



Competition rules

17th Edition, 2026

photocontest.milvus.ro

1. DEFINITIONS

The following notions will be used simplified in the text of the present regulations:

Contest International Nature Photography Competition Milvus Photocontest



Organizer FORONA (Organization of Nature Photographers from Romania)

Milvus Group (Bird and Nature Protection Association)



Exhibition Milvus Photocontest Exhibition

Jury For the current edition of the competition the members of the jury are the following photographers:



Dan Dinu
dandinu.net



Dorin Bofan
dorinbofan.com



Zoltán Gergely Nagy
www.zoltan-nagy.com



István Kerekes
kerekesistvan.com



Daniel Mîrlea
danielmirlea.com

Communication Communication with the organizers will be made exclusively by e-mail at: photocontest@milvus.ro

2. DESCRIPTION

The contest is a public competition of nature photography, with international participation, under the patronage of the Organizer. Its purpose is helping nature conservation by promoting authentic photographs, which can bring awareness of the natural values that are worth preserving.

3. PARTICIPATION AND ENTRY

The contest is open to all amateur and professional photographers, regardless of nationality and residency. The participants who are under age, need the written consent of their parents or legal guardian to enter the competition.

The Forona Board members, employees of the Milvus Group, the members of the jury, employees of the sponsors, as well as the 1-st degree relatives of the above, are excepted from the competition.

The images for the competition can be submitted exclusively online, through the dedicated form on the Competition website.

The images for the competition will be submitted only within the time frame defined in section 7. Any images submitted outside this time interval will not be considered.

The participants need a valid email address for entering the competition.

Any communication with the Organizer will be made exclusively at the competition's email address. For the safety of the communication, participants are encouraged to mark this address as safe in their email, and to periodically verify the spam/junk folder and filters in their email app.

4. CATEGORIES

The competition includes the following categories:



A. Nature

Images depicting plants, mushrooms or landscapes, black and white or color.



B. Wildlife

Images with animals, black and white or color.



C. Nature of Romania

This category is dedicated exclusively to Romanian photographers. Images of plants, mushrooms, animals or landscapes, black and white or color, as long as the images are taken in Romania, by a photographer with Romanian residency, regardless of his / hers nationality.



D. Junior

This category is dedicated exclusively to photographers who have not turned 16 by March 21, 2026. You can enter images of plants, mushrooms, animals or landscapes, black and white or color. Photographers who enter this category cannot enter any of the other categories.

Participants are allowed to submit a maximum number of **15 images**, freely distributed in categories A, B and C. For category D, Junior, a maximum of 5 images can be submitted.

5. AWARDS

The jury will award the Milvus Trophy to the most interesting image in the competition, the I-st, II-nd and III-rd prize for the categories A, B and C, respectively a prize for category D. There will also be a Public Award, following a popularity vote held online.

To underscore the organizers' strong commitment to nature conservation, a new prize, the Impact Award, will be introduced. This award will be granted at the discretion of the jury to the photograph that most effectively showcases themes such as conservation efforts, environmental challenges, climate change, wildlife crime, and related subjects. The award does not have a separate category, the winning image can be chosen from any of the contest categories.

The value of the prizes for the current edition of the Competition is as follows:

- The Grand winner will be awarded the **Milvus Trophy, 1000 Euros and a 4-day guided photo tour to the photographic hides at Ultima Frontieră, Periprava (Danube Delta) for 2 people, offered by Rewilding Romania**;
- The winners of **the I-st prize** for categories A, B and C will receive **400 Euros** each;
- The winners of **the II-nd prize** for categories A, B and C will receive **300 Euros** each;
- The winners of **the III-rd prize** for categories A, B and C will each receive the "Wild Romania" **photography book** made by Dan Dinu;
- The winner of the **Junior prize** will receive a **photography books pack** containing "Harghita Magică" made by Potozky László and "Vâlcea Naturală" made by Daniel Mîrlea;
- The winners of the **Impact and Public awards** will receive a Milvus gift package.

All laureates will receive an invitation for access to the LYNX Festival, an event dedicated to documentary film and nature photography, which will take place in Brașov from June 2026. During this festival will also take place the opening of the Milvus Photocontest exhibition and the awards gala.

The prizes in objects or services will not be converted to their financial value. In exceptional cases, at the discretion of the jury, one or more of these prizes may not be awarded.



© Emil Zamfir (Romania)

6. ENTRY FEES

The submission of the photographs in the competition is conditioned by the payment of a participation fee of **20 Euros**. This fee is non-refundable.

Registration in **category D** is **free** of charge.

