

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY

GRAND PRIZE

CAPE BUFFALO

Syncerus caffer

LAKE NAKURU NATIONAL PARK,
KENYA

BY FEDERICO VERONESI
NAIROBI, KENYA

The African buffalo is one of the “Big Five” mammals that were once hunted for food and sport. With its bulky build, massive horns, unpredictable nature, and running speeds up to 35 miles per hour it is considered highly dangerous to humans. The cape buffalo inhabits open woodland savanna and montane rainforest where there is abundant grass and drinking water. African buffalo are highly sociable animals that travel in large, imposing herds that may consist of more than one thousand individuals. During the dry season, males form bachelor groups of 3 to 4 males. Members fight each other to establish dominance hierarchy.

“I watched these bulls fighting for approximately three hours. The sky was overcast creating ideal conditions to photograph the huge creatures. To emphasize the texture of their skin and horns, I framed my shots from different angles and approaches. This tight composition is the image I prefer as it captures the power and the struggle of the confrontation.”—*FV*

Nikon D300; 600mm f/4 lens; 1/640 sec at f/4; ISO 200; car window mount; Manfrotto 503HDV head.

Federico Veronesi is a full time wildlife photographer and guide for safaris based in Kenya since 2002. Born in Milan, Italy, he first came to Kenya on a 20-day safari with his parents when he was six years old. He now has his own tent in the Maasai Mara National Reserve where he camps among the African wildlife. Throughout the year he accompanies small groups of photographers in the Masai Mara and other parks of Kenya and Northern Tanzania, sharing his passion for the wild animals and photography with his guests.



Laura Di Biagio

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER AFRICAN WILDLIFE

AFRICAN LION

Panthera leo

KGALAGADI TRANSFRONTIER PARK
KALAHARI DESERT, SOUTH AFRICA

BY LEE SLABBER
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

The “King of the Beasts” plays a critical role in African ecosystems. Many lions live outside of national parks and other protected areas, and to survive, predators must have room to roam and hunt without clashing with human communities. Most states in the East and Southern Africa support wildlife tourism; the presence of lions provides incentive for wild land conservation as it generates income for the management of parks and the surrounding communities.

“Spending time watching lions can be a test of one’s patience—they spend most daylight hours sleeping. But when there are cubs around, there is more action as they get into mischief. I had been following this pride in the Kalahari for a number of days, observing this one youngster always causing trouble—so I kept my focus on him. In this image, his father had been trying to sleep. The cub kept climbing over the adult’s head until the lion growled to warn the youngster to back off. In a moment of brave defiance, the youngster just glared back at the adult. I loved the display of intimacy.”—LS

Canon EOS-1D Mark III; 300mm f/2.8 lens; 1/1600 sec at f/3.2; ISO 500; bean bag.

Growing up in Cape Town, Lee Slabber became appreciative of his surroundings and the natural world from a very young age.



Laura Di Biagio

This led to a keen interest in the outdoors and wild animals. He turned to photography to document his many hours spent exploring the bush. His hobby has become an obsession; he now specializes in the photography of activities and behavior of the animals that try to survive in the harsh environment of the Kalahari Desert.

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER ANIMAL ANTICS

GRIZZLY BEAR CUB

Ursus arctos horribilis

Katmai National Park and Preserve,
Alaska, USA

By Andy Rouse
Cardiff, Wales, UK

The awe-inspiring grizzly bear is a symbol of the vast, spectacular wilderness of Katmai. The site of a powerful volcanic eruption in 1912, the nearly 5 million acres became a National Park and Preserve in 1980 to protect habitats for fish and wildlife, including the grizzly bear, also known as a silvertip or North American brown bear. During summer, the large predators gather along pristine waterways to feast on red salmon runs. Every other year, females produce one to four small offspring which weigh only about one pound. The protective sow cares for her young for up to two years, and is most dangerous if she thinks her cubs are threatened.

