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NANPA TRUTH IN CAPTIONING STATEMENT

Why Accurate Captioning Matters

Digital technology has led to an explosion in the popularity of nature photography, and created seemingly limitless possibilities in photo editing.

Consistent, accurate image captioning facilitates three very important goals:

1. Educate the public and photo viewers about the context and intent of the image.
2. Maintain public trust in the credibility of the image.
3. Help to educate other photographers.

NANPA believes the methods and definitions offered by this document will act as a resource for accurate captioning in the modern digital age. This is not meant as an exhaustive guide or manual. Our intent is to create common vocabulary, and to assist interested photographers in captioning their images accurately, and according to an industry standard.

Elements of an Accurate Caption

Accurate captions give honest context, enabling viewers to understand the photographer's perspective and intent. The building blocks of sound, complete and accurate captions include the following:

The What

Informative description of what image depicts.

Give an honest, concise description of what you photographed, without speculation or embellishment. When possible, note the species of animal or plants depicted.

The When and Where

Notation of the location and time of year image was taken.

Location and general date or seasonal information is an important part of any caption. However, if the subject is an endangered species, a delicate habitat, or otherwise vulnerable subject, omit specific location details, giving more general location information to protect from harm. The image may need to be stripped of any embedded GPS location data.

The How

Part A: *Truthful disclosure of the conditions under which the image was captured.*

The viewing public generally assumes that nature images are straightforward depictions of events and scenes that occurred naturally. It is essential that the photographer communicate completely and accurately the field conditions and circumstances of a nature image.

NANPA has provided the following captions to help photographers with descriptions appropriate to the image use and the photographer's discretion. These are suggestions, not laws or ethical mandates.

- **“Wild”**
The term “wild” applies to any animal having the freedom to go anywhere and to disregard artificially set boundaries, with the exception of preserves established to protect the animal for its own sake, and where it lives in a natural state.
- **“Captive”**
The term “captive” applies to any animal that is living under human care and control for an extended period of time. This includes, but is not limited to, zoos, game farms, falconry birds, rescue facilities, and research facilities. Including the name of the facility in the caption may also help convey the captive nature of the animal. Many educational and documentary photo users require this information.
- **“Controlled”**
The term “controlled” applies to an animal temporarily under human control but otherwise wild. Examples include animals in a cage, net, trap, temporary aquarium, or in refrigerated, drugged or tethered conditions.
- **“Baited”**
The term “baited” refers to the use of live, dead, or fake food to attract a predatory bird/mammal/reptile.
- **“Attracted”**
The term “attracted” applies to using food, water, scent, audio, decoys, or any other introduced means to attract a non-predatory animal. It also applies to using anything other than food (e.g., decoys) to attract a predatory bird or other animal.

Special Situations

In some situations, providing additional information about how the image was taken can help education image viewers on how to photograph their subject more responsibly. For example:

- Images taken on public land usually off-limits to the general public may be labeled as having been done under permit, or with appropriate permission.
- Wildlife images taken while working with wildlife biologists so as to minimize impact can be captioned to denote guidance and supervision.
- Images taken with remote cameras can show that images of delicate landscapes were taken with minimal impact.

This type of captioning can help discourage photographers from taking similar images without obtaining the proper permits, precautions, and expertise.

The How

Part B: *Truthful disclosure of any post-processing digital manipulation.*

Digital technology gives photographers the ability to create images which end up looking vastly different from what was captured in-camera with a single exposure. There is no clear line as to when an image shifts from a literal, documentary image to an artistic image that is no longer accurate from a documentary perspective. These artistically-rendered images can be captioned so that viewers understand they are not documentary.

To assist in this, NANPA provides the following captions as guidelines:

- **“As Shot”**
Nothing has been added to the original image and nothing removed. Standard digital adjustments may have been employed, such as global or selective adjustments to contrast, brightness, and saturation, as well as cropping, sharpening, dust spot removal, and noise reduction.
- **“Cleanup”**
Minor elements, such as a stick, have been removed. No new elements have been added to the original image.
- **“Manipulated”**
Major elements have been removed and/or new elements have been added, while maintaining the basic natural history of the scene at the time of capture. Examples of added elements include adding canvas, replacing eyes, adding wing tips.
- **“Composite”**
Visual elements from separate single images were combined to create a new scene. Examples include replacing an entire background or adding a subject.
- **“Multiple Exposures”**
The image is comprised of multiple single images. These may have been captured at the same location at the same time, captured in the same location at different times, or captured in different locations at different times. They are merged in-camera or during post-processing. Examples include HDR, stitched panoramas, focus stacking, and multiple in-camera exposures. Photographers may caption such images with the technique used, such as, simply, “HDR” or “stitched panorama.”
- **“Effects”**
An artistic filter or texture has been used to dramatically alter the appearance of all or part of the image beyond anything that could have occurred in nature.

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