Kung Foo Fighting Swamphens
Purple swamphen, *Porphyrio porphyrio*

Shelley Pearson, Western Australia

Two cute purple swamphen chicks emerged out of the reeds, falling over each other chasing after the parent. Every now and then the parent stopped to nudge them gently. It was a beautiful interaction to witness and this moment showed the cuteness and clumsiness of the chicks.

South Perth, Western Australia

Canon 1DX, Canon 500 f/4L IS II, 1/2700, f/7.1, ISO 640, handheld
Nature abounds

Australian Geographic’s 2017 Nature Photographer of the Year competition is a spectacular celebration of our rich and rare wild beauty.
Predatory Pursuit
Spider crabs, *Leptomithrax gaimardii*, Maori octopus, *Octopus maorum*

Justin Gilligan, New South Wales

This unusual encounter features an aggregation of spider crabs (*Leptomithrax gaimardii*) and a predatory Maori octopus (*Octopus maorum*). The octopus was behaving like an excited child in a candy store trying to work out which crab to catch and consume — its eyes were certainly bigger than its gut!

Mercury Passage, between Maria Island and mainland Tasmania

**Nikon D810**, 15mm f/2.8, 1/100, f/14, ISO 400, two Ikelite DS161 strobes, Nauticam housing
NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY, more than any other form of photography, gives us insight to moments captured in time that many of us might otherwise never see or experience.

It brings us landscapes and subjects that often go unnoticed by the rest of the world because they are too remote, cryptic or fast-moving.

Here, Australian Geographic brings you a stunning selection of the very best photographs entered in the 2017 Nature Photographer of the Year competition. This is the 13th year of this – Australasia’s most prestigious – nature photography competition. And the images represent an exquisite portfolio that is as strong as any in the competition’s history. From echidnas to octopuses, gum trees to glaciers – all remind us of the richness of life and uniqueness of landscape in this Australasian corner of the planet.

This year’s winners and shortlisted photographs strongly reflect certain recurring aspects of nature photography. Many have involved extraordinary patience to wait out and capture that one moment that might come along only once in a day, week or even a year. And then there are the shots that are captured in serendipitous moments, reflecting being in the ‘right place at the right time’. Either way, good nature photography needs an intuitiveness for, and connection to what is being photographed.

Each of these photographs stirs the soul or brings a tear to the eye. Adults will wonder at the talent, artistry and uniqueness of the moment that these remarkable images reflect. Children will delight in their raw power to captivate. Of course, it is these youngest admirers of nature who will bear witness the longest to our changing world. May they be inspired to learn about and love the wild Earth, and celebrate and look after it. And may their successes allow gifted photographers to capture nature’s moments of grandeur and beauty, even many generations from now!

Kris Helgen
Renowned zoologist Dr Kris Helgen, Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of Adelaide and an honorary researcher at the South Australian Museum, opened the AGNPY exhibition this year.


Go to: naturephotographeroftheyear.com.au

Winner
Animal Portrait

Windblown Egret
Little egret, Egretta garzetta

Jennie Stock, Western Australia

A little egret (Egretta garzetta) in breeding plumage was feeding in a shallow section of Herdsman Lake on a windy day when it turned and the breeze ruffled its feathers.

Herdsman Lake, Perth, Western Australia

Nikon D7200, Sigma 150–600mm Sport at 440mm, 1/1000, f/6.3, ISO 100, monopod

Winner
Threatened Species

Coming in for a Drink
Grey-headed flying-fox, Pteropus poliocephalus

Status: Vulnerable

Elizabeth Howell, New South Wales

These grey-headed flying-foxes can be seen skimming the water in order to lick the water from their chests, mainly when it hasn’t rained for some time or in extreme temperatures. They are fascinating creatures. This photo was taken at the bat camp on the Parramatta River in Parramatta.

Parramatta River, Parramatta, New South Wales

Nikon D500, 200–500mm at 500mm, 1/1250, f/7.1, ISO 720
Happy Wanderer
Short-beaked echidna, *Tachyglossus aculeatus*

**Jason Stephens, Tasmania**

As I waited for sunset at Hansons Peak in the Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park in Tasmania, an echidna appeared. It was happy wandering the mountains in search of dinner. I was happy to photograph it doing it. I’ve never seen an echidna this high in the mountains before or since.

**Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park, Tasmania**

**Nikon D800, Nikkor 14–24mm, f/2.8g, 1/100, f/16, ISO 400, handheld**
Winner Botanical

Final Stand

Justin Gilligan, New South Wales

Tasmania once had vast swaths of giant kelp forests. A rapid collapse has occurred due to the prolonged warming influence of the East Australian Current. The very last forests are now restricted to the cool waters off Actaeon Island.

Actaeon Island, Tasmania

Nikon D810, 15mm f/2.8, 1/125, f/20, ISO 400, two Ikelite DS161 strobes, Nauticam housing

Animal Portrait → Shortlisted image

The Eight-Legged King

Crab spider, Diaea sp.