“I was sitting on a riverbank when a mother grizzly bear started fishing for salmon in a pool nearby. It was a wonderfully memorable experience as she trusted me enough to leave her precious cubs right next to me on the bank. The cubs were great fun and I managed to catch this one in mid-scratch. He looks like he is either having a bad day or playing peekaboo.”—AR

Nikon D300; 600mm f/4 lens; 1/640 sec at f/4; ISO 200; car window mount; Manfrotto 503HDV head.

Born in the heart of London, photographer Andy Rouse has worked a professional nature photographer since 1995. Spending



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several months each year away from home, he has developed a reputation for using unusual photo angles and using an “up close” perspective (with the advice of local experts and using his extensive knowledge of animal behaviour). Capturing fascinating and often potentially dangerous animals in their environment augments his passion for telling a story.

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER ART IN NATURE

GOBY ON SOFT CORAL

Pleurosicya boldinghi; Dendronephthya sp.

Pantar Island, Indonesia

By David Hall

Woodstock, New York, USA

This photograph was taken at a dive site called Beang Abang, a small bay located on Pantar Island located just west of Alor and 45 miles north of Timor. The tiny, volcanic island is part of the Lesser Sunda Island chain which runs from Bali to Timor. The surrounding reefs contain an amazing diversity of fish and corals, but remain largely unexplored.

“Soft corals and the animals that live with them are among my favorite photographic subjects. I spent quite a bit of time photographing this particular colony because of its unusual color palette. The colony hosted a subtly-colored commensal goby in its coral. The shy, inch-long fish darted around the soft coral, changing location every few seconds. I decided to prefocus my camera for the spot where I had briefly seen the fish entirely in the open and waited. Eventually it returned to the spot just long enough for me to quickly make two exposures before it left. In addition to the fish, at least two, verywell-camouflaged commensal ctenophores (or comb jellies) are clinging to the coral.”—DH

Canon EOS 5D in Subal housing; 100mm macro lens; 1/200 sec at f/20; ISO 200; Ikelite DS-51 strobes (2).

A professional photographer since 1980, David Hall was motivated initially by scientific curiosity and a love of animals. His photography quickly evolved to encompass aesthetic and environmental goals.

“It has been my hope that my fascination with, and respect for, all living things would show in my work and help to inspire similar feelings in others.”



Laura Di Biagio

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER BIRDS

ROSEATED SPOONBILLS

Platalea ajaja

Smith Oaks Rookery,
High Island, Texas, USA

By Michael Rosenbaum
Delray Beach, Florida, USA

A social bird, the spoonbill lives in large colonies with other wading birds. The feathers get their rosy pink color from eating crustaceans that feed on algae. Often found foraging in shallow water, the nearly 3-foot-tall bird swings its head sideways back and forth using its long, flat bill to sift up small fish, amphibians, shrimp, mollusks, snails, and insects. Thousands of spoonbills roost and nest at the Smith Oaks sanctuary off Texas' northeast coast. The area was impacted dramatically by Hurricane Ike in 2008, but is now recovering.

“I recently visited High Island for the first time and spent several mornings photographing spoonbills in overcast and foggy conditions. This photo captures a spoonbill coming in to land, being warned off by the bird already on the tree branch below. The soft colors and graceful lines of the composition make the behavior appear almost as a ‘kiss,’ yet the interaction is actually two birds engaged in combat.—MR

Canon EOS-1D Mark IV; 500mm lens; 1/3200 sec at f/4.5; ISO 800; hand-held.

Michael Rosenbaum lived in New York City before moving to Florida in 1991. This relocation inspired a love of nature, particularly bird life. Wanting to capture images of birds in flight, he began using an SLR camera, igniting a passion that changed his life. He now serves as a vice chairman of the Photographic Society of America's Nature Division, and devotes much of his time to nature photography.



