



## *Wildlife in North Carolina* 2021–2022 PHOTO COMPETITION

Jian Zheng, Grand Prize winner of the 2021–2022 *Wildlife in North Carolina* Photo Competition, didn't start out photographing birds. Instead, he began taking photographs in a gymnastics studio.

"I started photographing gymnastics for my daughter eight years ago," he said. "Since I work from home, I see quite a few beautiful birds singing, flying and searching for food in the backyard from my office window every day. So, I also started photographing backyard birds and learning about the habits of various birds."

"Later, I was not satisfied with photographing birds in the backyard, and I was eager to learn more. I explored more birds and wild animals and recorded what I saw with my camera. I often visit nearby parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and use my vacations to explore farther, unknown places."

Zheng, who is a software engineer, said that he loves photographing birds most because they are beautiful, and you can find them anywhere. His advice to aspiring photographers? "First of all, you have to love it," he said. "Have enthusiasm and have patience."

The Photo Competition received over 1,800 entries this year. Singling out winners was challenging because there are so many talented photographers who subscribe to the magazine.

"Each year, I have the honor of being part of a panel of judges who get to review hundreds of beautiful images from all over North Carolina," said Marsha Tillett, art director of *Wildlife in North Carolina*. "This year's grand prize winner stood out from the rest with exceptional color and composition. But this winning photograph also had something more to it that really connected with the judges. I think we all agreed that seeing animal behavior captured so eloquently really set this image apart."

In addition to Tillett, the judging panel consisted of Commission graphic designer Bryant Cole and photographer Melissa McGaw, former Commission employee and photographer Thomas Harvey and photographer/naturalist Mike Dunn. A tip of the hat to Commission IT Specialist Adele Chase for her technical assistance.

All winning photographs will be online at [ncwildlife.org](http://ncwildlife.org). To learn more about the Photo Competition, including past winners and rules information, visit [ncwildlife.org/WINC](http://ncwildlife.org/WINC) and click on the Photo Competition link.

–Mike Zlotnicki

## GRAND PRIZE WILDLIFE IN NORTH CAROLINA 2021–2022 PHOTO COMPETITION



### **Jian Zheng, Cary**

Lake Betz mergansers

I went to the local nature preserve many times to see migrated hooded mergansers. One day, I saw two male hooded merganser drakes gather around a single female in a bid for her attention. They performed a number of displays, such as raising their white head crests, head-shaking, "head-throwing," head-pumping and uttering frog-like croaks in their attempts to woo the female. Drakes will go to impressive lengths to get the girl. They are so beautiful and amazing to watch dancing in the water.

(Nikon D850, Nikon AF-S Nikkor 600mm f/4E FL ED VR lens with Nikon AF-S Teleconverter TC-14E III, f/5.6, 1/1,250 of a second, ISO 800)



**BIRDS FIRST PLACE**

**Chantal Taunton, Raleigh**

Hungry hawk hunting

This red-tailed hawk is a resident of my park. As a park ranger at the N.C. Museum of Art Park in Raleigh, I have the privilege to see this hawk almost every day at work. This hawk is a juvenile, and on this day it was hungry and hunting. I love the intensity and determination in the hawk's eyes. I waited until it took off, quickly focused and captured it flying directly toward me.

(Nikon D850, Sigma 150–600mm Contemporary lens, f/8, 1/4,000 of a second, ISO 800)

**BIRDS SECOND PLACE**

**Mark Gallerani, Greensboro**

Cedar waxwing on a limb

We have several ornamental cherry trees in our neighborhood common area which attract the fruit-loving cedar waxwings every winter. I have always struggled to get good photos with clean backgrounds but lucked out when I staked out this single branch with nothing behind it. I took this photo when a single bird landed on the branch.

