

Nikon Capture NX "How To..." Series

Article 33 - How to enhance contrast using the Auto Levels feature.

Purpose: To easily enhance contrast in an image (make it more dynamic), using the "Auto Levels" feature.

Before: An image that is dull and lifeless with insufficient brightness.



After: Contrast is enhanced to make the image more dynamic with optimum brightness.

Process:

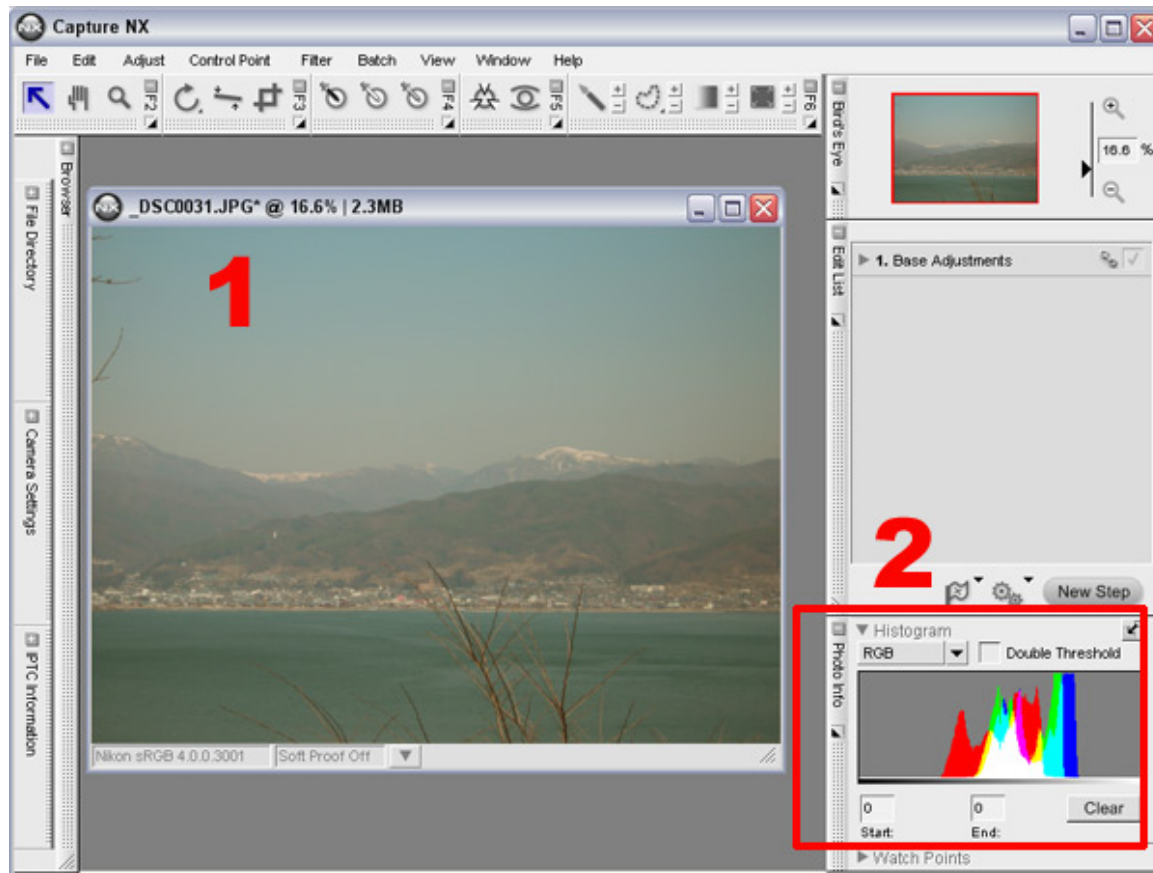
Step 1 - Check image contrast levels.

Step 2 - Use "Autolevels" to automatically enhance the image.

Step 3 - Use "Auto-levels" to manually enhance the image.

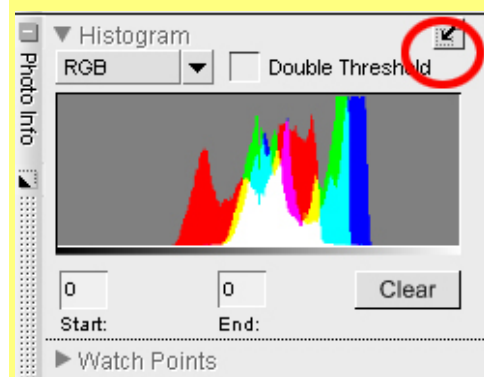
Step 1 - Check image contrast levels.

