

Welcome to Wild Earth Oceania Film Festival!

We acknowledge and give tribute, deep respect and love to the past, present, and emerging rightful First Nations owners of this land, our shared land now, and to those native Africans of the land, which I come from, without which none of this would be possible.



I could not be more pleased to welcome you to the inaugural Wild Earth Oceania Film Festival. In all of Australia's history, there has never been a Wildlife Film Festival to date. Australia's identity is steeped in its amazing and enigmatic wildlife and incredible biodiversity and habitat. The Indigenous owners of this majestic land are one with the sky above them and the ground beneath them and one with every creature that traverses both. We are privileged to walk on country with you.

This festival is designed to help us walk each other home through the power of film and to return back to nature, which is who we are.

We are proud to share with you 66 films across 10 wondrous days in Sydney in three Palace Cinemas locations at Palace Norton Street, Palace Chevelle, and Palace Central. We had a large and resounding response to our call for film submission from filmmakers across the globe, with excellent Australian representation. The films were of very good to exceptional quality and we cannot wait for you to discover these encapsulating immersive experiences through the eyes of wild creatures, from the feet of giant trees, the quiet place of Indigenous wisdom and from the historic lens of natural history.

We warmly welcome emerging and established Australian and global talent, and we are committed to supporting film directors and producers for years to come as film continues to be an essential call for action to generate policy reform, environmental law changes, deep community action, and changed behaviours for good. We unify industry sector leaders and promote robust head, heart, and hands discussions for impact through expert panel discussions following each film premiere.

Wild Earth Oceania is a gift to Australia and to Film Makers around the globe and the start of a journey that we invite you as individuals and communities to come with us for years and decades to come.

Australia is a megadiverse nation with over 90% of our wildlife being found nowhere else in the world. People travels tens of thousands of miles to come and see our wildlife, yet we are in a wildlife extinction crisis - Australia finds itself at the bottom of the rung of the ladder for species extinction.

There is no better way to face and overcome adversity than through the power of storytelling, for which we – humans - are designed for. As storyteller artists, creatives, impact makers, custodians, caretakers and stewards of this most incredible vast land, we have the ability to rewrite history and create and alchemise the future we all dream for ourselves and our children.

We are pleased and delighted to bring you this festival. Australia's first ever Wildlife Film Festival and the largest in the southern hemisphere premieres in Sydney as a centre for cultural excellence in Australia and a city of pre-eminence and world relevance.

My sincere and heartfelt thanks to the incredible WEO Team who have been working tirelessly behind-the-scenes for two years and to our generous partners and supporters. Without them, this would not be possible.

This is only the beginning and we encourage you to sit back and enjoy the deep and enriching stories filmmakers from every continent on the globe have to tell, and to see yourself as part of the solution so that plays out on the stage of your soul as you embrace your very right to have a voice in the life that you participate in and to be a force for good.

Warmest regards,

Jacquie
Wild Earth Oceania Director







Key Locations across Sydney



Our film screenings will take place at a range of Palace Cinemas across the city: Palace Central, Palace Norton Street, and The Chauvel Cinema.

Palace Central: Level 3 Central Park Mall, 28 Broadway, Chippendale NSW 2008

Palace Norton Street: 99 Norton St, Leichhard, NSW 2040 The Chauvel Cinema: 249 Oxford St, Paddington, NSW 2021

Accessibility

We aim to make Wild Earth Oceania Film Festival as accessible as possible. Each of the venues have ramps and/or lifts to access the film screenings and lighting to guide path to seats. Palace Cinemas also provides hearing aid loops and audio description in Palace Norton Street and Palace Central.

If you have any concerns about access to any of the venues, please do get in touch by emailing us at info@wildearthoceania.com.

WEOFF 2023 Programme

Make the most out of the festival



Here are some hotel recommendations that will allow you to be right next to our festival venues and ready to watch all our fantastic films in no time!

Near The Chauvel Cinema:

- 1. Mrs Banks Boutique Hotel: This boutique hotel is located in the heart of Paddington, making it an ideal base from which to explore Sydney while enjoying the festival. -> 259 Oxford St, Paddington NSW 2021
- **2.** <u>Hughenden Hotel:</u> This hotel offers bespoke range of guest rooms and is known to be full of surprises. It can also accommodate your furry friends if you decide to bring them along with you. -> 14 Queen St, Woollahra NSW 2025

Near Palace Norton Street

- **1.** Rydges Camperdown: This spacious and newly refurbished accommodation is in close proximity to Sydney's vibrant CBD and is right next to a range of charming boutiques and restaurants. -> 9 Missenden Rd, Camperdown NSW 2050
- **2.** Garden Lodge Sydney: Located within the suburban district of Haberfield, the Garden Lodge Sydney will offer you spacious rooms and is just 7 km away from Sydney's Central Business District.-> 17 Parramatta Rd, Haberfield NSW 2045

Near Palace Central:

- **1. Four Points by Sheraon:** Looking for excellent service and a prime location in Sydney's Chippendale neighbourhood? Look no further! The Four Points guarantees to make your stay worthwhile. -> 88 Broadway, Chippendale NSW 2008
- **2.** Novotel Sydney Central: Novotel Sydney Central is located within walking distance of Darling Harbour in Sydney's CBD and offers easy access to Central Railway Station. You can expect their stylish rooms to offer sleek comfort and spaciousness. -> 169/179 Thomas St, Haymarket NSW 2000

Stay caffeinated!

Here are our top recommendations of cafés near our venues to make sure you are wide awake to enjoy your week of film watching.

- 1. La Bottega Leichhardt: Located two minutes away from Palace Norton Street, this café offers a selection of hot and cold drinks and serves breakfast all day long! -> Shop 9/39 Norton St, Leichhardt NSW 2040
- 2. <u>Funkis Köket Café:</u> This Scandinavian café is tucked away in a gorgeous backyard near The Chauvel Cinema and is the perfect stop to get something sweet to go with your coffee! -> 202 Oxford St, Paddington NSW 2021
- 3 <u>Concrete Jungle Cafe:</u> Looking for a serene oasis away from the hustle of the film festival? Look no further! Located five minutes away from Palace Central, Concrete Jungle will refuel your energy levels while making you feel good from the inside out. -> 15 Kensington St, Chippendale NSW 2008
- 4. <u>Café Giulia:</u> Another favourite only five minutes away from Palace Central is Café Giulia. From regular coffees to fruit whips, this café has something for everyone. Plus it serves a range of soups, which makes for a great wintery meal to grab between two sessions of the festival! -> 92 Abercrombie St, Chippendale NSW 2008