(Canon 7D Mark II, Canon EF 100–400mm lens, f/5.6, 1/400 of a second, ISO 1,000)



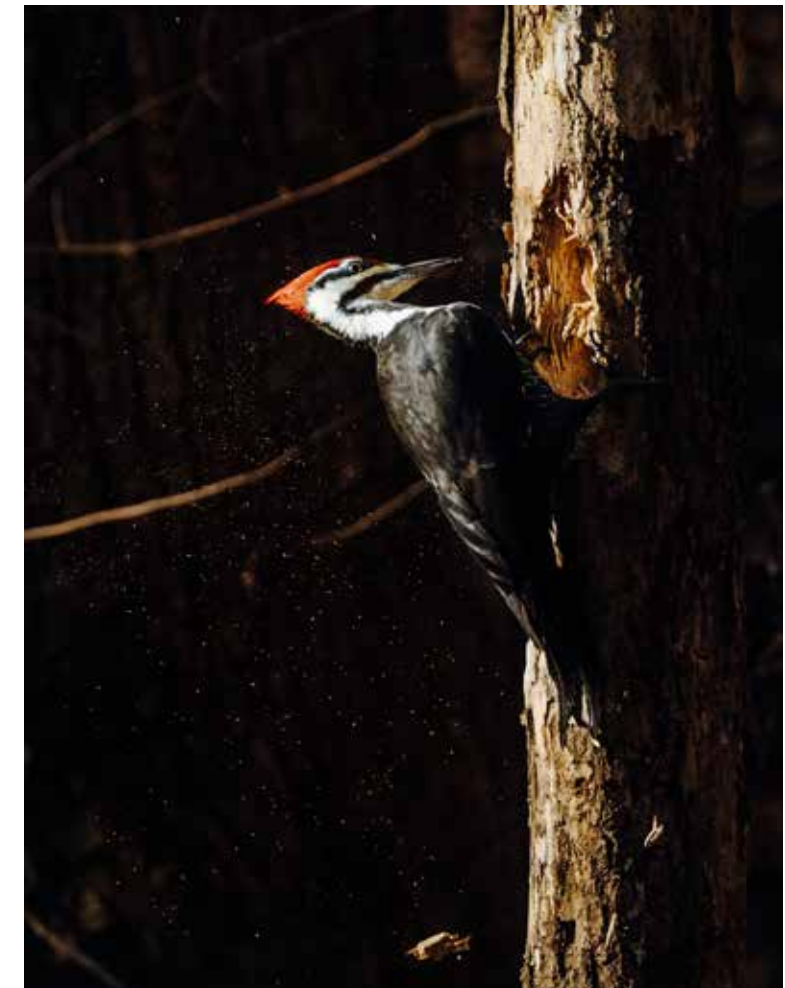
**BIRDS THIRD PLACE**

**Erin Maxwell, Durham**

Pileated woodpecker at work

This moment presented itself to me in my own backyard. It is ripe with native trees, which affords me many varieties of birds to observe thanks to the vicinity of the Eno River. Many pictures of pileated woodpeckers are from a downward angle, so when I heard the bird's distinct call, I was elated to find it on a dead tree at eye level. I quickly leveled my camera, and with the light streaming in through a darkened morning wood, I captured a golden opportunity.

(Canon EOS R5, Canon EF 100–400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS II lens, f/8, 1/1,250 of a second, ISO 2,000)



## MAMMALS WILDLIFE IN NORTH CAROLINA 2021–2022 PHOTO COMPETITION



### MAMMALS FIRST PLACE

**Robert Wagner, Whittier**

Bugling bull in the fog

Elk were reintroduced to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 2001. Since then, their numbers have grown tremendously. The best time to photograph them is during the rut, which takes place from late summer through fall. This bull elk bugling in the fog was the shot of a lifetime, and the composition couldn't have worked out better. This was taken at the Oconaluftee Visitor Center near Cherokee.

(Nikon D850, Sigma 120–300mm lens at 155mm, f/2.8, 1/160 of a second, ISO 1,000)

### MAMMALS SECOND PLACE

**Skip Sickler, Newland**

Young buck in snow

It was early December and we had been surprised by an 8-inch-deep blanket of fresh snow in Linville and the surrounding mountains. The air was clear and crisp, perfect for getting outside and photographing a world of wonder. I was lucky this young buck was as interested in me as I was in him. Talking to him in a calm, reassuring voice, he allowed me to expose three frames before slowly walking deeper into the forest. I meandered back to my truck, taking more photos along the way, but I knew the highlight of my day was our conversation.

