



PREminat

COMMUNICATING THE
NATURAL SCIENCES

The Nat Award

The **Nat Award** was created in 2018 to commemorate the Museu de Ciències Naturals de Barcelona's 140th anniversary. It is an honorary distinction that rewards individuals or institutions that have brought a new approach to the dissemination of natural sciences that has contributed to the creation of scientific vocations and to the conservation of nature. Awarded annually to local or international individuals or institutions, there is both a main prize and an honourable mention. Winners of the Nat Award receive a specially designed piece by the sculptor Antoni Llena, and those granted the Nat Honourable Mention, a silkscreen print by the painter Perico Pastor.

Winners of the Nat Award and Nat Honourable Mention 2021

Nat Award 2021

Nalini Nadkarni, for her enthusiastic work in research and dissemination of biodiversity and the environment, focused on the study and defence of forests around the world; and for the creation of original communication and educational tools aimed at all areas of society that also address gender issues and groups at risk of exclusion.

Nat Honourable Mention 2021

Centre Excursionista de Catalunya [Hiking Club of Catalonia] and the **Institució Catalana d'Història Natural** [Catalan Institute of Natural History], for their great academic and educational work with the general public on the understanding, exploration, research, and dissemination of natural sciences and the preservation of the environment. A task begun in the 19th century, successfully continued to the present day, and which has made a decisive contribution to the history of the Museu de Ciències Naturals de Barcelona [Barcelona Museum of Natural Sciences].

The Nat Award jury is formed by:

- **Dacha Atienza**, head of collections & research at the Barcelona Museum of Natural Sciences
- **Mara Dierssen**, neurobiologist and science communicator
- **Martí Domínguez**, biologist and director of the scientific journal *Mètode*
- **Xavier Duran**, writer and journalist with TV3
- **Teresa Garnatje**, director of the Institut Botànic de Barcelona [Botanical Institute of Barcelona]
- **Anna Omedes**, director of the Barcelona Museum of Natural Sciences
- **Joandomènec Ros**, Professor of Ecology at the University of Barcelona

Nalini Nadkarni

[1954, Bethesda, Maryland USA]

Known as the “Queen of the Forest Canopy”, forest ecologist Nalini Nadkarni is a pioneer in the study of canopy ecosystems in tropical and temperate forests. In particular, she studies the survival of epiphytes, non-parasitic plants that grow on other plants, as well as the effects of forest fragmentation on biodiversity. She is co-founder of the International Canopy Network, a non-profit organization that fosters the creation of communication tools for researchers, educators and conservationists concerned with forest canopies.

Nadkarni uses mountain climbing techniques, construction cranes and hot air balloons to explore forest canopies, among the last biotic frontiers on Earth. She has studied trees on every continent, undertaking long-term projects in the forests of Costa Rica and the Pacific Northwest in Washington State.

Nadkarni is also an activist and a passionate communicator of nature and science. While exploring the canopy of a Costa Rican forest, the shrill noise of a chainsaw encouraged her to step out of academia to engage and raise awareness among all kinds of people and communities about the fragility of forests and the future of the Earth. She has pioneered conservation projects in prisons, demonstrating that everyone can contribute to biodiversity conservation. She has invited rappers, dancers, writers and visual artists into the forests to find inspiration for particular works, some of which have been met with acclaim. She has reached out to religious communities through talks on the role of trees in the symbolism of almost all faiths, and has collaborated with the manufacturer of Barbie dolls to create a series of scientific models: the forest canopy explorer, the astrophysicist, the biologist, and the entomologist, among others.

Nalini Nadkarni is a professor of biology at the University of Utah and at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. She has written nearly 130 scientific articles and half a dozen books, some specialised as well as popular books for adults and children. Her work has been showcased in several documentaries and in magazines such as *Playboy*, *Glamour*, *National Geographic* and *Natural History*. Nadkarni's endeavours have earned her some fifteen awards, including the Public Engagement with Science Award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the William Julius Wilson Award for the Advancement of Social Justice from Washington State University, and the Women of Discovery Award from WINGS WorldQuest.

<https://nalininadkarni.com/>

Centre Excursionista de Catalunya

The Centre Excursionista de Catalunya [Hiking Club of Catalonia – CEC] is a cultural and sporting institution founded in 1876 as a fruit of the *Renaixença* movement. It was established with the aim of promoting hiking as an activity by which to discover and study the natural and cultural heritage of Catalonia. One of its first members was the poet Jacint Verdaguer.

