

	Grade	Image #1 Title	Grade	Comments
	A Grade	AO Alleyways	Accepted	A triptych with three individual panels which help to tell a story. I find this one haunting and ominous and I get a sinister feeling which is backed up with the choice of the author to use black and white. We see different sizes of spire and leading lines in each image. I feel the middle one is intriguing and powerful on its own. I think that the set would be enhanced if the ground level on each one was at the same level.
	A Grade	AO Hire Me	HONOURS	I find myself exploring each little picture frame as the people go about their business, considering their own lives. The colours really pop from the image and it has been carefully composed which works well. I wouldn't suggest changing anything. Good work.
	A Grade	AO Into the woods	Merit	Abstract images can be captivating and this one feels dreamy and intriguing to me. I like the way the photographer has chosen to show us 3 trees and the way the one on the right hand side is quite dominant. I find my eye goes to the left hand side then the one in the background automatically, so a nice journey. I do find the bright patch (centre middle) a bit distracting for me. My eye gets dragged away. Maybe the photographer could try reducing the highlights in LR or similar, otherwise when out next time look for an area with little or no sun/light coming through.
		AS Bellbird (Korimako)	Highly Commended	They always look so grumpy to me. This one looks like a male with the purple gloss on the head and ruby eyes showing us a curious pose, displaying the inquisitive nature. We also see the strong grip that they have. I think we have good detail in the feathers and a nice catchlight in the eye.
	A Grade	AS Cave Weta Hemiidrus pallitarsis	Accepted	Hemiidrus pallitarsis is a species of ground weta and this title states a cave weta. Unfortunately I think this is the wrong title and I am not convinced that this is a cave weta as the legs look too bulky. Cave weta have long slender legs and can be identified by the fact that their antennae almost touch at the base. We can clearly see heavy spines on the back legs. In my view this is a tree weta which have 5 to 7 pairs of big spines on their back legs. (I apologise if I am wrong and will stand corrected). I decided to assess it anyway, and I like the letterbox format of showing us this as it fits with the long antennae. I feel the image is quite 'noisy' or maybe the photographer has had to crop in quite a bit. Well done though for getting so close though. You are braver than me.
	A Grade	AS Gull in Flight	Merit	It appears to be the black-backed gull with the thick bill. I can almost hear the persistent call as I look at this image. I enjoy the angle and composition with plenty of room and the square format suits it too. Nice job
	A Grade	AS Harrier Hawk On The Wing	Merit	A magnificent bird and not the easiest of shots to achieve. Not something that you can plan or arrange compositionally, rather knowing the behaviour and anticipating. Good depth of field ensures nothing to distract the viewer. The lighting (being slightly backlit) puts more shadow on the face. The photographer might like to think about lifting the shadows a little in the face area. Otherwise a lovely shot.
	A Grade	AS Hover Fly	Accepted	Pictured here showing us the natural environment we see the lovely detail in the wings, eyes and shiny thorax. I like the angle shown and I feel that the depth of field although showing us a blurry background, is slightly narrow as the abdomen body showing us the 3 pairs of yellow patches is a little soft in focus for me. I think the image would be enhanced if the body was also sharp.
	A Grade	AS Juvenile Tui	Merit	First of all the juvenile have a browner body and lack the throat tuft. Here we see the tuft (poi) however it does appear to be 'developing' rather than established. Captured nicely in the environment with the light just illuminating the head and back. In my view we are losing a little detail in the black feathers and I might suggest just lighting the shadows a little. I think that would enhance this shot.
	A Grade	AS Kaka	Accepted	I was lucky enough to see these in Fiordland on a recent trip. Seen here feeding on what looks like the eucalyptus (blue gum). Good catchlight in the eye. When I look at the background, it appears rather 'muddy' or possibly over processed which spoils the image for me as I am distracted by it. Sorry.
	A Grade	AS Kākābeak (Cianthus Puniceus)	HONOURS	This beautiful plant produces copious amounts of nectar so tui and other nectar-loving birds love them. I find this image really grabs my attention with the vibrant colour and crisp sharp flowers. The red/green combination works well being complimentary colours and add to the dramatic impact for me. The water droplets take it to the next level for me.
	A Grade	AS KAREARE	Accepted	This one is looking a little dishevelled. Well done on showing us a behaviour we don't see often. For me the colour seems a little off. The feathers seem to have a purple (magenta) tinge in my view. Maybe the author might like to try to reduce that in LR or similar. It is allowed.