(Nikon D800, Nikon 70–200mm lens at 200mm, f/4.5, 1/8,000 of a second, ISO 800, EV-1)



### MAMMALS THIRD PLACE

**Alan Clark, Raleigh**

Squirrel eating dogwood

While looking for birds to photograph in my backyard, I noticed this gray squirrel eating unopened dogwood buds. I had never seen them do this and found the behavior interesting. The photo captures the squirrel grasping the stem with both paws and nibbling the bud on a cold, overcast day in February 2021.

(Nikon D850, Nikon 500mm lens f/4 and 1.4x teleconverter at 700mm, f/7.1, 1/800 of a second, ISO 3,200)



## REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

### WILDLIFE IN NORTH CAROLINA 2021–2022 PHOTO COMPETITION



#### REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS FIRST PLACE

**Skip Sickler, Newland**

Leopard frog floating

Frogs had been putting on quite a concert for a number of weeks in a small, nearby pond. It was early May and the mating season was in full swing. I knew the pond would yield a high number of subjects to photograph. It had been a cloudy, overcast day. The late-afternoon lighting conditions provided a diffused light source with minimum glare. Since frogs are quite wary of approaching people, I moved slowly toward the pond edge until I could almost fill the frame with a single frog. I maintained a low profile either sitting or lying on the ground. The image was cropped slightly during post processing.

(Nikon D500, Nikon 400mm lens with 1.4 teleconverter, f/8, 1/200 of a second, ISO 800, EV-1)

#### REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

##### SECOND PLACE

**Sujata Roy, Morrisville**

Anole eating shed skin

Summer 2021 was mostly spent staying home and watching wildlife around the community and home. Around the middle of May, I noticed something which appeared like a trash paper stuck to my bushes in the front yard. I went out and checked that peculiar looking paper and realized that an anole was shedding its skin. The bush was low and gave me a top view of all that was happening. I grabbed my macro lens and sat down quietly watching and recording all the anole did to free itself from the old skin. At one time, I saw it eating that shed skin. It tried to rub its body against the leaf's edges so that the skin comes off easily. It finally moved out of the bush once all the skin was gone. The anole looked summer-ready!

(Canon 7D MII, Canon Macro EF 100mm f/2.8L IS USM lens, f/6.3, 1/160 of a second, ISO 200, EV-0.33)



#### REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

##### THIRD PLACE

**Zane Chimiak, Clayton**

Treefrog on a tree

My son and I found this treefrog in our backyard one afternoon. I knew that I wouldn't be able to get any photos while my 2-year-old was on the loose, so I came back that night to look for the frog. Luckily, it hadn't strayed far from its resting spot. I like this photo because I think it shows how well their patterning mimics the bark of trees.

(Sony A6100, Sony FE 90mm Macro G OSS lens, f/9, 1/125 of a second, ISO 400, Godox TT350S strobe off-camera)



## INVERTEBRATES WILDLIFE IN NORTH CAROLINA 2021–2022 PHOTO COMPETITION



### INVERTEBRATES FIRST PLACE

**Kevin Long, Asheville**

Weevil standing on a brick wall

I often throw my camera bag in my car whenever I leave the house in case I find some interesting subjects to photograph, most often insects. While visiting my grandparents one afternoon, I was scanning a brick wall that I have found insects and lizards on since I was a child and noticed a weevil standing very still and upright on top of the wall. Fortunately for me, it was cooperative and held a tank-like posture until I was done taking photographs before it decided to move on.

(Canon 77D, Canon 100mm f/2.8L macro lens, f/16, 1/125 of a second, ISO 200)

### INVERTEBRATES SECOND PLACE

**Skip Sickler, Newland**

Honey bee and rhododendron

A friend and I had spent a delightful morning photographing the sunrise at Craggy Gardens on the Blue Ridge Parkway. It was early June, just a bit before the peak of the rhododendron bloom. As we were hiking back down the trail, we noticed a particularly nice section of rhododendron in full bloom, still covered by morning dew. In addition, the flowers were covered with a host of insects—various species of fireflies, bees and flies. Using a sturdy tripod, I spent the next hour or so photographing the insects and blossoms. This honey bee, half-hidden, seemed to be studying me just as intently as I was the blossoms.