This entity played the role of a people's university at a time when there were no secondary schools and university access was very restricted. Thus, at the Centre's headquarters, regular courses were given in many subjects, including geography, geology, and botany.

Publication of the *Butlletí del Centre Excursionista de Catalunya* began in 1891, and it soon became one of the most widely read periodicals in the region. For naturalists, the *Butlletí* was where they found the latest news on discoveries of fossil sites or species of plants and animals. The same was true for scholars of archaeology, architecture and folklore, among other subjects.

Members of the CEC, in their private capacity, have been very active donors of collections to the Museum. Indeed, the Museum itself ran courses for them on how to collect items in a way that would make them eligible for admission to the Museum.

The editorial work of the CEC, alongside the *Butlletí*, deserves special mention. Since its inception the Centre has maintained significant publishing activity, issuing more than 400 volumes, especially on hiking, but also on geology and botany, many of which have been fundamental to the study of natural sciences in Catalonia.

For nearly 150 years now, the CEC has distinguished itself in the defence and preservation of the natural environment. From the very beginning it has promoted respect, knowledge and love for nature, and in 1976 – the year of its centenary celebration – it published a manifesto declaring its active involvement in environmental issues and inviting the public to join in.

The CEC has a general library, a map library, and one of the most important photographic archives in Catalonia, comprising nearly 750,000 images from 1860 to the present day. These photographs cover a wide range of subjects: mountains, plants, animals, architecture, rural life, ethnography, etc.

The Centre Excursionista de Catalunya has been awarded the Gold Medal of the City of Barcelona [1976], the Jaume I Prize of Honour [1981], the Sant Jordi Cross [1983], and the UNESCO medal [1999]. In 1997 it was declared an entity of public utility by the Council of Ministers.

<https://cec.cat/>

Institució Catalana d'Història Natural

The Institució Catalana d'Història Natural [Catalan Institute of Natural History – ICHN], closely linked to the Barcelona Museum of Natural Sciences, is the oldest naturalist institute in Catalonia. It was founded in 1899 by three students under the age of 20: a law student, a pharmacy student, and an engineering student. The objective was to cultivate the natural sciences and promote their study among the young people of Catalonia, through scientific excursions, lectures, and the publication of a bulletin in Catalan.

From the very beginning, the Institute brought professionals and amateurs together to work on projects to advance knowledge of nature and transmit it to wider society. In a few short years, those founding students had become accomplished naturalists, and had made the Institute into a prestigious entity. Some of its members were called to form part of the Municipal Board of Natural Sciences, a body created by the City Council to maintain, develop, and catalogue the natural science archives and collections held in municipal museums, in particular, the Museu Martorell.

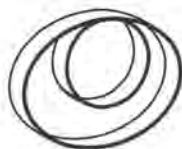
The close collaboration between the Institute and the Museum is reflected in the collections and the people. The Museum was enriched by pieces that came from scientific excursions organized by the Institute, and by those of its members who became Museum technicians, such as Ignasi de Sagarra and Joan Baptista d'Aguilar-Amat, among others. And when the Institute became part of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans [Institute for Catalan Studies – IEC] in 1916, it decided to make a donation of all its collections, significantly increasing the Museum's holdings in all disciplines of the natural sciences.

Alongside the bulletin, other collections were published under the title “Treballs” and “Memòries” [“Papers” and “Reports”], which in many cases set the foundations for research into the natural sciences in Catalonia.

The Institute's activity was suspended due to the Civil War in Spain, until 1972, when a small group of members decided to revive it. The most important project of this new era was the *Llibre Blanc de la Gestió de la Natura* ["White Paper on Nature Management"], also called *Natura ús o abús?* ["Nature Use or Abuse?"], a report on the state of nature in the Catalan territories published in 1976. This collective work, coordinated by the winner of the NAT Award 2020, Ramon Folch, is a benchmark in the world of natural heritage management and conservation, which for the first time laid out the environmental issues affecting our country. An updated version of the "White Paper" with a broader social and environmental focus was published in 2018-2019 through the website <https://natura.llocs.iec.cat/>, aimed at defining the environmental agenda for Catalonia and showing the need for its application.

The Catalan Institute of Natural History, which received the Sant Jordi Cross in 1999, confers two awards: the Torras-Foulon Prize and the ICHN Grant for Women Naturalists, both for naturalist research on the natural systems of the Catalan territories.

<https://blogs.iec.cat/ichn/>



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