Tiana Reimann, Queensland

Spiders: the ultimate predator of the garden, the king of all mini-beasts. I came across this crab spider perched perfectly upon the mouth of an orange mokara orchid. As I looked closely, the shape of the orchid mouth appeared as its throne with its imaginary crown floating above it.

Kimbe, West New Britain, Papua New Guinea

Olympus E-PM1, 14–42mm, 1/160, f/11, ISO 400, flash, handheld
It took several attempts circling around at 3000 feet to direct my pilot into position so I could get the angle I wanted and keep the strut of the wing out of shot. To me, this looks like a person side-on lying in the earth.

Lake Eyre, South Australia

Nikon D800, Nikon 24–70mm, 1/1600, f/8, ISO 200, handheld

Competition partners and sponsors

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In most Australian states recreational gillnets are now illegal. However, in Tasmania gillnets or graball nets – due to their non-selective nature – can still be set for six hours at a time. This marblefish and herring cale are likely to be released from this net as dead bycatch.

**Iceberg at Paradise Harbour**
Brian Jones, Australian Capital Territory
The iceberg has wonderful form and texture (which is accentuated in high-contrast monochrome), and some of the 90 per cent that is under the water can also be seen.

**The Dancer**
Common dolphin, *Delphinus delphis*
Georgia Poyner, New South Wales. Age 16
I was out boating in our inflatable when we encountered a pod of common dolphins. Dolphins can be a tricky subject as you never know when or where they will surface. Being patient and quick really helps!

**Dalmeny, New South Wales**
Canon EOS 7D, EF100–400mm f/4.5–5.6L, 1/1000, f/5.6, ISO 320, circular polariser, monochrome conversion with Nik Silver Efex Pro 2, handheld

**Paradise Harbour, Antarctica**
Canon EOS 5D Mk III, Canon 17–40mm f/4 at 20mm, 1/640, f/11, ISO 640, circular polariser, monochrome conversion with Nik Silver Efex Pro 2, handheld

**Our Impact**

**Winner Monochrome**

**Iceberg at Paradise Harbour**

**Winner Junior**

**The Dancer**
Common dolphin, *Delphinus delphis*

**Georgia Poyner, New South Wales**
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Canon EOS 7D, EF100–400mm f/4.5–5.6L, 1/1000, f/5.6, ISO 320, circular polariser, monochrome conversion with Nik Silver Efex Pro 2, handheld

**Winner Our Impact**

**Gillnet**
Marblefish, *Bovichtus angustifrons*; herring cale, *Odax cyanomelas*

**Justin Gilligan, New South Wales**
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**Tasman Peninsula, Tasmania**

**Nikon D810**, 16–35mm f/4, 1/13, f/18, ISO 400, two Ikelite DS161 strobes, Nauticam housing
Devouring a home

Giant jellyfish, *Tiburonia granrojo*,
green turtles, *Chelonia mydas*

Scott Portelli, New South Wales

Giant jellyfish make a very inviting meal
for a couple of green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*). The turtles devour the soft
tentacles and underside of the jellyfish,
one of their main food sources, while
slowly reducing the home of some
small fish to a lifeless shell.

Byron Bay, New South Wales

Canon 5D Mk III, 16–35mm, 1/200,
f/11, ISO 250
Winner Portfolio

Julie Fletcher, South Australia

A stunning selection of Australian landscape and wildlife images demonstrating exceptional talent in capturing a broad range of subjects. The strong creative compositions combined with rich colour palettes and great technical execution result in a compelling series of nature photographs that were a stand-out to the judges.

JUDGES' COMMENTS
Animal Habitat → Shortlisted image

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**Gliders by Night**  
Sugar glider, *Petaurus breviceps*

**Charles Davis,**  
New South Wales

I set up a studio to photograph possums next to a tree I knew was being used because of the scratches up and down the trunk. I didn’t expect to see gliders, but by the end of the project, I had three coming to the tree each night to feed.

**Yalcowinna**, Cooma, New South Wales

**Nikon D810**, Sigma 15–30 f/8, 1/10, f/5, ISO 2000, three Nikon SB700 flash, home-made camera trap with PRI sensor

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$34.95

**AUSTRALASIAN NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY**  
The year’s best wildlife and landscape photos

See the full shortlist of images from the 2017 photography competition in this new, 120-page hardcover book. Inside, you’ll find nearly 100 beautiful nature photographs from a region that includes Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica and New Guinea.

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See for yourself  
DON’T MISS THE opportunity to see these beautiful photographs in two magnificent exhibitions in Adelaide and Sydney.

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**AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC Nature Photographer of the Year exhibitions for 2017**

**South Australian Museum**  
Adelaide, SA  
11 August–24 September 2017  
Open 10am–5pm daily  

**Australian Museum**  
Sydney, NSW  
11 August–10 December 2017  
Open 9.30am–5pm daily  
[australianmuseum.net.au](australianmuseum.net.au)

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