The entry fee can be paid either by:

- Credit card
- PayPal using the email address photocontest@milvus.ro
- Bank transfer in one of the following accounts:
R003 INGB 0000 9999 0179 9043 (Euro) / R012 INGB 0000 9999 0170 3336 (Lei)
ING Bank N.V. Amsterdam, sucursala Bucureşti, SWIFT code: INGBROBUXXX
Beneficiary: Grupul Milvus, Tg. Mureş, Romania



© Brian Matthews (UK)

7. COMPETITION CALENDAR

Submission of the images	January 20 - March 20, 2026
RAW files request	April, 2026
Public vote	May, 2026
Public announcement of results	May, 2026
The awards ceremony and exhibit opening	June 06, 2026

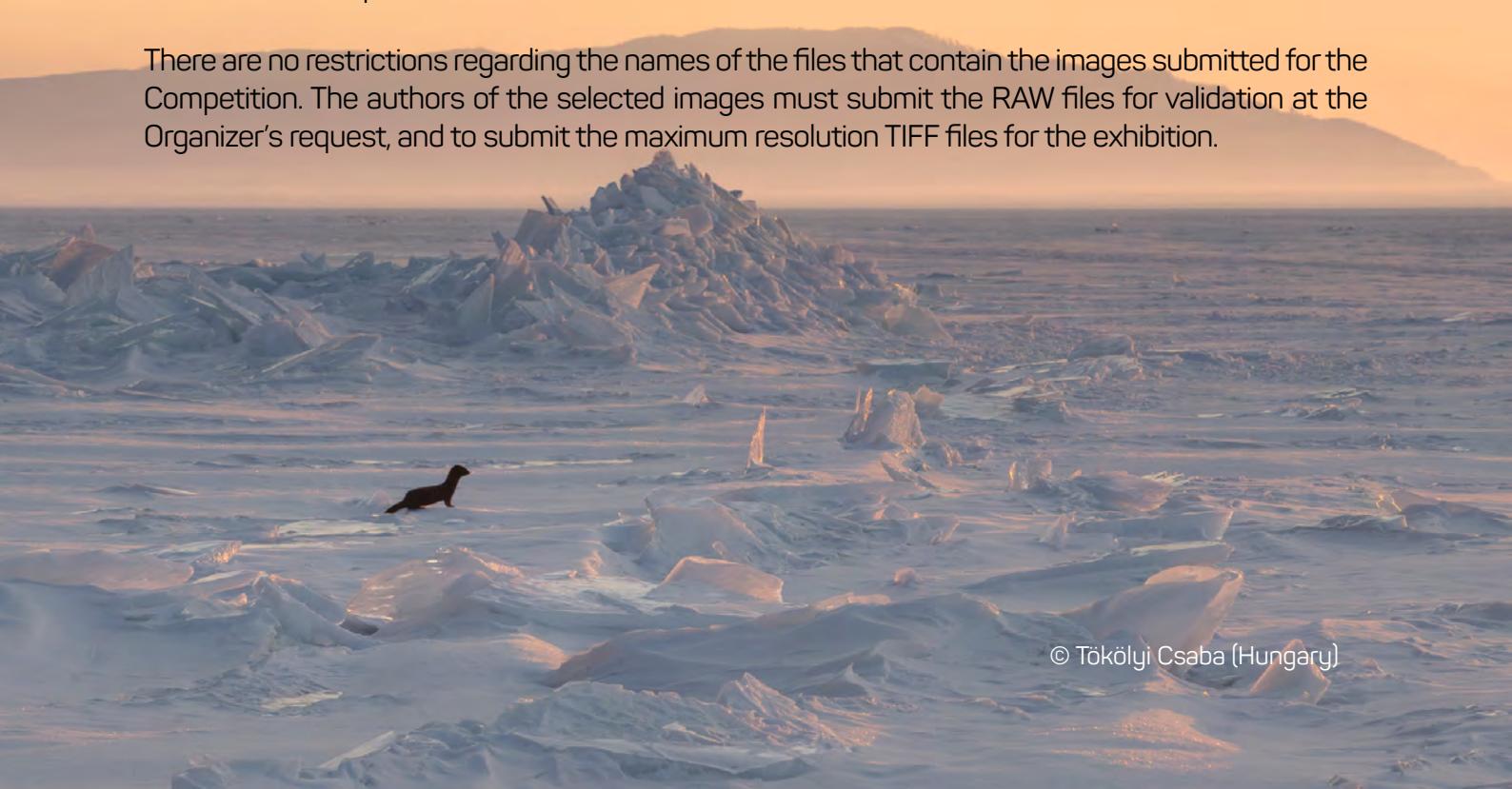
8. FILES

The digital files of the images submitted in the competition will follow the following criteria:

- JPEG format, sRGB color space, 1920 pixels exactly on the long edge;
- The files may be compressed as long as the image will not be visibly affected;
- The file size must not exceed 3 MB, the EXIF data have to be preserved;
- The images must not contain frames, signatures, logos, watermarks, or any other visible form of identifying the author;
- The images must have a descriptive title in English.

