



WILDLIFE IN NORTH CAROLINA 2007 PHOTO COMPETITION

Ed Ziegler was walking on the beach at Emerald Isle the week after Labor Day last year, looking for birds to photograph. As he gazed out into the rolling waves in the early morning light, he realized that he could see schools of fish moving down the beach as each wave peaked. “The waves were alive with fish,” he said. Ziegler took photos of the migrating white mullet for a while, producing this winning photograph that clearly shows the fish “surfing” down the beach in a green wave backed by a blue-green sea.

The photo is appealing on a couple of levels: It is unique because it documents a common but infrequently photographed animal behavior, and it offers a visually pleasing package of action, a nice palette and solid composition. Our judges felt that it possessed an element of spontaneity as well as beautiful color.

When Ziegler’s photo was shown during group judging of finalists, an honest-to-goodness cheer went up among the judges. Even in a field of 5,484 photographs — our largest number of entries ever — this photo was a hands-down winner.

In the competition’s third year, 1,019 photographers took part, including 136 young shutterbugs in the two youth categories. The most popular subject was Birds (907 entries), followed closely by Invertebrates (884) and the landscape category, Peaks, Valleys and Plains (810). Wild Plants received 773 entries and Reptiles & Amphibians 543, rounding out the top five categories. The competition is intended to encourage high-quality nature photography and to identify talented wildlife photographers working in North Carolina.

Our esteemed judges included *Wildlife in North Carolina* art director Victoria Cumbee; WINC photographer Melissa McGaw; educator Mike Dunn, coordinator of teacher education for the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences; and professional wildlife photographer F. Eugene Hester, a perennial winner in the Outdoor Writers Association of America photo competition.

We wish to thank our corporate sponsors, Great Outdoor Provision Co. and J. W. Photo, for their generous participation in this year’s competition. Valuable support was provided by our co-sponsor, the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences. All winning photographs may be seen on exhibit through March at the museum. Details and rules for the 2008 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 2007 PHOTO COMPETITION



Ed Ziegler, Raleigh
White mullet, Emerald Isle

Ziegler did not know the species of fish he captured in his winning photo, so we sent the image to the state’s most knowledgeable fish experts for identification. The consensus was white mullet, one of the most common saltwater fish in North Carolina waters. Other fish that commonly run down the beach include striped mullet, bluefish, menhaden, Atlantic thread herring and many other species. One prominent fish biologist called this image “one of the most striking photos I’ve ever seen.”



BIRDS FIRST PLACE

Lori Cash, Grandy
Willet, Nags Head

While photographing shorebirds at the beach in Nags Head in early 2007, Cash captured this image of a willet landing in the surf to feed on mole crabs. Cash placed her camera on a tripod and adjusted it as low to the ground as she could to get this angle.



BIRDS SECOND PLACE

Gene Furr, Raleigh
Brown pelican, Carolina Beach

This shot was the result of a day trip to Carolina Beach to capture images of brown pelicans. After three hours of searching, Furr noticed this particular brown pelican flying low and searching for a place to land. When it flew over before landing on an old boat, Furr snapped this impressive picture.



BIRDS THIRD PLACE

Gene Furr, Raleigh
Great egrets, Southport

While in the Southport area, Furr happened upon this egret nest that contained a single chick waiting for an adult egret to return with food. Furr chose a position where the nest and egrets would be backlit by the afternoon sun. A background of dark trees in shadows created contrast with the white egrets. After Furr waited more than five hours, the adult egret returned. The back-light of the sun through the wings of the adult egret gave Furr the moment he was looking for.



BIRDS HONORABLE MENTION

Ed Erkes, Goldsboro
Prothonotary warblers, Four Oaks

This great image of prothonotary warblers and their nest was taken at the Howell Woods Environmental Learning Center in Johnston County in May 2007. To get just the right shot, Erkes spent more than 20 hours spread over 2½ days photographing them. In this image, the male flew to the nest site, apparently unaware that the female was at the entrance to the nest. Unable to land immediately, he fluttered for a moment in front of the nest.



BIRDS HONORABLE MENTION

Timothy Bardy, Holly Springs
Bluebird with winterberry, Holly Springs

Bardy had good success photographing birds from a blind in his back yard on this snowy morning in December 2005. After Bardy got a great photo of a cardinal, this bluebird appeared nearby and began gobbling berries. A mockingbird that usually guards the tree was nowhere to be found, so Bardy was able to fire away.



