

# MEDIA IMAGES

Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2015  
December 4, 2015 to April 4, 2016

High-res images available on request from: [kwells@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca](mailto:kwells@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca)

All photos credited “[Photographer’s name]/Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2015”



A black bear looks in  
By Connor Stefanison  
Burnaby, Canada  
WINNER: Rising Star Portfolio Award

When Connor spotted bear droppings on the track leading to his camera trap, his heart fell. He was worried it had damaged the equipment he had set up to photograph spotted skunks. Relief at finding his gear intact turned to delight when he realised not only was there an image of a bear glossy with health, but it was also looking right into the camera. Black bears are highly intelligent and curious animals that frequently exhibit exploratory behaviours, so it's no surprise Connor's trap drew this one's attention. Although the majority of this night-forager's diet is vegetable-based, they are opportunist scavengers, so the tiny piece of meat Connor used as bait for skunks may have piqued its interest.

### A tale of two foxes

By Don Gutoski

Canada

WINNER: Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2015 Grand Title Winner

From a distance, Don could see that the red fox was chasing something across the snow. As he got closer, he realised the prey, now dead, was an Arctic fox. For three hours in temperatures of -30 degrees Don stayed at the scene, until the red fox, finally sated, picked up the eviscerated carcass and dragged it away to store for later. In the Canadian tundra, global warming is extending the range of red foxes northwards, where they increasingly cross paths with their smaller relatives, the Arctic fox. For Arctic foxes, red foxes now represent not just their main competitor – both hunt small animals such as lemmings – but also their main predator. Few actual kills by red foxes have been witnessed so far, but it is likely that conflicts between the two mammals will become more common.



### Ruffs on display

By Ondřej Pelánek

Czech Republic

WINNER: Young Wildlife

Photographer of the Year 2015

Grand Title Winner

Ondřej and his father travelled to the far north of Norway in summer, when there is 24-hour sunlight, to observe the ‘warlike behaviour’ of these courting male ruffs. “I was so excited that I could not sleep,” Ondřej recalls, so that night, while his father snored in the tent nearby, he snuck out into the midnight sunlight to capture this scuffle. Gathering in display areas known as leks, male ruffs will fight for females and defend their territories, leaping, strutting and puffing up the feathery collar they’re named for. Their status is revealed by the colour of their plumage. Those with dark head tufts hold territories at the lek, whereas the lighter-plumed satellite males don’t, instead loitering on the outskirts hoping for a chance to mate.



## Goose attack

By Josiah Launstein

Canada

FINALIST: 10 Years and Under

A Canadian Goose rushes out of shoreline to protect its territory from an intruder in Burnaby Lake, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada.

"I was photographing ducks and geese on a cold February morning when I noticed a goose that was being very aggressive toward any geese that came into its area", Josiah said. "I quickly got my lens focused on it when it exploded from the shallows after this second goose. I love how you can see the water and mud flying!"



## Night of the mountain goats

By Connor Stefanison

Canada

WINNER: Rising Star Portfolio Award

It was a clear, starry night, exactly what Connor had hoped for, with barely any moonlight. It was so dark that framing the mountain goats was "a matter of guesswork."

Connor had camped for three days, to allow the goats to get used to his presence. In fact, they were so accustomed to him that one brushed past as he was photographing another. Mountain goats are nimble animals that live most of the time on steep cliffs, away from predators. Their powerful forelimbs allow them to climb or brake, while their hooves can squeeze like pincers to grasp irregularly shaped rock.



Raven strut  
By Connor Stefanison  
Canada  
WINNER: Rising Star Portfolio Award

Pensive, misty and peaceful. The conditions at this popular lunch stop for hikers were perfect for landscape photography. But Connor was there for the ravens. He knew they gathered to scavenge hikers' leftovers, then hid them in food caches. Two such ravens entertained him for half an hour, until one landed in the perfect spot, displaying its characterful strut. These clever birds don't just steal food from humans, they also steal from each other. Their highly developed memory allows them to remember where they have seen other ravens storing food or who saw them when they accessed their own cache.