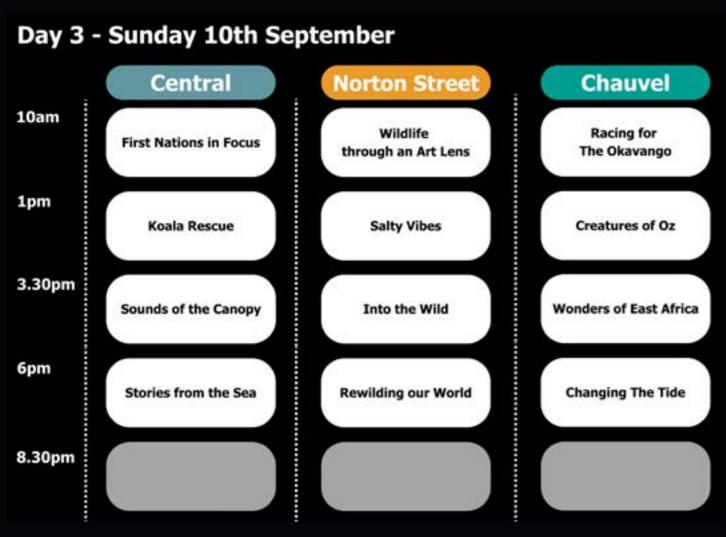
Photo Credit: Florian Ledoux

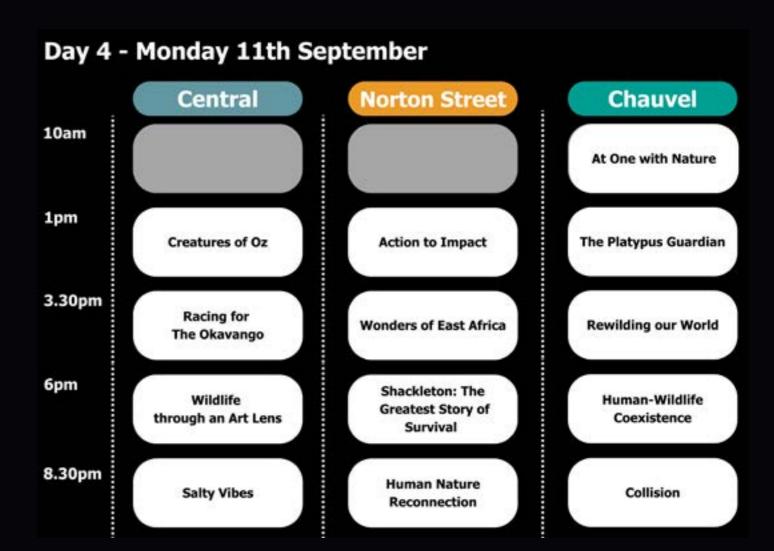
At a glance - Main Festival





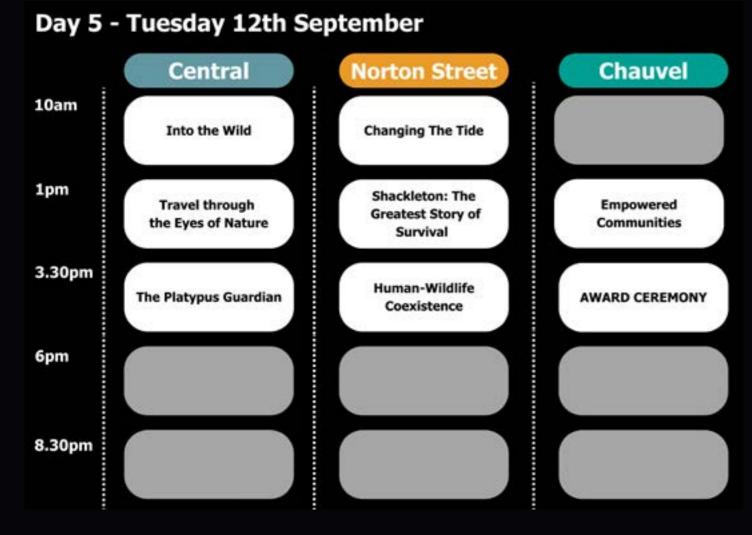
At a glance - Main Festival







At a glance - Main Festival



Expert panel sessions and Q&A

Each film on this programme will be linked to a panel session and a Q&A with experts on its first screening. These interactive panel sessions will gather a mix of filmmakers, scientists, and artists who will come together to discuss the theme of the films screened beforehand. You will then get a chance to ask the panellists your questions! More information about the panels will be announced closer to the time.

Book your tickets

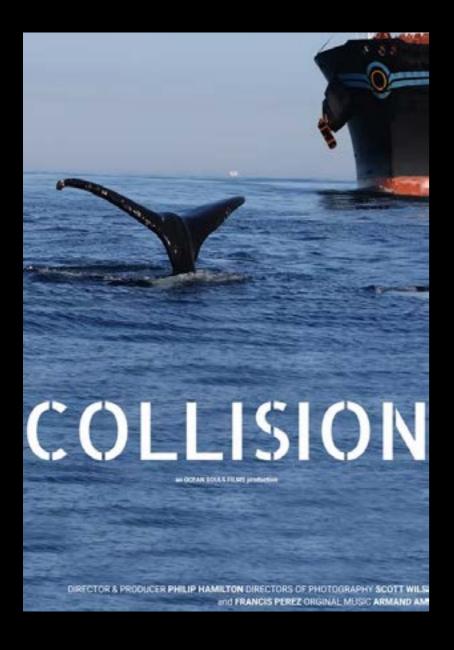
Go directly to buy tickets to the different sessions by clicking on the box with the date of each event. To use the interactive links in this document to book sessions, please download this PDF to your device.



In Depth Programme

OPENING NIGHT - WORLD PREMIERE

Please join us at 6pm on the 8th of September for the official opening of the festival! Drinks will be served in the foyer of the Norton Street Cinema for 6pm while the welcome speeches take place. We will then all head into the cinema to watch the World Premiere of Collision!



Collision (Feature) - 84min

Directed & produced by Philip Hamilton, and directors of photography Scott Wilson and Francis Pérez

A worldwide increase in shipping traffic is threatening our oceans, its inhabitants and the planet. Collision is a powerful feature documentary which highlights the severely underreported issue of fatal ship strikes on whales, a threat which is endangering their very existence.

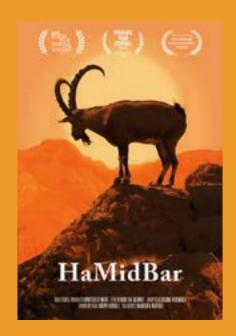
Working with leading scientists, NGO's and worldwide authorities Collision is an accurate and scientifically based account of the realities of the harsh impact of marine traffic on ocean life.

The film not only highlights the issues but also presents clear and available solutions to encourage governments, authorities and global shipping companies to make vital changes.



TRAVEL THROUGH THE EYES OF NATURE

9th Sep, 10am - Norton St 12th Sep, 1pm - Central



HaMidbar (Students & Youth) - 11min

Directed & Produced by Kirsten Slemint

Often regarded as empty and desolate, the Israeli deserts are anything but. These deserts have shaped some of the toughest creatures on the planet with some incredibly stories of survival. For her debut film the Director took a profound journey into the Israeli deserts to bring us HaMidbar - 'the wilderness'.

Kingdom of Ice: Antarctica's Leopard Seals (Sponsored Film) - 9min

Directed by Paul Nicklen & Andy Mann and produced by Paul Nicklen

Diving in the icy kingdom of Antarctica soon brings you face-to-face with one of the continent's most highly regarded predators of the sea, the powerful leopard seal. And yet, when our co-founders Paul Nicklen and Cristina Mittermeier share a remarkable encounter with one special seal, the experience reveals a charismatic and nurturing side to these animals rarely shared with the rest of the world.



"Being in the water with a leopard seal is one of the most beautiful things you can ever experience in life. They're very, very curious. And their curiosity, I think it's what's special," Paul Nicklen. The leopard seal patrols the frigid realm with ease, grace, and endless wonder toward any life that enters its home. However, the future of its domain remains in peril. Covering nearly 20% of Earth's southern hemisphere, Antarctica regulates the global climate, slowing down warming temperatures and capturing carbon dioxide from the surrounding air. The continent also creates a nutrient-rich environment for phytoplankton, the very foundation of the world's food web, to grow and thrive. Today, Antarctica is vulnerable to melting ice shelves, losing land mass to rising sea levels, rampant overfishing, and increasing algae blooms that greatly limit the growth of vital plankton. But there is still hope to save its ecosystem.

Creatures of the Kaleidoscope (Students & Youth) - 18min

Directed & produced by Hannah Jodie Alexander

Exploring one of nature's most magical creatures, the cuttlefish. Discover how they use their colour changing and shape shifting abilities to survive and thrive in the open ocean.



