

Scientists' stunning images

NIWA's annual photographic awards have produced some amazing shots this year, a few of which are shown here.

From the bottom of the ocean to the top of atmosphere, NIWA staff work in some of the world's most stunning landscapes.

These beautiful environments form the backdrop for the vast array of environmental science undertaken by our researchers, and are celebrated each year with NIWA's annual photographic competition for staff.

But, as described by Susan Pepperell, sometimes it's the stories behind the winning shots that also deserve telling.

Environmental monitoring technician Hamish Sutton tramped for three days, crossed three gorges and negotiated a long section of boulders to get his shot, which won the Our Places category of the competition.

The photo features Ivory Lake Hut on the West Coast, built for the Ministry of Works in 1970 to enable monitoring of the glaciers, and its walls are full of the names of past NIWA employees who have worked there.

Freshwater fish ecologist Shannan Crow made several attempts and spent hours and hours waiting to get his photograph of Porters Pass which was a clear winner of the People's Choice voted by the public via social media.

Crow said he always wanted to make the Milky Way the main subject but he also wanted the car lights in the foreground, which took a lot of waiting and timing it just right.

Meanwhile, Crispin Middleton lucked out with his winning shot for the Special Award. His squid triptych was taken while he was diving near the Poor Knights Marine Reserve.

'Despite the squid only being around 10–15mm long, my wife spotted it from the boat as we were driving along the coast of the Poor Knights. By the time we anchored I was sure it would have made a getaway but as soon as I backward rolled into the water, the little thing was right there in front of me posing for photographs. I wish more marine critters would behave like this.'

The judges – photography professionals Ross Giblin of Fairfax Media, Gerry le Roux from Science Lens – said the squid looked like ballet dancers on stage. 'The more you look at this photo the more details you see. We love the subtle, translucent detail against the very dark background.'

Jennifer Beaumont took her photo of a brittle star hiding in an anemone when snorkelling on a reef at the Sesoko Marine Station in Okianawa, Japan; she won the Our Work award.

Jochen Bind's photograph of Fox River, taken during a road trip down the West Coast of the South Island, won the Freshwater award, and other winning images include a squid specimen taken by Rob Stewart on board NIWA research vessel *Tangaroa* at the Kermadecs, a photograph by Lettie Roach of scientists on the sea ice in the Ross Sea, and a shot of Mt Taranaki at 2am by Ayushi Kachhara.

Madonna squid. Credit: Crispin Middleton

Ivory Glacier. Credit: Hamish Sutton



Porters Pass. Credit: Shannan Crow



Brittlestar Anemone. Credit: Jennifer Beaumont

The link to all award-winning photographs is:
http://www.niwa.co.nz/static/media/2017_9_photo_competition/

