

2026 YOUTH PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

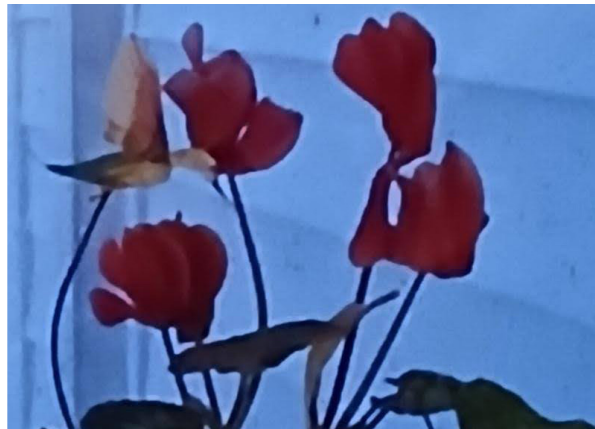
Each year, the PFSC and PWF host a uniquely themed wildlife photo contest to encourage creative expression and foster an appreciation and understanding of the outdoor world. For this year's contest, we asked for depictions of Pennsylvania's pollinators — from bees to butterflies — and the results of their work. By looking closer at nature, and learning more about pollinators, we can see how conservation efforts promote and protect our natural resources.

Thank you to everyone who submitted their pictures, and congratulations to all of this year's winners!

1st Place - Caleb Pardoe Butler County



Sub-Junior Division (Grades 4-6)



2nd Place - Daniel Russick Armstrong County

When grandma told me about this, I looked up pollinators and learned that 90% of them are bees, and I don't know where I would find bees now. But I thought the hummingbird was interesting because it's different from other birds, and that's because its beak pollinates the tubular flowers. There are 8000 species.

Hummingbirds collect pollen on their heads and feathers as they fly from flower to flower pollinating the plants, and they have such great memories that they remember where and what flowers they got nectar from and when it's time to return to those flowers! Hummingbirds are great for our ecosystem because they need the flowers' nectar for energy, and in doing so, they pollinate the flowers to reproduce. So our world is more beautiful because of the hummingbird's pollination.

A pollinator is an animal or insect that moves pollen from the male part of a flower to the female stigma. My picture is a Giant Swallowtail. It is a pollinator. The Giant Swallowtail is North America's largest butterfly. It transfers pollen from one plant to another on its legs, body, and tongue. This helps create genetic diversity.



The Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation is the educational arm of the PFSC whose mission is to educate Pennsylvanians about our environment and inspire them to protect and conserve our natural resources. Donations to PWF are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

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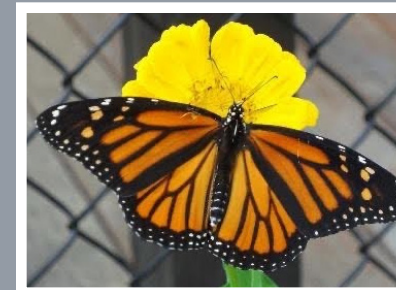


Junior Division (Grades 7-9)

1st Place Rebekah Pardoe Butler County

Hummingbird clearwing moths are fast-flying moths that pollinate flowers, remarkable for their resemblance to hummingbirds. These moths typically have one to three broods per year, with the pupae living in the soil until maturity. Despite sometimes being hard to find, they are common in Pennsylvania. A variety of different kinds of hummingbird moths are common throughout the U.S. I decided to use this picture because it's hard to capture a good picture of the moth at its speed.

Seniors Division (Grades 10-12)



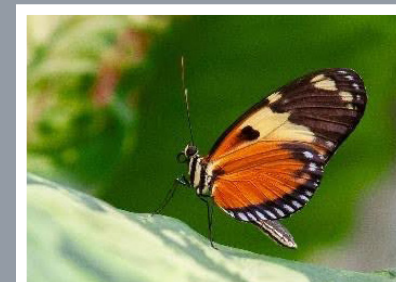
1st Place - Jenna Koni, Westmoreland County

The monarch butterfly, native to Pennsylvania, is a vital pollinator of wildflowers. The inspiration for my photo was to capture a butterfly in flight, pollinating, to depict the elegance of the species and its pollination in action. I was able to isolate the subject in my photo through the vibrant colors of the flower, tied to the orange and the intricate details of the butterfly. When we think of butterflies, the first thing that attracts us is their distinctive appearance. However, they are more than an art piece.



1st Place - Kieran Cain, Allegheny County

Although they are not a common pollinator, weevils also play an important role in pollination. Weevils form a symbiotic relationship with flowers, namely brood-site pollination, in which weevils live, feed, and lay eggs on the same plants they pollinate. As they crawl inside of flowers to feed on nectar, pollen sticks to their bodies and is transferred from flower to flower as they move, effectively and efficiently fertilizing more plants. Plant and weevil populations grow and develop together, focused around the success of their brood site pollination.



1st Place - Mackenzie McClure, Centre County

The smallest details in life are often overlooked, including our pollinators. Crafted with such a specialty, they allow our ecosystems to thrive. Despite their importance, humans may neglect their beauty and the cornerstone role they play in nature's life. This photo not only showcases the delicacy and value of these species, but also their true ability to bring wonders full of imagination and appreciation to all humankind.