Eye of the Hornbill (Micro short) - 5min

Directed by Miguel Anton

A portrait of the colourful birdlife of the Tenasserim mountains of South-East Asia. The forest appears quiet, but deep inside, daily adventures take place under the attentive eye of the hornbill. Today, a monsoon downpour soaks the jungle, and the radiant Blacknaped monarch will have to be persistent if he wants to maintain his bright plumage. Secret stories of rarely-filmed birds that will keep unfolding as long as their forest home remains untouched.



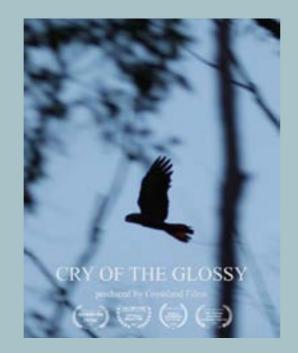


FIRST NATIONS IN FOCUS

Cry Of The Glossy (Short) - 10min

Directed & produced by Tim Brown & Michael Portway

Taking us on a journey through the forested hills of the NSW Southern Highlands (Australia), poet and Gunai woman, Kirli Saunders, reflects on the special place the endangered Glossy Black Cockatoo holds in her heart and culture.



Seeds of Change (Short) - 11min



Directed by Mark Koolmatrie and produced by Joshua Trevorrow

Be inspired by Ngarrindjeri Elder Mark Koolmatrie. Uncle Mark is actively spreading the word about healing Country through a traditional First Nations totemic system within a modern framework, a system that was adopted by Aboriginal people for tens of

thousands of years and ensured the respect, balance and harmony between humans and the planet Uncle Mark shares his knowledge whilst operating conservation and cultural tours that are led from the heart.

Warru Ngurakutu Kulpanyi (Short) - 16min

Directed and produced by Max Mackinnon

A huge team work together to transport threatened wallabies back to their old home.





9th Sep, 1pm - Norton St 10th Sep, 10am - Central

Moana Rising - 18 min (Sponsored Film)

Directed and produced by tba

For centuries, Pacific peoples have deeply connected to the moana, or ocean, and recognised the ocean's vital role in their daily lives.

However, the ocean is warming and rising. Every day Pacific people face unprecedented threats to their way of life. Every day, the mauri, or life force, of the moana is increasingly depleted.

Moana Rising is a cry from the Pacific to restore this connection to the ocean. Featuring Indigenous Pacific Islands Ocean Champions - from leaders to voyagers to scientists - Moana Rising voices heartfelt perspectives, experiences and responses to the climate crisis and the ocean change in the Pacific and gives voice to those whose past, present, and future are deeply intertwined and connected to the health of the Pacific Ocean.



9th Sep, 1pm - Chauvel 11th Sep, 10am - Chauvel

AT ONE WITH NATURE

Restoring the Spirit of Place (Short) - 12min



Directed by Jerry van de Beek, Lara Tomov & Nick Stone Schearer and produced by Taylor Lennox

This is the story of wildlife passages along Highway 93 which runs through the Flathead Reservation and the work of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai (CSKT) tribes to support coexistence along human and wildlife corridors.

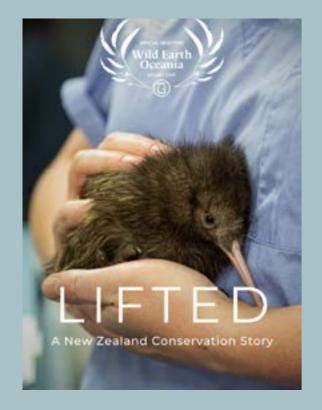
The CSKT pushed for a "context-sensitive design of the expansion of Highway 93" to take into account the surrounding mountains, plains, hills, forests, valleys and sky. This includes the paths of waters, glaciers, winds, plants, animals and native people. The CKST call this approach "Spirit of Place".

Slaven. (Micro short) - 5min

Directed & produced by Josh Robertson

Wildlife conservationist Slaven Reljić is on a mission to protect bears and other large carnivores in Croatia and the surrounding countries — but is there hope for these charismatic species?





Lifted (Short) - 7min

Directed by Harry Seagar

'Lifted' is a captivating short film that chronicles the remarkable process known as a Kiwi Egg Lift. Showcasing the inspiring journey of kiwi from the egg to juvenile stage, before being safely returned to the wild to help grow the critically endangered population of the species. The film also shines a light on the challenges faced by and extraordinary efforts of Simon Hall, a visionary conservationist who has dedicated his life to creating New Zealand's largest private conservation estate. Set against the breathtaking landscapes of Aotearoa New Zealand, we witness the tireless efforts of the Forest Lifeforce Restoration Trust.

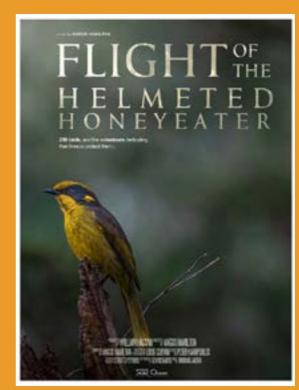


Guardian of the Sea Lions (Micro short) - 3min

Directed & produced by Stephanie Guest & Shania Riethmann

"Guardian of the Sea Lions" is a film centered around Janet Ledingham, an 83 year-old woman who voluntarily collects data on the local Dunedin sea lions for the New Zealand Sea Lion Trust. It is both informative and inspiring as we learn about Janet's passion for sea lions and her role in caring for the Dunedin population. The film will make you come to appreciate both Janet and the sea lions, as Janet tells her story.

Flight of the Helmeted Honeyeater (Students & Youth) - 9min



Directed by Angus Hamilton and produced by William Hassan

Flight of the Helmeted Honeyeater is a documentary focussing on this critically endangered bird and the volunteers giving up their time to save this Victorian treasure.

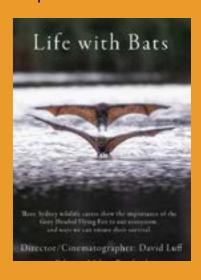
The Helmeted Honeyeater is now found only in a sliver of re-grown forest. Less than 15 years ago, there were fewer than 50 individuals remaining.

The Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater and partners have been crucial to helping bring the bird back from the brink of extinction. The population has now reached approximately 250 individuals (and is hopefully growing every year). The Helmeted Honeyeater acts as a symbol of both the fragile natural world, and as a success story... a beacon of hope.

Life with Bats (Short) - 6min

Directed & produced by David Luff

Life with Bats follows three wildlife carers in different aspects of their jobs. From rescuing orphaned pups, to rehabilitating and caring for them. We learn about the importance that this species plays in our ecosystem as well as ways we can ensure the survival of their population. All while seeing fascinating footage of this adorable and loving species, including rescues of orphaned pups and the rehabilitation process.



Akashinga (Short) - 6min

Directed by Steven Dean

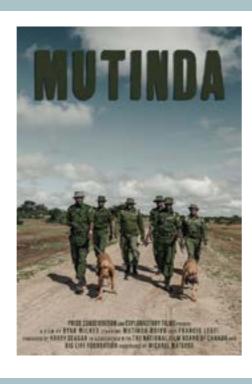
Africa's first armed, all-women anti-poaching unit is revolutionising the way that animals are protected – and arresting poachers with minimal conflict.

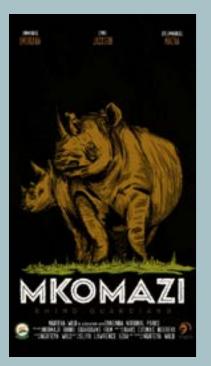
These women aren't called the 'Brave Ones' for no reason, they have already overcome abuse, marginalisation, and trauma. Now they are empowered to protect themselves and the African animals under constant threat.

