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JONAH REENDERS



In this year's overall winning photo, Callie Veelenturf takes samples from a leatherback sea turtle's nest during her research in Equatorial Guinea.

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Behind the scenes

This year's winning shots follow scientists from Antarctic fields to African volcanic plains.

BY JACK LEEMING

This shot of marine biologist Callie Veelenturf kneeling with a sea turtle is the overall winner of *Nature's* 2018 #ScientistAtWork photo contest, which celebrates the diversity and importance of the research scientists dedicate huge chunks of their lives to.

Veelenturf has just started a position at the Turtle Island Restoration Network, in Olema, California, where she'll protect leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) as they lay their eggs on beaches across South and Central America. As part of her master's-degree programme at

Purdue University Fort Wayne in Indiana, she and biologist Jonah Reenders, a volunteer on the project, spent nearly half a year living in tents on Bioko Island in Equatorial Guinea. In November 2016, two months in, Reenders snapped this picture of her sampling a leatherback's nest just before it started laying eggs. "Five months. Livin' in a tent," Veelenturf says. "We ate powdered baby food for breakfast every day."

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Read the story online to see more photos: go.nature.com/2japvk1

This year's #ScientistAtWork contest — our second — garnered about 330 entries from around the world. We

saw scientists treating disease in West Africa, engineering crops in Australia and tracking the habits of cave bacteria in central Europe. Winning entries, shown here, were selected by *Nature* art editors on the basis of visual impact. Winners will receive a year's personal subscription to *Nature*.

Scientists devote endless time and energy over the course of their careers to answering certain questions or solving specific problems. Veelenturf's goal is to counter the fall in turtle birth rate — often attributed to climate change — worldwide. "I want to spend my life preserving turtle habitats," she says. ▶

Here are the rest of the winning images from the competition.

SPACE FROM THE ANTARCTIC (HANG LI)

A panorama of the night sky from Zhongshan Station in Antarctica shot by geodesist Hang Li of China's Wuhan University in Hubei. For two months of polar night, Li lived in darkness, cold and isolation.



INTO THE SINKHOLE (MICHAEL BIRD)

Ecologist Mick Brand and meteorologist Costijn Zwart of James Cook University in Townsville, Australia, abseil a boat into a 40-metre sinkhole in Arnhem Land to investigate the area's geological record.



GLASSES (BOGDAN DEREKA)

Joseph Beckwith, an ultrafast photochemist at the University of Geneva in Switzerland and a colleague of Bogdan Dereka, who took this photo, arranges equipment designed to manipulate laser light.

SPACE: HANG LI; SINKHOLE: MICHAEL BIRD; SALT PLAINS: MARIA DE CRAEN; ICE CORES: ANA LYONS; SPEAKING UP: NELSON W ARMOUR; GLASSES: BOGDAN DEREKA

SALT PLAINS (HUGO MOORS)

Microbiologist Hugo Moors and geologist Mieke De Craen with the Belgian Nuclear Research Centre in Mol take samples from the volcanic salt plains of northern Ethiopia, one of the most extreme environments on Earth. Water here has seven to ten times the salt content of the sea, and so can be heated to temperatures above 100°C. Their sample was more acidic than the solutions in many car batteries.



SPEAKING UP FOR SCIENCE (GARRY COOPER)

Entrepreneur Garry Cooper speaks at a March for Science last year. Cooper hopes this picture reflects his message: scientists don't all look alike, and that's a good thing. The march was repeated this month.



DRILLING ICE CORES IN ANTARCTICA (ANA LYONS)

Junior scientists heave up an ice-core sample near McMurdo Station in Antarctica. The blinding sun is deceptive, says photographer and biologist Ana Lyons of the University of California, Berkeley — it's cold.