

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2011

The world's most prestigious wildlife photography exhibition returns to the Australian Museum this summer with 108 of the world's best wildlife images on display from 10 December 2011.

The international competition attracted almost 41,000 entries from 95 countries this year.

Revealing nature photography in its purest form, the competition combines the work of talented young photographers and gifted amateurs with leading lights of the profession from around the

globe. The resulting photographic collection celebrates the beauty and magnificence of the world in which we live, as well as acting as a stark reminder of the fragility of nature.

The competition is owned by the Natural History Museum, London and *BBC Wildlife Magazine*.

Where : **Australian Museum**

6 College Street
Sydney NSW 2010 Australia

When: 10 December 2011 – 18 March 2012

Cost: Free with general Museum entry



Tiny warm-up
**By Cyril Ruoso,
France**

Folded up into a fur-ball, this youngster is warming its extremities in between bouts of play and feeding. He is part of a band of about 70 or so Qinling golden snub-nosed monkeys living high up in China's Qinling Mountains, surviving on lichen, leaves, bark and buds. 'If mother is not around to cuddle up to, then sitting like this is the best way to keep warm in the extreme winter cold,' says Cyril. Sitting apart from its mother also makes such a little

monkey vulnerable to attack by goshawks or golden eagles. The species is endangered, and this subspecies probably numbers no more than about 4,000. The total population of all races of golden snub-nosed monkeys is only 8,000–20,000.

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III + 400mm f2.8 lens; 1/200 sec at f2.8; ISO 400.

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Snow kings

By Ole Jørgen Liodden,
Norway

The blizzards came about every 15 minutes. 'There would be a break in the wind, perhaps a ray of sun, then wham, another flurry of snow would hit,' says Ole. Not that this took him by surprise: it was his fourth trip to Antarctica, so he knew what to expect and the atmosphere he was looking for. This group of about 15 king penguins were heading back from fishing and up the beach to their colony on South Georgia to feed their chicks. Ole crouched down in the driving wind and waited for them. 'I used a comparatively slow shutter speed to catch the near-horizontal streaks of snow,' he says, as the penguins waddled by, taking no notice of him and pausing merely to shake the snow off their flippers.

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III + 24-70mm f2.8 lens; 1/320 sec at f11; ISO 400.



Forest fox

By Klaus Echle, Germany

The foxes that Klaus sees in the Black Forest near his home in Freiburg usually keep their distance, even though they are not hunted. One day he came across a vixen who seemed surprisingly relaxed in his presence. Gradually, they got to know each other. Klaus would make a point of going into that part of the wood on wet or misty days. 'The light is so special then,' he explains. 'Sometimes I wouldn't see the vixen for weeks. But when our paths did cross, she would tolerate my presence.' Gradually she allowed Klaus to follow her, often for long periods. Klaus says that his aim with this image was to create the impression of what it's like to be in the forest, to show how the fox was one with its environment.

Canon EOS 5D Mark II + EF 17-40mm f4 lens; 1/80 sec at f4; ISO 1000; tripod.



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Dawn stars

By Kah Kit Yoong , Australia

'Of the many beaches I have photographed in the world,' says Kah Kit, 'this one is my absolute favourite.' He had gone to Paparoa National Park, on New Zealand's South Island, with a particular composition in mind, drawn to the multicoloured rocks and stacks that make the coast so distinctive and hoping to photograph them lit up at dawn. But the blazing sunrise he had envisaged didn't happen. Instead, while exploring the beach as the tide went out, he found another source of colour. Set against the blue of the early morning light, the reef starfish almost glowed. 'A long exposure captured the swirl of an eddy in the rock pool, suggesting some primordial world from which these strange creatures had emerged.'

Canon EOS 5D Mark II + 16-35mm f2.8 lens; 4 sec at f13; polarizing filter + neutral-density graduated filter; ISO 100; Gitzo Explorer tripod.



Racket-tail in the rain

By Petr Simon, Czech Republic

Petr has become addicted to hummingbirds. One of his favourite species is the booted racket-tail – tiny, quick and a real challenge to photograph. He recently spent more than two weeks at a lodge in Ecuador watching hummingbirds, obsessed with getting the quintessential image. Each day, he watched the birds feeding, getting to know their routines – which bird feeders and flowers they visited and when. Muted light gave the best results, and this shot of a male booted racket-tail feeding at a bromeliad was taken in the late afternoon. Petr used flashes to highlight the bird's dazzling plumage and a fast shutter speed to slow its rapid wing-beat. The soft rain added a sparkling touch to the scene.

Nikon D3S + 400mm f2.8 lens; 1/800 sec at f5.6; ISO 3200; two Nikon SB-900 flash units.



Polar power

By Joe Bunni, France

After three days on a small boat looking for polar bears in Repulse Bay, Nunavut, Canada, Joe finally got lucky. 'We cruised at a distance, so we didn't disturb the bear. Then, once we were sure it was relaxed with our presence, I slipped quietly into the water with just a mask and fins, attached to the boat by a rope.' The polar bear now started to swim towards the boat, powering itself with its front legs, the toes of its huge paws spread wide. It didn't appear to notice Joe, and for 20 minutes he was able to take photographs from the water. But then the bear caught sight of its own reflection in the dome port and swam up to Joe. 'It's amazing when a huge, powerful animal comes beside you.' It came so close that its nose touched the housing, startling it. The second after Joseph took this shot, the bear reached out and touched the dome with its paw. Then it turned and swam away, leaving Joe with an unforgettable split-level image of a swimming polar bear – symbolic, he says, 'of the power and elegance of a wonderful creature struggling to survive in a fast-changing climate.'

Nikon D2X + 10.5mm f2.8 fisheye lens; 1/320 sec at f12; ISO 400; Aquatica housing.



Illusion

By Stefano Unterthiner, Italy

The winter gathering of whoopers on Lake Kussharo, on Hokkaido, Japan, was a picture of chaos. The swans were constantly standing up, sitting down, heading off, interacting and calling. 'I suddenly saw that this could be the key to a completely different kind of image – one that shows the rhythms of a flock's movements,' says Stefano. He started to imagine the group of swans as one, flowing over the ice, seen at different points in time and space, and he set out to create the illusion. The swan enters lower right, wanders around a bit, sits down a few times, and exits top right – a single shot of continuous time and motion.

Nikon D700 + 24-70mm lens; 1/320 sec at f16; ISO 1000.

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