Laura Di Biase

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER ENDANGERED SPECIES

PROBOSCIS MONKEYS

Nasalis larvatus

IUCN Status: Endangered
Labuk Bay Proboscis Monkey
Sanctuary, Borneo, Malaysia

By Michael Lambie
Kingston, Ontario, Canada

The dominant feature of this species is the male's large nose which is used as a resonating chamber amplifying the monkey's threatened call as it swings through through the forest canopy. On Borneo, the proboscis monkey's only home, the jungles are being stripped bare and replaced with palm oil plantations. The Labuk Bay Proboscis Monkey Sanctuary is located on private land which would have been turned into a plantation, if not for this eco-experiment where the property has been dedicated to the endangered species.

“Able to watch a number of proboscis monkey troops at Labuk Bay, I observed these two, small juveniles as it seemed they were being brought to heel after they had incurred the wrath of the adult male. Normally, the dominant males only behave in this type of display to other bachelor males, the competition.”—*ML*

Canon EOS-1D Mark III; EF 400mm f/4 DO IS USM with 1.4x tele-extender II; 1/400 sec at f/8; ISO 1250; Canon 580EX flash; Better Beamer flash extender; Gitzo 1228 tripod; Really Right Stuff BH-55 head.

Michael Lambie's passion for nature photography started almost 20 years ago with a visit to southern Africa. His wife had purchased an SLR camera for the trip, but when they arrived, he 'stole' her camera and never gave it back. Now through his photography he assists wildlife causes not only through donations, but also through making his own imagery available to conservation organizations for fundraising.



Laura Di Ruggio

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER LANDSCAPE

CIMA AMBRIZZOLA Dolomites National Park, Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy By Samuel Bitton Jongny, Switzerland

Taken from a spectacular wilderness area called Cinque Torri, this is a view of 8,907-foot Cima Ambrizzola (center) and 8,717-foot Punta Lasto de Formin (right). The Dolomites of northeastern Italy are renowned for the carbonate rock which creates the dramatic shapes and colors of the range. In August 2009, this natural paradise was declared a Natural World Heritage Site by UNESCO to protect the distinctive landscape's beauty, geology, vegetation, and fauna.

“Normally I shoot during early morning or sunset, but during the mid-afternoon on the day I made this image there was an interesting cloud pattern in the sky. I really loved the way the sun was softly lighting up some parts of the landscape and not others. The foliage and mountains were lit in such a way that revealed the delicate subtleties of their color and texture—creating a moody, watercolored effect.”—SB

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III; 24-105mm L IS lens at 35mm; 0.9 GND filter; 1/5 sec at f/16; ISO 50; Gitzo Mountaineer tripod; Acratech ballhead.

Samuel Bitton is a professional photographer based in Switzerland. One of his greatest desires is to share the natural splendors that surround us. Since discovering his passion for photography in 2001, Bitton leads workshops through the Swiss Alps and Jura mountains, but often shoots alone, far from commodities and often under tough weather conditions. Spending time observing nature with great attention has made him deeply aware of all the environmental problems, and he believes that his work could help in its protection.



Laura Di Biagio

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER OCEANS

BLUE SHARK

Prionace glauca

OFF FAIAL ISLAND,
AZORES, PORTUGAL

BY NUNO SÁ
AZORES, PORTUGAL

Found in deep temperate and tropical waters, the blue shark is the most abundant and widely distributed pelagic shark on the planet. However, with stocks of the traditional big fishes collapsing (especially tuna and swordfish) and reduced to about 10 percent of their historic population, and with the increased demand for shark fins, the blue shark has become the world's most frequently caught shark and the main species supplying the Asian shark fin trade. An estimated 10 to 20 million of these keystone predators is taken out of the ocean each year. There is concern about what the effect the removal of such an important predator might be having on the oceanic ecosystem.

