

The Tony Whitten Conservation Prize

Tony Whitten (1953–2017) was an inspirational conservationist who championed biodiversity across Asia and beyond. He was Senior Advisor at Fauna and Flora International (serving as Director of its Asia-Pacific programme), and before that Senior Biodiversity Specialist at the World Bank. Alongside helping run conservation projects across Asia Tony did world-class work on the discovery and conservation of limestone cave invertebrates, saving many species from obliteration by the region's rapidly expanding cement industry, and having no fewer than 31 new genera and species named in his honour. He also recently established the IUCN Cave Invertebrate Specialist Group. As a tribute to him, the Cambridge Conservation Initiative is delighted to host this award for early career conservationists and biodiversity researchers from East and Southeast Asia.

The prize is open to those under the age of 35 involved in any area of conservation or field biology in the region. Prizes are awarded by a panel selected by Tony's family. The panel is especially interested in hearing about work on the overlooked species and habitats that Tony was most passionate about – such as caves and karst ecosystems, and understudied invertebrates and fishes. Applicants should be nationals of Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste or Vietnam.

Applications for the 2020 Prize will be announced on the [Cambridge Conservation Initiative](#) website.

2019 PRIZE WINNERS

The panel judging applications for the first year of this prize were astonished by the number they received, and also by their quality. They have awarded the prizes to six early-career conservationists and field biologists from East and South-east Asia, all of whom are doing groundbreaking work on the sorts of often overlooked species and habitats that Tony was most passionate about.



Ayu Savitri Nurinsiyah, for her work on the land snails of Java

Ayu explores the diversity of land snails, and has been involved in the discovery of a number of new species, including *Landouria tonywhitteni*, named in honour of Tony Whitten. This species is endemic to Sukolilo karst, an area where there are conflicts between the cement industry and local people.

Evan Quah Seng Huat, for his work on the conservation of karst habitats in Myanmar

Evan has been studying reptiles and amphibians in these little explored karst regions before they are quarried by the cement industry. He has been involved in the discovery of several new species, including the gecko *Hemiphyllodactylus tonywhitteni*, named in honour of Tony Whitten.





Junn Kitt Foon, for his work on conservation and taxonomy of land snails in Malaysia

Junn was inspired to pursue a conservation career by Tony Whitten's books and his passion for limestone biodiversity. Working with Tony taught him the need to engage with stakeholders, including communities, government, conservationists and companies, when undertaking conservation work.

Ming-Kai Tan, for his work on taxonomy and orthopteran biodiversity in Southeast Asia

Ming-Kai surveys orthopterans throughout Southeast Asia. He seeks to resolve taxonomic problems, name species, and provide species lists and distribution and natural history data so that protection of these neglected species is well-informed.



Nattawadee Nantarat, for her work on land snails in Thailand and Southeast Asia

Nattawadee analyses the biodiversity and evolutionary relationships of land snails in Thailand and Southeast Asia to help support programmes for karst conservation. She has a particular interest in terrestrial operculate snails of the genus *Cyclophorus*.

Weixin Liu, for her work on millipede diversity in subterranean habitats in China

Weixin carries out research on millipede diversity in subterranean habitats in China, working on phylogenetic relationships using both morphological and molecular characters. She is also investigating the status and ecology of millipedes, to provide data for their conservation.