(Nikon D800, Sigma 150mm macro lens with 1.4 Sigma teleconverter at 210mm, f/13, 1/5 of a second, ISO 400, tripod)



### INVERTEBRATES THIRD PLACE

**Don Kinney, Wendell**

Grasshopper covered in dew

I was out at one of my local preserves, early in the morning as usual. It was a cool fall day, and everything was covered in dew. As I made my way around the field, I saw this grasshopper on a tall plant, apparently doing the same thing I was, soaking in the warm morning sun. I had my long wildlife lens mounted on my camera and was able to get a nice photo without disturbing its peace.

(Nikon Z6II, Nikon 200–500mm lens at 500mm, f/5.6, 1/640 of a second, ISO 1,600)





**WILD PLANTS FIRST PLACE**

**Skip Sickler, Newland**

The unraveling

I have always been captivated by the simplicity and symmetry of ferns, especially those that have just unfurled or are in the process of unraveling from their fiddlehead stage. While roaming the open forests at the base of Grandfather Mountain late one mid-summer morning, I discovered a fine fellow. A gentleman—it posed with great dignity. It was refined in its appearance. It seemed full of character. It begged to be photographed. Deep shade obscured the background, isolating the fern front-and-center. Dappled sunlight filtered through the overhead leaves. The partially sunlit, partially shaded fern created great tonal range, but presented a photographic challenge. The image, originally captured in color, was converted to B&W in post processing.

(Nikon D850, Sigma 150mm macro lens with Sigma 1.4 teleconverter, f/22, 1/13 of a second, EV-1, tripod)

**WILD PLANTS SECOND PLACE**

**David Hattori, Apex**

Mushrooms on a mossy log

Doing a little photographic exploration in the woods behind our house one fall day, I came across these mushrooms growing out of a decaying log. I liked how they were packed into the cracks in the log and the green of the moss setting them off with a hint of sunlight on the caps. Unlike the wildlife that I often photograph, mushrooms don't move, so I was able to use a tripod and long exposure with a small aperture to get the most depth of field possible in the dimly-lit woods to capture the image.

(Canon 5D MarkIII, Canon macro f/2.8 lens at 100mm, f/32, 5 seconds, ISO 250, tripod)



**WILD PLANTS THIRD PLACE**

**Skip Sickler, Newland**

Wearing the evening's colors

I had spent the afternoon at the Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation, enjoying a late-winter photography outing. It was the end of February. A few days prior, a bit of snow had fallen on the high peaks. Many rocks and trees in shaded areas still wore a glaze of ice. It was near closing time and the sun was low in the sky as I drove down the mountain. As I rounded a curve in the road, I was gobsmacked by the golden hour reflecting from the frozen branches of an ancient oak tree. The blues and greens of distant mountains contrasted beautifully with the orange cast of the setting sun.

(Nikon D800, Nikon 70–200mm lens at 145mm, f/8, 1/13 of a second, ISO 500, EV-2/3, tripod)



## OUTDOOR RECREATION

### WILDLIFE IN NORTH CAROLINA 2021–2022 PHOTO COMPETITION



#### OUTDOOR RECREATION FIRST PLACE

**David Hattori, Apex**

Paddling in the marsh

My niece joined my brother and me on our annual fall Hatteras fishing trip for a few days and brought her paddleboard along. As she glided along in the channels behind our house just south of Buxton, the warm glow of the late afternoon sunlight on the marsh grass caught my attention. I was able to create this peaceful image of her enjoying some of North Carolina's natural beauty.

(Canon EOS R5, Canon 100–400mm f/4.5-5.6L lens at 100mm, f/8, 1/2,000 of a second, ISO 1,600)

#### OUTDOOR RECREATION

##### SECOND PLACE

**John Rabb, Lenoir**

Kayaker in the rapids

On the coast, surfers catch the big waves when the storm comes in. In the mountains, these guys catch the ride of their lives in Wilson Creek Gorge. This photo was taken just after Tropical Storm Fred moved through the area. This kayaker and his friends are very experienced and made the same run over a dozen times without incident.