MAMMALS FIRST PLACE

Gary Carter, McLeansville
Eastern chipmunk, McLeansville

While out photographing songbirds, Carter noticed this chipmunk gathering nuts and taking them back to its home. At the moment he snapped the image, the chipmunk had crawled up on the perch where the songbirds had been landing. While seeming to stop and listen to the birds for a moment, the chipmunk gave Carter the opportunity to snap this shot.



MAMMALS SECOND PLACE

Bruce Siulinski, Brevard
Elk, Cataloochee Valley

This photograph of elk taken in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park almost did not turn out well. After waiting for just the right amount of light to appear, Siulinski excitedly began clicking off shots—forgetting that he had the camera set for low light. Fortunately for him and us, he had the camera in aperture priority, which provided good exposure.



MAMMALS HONORABLE MENTION

Brad Douglass, Banner elk
Fawn, Fleetwood

While walking through the woods with family, Douglass was able to snap this great photograph. Along the way, his mother abruptly stopped and told him to reach for his camera. Once he had it in hand, she said “Don’t move” and pointed at a fawn 3 feet from her right foot. Over the course of seven minutes, Douglass snapped pictures of the still fawn. He described it as “one of the coolest experiences I have had photographing nature.”

MAMMALS HONORABLE MENTION

David Vandre, Hendersonville
Opossum, Hendersonville

Vandre lives on top of a 500-foot ridge above Hendersonville in the Blue Ridge Mountains, in a wooded area with a great deal of wildlife. One morning, he noticed this mother opossum slowly making her way across his yard. When he returned with his camera, she stopped to look at him, giving him the opportunity to take this unique shot of her carrying her 13 young.



MAMMALS THIRD PLACE

Dustin Maynard, Thomasville
Bobcat, N.C. Zoo, Asheboro

Having been to the zoo many times before, Maynard had never seen this bobcat as active as it was the day he snapped this shot. Alternating between running and walking around his pen, the bobcat finally stopped and started cleaning itself. That is when Maynard snapped this picture.





REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS FIRST PLACE

Robert Dant, Hickory
Carolina anole, Hickory

This picture is the result of Dant chasing lizards in his yard with his 6-year-old son Ross. Taken in March 2007, it is a photo of the first and only green anole Dant and his son have seen in their yard. During the “chase,” the lizard eventually alighted on a day lily. Pausing for a few moments, the green anole gave Dant the opportunity to capture this picture.

**REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS
SECOND PLACE**

Kiran Venkatesh, Raleigh
Copperhead, Pittsboro

This picture was the result of Venkatesh’s participation in the UNC School of Medicine Day of Service allowing medical students a chance to volunteer their time at local area organizations. The photographer’s group was selected to go to the Carnivore Preservation Trust in Pittsboro. While helping clear brush and overgrowth in a tiger cage, Venkatesh discovered this copperhead hiding there. Amazed by its effective camouflage, he snapped this picture.



**REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS
THIRD PLACE**

Ricky Riddle, Bakersville
Eastern garter snake, Bakersville

Riddle got down low and close to take this snake’s-eye-view photo of a garter snake hanging out under a bush. Judges liked the feeling the photo gives that the viewer is in the snake’s space without intruding.





REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS
HONORABLE MENTION

Zach Barfield, Mount Holly
Black rat snake, Gaston County

Taken in June 2007, this photo captured a unique perspective of a black rat snake basking in the heat of a road. According to Barfield, black rat snakes typically kink their bodies in this unique manner when soaking up heat from pavement. He took the photograph at ground level with the snake lying right in front of him (after ensuring there was no traffic, of course) and used a shallow depth of field to render the head in focus and the rest of the body slowly fading out of focus.



REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS
HONORABLE MENTION

Mark Tegges, Eldersburg, Md.
Pine barrens treefrog, Pinehurst

While walking the Sandhills Game Land with some friends, Tegges heard the distinct call of pine barrens treefrogs emanating from trees and bushes surrounding a pond and swamp by the sand road. After Tegges approached a calling male to photograph him, the frog crouched down and stopped calling. After Tegges imitated the frog's call, the one photographed here took the bait and responded.



