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## ***Wildlife Photographer of the Year* returns to the Royal BC Museum**

VICTORIA, BC — Now in its 59<sup>th</sup> year, the prestigious *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* exhibition opens today at the Royal BC Museum with close to 100 incredible photos showcasing the best wildlife photography from around the world.

Capturing fascinating animal behaviour, spectacular species and the breathtaking diversity of the natural world, *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* unveils the triumphs, challenges and incredible beauty of a planet under pressure. Through their art, photographers across the globe introduce audiences to species at risk of extinction and others brought back from the brink. Each photo is presented in an oversized backlit display with a caption that shares the image's story, using photography's unique emotive power to engage and inspire audiences.

"We are thrilled to welcome back *Wildlife Photographer of the Year*, a perennial favourite at the museum," says Tracey Drake, CEO of the Royal BC Museum. "This year's exhibition is particularly special as it features the work of two exceptional local photographers, Garth Lenz and Mark Williams."

Williams is highly commended for two images in the animal portraits category: An Arctic fox backlit by the sun, and a dramatic drone shot of five belugas surfacing among fragments of sea ice—both captured in Nunavut. The Arctic fox was also selected by the Natural History Museum as part of the exhibition's core marketing materials and can be seen in advertising around Victoria. Lenz is also highly commended in the photojournalism category for an aerial, early morning shot of the biggest open excavation on Earth, the massive Bingham Canyon copper mine in Utah.

"It is a great honour to once again be featured in this exhibit and to see my work featured here in this beautiful museum as well as in 19 other venues and ten countries. This annual exhibit is arguably the most compelling visual celebration of the beauty and wonders of the natural world as well as its fragility. At this moment in our evolution it is also more important than ever that the exhibit also serve as an alert and inspiration for society to mobilize all our best efforts to protect our planet from the unprecedented threats it faces." says Lenz, marking his third selection to the competition since 2013. Lenz will also be supporting a number of events at the Royal BC Museum throughout the exhibition run, including an adult photography class.

This year's competition attracted an astounding 49,957 entries from photographers of all ages and experience levels from 95 countries. During an intense week at the Natural History Museum in London, entries were judged anonymously on their creativity, originality and technical excellence by an international panel of industry experts.

MEDIA RELEASE

On February 7, “Ice Bed,” a compelling photo of a polar bear napping on a drifting iceberg by UK-based photographer Nima Sarikhani, was announced as the People’s Choice winner.

Using the power of photography to raise awareness around animal advocacy and environmental conservation, this annual exhibition is a showcase of the world’s best nature photography. With soundscapes, videos, expert insights and stunning photography, you’ll leave not only awe-inspired by the beauty and diversity of nature but also with a renewed drive to do what you can to protect it.

*Wildlife Photographer of the Year* is open at the Royal BC Museum now and runs until June 2.

Check out the museum Flickr page for images from the exhibition for print and online use: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjBfP7H>.

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**About the Royal BC Museum:** The Royal BC Museum explores the province’s human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Located in Victoria on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations), we are a hub of community connections in BC—on-site, off-site and online—taking pride in our collective histories.

For tickets to IMAX® Victoria and the Royal BC Museum, including combo tickets for both attractions, visit: [Tickets](#)

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For information about visiting the Royal BC Museum, visit: [Plan Your Visit](#)

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