

Descriptive Audio Guide

Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2018

1) Welcome

Hi, I'm Mark Peck, manager of the Schad Gallery of Biodiversity at the ROM. It's my pleasure to welcome you to Wildlife Photographer of the Year, organized by the Natural History Museum in London, England since 1984. This internationally recognized competition draws entries from around the world by amateur and professional photographers alike. The competition continues to take the field forward, rewarding artistry, technical excellence and new ways of seeing nature.

Out of more than 45,000 entries from 95 countries, the judges chose 100 winning and commended images. From those, they then selected two grand title winners. The Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition celebrates the very best in wildlife photography and is proudly hosted by the Royal Ontario Museum. We believe that sustainability is an essential mission in the 21st Century, and we know that photography helps us all see our natural world from a new and exciting point of view.

This audio tour will take you through twelve photographs. Throughout the exhibition you'll find numbers near particular photographs which indicate a tour stop. When you arrive at these photographs simply select that number on your device to enjoy a detailed examination of the scene, along with a unique perspective about that photo. We hope to give you additional insight into the photograph, explain what it took to capture that precise moment, and provide you with some curatorial insights from ROM experts. Hopefully you will begin to understand how exhibitions like this one help us appreciate our natural world, and how behind every photograph is a larger story.

2) Sinuous Moves

Hi, this is Vincent Luk and I'm a professional photographer who tells stories through photos. Let's look closely at *Sinuous Moves*, a photo taken in Italy from the category about animal behaviours.

Two slender snakes rise-up from the middle of this photo in a courtship ritual. Their side-by-side bodies are hidden in short, orange-coloured grass, which blurs around them like sweeping flames. Looking to the left of the frame, their faces are in perfect focus - a single red eye on each standing out against their speckled skin. The male on the right is slightly darker brown, while the female on the left has a pink hue to her scales. Neither shows its tongue, giving the sense that they're quite focused on the task at hand.

Courting Adders will rise and lower their bodies in a constant shifting motion, sometimes vibrating their tails. If mating occurs, they will entwine their bodies even closer and, three months later, the female will give birth to as many as 18 live young.

Photographer Lorenzo Shoubridge quietly watched the adders sway cheek-to-cheek, aware that even the slightest movement would distract them. Glad for his low-angle vantagepoint, he isolated the pair by softly blurring their vibrant surroundings. I really love the perspective of this image and how Lorenzo got down to the ground to capture this, only showing the top of the adders heads and not the rest of their bodies. Lorenzo was clearly respecting the snake's space and making an effort to give them their privacy.

This image reminds me a little bit of boudoir photography that captures the beauty of intimate and romantic moments. The blurriness of the orange grass around the snakes makes me feel like they are fully in their own little world. When photographing animals in their natural environment there is always the challenge of vegetation in the foreground and background. A larger telephoto lens would have undoubtedly meant more vegetation in the foreground blocking the clear view of the heads. Lorenzo used a large 4.5 fstop, which creates a shallow depth of field. This blurred both the foreground and the background, putting the snakes in focus without competing with the background.

3) Blood Thirsty

Hi, I'm Mark. I'm the manager of the ROM's Schad gallery of biodiversity and a nature photographer. Let's talk about *Blood Thirsty*, the winning photo in the category about animal Behaviours.

In this somewhat shocking photo, a large black and white Nazca Booby takes up the right side of the frame. The bird faces to the right, has a pink and black beak, and a single yellow eye that stands in contrast against its white feathered head. Downy white feathers continue down its back then the sides, around the underbody and into the wings the feathers become long, black and silky. The booby bears a gaping wound on its back. Dark red blood soaks the feathers around it and stains its white tail. A small brown finch sits feeding at the open hole, its tiny orange beak dotted with blood. Another finch stands in the background, as if patiently waiting its turn to feed on the blood.

The seemingly-intense scene is set on a cluster of rocks, visible to the left of the frame. In the background, wispy green shrubs are set against a blue sky.

Finches have a small supply of seeds and insects to eat on the island so, to survive, they drink the blood of Nazca boobies. Bloodfeeding is not uncommon in nature. It has evolved independently in a number of animal groups from leeches and ticks, to birds, bats, and fishes. Blood is one of the most nutrient-rich substances on earth.