	A Grade	AS Kereru Luncheon	Merit	We see the lovely iridescent green and bronze feathers here in some good detail. The lighting coming from the left hand side leaves us with some shadow on the breast but we can still see the white vest. Glad to see that we see the full tail, I would personally like a little more room on the left hand side, otherwise a well captured shot.
	A Grade	AS Kowhai and the (Prothemadera novaeseelandiae)	Accepted	One of the tui's preferred nectar sources (in season), so this accurately represents the environment. We see detail in the poi (white feather tuft) and a small catchlight in the eye. The focus on the tui feels a little soft for me and I find that the sharpest part is the kowhai flowers just in front. Nicely seen though and good composition.
	A Grade	AS LIQUIDAMBAR	Accepted	Also known as 'sweet gum'. I have some of these on my daily dog walk. Quite stunning colours as they change from lush green to yellow then dark red and purple. This image shows the colours quite vivid and vibrant. I think they are a little over saturated for me. Maybe the photographer might like to reduce the saturation and vibrancy in LR or similar. I feel this would enhance the shot for me at least.
	A Grade	AS Mycena Fungi	Accepted	Nice to see some fungi in the set of images. A good macro lens and some form of lighting will help you to capture your images as some of them are so small. Not to mention good eye sight to see them in the first place. I really enjoy the low down perspective shown here as we look up into the gills/underside. There is plenty of detail too and the light has been well handled. Unfortunately I do see a small imperfection (could be something cloned out) in the black part of the background lower right hand side. It looks like a circle has been cloned. Once seen, my eye is drawn back to it. Without that, I think this is a good study of the fungi.
	A Grade	AS Nikau Rhopalostylis sapida bark detail	Accepted	When we take the time to look more closely there really is more structure and detail available. The evenly spaced rings, where the leaves (fronds) have fallen make for different and contrasting patterns and colours. I enjoy the perspective that the author has chosen to show us here with a more macro or close up approach. The focus is good in the middle of the shot in my view and fades off at the edges. I could suggest a narrower aperture (f/16) next time.
	A Grade	AS North Island Robin	Merit	Here we see the back view of the curious robin as it possibly checks out what the photographer may be doing. The environment is nicely displayed with a good depth of field. I find the brighter green patch directly above the bird a little distracting for me. It tends to drag my eye away. Otherwise I enjoy the different view we have here. I am not sure it could be reduced in LR but may be worth a try.
	A Grade	AS NZ Giant Stick Insect Argosarchus horridus	HONOURS	The NZ bristly stick insect is something we don't see very often, and to catch two together, well done. The colour makes them so well camouflaged as they blend with the wood so well done to the photographer for seeing this and managing to get a sharp image. Great detail and exposure too.
	A Grade	AS NZ Native Pigeon Kereru	Merit	We have lots of these around at the moment in the garden. I enjoy their noisy beat of the wings, so distinctive. The photographer here showing us the lovely detail in the feathers and beautiful iridescent colouring. I enjoy the small catchlight in the eye and the detail in the crimson eye and feet. I do feel that we are losing a little of the detail in the smart white vest just underneath the wing. Otherwise a nice image.
	A Grade	AS NZ Wild Goats	Accepted	Now in this image we can clearly see the constructed fence in the background and I ask myself is this acceptable under the NZ Flora and Fauna definition which clearly states 'minimum evidence' of human influence is acceptable for some nature subjects. I will give the author the benefit of the doubt and say the image looks a little soft in focus but shows us the playfulness of the goats so well done on capturing that moment.
	A Grade	AS Paradise Shelduke	HONOURS	Pictured so beautifully in the natural environment. Beautiful exposure enhances the stunning detail in the feathers and catchlight. Enhanced by the depth of field with nothing to distract. Stunning shot well done.
	A Grade	AS Pied Stilt catching a worm	Highly Commended	Nice to see some natural behaviour as the stilt grapples with the worm. I enjoy the composition that the author has chosen with plenty of room and a good depth of field. I do find that we are losing a little detail in the black feathers both on the neck and back but I do appreciate that it can be challenging.
	A Grade	AS Pingao Ficinia spiralis	Accepted	Sand dune stabilising plant that can get buried by the shifting sands. Whilst I can see that the species is accurately represented and I think the lighting has been well handled, I find that the background is quite dominant in this image. I think the pieces of bright wood are a little distracting and I might suggest a different angle next time. The author could also try just reducing the exposure on the wood.
