

# Clearwing butterfly wins BMC Ecology Image Competition 2018

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The overall winning image, by Marianne Elias (Institut de Systématique, Evolution, Biodiversité, CNRS, MNHN, Sorbonne Université, France) Credit: Marianne Elias (Institut de Systématique, Evolution, Biodiversité, CNRS,

MNHN, Sorbonne Université, France)

From bridges built by spiders, to marine mammals without table manners, and the unpredictability of volcanoes, the 2018 BMC Ecology Image Competition produced a terrific array of images that reflect the variety of research in progress in the field. All images are open access and available for use under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license.

The overall winning image by Marianne Elias, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, France is a photo of the clearwing butterfly *Hypomenitis enigma*. The picture was taken in the southern Andes of Ecuador, the butterfly's natural habitat. The species' unique wing transparency is caused by the particular shape of its wing scales (which look like hair), and the presence of tiny structures on the wing surface that act as anti-reflectors, increasing the amount of light transmitted through the wing.

Guest judge, Professor Zhigang Jiang of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said: "This photo does a fantastic job of showcasing the striking beauty of a rather enigmatic species little known to people, whose transparent wings still raise multiple questions regarding its evolution. Marianne Elias' entry not only shows the beauty often found in nature, but also highlights some of the research going on in the field of ecology in the biodiversity-rich tropics, making it a worthy winner of this year's competition".

The winner was chosen from more than 140 entries. There were two overall runners up and winners from five categories: Community, Population and Macroecology; Behavioral Ecology and Physiology; Conservation Ecology and Biodiversity; Landscape Ecology and Ecosystems; and the Editor's Pick.



Second runner-up in the BMC Ecology image Competition Credit: Matteo Santon, University of Tuebingen, Germany

The winning images and an additional six highly commended images highlight pressing issues in [ecology](#), from the important roles that species play in their environment, to the mutually beneficial relationships they form, and the need for conservation and recovery of threatened habitats. All images are released free to use under a Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY).

The Conservation Ecology and Biodiversity Research category winner called 'Little Treasure of the steppes', was captured by Pilar Oliva Vidal from University of Lleida, Spain, who also submitted one of the overall

runners up. It depicts a steppe bird in its [natural habitat](#), surrounded by bright red flowers.

Section editor Josef Settele, one of the judges, said: "We chose this picture because of the composition of colours, and because it highlights the importance of guaranteeing the conservation and recovery of habitats like steppes, and their species, through the appropriate management of human activities."



First runner up of the BMC Ecology Image Competition Credit: Pilar Oliva Vidal, University of Lleida, Spain

'Small Bridges', by Darko Davor Cotoras Viedma of the California

Academy of Sciences, USA, was this year's Editor's Pick. The image shows the highly specific web created by a *Wendilgarda galapagensis* spider. Unlike the familiar orb webs produced by other spiders, *W. galapagensis*, which is endemic to the remote Isla del Coco in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, spins webs that resemble hanging bridges.

Now in its sixth year, the *BMC Ecology* Image competition was created to give ecologists the chance to share their research and photographic skills, and celebrate the intersection of art and science.

Senior editor Alison Cuff said: "We were delighted at the variety and quality of the images submitted to the 2018 competition. Having the input of respected scientists as our judges ensures our winning images were picked as much for the scientific story behind them as for the technical quality and beauty of the images themselves. As such, the competition very much reflects BMC's ethos of innovation, curiosity and integrity. We thank all those who took part in this year's competition, and congratulate our winning photographers; we hope our readers and the public enjoy their work as much as we have."

**More information:** BMC ecology image competition 2018: the winning images, Cuff et al. *BMC Ecology* 2019, [DOI: 10.1186/s12898-019-0226-z](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12898-019-0226-z)

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