave him a split second to capture the image before it moved on.





REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS FIRST PLACE

Parks Roberts Jr., Wilmington

American alligator, Winnabow

Shot on June 1, 2008, near the Cape Fear River between Wilmington and Southport at Orton Plantation's pond, Roberts spotted this alligator down an embankment about 6 feet below him. As he zoomed in and watched those cold, dark eyes that never moved or blinked, he admitted that he felt a bit unnerved. "Was he thinking I might make a good afternoon snack?" Roberts wondered.

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS
SECOND PLACE

Scott Hotaling, Cullowhee
Spring salamander, Great Smoky Mountains
National Park

While hiking along the Big Creek area of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in May 2008, Hotaling spotted this small salamander and decided to snap a shot. He felt the combination of the salamander's surroundings and the low angle of the shot made it look like a dinosaur in a forest.



REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS
THIRD PLACE

Ed Ziegler, Raleigh
Yellow-bellied slider, Durham

In the fall of 2007, Ziegler spent two days roaming about the Duke Gardens pond looking for wildlife to shoot. On the second day, he ducked into a wooded area to watch for activity in the pond that was beautifully reflecting the colors of the turning leaves of the trees along it. After setting up his camera near ground level, this shot of a turtle emerging from the water was his reward.





REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS
HONORABLE MENTION

Alexandra Houston, Beaufort
Green sea turtle, Pamlico Sound

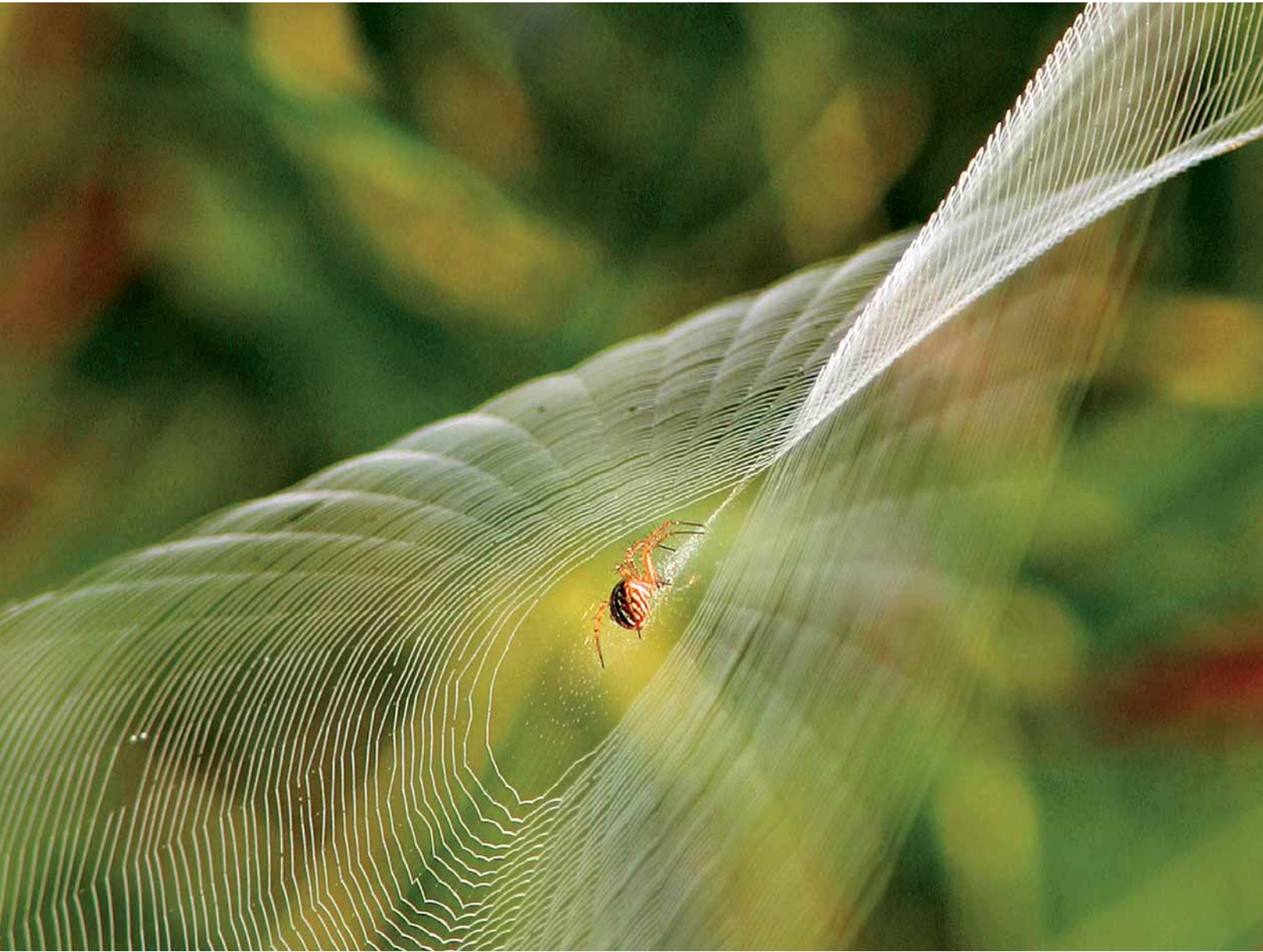
While tagging sea turtles in November 2007 in Pamlico Sound near Cedar Island, Houston snapped this picture right after one turtle was released back into the water. Due to the cold weather it was unable to swim away immediately, giving Houston the chance to snap this shot. The turtle was recaptured and placed on the bottom of the boat to warm in the sun for a moment. Once re-released, it sped off under the surface.



REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS
HONORABLE MENTION

Robin Wynn, Hubert
Carolina anole, Hubert

With her yard inundated with them, Wynn kept noticing an anole that seemed to think that her husband's old truck was a great place for sunbathing. She noted that it would position itself on the edge of the window where it would be reflected in both the mirror and window. Deciding to capture the scene, she took out her camera and caught the anole appearing to admire his reflection.



INVERTEBRATES FIRST PLACE

Leanne Greene, Morganton

Orb weaver spider, Morganton

This picture of an orb weaver spider was the result of rising gas prices. Due to her desire to still explore nature with her camera without having to drive anywhere, Greene decided to look around a neighbor's hayfield. It was there that she discovered the beauty of spiders in their webs.



INVERTEBRATES SECOND PLACE

Ed Erkes, Goldsboro

Wolf spider, Wayne County

Located in a wet mossy area next to a pond where Erkes has been planting trees, shrubs and other plants to attract wildlife, this photograph required him to lie down on the ground to get just the right angle of the wolf spider. The low angle also allowed him to throw the more distant background out of focus while using a bit of flash to fill in the shadows.



INVERTEBRATES HONORABLE MENTION

L. Scott Campbell, Hillsborough

Katydid, Hillsborough

Sometimes a stunning picture is waiting right there in your own yard. In July 2006, Campbell discovered that when he spotted this katydid sitting on a banana plant leaf on the deck at his house. Campbell mentioned that the shot was tricky because the closeness of his macro lens caused the katydid to continually move.

INVERTEBRATES HONORABLE MENTION

JoAn Stout, Greensboro

Black widow, Greensboro

Despite the perception of danger, Stout remembered the words of one of her college professors about respecting all wildlife when she discovered this black widow around her tomato stakes. After gingerly carrying the stake that the spider was on into the woods, she shot this picture before it disappeared.



