



**mangrove
action
project**

Mangrove Photography Awards 2026

Rules and Terms & Conditions

TERM

[Mangrove Action Project](#) presents the [Mangrove Photography Awards \(MPA\) 2025](#), which begins at 9:00 am British Summer Time (BST) on the 1st of April 2026 and closes at 11:59 pm Pacific Standard Time (PST) on the 1st of June 2026.

PHOTO SUBMISSION

You can submit a total of 12 photos to the Mangrove Photography Awards, across multiple categories.

You can enter into as many categories as you wish.

You can enter up to 6 photos per submission form.

Up to 6 photos can be entered across the five single-image categories; Wildlife, Landscape, People, Threats, and Underwater.

For the Conservation Stories portfolio category, you must submit a series of 6 images.

All submissions must be photographs (accepted file types: JPG, PNG, or TIFFS).

The maximum file size per image is 4MB. Submissions should be in high resolution.

Submissions must be free of borders, watermarks, or signatures.

COMPETITION RULES

Entries must be received by 11:59 pm PST on 1st June 2026 (“the Closing Date”).

All submissions must have been created by the photographer entering.

Entrants 23 years of age or younger on 24th July 2026 will automatically enter the Young Mangrove Photographer of the Year Award.

Images that have received an award in a previous Mangrove Photography Awards should NOT be entered.

Manipulation of the natural world is **NOT acceptable**. All entrants must confirm that all images were taken naturally, without interfering with wildlife or damaging the environment.

The following actions are prohibited:

- I. Attempts to deceive the viewer or disguise and/or misrepresent the reality of nature.
- II. The staging of animals in a wildlife habitat or any behavior that is unnatural (training animals to stage, etc.).
- III. Actions that negatively impact animals and the surrounding biodiversity. This includes flying aircraft or a drone too low or noisily over an animal, as well as photographing nests using wide-angle lenses (telephoto lenses are permitted). An animal's welfare must always come first.
- IV. Usage of baiting (including live baiting).
- V. Providing false, incomplete, or misleading captions for submissions.
- VI. Placing any hazardous and/or detrimental materials into the environment.

Photos found to have been associated with any of these actions will be disqualified. Entrants are responsible for ensuring full compliance with any applicable national or international legislation, including the regulation of drone use. Entrants must secure any relevant permits. For photos featuring people, the photographer must obtain the subject's consent.

Additional ethical guidelines¹. We kindly ask all participants to:

- I. Maintain respectful proximity to animals, ensuring appropriate distance is kept and that any equipment, including a drone, is used responsibly.
- II. Exercise caution with noise production during the photo session.
- III. Carefully consider the placement of photo traps and ensure they are only used where permitted and necessary.
- IV. Collect all photography materials from the environment, ensuring nothing is left behind or forgotten.
- V. Be mindful of local communities living in, and relying on the mangroves. Demonstrate respect for their daily activities, personal space, and well-being.
- VI. Always seek consent from a human subject before photographing them. If your photo is selected, please make sure that your subject agrees to the photo being used. We ask that you portray their story as accurately and truthfully as possible.

¹ For more considerations on ethics in photography, please refer to this piece by the International League of Conservation Photographers: <https://blog.conservationphotographers.org/winning-at-what-cost-ethical-considerations-for-wildlife-and-nature-photo-contests/>

- VII. Limit the use of artificial lighting, such as flash photography, wherever possible. If artificial lighting is necessary please consider the potential disruption to wildlife, and use it only when appropriate and safe.
- VIII. Be cautious of nesting and young animals, ensuring not to disrupt their habitat.

Post-processing of images **IS acceptable** but must remain truthful to the original experience. Editing should not deceive the viewer, misrepresent the reality, or omit elements of the natural world. All photos should accurately reflect the subject matter and the scene as it originally appeared.

Photographers should hold all required permissions and permits for the images submitted. Photographers must be prepared to send the camera RAW files for proof of authenticity.

CATEGORIES

The competition features 6 categories that participants can choose to enter. Some categories have a subcategory to help guide entries.

Images submitted to the Conservation Stories portfolio category may be entered into one other category if relevant. The Mangrove Photography Awards reserves the right to reassign images to a category other than the one originally submitted if the judges determine it to be better suited.

