

Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2013**November 29, 2013 to April 6, 2014***On loan from the Natural History Museum, London*

Media images available by contacting: Sandra Hudson sandra@goodrelations.ca or 250-216-1380 or Royal BC Museum Media Inquiries news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca or 250-387-3207

1

The flight path**WINNER: The Eric Hosking Portfolio Award**
© Connor Stefanison, Canada

Connor's photography draws on the wilderness skills he acquired over a childhood spent largely outdoors. This female barred owl had a territory near his home in Burnaby, British Columbia. He watched her for some time, familiarizing himself with her flight paths until he knew her well enough to set up the shot. 'I wanted to include the western red cedar and the sword ferns so typical of this Pacific coastal rainforest.' Setting up his camera near one of the owl's favourite perches, linked to a remote and three off-camera flashes, diffused and on low settings, he put a dead mouse on a platform above the camera and waited for the swoop that he knew would come. 'She grabbed the mouse, flew back to her perch and began calling to her mate. It is one of the most exciting calls to hear in the wild.'



Canon EOS 5D Mark II + 16-35mm f2.8 lens at 16mm; 1/13 sec at f8; ISO 1600; Canon 580 EXII flash + Canon 580 EX flash + Canon 430 EX II flash; Vello FreeWave Plus wireless remote shutter; tripod.

4

Lucky pounce**WINNER: The Eric Hosking Portfolio Award**
© Connor Stefanison, Canada

'Anticipating the pounce – that was the hardest part,' says Connor, who had come to Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, USA, in search of wildlife as much as the spectacular landscape. He had found this fox, his first ever, on his last day in the park. It was so absorbed in hunting that Connor had plenty of time to get out of the car and settle behind a rock. It quartered the grassland, back and forth, and then started staring intently at a patch of ground, giving Connor just enough warning of the action to come. When it sprung up, Connor got his shot. And when it landed, the fox got his mouse.



Canon EOS-1D Mark IV + 500mm f4 lens at 500mm; 1/2500 sec at f8; ISO 500.

24

Oil spoils

RUNNER-UP: The World in Our Hands Award

© Garth Lenz, Canada

To portray the sheer scale of the Alberta tar sands in Canada, Garth took to the skies. 'One of the biggest challenges', he says, 'was directing the pilot to position the plane precisely for the optimal composition. Multiple passes were required to get the positioning just right.' Garth's aim was for the public to see his pictures and grasp the scale of the devastation. This scene is just a small



section of one of five huge tar-sand mines in the region. Tar sand is a mix of clay, sand, water and bitumen – a heavy, viscous oil, which needs refining. To extract the bitumen, wilderness areas the size of small countries have been replaced with toxic lakes, open-pit mines, refineries and pipelines. Huge quantities of oil (more than two trillion barrels) are locked up in tar sands and offer a viable way to cope with the world's energy needs, but at a huge cost. Putting aside the massive loss of wildland and the water pollution issues, tar sands are considered to be the most carbon-intensive form of energy, and as former-NASA-climatologist James Hansen has stated, if the tar sands are fully tapped it will be 'essentially game over' for any hope of establishing a stable climate.

Nikon D3 + 24-70mm f2.8 lens; 1/800 sec at f6.3; ISO 800.

35

Essence of elephants

GRAND TITLE WINNER: 2013 Wildlife Photographer of the Year

© Greg du Toit, South Africa

Ever since he first picked up a camera, Greg has photographed African elephants. 'For many years,' he says, 'I've wanted to create an image that captures their special energy and the state of consciousness that I sense when I'm with them. This image comes closest to doing that.' The shot was taken at a waterhole in Botswana's Northern Tuli Game Reserve, from a hide (a sunken freight container) that



provided a ground-level view. Greg chose to use a slow shutter speed to create the atmosphere he was after and try 'to depict these gentle giants in an almost ghostly way.' He used a wide-angle lens tilted up to emphasize the size of whatever elephant entered the foreground, and chose a narrow aperture to create a large depth of field so that any elephants in the background would also be in focus. Greg had hoped the elephants would turn up before dawn, but they arrived after the sun was up. To emphasize the 'mysterious nature' of these 'enigmatic subjects', he attached a polarizing filter and set his white balance to a cool temperature. The element of luck that added the final touch to his preparation was the baby elephant, which raced past the hide, so close that Greg could have touched her. The slow shutter speed conveyed the motion, and a short burst of flash at the end of the exposure froze a fleeting bit of detail.

Nikon D3s + 16-35mm f4 lens + polarising filter; 1/30 sec at f22; ISO 800; Nikon SB-900 flash + SC28 remote cord; mini-tripod; Nikon cable-release.