Mutinda (Students & Youth) - 13min

Directed by Ryan Wilkes and produced by Harry Seagar

'Mutinda' is the transformational story of Kenya's once most wanted poacher, Mutinda Ndivo. After a life of killing treasured animals and running from the authorities, a decisive moment occurred that changed him forever. Mutinda is now an award-winning wildlife protector, working as a conservation ranger for Big Life Foundation's Dog Unit. 'Mutinda' is an inspiring story of legacy, transformation and recognizing the potential good in those who may have been forced into a life of transgression.





Mkomazi Rhino Guardians (Short) - 14min

Directed by Hans Cosmas Ngoteya and produced by Ngoteya Wild

This documentary was filmed in Mkomazi National Park, 3,245km² of land that was established in 2008, which is among the youngest national parks in Tanzania.

It was created to raise awareness on the efforts done by our local conservationist in Tanzania to protect and breed these endangered species. To this date, due to their efforts the number of these endangered species have increased, education is provided to both the communities surrounding the Mkomazi National Park and to the public on the importance of conserving and protecting these endangered species.

Mahale Chimp Guardians (Short) - 28min

Directed by Hans Cosmas Ngoteya and produced by Bush to Base Solution & Ngoteya Wild

This is the story of greater Mahale and its global significance as a biodiversity hotspot. Mzee Bunengwa has lived in Mahale throughout his life. Through his background history, he takes us back and tells us how the Mahale National Park was and what he has been observing to the state that the park is today. He also tells us about how he manages to live and build relationships with chimps, and what motivates him to advocate and protect them.

Butati is one of the professional guides in Mahale, his father was a chimpanzee tracker in the park, he was born around the park and heard stories about the chimps since he was in his mother's womb. Butatu then decided to pursue his career as a chimpanzee specialist guide, and now he works back home in the Mahale NP. Under his experience he explains the conservation status of chimps', behavior, ecology and why it is important to protect greater mahale for future use.



The Malilangwe Scouts (Short) - 11min

Directed by James Suter & Sam Suter



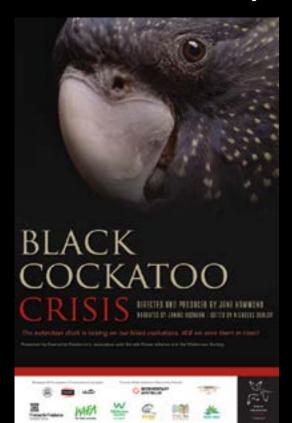
This film documents a team of dedicated individuals fighting to protect Zimbabwe's natural heritage, with a focus on rhinos. The Malilangwe Trust, not only inspired us, but made us realize that anti-poaching is not just about training and discipline, it's also about forming bonds with those in your team.

Rhino poaching has reached crisis levels in southern Africa and without this team this area would not be flourishing the way it currently is. We would continue to lose more rhinos in Zimbabwe. The training that these scouts undergo is intense. Not everyone makes it. Watch and learn more about this team, about the training, about protecting rhinos - "Its our legacy, our future" - a quote directly from the film.

9th Sep, 6pm - Chauvel 11th Sep, 1pm - Norton St

ACTION TO IMPACT

Black Cockatoo Crisis (Feature) - 1h14min



Directed & produced by Jane Hammond

Western Australia's iconic black cockatoos are in crisis. Their numbers have fallen dramatically over the past few decades and all three species in the south-west of WA could become extinct in just 20 years unless something is done to protect their habitats. With the loss of the banksia woodlands on the Swan Coastal Plain to housing, Carnaby's Black Cockatoos have come to depend on the once vast exotic pine plantations on Perth's northern fringe.

These pine plantations supply up to half of all the food needed to keep the population of Carnaby's alive but these too are disappearing. Within the next two years the remaining 4000ha of pines are slated for clearing leaving the cockatoos facing possible starvation.

Meanwhile the Baudin's Black Cockatoos are literally being shot out of the sky in an unequal battle for food with apple and pear growers in Perth's hills. And the Forest Red-Tailed Black Cockatoos are under threat from the loss of nesting hollows and declining habitat.

Black Cockatoo Crisis looks at the plight of our special cockatoos and what we can do to stop these threatened species disappearing for ever.

This is a story with a Western Australian focus but a universal theme. The world's biodiversity stands at a crossroads with more than 1 million species currently facing extinction. Will we act in time to save them?

Paint The Future (Micro short) - 5min

Directed & produced by Ryan Kennedy

This story follows the journey of ultra runner Erchana Murray-Bartlett as she hand delivers three hand drawn pictures from Alice (10 years), Ange and Mel (both 8 years) by foot, from the top of Tasmania to the bottom - Devonport to Parliament House in Hobart.

Her mission? To empower the next generation to fight for a greener future. These pictures represent a natural world that the girls, and their entire generation, deserve to explore when they're old enough to throw on a backpack and set foot outdoors on their own. However, Erchana decides to take on this adventure in the middle of winter, across Australia's coldest State when all the elements are against her.





33 Acres, The Legacy of a Donation (Micro short) - 3min

Directed by Steven G. Smith

33 Acres examines the healing properties of nature. It looks at the therapeutic qualities of a protected and restored environment.

This short film is about the legacy of donating a small piece of land for a park. At the turn of the century, the area was a polluted waterway. It has since been restored and returned to its natural state. The film celebrates the subtle beauty of the New England landscape and wildlife and the impact it can have on the recovery of the human spirit.

Ocean Grandmother (Sponsored film) - 10min

Directed by Paul Nicklen and produced by Paul Nicklen and Andy Mann

A young Indigenous person from the shores of Panama's Guna Yala Comarca takes us on a journey into the heart of their community, their Ocean Grandmother. Explore the hope for a brighter future that thrives throughout Guna Yala to save the surrounding seas that all life depends on.



In the film, Diwi Valiente, a dedicated Indigenous climate activist, finds themself at personal crossroads of ocean conservation and a changing climate. Their people are becoming the first documented case of an Indigenous community that is being forced to relocate due to climate change.

Diwi invites SeaLegacy co-founder Cristina Mittermeier and SeaLegacy 1 crew into their village, as they tell us of their future vision for their island-dwelling people. A deeply connected person to the ocean and nature, Diwi shares about their community's culture and wisdom, reflecting on how valuing their people's traditions and customs could help solve some of the challenges that they and their people are currently facing. But there is still hope to save their community.

9th Sep, 6pm - Norton St 10th Sep, 1pm - Central

Koala Rescue

The Last Koalas (Feature) - 54min

Directed & produced by Serena Michelle Findlay

The summer of 2020 was characterised by catastrophic bushfire events around Australia. On Kangaroo Island in South Australia, over 200,000 hectares was burned, including 90,000 hectares of national park. A thriving colony of 50,000 koalas called Kangaroo Island home prior to the devastating Black Summer bushfires. Now, as few as 5,000 - 10,000 koalas remain.

As the koala species edges closer to the threat of extinction on mainland Australia, this documentary explores the incredible rescue, recovery, rehabilitation and release effort undertaken for the surviving Kangaroo Island koalas; a colony which scientists have signalled may well be Australia's last.

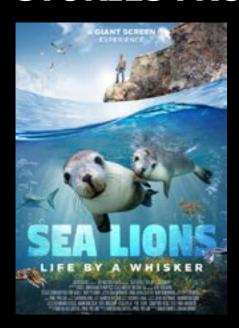




Photo Credits: The Last Koalas

9th Sep, 8.30pm - Norton St 10th Sep, 6pm - Central

STORIES FROM THE SEA



Sea Lions, Life By A Whisker (Feature) - 48min

Directed by Amelia McCarten & Paul Phelan and produced by Sarah Beard & David Gross

This beautiful, family friendly film, takes place along South Australia's stunning Bunda Cliffs. Be immersed in a classic coming of age tale guided by one of Australia's most unique, intelligent, and playful animals and take an intimate journey inside a rare colony where a life of great intimacy, tenderness, and clumsiness, must often give way to a life of great sacrifice and bravery. Dive into the world of an adorable Australian sea lion pup and meet marine park ranger, Dirk Holman, one of the people trying to save her species.