“Diving into the blue, three miles off the coast of Faial Island, I watched the torpedo-shaped shadow rapidly approaching from deep dark waters. As it came closer, its long pectoral fins gave it a form that reminded me of a jet plane; it was a 10-foot-long blue shark.”—NS

Canon EOS 7D; Tokina 10-17mm lens at 10mm lens; f/9; 1/250 sec; ISO 640; Aquatica housing; Ikelite DS 160 Strobes (2).

Nuno Sá is an award-winning photographer born in Montreal, Canada. As a young student, a trip to the beautiful islands of the



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Azores made him give up on a career as a lawyer. He moved to these islands to pursue his dream of living near the sea and becoming a professional underwater photographer in 2004. Today, Sá is one of Portugal's most recognized wildlife photographers and is also on the “Wild Wonders of Europe” team of top European nature photographers.

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER PEOPLE IN NATURE

BODY BOARDER Noordhoek Beach

Table Mountain National Park,
Cape Town, South Africa
by Lee Slabber
Cape Town, South Africa

The Atlantic coastline of South Africa promises dazzling views, abundant marine life, and pristine beaches. The Hoek is at the base of a mountain at the end of one of Cape Town's most scenic, unspoiled beaches, and is part of Table Mountain National Park. The fine, pearl-white sand stretches for nearly five miles. Backed by protected wetlands, the surrounding area is fairly isolated, picturesque, and free of urban development. The Capes' widest beach is a perfect spot for walkers, joggers, anglers, kite flyers, horse-back riders, body boarders, and surfers.

"I captured this image of a body boarder performing an aerial maneuver at the Hoek beach near my home. Like anything you choose to photograph, knowing your subject helps in creating a great image—I spent many years body boarding when I was younger. The power of the wave, the color and flow of the water, and the precise timing of the bodyboarder's inverted air, made an image that clearly shows man's interaction with nature."—LS

Canon 1D Mark III; 600mm lens; 1/2000 sec at f/8; ISO 200; Manfrotto monopod.

From a young age Lee Slabber has been interested in sports, travel, and nature. Today these are his three favorite subjects to photograph. To capture the action and drama of extreme sports he visits the beaches of his native South Africa, as well as the shores of Indonesia. Slabber also spends time in the bush observing wildlife and leads photo safaris to some of Africa's most prolific wildlife destinations.



NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER PLANT LIFE

JAPANESE MAPLE TREE

Acer palmatum

OREGON, USA

BY PETER LIK

OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

RESIDES IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, USA

The Japanese maple is a relatively small, deciduous tree. Swedish doctor-botanist Carl Thunberg traveled in Japan in the 18th century and named the maple species “*palmatum*” after the hand-like shape of its leaf. Native to Japan, China, North and South Korea, Russia, and parts of Mongolia, the Japanese maple is a grown by gardeners all over the world for its leaf shapes, colors, and fine texture. The tree in this photograph is around 8-foot-tall and the branches reach out to around 10 feet.

“Standing beneath the canopy of this Japanese maple was an incredible feeling—I was in awe as the late afternoon light backlit the delicate leaves. Every branch told its own story, and I felt this special tree had so much to tell. As the sun sunk toward the horizon, the tree came to life with an incredible display of color, shape and texture—its rays burst into a star within the tree.” —PL

Phase One P65; 1/6 sec at f/16; Gitzo GS5121LVL tripod; Really Right Stuff head.

Peter Lik was born in Melbourne, Australia, to Czech immigrants. His parents' gift of a Kodak Brownie camera on his eighth birthday set young Peter's course. Self-taught, Lik worked hard at his craft before making a life-changing decision: to come to the U.S. in 1984. A chance meeting with photographer Allen Prier in Alaska became a defining moment in Lik's life. He was introduced to the medium format panoramic camera and given the advice “Go big or go home.” Lik did both.