(Sony A7 RIV, Sigma 24–70mm lens, f/7.1, 1/1,250 of a second, ISO 100)



#### OUTDOOR RECREATION THIRD PLACE

**Skip Sickler, Newland**

Elk River fly angler

Following a nice January snowfall, I was exploring along the Elk River for a combination of snow-covered, icy rocks and moving water when I discovered a fly-fisherman plying the eddies below the Banner Elk Mill Pond. I wanted a slow enough shutter speed to allow some water movement; yet, fast enough to freeze the angler's movement. I tried to time my shots to coincide with periods of relatively little movement by the angler. I tried different shutter speeds. Out of two dozen shots, this image provided the best compromise.

(Nikon D850, Nikon 90–200mm lens at 135mm, f/22, 1/6 of a second, ISO 200, EV-1/3, tripod)



## WILD LANDSCAPES

### WILDLIFE IN NORTH CAROLINA 2021–2022 PHOTO COMPETITION



#### WILD LANDSCAPES FIRST PLACE

**Skip Sickler, Newland**

Clouds over Table Rock Mountain

Afternoon thunderstorms are common during the summer months in the North Carolina mountains. It had been a hot, humid day. Conditions were perfect, we thought, for a brilliant sunset, punctuated with large billowing clouds. A friend and I headed to a rock outcrop on the summit of Sugar Mountain. We were not disappointed. I was captivated by one large thunderhead hovering in the distance, making the distant mountains that form part of the eastern edge of Linville Gorge Wilderness area look tiny in comparison. The image was captured in color and converted to B&W during post processing.

(Nikon D850, Nikon 70–200mm lens at 70mm, f/11, 1/60 of a second, ISO 400, EV+2/3, tripod).

#### WILD LANDSCAPES SECOND PLACE

**Erin Maxwell, Durham**

Eno fall foliage

The rainfall and mild temperature changes this past year in North Carolina awarded us with tremendous fall foliage. I cannot remember seeing it in such color and detail in my many years in the Triangle region. A typical hike led to such an astounding rebound of color off the water that I could not resist capturing the view from a bird's eye.

(DJI Mavic Air II drone, f/2.8, 1/50 of a second, ISO 100)



#### WILD LANDSCAPES THIRD PLACE

**Kyle Foreman, Durham**

Fort Macon jetty

Rocks and moving water are one of my favorite subjects for photography. I took this photo at the beach by Fort Macon State Park. One of my favorite things to do in photography is to show motion around a static object. Rocks and water are a perfect combination for this. Slowing the shutter speed down just enough to show the motion of the waves yet still retain the texture of the water really enhances this image. The waves crashing around the rock also creates some interesting leading lines.

(Nikon D3200, 11–16mm Tokina lens at 11mm, f/11, 0.4 seconds ISO 100)





## ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

### WILDLIFE IN NORTH CAROLINA 2021–2022 PHOTO COMPETITION



#### ANIMAL BEHAVIOR FIRST PLACE

**Robert Wagner, Whittier**

Bull elk drinking water in the Oconaluftee River

This shot of a bull elk was one of those photographic moments I had been waiting for. I've always wanted a beautiful photograph of an elk in water, and the reflection was definitely a bonus. The elk rut during the fall season is the best time to capture one of these huge beasts. This was taken in the Oconoluftee River, inside the Great Smoky Mountains National Park near Cherokee.

(Nikon D850, Sigma 120–300mm sport lens at 300mm, f/2.8, 1/400 of a second, ISO 500)

#### ANIMAL BEHAVIOR SECOND PLACE

**Zane Chimiak, Clayton**

Eastern spadefoot toad hiding

I found my very first Eastern spadefoot this year while I was gardening. Shortly after this, I discovered that I have the pleasure of sharing my property with dozens of spadefoot toads. On rainy nights, they can all be seen sitting near their burrows, around the foundation of my house. On one such night, I found this individual who hadn't yet completely unearthed himself. I quickly ran inside to grab my camera and capture this photo.

