

Conservation news

The Tony Whitten Conservation Award 2020

The panel of judges for the second year of this competition honouring Tony Whitten were again hugely impressed by the diversity and quality of the applications they received. This year's awards, worth GBP 2,000 each, have been made to five conservationists and field biologists from East and South-east Asia, all of whom are under 35 years old and doing ground-breaking work on the often overlooked species and habitats that Tony was most passionate about:

Areeruk Nilsai, for her work on troglomorphic Collembola in Thailand. Areeruk focuses on the taxonomy and adaptive radiation of cave springtails in the genus *Coecobrya*. She uses both morphological and genetic characters to understand their phylogenetic relationships and their adaptations to cave life. Her work also aims to support conservation of Thailand's karst and cave ecosystems.

Guoyi Zhang, for work on the taxonomy of snails of karst mountains in Northern China. Zhang's project uses DNA and morphological characters to resolve the relationships of snails in the family Camaenidae and shed light on the biogeography of these and related molluscs. Zhang has also exposed illegal collection and trading, and will use this award both to expand survey areas and to visit museums to check specimens.

Joseph B. Rasalan, for his work on tarantulas in Philippine cave and forest ecosystems. Joseph has been involved in the discovery and description of two cave mygalomorphs new

to science, in the formulation and implementation of cave ecosystem conservation policies, and in capacity building. Joseph will use his award to create online content about Philippine cave and spider biology.

Munkhnast Dalannast, for his research on Mongolian cave bats and invertebrates. An expert on Mongolian bats, Munkhnast will use his award to extend his research by studying the invertebrates living in Mongolia's extensive but overlooked caves.

Rena Tri Hernawati, for her work on freshwater shrimps of Java and Bali. Rena's research on DNA-barcoding the freshwater shrimps of Java and Bali has revealed several cryptic species, with discrete lineages in different drainage systems. Her award will support visits to important crustacean collections in Singapore and Leiden.

In addition, six applicants were highly commended: Jay S. Fidelino, for his work on the endemic mammals of Dinagat Island; Justine O. Magbanua, for his work on the Negros cave frog; Krizler C. Tanalgo, for his work on assessing the vulnerability of bat caves in the Philippines; Mya Bhone Maw, for her work on the genus *Begonia* in northern Myanmar; Nur Atiqah Bte. Abd Rahman, for her work on the publicizing the wonders of the Batu Caves and their bats; and Wendy A. Mustaqim, for his work on the orchids of Buru Island.

The third and final round of Tony Whitten Conservation Awards will be announced at cambridgeconservation.org/about/tony-whitten-conservation-award during summer 2021.

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Earthshot prize targets game-changing initiatives

In November 2020 HRH Prince William launched the Earthshot Prize, with the ambition of inspiring and championing the solutions that will address the ever-growing environmental crisis facing the planet. Referencing John F. Kennedy's Moonshot programme, which challenged the USA to land a man on the moon before the end of the 1960s, the Earthshot Prize aims to catalyse and identify novel and scalable environmental solutions, from any sector anywhere



Top row, left to right: Areeruk Nilsai, Guoyi Zhang and Joseph B. Rasalan. Bottom row, left to right: Munkhnast Dalannast, Rena Tri Hernawati and Tony Whitten.