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**NIKON SMALL WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT ON DISPLAY AT WELLS RESERVE**

WELLS, Maine, April 26, 2021 — Feather of peacock, eye of weevil, and mite on a honeybee may sound like ingredients in a fanciful witch’s brew, but they are among the award-winning close-up photographs showing at the Wells Reserve at Laudholm between May 28 and July 18. The exhibit presents the top 20 images from the 44th annual Nikon Small World photomicrography competition, those that were judged the best among almost 2,500 entries from scientists and artists in 89 countries.

“Nikon Small World celebrates the beauty and complexity of life as seen through the light microscope,” explained Nik Charov, president of Laudholm Trust, who arranged for the exhibit to appear in Maine this summer. “Scientists at the Wells Reserve examine microscopic life all the time, from lobster eggs to zooplankton. This show is a great fit for a renovated exhibit space that also features a window into our active research lab.”

First-place winner Yousef Al Habshi said, “Through photomicrography we can find a whole new, beautiful world which hasn’t been seen before. I feel like I’m photographing a collection of jewelry.”

Al Habshi’s winning image captures part of the compound eyes and surrounding greenish scales of an Asian red palm weevil. He stacked more than 128 micrographs “to show the black body against the black background without overexposing the skin and scales.”

Second place was awarded to Rogelio Moreno for his colorful photo of a fern sorus, a clustered structure that produces and contains spores. Saulius Gugis captured third place with an image of a spittlebug making its “bubble house.”

Eric Flem, communications manager at Nikon Instruments, said “Imaging and microscope technologies allow artists and scientists to capture scientific moments with remarkable clarity.” Winning photographs, images of distinction, and honorable mentions from current and past competitions can be viewed at nikonsmallworld.com.

Nikon Small World will be open from 10am to 3pm daily, with COVID precautions in place. Entrance to the exhibit is free with regular admission to the Wells Reserve at Laudholm. FMI wellsreserve.org/art.

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The Wells Reserve at Laudholm is a place to discover. Maine’s only National Estuarine Research Reserve is open every day for science, education, and public enjoyment. More than 30,000 people visit the Wells Reserve each year to explore 7 miles of trails and discover the value of coastal ecosystems. The Wells Reserve is funded by Laudholm Trust (a member-supported Maine nonprofit founded in 1982) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The reserve is located just off U.S. Route 1 near the Wells-Kennebunk line.