Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2018 exhibition

Now in its fifty-fourth year, Wildlife Photographer of the Year showcases extraordinary animal behaviour and the breathtaking diversity of life on Earth.

Explore the world's best nature photography, exhibited on 100 exquisite light panels.

Experience the changing face of nature and uncover the surprising, and sometimes challenging, stories behind the photographs.

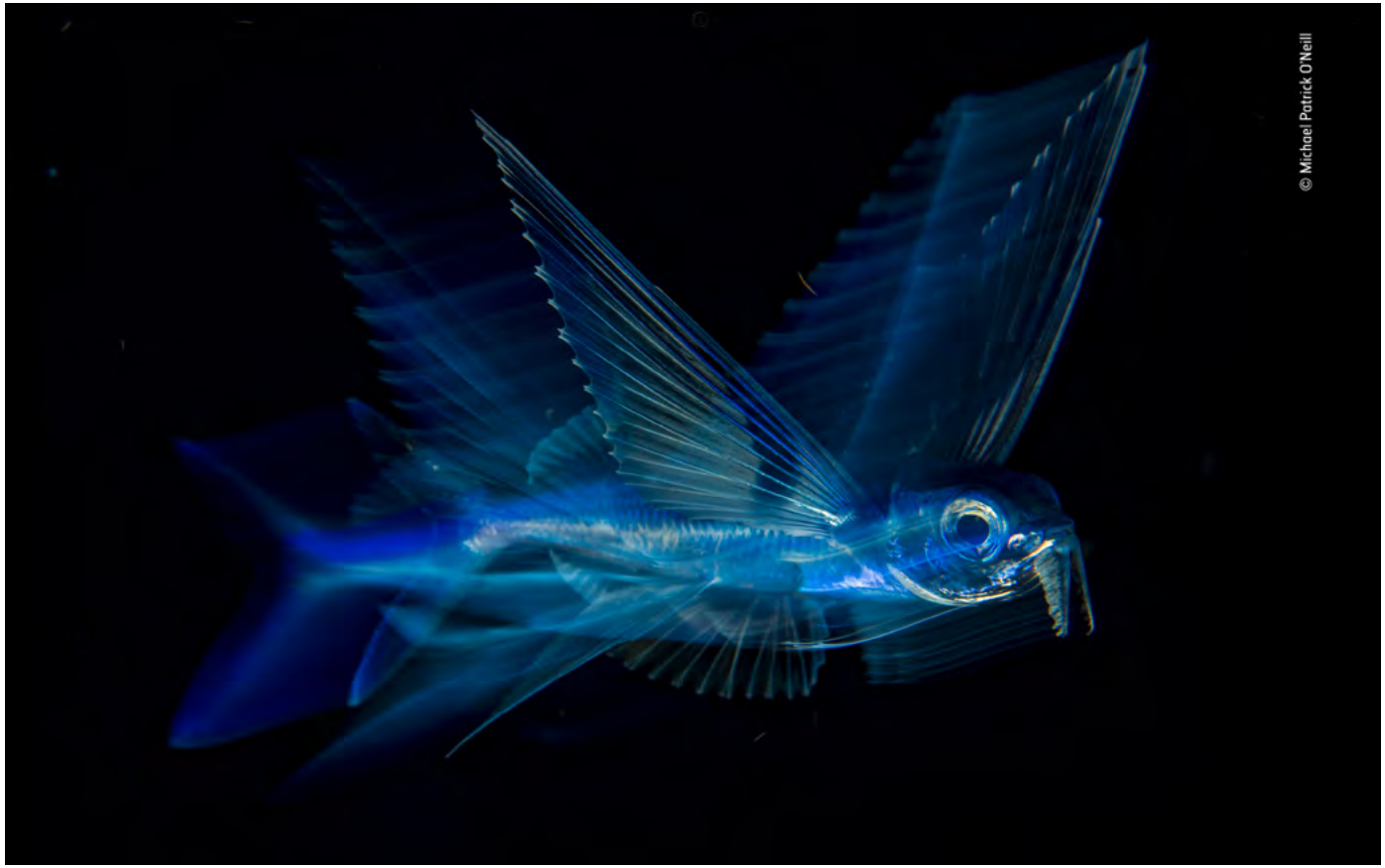
Chosen from over 45,000 entries by expert judges, the images were awarded for their creativity, originality and technical excellence.

19 October 2018 - 30 June 2019
South Kensington, London
Adult £13.50. Child £8. Concession £10.50
Family £28-£38

Free for Members, Patrons, children under four and disability personal assistants.

Advance booking is highly recommended for this exhibition.

www.nhm.ac.uk



Winner 2018 Under Water

Michael Patrick O'Neill, USA

Night Flight

Late one night, over deep water, Michael was following a flying fish. By day, they move extraordinarily fast, but at night they swim slowly just below the surface. He tried various shutter and flash settings, all the while keeping track of his small subject. 'I wanted to create a sense of movement,' he says.

By rapidly beating their forked tails, flying fish such as this juvenile propel themselves in the water until they take off at the surface. By holding their long, pointed pectoral fins out stiffly, they can glide in the air for several hundred metres, away from underwater predators.