(Sony A6100, Sony FE 90mm Macro G OSS lens, f/8, 1/200 of a second, ISO 400, Godox TT350S off-camera flash)



#### ANIMAL BEHAVIOR THIRD PLACE

**John Mauser, Hubert**

Black bear eating berries

Last October, I was exploring a local wildlife refuge looking for black bears. After a few hours, a sow and her cub emerged from the woods and started walking in my direction. Both bears climbed a tree and settled about 10 feet up. I thought they were hiding, but then noticed that they were feeding on berries from the Virginia creeper vines. I photographed each bear as they fed. This image of the mother bear was one of my favorites. She looks fierce with her teeth showing, but in reality she is delicately plucking each berry from the vine.

(Sony A7III, Sony 200–600mm lens at 600mm, f/6.3, 1/800 of a second, ISO 2,000)



## YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13–17

### WILDLIFE IN NORTH CAROLINA 2021–2022 PHOTO COMPETITION



#### YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13–17 FIRST PLACE

**Loughran Cabe, Raphine, Va.**

Cape Hatteras katydid

The Outer Banks, while comprising only thin strips of land, contain a remarkable amount of freshwater wetland. I never pass up the chance to wander these wetlands at night with my camera, listening to choruses of half a dozen species of frogs. On the night I took this photo I was particularly interested in finding some of those frogs, or maybe even a cottonmouth (*Agkistrodon piscivorus*), but was distracted by this orthopteran. I fired off a couple shots, impressed with its camouflage, before moving on to search for frogs. This image was the result.

(Nikon D60, AF-S DX Micro Nikkor 40mm f/2.8G lens, f/22, 1/250 of a second ISO 100, single external strobe)

#### YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13–17

##### SECOND PLACE

**Brock Davis, Cary**

Blue dasher hovering

I found this dragonfly hovering over a creek after a heavy rain. The water had turned orange due to the runoff brought by the rain. The dragonfly was repeatedly skimming the water for a drink. Because of his rapid movement, it was difficult to get a shot in focus. After many unsuccessful attempts, I finally captured a photo of the dragonfly in the air.

(Canon EOS M50, EF-M 55–200mm f/4.5–6.3 IS STM lens at 85mm, f/6.3, 1/1,600 of a second, ISO 400)



#### YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13–17

##### THIRD PLACE

**Brock Davis, Cary**

Anole with dewlap

Spring is one of the best times to find reptiles and the day I took this photo was no exception. I spotted this green anole while exploring a wooded area in May. As I was hiking along the banks of a stream, I saw this anole basking on a fallen tree. The contrast of the brightly lit lizard and the dimly lit background contributed to the dramatic aspect of the photo. I slowly adjusted the shutter speed until the lizard had the perfect amount of light on him. Unexpectedly, the lizard extended his dewlap adding more contrast to the photo.

(Canon EOS M50, EF-M 55–200mm f/4.5–6.3 IS STM lens at 200mm, f/6.3, 1/1600 of a second, ISO 200)





**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13–17**

**HONORABLE MENTION**

**Loughran Cabe, Raphine, Va.**

Young treefrog hanging on

The wetlands of the Outer Banks are a strikingly unlikely habitat; they're characterized by abundant fresh water and numerous amphibians, all on oceanic islands. At night, they are rewarding hunting grounds for frog-lovers, and I have spent some memorable evenings photographing the many species that can be found. This young squirrel treefrog (*Dryophytes squirrelus*) was one of many found clinging to the marsh vegetation on one such evening.

(Nikon D60, AF-S DX Micro Nikkor 40mm f/2.8G lens, f/22, ISO 100, 1/250 of a second, single external strobe)

**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13–17**

**HONORABLE MENTION**

**Jarrett Stephens, Hope Mills**

Red-bellied woodpecker in the rain

I chose this subject in particular because of its striking black-and-white checkered feathers on the wings as well as the contrast with the red plumage on the head and neck. It was just an all around beautiful bird. The photo was taken on a rainy day, at my grandmother's bird feeders, in Hoke County. The rain in question added a nice natural contrast bringing the background and foreground together. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to photograph such a beautiful bird.