Bloodfeeding is a little uncommon in birds though. In this example, the Vampire Ground Finch, one of 15 Finches found on the Galapagos Islands has come up with a rich and very unique food source. The Vampire Ground Finch is only found on two of the islands, Wolf and Darwin. Because of its small population size and geographic range, the species is considered endangered.

The booby in the photo does not seem bothered by the bloodletting. The vampire finch may have evolved its taste for blood from behaviour originally related to pecking for parasites. The removal of parasites would have been beneficial to the booby and therefore readily accepted. In addition to blood, the Vampire finch also feeds on seeds, invertebrates and nectar from the Galapagos prickly pear. Quite a varied diet, all things considered!

Photographer Thomas Peschak scrambled over loose rock to this plateau on a remote part of the Galápagos Islands, where he captured this bizarre scene. He wanted to provide a bird's eye view for this image. In fact, he was able to provide the view from both birds! By using a wide-angled lens, a higher fstop, and a little flash for highlights, Thomas got a greater depth of field and maintained sharp focus on both the finch and the booby, showcasing the reactions of both species for the viewer.

In the winter of 2019 the ROM will be featuring an exhibit on bloodsuckers from both a cultural and natural science perspective. The two ROM curators responsible for the content of the exhibition are world authorities on bloodsucking. Dr. Doug Currie studies black flies and Dr. Sebastian Kvist studies leeches. It promises to be a great show!

4) Fitting the Bill

Hi, Mark here, manager of the ROM biodiversity and nature photographer. Let's talk about *Fitting the Bill*, a photo taken in Canada from the category about animal Behaviours.

At the centre of this photo is an adult female Common Loon -- known in Europe as Great Northern Divers. The bird stares to the right of the camera with piercing red eyes -- her baby chick facing her. The mother is in crisp focus, every bead of water on her silky black plumage. A ring of white dots circle her neck like a pearl necklace and continue down her sleek back -- markings characteristic of the Common Loon. In her glossy black beak she holds a limp damselfly nymph to her precious chick. The baby is soft-brown, with its back to the viewer and slightly out-of-focus. The rippled water reflects a blur of green surroundings.

Photographer Jess Findlay captured the intense focus of this Common Loon mother -- a species of bird that lays just one or two eggs. In the first few days of life, young Loons struggle to swallow even small fish. The adults lead them from the nest almost immediately after hatching, and one or both parents will spend over three months protecting and feeding the young before leaving them to migrate south on their own.

Common Loons are a Canadian icon. They are woven into the fabric of our country and are even on our money. For many of us, they represent the northern wilderness and anyone who has

experienced the call of the loon on a summer's night is awed by its haunting beauty. And, Canada really is the home of the Common Loon. 95% of the world's breeding population is found in Canada, 70% in Ontario and Quebec. What many people don't realize is that Canada is also home to 3 other species of loons, the Red-throated, Yellow-billed and Pacific loons, all of which breed in the Canadian Arctic.

What I love about this photo is the story it tells about adult loons and their young. It is difficult to tell the difference between a male or female loon so I cannot be sure about this parent but, regardless, the image beautifully portrays the care adults have for their young. For the first week or two after the eggs hatch, baby loons will spend much of their time riding on their parent's back, dropping off occasionally for a quick swim before climbing back on again underneath their wing. For the next three months, one or both parents will feed and protect the young until they are old enough to start their migration south. Young loons will first eat small prey items like damselfly nymphs and other aquatic invertebrates, slowly building up to juvenile fish.

I also love that the photographer has brought us into the image and made us part of the story selecting an eye-level perspective for the shot. I feel like I am the other loon parent observing the feeding from close by while I keep aware of potential predators like a snapping turtle or a northern pike.

5) Forest on a Tree

Hi, I'm Agatha. I am a high school student and wildlife photographer, and winner of the ROM's own wildlife photography competition. Let's talk about *Forest on a Tree*, a photo in the Diversity category.

This photo features the thick brown branch of a Tilo tree, which crosses the frame horizontally like a band. The branch is covered in dark green moss, and sprigs of wrinkly ferns sprout out along the top and bottom. The ferns resemble miniature trees with skinny trunks and broad triangular leaves. A cluster of extra bright leaves grow along the front of the branch toward the camera. The extreme closeup shows the bends and bumps of the tree bark, which looks like rocky terrain.

