

The Dilys Breese Medal 2017

Dilys Breese, a former Vice President and Honorary Secretary of the BTO, was not only a renowned radio and television producer, she also did much to promote the science of ornithology to broader audiences, particularly through the work she did for BTO. In recognition of this service, a medal is awarded on an annual basis to outstanding communicators who deliver BTO science to new audiences. Six awards were made in 2009 and the first of the annual awards was made in 2010.

- Fiona Barclay (2009)
- Stuart Winter (2009)
- Victoria Gill (2014)
- Ray Collier (2009)
- Chris Packham (2010)
- Ben Hoare (2015)
- Stephen Moss (2009)
- Michael McCarthy (2011)
- Dr Max Whitby (2016)
- Tony Soper (2009)
- Sheena Harvey (2012)
- Brett Westwood (2009)
- John Ingham (2013)

The Marsh Awards for Ornithology (funded by The Marsh Christian Trust)

This is the eighth year that BTO has worked with Brian Marsh, of the Marsh Christian Trust, to recognise achievements in ornithology. The Marsh Trust runs a portfolio of awards with a number of internationally and nationally recognised organisations. Recipients of Marsh Awards range from scientists working in conservation biology and ecology to authors and sculptors from the arts world, and those who give their time unselfishly to work with the young, the elderly, people with mental health issues and for our heritage.

The Marsh Award for Ornithology is made to an ornithologist who is making a significant contribution to the field. Amongst other things, the selection panel considers the significance of the research undertaken so far, contributions to training and capacity-building within ornithology, alignment with BTO's mission and engagement with the wider ornithological community.

The Marsh Local Ornithology Award is made to a bird club or group that publishes a book, completes a study or conducts any other exceptional activity that advances knowledge about birds.

The Marsh Award for Innovative Ornithology celebrates an important contribution which takes forward our understanding of avian ecology or conservation science.

The Marsh Award for International Ornithology is made to an individual scientist whose work on the international stage has had significant influence on British ornithology, especially as reflected in the work of BTO scientists and volunteers.

The Marsh Award for Young Ornithologist is made to an individual (or group of people) under the age of 18 who has/have made a significant contribution to BTO bird monitoring schemes and shared this information with their peers.

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to Harriet Mead and the Society of Wildlife Artists for their generosity in allowing us to hold our Awards Ceremony on the preview day of the Natural Eye exhibition. The Society of Wildlife Artists is a registered charity that seeks to generate an appreciation of and delight in the natural world through all forms of fine art based on or representing the world's wildlife.

PROGRAMME



AWARD WINNERS 2017

Mary Colwell (Winner of the Dilys Breese Medal)

Mary Colwell is an award winning radio, TV and internet producer winning 14 awards over the last eight years. As a Producer of Radio 4's *Saving Species* and *World on The Move*, she ensured that BTO projects featured in at least 16 episodes. Mary is passionate about Curlews and last year walked 500 miles from the west of Ireland to the east coast of England to highlight the Curlew's plight and fundraising for BTO's Curlew research. As she crossed the British Isles, Mary gave talks as well as media interviews. She interviewed scientists, conservationists, artists, musicians, poets, farmers, walkers and anyone inspired by the Curlew and the beautiful places it inhabits. All this information was captured through Mary's blog, facebook and twitter account in real time over her six week journey bringing huge profile to our Curlew Appeal.

Dr Becki Lawson (Winner of the Marsh Award for Ornithology)

Dr Becki Lawson is based at the Institute of Zoology in London, where she is currently an Institute of Zoology Research Fellow leading work on disease effects on free-ranging wildlife populations, with a particular interest in those relating to wild birds. Becki has been instrumental in driving forward work on trichomonosis in British finches and its role on population declines, on avian pox in British tit species, and on emerging diseases in garden wildlife. BTO has only been able to make a substantial contribution to the understanding of wildlife disease because of the support of Becki Lawson and the leadership that she has shown, recognising and championing the role of citizen science in collecting data on wildlife disease and the value of BTO's long-term data sets.