(Canon EOS Rebel TG, 35–700mm lens at 700mm, f/5.6, 1/250 of a second, ISO 400)

**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 13–17**

**HONORABLE MENTION**

**Ethan Salguero, Wilmington**

Pine cone in pine needles

This was taken on the University of North Carolina Wilmington campus. A pine cone fell down onto a bed of pine needles. Vivid and contrasting colors came from the deep blacks in the crevices and the sun shining through the trees to make each ridge and tip of the pine cone glow.

(Canon EOS 90D, Sigma 100–400mm C lens at 361mm, f/6.3, 1/200 of a second, ISO 200)



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER**

**WILDLIFE IN NORTH CAROLINA 2021–2022 PHOTO COMPETITION**



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER**

**FIRST PLACE**

**Rohan Yadav, Morrisville**

Comfortable 'coon

One day on a trip to Airlie Gardens in Wilmington, we stumbled upon this Y-shaped tree. We found it looked interesting with the messy Spanish moss growing all over it. The summer day was perfect, with just the right amount of light for photography and the trees glowing a beautiful golden. It was only after we had finished appreciating the scenery that we saw a small raccoon cub nestled in the split of the tree. After seeing this perfect opportunity, we couldn't resist snapping a few pictures of this adorable mammal.

(Canon EOS Rebel SL2, Canon 70–300 mm f/4-5.6 IS II USM lens at 300mm, f/7.1, 1/80 of a second, ISO 200)



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER  
SECOND PLACE**

**Brayden Adcock, Oxford**

Assassin bug laying eggs

I was outside playing one day when I noticed a bug I have never seen before. After getting a closer look I noticed there were some eggs attached to the tree behind the bug. I decided to get my phone out and take a picture so I could ask someone what type of bug it was. I asked a family friend who let me know it was an assassin bug that was laying eggs. She also let me know the eggs would hatch sometime in spring. I came out a few hours later and found more eggs. The next day the bug was gone but the eggs were still attached to the tree.

(iPhone 12 Pro Max)

**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER  
HONORABLE MENTION**

**Rohan Yadav, Morrisville**

Lake Crabtree Park hawk

One fall day, me and my mom were at Lake Crabtree County Park to do some bird photography. We were looking to capture something in the colorful leaves. We were driving to a certain part of the park when I spotted a juvenile red-shouldered hawk sitting on a branch in the woods next to the road. As we got down from the car, it noticed us and flew to another tree. This was fortunate because it was now in a clearer spot, and so I was able to get two photos.

(Canon EOS Rebel SL2, Canon 70-300mm IS II USM lens at 300mm, f/5.6, 1/125 of a second, ISO 100)



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER  
HONORABLE MENTION**

**Levi Corn, Marshall**

Mountain salamander

We live in the mountains of North Carolina, and I found this salamander in our creek on a small island. I like to take pictures of animals I see around here. I wanted to take a picture of the salamander because he is pretty, and I don't see him very much.

(Aberg Best ABcam 218, DC5100B-5M, 6mm, f/2.8, 1/190 of a second, ISO 25)



**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER  
THIRD PLACE**

**Krish Attaluri, Cary**

Eastern tiger swallowtail on a stem

My brother and I usually go to White Oak Trail in Cary every few weeks and in the month of August we find a lot of bugs and butterflies. This past August I and my brother were taking pictures of bugs and we found this beautiful butterfly and I was lucky enough to get this beautiful shot of the butterfly.

(Canon EOS Rebel T1i, Canon EFS 55-, 250mm lens, f/5.6, 1/500 of a second, ISO 1,600)

**YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHER 12 & UNDER  
HONORABLE MENTION**

**Ellie Cooper, Cary**

Merchants Millpond cypress swamp

Cypress swamp at Merchants Millpond State Park with the sun shining just right to show off the beautiful greens that caught my eye. I chose this because I liked the setting and how the cypress knees looked like little people or wooden elves (as my dad would say) that dance around at night and I like landscape photos!

(Kodak Pixpro FZ53, 28mm, 1/40 of a second, ISO 80)