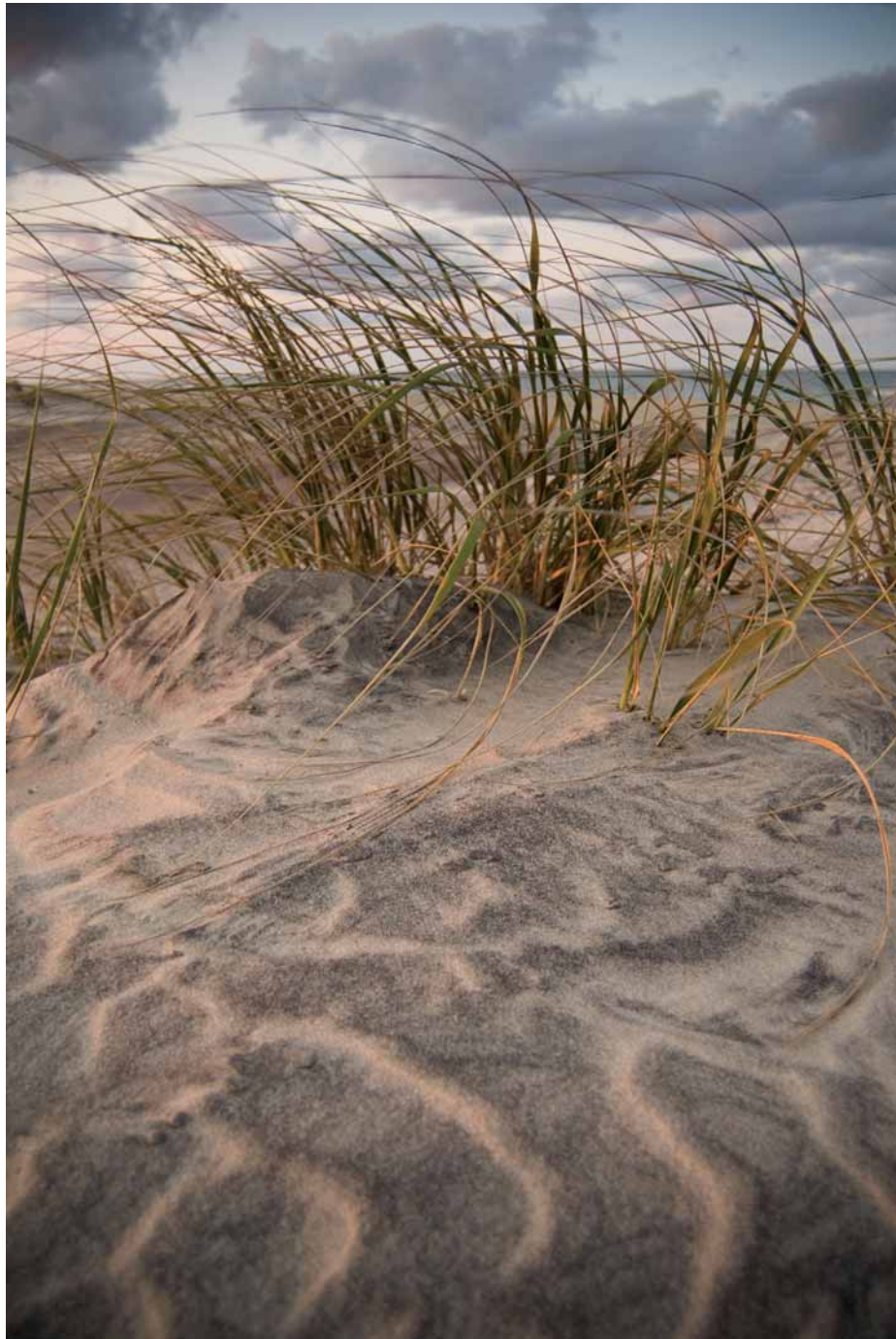
INVERTEBRATES THIRD PLACE

Jamie Konarski Davidson, Greenville

Ghost crab, Nags Head

While on the shore at the Outer Banks Fishing Pier in Nags Head around sunrise, Davidson noticed hundreds of ghost crabs digging out their holes. After locating a good spot, she lay flat on the sand and began snapping shots. After a bit of time, she was able to crawl very close to the crab in the photograph, capturing this image.





WILD PLANTS FIRST PLACE

Charles Allen, Crofton, Md.

Sea oats, Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge

This shot represented a time of connection between Allen and his half brother on this beach trip. Allen, an avid photographer, spent much of his time there teaching his sibling about photography, with him patiently following Allen around as the photographer chased the light to get the photos he wanted. This one of sea oats taken at the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge was one of his favorites.

WILD PLANTS
SECOND PLACE

Hobart Jones, Mount Airy

Lone green tree, Pilot Mountain

Taken on an overcast day at Pilot Mountain, Jones found light conditions varying from light to heavily overcast as he strolled about. Walking to the overlook, he looked down and saw this lone tree beginning to leaf and was struck by its vibrant color in a largely monochromatic scene. He employed a telephoto lens to isolate the tree and give it some definition, as it was simply a green dot to the naked eye.



WILD PLANTS
THIRD PLACE

Jared Lloyd, Kitty Hawk

Black-eyed Susans, Blue Ridge Parkway

Lloyd used a low point of view and a short depth of field to isolate one bloom and create an interesting photograph of a common flower.





