

## VIMS announces winners of 2012 Photo Contest

By David Malmquist

(September 24, 2012) The Virginia Institute of Marine Science has announced the winners of its annual photo contest, an in-house competition held to recognize and honor the most engaging images taken by VIMS faculty, students, and staff during their scientific work in the field and laboratory.

The first-place winner for 2012 is VIMS graduate student Alison Deary, for her photograph of a specimen of a larval spadefish that she prepared with special dyes to indicate whether individual parts of the fish's developing skeleton have begun to harden through the process of calcification, or still remain cartilaginous and soft.

"The red colors in the image indicate calcified structures," says Deary, "whereas the blue indicates uncalcified structures. Even though this individual is only 23 days old, it already exhibits a great deal of calcification." The image was prepared for the Finfish Aquaculture program at VIMS, whose scientists are collaborating with colleagues at Virginia Tech to explore the use of spadefish in aquaculture. The project is funded by Virginia Sea Grant.

Taking the second-place award was VIMS graduate student Miram Gleiber for her "mirror image" of the U.S. research vessel *Laurence M. Gould* within the sea ice in Neko Harbor on the Western Antarctic Peninsula. The ice-breaking vessel provides the main research platform for VIMS' involvement in the Long-Term Ecological Research project at the U.S. Palmer Research Station.



*This image by Miram Gleiber took 2nd place.*



*This image by graduate student Alison Deary took top prize in the 2012 VIMS Photo Contest.*

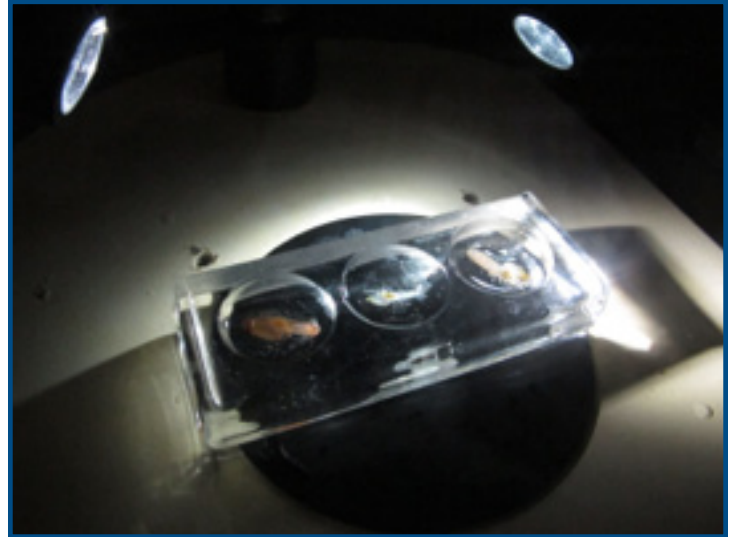
The third-place winner was graduate student Solomon Chak, for his image of three specimens of the sponge-dwelling Caribbean shrimp *Synalpheus*. Chak and his faculty mentor Dr. Emmett Duffy are studying the evolution of "eusociality" in these organisms. Eusociality—most familiar among ants, bees, and other social insects—refers to life in large, cooperative colonies. Duffy's 1996 discovery of eusociality in *Synalpheus* was the first report of this phenomenon in a marine animal.

The selection committee, headed by VIMS Publications Manager Sue Stein, also awarded a number of honorable mentions:

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- Steven Baer—a self-portrait illuminated by a spectacular display of the northern lights, taken during studies of nitrogen cycling along Alaska’s North Slope.
- Jessica Bergeron—Sunset from the fishing vessel *Regulus* during a scallop research cruise to the Georges Bank.
- Miram Gleiber—VIMS graduate student Kate Ruck on the research vessel *Laurence M. Gould* during a PAL-LTER research expedition to Antarctica.
- Janet Krenn—VIMS graduate student Ryan Schloesser retrieves a buoy during fieldwork near VIMS Eastern Shore Laboratory in Wachapreague.
- Pam Reynolds—A trio of researchers process fish and invertebrates caught in a seine net in Middle Marsh, North Carolina as part of the international ZEN research project.



*This image by Solomon Chak took 3rd place.*

Stein says that she “always appreciates the efforts of those who submit their photos to our contest,” and notes that VIMS uses photo-content entries to help illustrate its print publications, outreach materials, and website.

VIMS Dean and Director John Wells says he enjoys the photos for their “engaging depiction of the wide diversity of research activities pursued by VIMS scientists in Chesapeake Bay and around the world.”

High-resolution versions of the images are available on the VIMS Flickr page at <http://bit.ly/vimsphotocontest12>.