



## Lepidopterists' Society of Africa's Photographic Competition 2011

Another year has passed and the winners for the Lepidopterists' Society of Africa's photographic competition 2011 have been determined.

With this now being the second year that the competition is open to the rest of the public, it is interesting to look at some of the statistics. Nearly two thirds of the entries came from non-members and only a third came from the current members of the society, which is roughly the same as last year! But unlike the 2010 competition, the members of the society actually took most of the trophies this year!

With every year that passes we also learn more about what other people see in butterflies. Many photographers only see the physical beauty of the butterflies they photograph, but even though we acknowledge that most butterflies and moths are extremely pretty, there is something else that motivates us to host this competition. The scientific value of many of the photographs far outweighs their aesthetic appeal, and this was more obvious than ever in this year's competition. There were quite a few photographs that did not make it into the top selection because of technical reasons, but they did show behaviour about certain butterflies that we had never seen before. Even some photographs of very common butterflies entered into the pictorial category showed behaviour that was new to the judges!

As we said last year, having a competition that limits photographers to only one subject is not an easy task, but we have proven that there are lots of good photographers out there. In South Africa we certainly can't complain about a shortage of subjects, so I hope everyone will enter again next year! To all that entered this year, thanks a lot and may the next season present you with many memorable photos!

Lastly I need to thank all the sponsors for their generous contributions! Without them, this would definitely not have been possible. The De Beers Diamond Route, Boland Cellar, Engen, ExecuJet and the Bluebottle Guesthouse sponsored the winners' prizes and Incedon sponsored all our marketing and administrative costs. Whenever possible, please support the sponsors to thank them for the money and support they put into this competition.

Now on to the winners...



## Pictorial

### Winner

We always try and find beauty in the colourful butterflies, but the patterns and textures that can be seen on many of the moths are equally amazing. Steve Woodhall took this image of a moth (*Pingara abyssinaria*) in the Entumeni forest in Northern KwaZulu-Natal. Even though this is a very common moth in South Africa, this photograph is perfectly sharp and shows the camouflaging pattern very clearly.



Photograph by Steve Woodhall

Steve won:

- 2 Night mid-week stay at Dronfield Nature Reserve sponsored by the Diamond Route
- A Carroll Boyes bottle stand sponsored by Engen
- A USB pen and laser sponsored by Engen
- A pair of binoculars sponsored by Engen
- A Carroll Boyes wine bottle stopper sponsored by Engen
- A bottle of Flutterby wine sponsored by Boland Cellars

## Second Prize

This photograph by Peter Webb shows a male white-cloaked skipper (*Leucochitonea levubu*) marking its presence. The brilliant blue back ground made this photograph stand out from the rest!



Photograph by Peter Webb

Peter won:

- A Caroll Boyes bottle stand sponsored by Engen
- A Caroll Boyes wine bottle stopper sponsored by Engen
- A Sally Williams hamper sponsored by Engen
- A bottle of Flutterby wine sponsored by Boland Cellars

### Third Prize

This photograph of a mating pair of Paul's Buffs (*Pentila pauli*) photographed in Zambia was taken by



Photograph by Peter Sharland

### Runners up for pictorial category



Photographed by Justin Bode



Photographed by Peter Webb



Photographed by Justin Bode



Photographed by Johan Rossouw

### Scientific Category

#### Winner

Peter Webb took this photograph of a moth in a stretch of veld near his home in Irene, Gauteng. It depicts a male moth (currently still unidentified) that climbed up a blade of grass and was sitting there exposing the hairs on the wings. Not only is this a very beautiful photo, but as no one is sure what the purpose of this behaviour is, it contributes a lot to our scientific knowledge. It also goes to show that you don't need to travel into the deepest darkest corners of Africa to see interesting creatures. Moths are very under-studied and interesting observations such as this one can be seen in your own garden!



Photograph by Peter Webb

Peter won:

- 2 Nights' accommodation at the Blue Bottle Guest house in Cape Town
- A Carroll Boyes bottle stand sponsored by Engen
- A USB pen and laser sponsored by Engen
- A pair of binoculars sponsored by Engen
- A Carroll Boyes wine bottle stopper sponsored by Engen
- A bottle of Flutterby wine sponsored by Boland Cellars

### Second prize

This African cuckoo eating a garden Acraea (*Acraea horta*) larva is a brilliant example of a bird that is not affected or is not bothered by the bad taste of the Acraea larvae. Acraea larvae are thought to be poisonous or bad-tasting, but this is another great example of predation on them which makes us question our current knowledge...



