

Using Photos for Your Chalk Art

A quick guide to copyright for artists of all ages · May 1–17, 2026 · Endangered Species Day: May 15

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Because this contest has **prize money**, there is one important first step when using a photo or drawing as inspiration: **find out if it has a free use, public domain, or Creative Commons license — then follow the rules for that license below.**

1 You used a public domain or free-use photo

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Creative Commons — only these 3 are OK for a prize contest:

- ✓ **CC0** — No restrictions. Copy freely!
- ✓ **CC BY** — Copy freely. Give credit to photographer.
- ✓ **CC BY-SA** — Copy freely. Give credit. Share your art freely too.
- **BY-NC, BY-ND, BY-NC-ND, BY-NC-SA** — study only, don't copy. See box 2.
- ✓ See page 2 for full list with QR codes!

2 Don't know who owns it — or it's a restricted CC license

STUDY IT, THEN DRAW YOUR OWN

Includes: **any photo with unknown copyright**, and CC photos labeled **BY-NC, BY-ND, BY-NC-ND, or BY-NC-SA** — those restrict commercial use or copying.

- ✓ Use the photo to see what the animal looks like
- ✓ The more you change, the better — different pose, different background, different scene
- ✓ Add your own style and imagination
- ✗ Don't copy it exactly — draw it in your own way!

■ What does "copying exactly" mean for chalk art?

Imagine putting your chalk drawing next to the original photo. If someone could say "**you just re-drew that photo line for line**" — that's copying exactly. But if you looked at a photo of a manatee to understand its shape, then drew **your own manatee** swimming through colorful seagrass you invented — that's **your original art!** The best chalk art always comes from making it your own.










Contest: endangered.org/chalk-art-event

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Copyright: copyright.gov/what-is-copyright


■ Free Wildlife & Plant Photo Sources

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 <p>Audubon Birds of America www.audubon.org/art/birds-of-america</p>	 <p>Biodiversity Heritage Library www.biodiversitylibrary.org</p>	 <p>iNaturalist (CC-licensed photos) www.inaturalist.org</p>
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■ Contest & Reference Links

Scan to enter the contest, access the free photo guide, or look up copyright and Creative Commons information.

 <p>Contest Details & Entry Form www.endangered.org/endangered-species-chalk-art-event/</p>	 <p>List of Free Photo Sources phas-wsd.org/celebrate-nature-through-art/</p>	 <p>T&E; Species Lists — Federal, State, Tribal phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/Claude_TE-_species_lists_reference.pdf</p>
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