

Saving Seals wins at International Tourism Film Festival

Saving Seals, a short film by local wildlife photographer Steve Benjamin of Animal Ocean, won the Grand Prix Award at the International Tourism Film Festival Africa in the Documentary and Television category.



Image supplied: *Saving Seals* explores the history of the seal disentanglement programme

The film also won Gold in the Environment and Ecology thematic category. *Saving Seals* documents the extraordinary measures undertaken by staff of the Two Oceans Aquarium and the Aquarium Foundation to rescue and disentangle seals. These efforts are part of the Marine Wildlife Management Programme at the V&A Waterfront.

“We are extremely honoured to have been recognised for the film we created. The making of the film was a long and arduous process to complete due to logistical and technical complications, but also to ensure that the story of this passionate work being done with the seals, is told correctly. We are really excited that this film, and the recognition it is getting, will continue to highlight the great work that the Two Oceans Aquarium and the Two Oceans Aquarium Education Foundation are doing for Cape fur seals in the Waterfront and harbour areas,” said Benjamin.



Local animation film, *Seal Team*, in Netflix's Top 10 list in 27 countries globally

13 Jan 2022



Saving Seals was released in November 2022 and focuses on the work being done by the Two Oceans Aquarium, the Two Oceans Aquarium Education Foundation, the V&A Waterfront's Marine Wildlife Management Programme, the South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and international collaborators to develop a protocol to safely tranquilise distressed seals in order for them to be disentangled from life-threatening nooses.

Saving Seals explores the history of the seal disentanglement programme at the V&A Waterfront and the desperate need for this new technology - which enables rescuers to help those seals that cannot be helped through other means.

Seal rescues and disentanglements in the V&A Waterfront have a long history of progress and innovation over the years. What started as rescues by the then Department of Fisheries, assisted by Vincent Calder of the Two Oceans Aquarium, grew into Calder and Claire Taylor, also of the Two Oceans Aquarium, developing a method to approach unsuspecting seals from below the jetties.

This method has proven highly successful with specialised equipment and techniques being developed. Calder and Taylor's efforts were recognised and incorporated into the Marine Wildlife Management Programme at the V&A Waterfront.

However, some of these more 'traditional' methods are unfortunately not always effective and alternatives, like the darting of seals, have had to be explored to deal with badly disentangled or in areas where they are inaccessible. The Two Oceans Aquarium and its Foundation have, over the last couple of years, worked closely with veterinarian Dr Brett Gardner of Zoos Victoria, and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, to trial a protocol for the use of sedative darts and stimulants on high-risk Cape fur seals.



Corona Studios' second production focused on defying prejudice

29 Apr 2022



Saving Seals highlights this particular method as an alternative to the 'traditional' ways of disentangling seals.

"I would like to extend my personal congratulations to Steve Benjamin on this incredible achievement. I am so very proud to have been part of the making of this exceptional film. The film shines the spotlight on the work that the team is doing to assist the seals in the V&A Waterfront and the Port of Cape Town. It also highlights the fact that not all environmental issues have the same solutions, and sometimes one has to think outside of the box to tackle these kinds of problems," said Taylor.

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