WILD PLANTS
HONORABLE MENTION

Scott Hotaling, Cullowhee

Icy tree canopy, Great Smoky Mountains National Park

While on a hike through a freshly snow-covered forest in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park near Cherokee in late 2008, Hotaling looked up at the canopy and realized how spectacular that perspective was. After searching for a few minutes, he found this composition for a photograph.



WILD PLANTS
HONORABLE MENTION

Sabrina Kumar, Dillsboro

Spiderwort, Asheville

Taken in May 2007 at The Botanical Gardens at Asheville, this picture brought back childhood memories for Kumar. "My mom introduced me to this plant when I was a kid with the folk name 'true blue,' saying it was the truest blue found in nature," she mentioned. This one, growing wild at the garden, reminded her of the ones she had seen as a child near Lake Summit.



OUTDOOR RECREATION FIRST PLACE

Regina Chayer, Garner

Man and dog on beach, Duck

While at the Outer Banks last fall photographing a friend's wedding, Chayer decided to go out on the beach at sunrise while she had a little free time. Struck by the beauty of the sunrise, she noticed this gentleman and his dog. Recognizing that their long shadows made for a good shot, she snapped this picture.



**OUTDOOR RECREATION
SECOND PLACE**

Jay Wickens, Powells Point
Duck hunter, Corolla

While out taking sunset photos at the sound side of the Whalehead Club in Corolla in January 2008, Wickens noticed this boat approaching. He raised his camera and took this shot as the man, framed against the dimming sky, carefully exited his boat.



**OUTDOOR RECREATION
THIRD PLACE**

Brenda R. Combs, Wilkesboro
Fisherman on Price Lake, Blue Ridge Parkway

Taken on her husband's birthday in September 2007, this shot was the result of their habit of driving along the Blue Ridge Parkway and taking pictures. Headed to Grandfather Mountain, Combs and her spouse decided to stop and take a picture of the sun rising over Price Lake. Spotting the fisherman, she saw that he provided a great silhouette against the water.



**OUTDOOR RECREATION
HONORABLE MENTION**

Jared Lloyd, Kitty Hawk
Kayaker on Price Lake, Blue Ridge Parkway

Lloyd was photographing wildlife early in the morning at this lake near Blowing Rock when a kayaker emerged from the fog and paddled across the glassy surface of the water.



PEAKS, VALLEYS & PLAINS FIRST PLACE

Scott Hotaling, Cullowhee

Winter sunrise, Appalachian Trail

Hotaling is the first to admit that very few landscapes are as photogenic as a snow-covered mountain scene at sunrise. Traveling out early to capture just the right moment, he was rewarded with this shot. Having been to this spot before, he said that although the play of light from this location at sunrise in the winter is always fantastic, that particular morning was even better than usual.



PEAKS, VALLEYS & PLAINS
SECOND PLACE

Leslie Sparks, Durham

Beach landscape, Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge

While on a trip to the beach with his wife in January 2008 to see the migrating birds and check out kayaking sites, Sparks stopped at an abandoned Coast Guard facility. While there, he noticed the marching dunes, waves and beautiful cloudy sky. While snapping some shots, he saw a scene with good composition and took this photo.

PEAKS, VALLEYS & PLAINS
HONORABLE MENTION

Cory Barlow, Asheville

Icy panorama, Stone Mountain State Park

While on a pre-Christmas hike with his father in Stone Mountain State Park, Barlow used a camera set to capture infrared light in grayscale to shoot this scene. "It was spectacular day for infrared photography," he stated. He has hiked and explored the area for most of his life, as he grew up just a few miles away.



PEAKS, VALLEYS & PLAINS
HONORABLE MENTION

Scott Hotaling, Cullowhee

Oconaluftee River, Great Smoky Mountains
National Park

Familiar with the area, Hotaling knew that this particular section of the Oconaluftee River looks fantastic after a storm. Consequently, when a summer thunderhead rolled through, he quickly made his way out to the river. He notes that he had to wade out into waist-deep water to get this shot because that perspective was absolutely necessary to the composition.