I was instantly intrigued by this photo. At first I thought it was a small scaled forest that seemed to be sliced in half to reveal the strata of the earth. As I got closer, the top half almost mirrored the bottom as if the small trees were reflecting in water below. I then realized it was a small ecosystem that had attached itself to the branch of a tree.

The mighty Tilo tree only grows in Madeira and the Canary Islands and can reach more than 40 metres in height. That's as tall as a 13-storey building. The foliage growing along this branch is hare's foot fern, which relies on the branch for support and takes water and nutrients from the air, rain and plant debris.

Photographer Antonio Fernandez found this tree in a misty forest, where this branch was hanging among many others. Wanting a uniform background for an intense shot, Antonio waited for the fog to lower, which set his simple composition against a pure white backdrop.

Antonio did a remarkable job capturing this diverse, but thriving ecosystem. The sharp white background enhances the photograph and gives clarity to all the plant life and the branch itself. It amazes me how all the plant life is competing for space, and the sense of determination that each little plant has, whether it be a fern, leaves or moss. The determination for life to thrive and survive no matter what the conditions it finds itself in is fascinating. This photo definitely makes me feel compelled to get closer to the small wonders of parks and nature trails. If these little plants are putting so much effort into surviving then I will put effort into witnessing their achievements.

6) Looking for Love

Hey, it's photographer Vincent Luk again. Let's check out *Looking for Love*, a photo from the Animal Portraits category, taken off the coast of Japan.

This photo contains a single subject – a fish. That is, an Asian sheepshead wrasse, which are found near Sado Island, Japan. The animal is distinctly recognizable by its enormous, pink bulbous head, which takes up the majority of this shot. The fish faces the left edge of the frame, the back of its body extending to the right and ending in a two-pronged tail. It has a row of short, bristly yellow fins down its spine, which match a yellow ring around its glossy blue eye. A large, bright-pink fin on its side matches the hue of the bulbous hump on the top of its head. The rest of the plump body glows white against the dark blue ocean background and three miniscule teeth protrude from its slightly open mouth.

If there are no dominant males in a school of Asian sheepshead wrasse, the larger, older female wrasse will change sex. The newly transformed fish makes use of its bulbous head, which turns bright pink in breeding season, to gain control over other males and attract a harem of females in the process.

Tony Wu, the photographer, was on a mission – to capture an image that portrayed the 'unique expression and burning desire of a male in love'. I think he succeeded. Tony used a wide angle lens to capture this image, which means he was up close and intimate with the fish. Underwater photography can be difficult for the photographer because of the challenges with light and water clarity. Photographers often need to be very close to their subject. It almost looks like this fish was being curious and swam over to Tony to see what he was up to.

I love learning about strange and wonderful creatures on this planet! This image really caught my attention with the uniqueness of the fish and its piercing blue/green eyes staring right back at you. What a great portrait.

7) Cool Cat

Hey, Vincent here. Let's examine *Cool Cat*, a photo from the Animal Portraits category, taken in South Africa.

This photo is set at the edge of a watering hole, murky water covering the bottom quarter of the frame. Long African grasses grow along the water's edge and flop forward toward the camera. Their stalks are brown where they're buried in the swamp then flourish in a vibrant green that fills most of the image.

From between the tall reeds, the sand-coloured face of a lioness breaks through and bends to take a drink. Her piercing amber eyes seem to look slightly right of the lens and her thick pink tongue creates ripples on the water's surface. A few blades of grass curl over her face, making her look both strong and peaceful.

Photographer Isak Pretorius loves creating photos with impact. He was photographing a pride of lions when this lioness wandered off. Anticipating it was going for a drink, he positioned himself by the nearest waterhole for whenever the cat appeared through the lush green wall of grass.

Patience was the key here as Isak was able to anticipate the behaviour, after spending time observing the pride of lions. A 600 mm telephoto lens was used to capture the image at a safe distance away, allowing the lioness to behave naturally in its habitat and for Isak to capture this tranquil moment at the edge of the watering hole.

I love the symmetry in this image. The way the lioness is framed by the tall blades of grass and the ripples of water. Isak clearly chose the right time of year to photograph lions in South Africa with the rich greenery that made this image pop. The "Emerald Season" during the summer is a beautiful time of year when all is green and lush, but can make wildlife a bit harder to spot in the dense bush. You can get a sense of how difficult it would be to spot the lioness if it was stalking prey amongst the tall blades of grass, as her back almost disappears into the background at the top of the image.