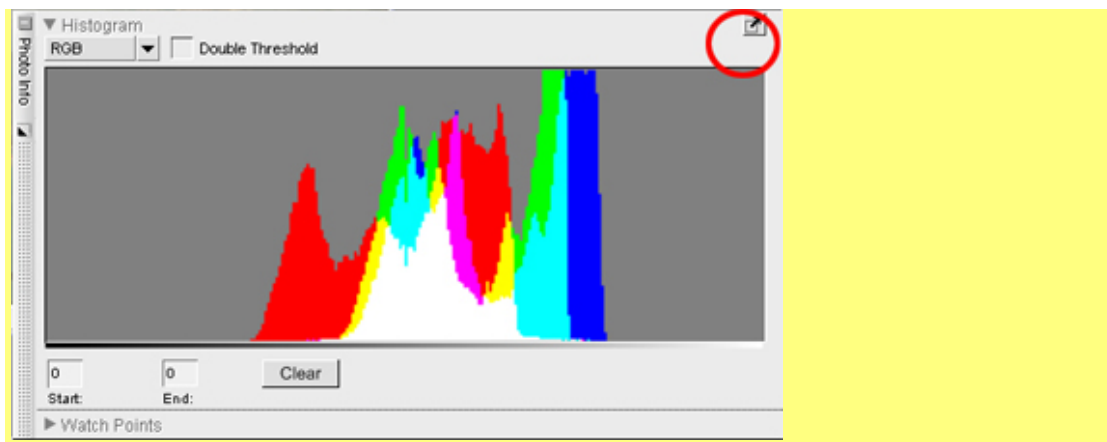
- 1) Open an image.
- 2) Check the histogram. In general, the spikes on histograms for low-contrast images (those that are rather dull and lifeless) are concentrated in the center of the histogram, indicating insufficient



Enlarging the histogram:

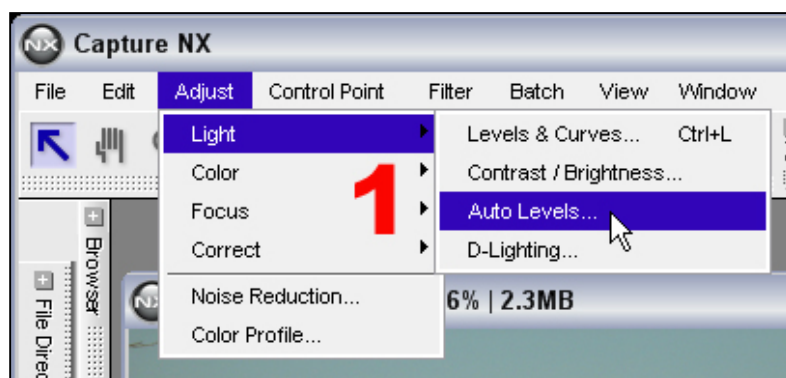
With Capture NX Ver.1.1, the histogram can be enlarged. Click the button at the top right of the Photo Info palette to enlarge histogram display. Click the same button again to return display to normal size.





Step 2 - Use "Auto levels" to automatically enhance the image.

1) Select "Auto Levels..." from the "Light" submenu in the "Adjust" menu.