	A Grade	AS Piwakawaka	HONOURS	Captured in flight about to catch a bug. We don't see too many images like this, well done on making the shot. The fast shutter speed allows us to see detail and the critical moment with the mouth open. Just lovely.
	A Grade	AS Pohutukawa and visitor	Accepted	The visitor here appears to be a German wasp to me. It is identifiable by the separate black dots whilst the common wasp has broader black bands that merge with dots. The bright red of the pohutukawa really stands out against the green leaves. I think that the focus is slightly out in this instance and the sharpest part of the image is the leaf at the forefront of the shot. For me, I feel the wasp should be sharp.
	A Grade	AS Pukeko with Young	HONOURS	What a lovely story we have here with the chicks together with the adult pukeko. It evokes emotion even though the pukeko isn't particularly liked (not round my place anyway). I enjoy the low down perspective that the photographer has given us with the almost eye-to-eye angle. Great depth of field and everything is pin sharp that needs to be.
	A Grade	AS Red Katydid Caedicia simplex	Merit	Part of the grass hopper family and the extremely long antennae are visible. I haven't seen one of these myself yet, but I look forward to it. We see some lovely detail in the long leg out stretched and I feel the lighting has been well handled. The green leaves really make it stand out. A minor point, but I wonder if the photographer has another shot with the full antennae rather than cutting it off at the top. I feel this would enhance the shot for me.
	A Grade	AS Shield bug nymphs.jpg	Merit	Also known as stink bugs. The newly hatched juveniles blend into their environment apart from the red markings. Apparently flightless at this stage of their life. We see the detail on the shield and legs. In my opinion, the use of the light or flash (as it appears to me) has given us a few blown-out areas which is a pity. I would suggest diffusing any light that you may be using to help prevent this in future. Otherwise good detail.
	A Grade	AS Silver Tree Fern Cyathea dealbata	Accepted	This is an artistic way of showing us the silver fern. In my view the definition is quite strict for 'nature' images and 'natural conditions'. All images must maintain a faithful representation of a natural form. Manipulation or modification to the original image is limited to minor retouching restoration of <i>original colour</i> is acceptable. This being in monotone, doesn't comply in my view. However I like the way the author has filled the frame with it.
	A Grade	AS Spinifex Sericeus	Accepted	Something we sometimes see on our walks along the beach/sand dunes and not something that everyone would take the time to make an image. I think it is nicely composed on the 1/3 and I like how no part has been trimmed off. I think that the images feels quite magenta to me and I would suggest a tweak of the white balance may enhance.
	A Grade	AS Takahē sharing a tasty snack	HONOURS	The lovely timing shows us the action and decisive moment of the two takahē. I feel the image has been well composed with the key elements placed in a strong position. The colours are true and the interaction is interesting in my view. Nice and sharp with good lighting.
	A Grade	AS Tui, juvenile (Prothemadera novaeseelandiae)	Merit	Clearly a juvenile with the browner body and lack of throat tuft (poi). Pictured on the flax (phormium) with pollen on the head. Compositionally, I feel that the tui is quite centrally placed and I might suggest a little more room around. Good depth of field with no distractions though. The image feels a little over exposed and we have lost detail in the bill.
	A Grade	AS White-fronted tern courtship offering.jpg	Merit	So called for the white strip on the forehead which separates the black cap from the black bill. There is a story here and it has been captured well in my view with the decisive moment caught, enhancing the story. Good depth of field, nothing distracting. I do feel that the white feathers are quite smooth looking and so therefore don't have much definition. I am not sure that tweaking the highlights would work for this image which is a shame.
	A Grade	AS Wrybill - Ngutu parore	HONOURS	The only bird in the world with a laterally-curved bill which is always curved to the right. Well done on the catchlight in the eye. Nicely positioned and sharp. I think there is good detail in the feathers. Very nice.
	A Grade	AS Yellowhammer (Hurukōwhai)	Highly Commended	Balancing on one leg. Lovely and sharp with a catchlight. Nothing to distract us with the clean background. I think this is nicely composed with plenty of room to look into. Looks like it has some food around the mouth.