Although they drink readily when water is available, lions also consume moisture from their prey and plants – making them perfectly adapted to arid landscapes.

8) The Catch

Hi, this is Agatha, the student who won the ROM's own wildlife photography competition. Let's take a look at *The Catch*, a photo taken by a young photographer in the 11-14 year old category.

In this portrait, a pale grey spider hangs from a single thread of silk against a pitch black sky. Its eight hairy legs are spread in near-perfect symmetry on each side of its bulbous body, the front two pairs reaching the far edges of the frame. In the middle of a meal, the spider dangles a frog in its fangs, mid-air. Glossy yellow-white, the frog seems to shimmer against the black backdrop and, having been pierced through the neck, its head hangs toward the viewer. In actuality, each

animal is no bigger than a golf ball. But together, they fill the frame of this photo, inspiring both fascination and curiosity about the details of their encounter.

This photo was taken by Robert Irwin, son of Steve Irwin, the famous “Crocodile Hunter” and Australian zookeeper. Robert was trudging through the dense Australian woodland at night when he saw this huntsman spider dangling mid-air while clutching a dead frog. He said it was extraordinary to see the spider predating an animal so large.

Huntsman spiders are active hunters who usually stalk large insects, other spiders, and the occasional frog. They don’t spin webs, but instead leap down from above or throw a silk net onto passing prey. This arachnid likely fell from a branch while struggling with the frog, and was left dangling dramatically from a silk anchor line. Huntsman spiders set up these anchors as a precaution for exactly this purpose.

I’ve always been a bit scared of spiders. When I see them in the centre of their webs, I feel a sense of relief because I know exactly where they are. It’s the ones that hide under the furniture or the bed waiting to lunge at their prey that make me a little tense.

Spiders are often used in movies or social media as a way to create fear or panic, or as an unwanted house guest. In reality, spiders contribute greatly to our ecosystem. They control the insect population and provide birds with a food source.

By looking more closely at spiders and understanding how amazing they truly are, you become a little less frightened. For me though, I still prefer them outside of the house!

Robert Irwin's photo is incredible because it captures a moment in time when the prey succumbs to the hunter. The battle between life and death is over for the frog and the spider takes home her prize. The black background re-enforces the climax of this event and adds to its grim conclusion...for the frog anyway!

9) Colour Sound Action

Hi, it’s Agatha again. Let’s take a look at *Colour, Sound, Action*, a photo taken by a Canadian photographer in the 15-17 year old category.

This landscape-oriented photo captures five cobalt-winged parakeets descending on a mucky puddle at the left of the frame. Their outstretched wings, in tones of intense violet, are blurred with motion and offset by the crisp lime-green colour of their heads and bodies. On the right of the image, a few dozen birds are densely huddled together. Their tails have cobalt-blue stripes and their tiny peach-coloured beaks stand out against their vivid green feathers. The background is dark, with hints of a forest looming just beyond sight. A spotlight illuminates the glistening mud, a small pool of water and the tiny parakeet faces gathered around it.

Parakeets spend most of their day in the safety of trees where predators are unlikely to catch them. But when they need to come down to drink, they're aware of the risks and descend in groups for protection. They are incredibly vulnerable to attack when grounded, so even the slightest noise can disperse the flock.

As a bird lover, I found this photo to be absolutely stunning. The vivid green, peach, and blue coloured parakeets huddled together for safety, while taking a drink of water demonstrates the strong bond and instinct they have to protect each other from danger. The five parakeets captured in mid-flight look as though they are dancing in the air, perhaps moments after quenching their thirst.

A slow shutter speed allowed photographer Liron Gertsman to capture the cluster of parakeets in flight, amid a frenzy of colour and squawking. He hopes this image will show 'just how amazing and worth protecting nature is.'

Liron has perfectly captured this beautiful moment. Although the parakeets fluttering wings are now still and suspended in time, you can almost still hear their wings flapping and their feet scrambling along the ground, each one vying for a place around the pool of water. The fact that Liron is Canadian is truly special because it not only showcases Canadian talent but demonstrates Canadian awareness and desire to protect endangered wildlife throughout the world. Seeing the beauty of these endangered parakeets in their natural habitat confirms our need to protect them and ensure their future is as bright as they are.