Nikon D4 + 60mm f2.8 lens; 1/8 sec at f16; ISO 500; Aquatica housing; Two Inon Z-220 strobes

Michael is an award-winning photographer and author specialising in marine wildlife and environmental issues. For the last 25 years he has travelled extensively, photographing diverse aquatic animals and habitats and humanity's impact on them. His images have appeared in many publications including BBC Wildlife, National Geographic Magazine and The New York Times.

www.mpostock.com



Highly commended 2018 Under Water

Audun Rikardsen, Norway

Night Snack

Large numbers of herring were overwintering in the northern fjords, attracting hundreds of predators and night fishing boats. The killer whales had realised that the sound of nets being hauled up meant the possibility of an easy meal. Audun asked the fishermen to angle their strongest light into the water, to capture his shot.

Killer whales are the largest members of the dolphin family. Although one species, it's now thought there are several kinds living in different areas, using specific hunting strategies and social structures. This is a male eastern North Atlantic form, which is known to work together with other killer whales to herd fish into dense shoals.

Canon EOS 5D Mark IV + 14mm f2.8 lens; 1/80 sec at f2.8; ISO 1600; Aquatech housing

www.audunrikardsen.com



Highly commended 2018 Under Water

Shane Gross, Canada

Beneath the Blue

Shane had looked for the Bahama cavefish many times since his first encounter, and found this one in the cold, clear depths of the marine cavern known as the Sapphire Blue Hole. The pool was tricky to reach, especially with heavy kit'

The Bahama cavefish, as its name suggests, lives only in the Bahamas in a dozen or so inland blue holes and caves, connected below ground to the sea. It moves between upper fresh water and salt water deeper down, feeding on small invertebrates such as shrimp. Almost blind, it's rarely seen near the surface, living in the dark depths where it uses its sensory pores to navigate.

Nikon D500 + Tokina 10–17mm f3.5–4.5 lens at 11.5mm; 1/250 sec at f22; ISO 1000; Aquatica housing; Two Sea & Sea YS250 strobes

www.shanegross.com



Highly commended 2018 Animal Portraits

Tony Wu, USA

Looking for Love

Tony was on a mission – he wanted to capture an image that portrayed the 'unique expression and burning desire of a male in love'. His subject was the Asian sheepshead wrasse, a fish found near Sado Island. After years of planning, and amid torrential rain, he finally found an earnest suitor for his portrait. 'This,' he says, 'is the face of a fish looking for love'.

If there are no dominant males in the school of Asian sheepshead wrasse, larger, older female wrasse will change sex. The transformed fish will use its bulbous head, which turns red in the breeding season, to gain control over other males, attracting a harem of females in the process. It will then mate with these females dozens of times a day.

Nikon D800 + Sigma 15mm f2.8 lens; 1/200 sec at f11; ISO 200; Nauticam housing; Pro-One dome port; Two Nikon SB-910 flashes + custom Zillion housings

www.tony-wu.com



Highly commended 2018 Animal Portraits

Valter Bernardeschi, Italy

Mister Whiskers

Extending his camera ahead of him using two monopod poles and a float, Valter slipped into the icy water to photograph the walruses he had spotted from his dinghy. This caught the attention of some curious youngsters who began to swim towards him. Exhilarated by this peaceful encounter, Valter captured this intimate portrait from a pole's length away.

These walruses are likely to live for up to 40 years, spending their days trawling the seafloor, using their whiskers and muzzles to find and extract food. Their thick skin protects them from the cold as they forage mainly for molluscs, such as clams. In the Arctic water, blood flow to the surface of their skin is reduced to retain heat.

Sony ILCE-7RM2 + 28mm f2.8 lens + ultrawide converter; 1/800 sec at f8; ISO 1250; Nimar II housing; Nikonos remote control; Feisol monopod

www.ilmiocantolibero.com

Winner 2018 Behaviours
Amphibians and Reptiles

David Herasimtschuk, USA

Hellbent

Clamped in the jaws of a hungry hellbender salamander, things were not looking good for the northern water snake. But when its attacker repositioned its bite, the snake pushed free and escaped. David was thrilled to catch a battle between these two unlikely foes. 'I've seen hellbenders display an array of behaviours, but this was by far the most remarkable,' he says.

Hellbenders are the largest salamanders in the USA and are among the most endangered. Usually they hunt for small prey, such as crayfish, insects and eggs, so a northern water snake is an unexpected choice. These amphibians use suction to secure their prey before using their teeth – a method unlikely to subdue a wriggling snake.

Technical specification

Sony a7R II + 28mm f2 lens + Nauticam WWL-1 lens; 1/60 sec at f13; ISO 1250; Nauticam housing; Inon Z-240 strobe

David's passion lies in producing imagery that helps foster an appreciation for the life in rivers and streams. By working with the non-profit Freshwaters Illustrated, he is able to create images that have the power to capture the imagination and educate audiences about the importance of keeping their rivers clean and healthy.

www.freshwatersillustrated.org



