

The Tony Whitten Conservation Award 2021

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

Jade Aster Badon, for work on the ecology and biology of Philippine Lepidoptera Jade is a global expert on the butterflies of the Philippines. His PhD research generated significant new insights on the impact of typhoons on butterfly communities. By founding the citizen science group PhiLep, Jade has gone on to stimulate nationwide interest in his country's butterfly fauna.

Zhe-Yu Chen, for work on the systematics and diversity of land snails in southern China Zhe-Yu focuses on microsnails in karst areas. He has discovered 21 new taxa, including seven new genera, substantially extended the known range of genera previously thought to be restricted to South-east Asia, and identified one of the few arboreal fungus-eating snails.

Zarris Kem, for championing the cave-dwelling spider Liphistius batuensis in Selangor, Malaysia Zarris conducted the first detailed research on this narrow endemic since 1967. He has helped identify the major threats it faces, and works closely with local communities and governments to help alleviate them.

Reza Saputra, for work on orchids in West Papua, Indonesia As an orchid specialist working for the province's Natural Resources Conservation Agency, Reza has described two

species new to science. He is particularly interested in karst-associated species, which are both poorly known and increasingly threatened by the activities of the cement industry.

Siyuan Zhang, for protecting pangolins in China Siyuan has been involved in c. 50 rescues of smuggled pangolins, successfully campaigned for their upgraded protection and removal from the national pharmacopeia, and brought charges against poorly-performing local governments. Her report on the functional extinction of Chinese pangolins generated over 200 million social media views.

In addition, six applicants were highly commended: Ade Prasetyo Agung for research on the diversity, evolution and biogeography of *Hemiphyllodactylus* geckos in karst regions of Yunnan, China; Harold B. Lipae for work on the diversity and taxonomy of microsnails in the karst ecosystems of southern Luzon, Philippines; Wendy Achmmad Mustaqim for researching the taxonomy of Sumatra's seed plants; Mark Arcebal K. Naive for research on *Dendrochilum* orchids across the Indo-Malayan Archipelago; Chairunas Adha Putra, for rediscovering and conserving Modigliani's nose-horned lizard in Sumatra; and Nur Atiqah Bte. Abd Rahman for work on cave bat ecology in Peninsular Malaysia.

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Top row, left to right: Jade Aster Badon, Zhe-Yu Chen and Zarris Kem. Bottom row, left to right: Reza Saputra, Siyuan Zhang and Tony Whitten.