10) Shark Sex in the Shallows

Hi, it's Mark again from the ROM. Let's look at *Shark Sex in the Shallows*, a photo taken by a Canadian photographer in the Habitats category.

You likely wouldn't know these sharks were mating based on this photo. An underwater camera captures a sandy seabed under approximately one meter of clear, green water.

At the centre of the frame, a female nurse shark lies on her back on the sea floor. She is brownish in colour, with smooth skin and a torpedo-like snout facing to the left of the frame. Sand is tossed around her curving body as she struggles against a male.

He breaks the surface of the water, facing the camera – and clutches the female by the gills with his teeth. He is lighter in colour, his small eyes hard to see against the extra-light flesh of his face. Two short whiskers extend from his mouth like fangs. But he is not attacking the female. They are mating.

Nurse shark mating is not a gentle affair. The male bites the female's pectoral fin, rolling her over and pinning her to the seabed.

Photographer Shane Gross camped overnight on a beach to capture this image in the morning. He managed to capture the gaze from the mating pair's tiny eyes amid the chaos.

Wildlife photography is rarely easy. Wildlife photography underwater is even more difficult. Additional lighting is usually required and you have to be close to your subject matter, so wide angle lenses are a must. Trying to remain calm and keeping the camera steady when you are a few feet away from two mating sharks is probably not for everyone, but it does provide incredible opportunities to witness and better understand some very interesting behaviour.

Nurse sharks are a somewhat docile shark species, although they have bitten people when bothered or provoked. During the day, they are often found sitting quietly on the seafloor or under rocky ledges, but are more active at night when they are feeding. Nurse sharks use a powerful mouth suction to capture their prey from the sandy sea bottom. Adult female Nurse Sharks may reach 3 m in length and are a little longer than males, however males tend to weigh more reaching up to 120 kgs.

Nurse sharks are oviparous, meaning they do produce discrete eggs but the eggs remain in the female until they hatch after 6 months. The young are fully developed and are on their own after they are born. Nurse sharks have a typical litter of 20-30 pups. They mate every 2 years.

11) The Golden Couple

Hey, it's Vincent, professional photographer. Let's look at *The Golden Couple* – this is the winning photo of the competition this year, and is taken from the animal portraits category.

In the centre of this jungle-themed frame are two golden snub-nosed monkeys sitting on moss-covered rocks. The male on the left is larger and sits on a higher level than the female. Both have short, vibrant-orange hair covering their heads and framing the pale blue skin of their faces. The male has his back to the viewer. His hair becomes long and more golden in colour as it cascades down his body. His long thin tail is covered with short grey hair and hangs down the rock. He gazes away from the camera toward the right edge of the frame.

The female sits beyond him, looking off in the same direction as her partner. She's a fair bit smaller than he is and faces the camera, such that her breasts are visible. The pair is set against a dense forest background with thick brown tree trunks breaking up the lush green foliage.

Found only in the forests of China's Qinling Mountains, this sub-species of golden snub-nosed monkey is now endangered. The trees they rely on for food are being overharvested to make way for roads and tourism, which has cut their numbers in half over the past 40 years. There are now fewer than 4,000 individuals left in these mountains.

Photographer Marsel van Oosten slipped and stumbled over logs in his struggle to keep up with this couple as they jumped from tree to tree. But he learned to predict their behaviour, and was able to capture them intently watching an altercation between two males down the valley.

Marsel trained in art and design, but his love of wildlife and passion for photography led him to leave an office job to become a nature photographer.

His passion was well-channelled. This is such a beautiful image. The lighting is superb and beautifully captures a moment of stillness of these endangered monkeys. It makes me wonder how often these animals are able to have a moment like this for themselves, without the interference and disturbance of humans coming in to their forest and cutting down their trees. Or is the lack of emotion on their faces showing a darker side where they have already given up hope and are numb to their inevitable demise? It is definitely a thought provoking image that makes you question why we aren't doing more to protect endangered species around the world. One thing is for sure, we need to have more amazing photographers like Marsel Van Ousten out there capturing these beautiful images of natural history and sharing these stories. I hope images like this can open people's eyes to appreciate the incredible diversity of life on this planet and the need to protect it. To me, this winning image really speaks to the uncertainty of where our planet is headed.

12) Lounging Leopard

Hi, Agatha here, student and photographer. Let's talk about *Lounging Leopard*. This is the overall winning youth photo, taken from the 15-17 year old category.

