

RULES 2026

PRESENTATION

MedFoto is a photography competition aimed at promoting photography that depicts the marine world as realistically as possible. Images should capture the Mediterranean Sea and its immediate surroundings, taken with respect for people, animals, plants, and the natural environment.

Photographs should be innovative and inspiring, with a perspective that documents marine diversity and human interaction with the marine world.

1. REGISTRATION

Organizers: The event is organized by the Club Nàutic l'Escala and the Alive Fund with the goal of raising awareness of the natural values of the marine environment and its benefits for humanity.

Participation: Registration for the competition is open to both amateur and professional photographers of any nationality, except for persons involved in its organization, jury members, and their immediate family.

All participants are subject to these rules.

Registration will be open from April 1 to May 15, 2026, on the website: www.medfoto.org. The registration fee is €15 per participant, allowing the submission of up to fifteen photographic entries in any of the categories.

All communication with the organization must be done via email at info@medfoto.org

The organization will communicate with the general public through the website www.medfoto.org. All information regarding the competition, awards, etc., will be made public there. Only finalists and winners will receive private communications.

2. CATEGORIES

The photographic subjects of the competition are the Mediterranean Sea and its coastline. Photographs taken in other geographic areas will not be accepted.

Each participant may submit a maximum of fifteen photographic entries (either single images or photo stories), distributed across any of the following categories:

1. **Landscape:** Photographs showing coastal landscapes of the Mediterranean above the water surface. From the shore to the open sea; from general views to specific environmental details; from wild locations to humanized areas and coastal towns. Always portraying the place with a photographic spirit, playing with the subject, light, and composition.
2. **Wildlife:** Wild fauna and flora photographed in their natural environment above the water surface: seabirds, cetaceans at the surface, Mediterranean coastal flora and fauna, etc. Both aesthetic portraits and images capturing interesting behaviors are welcome.
3. **Sports and Leisure:** Water sports (sailing, rowing, kayaking, water skiing, swimming, etc.), capturing their difficulty, skill, spectacle, or the pleasure of practicing them. Also, leisure activities around the marine and coastal environment.
4. **Maritime Professions:** Professional activities of people whose work takes place at sea, such as fishermen, sailors, and others.
5. **Underwater:** Photographs taken below the water surface: fish and other animals, plants and vegetation, underwater landscapes, underwater activities, etc.
6. **Conservation and Climate Change:** Management of marine and coastal natural resources, environmental issues and their solutions, effects of climate change.
7. **Popular:** Award for the best photograph captured directly in JPEG format using cameras that do not provide an original RAW file, such as some mobile phones, compact cameras, action cameras, or drones. Also, photographs taken with analog cameras for which only a digitized JPEG file is available. The theme of photographs in this category is limited to the subjects of the previous categories.
8. **Photo Story:** A photographic proposal consisting of six (6) photographs on a Mediterranean-related theme. In addition to photographic quality, the story's interest and narrative treatment will be evaluated. For registration purposes, each six-photo story counts as one of the fifteen submissions a participant may present.

2. PRESENTACIÓ DE LES FOTOGRAFIES

Deadlines: Participants have until May 15, 2026, at 23:59 CET to register and upload up to fifteen photographic submissions to www.medfoto.org.

Formats: Photographs captured with digital or film cameras must be submitted in digital JPEG format with a minimum acceptable resolution of 2,500 pixels.

EXIF camera data must remain intact.

Photographs must have been originally captured in RAW format or on photographic film, except in the “Popular” category. RAW DNG format is only accepted if it is the original format of the camera used (Pentax, Ricoh, Leica, DJI, some mobile phones...).

The organization may request these original RAW files for a set of pre-selected photographs chosen by the jury to verify authenticity. If the original photograph is film, the original negative or slide will be requested. In this case, shipping and return costs via registered mail or courier will be borne by the author.

This request for the original file or photograph does not imply that the photograph is a finalist or award-winning.

Processing: Basic photographic development adjustments are accepted: exposure corrections, white balance adjustments, contrast or saturation adjustments, noise reduction, sharpening, dust spot removal on the sensor, etc. Black and white photos, HDR, panoramic, and focus-stacked images composed of multiple shots taken at the same time depicting a real situation are also accepted.

Reframing of the original photograph is allowed, as long as the resulting image has no less than 2,500 pixels on its longest side. Upscaling the original photograph using interpolation or software such as Topaz Gigapixel AI, Photo AI, Adobe Photoshop, etc., is not allowed.