	B Grade	BO Bason Reserve	Merit	This looks like a nice place to visit with the little building in the middle of the trees and a different way of showing us too. My guess is infrared, which we don't see very often. It gives the image a surreal feel to it and otherworldly with the trees taking on a bright white hue and the sepias toned sky. It all appears frozen in time. Something different and not something that I have tried. The sepias seems to be in part of the grasses and trees at the bottom of the images. I wonder if it might look 'cleaner' white but that is just my suggestion.
	B Grade	BO Evening Reflections	Merit	The evening light gives this image a softness in my view. The reflection has been well seen by the photographer. Not a building that most of us would take the time to make an image being industrial but I think it works well in the evening light. The blue with the splash of yellow (doors) compliment. I find my eye is drawn to the little mark in the sky. Is it a bird in flight maybe? I think the image would be enhanced without it and suggest cloning it out in LR or similar. Otherwise nice work.
	B Grade	BO Natures Landscape	Accepted	Looks inviting. A lovely landscape with stunning background view. I think the way the author has chosen to compose the shot works well with the bottom 1/3 grounding the image. Unfortunately what grabs my attention is the rectangle int he sky (top left side). Not sure how it got there but this is easily fixed with cloning it out.
	B Grade	BO Natures wood Pattern	Highly Commended	There are some beautiful patterns in nature and well done to the author of this one. I enjoy the colour palette with the muted greys, whites and golden colours. For me, the strongest part of this image is on the right hand side as I keep looking at the darker part on the left and what appears to be a small piece of wood. I would suggest the photographer might like to think about cropping in from the left hand side and make it a portrait and take away the distraction. I think this would enhance the image. Well done.
	B Grade	BO Westmere Lake	Accepted	Shooting through the trees and bushes makes for an interesting view and here we have what appears to me to be an infrared shot looking at what now seems like ice water with the white foliage. The image has a mystical and rather eerie feel for me. I find my eye is drawn to the white flower/leaf in the top right hand corner as it is so much bigger than the others and I feel it doesn't add anything to the shot. I might suggest removing that.
	B Grade	BS Black Shag Kawau Pu	Highly Commended	I am lucky enough to have a small lake in the back garden and we have black shag visit to feed on the fish and eel. This one is pin sharp and clearly shows the shag possibly waiting for his next meal. Good depth of field with nothing to distract the viewer, and good colour and lighting too with details in the feathers. The only minor thing I would say is I would like just a little more room in front but otherwise, well done.
	B Grade	BS Hihi Stitchbird	Merit	Apparently quite a rare NZ bird. I have been lucky enough to visit Tiririri island and have seen and photographed many of them there. (It is well worth a visit if you get chance). Pictured here in the natural environment in the bush and quite centrally placed in the frame. I think there is some nice detail in the feathers and a good catchlight too. I feel that the image is a little over exposed and I find the bright background quite prominent. I wonder if the author might consider reducing the exposure/highlights.
	B Grade	BS Kereru New Zealand Pigeon	Accepted	Watching the photographer from above. This is how I regularly see the kereru in my garden. The detail in the white vest is just splendid in my opinion. Well done on nailing the exposure. I do find that the focal point is a little out and the sharpest part of the image is the greenery/branch on the chest. I feel the eye should be sharp as that is the 1st place we look. Almost there.

B Grade	BS North Island Robin Toutouwai	Merit	These are so friendly when you come across one on a walk. I enjoy the way the photographer has managed to compose this image and the muted background. I like the angle and the way we have space for the robin to look into. It doesn't appear quite sharp for me and I wonder if the shutter speed was high enough or was there a little camera shake maybe. Otherwise I think this is a lovely shot well done.
B Grade	BS Tieke - Philesturnus rufusater	HONOURS	This appears to be a juvenile to me with the very small wattle. Well done to the photographer on not only managing to photograph this lovely saddleback nice and sharp, but also doing so whilst it is eating. This gives it that 'wow' effect for me with the added interest. Nicely handle lighting too and depth of field. Nice work.
B Grade	BS Warou (Hirundo neoxena)	Merit	The welcome swallow. They are so graceful in flight. One pictured here preening and the other watching what's going on. The muted background really helps these two stand out. Beautifully sharp and catchlights too. The wooden fencing is acceptable as in my view this is minimal human influence and it's the natural environment.
B Grade	BS Wewewa - Poliocephalus rufopectus	HONOURS	With wings outstretched we can see some nice detail in the feathers. I feel the reflection adds an extra element of interest for me. The image is sharp and well exposed in my view. Nice job and an accurate representation.