The subject of this photo is a sole leopardess, peacefully lying on a branch at the centre of the frame. Her face is gently resting on her front paw and she gazes just beyond the viewer, as if in a daydream. Her fur is both subtle and blazing - its orangey hue dotted with black spots characteristic of the iconic cat. Her pink nose and white whiskers stand out against the shadows and her body extends out of frame to the right. The image is in crisp focus, every hair on the animal's body visible. In contrast behind the cat is the green shadows of a forest and a hint of blurred light that illuminates her in a pose that is both regal and intimate.

This photo is truly beautiful. I love how the photograph captures not only the majestic essence of the Leopard but manages to capture her in a peaceful and tranquil moment. It's almost as if she is pondering upcoming events or reflecting on days passed, as she lays hidden amongst the leaves. I love how the leopard's head is nestled on her front paws and her eyes are gazing peacefully upwards, unaware that she is forever being imprinted on film for us to marvel in her beauty. The blurred background and shimmering morning light behind her add to the leopard's natural beauty and enhance her perfectly spotted fur coat.

Leopards are highly adaptable animals but show a decline in numbers and are now classified as vulnerable. As human populations expand, leopard habitats have become reduced and fragmented. Also, leopards are still illegally hunted for their skin.

Photographer Skye Meaker grew up in South Africa and was introduced to nature photography by his father. Taking his first shots at seven, he is now 15 years old and already a prize-winner with a passion for wildlife photography.

The notoriously elusive leopards of the Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana are hard to spot. Skye tracked the shy cats for several hours and eventually came upon this female. The morning light was poor and leaves kept blowing across her face. But when the overhead branches moved, a shaft of light gave a glint to her eyes, and Skye snapped this tranquil portrait as the leopardess was falling asleep.

I admire the patience and courage of Skye, the photographer, as he made his way through the game reserve searching for that perfect shot. It takes real determination and love for photography and animals to capture for the world photos of truly magnificent wildlife. This powerful photograph of the “Lounging Leopard” must empower us to continue our responsibility to protect endangered wildlife. Successful wildlife conservation cannot just be a dream of ours but a reality that we are proud of accomplishing.

13) Glass-House Guard

Hi, it's Mark here. Let's end with a look at *Glass-House Guard*, a photo from the underwater Habitats category.

A bright yellow pygmy goby is the star of this photo. The fish floats at the centre of the frame facing the camera, its outstretched fins almost reaching the edges. Two bulging blue eyes, though on the sides of the face, seem to stare at the viewer. The image is so crisp that the shiny clear coating over the eye is visible.

The goby's mouth is open and turned down at the corners in a plump frown. The vibrant eyes stare through a circular opening – which is an extreme close-up of the mouth of a glass bottle where the fish has made its home. Tiny fibres surround the perimeter and trap particles of plankton, algae and other ocean debris.

Photographer Wayne Jones set up his camera centimetres from the bottle's narrow opening to focus on the goby's arresting blue eyes. As the fish was moving, the rest of its body is blurred in a haze of yellow.

All of the photographs in this exhibition are visually striking, but one of the things I like most about WPY are the stories behind the photographs. Sadly, despite the bright vibrant colour of the pygmy goby, this story is about ocean pollution and the damage we are doing to coral reefs.

Female pygmy gobys often inhabit old worm holes to lay eggs while the male stands guard outside. Though Coral reef ecosystems are some of the most diverse and plentiful on Earth, due to human contributions to ocean pollution, they're becoming more and more threatened. As a result, fish and other sea life have started using foreign objects as homes. This is not something we should be proud of.

Global warming in our oceans is occurring so rapidly, the coral and algae cannot adapt and the reefs are dying. In 2016, the bleaching of coral on the Great Barrier Reef killed 30 to 50 percent

of the reef's coral. And there are other problems as well. In some cases we are losing our reefs to extinction. Coral is a popular item for souvenirs. It is a favourite for jewellery, carvings and even home decorations. Coral is also highly sought after for aquariums and many natural reefs are in decline as a result. Even ecotourism is having an impact. Damage from boat anchors, direct contact by divers, the introduction of invasive species, and the feeding or harassment of species by humans all have negative impacts on reefs.

Research and efforts by scientific institutions like the ROM are important to understand and reverse these negative impacts. To learn more about threats to coral reefs spend some time in this space, and explore the story behind the photo.