The 6 categories are:

Wildlife

Celebrating animals in mangroves worldwide, above the waterline. This includes images of unique animal behavior in trees and on land, rarely seen species, and microscale organisms, that convey the vital connection between mangroves and their inhabitants.

Wildlife subcategories:

- I. Birds
- II. Mammals
- III. Other Species

Landscape

Captivating images exploring the diversity of the globe's mangroves, from expansive landscapes to the detail of individual flora. Images may include unseen angles, patterns, close-ups, and creative perspectives.

Landscape subcategories:

- I. From the Air

- II. On the Ground
- III. Black and White

People

Revealing intimate relationships between people and mangrove forests. This includes images illustrating traditional connections with coastal communities and positive conservation efforts.

People subcategories:

- I. Livelihoods
- II. Conservation & Restoration

Underwater

Showcasing the hidden world of mangroves below the water line, uncovering the diversity of aquatic life. Split-shots may be submitted to expose relationships with other elements of mangrove ecosystems.

Threats

Investigating the current issues that threaten our coastal ecosystems. This includes human impact and extreme natural events that are causing increasing pressure on these vital forests.

Conservation Stories

Portfolio image category showcasing a long-held commitment to mangrove conservation through a striking collection of six images. A total of six images must be submitted. Submissions may include images taken at any time during the photographer's career, including award-winning images, and should prioritize emotional storytelling.

SPECIAL AWARDS

In addition to the main categories, the competition includes special awards to recognise and celebrate outstanding contributions from particular groups of participants.

Young Mangrove Photographer of the Year

Open to photographers under the age of 23 (as of 24th July 2026), this award recognizes young talent exploring and expressing their fascination with mangrove ecosystems.

People's Choice Award

Voted for by members of the public, the People's Choice Award provides an opportunity to showcase this year's most loved image, as chosen by the audience.

The following awards are presented in partnership with the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD):

The Emirates Award

Recognizing the work of UAE-based photographers, this award celebrates local talent working to highlight the importance of mangrove conservation.

The Arabian/Persian Gulf Award

This award recognizes the work of photographers from regional countries including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and their efforts to showcase the significance of mangrove conservation.

PARTNER AGREEMENTS

Global Mangrove Alliance (GMA)

Participants who opt in as a GMA member/submitting images of GMA projects agree to:

- I. Warrant that the photo is their original work and does not infringe on third-party rights, such as privacy or intellectual property. Your photograph must not defame or invade the privacy or publicity rights of any person, living or deceased, or otherwise infringe upon any third party's copyright, trademark or other personal or property rights.
- II. Confirm they have obtained necessary permission from anyone recognizable in the photo.

The GMA have authority to:

- I. A non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty-free, perpetual license to use or publish the photograph in any manner including, but not limited to: a) *Global Mangrove Alliance website* b) *Global Mangrove Alliance newsletter* c) *The Global Mangrove Alliance is granted license to use photograph submissions for promotional purposes, such as social media, websites, and marketing materials.* d) *Global Mangrove Alliance slideshows, brochures, newsletters, articles, reports, calendars, and publications.*

The GMA agree that:

- I. All entrants will retain ownership (copyright) of their photograph(s).
- II. When using the submitted photo, it will appropriately credit the photographer with their name, title of image, award given (if applicable), and the Mangrove Photography Awards.

UNESCO

Participants who opt in to their image helping advance Mangrove Ecosystem Conservation in UNESCO-Designated Sites agree to:

- I. Their photograph(s) being used for UNESCO Mangrove Ecosystems in the World exhibitions.

- II. Featured photographs will be used to create the new [UNESCO Mangrove Poster Series](#), which will be available for public download on MAP and UNESCO websites.

JUDGING

A panel of judges, and a designated chair, are appointed to evaluate all competition entries. Submissions are reviewed anonymously. The judging consists of two rounds, with the final round including an authenticity check to ensure entries adhere to the Mangrove Photography Awards rules and ethical standards.

The panel will be looking for originality, narrative, and ethical practice. Therefore, the panel will prioritize images that have not already been awarded (winner, runner-up, commended, honourable mention, etc) in other similar international competitions.