INVERTEBRATES FIRST PLACE

Ellen Devenny, Kings Mountain
Chinese mantid, Kings Mountain

In this striking photograph of a mantid's head, Devenny captured a unique perspective of an intriguing subject. While preparing dinner, she noticed the mantid in a window flower box outside her kitchen window. The red glow of the background came from light inside the house and red tomatoes sitting inside in the kitchen window.



INVERTEBRATES SECOND PLACE

Johnny Hill, Goldsboro
Dragonfly, Goldsboro

This picture of a Halloween pennant, taken in June 2006 by Hill, was the result of a walk out in nature during a lunch break. The photographer pointed out that he and his camera make regular trips to a nearby field and pond during his lunch hour, and this particular visit resulted in this outstanding image.

INVERTEBRATES HONORABLE MENTION

Tom Gillespie, Trinity
Beetle, Outer Banks

This unique shot conveys vastness on a minute scale. Gillespie waited about 45 minutes for the sun to get in just the right position to take abstract shots of the sand alone, but the beetle wandered across his path and offered up a more interesting subject. Following the bug on his hands and knees for 15 minutes, Gillespie snapped this shot when the right light and perspective came together.



INVERTEBRATES HONORABLE MENTION

Tracey Helmstetler, Greensboro
Snail, Greensboro

To capture this image, Helmstetler stood in one spot for more than an hour watching the shadow of this snail change shape as it moved across the leaf. Fighting constantly changing light, Helmstetler took many shots before getting this one, and the results are impressive.



INVERTEBRATES THIRD PLACE

Bradley Lewis, Durham
Ant, Durham

Often when photographing subjects in the unscripted natural world, you end with a completely different photograph than you set out to get. After being strafed by a hummingbird while standing on his deck, Lewis decided to go buy a feeder to attract them for photos. Once in place, he noticed that some ants had taken an interest in it. He was so captivated by the dramatic lighting visible through the feeder and the translucent bellies of the ants that he abandoned his original plan and concentrated on photographing the ants.