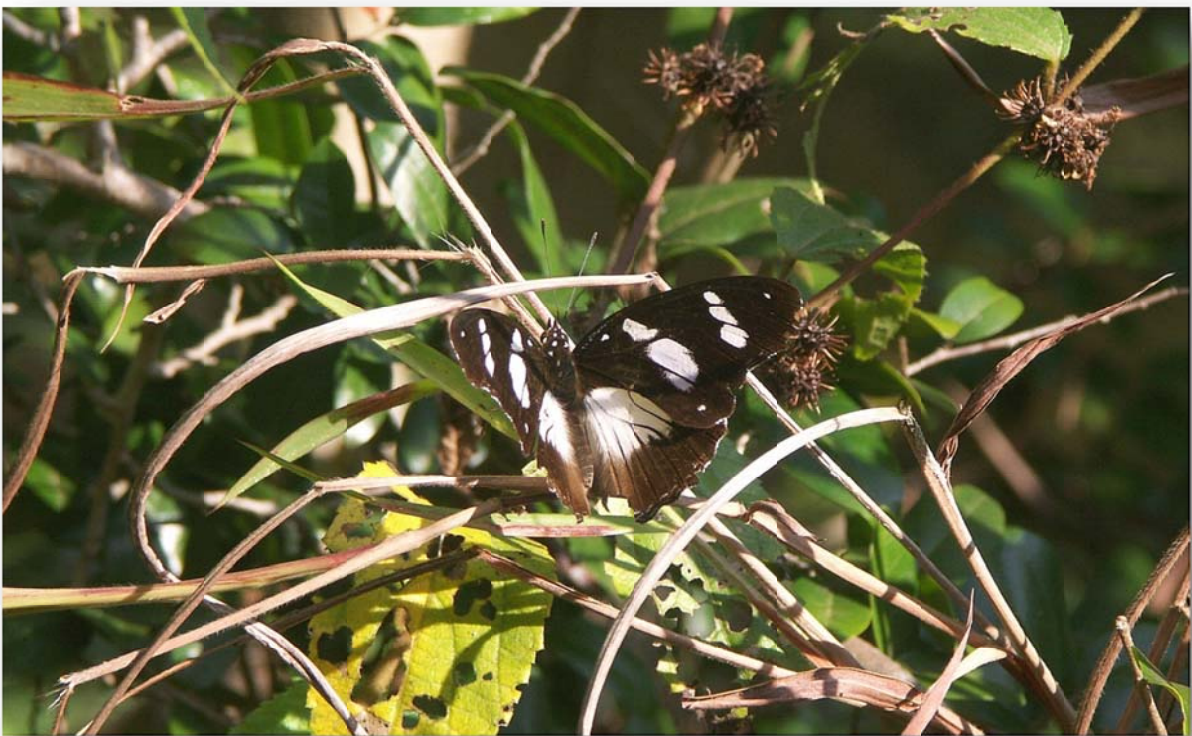
Photograph by Peter Webb

Peter won:

- A Carroll Boyes bottle stand sponsored by Engen
- A Carroll Boyes wine bottle stopper sponsored by Engen
- A Sally Williams hamper sponsored by Engen
- A bottle of Flutterby wine sponsored by Boland Cellars

### Third Prize

Even though this butterfly can be common further north in Africa, this deceptive diadem (*Hypolimnas deceptor*) is a fairly rare butterfly in South Africa. Very few Lepidopterists have seen more than a handful of specimens in South Africa, even though they have been recorded from East London through to Northern KwaZulu-Natal. This photograph however was taken in the Soutpansberg, and is the first confirmed record of this butterfly from outside KwaZulu-Natal or the Eastern Cape. There was at least one historic record from before 1953, but the specimen could never be traced and it was actually excluded for the SABCA project. This photograph was taken at a very well surveyed locality, and after more than 10 years of regular visits, another interesting record appears for the eastern Soutpansberg!



Photograph by Chris Willis

## Other very interesting photographs



Left and below: Even though these spotted jokers (*Byblia illithya*) are common and found throughout most of the eastern parts of South Africa, the behaviour shown here is quite interesting. Both specimens are males and it appears as if they are licking salts from the rock on which they are sitting. This behaviour is often seen for other species, but has not been recorded for this species! (Photographs by Marthie van Zyl)



Left: This Pondoland Widow (*Dira oxylus*) fell prey to a robber fly. As there are not many records of butterflies with eyespots being taken by predators this becomes a very interesting photo. (Photographed by Steve Woodhall).



This mating pair of Barber's ranger (*Kedestes barberae bunta*) was photographed near Strandfontein in the Western Cape. It depicts one of South Africa's most endangered species of butterflies, but also shows some behaviour (Photograph by Andrew Morton)

This is a lovely photograph of a mating pair of African monarchs (*Danaus chrysippus*). The top butterfly is the male and the bottom one the female. Notice how the male keeps on feeding while mating... (Photographed by Eddie Reyneke)



## Early Stages

Steve Woodhall photographed this Common Buff (*Baliochila aslanga*) egg to win the first prize in the early stages category. This photograph shows amazing detail of an egg that is smaller than a pin head. The technique he used to obtain this is called stacking, where many images taken at maximum sharpness but reduced depth-of-field is stacked together to form one image. This technique is allowed in this category where scientific value is more important than the actual aesthetic appeal.



Photograph by Steve Woodhall