



[ACE for Wildlife™ Network Photo Contest](#)

Calling all zoos, aquariums, and conservation organizations across the Advancing Conservation through Empathy for Wildlife Network! We're excited to launch our second **ACE for Wildlife Network Empathy Photo Contest**, and we want you to share what empathy in action looks like at your organization. This contest is an opportunity to showcase your unique perspective on empathy between animals and people, and how it plays a role in conservation.

How It Works: The contest opens **July 1st 2025** and closes **October 31st 2025**. Participants can choose which category they would like to submit their photo to. The categories and respective photo criteria can be found below:

Category I: Animal portraits

Photos in this category should have the following qualities:

- a. The animal is the main subject
- b. Animals should be front-facing, or side facing

Example:



“Cortez, with his striking appearance and gentle nature, bridges the gap between humans and wildlife at the Edmonton Valley Zoo. His captivating look draws visitors in, but it’s his unique personality that creates lasting connections. As part of our educational raptor talk, Cortez shows us that empathy is a powerful tool for conservation, inspiring guests to take action in protecting endangered species.” -Kelley Polowy, Edmonton Valley Zoo

Category II: Animal behavior and personality

Photos in this category should include any of the following features:

- a. The animal’s personality or story is conveyed (you may add a caption in the submission for context)
- b. The image should showcase animal's facial or body expression
- c. The animal's unique behavior is captured

Example:

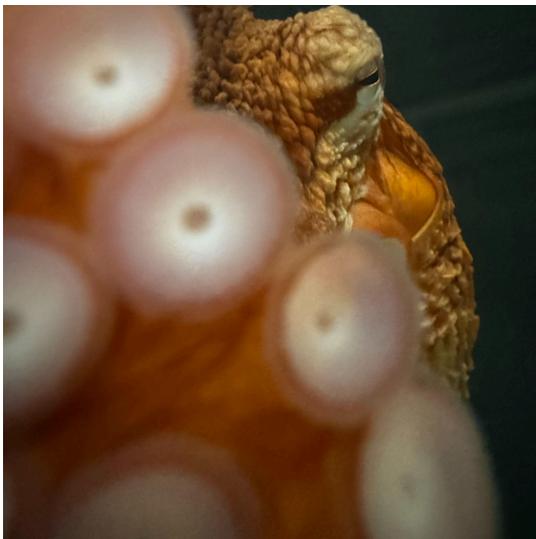


“This Picture was taken a couple days after our chick, Calypso hatched. Periwinkle, the blue crane immediately started to brood with her, but Calypso wanted to poke her head out and see the world.” -Luke Johnson, International Crane Foundation

Category III: Storytelling

Photos in this category can do any of the following:

- Depict a visible bond between animals, or between a person and an animal—this could be through touch, eye contact, parallel body language, or other cues of connection
- Capture moments of empathy or care: Highlight scenes where care is being shown to an animal (e.g., medical treatment, enrichment, or comfort), especially if it reflects a shared experience someone could relate to
- Include themes of diversity, equity, accessibility, or inclusion (DEAI) - Photos that celebrate inclusive experiences—such as guests of all abilities engaging with exhibits, multilingual signage helping someone connect, or staff from diverse backgrounds participating in animal care



“Ducky is a young Giant Pacific Octopus (around 2.5 years old) who has quite the personality. He charms everyone who encounters him, from his keepers to staff members who have the chance to meet him, as well as the many guests who have come in and out of our research theater for our Octopus Experience. Ducky loves to interact with our aquarists, pouncing the glass when they arrive, as seen in the picture, playing peekaboo with his arms over his eyes.” -Abrianna Lance, Alaska SeaLife Center

Your photos will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- How well does this photo showcase empathy
- How well does this meet the criteria in each category
- Quality and impression of the photo/ composition

Photo Guidelines:

- For each category, we will determine winners for each of the following taxa:
 - Reptiles and amphibians
 - Terrestrial invertebrates
 - Mammals (terrestrial and marine)
 - Birds
 - Marine invertebrates and fish
- You can submit up to three photos (one for each category).
- Photo dimensions should roughly be the following sizes:
 - **Square:** 1080 x 1080 pixels (1:1 aspect ratio)
 - **Landscape:** 1920 x 1080 px pixels (16:9 aspect ratio)
 - **Portrait:** 1080 x 1920 pixels (9:16 aspect ratio)
- Format: **JPEG or PNG**
- Images must be your own, taken within the last five years at a zoo, aquarium, or other conservation organization, and not submitted during the 2024 Empathy Photo Contest.
- **No AI-generated images** or heavily altered photos.
- Your submission must include your name, organization, and title of the photo
- Your photos must include a short caption, and a description of your photo. Please include animal names when known. We encourage you to tell a short story about your submission if information is available.
- Anyone who is in the ACE for Wildlife Network is eligible to submit photos.
- You do NOT need to be a professional photographer to participate!

Submission & Prizes:

- All winning photos will be:
 - Displayed on the ACE for Wildlife Network website, a newsletter article and future Network publications
 - Showcased at the 2026 ACE for Wildlife Network virtual Summit
 - Winners will receive a small prize

Submit your photos by **October 31st, 2025** through this [link](#).

For questions, feel free to reach out to empathy@zoo.org.

We can't wait to see how you capture empathy in action!