



Coming Full Circle - Having Your Avian and Macro Too

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Back in the "old days" when NPN hit first hit the 'net, a small group of nature photographers with diverse photographic interests all shared a common image critique gallery. We had bird photos posted side-by-side with macro, fauna, flora and all other types of nature photography. For all of us, it was quite an experience to see such a wide array of excellent photography in one place. And of course, no one could deny the "family feel" of the small-group dynamics.

It didn't take long for the word to get out about NPN and our single image critique forum to overflow with activity. Bird photographers flocked in by the scores and before we knew it, *naturephotographers.net* was becoming known (in jest) as *birdphotographers.net*. It soon became apparent that unless you were on NPN 24/7, many excellent images were being pushed into the back pages of the single forum and into oblivion. The Achilles heal of the single-forum approach had been revealed.

After some discussion and debate, the single image critique forum was divided into multiple galleries based on genre. A single gallery was dedicated to the avian photographers, who had accounted for well over 75% of the single-forum's postings, with six additional galleries dedicated to macro, fauna & flora, earth, sea & sky, man & nature, scenic, and underwater. While the avian gallery was still very busy, those interested in other kinds of nature photography could enjoy the image critique galleries on a more leisurely basis without fear of missing a photo or comment.

But with the division of the single forum came the inevitable division of the single group of photographers who had made the original forum so successful. To a large degree, the dynamics of "genre interaction" was missing - no longer could the beautiful landscape image or the amazing macro shot be seen in the same place as the stunning avian image. Bird photographers rarely ventured out of the avian gallery, macro shooters rarely from the macro gallery, and so on. Soon, the family feel of the original single forum was all but lost.

This, of course, was not by design. The fact that the NPN image critique galleries were being operated on a commercially-available, one-size-fits-all bulletin board system was at the root of the problem. While we came up with a system to host images using a separate upload script, the board itself offered a lot of what we didn't need and not enough of what we did need. Most importantly, it gave viewers no option to view all posts and all comments from all galleries in the old single-forum format. The option of "hacking" the board was deemed a poor investment, and something that would not achieve our goals of functionality and quality of presentation.

Thus in September of 2003, it was decided to cut our losses and free ourselves of the limitations of the commercially available "canned" bulletin board systems. NPN made the sizeable financial commitment to develop its own, fully custom and configurable image critique software that would address the shortcomings we had struggled with for so long.

View All Galleries

Along with a myriad of improvements including thumbnails, a streamlined image upload process, and the viewing of thumbnails by specific photographer as a single gallery, one of the most significant features to be (re)introduced in the new software is the [View All Galleries](#) option. Just like the good old days, nature images of all types can be found in a single forum. And to top it all off, the View All Galleries thumbnail presentation offers a visual

Forum Index

Image Critique Galleries

[View All Galleries](#)

[Avian](#) | [Earth, Sea & Sky](#) | [Fauna](#)
[Flora](#) | [Macro/Close-up](#)
[Man & Nature](#) | [Photo Art](#)
[Weekly Challenge](#) | [Editor's Picks](#)
[Photo Series](#) | [Staff Showcase](#)
[TPN Photo Critique](#) | [TPN Editor's Picks](#)
[Posting Guidelines](#) | [Forum Help](#)

Discussion Forums

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Regional Group Forums

[Colorado](#) | [Central States](#)
[Florida](#) | [Mid Atlantic](#)
[Midwest](#) | [Northern California](#)
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The **View All Galleries** forum can be accessed via the Forum Index menu (shown above) in the NPN image critique galleries, and via the [Site Map](#) which can be accessed with the link in the upper right corner of the page.

smorgasbord of beautiful landscape images, amazing macro shots, stunning avian images, and nature photos of all kinds in side-by-side, single-forum glory. You can have your favorite nature photography genre on a separate dish, or have *it all* on one plate as a mouth-watering mix.

And once again, only on NPN!

Jim - NPN 0001

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