Ben Kibel, Hookpod (Winner of the Marsh Award for Innovative Ornithology)

Ben Kibel is the engineer who designed the Hookpod, a simple but clever seabird mitigation device that has the potential to end seabird deaths in the global longline fishing industry. Fifteen of the 22 species of albatrosses are threatened with extinction due to mortality caused by interactions with pelagic longline fisheries. Ben designed the Hookpod to reduce seabird bycatch levels in these fisheries to near zero. It achieves this by encapsulating hooks in a polycarbonate case during setting. This disarms the hook and makes them harmless to birds. The development of the Hookpod has been a seven-year process of on-going research and development. Hookpods have been set more than 80,000 times in trials to date and no seabird has been caught, when Hookpods have been correctly set, with no reduction in fish catches.

Professor Theunis Piersma (Winner of the Marsh Award for International Ornithology)

Theunis Piersma is Professor of Global Flyway Ecology at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. He has established a very successful research group, and acquired wide international recognition for his scientific work on migration, ecology, and evolution of birds and other taxa. He was one of the driving forces in establishing the Global Flyway Network, which focuses on long-term demographic studies of shorebirds to identify natural selection pressures on this group of birds, with work carried out in The Netherlands, Africa, Australia, North and South America and Asia. As well as a leading academic, Theunis is also a dedicated mentor to the younger generation of scientists. He has supervised 50 PhD students and 20 postdocs, and his team hosts visiting students and scientists from all over the world. He is also a prolific science communicator with 14 books in his name, including the BTO-published *Guests of Summer* on House Martin, on top of many seminal scientific papers.

Bardsey Bird Observatory - Steve Stansfield (Winners of the Marsh Award for Local Ornithology)

Bardsey were the first bird observatory to load all their bird observation records to BirdTrack and have loaded over 746,000 records covering the period 1934–2014. These records are a tremendous resource for local ornithology in North Wales. As well as being a valuable local resource, now the records are in BirdTrack they can be used in national and international research projects too. Bardsey Bird Observatory have also built a strong relationship with young birders, organising a NCB week (NCB= Next Generation Birders) in 2014, 2015 and 2016. It's a fantastic opportunity for young birders, ringers or general wildlife enthusiasts to help out at a bird observatory and gain valuable experience. Bardsey have made a special effort to engage with young people and to offer them a special experience staying at the Observatory and taking part in their work.

Toby Carter (Winner of Marsh Award for Young Ornithologist)

Toby is one of the small group of young birders who gave presentations at our annual conference in 2014 and made such an impression on the audience. He has held a ringing license since November 2016 and in addition to his ringing contributions he also contributes to BirdTrack, the House Martin Survey, the Wetland Bird Survey and the Nest Record Scheme. He has provided material for our blogs and publications, helped us on the BTO stand at Birdfair and recently volunteered as a helper on our Bird Camp for young birders. Toby always conducts himself impeccably and is very supportive and encouraging of others. He's active on social media and regularly helps to promote our work.

Programme

18:00 Drinks reception (refreshments will be served throughout the evening)

18:30 Welcome to the Natural Eye exhibition – Harriet Mead, President, SWLA

18:35 Dr Andy Clements opens the Awards Ceremony

18:40 Sara Oldfield, Marsh Christian Trust Ambassador, presents the following awards:

Dilys Breese Medal – Mary Colwell

Marsh Award for Ornithology – Dr Becki Lawson (Institute of Zoology, London)

Marsh Award for Innovative Ornithology – Ben Kibel (Hookpod) - collected on his behalf by his brother, Pete

Marsh Award for International Ornithology – Professor Theunis Piersma

Marsh Award for Local Ornithology – Bardsey Bird Observatory (Steve Stansfield)

Marsh Award for Young Ornithologist – Toby Carter

19:00 Dr Andy Clements closes the Awards Ceremony

19:05 Opportunity to view and purchase the artwork and purchase a signed copy of *Flight Lines*.

20:30 Close

Flight Lines

The BTO/SWLA Flight Lines project highlights through art and narrative the challenges that migrant birds face, and brings to a wider audience the research and conservation work that is being done to help them. Artwork from the project has been shown at the Mall Galleries in previous years but this year it is the book of the project that we are showcasing. The book follows the journeys of those birds migrating between Britain and Africa, from their departures in autumn to their return in spring. We hope that you will take the opportunity to purchase a copy of this book tonight and to get it signed by those contributors present at the event.

BTO receives a percentage of sales from tonight, so please support the SWLA artists and BTO by purchasing some wonderful art.

Cover Artwork: Warblers & Heron - Robert Greenhalf, SWLA

