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JOINT PRESS RELEASE



Predators under threat! International Film Festival for Big Cats announced

**Stories about jaguars, leopards, lions, pumas, tigers and more
will hit the big screen and your mobile phone when the world
celebrates World Wildlife Day 2018**

Geneva/Jackson Hole, WY, US, 24 September 2017 – Have all the big cats ever come under the international spotlight as a group? Probably not, but they will soon. The Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival announced today that they are teaming up again to organize an international film festival, this time for the world's big cats, to raise global awareness of the critical challenges facing these iconic species.

The Film Festival will be one of the global events that will anchor next year's UN World Wildlife Day (3 March) celebrated around the theme of big cats. Winners will be announced at UN Headquarters in New York at a high-level event to observe the day.

CITES Secretary-General, John E. Scanlon, said: "All big cats are protected under CITES because unregulated and illegal trade poses serious threats to their survival. World Wildlife Day 2018 and the film festival give us a unique opportunity to raise awareness about their plight as well as the ongoing national and global efforts to save these majestic species, through motion pictures and story-telling. The Festival will generate the level of attention big cats all deserve to ensure they are with us for generations to come."

"At a time when the 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 big cats. The festival will also engage the voices of local people from communities who are living with big cats, and seeking to support their conservation while securing a sustainable livelihood.”

Big cats are among the most widely recognized and admired animals across the globe. However, today these charismatic predators are facing many and varied threats, which are mostly caused by human activities. Over the past century, we have been losing big cats at an alarming rate due to loss of habitat and prey, conflicts with people, poaching and illegal trade. For example, tiger populations plummeted by 95 percent over the past 100 years, and African lion populations dropped by 40 percent in just 20 years. A range of measures are underway to arrest this decline, but more needs to be done.

In an effort to reach as wide an audience as possible, the expanded definition of big cats is used for World Wildlife Day 2018 and the film festival, which includes not only lions, tigers, leopards and jaguars -- the four largest wild cats that can roar - but also cheetahs, snow leopards, pumas, and clouded leopards. Big cat species are found in Africa, Asia, and North, Central and South America, representing a virtually global distribution.

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.

Timeline and planned activities

The call for entry will start in October and close on 15 December 2017. Finalists will be announced in January 2018. Winners will be presented at a high-level event to coincide with the global celebration of U.N. World Wildlife Day at U.N. Headquarters in New York on 3 March 2018.

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:

- Issues and solutions
- Conservation heroes
- People and big cats
- Science and conservation
- Micro movie (under 5 minutes).
- Local voices

Programmes created since 1 January 2010 are eligible for consideration.

Submission Guidelines

- There is no entry fee for submission.
- Entries must have been completed after 1 January 2010 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 format (including animation) and be fictional or non-fictional. Motion picture programmes must have mixed (mono/stereo) audio track on both channels, and there must be an English version (dubbed or subtitled).
- 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 Festival 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.

Note to editors:

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 Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival

Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival's (JHWFF'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. For three days this year, committed wild cats advocates convened for the Jackson Hole Conservation Summit (24-26 September), to share resources and strategies, address critical challenges and brainstorm innovative approaches for collaboration. They joined 650+ of the world's most influential filmmakers and commissioners at the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival to celebrate 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.