Sharpen by halo maps.atn – User manual

General purpose

This is a simple sharpen action based on Photoshop's Unsharp Mask filter. However, it does one thing very well: separate the dark and light halos that the USM filter produces, while leaving other pixels alone. This enables effective fine-tuning of the sharpening effect.

Layer structure

The action creates a group "Sharpen halo maps" consisting of two layers.

- *Dark halos* – the darkening-only part of a (rather strong) unsharp mask application
- *Light halos* – the lightening-only part of a (less strong) unsharp mask application

The settings for the light halos are weaker because light halos tend to be more offensive than dark ones. Both layers get 50% opacity by default, allowing for both increasing and decreasing the effect.

Compatibility

The action works in any Photoshop version, except maybe the very oldest ones.

Limitations, drawbacks and pitfalls

- The action makes a fixed choice of amount, radius and threshold. For most images, these are fine. However, if different values are required, manual processing is necessary.
- The action only works in RGB and CMYK.
- Beware of increased noise in high-ISO images.

Gerald Bakker, December 2017