

In-Depth Explanation of CCC Scoring Guidelines

The Coastal Camera Club presents the following guidelines for applying specific, numeric scores in Club competitions to both promote consistency in judges' scoring and a members understanding the meaning of numeric scores.

The range of scores is from 5-9 (5, 5.5, 6, 6.5, 7, 7.5, 8, 8.5, 9). The difference between an image that scores an 8 and one that scores an 8.5 is the perceived strength of the image. The score of 0 is used only by a judge to indicate that she/he wants to disqualify him/herself from scoring a particular image in which case the other two judges scores are averaged for the third score.

A score of 9: This image **demonstrates true photographic excellence**. An image that scores a 9 is an **exceptionally strong and effective image, which has an immediate WOW impact upon the viewer**. It need not be a perfect image, but must be an exceedingly strong image. Not only is the image technically correct but the elements of the image must work together to form a whole that is far greater than the sum of the parts. There should be no obvious flaws. Images that score a 9 may break the "rules", but when rules are broken, they are broken intentionally for effect. Technical excellence is expected of any image given a score of 9. The image exhibits MANY elements towards which those who are working at polishing their craft should be striving: difficult exposures, effective use of selective focusing and depth of field, as well as other advanced photographic techniques are very common in such an image.

While a score of 9 should not be given without very good reason since it implies true photographic excellence, if a judge feels that an image knocked him or her out of their chair and/or that they were awestruck, they should give the image a 9 with no apologies to anyone. Photographers should not feel that a 9 is impossible to achieve.

A score of 8 or 8.5: This is a **very strong image**. This image is **technically correct and much more**. The elements of the image must work together. If there are flaws they are minor and hard to find. When the rules are broken they are done so intentionally and for impact. Technical excellence is expected to a high degree. Difficult exposures, effective use of selective focusing and depth of field, as well as other advanced photographic techniques are commonly found in such an image. The image effectively exhibits several elements towards which those who are working at polishing their craft should be striving (see list in 7-7.5). The difference between an image that scores an 8 versus one that scores a 7.5 is the strength of the image.

A score of 7 or 7.5: This is an **effective image** that exemplifies skillful understanding of photographic principles (composition, presentation of subject) and use of technique to convey an effective message without any significant flaws. Any obvious flaws are compensated by other elements in the image. It exhibits elements which photographers working at polishing their craft should be striving for: Showing a knowledge of importance of choice and presentation of subject, good lighting, dramatic composition effective use of depth of field, electing emotional impact; and exhibiting freshness and creativity. This is an image that effectively commands the viewer's attention.

A score of 6 or 6.5: This is a good solid image. The image is **technically correct and more**. The elements of the image work together. If there are flaws, they are minor and compensated for by other elements in the image. A score of 6 is the first step above a technically correct but otherwise uninspiring image that would warrant a 5 or a 5.5. It is the start on the path towards the high impact image.

5-will be considered a "baseline" score, the one that separates the acceptable from the unacceptable.

A score of 5 or 5.5: This image has no significant technical flaws, but likewise has no significant strengths. Such an image is sometimes referred to as a record shot, or a snapshot. It is **acceptable**, but does not generate any special interest or stir emotions (other than disinterest). It is the quality of image that we would expect that most hobbyists should be able to take as a minimum standard. It has the technical proficiency that modern auto-

exposure and auto-focus camera allow. The maker has made a correct exposure in a non-difficult lighting situation and the subject of the image is sharp. However, it lacks those elements that image makers who are working at polishing their craft should be striving towards in order to improve their skill: the importance of choice of subject; good lighting; dramatic composition; handling depth of field effectively; eliciting emotional impact; and demonstrating competent use of post processing skills.

A score of ZERO: This score is only given when a member judge wishes to disqualify her/himself from judging a particular image. This score signals the computer program to average the remaining two scores for the third score.

Special Considerations

Every month there is a category with an assigned topic or theme. In addition to the judging criteria mentioned above, an image will also be judged for “goodness of fit” i.e., how well the image conveys the topic or theme of the particular competition. For example, if the contest topic is flowers and the photographer includes birds or butterflies in the image, the judge should take into consideration whether these other objects detract or too strongly compete for the presentation of the themed subject.

** If, during the competition, a judge has a question about the appropriateness of an image in a particular category...or any question of an image in front of the judges...a timeout should be called to discuss the concern with fellow judges and the Competition Chair, or designee, before scoring said image.*

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