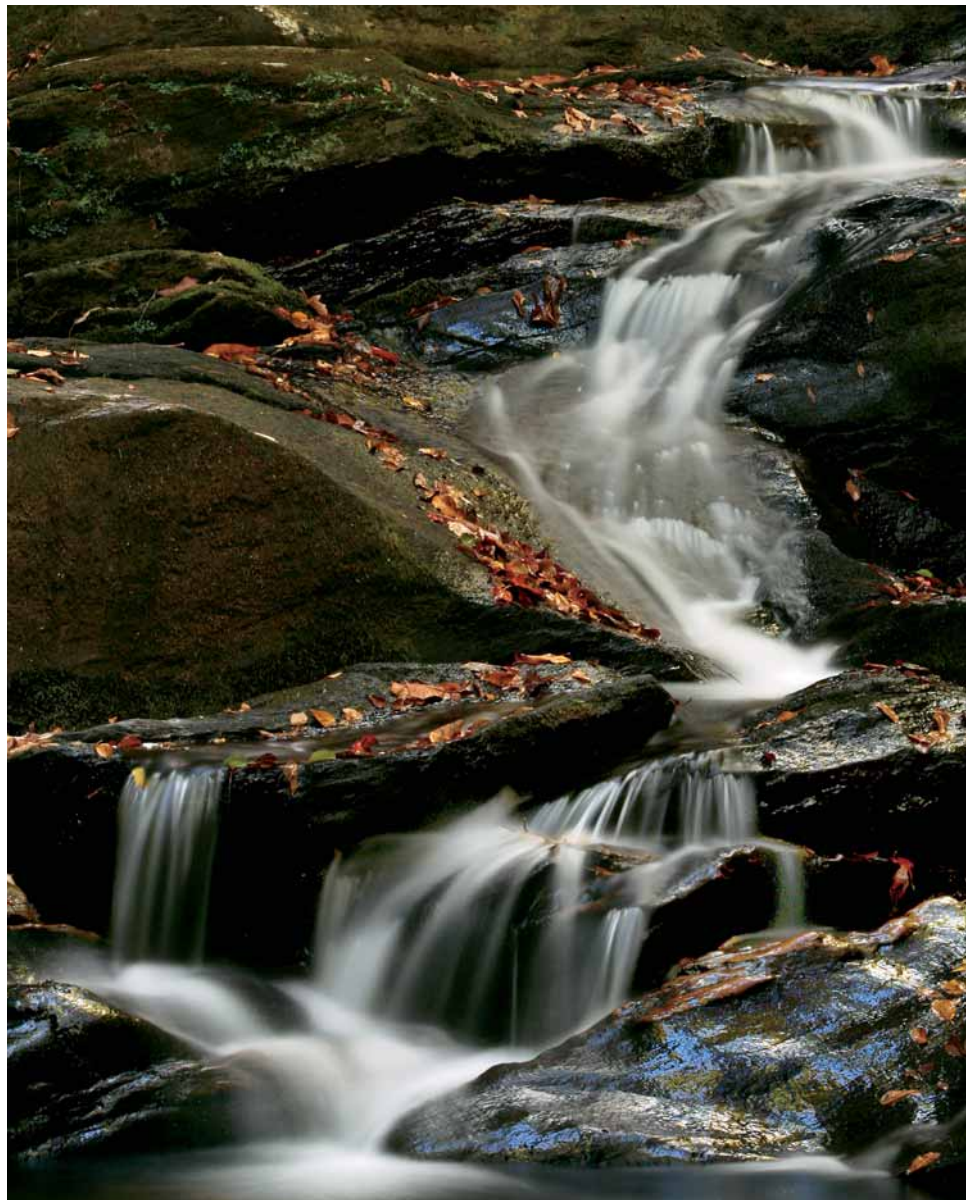


PEAKS, VALLEYS & PLAINS
THIRD PLACE

Ellen Devenny, Kings Mountain

Waterfall, Busick

Devenny said that this is one of her favorite places to visit and photograph. Taken in October 2007, this photograph of the Roaring Fork waterfall is of what she views as one of the state's greatest hidden treasures. "We stop by when we are in the area, and we seldom see more than a dozen people there. It is a very beautiful and natural area that few people know about," she said.





ANIMAL BEHAVIOR FIRST PLACE

Ed Ziegler, Raleigh
Sanderlings, Emerald Isle

While on vacation at Emerald Isle the week of Labor Day in 2008, Ziegler had spent much of his time watching the efforts of sandpipers to defend their territory. On a late afternoon of one of those days, he observed a conflict between two of them, snapping a shot just after one plucked a crab from what was apparently the other's property.