Shellfish Reefs: Filters of the Sea (Micro short) - 4min

Directed by Rebecca Daniel and produced by Meghan Hayes

Shellfish reefs inhabit coastlines all over the world and have been shaping the health of the ocean for millions of years.

Comprised of clusters of mussels, oysters, or clams, these reefs filter water and provide vital habitat for juvenile fish, vulnerable invertebrates, and even other shellfish! Unfortunately, this ecosystem is on the brink of collapse thanks to severe overharvesting and poor water quality along coastlines.



Be Kind to Nyinggulu (Micro short) - 2min

Directed by Nush Freedman and produced by Nush Freedman & Andre Rerekura

This is a micro short film that was made to inspire positive action around the Nyinggulu coast during a busy tourism period. It's about the small individual actions everyone can do to keep our home beautiful, safe and healthy for the future.



My Blue Country (Sponsored Film) - 5min

Directed by Paul Nicklen and produced by Jessica Todd-Marrone and Andy Mann

Freediving with tiger sharks is how André Musgrove challenges the misconceptions surrounding these vital animals and connects with his home in The Bahamas. As an underwater cinematographer, filmmaker, and photographer, André spends most of his time freediving on one breath for intimate encounters with some of the world's most misunderstood predators. His love for the ocean is rivaled only by his passion for revealing its hidden beauty to his community and visitors from across the world. By teaching others to fall in love with the ocean, André hopes to protect its vulnerable wildlife for a healthy, brighter future.



Giant Mantas of Mexico | The Resurgence of Revillagigedo National Park (Sponsored Film) - 4min



Directed by Cristina Mittermeier and produced by Cristina Mittermeier, and Michael Gestal

Five years after its protection, Mexico's Revillagigedo National Park bounds with a resurgence of life—welcoming back the region's incredible native species, like the endangered giant manta ray.

SeaLegacy co-founder Cristina Mittermeier and marine scientist Frida Lara explore what's possible when we give aquatic life space to recover and thrive. The pair greet a giant manta as an old friend, as it flips, flies, and glides through the water. The curious creature holds great symbolic significance and plays a vital ecological role within the ocean and all the marine life impacted by its sheer presence. The bounty and diversity of life Cristina captures within Revillagigedo National Park prove that protecting our marine ecosystems is the solution to saving our ocean. Only brightened by the endangered giant manta's presence, this region's achievements act as a guiding light of hope for conservation worldwide.



Older Than Trees (Short) - 20min

Directed by Pippa Ehrlich, produced by Tasmin Vosloo, and executive produced by Craig Foster

James Lea grew up dreaming of sharks; enigmatic monsters of the deep. In his first few years as a field biologist he fell in love with silky sharks in the Red Sea, where he got to interact with them and learn their individual personalities. But, in the space of just a few years he watched as almost each and every animal he had got to know was lost to the shark fin trade. Feeling heartbroken and helpless, James resolved to use his expertise as a scientist to protect sharks in places where they still have a chance to thrive.

Older Than Trees highlights Lea's work in the field, and the success he's contributed to in getting protection for these ancient species through the creation of marine protected areas.

SOUNDS OF THE CANOPY

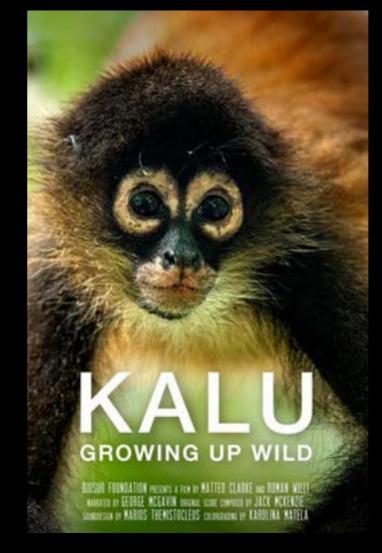
Dark Green | Alone in the Amazon & Conservation Story (Sponsored film) - 53min

Directed by Jesper Buijvoets & Aagje van Meerwijk and produced by Sensu Productions & AAK

The short film Dark Green is made up of two parts. In part one – "Alone in the Amazon" (32 min.) – adventurer, biologist and storyteller Paul Rosolie takes a deep dive into the Peruvian jungle. He travels alone, in search of the last remaining wilderness on Earth. It is a journey into the heart of the jungle, but equally an investigation into the relationship between modern humans and nature.

Part two – "The Conservation Story" (20 min.) – teaches us more about the area. What's so unique about this region of Peru, a province so rich in natural beauty that it bears the name Mother of God? What dangers threaten it? And what efforts is Paul taking for its protection?





KALU - Growing Up Wild (Short) - 14min

Directed and produced by Roman Willi & Matteo Clarke

"Kalu - Growing Up Wild" is a short documentary about the challenges a baby spider monkey named Kalu faces growing up in the jungle of the Osa Peninsula in Costa Rica. He must learn to climb, forage for food, communicate, face predators and make difficult decisions in order to survive. It shows the resilience and beauty of nature and highlights the importance of protecting it for future generations. The film is narrated by George McGavin, one of Britain's leading entomologists and naturalists, and produced with support from the BioSur Foundation, a NGO working to protect rainforest in Costa Rica.



WILDLIFE THROUGH AN ART LENS

The Last Vaquita (Short) - 13min

Produced by Ed Harrison & James Harrison and directed by Ed Harrison

With the Vaquita Porpoise on the brink of extinction, two brothers who collaborate as wildlife artists leave their studio behind and head to a small fishing town in Mexico. They board the M/V Farley Mowat to experience the front-line fight between ocean conservationists Sea Shepherd and the poachers, backed by the Mexican cartel, who are devastating countless marine species.

Caught up in a tale of greed and corruption, they witness a battle that seems all but lost and find themselves questioning their place in the world. Can they use their craft to take action amidst today's Sixth Mass Extinction?



Salt Medicine (Short) - 21min

Directed & produced by Sadie James

Salt Medicine is an expression of the many ways in which the Ocean makes us feel better, as seen through the eyes of artist Sadie James.



10th Sep. 10am - Norton St

11th Sep. 6pm - Central



Te Whakairo (Short) - 14min

Directed & produced by Vanessa Wells

Te Whakairo - Ngā Kī o Te Tai Ao (The Carvings Carry the Stories of the World).

Two talented carvers from each end of Aotearoa take their whakairo (carving) to Antarctica in response to New Zealand's kaitiakitanga (guardianship) of the world's largest marine protected area - The Ross Sea.



Mother Whale (Micro short) - 4min

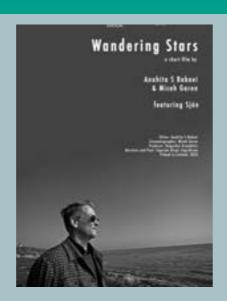
Directed by Anahita Babaei & Micah Garen

A short film about why we need to stop killing whales featuring the Icelandic singer Soley.



Directed by Anahita Babaei & Micah Garen

A micro short film featuring the Icelandic writer Sjón talking about why Iceland needs to end whaling.





OUR FRIENDLY LITTLE BUGS (Students & Youth) - 4min

Directed by Marie-Jo Long and produced by Serge Dentin

Ants, earthworms, bees, butterflies and woodlice are the heroes of this animated short. From the drawings they have made, a group of children tell us about the development, the places of life, and the roles that these insects have within the ecosystem of which they are a part.

