

The prestigious Linnean Medal 2022 to Sri Lanka



Rohan Pethiyagoda, one of Sri Lanka's foremost naturalists has been awarded the Linnean Medal (Zoology) 2022.

The Linnean Medal is awarded annually by The Linnean Council alternately to one or two scientists (in any field). The Prestigious Linnean is known to be an expression of the Society's esteem and appreciation for service to science.

In the citation on Dr. Pethiyagoda, the Linnean Society, UK says *"His 1991 monumental Freshwater Fishes of Sri Lanka was hailed as a landmark achievement, treating the island's diverse ichthyofauna more comprehensively and authoritatively than ever before. Over the next decade both Rohan and his Wildlife Heritage Trust (WHT), set up with the profits from the book, became synonymous with the exploration, discovery and documentation of Sri Lanka's biodiversity and the wider application of this to enhance biogeography of the broader region. His program of original and collaborative research (both Sri Lankan and overseas) has resulted in publications on many zoological groups in addition to fishes. His impact on biodiversity research in Sri Lanka and beyond through his output and catalytic influence cannot be overestimated"*.

Hailing from the island of Sri Lanka - considered one of the planets bio diversity hot spots- Rohan also had tremendous impact in Sri Lanka and overseas through his educational work and activism.

The Linnean Society's awards and medals celebrate natural historians from inside and outside academia for their accomplishments in improving our understanding of the natural world.

Dr. Pethoyagoda is joined by one other Linnean awardee this year- Professor Sebsebe Demissew, Linnean Medal (Botany) 2022 who is one of the most powerful voices for biodiversity conservation today.

As The Linnaean Society states, *“these extraordinary people have shown, across many branches of natural history, how in-depth study and practice can not only increase knowledge but can address some of our world’s pressing environmental problems”*

The Linnean Society is the oldest active biological society in the world. The Society takes its name from the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778), whose botanical, zoological, and library collections have been in our care since 1829. It was founded in 1788 by Sir James Edward Smith (1759–1828), who served as its first President.

Credits: The Linnean Society, UK, scientist.lk, et al