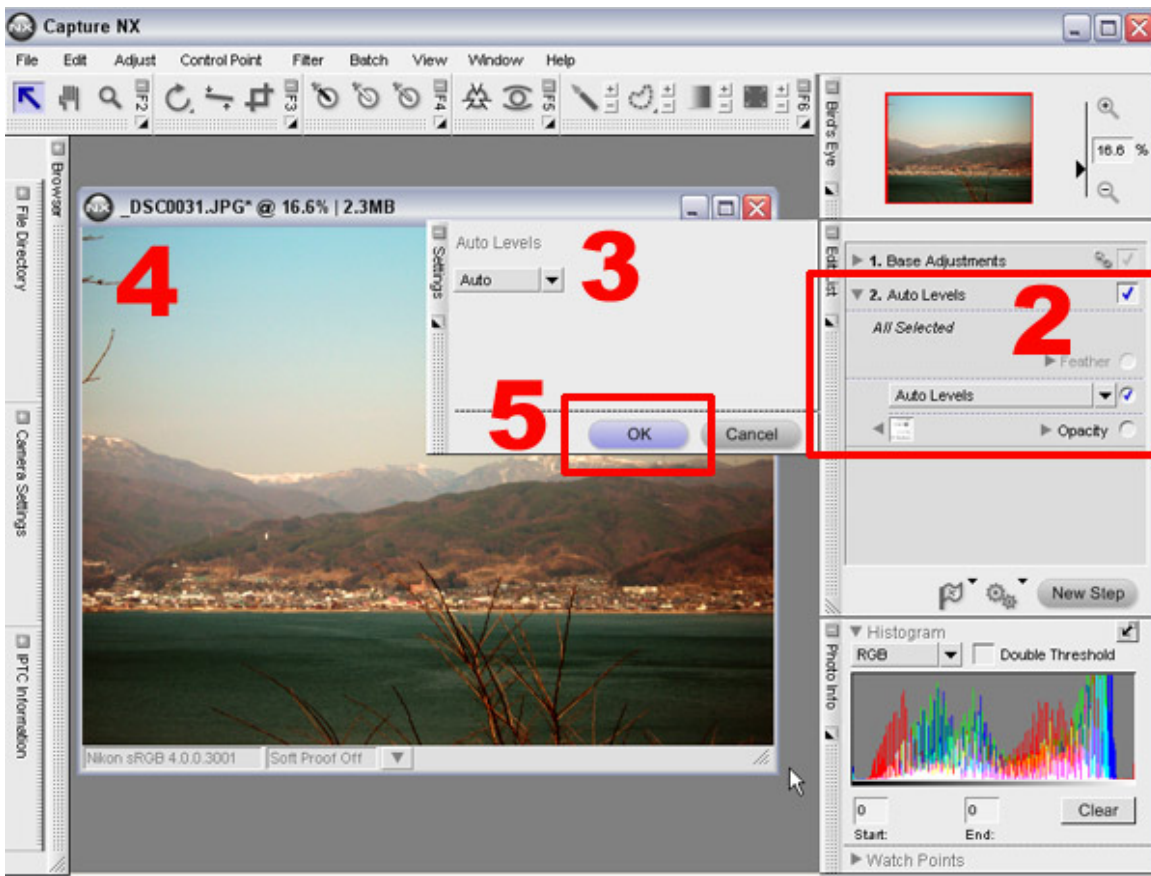


2) An "Auto Levels" step is added to the "Edit List".

3) The "Auto Levels" dialog is displayed.

4) The image is enhanced with "Auto Levels".

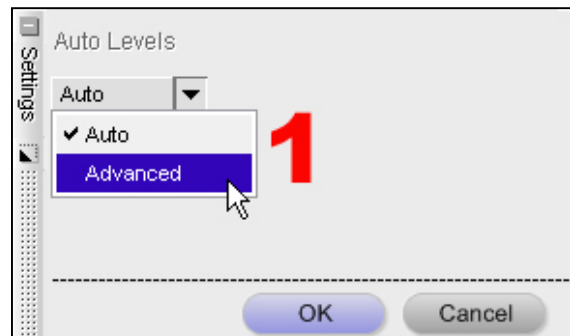
5) If satisfied with the result of automatic enhancement, click "OK". If automatic enhancement does not result in satisfactory contrast or hues, proceed to Step 3.

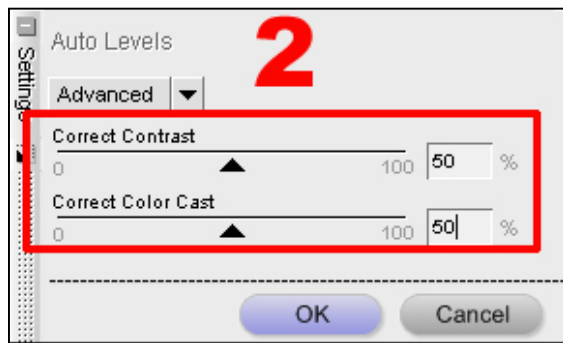


Step 3 - Use Auto Levels to manually enhance the image.

More natural contrast levels and hues can be achieved as required with Auto Levels enhancement.

- 1) Select "Advanced" from the "Auto Levels" pulldown menu.
- 2) Advanced enhancement options are displayed.
- 3) Adjust the "Correct Contrast" and "Correct Color Cast" sliders to achieve preferred contrast levels and hues.
- 4) Image contrast levels and hues are modified to reflect "Correct Contrast" and "Correct Color Cast" adjustments (here we have set "Correct Contrast" to 45% and "Correct Color Cast" to 20%).
- 5) Click "OK".
- 6) Look at the histogram again to verify that spikes cover a broader shadow-to-highlight (left to right) range on the histogram.





With initial display of "Advanced Options",
"Correct Contrast" and "Correct Color Cast"
are set to 50%.