The images submitted for the Competition must be taken and edited according to the ethical and technical requirements listed below, and also with the [Forona Ethical Code](#).

There are no restrictions regarding the names of the files that contain the images submitted for the Competition. The authors of the selected images must submit the RAW files for validation at the Organizer's request, and to submit the maximum resolution TIFF files for the exhibition.



© Tökölyi Csaba (Hungary)

9. ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS

The Organizer is actively involved in nature conservation projects, and is highlighting the importance of respecting a series of strict ethical requirements when taking the images submitted in the competition. All submitted images need to strictly abide by the [Ethical Code](#) developed by Forona.

The images taken by one or more of the below listed methods **ARE NOT ACCEPTED**:

- Photographing dead, captive or trained animals, or animals which had their moving capacity substantially altered by either mechanicals or chemicals means (sedation) or by freezing;
- Photographing animals in extremely stressful circumstances (accessing bird colonies within the nesting period, using artificial light sources, continuous or flash, etc.) wounding or death of the subject;
- Destroying plants or landscape elements;
- Photographing in natural areas restricted from public access, except when a valid permit was used;
- Altering the natural landscape by eliminating or adding elements that substantially change the photographed scene; this does not include removing the anthropic debris from the image;
- Photographing animals at feeders or specialized hides is accepted, as long as the images are presented as such, and the feeding conditions do not endanger the subject (by the quality of the provided food or exposing them to predators) and as long as the natural behavior of the animal is not substantially modified.

Any breach of the ethical requirements above will result in immediate disqualifying of all the images submitted in the Competition by that certain photographer. Finding out later about such breaches in taking the selected images, will result in eliminating the images from the Exhibition and withdrawal of any awarded prizes, if case.

Anthropic elements, vegetal crops, or domestic animals are not accepted in the images submitted for the Competition. Those elements are accepted only if they are a part of the natural environment of the species that is the subject of the image, and are not the subject of the image per se.



© Daniel Mirlea (Romania)

10. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Only digital images, taken with electronic devices or high resolution scanning of diapositives or negative slides are accepted in the Competition. The electronic devices may be digital cameras, drones, mobile phones, or any other device that ensures the minimum resolution specified below. Images made by AI technology or use of such tools to remove or fill-in parts of the photo are not accepted.

Images on physical support cannot be submitted in the Competition.

The Organizer encourages technical excellence, and obtaining the images in camera, with minimal digital edits applied after.

The following types of digital edits **ARE ALLOWED**:

- Cropping the original image, as long as the resulted image maintain a minimum resolution of 12 Megapixels;
- Rotating the entire image so that the elements in the frame are correctly aligned;
- Correcting the chromatic aberrations, correcting the vignetting and distortions produced by the optical devices;
- Moderate adjustments of the white balance, contrast, tonal values of colors and saturation;
- Moderate selective adjustments by using software elements like dodging/burning and shadows/ highlights, as well as applying neutral gradual digital filters;
- Eliminating image noise, produced by sensor and electronic circuits, to a reasonable degree, applied to the entire image or selectively;
- Eliminating the effects produced by dust on the sensor, or sensor flaws;
- Minimal cleaning of some disturbing elements (e.g.: dust, debris, etc.), as long as this does not change the composition, the subject or the message of the image;
- Limited application of micro contrast (sharpening) over the entire image or selectively;
- Converting the images in black and white;
- Infrared images taken with digital cameras modified for this purpose.

Other types of digital editing not listed here explicitly may be accepted, as long as these are discrete and within decent limitations.

Panoramic images obtained by joining multiple successive frames horizontally or vertically are accepted, as long as the included images have been obtained in the same location and within a reasonable time frame.

Also, HDR or focus stacking images are accepted, as long as they do not alter reality and all included images have been produced with the same subject and composition, in the same location, and within a reasonable time frame.

The following types of digital editing **ARE NOT ALLOWED**:

- Eliminating elements from the frame, if this changes the composition, the subject or the message of the image;
- Adding elements in the frame, including shadows, glow, fog, etc.;
- Multiple exposures in camera, even if the result is one single RAW file;
- Applying digital color filters;
- Converting the image to monochrome, except black and white;
- Excessive selective desaturation of the colors.

Not complying with one or more of the technical requirements will result in the disqualifying of the image in question.



11. JURY

The Jury is formed by members of the Forona Association and other guests. The members of the jury are listed under section 1.

In a situation of force majeure, one or more of the members of the jury may be replaced without previously informing the participants.

