

2026 BigPicture Natural World Photography Competition

Category: [Photography](#)

Deadline: March 8, 2026

Website: graphiccompetitions.com



The BigPicture: Natural World Photography Competition is an international contest organized by the California Academy of Sciences that showcases outstanding nature, wildlife, and conservation photography. Each year it attracts both emerging and established photographers who document biodiversity, animal behavior, ecosystems, and environmental challenges across the globe. By highlighting visually compelling and scientifically relevant imagery, the competition aims to strengthen public understanding of the natural world.

The 2026 edition expands the competition's scope by including a new Video Story category, inviting creators to combine short-form video clips with supporting still images to tell impactful conservation narratives. This addition reflects the growing importance of multimedia storytelling in environmental communication and encourages participants to explore innovative techniques to portray species, landscapes, and ecological issues. The contest continues to feature its established categories covering wildlife portraits, terrestrial and aquatic life, landscapes, human-nature interactions, and conservation photography.

BigPicture positions itself not only as an artistic platform but also as an educational and advocacy tool, emphasizing the urgency of protecting global biodiversity. Winning entries are selected for scientific relevance, visual excellence, and narrative strength, and are exhibited at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, where they reach broad public audiences. Through its international reach and conservation-focused mission, the competition contributes to elevating environmental awareness, supporting nature photographers, and inspiring action to safeguard the planet's ecosystems.

Entry fee: US \$25 for up to 10 single-image submissions; US \$15 for each "Photo Story" submission (video + supporting photos).

Eligibility

Open worldwide to all photographers, except employees/volunteers and board members of the California Academy of Sciences (and their households).

Prize

The Grand Prize winner receives US \$5,000; first-place winners in each of the seven official categories receive US \$1,000 each; additionally there is a "People's Choice" prize of US \$300. Winning images (and video stories) are exhibited at the California Academy of Sciences' renowned museum in San Francisco.