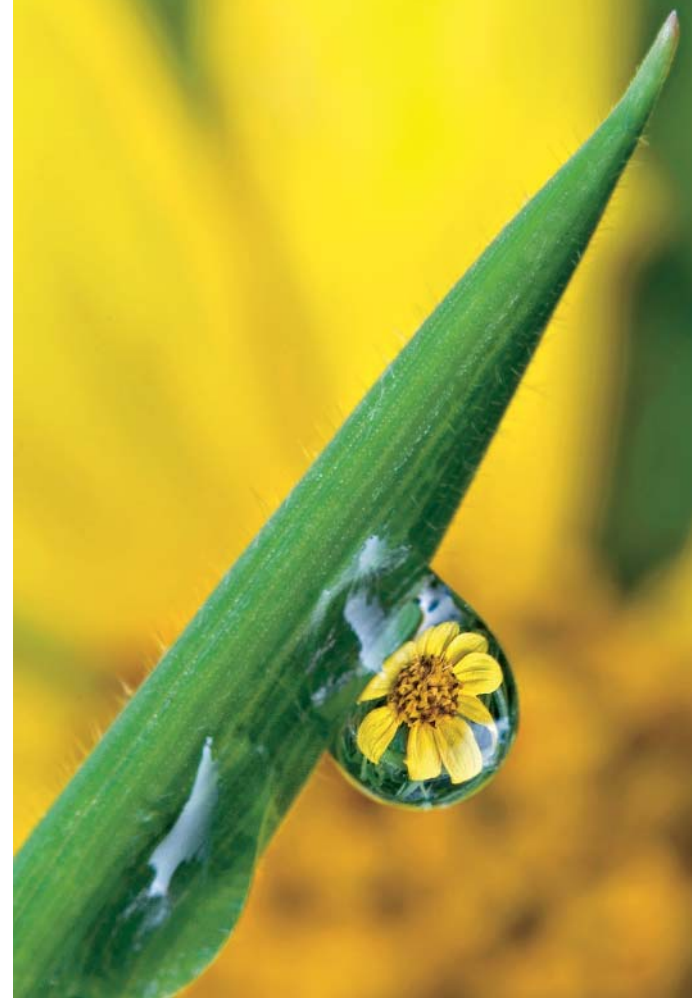




WILD PLANTS FIRST PLACE

David Blevins, Fuquay-Varina
Cinnamon fern, Sandhills Game Land

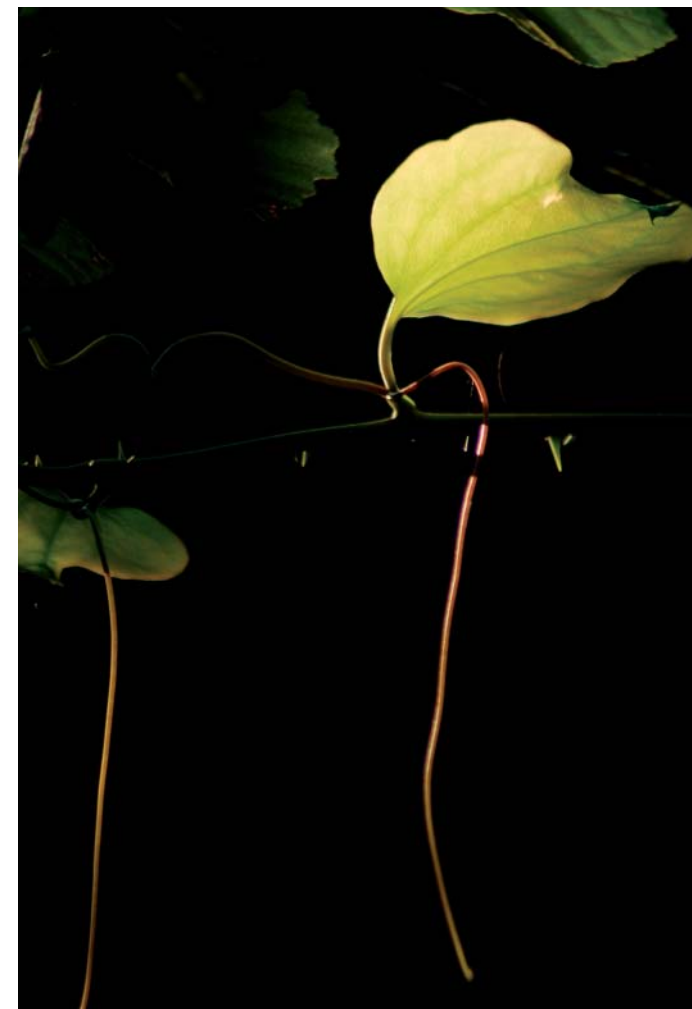
Taken at the Sandhills Game Land, this picture of a cinnamon fern was the result of trip by Blevins down to a transition zone where fire from the dry uplands had burned into an area with wetter soil along a stream and had created a pure stand of cinnamon fern. With the sun to his back, he noticed that the sun shone through both the green and fertile fronds. Moving the camera down into the ferns to give the viewer a fern's perspective on the scene while still being careful to maintain the background gradient from light to dark, he snapped this picture.



WILD PLANTS SECOND PLACE

Scott Hotaling, Cullowhee
Schweinitz's sunflower, Blue Ridge Parkway

Discovering a stand of wild sunflowers growing along the side of the road on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Hotaling snapped this intriguing shot of a Schweinitz's sunflower refracted upside down in a dew droplet. Hotaling noted that accurate focusing and proper magnification were absolute necessities in getting this shot.



WILD PLANTS THIRD PLACE

Joshua Doby, Zebulon
Common greenbrier, Zebulon

While wandering his family's 10 acres in Zebulon looking for wildlife, this common vine in a tree caught Doby's eye. He liked the lighting behind the brier, so he spent about 30 minutes taking different exposures of the plant. For Doby, a freshman at Mars Hill College, the results speak for themselves.



**WILD PLANTS
HONORABLE MENTION**

Ellen Devenny, Kings Mountain
Mountain rhododendron, Nantahala National Forest, Macon County

While on the way back up from a hike up Albert Mountain near Franklin, Devenny noted the fact that the mountain rhododendron were in bloom everywhere. The result of this discovery was the impressive photograph shown here.



**WILD PLANTS
HONORABLE MENTION**

Ellen Devenny, Kings Mountain
Queen Anne's Lace, Hayesville

Taken in July 2007 in an open field in Hayesville, this photograph of Queen Anne's lace was shot while Devenny, along with her cousin and his wife, were strolling the fields of a farm that has been in her family for generations. Taken from a low perspective, this shot gives the viewer a unique look at this attractive plant.