12. JUDGING

From the total of the submitted images, the jury will make a selection that will be presented in the Exhibition. The judging of the images will be made anonymously. The jury reserves its right to move an image to another category if necessary.

The jury will request the authors to submit the original images in order to evaluate the compliance with the ethical and technical requirements. In exceptional cases, the jury may request the submission of a limited number of photos taken at the same photo session, before and after the image submitted for the Competition. In case of the images obtained by scanning, the organizers may request the presenting of the original medium. Also, the jury may request to the participant additional details regarding the conditions under which the photo was taken, or any other information considered as relevant.

By original images for validating the images submitted in the Competition one shall understand:

- All types of RAW files (ARW, CRW/2/3, ERF, NEF, ORF, PTX, etc.);
- DNG files (Adobe Digital Negative Raw) will be accepted only if they are the digital native format of the camera/device;
- JPEG or TIFF files produced directly in the camera.

Original files altered by ulterior editing will not be considered. Non compliance with these requirements will result in disqualifying of the image in question.



13. COPYRIGHT

By entering the Competition, the participant confirms that the submitted images are personal creations, that he / she is the copyright owner, and that the exclusive usage rights have not been transferred to third parties.

The participant is responsible for obtaining written confirmations for publishing in case the image affects or contains elements that may affect the interests of third parties.

It is also the responsibility of the participant to obtain in advance all the premises and / or permits necessary for photographing in areas restricted to public access.

14. USAGE RIGHTS

The selected images will be available to use by the Organizer in the context of the Competition and promotional and PR activities related to the Competition. The organizer has the right to publish these images on its own websites, on the Competition's page, on its own social media pages, and to transfer these images for publishing in the written press, online or TV, for the exclusive purpose of promoting and informing on the current and next editions of the Competition, as well as for marketing and contacting potential sponsors.

The Organizer has the right to publicly exhibit the images selected within the Exhibition or other events, or to reproduce them and distribute them printed on any kind of physical support, in order to promote the Competition and the activities related to it. In using promotional materials, the format of the images can be modified for optimizing the framing.

In all cases specified above, the association of the images with the Competition and with the author will be specified accordingly. The Organizer has the right to transfer its rights to third parties, with the purpose of promoting the Competition or the activities related to the Competition.

For none of the above usage, the participants will not be able to request compensations of any kind.

In case a third party expresses the interest of buying the usage rights for a certain image, the Organizer will transfer this request to the author of that image.

The printing of the images selected for the Exhibition will be made by the Organizer, on its own expense.

15. POST COMPETITION

The electronic files containing the images that were not selected will be erased by the Organizer after announcing the winners of the Competition.

At the closing of the Exhibition, the Organizer can donate the printed images to charity or educational institutions, under the condition that they will not be used for commercial purposes.

16. RESPONSABILITY

All risks associated with the electronic transfer of the files (images submitted for the Competition, original files, or maximum resolution images) and with the physical transfer of diapositives or negative slides respectively, will be assumed by the participants. The Organizer will not accept any compensation claim nor legal responsibility.

The participant is solely responsible for any damage produced to the organizer or third parties by not complying with the regulations. The Organizer reserves its right to address the competent authorities in exceptional circumstances.

All personal details of the participants will be used exclusively for the administration of the Competition, under the conditions available in the registration form, with respecting the valid national and EU legislation.

The email addresses used for entering the competition will be kept for further communication regarding the Competition. The participants can unsubscribe at any time.



17. FINAL CLAUSES

The images submitted in the Competition that do not comply with the registration requirements and / or the content, format, ethic or technical requirements will be disqualified. The final decision of accepting or rejecting an image will belong exclusively to the Jury.

All the decisions of the Jury are final. Any potential appeal will not be considered.

The Organizer reserves its right to restrict or cancel any participant's entering the Competition, if the association with that person could damage the image of the Organizer or following an attempt to tamper the Competition.

The participants that have been disqualified do not have the right to be refunded the entering fee, nor to compensation of any kind.

The organizers will make all reasonable efforts to contact the winners for the delivery of the prizes. Prizes not claimed within 6 months of the date of the awards ceremony will be forfeited.

The Organizer reserves its right to cancel, suspend or extend a certain edition of the Competition in case none of the images submitted does not comply with the requirements, or does not raise to a decent quality standard, or in case of force majeure, or in case the Competition is affected by situation beyond the control of the Organizer, including but not limited to: viruses and cyber attacks, frauds or technical difficulties.

In case of controversy, the Romanian version of the present Competition Rules prevails.

By submitting an image in the Competition, the participants unequivocally agree with the provisions of the present Competition Rules.



© Gönye Csaba (Hungary)



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Cover photos:

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Ervin Horesnyík (Slovakia), Gothárd Ferenc - Alpár (Romania).



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