HUMAN-NATURE RECONNECTION



Skin Deep (Short) - 19min

Directed by Harry Vincent, Alix Livingstone, and Caitlee Wilson

Skin Deep dives into the experience of Donny Imberlong, a Jaru man living on the traditional lands of the Miriwoong Gajerrong people, while working on a Darwin crocodile farm in 2017. It explores his strong connection with the species, and the inner struggles that came from working in an industry that relies on killing an animal that he loves so deeply. Ultimately, the film shines a light on the current mindset behind conserving these apex predators and begs the question - can there be a better way?

Return to K'gari (Short) - 21min

Directed by Selket Kaufman

Tucked away on the eastern coast of Australia lies a primeval bay where migrating South Pacific humpback whales find refuge. To sustain and grow vital noninvasive whale research, Pacific Whale Foundation (PWF) seizes this opportunity to develop a long-term study examining this population of humpback whales—where they migrate and how they use East Australia's coastline. Today, PWF Australia's ongoing efforts focus on the revitalization of a paradise threatened by climate change and unsustainable commercial tourism.



Life amongst the Boulders (Micro short) - 5min

Directed and produced by Phillip Frederic Graaf

The Wallabies of Magnetic Island live in a little Paradise... But humans might actually be threatening them unknowingly. This short film shows the beauty of this island and the life of the wallabies during a normal day (they are actually nocturnal animals).

Reviving Giants (Short) - 9min

Directed & produced by Stefan Andrews

Mick Baron and Karen Gowlett-Holmes have been running the Eaglehawk Dive Centre on the iconic Tasman Peninsula since 1991. For decades one of the major attractions to the area has been the giant kelp forests. But over the years they have seen first hand the destruction of the giant kelp forests, a direct result of climate change.

Dependent on Tasmania's giant kelp forests more than anyone, Mick and Karen have been instrumental in the efforts to research and rehabilitate these critically endangered ecosystems. With word spreading about restoration efforts, now the dive centre is increasingly receiving requests for people interested in diving on the restored reefs.

In this short film, Mick and Karen take you on a journey through the day in the life of these highly accomplished Tasmanian dive shop owners. The film explores their personal reflections on the dramatic changes observed in the giant kelp forests within their lifetimes and their ongoing efforts to raise awareness to the issue and gain traction in the rehabilitation of these reefs.

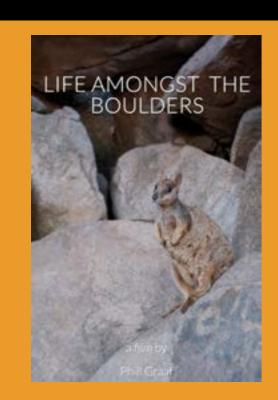




Shark Researchers: A New Approach to Shark Conservation (Micro short) - 3min

Directed by Arnau Argemi Gonzalez

Coastal communities in Belize have traditionally relied heavily on shark fishing for their livelihood. However, this practice puts the conservation of shark populations at risk. While banning shark fishing could endanger the livelihoods of thousands, Global FinPrint offers a solution. Their innovative approach aims to safeguard both sharks and the well-being of Belizean coastal communities. Discover in this short film how shark fisherfolk can transition to new livelihoods, becoming vital champions for shark conservation.



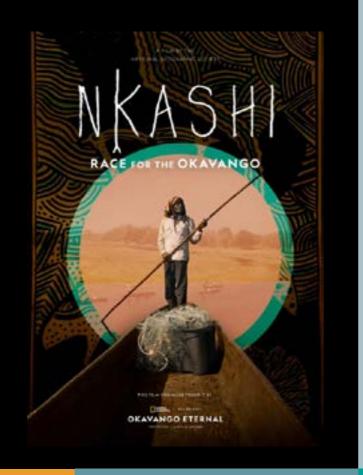
10th Sep, **10am - Chauvel 11**th Sep, **3.30pm - Central**

Racing for the Okavango

Nkashi: Race for the Okavango (Feature) - 1h11min

Directed by Sarah Joseph, produced by Sarah Joseph, Dustin Sylvia, & Thalefang Charles, and executive produced by Vanessa Serrao, Steve Boyes, & Kaitlin Yarnall

Created by the National Geographic Society's Impact Story Lab in collaboration with Batswana filmmakers, Nkashi: Race for the Okavango shows the triumphs and challenges of three mokoro (dugout canoe) polers, celebrates cultural heritage, and illuminates the importance of protecting the Okavango Delta.



10th Sep, 3.30pm - Norton St 12th Sep, 10am - Central

INTO THE WILD

My Alaskan Journey (Feature) - 1h01min



Directed & produced by Jack Johnston & Erin Ranney

In My Alaskan Journey, wildlife camerawoman Erin Ranney explores four unique areas of Alaska's coast, revealing stunning landscapes and iconic wildlife along the way. Guided by Alaska's history, her family's stories, and her own memories, Erin's journey weaves the past with the present, and paints a hopeful future for the land and wildlife of coastal Alaska.

Sonora (Students & Youth) - 24min

Directed by Johnny Holder and produced by Johnny Holder & Pablo Camacho

Sonora is an experiential short documentary that explores the human sensory connection to nature through the mind of Juan Pablo Culasso, a blind birder in Colombia.



SALTY VIBES

Great Ocean Love (Short) - 30min

Directed by Ella Bourn, and produced by Belinda Baggs, Linley Hurrell, & Josh Kirkman

Great Ocean Love is part documentary, part road-trippin' surf flick that follows Belinda Baggs, Linley Hurrell, and Lilly Pollard on a journey of discovery along the Great Ocean Road.

Centred around the teachings of Gunditjmara whale dreamer Yaraan Bundle. Along the way, they meet saltwater women who share their love for the rugged coastline they call home.





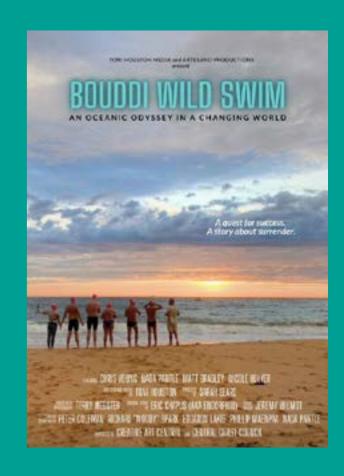
BOUDDI WILD SWIM (Feature) - 55min

Diected by Toni Houston and produced by Sarah Beard

BOUDDI WILD SWIM is human adventure in a changing world. At first glance it's a simple quest; a group of swimmers training for and attempting a 23 kilometre ocean swim.

It's a big undertaking; the shoreline follows Bouddi National Park on NSW's Central Coast, which is raw bushland, treacherous seas and often inaccessible coastline. This quest is a classic meditation on human motivation, endurance and potential heroism. But it becomes much more. Mother Nature is in flux. A swim is no longer just a swim.

As the months unfold, dramatic challenges escalate; global pandemic, record-breaking floods, and shark attack. The swimmers' local quest becomes a global lens. Whether they 'succeed' isn't up to them. It's up to Mother Nature. And how she feels on the day...



