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TWO BY TWO

Animal-loving amateur photographer wins wildlife prize again AND scoops third place

By HENRY ELLIS

A POSTMAN has won the prestigious Kent Wildlife Photographer of the Year crown for the second year running.

Keen amateur snapper Jason Steel, of Watling Street, Bexleyheath, has been delivering post in the borough for the past 25 years.

But in his spare time he has honed his skills as a wildlife photographer, specialising in pictures of reptiles and amphibians living in and around the capital and Kent.

Reptiles

He has already made a name for himself, with regular work with the Kent Reptiles and Amphibians Group, despite only picking up his first digital camera in 2005.

Last year the 42-year-old's photo of a young swan taken in Footscray Meadow wowed judges from the Kent Wildlife Trust and the Natural History Museum, while this year he returned to the same spot to take a shot of a common toad crossing a busy main road.

And, despite nearly 100 photographers entering the competition, which is now in its sixth year, Jason's picture of a Wood Mouse, snapped at Hall Place in Bexley, picked up the

This photo of a toad waiting to cross a road won Jason Steel, inset, first prize in a competition

j2779/C; inset, j2929/C



third prize in the competition as well.

Jason told *the Mercury*: "I'm really pleased to have won the competition again.

"It's great. My interest in photography really grew out of my interest in wildlife.

"I work with the Kent Reptiles and Amphibians Group, which campaigns to protect local wildlife."

"My picture is just of a common or garden toad by the road but I was very pleased with it.

"You don't win much, just a food hamper with a few bottles and things in there but it is still really flattering to win.

"I'm already looking at what to do for next year's competition. I think I might do something with seagulls."

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