Photomontages (except HDR, panoramas, and focus stacking mentioned above), double exposures, or manipulations/alterations of the original image, such as removing, moving, or adding elements (person, animal, object, branch, debris, floating particles, bubbles, or underwater reflections), are not allowed. Borders, watermarks, or signatures may not be added.

At MedFoto we aim to show and value the reality of our world. Therefore, images created with artificial intelligence (AI tools such as Midjourney, StableDiffusion, Adobe Firefly, ChatGPT, etc.), or photographs where AI has been used to add/remove elements or expand the original frame, such as

Generative Fill or Generative Expand in Adobe Photoshop, Luminar Neo, Canva, or similar, are not accepted.

Ethical Code: Plants and animals must be photographed with respect, without causing harm or undue disturbance, following the AEFONA ethical code.

In categories 2 Wildlife and 5 Underwater, photographs of captive, domestic, stuffed animals or cultivated plants are not accepted.

<https://www.aefona.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/decalogo-etico-v2021-09.pdf>

In categories 2 Wildlife and 5 Underwater, photographs of captive, domestic, stuffed animals, or cultivated plants are not accepted.

4. AWARDS

- **Absolute Award:** MedFoto 2026 Photography Award, €1,000, for the best photograph of the 2026 edition.
- **Category Awards:** Best photograph in each category – 8 awards for each of the eight categories, €300 each.
- **Special Awards – 4 prizes:**
 - **Costa Brava Award:** Photograph within the geographic limits of the Costa Brava (between Blanes and Portbou), prize includes a weekend in a bungalow at Camping la Ballena Alegre for 4 people.
 - **L'Escala Award:** Photograph within the geographic limits of L'Escala municipality. Prize includes an experience in L'Escala for two people, including one night hotel stay with breakfast, one lunch or dinner, and a visit to the Anchovy and Salt Museum or Alfolí de la Sal – L'Escala Museum.
 - **Comic Nature Award:** Photograph in the “Wildlife” or “Underwater” categories that is funny or unusual. Prize includes a gift basket of Empordà products, one night hotel stay, and a one-year subscription to the Association of Friends of the Wetlands and Natural Heritage of Empordà.

Photographs competing for geographically limited awards will be evaluated preferentially if they include recognizable elements from the area.

In addition to awarded photographs, the jury will select a set of photographs and stories for inclusion in the exhibition.

The same photograph may not be submitted to multiple categories or compete for more than one award, except for special awards. Prize amounts are subject to applicable taxes.

5. JURY AND VERDICT

The jury consists of six experts in photography and the marine environment: photographers Adriana Olsina (ESP), David Salcedo (ESP), Laura Carrau (ESP), Oriol Alamany (ESP), Ugo Mellone (ITA), Xavier Salvador (ESP), and Marc Casanovas, the MedFoto 2025 winner.

The jury reserves the right to change a photograph's category if deemed appropriate, disqualify any image not complying with the rules, and declare any award void if the submitted works do not meet the minimum quality standards.

The verdict will be made public on July 24, 2026, during the awards ceremony. The jury's decision is final.

The organization reserves the right to interpret these rules and modify any aspect if deemed necessary. Rules are published in multiple languages, but in case of doubt, the Catalan version prevails.

6. CALENDARI DEL CERTAMEN 2026

The awards ceremony and exhibition opening will take place on July 24, 2026, at 19:00 at Club Nàutic l'Escala. On the same day, an exhibition of selected best photographs will open, running until August 15, 2026, at Club Nàutic l'Escala.

- **April 1:** Opening of registrations and submission of photographs
- **May 15:** Deadline for photograph submission
- **May 16:** Jury begins selection work

- **May 30 – June 5:** Request for RAW files or original negatives/slides for verification
- **June 15:** Final jury meeting and verdict
- **June 16:** High-resolution file submission by finalist authors, if applicable
- **From June 17:** Public announcement of finalists and publication on the contest Instagram account
- **July 24, 19:00:** Awards ceremony and exhibition opening at Club Nàutic l'Escala
- **August 15:** Closing of the official 2026 exhibition

7. DRETS DE PROPIETAT INTEL.LECTUAL

Participants declare that they are the sole copyright holders of the submitted photographs and are responsible for any claims related to image rights of persons or properties appearing in their photographs.

By participating in the MedFoto photography competition, the authors of finalist photographs grant Alive Fund and Club Nàutic l'Escala a non-exclusive right to reproduce, publish, exhibit, and communicate to the public, by any means, the selected photographs for the exhibition, as well as for promotional and dissemination purposes always related to the competition, crediting the author.

For any other use outside the scope of the competition or by third parties, the organization will contact the author to agree on usage conditions.

RECOMMENDED COMPETITION::

