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BAY AREA FOUNDATION CELEBRATES, SUPPORTS SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION

Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation commits \$750,000 to field biologists' work

SAN FRANCISCO—Today the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation announced its 2026 Awards in Field Biology, recognizing individual scientists and supporting their field research that explores our natural world and requires collaboration to meet challenges and opportunities.

Each scientist will receive \$150,000 in unrestricted funds, supporting their individual work, elevating their diverse perspectives and enabling them to commit time to observation and experimentation that helps us better understand ourselves and the world around us.

- **Angelo Soto-Centeno's** work helps us understand how global changes — including natural and anthropogenic changes in temperature and habitats — affect bat populations, especially in the insular Caribbean.
- **Marcelo Araya-Salas** explores how communication systems evolve and shape behavior for wild animal populations, with a focus on hummingbirds, songbirds and bats in neotropical ecosystems.
- **Noelle Lucey** is a marine biologist whose research in the Caribbean has brought attention to ocean deoxygenation as a significant driver of the decline of coral reefs.
- **Todd Elliott's** research on how animals consume and disperse fungi frames vertebrates as architects of fungal biodiversity that provide a novel and critical service to ecosystems around the world.
- **Ummat Somjee's** innovative, field-based experiments focus on the evolution, function and costs of elaborated insect traits, particularly weapons used in male–male competition, that reveal how these traits influence reproduction, physiology and survival.

Launched in 2020, the awards provide scientists with unrestricted funding, attention and support at critical junctures in their careers so they can focus on commitment and creativity, elevate often underrepresented perspectives to problem-solving, and promote progress in the biological sciences through research focused on our natural world.

Invited nominators confidentially identified scientists for the awards, and a committee selected awardees based on their impact in the field, originality and the timing when an award could provide support at a critical career point.

Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation supports individuals who explore and ask through fieldwork in natural sciences, create and captivate as they promote commitment in craft, teach and try as they support students in public education, and conserve and connect as they encourage care for our food systems and natural world. Learn more about the Foundation's partners and work at www.Maxwell-Hanrahan.org.

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