

AEFONA - ETHICAL DECALOGUE

Respect for nature must prevail over any activity carried out in the natural environment. This ethical code is the declaration of basic principles for the practice of our activity established by AEFONA in order to urge all its partners and followers to assume it as a personal commitment. As members of the Spanish Association of Nature Photographers (AEFONA), we must maintain the highest ethical standards in various fields of activity, with the aim of being an example of integrity and behavior, especially for new generations of photographers.

1. The nature photographer must faithfully reflect natural situations and avoid suffering, disturbance or interference in the behavior of living beings, with the main motto that the subject's safety must prevail over obtaining an image. In the case of photographing animal species in captivity, temporarily deprived of liberty, managed or cultivated, in the case of plants, you must specify it.
2. Knowledge dampens impacts. The nature photographer should not only learn the necessary techniques, but should strive to document and know the behavior, biology and requirements of the species. Seeking the support of experienced people and perfecting in this knowledge should be the vocation of every nature photographer.
3. We must set an example with our attitudes. The photographer must obtain the relevant permits, especially in the case of protected species, and know the regulations of natural spaces, especially in protected areas where our activity takes place. It is also advisable to collaborate with the local nursery.
4. The respect and conservation of the integrity of the landscape and its heritage values (archaeological heritage, geological formations, mineral elements, etc.) must prevail over the practice of photography. Any irreversible alteration or manipulation will be avoided. We must not leave any type of waste in nature. Plants are also living beings, which deserve all our consideration. It is always better to separate or hold branches, than to cut or pluck them, even if they are common species. Life is as valuable in rare species as in common species. The hiding of hiding places and observatories must be done with dry branches, straw bales, inorganic materials ...
5. A specific disturbance to avoid is excessive proximity to the subject, which produces stress, intimidation, activity modifications and, above all, habituation to human presence. The use of sound claims with bird songs is especially discouraged in breeding season, due to the negative impact it has on the birdlife. The experienced photographer must learn to recognize the signs of stress and avoid them.
6. Special attention must be paid to the circumstances in which living beings may be more vulnerable, such as during nesting, plumage change or unfavorable weather conditions. Photography of birds in their nests is discouraged. The alteration of the environment of a nest and the visible presence of the photographer or his team can draw the attention of other people or predators on the subject and should be avoided.

7. It is not advisable to feed wildlife for photographic activities, since it can create significant alterations in individuals and populations, introduce diseases and cause accidents or unnatural behaviors. The use of animals used as live baits, with their limited escape capacity, is a practice considered unethical and must be informed by the author in the image.

8. It is not advisable to extract specimens from their habitat or move them from the place or circumstances in which they are to take pictures in another clear place or, even in study or terrarium, since stress occurs, the animal is endangered and Furthermore, the natural circumstances in which he lives are not properly documented.

9. The special centers where animal species are kept in captivity have precise regulations for visitors that we must know and comply with. Some initiatives prioritize economic activity over its inherent educational function or animal welfare; if we go to them we are promoting their exploitation. In the case of living beings, the author must express clearly in what conditions and context he obtained the image and if it comes from animals in captivity or with their freedom restricted in some way.

10. The position of nature photographers, of respect and non-interference in any manifestation of nature, must be argued and should be disseminated through our tools: reports, exhibitions, audiovisual ... In case of any infraction or undesirable situation, including actions outside the current legislation that other photographers could perform, we must inform the authorities.

These are our generic recommendations for our associates and the official position of AEFONA regarding the ethical issues of our work in nature.