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World Wildlife Day Living Oceans Film Showcase announced

Stories about marine species and ecosystems will hit the big screen and your mobile phone when the planet celebrates World Wildlife Day 2019

Geneva/New York/Jackson Hole, WY, US, November, 2018 – Global marine species have never come under the international spotlight as a group. This will change in 2019. The Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Jackson Hole WILD announced today that they will team up again to organize an international film showcase, this time focused on marine species. Winning films will raise global awareness of the importance of life below water to our everyday lives, explore the critical challenges facing the marine ecosystems that comprise two-thirds of our planet and highlight inspiring solutions in meeting them.

The Living Oceans Film Showcase will be one of the global events that will anchor next year's UN World Wildlife Day (3 March) celebrated around the theme *Life Below Water: For People and Planet*. Winners will be announced at UN Headquarters in New York at a high-level event on Friday, March 1 to observe the Day.

Covering two-thirds of the planet, and making up more than 99% of earth's livable habitat, our oceans remain the least-understood ecosystems on Earth. In fact, we know more about the moon than we do about the deep sea. Nonetheless, life on our planet began in the ocean and we rely on a healthy ocean for our very survival. Life below water has sustained human civilization and development for millennia, from providing food and nourishment, material for handicraft and construction to the very air we breathe.

As UNDP Head of Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Midori Paxton, notes: "Over three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods and primary source of protein; the estimated market value of marine and coastal resources and industries is \$3 trillion per year; and oceans help to mitigate the impact of climate change. If we are to ensure that ocean ecosystems are sustainably managed for current and future generations, a comprehensive global response is needed that scales up successful nature-based initiatives."

Yet, the capacity of life below water to provide these services is severely impacted, as our planet's oceans and the species that live within it are under assault from an onslaught of threats, including climate change, marine pollution and trash, habitat destruction, and unsustainable fishing practices.

This set of challenges is daunting. However, it is in humanity's own interest and not too late to restore degraded ocean environments, step up efforts to sustainable use and conserve marine species, and engage committed stakeholders to action. "While we still stand at a juncture in which crisis can still be averted, it is essential to take action that empowers local engagement and personal commitment," explained Lisa Samford, Executive Director of the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. "Our aim is to galvanize the power of media to inspire wonder, catalyze change and move the dial on the conservation of marine species and ecosystems."

One challenge is to ensure that marine species are not over exploited through international trade, which CITES does for species listed on its Appendices by ensuring that trade is sustainable legal and traceable. "CITES has a long history of regulating international trade in many marine species to help ensure their survival in the wild, including since 2013 several commercially harvested sharks and rays, such as hammerhead, porbeagle and oceanic whitetip sharks, and the amazing devil and manta rays. For marine species this places CITES at the interface between sustainable use and international trade, focusing on species that have declined to a level that requires strong trade and sound management measures to maintain or rebuilt stocks," stated David Morgan, Officer-in-Charge of CITES.

The CITES Secretariat is designated by the United Nations General Assembly as the global facilitator for the celebration of the World Wildlife Day each year in collaboration with organizations in the United Nations system. UNDP is also co-organizing this year's set of World Wildlife Day events and activities together with UN Environment, Jackson Hole WILD, Wildlife Conservation Society, and other organizational partners.

Timeline and planned activities

The call for entry will close on January 1, 2019 and finalists will be announced February 1, 2019. Winners will be presented at a high-level event to coincide with the global celebration of UN World Wildlife Day at UN Headquarters in New York on March 1, 2019.

Winning and finalist films will be subsequently showcased extensively throughout the world.

Competition categories

Participants are asked to submit media in one or more of the following categories:

--**Ocean Heroes:** Awarded to the film that most effectively celebrates noteworthy work of individuals or groups committed to protection, raising awareness or understanding, and sustainable use of marine species or ecosystems.

--**People and Oceans:** Awarded to the film that best communicates humanity's social, cultural, economic and/or environmental interdependence with marine species and ecosystems including sustainable commercial use.

--**Ocean Issues and Solutions:** Awarded to the film that most effectively explores current challenges and communicates solutions to the environmental, social-economic and sustainability issues facing marine species and ecosystems.

--**Marine Life:** Awarded to the film that most effectively showcases the rich diversity and complex behavior of one or more marine species.

--**Ocean Short:** Awarded to the best marine species or ecosystem film less than 15 minutes in length.

--**Ocean MicroMovie:** Awarded to the best marine species or ecosystem film less than 5 minutes in length.

Programmes created after January 1, 2012 are eligible for consideration.

Submission Guidelines

There is no entry fee for submission. Entries must have been completed after January 1, 2012 but need not have been broadcast/exhibited prior to submission. Entries for competition are invited from media producers from around the world. Media submitted may be of any length, may originate in any digital media format and be fictional or non-fictional. Programs must have mixed (mono/stereo) audio track on both channels, must be an English version (dubbed or subtitled), and programs with visible time-code will not be accepted.

Submissions in all official UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish) are welcomed. Programmes in a language other than English must be subtitled in English for the Living Ocean Showcase presentation. Eligible entries are required to complete submission form via www.JHFestival.org. Entries will be uploaded to a private and secure Vimeo channel for judging.

For more information and to arrange interviews, please contact:

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About CITES

With 183 Parties (182 countries + the European Union), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) remains one of the world's most powerful tools for wildlife conservation through the regulation of trade. Thousands of species are internationally traded and used by people in their daily lives for food, health care, housing, tourist souvenirs, cosmetics or fashion. CITES regulates international trade in over 36,000 species of plants and animals, including their products and derivatives, to ensure their survival in the wild with benefits for the livelihoods of local people and the global environment. The CITES permit system seeks to ensure that international trade in listed species is sustainable, legal and traceable. CITES was signed in Washington D.C. on 3 March 1973 and entered into force on 1 July 1975.

About UNDP

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in nearly 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

About Jackson Hole WILD

Jackson Hole WILD's programs promote public awareness and stewardship of wildlife and wildlife habitat through the innovative use of media. Since 1991, its annual conferences draw together international leaders in science, conservation, broadcasting and media. In 2019, committed marine science and conservation advocates join global media leaders and innovators for the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival & Conservation Summit (21-27 September), to share resources and strategies, address critical challenges and brainstorm innovative approaches for collaboration. Jackson Hole WILD celebrates the world's finest nature programming and explore innovative ways to integrate media centrally into the battle against global wildlife crime.

About the United Nations World Wildlife Day

On 20 December 2013, the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 3 March as World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild fauna and flora. The date is the day of the signature of the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#) in 1973. World Wildlife Day has quickly become the most prominent global annual event dedicated to wildlife. It is an opportunity to celebrate the many beautiful and varied forms of wild fauna and flora and to raise awareness of the various challenges faced by these species. The day also reminds us of the urgent need to step up the fight against wildlife crime, which has wide-ranging economic, environmental and social impacts. The theme for the 2019 World Wildlife Day is: Life Below: For People and Planet.