



“Peek-a-Boo Gulls” by Bryjyt Jones (age 10) won the youth division for birds with this photo of a Laughing Gull pair

Brunswick Wildlife Ibis Fest: A Photo Contest Comes of Age!

Like a White Ibis, the festival’s namesake, it took only two years for the photo contest to reach adulthood. The overall quality of photo entries for Ibis Fest 2010 was analogous to the snazzy, beautiful breeding plumages of the many birds that “digitally attended” last weekend’s event.

Cary Paynter, President of the Cape Fear Audubon Society, summed it up nicely: “The goal of this year’s Ibis Fest was to highlight the connection between community and place while promoting activities, such as shrimping, birding, boating and kayaking, that strengthen that connection.”

“The photography contest added the visual aspect. The birds photographed were local birds doing what they do daily. Photographs, however, make us see them differently by putting them center stage rather than in the unnoticed backdrop.”

“Ibis Fest’s success is realized by the community’s greater appreciation for the local environment, from ibises to wildflowers” she concluded.

Paynter was joined on the 2010 festival planning committee by Randy Jones, Diane Butzin and Elysa Cooper. One of their toughest jobs was to judge nearly sixty photo contest entries. In 2009, I helped develop the photo contest for the inaugural festival. This year like last, I served as its facilitator...neither a participant nor judge.

Just think of me being like the public accounting firm for the Oscars...I received the images, enforced contest rules, protected the photographer’s anonymity, and presented the slide

show to the judges. As I watched the committee go through the process, pass after pass, I realized I had the less stressful job. The entries, twice the 2009 number, were that good!

The contest was open to all amateur and professional photographers of the Carolinas for photos taken in North Carolina after January 1, 2008. There were two divisions...adult and youth (under 18). Each division was further subdivided into two sections: birds and sustainable uses of our waterfront that may be carried forward in to the future. This structure yielded four first place winners and four second place winners.

Images were framed and given to the winners after being exhibited for all to see. Oh, did I mention the four first place winners received \$100 gift certificates to Southeastern Camera? Let me also mention that the competition was so strong, the committee selected 24 honorable mention images that, with the other winners, were displayed via a looping slide show during the exhibits.

Nature photographer Chuck Carmack deserves many thanks for serving as an advisor to the committee and as judge. He enlarged and framed the winning images. By the way, Chuck was the grand prize winner in 2009. His award-winning image was incorporated into the festival's fantastic logo.

“Peek-a-Boo Gulls” by Bryjyt Jones (age 10), taken at Ft. Fisher, shows a wonderful use of late afternoon light...wonderful enough to win first place in the youth division for birds.

Jones, a student at Parsley Elementary School in Wilmington, has been into photography for two years and is hooked forever. She began by attending Cape Fear Camera Club meetings with her grandparents, Mark and Bonnie Jones, both very accomplished photographers. To fuel the flame, family trips to places such as California have provided wonderful nature experiences like watching Sea Otters and California Condors.

Seventeen year old Jessica Player won first place in the waterfront category for youth with a beautiful photo of the sun setting over the docks at Southport's waterfront.

“Snowy Shrimper” by Anne Pendred, first place winner for the adult division in the waterfront category, was taken on our February 13th snow day. Pendred is a charter member of the Coastal Carolina Camera Club (CCCC) and one of seven club members who participated in this year's contest.

Pendred is certified by the Photographic Society of America (PSA) in image analysis. Her previous photo awards include publication in the WECT 2007 calendar, PSA honorable mention, and winning several levels of awards in Brunswick County's photo contest. Pendred has also participated in judging photo shows around the Lower Cape Fear and has developed the program “Getting Ready for Competitions” for the CCCC.

“Striker Fly Gazing” by Terrah Hewett won first place in the adult division for bird images. She has won several local awards, placing in the 2009 Brunswick County nature photography contest; however, she is relatively new to competition and does not use powerful image editing software. She just happens to be a natural!

“I’m so passionate about my photography and all the birds, for others to see what I’m trying to capture is so rewarding” said Hewett. Starting Monday, May 17, her photos will be featured at the Sunset Market Place in Calabash.

The dragonflies that Striker is watching may not end up as lunch but as bait for something bigger. According to Cornell’s Lab of Ornithology, Green Herons “are among the few tool-using birds, fabricating various baits that entice fish to where the herons can grab them.” Hewett has seen Striker use dragonflies for bait!

In addition to the contest, the festival’s photography thread featured professional nature photographer Mark Buckler, Director of the Pine Island Audubon Sanctuary. He taught a photography workshop for kids plus “Photographing the Working Waterfront” for all.

Thanks to the many others not specifically mentioned above for their participation and help “nurturing” this fledgling of a photo contest...and for that matter the festival itself! You photographers have learned from Buckler’s photography workshops and from studying the works of others. It’s time to start now planning for those award-winning shots for Ibis Fest 2011!

Last and certainly not least, Ibis Fest thanks Trinity United Methodist Church for providing facilities for the photo contest and exhibits plus all of the presentations and workshops.

John Ennis



“Striker” (a Green Heron) by Terrah Hewett sometimes catches dragonflies and uses them for fish bait.



Anne Pendred photographed her “Snowy Shrimper” in Calabash during our snow day last February