

## “Not just a success in terms of numbers” – NaturVision ONLINE steps into a new dimension

**This year’s NaturVision Film Festival drew to a close on Thursday evening with the last of four mini award ceremonies. Normally held in Ludwigsburg, Germany, this year the festival had to go virtual from the city. It was the first online version, the first time that visitors came from 64 countries without travelling, the first award ceremonies by video – a new undertaking pulled off with flying colours.**

*“You and your team have put together something brilliant and it’s great that the streaming works from Switzerland as well.”*

*“I actually have nothing but praise! I had a thrilling week and watched nearly all the films. This was my first time taking part and I’d be delighted if it happened again.”*

*“Thank you for the fantastic film programme. For me, the online version is much better than in-person events. ... It’s a real highlight!”*

These and other enthusiastic comments and congratulations from all over Germany – but also elsewhere in the world – came pouring in for NaturVision during the week of the festival – much to the delight of the team.

Altogether 18,000 viewers embraced the eight-day festival, immersing themselves in the varied programme of nature and environmental films. The festival week saw the NaturVision website bombarded by visitors, who keenly explored all corners of the site. The schools programme was booked by 30 schools and shown to 1,778 pupils from all year groups. But the favourite aspect for the festival-goers was the films they could watch in the virtual cinema.

What began with disappointment that there could be no live cinema or open-air event this year has, in many respects, turned out to be a milestone in the festival’s 19-year history: The response of the online community was not just consistently positive, but also much more so than usual, both on social media and in the online media. With its ambition to inspire a rethink in society, the festival in its online format not only reached more people – from all over – but also attracted considerably more young people. The festival organisers are also pleased about the many new, sustainable collaborations, which, it seems already, will continue beyond the festival week.

“It really was a strange feeling to be putting on a festival with no big screen and no meeting in person”, explains Festival Director Ralph Thoms. “But for me there are also an incredible number of

*NaturVision Film Festival is organised by Earth Vision UG; Our partners are Film & Medienfestival gGmbH, the city of Ludwigsburg and Central Filmtheater. NaturVision is supported by Ministry for Environment, Climate and Energy Economy Baden-Württemberg, Film Fund Baden-Württemberg, Bureau for Communication Baden-Württemberg. Also NaturVision is supported by other partners in 2020, among which are IBA’27, SportRegion Stuttgart, Wohnungsbau Ludwigsburg and Business Development Region Stuttgart, HAHN&KOLB GmbH, AUDI Stiftung für Umwelt, dieUmweltdruckerei. Media Partners are ARTE Magazin, Moritz, LIFT, forum nachhaltig wirtschaften, bioNachrichten, Greenup, Hallo Ludwigsburg.*

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positives. For one thing, there's the enormously pleasing success in figures. But just as important is the solidarity we experienced. From our supporters and award sponsors, from the many filmmakers who got involved with their films, interviews and video messages. And from our viewers, who engaged with the new format and gave us the best feedback. These are all constructive experiences that make us very excited about our anniversary festival in 2021".

One final award ceremony brought NaturVision's resoundingly successful online adventure to a close. The NaturVision Film Music Award (sponsored by NaturVision Förderverein) was won by Oliver Heuss for his concert-worthy soundtrack to **Im Reich der Wolga**. And the Audience Award (sponsored by Bund der Selbständigen Ludwigsburg) went to the film **Der Bär in mir**.

Now NaturVision is looking ahead. The preparations for its 20-year anniversary are already under way and will be complemented and enriched by the new experiences. For 2021 the team are planning a combination of analogue and digital formats, which proved so popular this year. But the main venues will once again be the Central Filmtheater and Arsenalplatz in Ludwigsburg – with plenty of festival atmosphere and inspiring encounters. The 20<sup>th</sup> NaturVision Film Festival is scheduled for 14 – 18 July 2021.