Photographs and photo essays will be judged on originality, technical excellence, composition, overall impact, and artistic merit, according to the following point scale (totalling up to 100 points):

- » **Overall Impact:** Up to 35 points
Evokes the diversity of life, inspires conservation, tells a cohesive story
- » **Originality:** Up to 30 points
Unique perspectives, rarely captured moments
- » **Aesthetic Impact:** Up to 20 points
Composition, lighting, framing, perspective, use of color, etc.
- » **Technical Expertise:** Up to 15 points
Sharp, exposure, depth of field, tonal range

The judges are a panel of conservation photographers and industry professionals who will judge the Mangrove Photography Awards 2026 according to the criteria above. All decisions by the judges will be final and binding.

Winners will be announced on 24th July 2026 ahead of World Mangrove Day.

PRIZES

Prizes are awarded as follows:

- I. Overall winner:
One overall winner will be selected across all categories and awarded the grand prize of \$1000 cash and the title of Mangrove Photographer of the Year.
- II. Category awards:
One winner of each category or subcategory will be selected. Winners will be awarded \$500 cash.

- III. Young Mangrove Photographer of the Year:
One overall winner will be selected across all categories and awarded the grand prize of \$250 cash and the title of Young Mangrove Photographer of the Year.
- IV. Finalists:
Up to six finalists in each single-image category and subcategory, will receive a Mangrove Photography Awards Certificate of Recognition.
- V. People's Choice Award:
One overall winner will be voted for members of the public on Instagram and awarded \$250 cash.
- VI. The Emirates Award:
One overall winner will be selected across all categories by our panel of judges and regional partner, Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi. The winner will be awarded \$500 cash.
- VII. The Arabian Gulf Award:
One overall winner will be selected across all categories by our panel of judges and regional partner, Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi. The winner will be awarded \$500 cash.

Many media publications and conservation partners will showcase the results of this competition, benefitting the photographers with high-profile exposure to their work. Winners are regularly published in BBC News, The Guardian, BBC Wildlife Magazine as well as other photography magazines.

MANGROVE PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Mangrove Photography Awards is an international photography competition aimed at showcasing the beauty, diversity, and fragility of our mangrove forests around the world. It also offers significant opportunities for photographers to have their work publicly showcased across a range of international media and public spaces, bringing significant exposure to their work.

1. By entering the Mangrove Photography Awards you agree to adhere to the following conditions:
 - 1.1. You will not post any inappropriate or malicious material.
 - 1.2. You will not break any laws.
 - 1.3. You will not infringe on any third-party rights or policies.
 - 1.4. You will not copy and/or use any Mangrove Photography Awards content – taken directly from the site or otherwise – without written consent from us.
 - 1.5. You permit the Mangrove Photography Awards to use your submission(s) as it sees fit, including for promotional and editorial purposes related to the Awards.
2. Entrants will retain ownership and copyright of all their submitted images. Usage of the images – by the competition owners or any partners and affiliates – in instances unrelated to the Mangrove Photography Awards is strictly prohibited.

3. By entering the awards, you grant Mangrove Action Project (MAP) a non-exclusive irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, display, and share the copyright owner's images. This license is limited to uses directly relating to the Mangrove Photography Awards and for the global promotion of mangrove conservation, in perpetuity. This may include but is not limited to, use on MAP and Mangrove Photography Awards websites, social media platforms, and print media associated with the Awards. No additional compensation or recognition will be given beyond a photo credit.
4. Image credits will always be provided using the entrant's name as provided by the photographer in their submission(s).
5. In other circumstances, there may be opportunities for our photographers to benefit from the use of their images. Where such benefits are likely to arise, permission will be sought in advance and terms and conditions will be agreed upon with the photographer.
6. Entrants agree to join the GDPR-compliant mailing list as part of their submission so that they can be contacted regarding their submissions and results.

QUERIES

If you have any queries relating to the Mangrove Photography Awards 2026, please email photography@mangroveactionproject.org.

REFERENCES

<https://blog.conservationphotographers.org/winning-at-what-cost-ethical-considerations-for-wildlife-and-nature-photo-contests/>
<https://ilcp.visurapi.co/ethics>
<https://files.visurapro.com/pro/files/users/29/f3bba9e16328a868bf62b9f419a67de7.pdf>
<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/wildlife-photographer-of-the-year-taking-ethical-photos.html>