OUTDOOR RECREATION FIRST PLACE

Joseph Rone, Spring Lake
Trout fishing, Brevard

Taken in August 2007 on the Davidson River from the bridge that crosses the river at the Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education, this picture was shot just after a shower in the middle of the August heat wave. It was Rone's first day of vacation, and when he drove across the bridge and saw the mist rising off of the river with the backlighting, he knew it was a special moment.



OUTDOOR RECREATION
SECOND PLACE

Conrad Lowman, Wilmington
Intracoastal Waterway boating, Wilmington

Lowman recounts that this shot of a boat in the marsh was taken on a beautiful summer day in which he was cruising the waterway. After deciding to pull into the marsh and enjoy the wildlife flying and swimming by, he noticed the contrast of the front of his boat against the marsh and sky. Thinking it would make a nice moment to remember, he decided to take a shot.



OUTDOOR RECREATION
THIRD PLACE

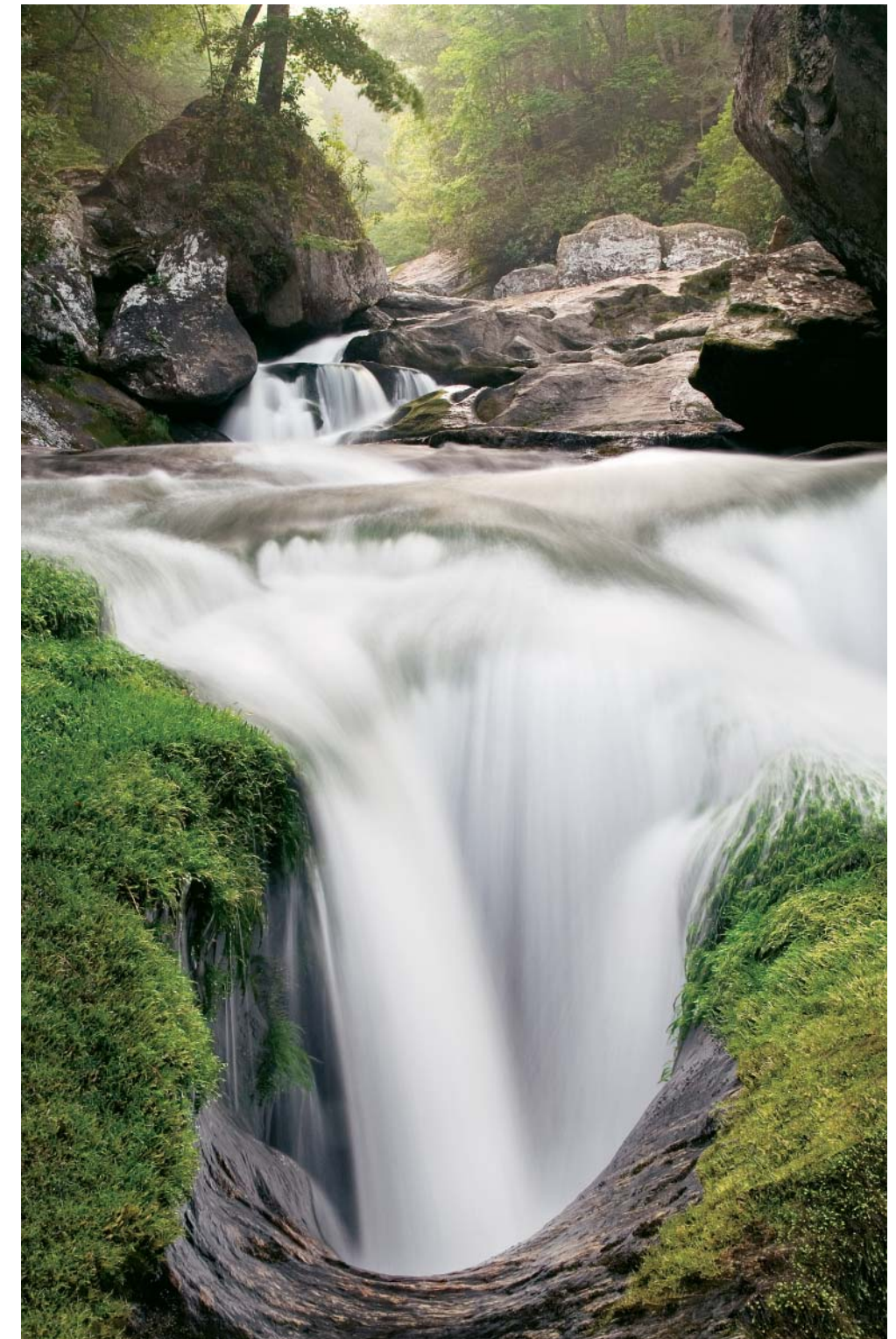
Scott Hubener, Asheville
Climbing Shiprock, Blue Ridge Parkway

Taken in July 2007 at Shiprock, next to Grandfather Mountain along the Blue Ridge Parkway, this picture was the result of Hubener's first rock climbing trip. Guided by an experienced group, the photographer described the event as an exhilarating experience, which is understandable seeing this picture.