Laura Di Biagio

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER POWER OF NATURE

WILDFIRE

FOURMILE CANYON

NEAR BOULDER, COLORADO, USA

BY DAVID BAHR

NEDERLAND, COLORADO, USA

The spark that ignited the Fourmile Canyon wildfire on September 6, 2010, is believed to be a combination of both natural and human causes. As tremendous winds raked the mountains, the surrounding dense, short trees provided “ladders” by which flames climbed and torched the higher branches of mature trees. Within minutes, the forest fire raged out of control. The blaze cut through more than 6,000 acres of land before it was finally contained. Badly burned soil has become water resistant, changing the watershed and making it difficult for vegetation to take hold. The lack of vegetation leads to erosion where floods of ash, dirt, and debris wash into local waterways. The recovery and regeneration of the burned area will be measured in the decades to come.

“This wildfire was the most destructive in Colorado history. Separated from the fire by a deep mountain canyon, my own home was spared, but from my vantage, I watched as the overwhelmed firefighters raced to avoid the wall of flames. At night, as captured in this photograph, the fire created an eerie red glow akin to a volcano spouting from the forest floor.”—DB

Canon EOS 5D Mark II; 500mm f/4L IS USM lens; 20 sec at f/11; ISO 400; Manfrotto 055CXPRO3 tripod; Manfrotto 322RC2 head.

David Bahr has enjoyed nature and photography since he was handed a 1970's vintage point-and-shoot as a child. He later migrated to a manual 35mm SLR which opened a new world of photographic possibilities. As chair of the Physics and Computational Science Department of Regis University in Denver, he also enjoys backpacking, backcountry skiing, and mountain climbing expeditions around the world.



Laura Di Biase

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY

WINNER SMALL WORLD

VINE SNAKE

Oxybelis fulgidus

Choco, Colombia

by Robin Moore
of Edinburgh, UK

Resides in Washington, DC

The vine snake is a slender, arboreal snake that can reach lengths of 6.5 feet and can range in color from bright green to rusty brown. It is slow moving, so it is dependent upon its camouflage for protection from predators. Found in the jungles of Central and South America, as well as Asia and India, this snake adapts by blending in well with the thick vegetation, often appearing to be just another vine.

“I was in the Choc scrambling through bushes and wading up streams in some of the most biodiverse forests in the world looking for anything scaly or slimy, when we came across this beautiful vine snake. I lay on my stomach to frame the shot when, as if on cue, a fly buzzed down and used the snake’s head as a landing pad. As soon as I had clicked the shutter, the fly departed. Some photographs come about through careful and diligent planning but this one was being in the right place at the right time.”—*RM*

Canon 5D Mark II; 100mm f/2.8 lens; UV filter; 1/200 sec at f/10; ISO 160; 580EX flash off camera (attached with cable); Lumiquest softbox; hand-held.

Born and raised in Edinburgh, Scotland, Robin Moore spent his childhood summers in the highlands, instilling a deep-rooted appreciation for all creatures great and small. Four years ago he purchased his first digital SLR to explore another passion: photography. Moore is now an internationally acclaimed photographer and conservationist, whose images paint a striking portrait of our relationship with the world around us.



Laura Di Ruggio

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER WILDLIFE

POLAR BEAR CUB

Ursus maritimus

BARENTS SEA, NORWAY

BY FLORIAN SCHULZ

WILHELMSDORF, GERMANY

The world's largest land-living carnivore measures 6 to 12 feet tall and weighs about 500 to 1300 pounds. Found only on ice-covered sea territories in the northern Arctic, polar bears depend on sea ice where they hunt their prey, mainly ringed and bearded seals. Today the polar bear is a species of great concern, threatened by the effects of climate change: reduced sea ice, delay in ice formation in the fall, and earlier ice melt in the spring. The bears must cope with a shortened hunting season and destruction of habitat; their migration patterns and access to denning areas has also been impacted. Reduced snow quality and a rise in the average annual temperature might also affect the bears' ability to build adequate dens.