Travelling companions

COMMENDED: Animal Portraits

© Douglas Seifert, USA

Swimming in front of this dugong in the Red Sea are juvenile golden trevallies, riding the pressure waves created by its nose. They use the great mammal as protection from predators and also feed on any small creatures it disturbs. The dugong is a tranquil animal, and it used to be an easy target for hunters – its closest modern relative, Steller's sea cow, was hunted to extinction in the eighteenth century. These days, it's more at risk from the loss of its seagrass habitat and from encounters with boats and fishing nets. Though dugongs are slow-moving, this simple portrait required a certain amount of physical exertion, as Douglas, wearing full scuba gear, had to position himself ahead of the dugong, while not letting bubbles spoil the simple scene or scare the animal. 'I had pre-conceived this image,' says Douglas, 'and knew when the shutter clicked that I'd captured the intimate portrait I was after.'

Canon EOS 5D Mark II + 16-35mm f2.8 lens; 1/200 sec at f11; ISO 640; Seacam housing; two INON z-220 strobes.



Ice aurora

RUNNER-UP: Wildscapes

© Ellen Anon, USA

The plan was to drive out to photograph the northern lights over the icebergs in Jökulsárlón, Iceland. But when she arrived, the sky was thick with cloud. 'Not expecting anything extraordinary, I set up close to the car, which was not an ideal location,' says Ellen. So when the clouds suddenly parted, revealing a breathtaking aurora borealis, she grabbed her gear and ran, stumbling in the dark, down to the water's edge. 'I was lucky,' she says. 'The aurora kept swirling, and I had time to set up again.' Lying on her stomach at the edge of the icy water, she used an extreme wide-angle lens to capture the reflection, and placed a lens cloth in front of part of the lens, then slowly raised it, to balance the exposure of the sky against the reflection (the magic-cloth technique). 'It was quite a challenge to force myself to think about the technical details while I was, in fact, feeling overwhelmed by the intensity of the display,' she says. 'This was my favourite image – the swirl of the clouds complementing the unusual colours in the aurora, all mirrored in the lagoon.'

Canon EOS 5D Mark III + 14mm f2.8 II lens; 36.2 sec at f3.5; ISO 1600; Gitzo GT2531 tripod + Really Right Stuff ballhead.

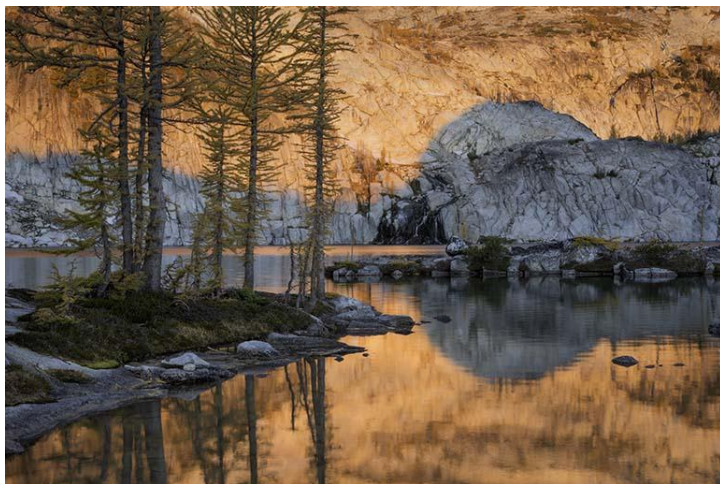


74

The enchantment

SPECIALLY COMMENDED: Wildscapes
© Adam Gibbs, United Kingdom/Canada

At first, Adam was bothered by the broad strap of shadow on the shoreline opposite. He had hiked to the Enchantments, an area of lakes and tarns in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness in Washington, USA, and had set up camp for a few days. The plan was to photograph the waterfall at the far end of the lake in sunshine. Adam knew he would probably be able to find another, shadow-free viewpoint the next day, but while thinking about moving, the beauty of the overall scene dawned on him. 'The dots of autumn colour of the clumps of Alpine larch and the warm glow of the reflected light on the side of the cliff was sublime,' says Adam. 'So instead of wishing the shadow away, I realised it was a key element of the composition.'



Nikon D800 + 24-120mm f4 lens at 50mm; 1/3 sec at f16; ISO 100.

93

Mother's little headful

GRAND TITLE WINNER: 2013 Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year

© Udayan Rao Pawar, India

One night, Udayan camped near a nesting colony of gharials on the banks of the Chambal River – two groups of them, each with more than 100 hatchlings. Before daybreak, he crept down and hid behind rocks beside the babies. 'I could hear them making little grunting sounds,' says Udayan. 'Very soon a large female surfaced near the shore, checking on her charges. Some of the hatchlings swam to her and climbed onto her head. Perhaps it made them feel safe.' It turned out that she was the chief female of the group, looking after all the hatchlings. Though he saw a few more females and a male, they never came close. Gharials were once found in rivers all over the Indian subcontinent. Today, just 200 or so breeding adults remain in just 2 per cent of the former range. 'The Chambal River is the gharials' last stronghold,' says Udayan, 'but is threatened by illegal sand-mining and fishing.'



Canon EOS 550D + 100-400mm lens; 1/400 sec at f13; ISO 1600.