OUTDOOR RECREATION
HONORABLE MENTION

Nancy Baldwin, Green Mountain
Walking, Little Switzerland

This picture was the result of what Baldwin described as a very pleasant day in Little Switzerland. While walking with two others, she hung back to examine some apples that had fallen from a nearby tree. When she began to follow them down, Baldwin was struck by what she described as the autumnal beauty of the area and snapped a shot of it.



PEAKS, VALLEYS & PLAINS
FIRST PLACE

Scott Hotaling, Cullowhee
Waterfall, Cullasaja Gorge

This extremely interesting shot required what Hotaling describes as a "difficult scramble" to discover this odd but beautiful geological feature literally swallowing up a large portion of the river and shooting it out some 20 feet below. Hotaling took off his boots and made his way out into the river, found his composition and waited for the light to make it all come together.



PEAKS, VALLEYS & PLAINS
SECOND PLACE

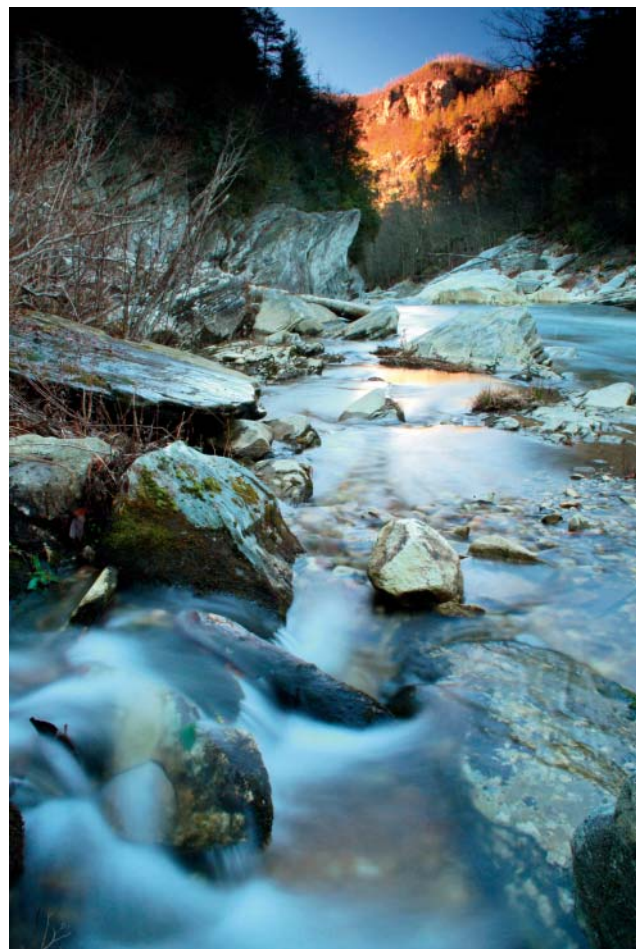
Monty Combs, Wilkesboro
Icy scene, Grandfather Mountain

Taken in November 2006 at the entrance road to Grandfather Mountain, Combs shot this picture in both color and monochrome. Upon examining the results, Combs decided that the monochromatic shot took better advantage of the dramatic nature of the subject matter.

PEAKS, VALLEYS & PLAINS
HONORABLE MENTION

Benjamin Ritner, High Point
Linville River cascade,
Linville Gorge Wilderness Area

To get this shot of the morning light and the river, Ritner walked down the Spence Ridge Trail to Linville River and began searching for what he had envisioned. When he came across this small stream that cascaded into the river, he set up his tripod and prepared to get the shot. After employing a circle polarizer to take the glare off the water while still showing the reflection and the light, he snapped this photo.



