There are a flow of basic steps to take when opening and rendering a photo in Photoshop. Some steps here do not necessarily apply to all photos and some more steps might be needed for others. The sequence of steps are most important.
Also remember that should you wish to enter wildlife/nature images into any PSSA recognised salon (unless otherwise stated in salon guide and except for removing dust spots) no moving of pixels are allowed separately, ie. cloning, distortion, etc. Rotation is allowed.

The steps are taken from a photo that had no previous manipulation done to it in Lightroom or any other RAW converter.
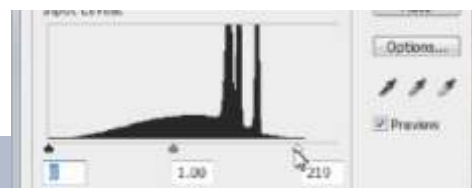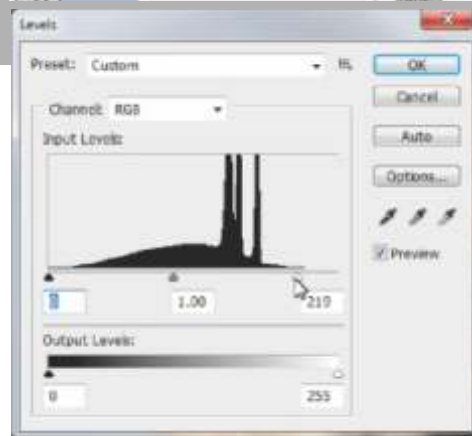
step ① Level it

Once photo is opened go to **Image>Adjustments> Levels...** a fly out menu will appear.
Move the side arrow/arrows to where the first indication of the graph appears, in this case the white side (right) was re-adjusted) the left side was left alone since the graph started on the edge, also, with the wild dog I will need to keep as much 'dark' information as possible. You will visually see the changes on your photo, with a good screen you can move the sliders while eye-balling the photo. Make sure that detail is preserved in light and dark areas.
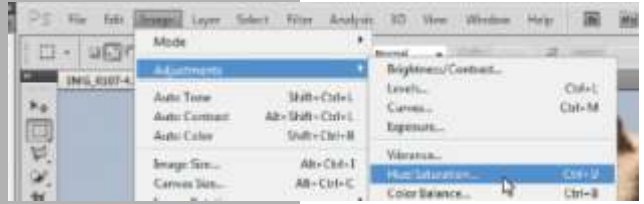Click **OK**.
You can now return to the graph to see if graph runs through full spectrum.
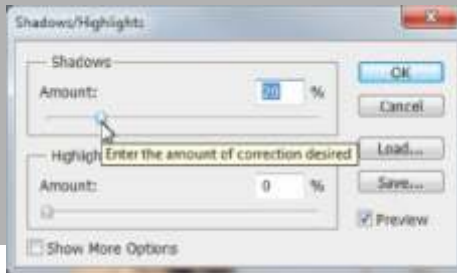
step ② Colour it

Go to **Image>Adjustments> Hue/Saturation...** a fly out menu will appear.
Move the slider on the Saturation bar while eye-balling the photo, do not over saturate since this would cause clipping and loss of detail.
Different manufacturers and different light conditions will affect the amount that you would saturate your photo.
In this photo -25 seemed good.
Click **OK**.

step ③ Balance it

Go to **Image>Adjustments> Shadows/Highlights...** a fly out menu will appear.
Move the slider on the Shadows bar while eye-balling the photo, do not over use since photo might become 'flat'.
For this photo 20% seemed good.
In some photos you might want to use the Highlight bar to darken light areas.
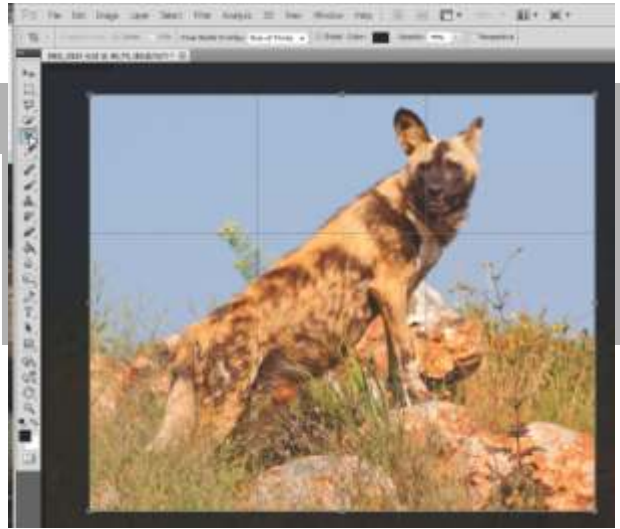Click **OK**.

Before   After

step 4 — Crop it

Select **Crop tool** in toolbox on left and crop to desired size by dragging tool across photo.
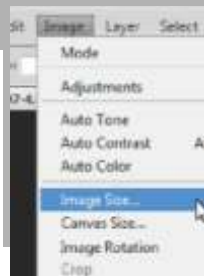
Crop can be re-adjusted by shifting squares on edge of crop area.

Remember that an image bank does not favour 'tight' crops since they often need head-space and more for copy around photo.

Press *enter* on keyboard.

step 5 — Resize and Sharpen

Go to **Image>Image Size...** a fly out menu will appear. Select desired size for image with **Scale Styles**, **Constrain Properties** and **Resample Image** at bottom ticked.

A most important step, should you reduce image size is to choose **Bicubic Sharper** at bottom drop-down menu of fly-out.

Click **OK**.

Further **Smart Sharpening** (Filter>Sharpen>Smart Sharpen...) can be done after resize. Sharpening is always the very last step when editing a photo. **Never over sharpen.** Save, only save as JPG if you are not going to do any further editing.