

Mini award ceremonies for the winners of the international film competition at the NaturVision Online Film Festival

The winners of the 19th NaturVision Film Festival are decided. Instead of the usual in-cinema awards gala, this year four mini award ceremonies were streamed online, with host Dana Hoffmann announcing the winners and introducing clips of the films. The ceremonies and the winning films are available to watch at NaturVision ONLINE until 23 July 2020.

In keeping with the online version of the NaturVision Film Festival, on Sunday 19 July 2020, the award winners from this year's festival were announced in four novel and entertaining mini award ceremonies, interspersed with video messages from the delighted winners.

Swiss director Roman Droux, for example, whose film about bears ***Der Bär in mir*** won the **German Wildlife Film Award**, was thrilled with the jury's reasoning that "the film makes us think and prompts us to question the relationship between humans and animals". (Award sponsor: City of Ludwigsburg.)

The **German Biodiversity Film Award** went to ***Die Wälder des Nordens*** by Kevin McMahon. As the film shows, the boreal forests are crucial for the world's climate, but human interference is endangering this often-overlooked region of the Earth. (Award sponsor: HAHN + KOLB.)

A dangerous consequence of global warming is the increasing flooding of entire swathes of land. Highlighting this, the science documentary ***66 Meter*** by Max Mönch and Alexander Lahl makes complex issues easy for the viewers to understand, and this was acknowledged by the jury with the **German Conservation and Sustainability Film Award**. (Award sponsor: Ministry of the Environment, Climate and the Energy Industry Baden-Württemberg.) They also awarded a Special Mention in this category – to ***Green Warriors: Paraguay's Poisoned Fields*** by Martin Boudot, which manages to give a voice to a village community battling against a major corporation's use of disease-causing pesticides on the surrounding soya fields.

The **NaturVision Camera Award** was shared this year, between ***Libellen – Funkelnde Jäger*** – showcasing the captivating close-up and macro shots of dragonflies by cameraman Kevin Flay – and ***The Elephant Queen*** by Victoria Stone and Mark Deeble, a classic wildlife film, which stands out due to its highly aesthetic and imaginative imagery.

As well as camera skills, environmental and nature films are also defined by their storytelling. Here too, the jury was particularly impressed by two films. The **NaturVision Best Story Award** went to ***Das***

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Contact and further information:

NaturVision Filmfestival

Martina Edin
Arsenalstraße 4
71638 Ludwigsburg

Fon: 07141-9137645

Fax: 07141-99 22 48-13
Mail: edin@natur-vision.org
Web: www.natur-vision.de

Lied der Gibbons by Mark Fletcher. The habitat of the Skywalker gibbons has been carved up to such an extent that they can no longer find each other to mate and are threatened with extinction. The film follows dedicated researchers who provide assistance with a kind of "dating app". A Special Mention in this category went to **Bamboo Stories** by Shaheen Dill-Riaz – a poetic film, which follows the fortunes of the raftsmen in the bamboo forests of Bangladesh.

Every year comes the excitement of discovering new filmmaking talent, and in 2020 the **NaturVision Newcomer Award** went to director George Pretty. (Award sponsor: dieUmweltDruckerei.) His black-and-white film **Life on the Rocks** impressed the jury with the emotional pull it develops. In the film, June Nelson recalls the years she and her husband, ornithologist Bryan Nelson, spent together on a remote rock in the sea – at the same time creating a universal statement against the destruction of habitats. A Special Mention in the Newcomer category went to Oliver Bruck for his multi-faceted film **Exploring Hans Hass**, in which he discovers the person behind the façade of the famous diver and media star Hans Hass.

The NaturVision children's jury also decided to honour two films: The schoolchildren gave the **NaturVision Children's Film Award** to **Die verrückte Welt der Hörnchen** by Yann Sochaczewski, a film about squirrels which they described as equally informative and funny. (Award sponsor: Wiedeking Stiftung.) Ben Wolter's **Anna und der wilde Wald**, in which animal reporter Anna goes in search of wolves in the Bavarian Forest, received a Special Mention.

The young people of the youth jury were fascinated by the short film **The Beauty** by Pascal Schelbli, which brings the issue of marine pollution home to the audience with impressive visual effects. But they were also inspired by the film **Anders Essen: Das Experiment** by Kurt Langbein and Andrea Ernst, which realistically shows how each and every one of us can protect ecosystems by changing our eating habits. So it was decided that both these films would share the **NaturVision Youth Jury Award**. (Award sponsor: Ministry of the Environment, Climate and the Energy Industry Baden-Württemberg.)

Now in its third year, the **NaturVision Short Film Award**, sponsored by Audi Stiftung für Umwelt, was the prize for the 2020 short film competition with the theme "Forest Whisperings". The winner was **Traces** by Sébastien Pins, which gently and poetically tells the story of a woodcutter. The short film jury also acknowledged **The Flying Gold of Arabuko** with a Special Mention. This film by John Davies delves into the story of an illegal Kenyan logger and poacher, now turned butterfly farmer.

The **NaturVision Bavarian Film Award** went to the film **Aus Liebe zum Überleben** by Bertram Verhaag, which explores sustainable agriculture, love of animals and respect for the land.

Two prizes are still to be announced: As the week-long NaturVision ONLINE festival draws to a close on Thursday evening, 23 July 2020, viewers can watch the final mini award ceremony to find out who takes home the Audience Award and the Film Music Award.