PEAKS, VALLEYS & PLAINS
HONORABLE MENTION

Michael McCarn, Stanfield
Fishing boat, Swan Quarter

While taking photos of crab pots stacked next to the fishing boats, McCarn's wife noticed a lone fishing boat that caught her eye. If it had not been for her acknowledgement of the boat, McCarn likely would not have snapped this image.

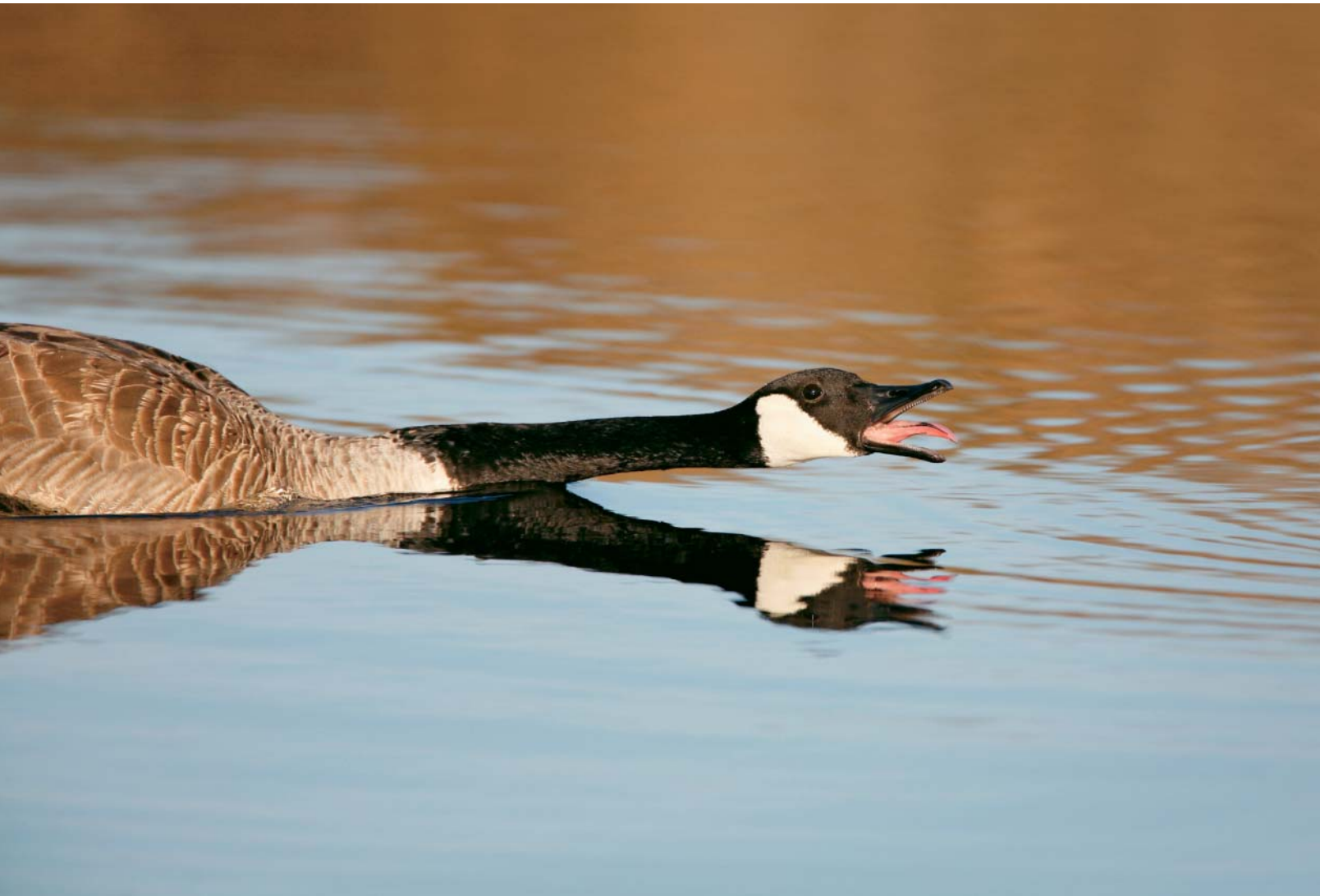


PEAKS, VALLEYS & PLAINS
THIRD PLACE

Conrad Lowman, Wilmington
Rich Inlet aerial, Wilmington

Having photographed Rich Inlet from the air for more than 15 years, Lowman has found it to be full of beauty from all angles. He points out that the image captures the energy of an active inlet that has overwashed the sandbars and marsh, creating unique designs.





