17th Annual International Ocean Film Festival
Holds “Global Online Audience Award” for Student Films March 25 – April 5

Winners will be announced online via the International Ocean Film Festival newsletter and social media on Monday, April 6 at 12 noon PDT.

24 March 2020 - San Francisco, CA: The International Ocean Film Festival often called “Sundance for the Ocean” will host a very special “Global Online Audience Award” for its Student Film Competition submissions. The online voting form and the films are listed by title at www.intloceanfilmfest.org/student-film-competition. Online viewers are asked to vote for their one top choice in each category of middle school and high school students. The contest will run from Wednesday March 25 at 12:00 noon and end at midnight Sunday, April 5th (all times Pacific Standard Time)

“While we’re all doing our best to ‘bend the curve’ and decrease coronavirus infections, this is a great opportunity to acknowledge the great work by our student filmmakers around the world,” said Ana Blanco, Executive Director for the IOFF. “With submissions from across the US, the Philippines, Indonesia, Kenya, Thailand and Turkey, this will truly be a global audience award. These next generation of artists, activists and ocean leaders are telling stories whereby we can truly save the world’s oceans. This is an opportunity for people around the world to be entertained, weigh in and engage with us during this challenging period.”

Rules for the online contest are:

- Only one vote per email.
- Votes can't be changed once submitted.
- Open to anyone around the world
The winning student filmmaker will receive a cash prize of $100, a Jenga Ocean game, and a Global Online Audience Award Certificate. Winners will also be honored at the Festival’s rescheduled full event later this year, along with the announcement of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place student film winners in each category.

For 17 years, San Francisco’s International Ocean Film Festival has been pursuing its ocean conservation mission through film: *Saving Our Oceans - One Film at a Time*. This year's Festival selection comprised 56 films from 15 countries including four world premieres, six United States premieres, nine West Coast premieres and six Bay Area Premieres.

“This is easily the most diverse group of films we’ve ever had, with the greatest international participation to date,” said Blanco.

For the 2020 Festival, 160 submissions were received from around the world, including films from the USA, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Italy, Switzerland, France, Germany, Turkey, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, South Korea, Madagascar and South Africa. The list includes films of all genres – documentaries, narratives, shorts, and animation films of all lengths. As always, the Festival focuses on all ocean centric themes including but not limited to: ocean exploration, wildlife, environmental, conservation, oceanography, seafaring adventures, maritime issues, ocean sports and coastal cultures.

In order to fulfill its conservation mission, and in addition to screening films, the International Ocean Film Festival has aligned itself with the Ocean Unite’s #Love30x30 initiative to bring more awareness to this global effort. #Love30x30 is a call to action to safeguard at least 30% of the world’s ocean by 2030 through a network of highly protected marine areas where no destructive or extractive activities like fishing or mining can take place.

Since its launch in 2004, the San Francisco-based International Ocean Film Festival has attracted thousands of spectators of all ages from around the world, including film enthusiasts, sea athletes, educators, and environmental activists. Since then, the Festival has presented over 600 films from 50 different countries and featured post-film Q&A sessions with visiting filmmakers, special panel discussions with content experts, and the Annual Free Student Education Program. It was the first event of its kind in North America, inspired by the well-established ocean festival in Toulon, France, which has continued to draw large audiences for more than 40 years.

Current sponsors for the 17th Annual International Ocean Film Festival include National Marine Sanctuary,
BigBus of San Francisco, Gray Line Tours, SSA, Alcatraz Cruises, the Port of San Francisco, the Consul General of Canada, Blue and Gold Ferry, RBC Wealth Management, Heidrick & Struggles, Pacific Gas & Electric and Troutman Sanders LLC.

The International Ocean Film Festival encourages its patrons, supporters and partners to follow the most current advice from the Center for Disease Control and the World Health Organization for preventing the further spread of the COVID-19 in Northern California and beyond, and to stay tuned for announcements about International Ocean Film Festival events once the threat level is reduced. A new date for the entire 17th Annual International Ocean Film Festival will be announced in a few weeks.