

## **These are Europe's best nature films 2025 / Hamburg's Second Mayor Katharina Fegebank at the award ceremony / Awards for Germany, Finland and Ireland**

Hamburg, 16 February 2025.

Sleeping giants, forests in transition and the variance of Irish birdsong - these topics are worthy of an award: five films about Europe's nature have held the title 'Best European Nature Film 2025' since Saturday evening. The filmmakers from Germany, Finland and Ireland accepted the first European Wildlife Film Awards (EWFA) trophies and prize money totalling 47,500 euros in Hamburg's Hafencity. The initiator of the new, most highly endowed European wildlife film award is the German Wildlife Foundation, which itself donated two of the prizes.

245 films were submitted in the first race for the best nature film. At the award ceremony at the Wildlife Embassy, the winners in five categories each received an oak owl trophy and prize money.

**The top prize of 15,000 euros in the wildlife category went to director Marko Röhr from Finland. His documentary 'Tale of the Sleeping Giants' (produced by Hanna Kauppi) shows the mystical Lapland with its mountains, lakes and rivers - and their animal inhabitants.**

Two German productions were honoured with 10,000 euros each: Jan Haft won in the biodiversity category with his film 'Unsere Wälder - Mut zur Lücke' (produced by Nautilus film for Doclights/ NDR naturfilm). In the nature conservation category, Christian Heynen won over the jury with his documentary 'Good news from the planet - how we protect moor, heath and meadow' (Längengrad Filmproduktion, in collaboration with ARTE). The prize for the best story went to Ireland to director Kathleen Harris for her film 'Birdsong' (True Films for ARTE). Best short film was 'Pepe taucht ab', filmed and produced by Sven Bohde from Kiel.

'With the Nature Film Award, the German Wildlife Foundation brings rarely shown insights into the world of wildlife to the big screen and thus gives the city a unique nature education experience. Especially in the categories of biodiversity and nature conservation, it becomes clear how important the filmic examination of climate change is. We have to protect the climate because it protects us. And only if we preserve biodiversity and species diversity will we be able to protect the climate and adapt to changing climatic conditions. I encourage all Hamburg residents to visit the Naturfilmkino cinema and be inspired by these fascinating films,' said Hamburg's Second Mayor Katharina Fegebank in her welcoming address.

Professor Dr Klaus Hackländer, wildlife biologist and board member of the German Wildlife Foundation, paid particular tribute to the work of the people behind the films: 'Wildlife filmmakers make the impressive world of wildlife accessible to everyone. With the European Wildlife Film Awards, we want to encourage filmmakers in Europe to continue to surprise and inspire with extraordinary insights.'

Maike Juraschka, head of the film competition at the German Wildlife Foundation, emphasised Hamburg's role in the wildlife film scene: 'In the Hanseatic city, the first European Wildlife Film Award will be presented in Germany's first wildlife film cinema - how fitting: because alongside

London and Vienna, Hamburg has long been one of the main production locations for spectacular nature documentaries. With the Wildlife Cinema, there is now a permanent venue for nature films in the centre of Hamburg.'

From 19 February, the Kino der Wildtiere will be showing one of the 50 nature films selected for the EWFA every Wednesday. The filmmakers are often on hand to answer questions from the audience after the screening. Cinema-goers can rate the films - and thus decide on the Audience Award, which will then be presented as the sixth category of the EWFA for the first time in February 2026.

### **About the European Wildlife Film Awards (EWFA)**

The EWFA is the first nature film competition to exclusively honour documentaries about the European animal and plant world. Presented by the German Wildlife Foundation, there are a total of six award categories. A total of 245 films have already been submitted for this first competition. A jury of experts from the fields of nature conservation, media, science and culture selected the winners in the categories of wildlife, biodiversity, nature conservation and storytelling. Cinema-goers also had the opportunity to rate the films. They voted for the best short film and decide on the Audience Award, which will be presented for the first time in 2026.

### **About the Wildlife Embassy**

The Wildlife Embassy in Hamburg's HafenCity is home to an exhibition, a learning workshop and a nature film cinema. In the 2,200 square metre permanent multimedia exhibition, visitors are immersed in the living environments of native wild animals and learn about the challenges they face in our cultural landscape. In the learning workshop, which is primarily aimed at primary school children, children can explore the native animal world in a playful way. And the wildlife cinema, Germany's only nature film cinema, regularly shows fascinating documentaries. Natural materials create a special atmosphere in the adjoining restaurant.