



The Fifth Annual Czech Nature Photo Was Won by Igor Mikula with His Photo of Blackbirds

The international jury of the Czech Nature Photo awarded Photo of the Year to photographer Igor Mikula for his photo, Common Blackbird. 267 authors competed in the contest with a total of 2,300 photos. A new addition to this year's contest was Czech Photo Junior for students of primary and secondary schools. A total of 227 contestants competed in this category, having submitted nearly one thousand photos in all. The award ceremony took place online on the social networks of Czech Photo on 10th May. From 11th May, the Czech Photo Centre gallery opened an exhibition consisting of nominees and other submissions for the Czech Press Photo contest.

"The culmination of the jury's work was the choice of photo of the year. It is fair to say the photo was not the absolute favourite to win the contest from the start. However, after careful consideration of all points of view, we came to a unanimous decision in the end. And so, photo of the year 2021 at the 5th Czech Nature Photo contest was a picture of a blackbird feeding its young in the nest. This local, one could say commonplace motif from Czech wildlife perfectly corresponds with the current complicated situation caused by the coronavirus pandemic, which influences all our opportunities and capabilities, including travelling and taking photographs. The author had an original vision of how to approach the photograph, then rendered it with technical precision and captured the right moment. The photo carries the message that powerful, emotive photographs can be found all around us," says the foreman of the jury, Vladimír Čech ml.

"For a long time I've been going to a remote village to the cottage of my friend Ondřej to watch animals. Every year, a pair of blackbirds makes a nest on the toilet windowsill. Last year was no exception. Since they are used to the presence of humans, I decided to document the life of this bird family. The photo shows a male bringing food to his offspring. The picture was taken using a remote trigger. I placed the camera near the windowsill and watched for a few hours to make sure its presence did not disturb the birds during feeding. The blackbirds ignored it completely and came with food at the same regular intervals. Knowing that, I hid near the toilet and as soon as the male returned with his catch, I took the photo. I'm confident the parents will bring up many future generations of their young in this unusual spot," describes Igor Mikula on the origin of the photo.

Igor Mikula was born in Piešťany in Slovakia. He's been focusing heavily on photographing nature since 2014. At that time, he first visited the mountain and lowland rainforest of Panama, which was central to his future work. For him, photographing animals and nature is a form of therapy which allows him to escape the pitfalls of everyday life and travel back to his carefree childhood years. The author has been the recipient of several awards in the Czech Nature Photo contest, as well as the title of Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year 2018, winning in the Animal Portrait category. He also placed highly in the International Nature Photography Competition 2019 in the Other Animals category, and was also nominated for the H+Z travellers' competition in 2019.

The expert international jury convened in the Czech Photo Centre gallery on 3rd March under the leadership of Vladimír Čech ml. He was joined in choosing winners by Israeli wildlife photographer Boaz Amidror, photographer Václav Šilha, director of the Šumava National Park Pavel Hubený, and Petr Tureček from the company Cewe.

The exhibition will be open from 11th May until 29th August every day except Mondays as per government decree. It will always be available Tuesday to Friday from 11 am to 6 pm, and on weekends from 10 am to 6 pm. The basic entrance fee is CZK 80 and the discounted fee is CZK 40. The gallery is located 100 metres from the Nové Butovice Metro station at Seydlerova 2835/4, Prague 5.

THE RESULTS OF CZECH NATURE PHOTO 2021:

Contest results:

MAMMALS:

- 1. place: Michal Stoklasa – Brothers**
- 2. place: Jan Pavlíček – Yellow-Necked Mouse**
- 3. place: Jan Pokluda – White Dark**

BIRDS:

- 1. place: Ondřej Nágel – Glutton**
- 2. place: Michal Stoklasa – Pavarotti**
- 3. place: Ondřej Nágel – Kestrel vs. Vole**

REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS AND UNDERWATER LIFE:

- 1. place: Petr Bambousek – Plumed Basilisk**
- 2. place: Martin Ertner – Colours of Autumn and Fire Salamander (Salamandra salamandra)**
- 3. place Radim Hlaváč – Frog and Mosquito**

INVERTEBRATES:

- 1. place: Petr Bambousek – Atta Ant**

2. place: Stanislav Macík – Eyes That Watch You
3. place: Vít Lukáš – Endangered King of the Oak Forest

PLANTS AND FUNGI:

1. place: Zdeněk Jakl – Lady's Slipper Orchid
2. place: Luboš Prchal – The Ore Mountain Loner
3. place: Vojtěch Herout – Advance Guard

LANDSCAPE:

1. place: Jiří Benda – Glacier Cave
2. place: Tomáš Frolec – Passo Giau #2
3. place: Daniel Franc – Pathway to Heaven

ANIMALS IN HUMAN CARE:

1. place: Vít Lukáš – Egg Control
2. place: Roman Jaroš – Spectator
3. place: Matyáš Slavík – Wolf Love

AWARD FOR THE BEST CZECH NATURE PHOTO:

1. place: Igor Mikula – Common Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)
2. place: Vít Lukáš – Under the Water, Above the Leaf
3. place: Igor Mikula – Rhinolophus

SERIES:

1. place: Martin Veselý, Mafra, a. s. – Closed Zoo
2. place: Zuzana and Matěj Dolinay – Viper Scales
3. place: Lukáš Veselý – Prominent Trees under the Night Sky

NATURE IN PRAGUE:

1. place: Martin Divíšek, EPA – Gull Feeding by Charles Bridge
2. place: Michaela Pupíková – Window...
3. place: Viktoriya Dobrobabenko – Winter Stroll

ANIMALS IN THEIR ENVIRONMENT:

1. place: Matej Ferenčík – Accompanied
2. place: Jan Stria – Sea Vacuum
3. place: Jiří Hřebíček – Stormy Sea

CZECH PHOTO JUNIOR 2021 NOMINEES:

Younger students' category:

1. place: Michal Vaicenbacher (7 years old) – Eurasian Nuthatch
2. place: Kryštof Červinka (10 years old) – Charles Bridge
3. place: Jana Andresová (10 years old) – Organ

Older students' category:

1. place: Adam Kőszegi (14 years old) – On the Hunt

2. place: Kristýna Coufalová (15 years old) – Gaze of the Frog – photo taken by the Vidlák pond in the sand quarry nature reserve
3. place: Eva Svrčková (14 years old) – Wasp Spider

Secondary school students' category:

1. place: Michal Vais (18 years old) – Time Bomb
2. place: Ondřej Labaš (17 years old) – In the Shadow of the Forest
3. place: Jana Chalupníková (18 years old) – There Are Paths We Don't See

The CZECH NATURE PHOTO 2021 contest and exhibition is organised by Czech Photo Centre



Ministerstvo životního prostředí

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