ANIMAL BEHAVIOR
SECOND PLACE

Ed Ziegler, Raleigh
House wrens, Raleigh

Although this bright blue bird house in Ziegler's back yard had been intended for bluebirds, the actual inhabitants turned out to be a family of house wrens. In fact, the house had been the site of a turf battle between the house wren and a bluebird, with the house wren being at first evicted but later claiming the home for itself. In June of 2008, Ziegler spent an entire morning shooting the interactions between the parent house wrens and their brood, with this shot being his favorite.



ANIMAL BEHAVIOR
THIRD PLACE

T.J. Hilliard, Fuquay-Varina
Northern black racer eating a ringneck snake,
Fuquay-Varina

An avid photographer of snakes, Hilliard has shot hundreds of pictures of them. In the course of all the shots, he has photographed only two acts of predation, including this one showing a black racer eating a ringneck snake, tail first. Hilliard pointed out that as a snake lover it was difficult for him to watch the ringneck lose its life, but fascinating to see the black racer earn its meal.





YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13-17
FIRST PLACE

James Jernigan, Snow Hill

Brown thrasher eggs, Snow Hill

While riding around his farm in May 2008, Jernigan spotted a bird's nest at the wood's edge. After gently easing up to it, he observed two eggs inside. Venturing closer than he normally would due to the fact that the lens he had on hand was too small, Jernigan snapped five shots and then quietly and quickly left before the mother returned. This photograph was his favorite.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13-17
SECOND PLACE**

Nathanael Gass, Durham
Snake eating a catfish, Eno River State Park

Often traveling to the Few's Ford access to the park to photograph wildlife, in March 2008 Gass happened upon a Northern water snake eating a catfish. To convey the drama of the scene, he immediately got into the water to get the best angle, while striving to both keep his camera dry and not disturb the snake.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13-17
THIRD PLACE**

Lee Bottoms, Clemmons
Dogwood petal, Arcadia

Taken in April 2008, this picture is of a dogwood petal that Bottoms found lying on the split trunk of a tree that was knocked down by an old, dying oak. The result of an informal competition that Bottoms has with a close friend of his, this photo was a success for him, winning not only that competition but also placing in this one.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13-17
HONORABLE MENTION**

Jake Orr, Topsail Beach
Sanderling, Topsail Beach

With some patience, Orr was able to get close enough to photograph this sanderling feeding.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13-17
HONORABLE MENTION**

James Jernigan, Snow Hill
Snow geese, Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

Once this huge flock started to fly, Jernigan snapped this shot.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13-17
HONORABLE MENTION**

Nathanael Gass, Durham
Green heron, Elizabeth City

Gass was able to get close enough to this patient and calm heron to photograph it.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER
FIRST PLACE**

Teresa Koester, Oxford

Sachem skippers on a thistle, Oxford

A good example of the positive side of unintended consequences, the thistle that attracted this group of butterflies grew from seeds that had fallen out of the Koester family's bird feeder. Taken on their front porch, this photograph captured several butterflies feeding on the "weeds" that they are now glad they did not pull.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER
SECOND PLACE**

Emma Halstead, Walkertown
Ladybug with eggs, Walkertown

While out in her back yard with her mother in June of 2008, Halstead was taking some photos during a pretty summer day. Near their poplar tree while trying to photograph aphids, she spotted some ladybugs and snapped this picture.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER
THIRD PLACE**

Jesse Motte, Florence, S.C.
Summer azure, Mingo Falls

Nervous about disturbing the insect in his viewfinder and with more flying all around him, Motte zoomed in with his camera and blocked out the background. The result was this impressive shot, taken at the Cherokee Indian Reservation.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER
HONORABLE MENTION**

Nicole Howren, Cary
Laughing gull, Frisco

When this bird flew up in front of the sunset, Howren captured this picture.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER
HONORABLE MENTION**

Lucas Bobay, Holly Springs
Anole, Holly Springs

Bobay snapped this shot of an anole that was hunting for insects in his yard.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER
HONORABLE MENTION**

Currie Chavez, West End
Ebony jewelwing, Weymouth Woods Park

Chavez took this picture in July 2008 when the insect alighted in front of her.