10th Sep, 1pm - Chauvel **11**th Sep, 1pm - Central

Creatures of Oz

Mysteries of the Twilight Zone (Students & Youth) - 30min

Directed by Leo Leo Richards and produced by Logan Mock-Bunting



In the deep ocean, life is concentrated at chemosynthetic oases where primary production is made possible via chemosynthesis at cold seeps and deep sea hydrothermal vents. The non-chemosynthetic regions of the deep are divided into two very different worlds. First is the midwater, where pelagic wanderers tread migratory routes that span entire oceans, and planktonic drifters and their predators take part in bioluminescent light shows. It is separated into zones based on depth, including the sunlight zone (epipelagic), twilight zone (mesopelagic), midnight zone (bathypelagic), abyssal and hadal zones. And below, lies the deep sea floor. A kingdom of mud and ooze, where sessile creatures cling to any solid outcrop and corals craft kingdoms on the seamount crusts. The worlds of the deep sea could not be more different, and yet their stories are fundamentally intertwined. In this film, we delve into the Twilight Zone.

Tree Kangaroos - Ghosts of the Forest (Feature) - 50min

Directed and produced by Geoff Spanner, and executive produced by Chris Fletcher



Tree Kangaroos: Ghosts of the Forest, mastered in 4K UHD, centres around a Lumholtz Tree Kangaroo joey and her mother from the time the joey looks out upon the world from her mother's pouch until she leaves her mother as a fully developed tree kangaroo almost two years later. During that time, Mabi (her name comes from the First Nation name for them) faces several challenges and trials as she learns to find food, climb trees, hop along the ground, avoid predators and grow.

Her biggest challenge is when a new joey emerges from her mother's pouch and Mabi starts to drift away from them to become an independent tree roo.

Mabi and her mother remain in the wet sclerophyll forest on the edge of the rainforest. Seldom seen, almost never heard and very rarely filmed in their natural environment, they are the ghosts of these forests. Tree kangaroos are however, one of Northern Australia's most iconic species.

Red Goshawks: lifting the veil (Short) - 10min

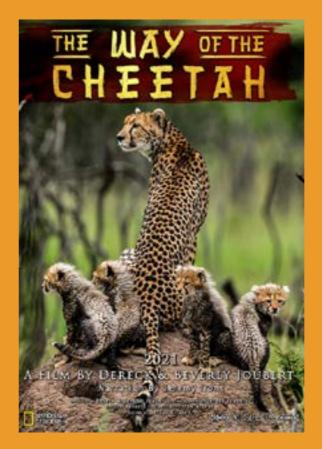
Produced by Braydon Moloney

Join raptor research Chris MacColl on journey to Cape York, as he reveals new secrets about Australia's rarest bird of prey.



WONDERS OF EAST AFRICA

10th Sep, 3.30pm - Chauvel 11th Sep, 3.30pm - Norton St



The Way of the Cheetah (Feature) - 44min

Directed by Dereck Joubert and David S. Falcone and produced by Dereck Joubert and Beverly Joubert

There really is no other big cat on the planet that is like a cheetah. They are warriors, yet comparatively small, fast (the fastest) but still use camouflage to disguise themselves to get up close. They can't climb like leopards or wrestle a buffalo to the ground, but they do form into agile coalitions of males to hunt prey much larger than them. It is their way.

The film goes under the cover of darkness with thermal cameras, and we capture the lush colours of Africa, but when it comes to the hunting scenes, as these shape shifting cats appear from nowhere in a blur, captured in ultra-high speed motion, the battles turn epic.

Shaba (Sponsored Film) - 12min

Directed by Ami Vitale, produced by Dave Allen and Gaby Bastra



In the mountains of northern Kenya, a Samburu community is doing something that has never been done before. They've built a sanctuary for orphaned elephants to try to rehabilitate them back to the wild. The project is not just changing local attitudes about elephants, it's changing attitudes about women too, because the secret to Reteti's success is all because of the special bond between a group of local women keepers and one special elephant named Shaba.

10th Sep, 6pm - Chauvel 12th Sep, 10am - Norton St

CHANGING THE TIDE

Neon Nights | Diving into the World of Biofluorescence (Sponsored Film) - 7min

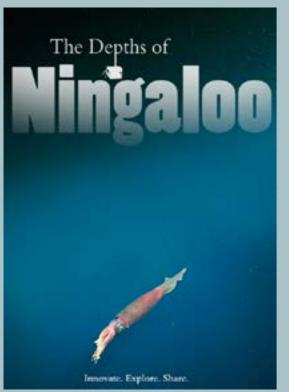
Directed and produced by Paul Nicklen

Illuminating the depths and revealing a neon display of biofluorescence, in A Sea of Hope, co-founder Paul Nicklen leads a journey through the night, diving into unfamiliar worlds.



Using blue lights to capture underwater biofluorescence, one of nature's most striking phenomena, Paul plunges into "a void of blackness." Cutting through the dark with only his beam of light, he relinquishes control and uncovers the underwater secrets usually shielded within the dark expanse.

Paul, joined by friend and fellow underwater photographer Marcelo Johan Ogata unveils the psychedelic display emitted from certain corals and animals when observed under blue light. The lights reveal the incredible contrast of these organisms from day to night alongside the abundant aquatic activity that bustles under the cloak of darkness.



The Depths of Ningaloo (Short) - 12min

Directed by Logan Mock-Bunting & Carlie Wiener and produced by Logan Mock-Bunting, Alex Ingle, & Carlie Wiener

In March 2020, a team of ocean scientists set out to observe, document, and characterize the deep-sea biodiversity in the Cape Range and Ningaloo Canyons - a region off of Western Australia, where almost no exploration had taken place.

This documentary was filmed entirely at sea, as Schmidt Ocean Institute's research vessel Falkor - along with their underwater robot, Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) SuBastian - collected beautiful visual surveys and sampling of the environment, providing important evidence for the unique life forms and geologic structures of this little-studied region.

The remote Western Australian coast is well known for its immense diversity of evolutionary significant fauna, but this celebrated area remained nearly unexplored until this first-of-its-kind expedition.

The Witness Is a Whale (Feature) - 52min

Directed by Nick Dean & Cheryl Dean and produced by Spindrift Images, Mark Fletcher Productions, & Terra Mater Factual Studios

A detective story spanning 60 years and half the globe, The Witness Is a Whale documents the uncovering of a massive illegal and secret slaughter of over 200,000 whales by the Soviet Union and Japan in the 1960's, an act described by scientists as "one of the greatest environmental crimes of the 20th century."

Using interviews with Soviet era whaling scientists and whalers, contemporary conservation biologists from around the world, along with rare personal archival material, The Witness Is a Whale tells this story for the first time. What starts as an exposure of Soviet illegal whaling leads into a larger and darker story, as former Soviet whalers accuse Japan of also secretly killing whales, an act that Japan has never confessed to, even now as they reinstate commercial whaling.



The ramifications of removing so many whales from the ocean are revealed with examples of whales exhibiting both intimate and previously undocumented behavior. This is accompanied by descriptions of the successful recovery of many whale populations and our increasing scientific understanding of their importance in ocean ecosystems.

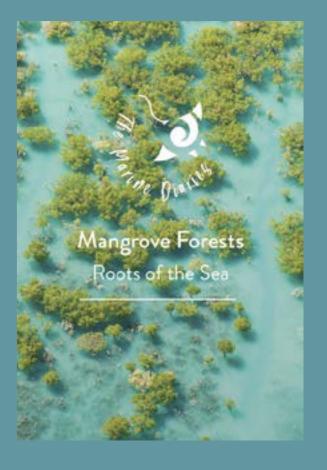
Mangrove Forests: Roots of the Sea (Micro short) - 4min

Directed by Rebecca Daniel and produced by Jessica Mitchell

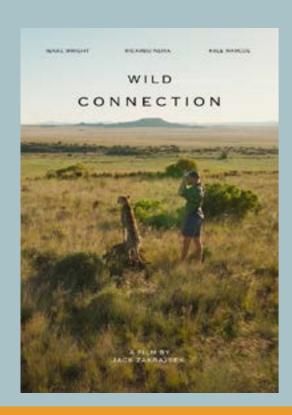
Step into the magical world of mangroves!