“During an expedition to document Arctic wildlife I observed a polar bear family from a small, ice-going vessel. The mother bear and her cubs were living on pack ice far from land. Incredibly intelligent animals, young polar bears learn quickly through their inquisitive nature. This cub was intrigued by its reflection and was studying it with great interest.”—FS

Nikon D300; 600mm f/4 lens; 1/640 sec at f/4; ISO 200; car window mount; Manfrotto 503HDV head.

Florian Schulz is a professional nature photographer who has dedicated his life to capturing inspiring images of wildlife. Schulz uses photography to instill in viewers a greater interest in understanding the importance of protecting wild habitats. A native of Germany, Schulz spends up to ten months a year in the field, often joined by his wife, Emil Herrera Schulz. Together, the two produce multimedia presentations that delight audiences around the world.



NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

ROTHSCHILD'S GIRAFFE

Giraffa camelopardalis rothschildi

HOGLE ZOO, SALT LAKE CITY,
UTAH, USA

BY BARBARA VON HOFFMANN

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO, USA

The giraffe is the tallest animal on land; males can reach up to 19 feet tall and weigh nearly 3,000 pounds. The smaller females are usually ready to become pregnant in their fourth year. After a 15-month gestation, a calf begins life with a 5-foot drop—females give birth standing up! A newborn stands about 6 feet tall and can recognize its mother by her coat's distinct pattern. The deep brown spots and cream-colored legs of the Rothschild giraffe provide camouflage within its natural habitat—the dry, wooded savanna of east Africa.

“While waiting for my grandson to arrive at the Salt Lake City airport, I had six hours to spare. Knowing that Hogle Zoo was nearby, off I went—camera in tow. I spotted a giraffe with her one-week-old calf. It was heart-warming to witness the mother affectionately nestling her head into the arched neck of her newborn. Instead of being inconvenienced, I felt blessed to watch Mother Nature at her best.” —*BvH*

Nikon D300; 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6 VR lens; 1/320 sec at f/6.3; ISO 320; Manfrotto 441 carbon fiber tripod; Arca-Swiss Monoball head.

In 1970, Barbara von Hoffmann visited Africa on her first safari.



Eric Murphy

She was fortunate to travel in a group with well-known photographer, Freeman Patterson, who inspired her life-changing love for the art of photography. Von Hoffmann has returned to Africa twenty times since then and travels extensively to photograph wildlife in natural habitat. She is also an impassioned advocate and activist for endangered animals.

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY

YOUTH

PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

RED FOX

Vulpes vulpes

CASCADE MOUNTAINS,
WASHINGTON, USA

BY JESS FINDLAY, AGE 18
BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA,
CANADA

About the size of a small dog, the red fox is about 36 to 46 inches long and weighs from 8 to 15 pounds. The large, bushy tail is used to cover its nose and feet in cold weather, as well as for balance when hunting. Red foxes are omnivores but prefer to prey on rabbits, hares, voles and mice, and other small mammals. This highly adaptable species is found in habitats as diverse as tundra, desert, forest, and even urban areas. The red fox is the most widely distributed wild carnivore in the world, occurring in North America, Asia, Europe, and North Africa, and has been introduced in Australia.

“While exploring Washington state’s beautiful Cascade Mountains with fellow photographer Alex Mody, we came across upon a red fox. Even during the coldest snow storm, the fox can stay warm by curling up on open ground. Wrapped in his white-tipped tail, this fox’s cheeky expression made him look as if he had just been rudely wakened from his daytime nap.” —*JF*

Canon 50D; 400mm f/5.6 L lens; 1/500th sec at f/8; ISO 400; handheld?.

Jess Findlay is an 18-year-old student from Burnaby, just east of Vancouver in southwestern Canada. He has spent many childhood days birdwatching and hiking throughout the Pacific northwest wilderness with his family. Now, he is always accompanied by his camera. In hopes of capturing unique images that tell a story, Findlay uses his knowledge of the natural world to pursue his passion.



Laura Di Biagio