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Setting it straight: Photo manipulated

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The Sacramento Bee published a photograph taken during the Galt Winter Bird Festival of a snowy egret grabbing for a frog just caught by a great egret. This week we learned the photograph had been digitally altered by the photographer in violation of our standards. While the original photo did show that same snowy egret grabbing for the frog from the great egret, the photographer merged in a different image of the great egret, in which the frog was more visible. As a result, the published photo included duplicated images of the plants.

The Bee's ethics policy strictly forbids such manipulation of documentary photographs. It is considered a violation of our core values, as it misrepresents the accuracy of the event. When we alter a photograph for illustrative purposes, we disclose that at the time of publication.

The photographer has been suspended pending investigation.

The Bee regrets the publication of this photograph and apologizes to our readers.



The original unpublished photograph taken at the Galt Winter Bird Festival on Saturday showing a snowy egret grabbing for a frog just caught by a great egret.



In this photograph, taken moments later, the frog is more visible in the beak of the great egret.



This image is a composite of the first two photographs.