Situated along coastlines around the world, from Indonesia to the Caribbean, mangrove forests support a plethora of life – including humans. Providing a safe environment for juvenile marine species and protecting the coast from rapid erosion, mangroves are incredibly important marine ecosystems.

Marine Ecosystem Diaries is a project launched by The Marine Diaries, an ocean science communication platform giving a voice to the ocean, its inhabitants, and the people who depend on it. The project launched in January 2021 and will be running for nine months (until the end of September 2021). It explores nine different marine ecosystems, from coral reefs to polar seas. It highlights each important ecosystem, telling their stories through easily accessible and educational materials.



REWILDING OUR WORLD



Wild Connection (Students & Youth) - 14min

Directed by Jack Zakrajsek, produced by Jack Zakrajsek & Ricardo Neiva, and executive produced by Jack Zakrajsek, Ricardo Neiva & Isaac Wright

Nick Kleer and his partner, Kristina Perlerius, leave their homes and careers and head to the Free State of South Africa where they develop strong bonds with the wild cheetahs at Tiger Canyon Private Game Reserve. They strive to halt the downward spiral that cheetahs are facing such as habitat loss and the shrinking of their gene pool.

Odrina the Lynx (Students & Youth) - 5min

Directed by Miguel Anton

After generations of absence, a silent shadow has returned to the forests of central Spain - one that the magpies are learning to fear again: the Iberian lynx.





Penny: Harvesting Hope (Short) - 6min

Directed by Josh Robertson

After discovering harvest mice are on the brink of extinction in the UK, Chester Zoo's Penny Rudd leads a mission to help protect this iconic species. But will her boundless passion for wildlife and lifelong determination to protect this charismatic species be enough?

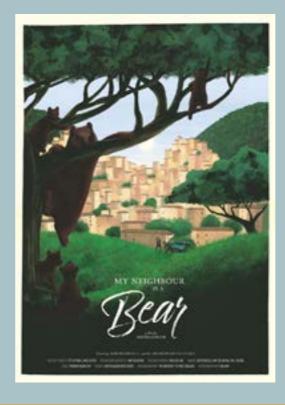


Gardening marine forests: A hands-on approach to restoration (Short) - 20min

Directed by Stefan Andrews, and produced by Adriana Verges, Aaron Eger, & Stefan Andrews

What if people could be the secret to transforming ocean deserts into rich forests filled with an abundance of life?

Join two marine scientists as they explore how a hands-on approach to marine restoration is working to revive marine kelp forests in South Korea.



My Neighbour is a Bear (Students & Youth) - 16min

Directed & Produced by Mattia Cialoni

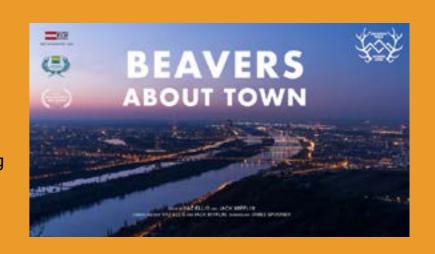
A rare Marsican bear family wanders down from the Italian Apennines to the charming village of Villalago, in search of food in the local orchards. For most people this would be a cause for concern, but for the residents of Villalago it is a rather different situation.

The film tells the story of the determination of one woman to understand these bears, and gives an important lesson of the fragility of our connection with nature.

Beavers About Town (Short) - 9min

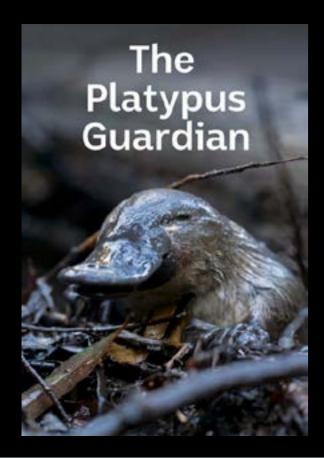
Directed by Yaz Ellis & Jack Mifflin

The city of Vienna is home to over 230 beavers, including one special beaver family who are the stars of this film. We follow them as they navigate the urban world they have made their home. From living in an unexpected "lodge", swimming past humans everyday and using empty boats as places to relax. You've never seen beavers like this before.



11th Sep, 1pm - Chauvel 12th Sep, 3.30pm - Central

THE PLATYPUS GUARDIAN



The Platypus Guardian (Sponsored Film) - 53min

Directed by Chadden Hunter & Nick Hayward and produced by Fraser Johnson & Nick Hayward

When local mountain biker Pete Walsh stumbles across a bizarre creature in an urban waterway his life is about change forever. He soon forms a bond with the animal he names Zoom. An egg-laying, duck-billed, venom-spined, furry-coated, underwater mammal otherwise known as a platypus. Pete embarks on a mission to save Zoom's city creek before it's too late, while Zoom takes Pete on a magical journey into the secret world of the platypus.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE COEXISTENCE

11th Sep, 6pm - Chauvel 12th Sep, 3.30pm - Norton St

The Edge of Existence (Feature) - 1h 27min

Directed by James Suter & Charlie Luckock and produced by Sam Sutter & Banovich Studios

The Edge of Existence is a long-format documentary, set in the Western Corridor of the Serengeti, that sets out to uncover and document the untold story of human-wildlife conflict in Africa. Human-wildlife conflict is a global issue that has reached crisis levels, threatening the survival of both humans and wild animals. There are communities living alongside wildlife in some of the last remaining wilderness areas on earth. These wilderness areas have started disappearing because of expanding human development, deforestation, and depletion of natural resources, which has left humans and wildlife living in closer proximity than ever before.

The conflict arises as a result of the competition for limited space and resources between communities and wildlife. The situation is dire, and if it is not addressed urgently, it will have a catastrophic effect on the environment and on communities that live alongside wild animals daily.

The Edge of Existence aims to tell the story of key characters on the ground in the Serengeti who face daily challenges as they struggle to coexist with Africa's wildlife. We show it from their eyes and hear their point of view on this topic.



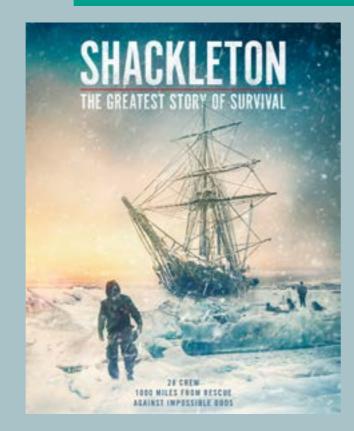
11th Sep, 6pm - Norton St 12th Sep, 1pm - Norton St

Shackleton: The Greatest Story of Survival (Sponsored Film) - 1h 27min

Directed by Bobbi Hansel & Caspar Mazzotti

28 lost adventurers must fight for their lives after their only lifeline is destroyed in the most uninhabitable place on Earth – Antarctica.

Shackleton: The Greatest Story of Survival reveals the true story of polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton and the crew of the Endurance, told by the only man ever to have repeated their incredible feat - explorer and adventurer Tim Jarvis. Following in the beset crew's footsteps, Tim reveals the enduring legacy of Shackleton's crisis leadership in the face of impossible odds - a lesson more relevant to us now than ever before.





AWARD CEREMONY

The Wild Earth Oceania Film Festival will culminate in an award ceremony on the afternoon of September 12th at Palace Chauvel where we will enjoy a special and honourable celebration of the winners and runners up for feature, short, youth and microshort films.

Special awards will be given to the winners of best ocean category film, best female director, best indigenous film, best cinematography and best music score.

Film makers, and their teams and familiers are welcome to attend, as is the general public. Tickets are priced at a flat fee of \$10.

Please contact julia@wildearthoceania.com if you have any queries or if you require further information.



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