ANIMAL BEHAVIOR FIRST PLACE

Lori Cash, Grandy
Canada goose, Cape Hatteras

Taken in February 2007 at a pond adjacent to the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, this image captured a Canada goose honking across the water in apparent defense of its territory. Cash noted that the early morning light allowed her to capture the reflection of the goose on the water as it was honking.



ANIMAL BEHAVIOR SECOND PLACE

Ed Erkes, Goldsboro
Pileated woodpecker, Four Oaks

After receiving a call from Frank Grubbs at the Howell Woods Environmental Learning Center about a pileated woodpecker nest that had been located, Erkes went out to photograph it. When he arrived, he noticed the male behaving strangely at the entrance to the nest cavity, repeatedly striking at something inside. Soon, the woodpecker began to pull a snake out of the nest area, with Erkes snapping shots of it. Two nestlings appeared unharmed shortly thereafter.



ANIMAL BEHAVIOR THIRD PLACE

Jeffrey Lewis, Manteo
Broadhead skinks battling, Roanoke Island

In this image, two male broadhead skinks are involved in what appears to be a territorial scuffle. According to Lewis, this conflict ended quite abruptly, with both skinks appearing to be unharmed.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13-17
FIRST PLACE**

Sarah O'Connell, New Bern
Oceanana Pier, Atlantic Beach

Taken on Labor Day, 2007, this picture is the result of encouragement by a friend. O'Connell notes that she likely would not have taken the picture if it had not been for a friend who was there with her who nearly had to drag her under the pier. O'Connell said she was certain that the fluorescent light coming off of the pier was going to destroy any picture that she could take. However, the result speaks for itself.

**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13-17
SECOND PLACE**

Michael McCloy, Southern Pines
Eastern hognose snake, Sandhills Game Land

When a friend discovered this Eastern hognose snake on a road, McCloy decided that he should take advantage of the opportunity and get a picture.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13-17
THIRD PLACE**

Nathaniel Gass, Durham
Milkweed longhorn beetle, Raleigh

This image of a milkweed longhorn beetle on milkweed, taken at the Prairie Ridge Ecostation, was taken by Gass on one of his many trips there. He states that of the many images he has taken, the bright red colors of the insect made this his favorite.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13-17
HONORABLE MENTION**

Danielle Barrio, Cary
Swimmer, Sugar Lake

Barrio took this photo of a friend jumping into a lake seconds before impact.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13-17
HONORABLE MENTION**

Alexander Bowman, Jamestown
Juvenile ghost crab, Holden Beach

Bowman got down to crab level to capture this nearly invisible young ghost crab.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13-17
HONORABLE MENTION**

Michael McCloy, Southern Pines
Green tree frog, Hoffman

McCloy squatted down to nearly eye level of the frog to get this intriguing shot.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER
FIRST PLACE**

Cole Nye, Elizabethtown
Laughing gull, Ocracoke

While on the Ocracoke ferry during a field trip to the Outer Banks with his fourth-grade class, Nye noticed that all his classmates were at the back of the ferry feeding seagulls. Borrowing his dad's camera, he snapped this dynamic shot.

**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER
SECOND PLACE**

Mia Daniel, Greensboro
Lynx spider, Greensboro

While exploring a field near her house, Daniel spotted a large green spider sitting on a dried-up seed head. She took a large number of pictures and was pleasantly surprised at how good they all looked.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER
THIRD PLACE**

Ryan Richardson, Asheboro
Bullfrog, Asheboro

Taken near his family's swimming pool in the summer of 2007, this picture required a little bit of tracking as the frog hopped forward after each picture Richardson took. The one selected was his favorite of them all.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER
HONORABLE MENTION**

Lucas Bobay, Holly Springs
Eastern box turtle, Holly Springs

Getting this photo required lying on the rain-soaked ground alongside the turtle.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER
HONORABLE MENTION**

Anna Gass, Durham
Carolina anole, N.C. Zoological Park, Asheboro

While Gass was taking this picture, the anole's color changed from gray to green.



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER
HONORABLE MENTION**

Lucas Bobay, Holly Springs
Grasshopper, Raleigh

This grasshopper picture was taken by Bobay at the Prairie Ridge Ecostation.