



2017 Gray's Reef Film Festival "Our Community, Our Ocean"

14th Annual Festival Expands to Tybee Island and Adds Second 3D Night

The 2017 Gray's Reef Film Festival is set for February 3-5. The first two dates – Feb. 3 & 4 – will be at the Trustees Theater in Historic Downtown Savannah and the third date – Feb. 5 – will be at the Tybee Post Theater on Tybee Island. Festival attendees are welcomed to donate to the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Foundation during the celebration. Suggested donations are \$10/day for adults and \$5/day for kids, students and members of the military. See below for full schedule and locations.

This year's theme is "Our Community, Our Ocean." By featuring the incredible wonders found beneath the sea, the films remind viewers that ocean communities enjoy a deep bond with nature that is unique to their geography, and with that bond comes the quiet promise and welcome duty of protecting and conserving our great global ocean.

"As a coastal community, most of us have a deep understanding that life in the ocean depends on us," said Sarah Fangman, superintendent of Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary. "These beautiful films remind us of how important a healthy ocean is to preserving *our* way of life and they give us the festival's theme: 'our community, our ocean.'"

Presenting the marine world at its most vivid, the festival is offering back-to-back "3D Nights" at the Trustees Theater in historic Savannah. "Moviegoers gave rave reviews to the festival's first-ever 3D Night last year, so we decided to double the fun this year," said Chris Hines, the sanctuary's deputy superintendent and festival organizer.

This year's headliner is *Galapagos: Nature's Wonderland 3D*. The Galapagos archipelago is composed of 19 islands in the Pacific Ocean near the South American country of Ecuador, which were created from volcanoes millions of years ago. Strict restrictions are in place for touring the islands, so most Americans learn about the Galapagos when reading about naturalist Charles Darwin.

“Galapagos is full of dramas, and it’s also full of very, very charismatic animals, which because they are uniquely unafraid of humans, you can get extremely close to while filming. It’s a wonderful subject for the 3D medium,” explained the legendary naturalist and film’s writer David Attenborough. “Home to some 9,000 species, Galapagos is one of the wonders of the world, and the animals are absolutely riveting in 3D.” *Galapagos 3D* is directed by award winner Martin Williams, who is well known for his documentaries with Attenborough.

Also on opening night, Gray’s Reef will screen *The Last Reef: Cities Beneath the Sea 3D*. Filmed in five different countries, *The Last Reef 3D* is the production of Academy Award® nominees Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas, creators of the worldwide theater and movie sensation, *Stomp*. In *The Last Reef*, stunning imagery immerses viewers in communities beneath the sea. The film captures the behavior and relationships of well-known ocean dwellers like dolphins, reef sharks and stingrays, and lesser-known but equally fascinating reef residents such as crocodile fish, colorful nudibranchs and delicate flatworms.

Saturday’s 3D movie night kicks off with *Wonders of the Arctic 3D*, a sweeping film by David Lickley, who describes himself as a “wilderness environmental-themed filmmaker.” *Wonders of the Arctic* presents awe-inspiring footage both above and below the water, and includes a storyline featuring the Inuit, the people of the Canadian Arctic who were part of the First Peoples of Canada. The 3D format captures images of narwhals and Arctic whales, and viewers will see some unexpected interactions with polar bears!

Back by popular demand is *Jean-Michel Cousteau’s Secret Ocean 3D*. Last year, the movie was such a hit that people who missed it clamored for a second viewing. Featuring huge 3D images of some of the tiniest sea creatures living their everyday lives, Cousteau expertly illustrates the importance of these small but mighty ocean animals. Naturally, he also provides some eye-popping shots of sharks and other big swimmers that audiences love to see.

The festival’s much-loved emerging filmmakers competition includes local filmmakers, all vying for the coveted *Dr. Robert O. Levitt Emerging Filmmaker Award*. Gray’s Reef gathers a panel of qualified judges and recognizes first, second and third place winners. The emerging filmmaker award is supported by Kathryn Levitt, widow of Dr. Robert O. Levitt, who was a pioneer in dive medicine and spent time diving with the Cousteau family. This year, the films are being screened at the Savannah College of Art and Design Museum of Art on Saturday afternoon, and Gray’s Reef will announce the winners during that night’s 3D movie session at the Trustees Theater, in front of a packed house!

For the first time in the Gray’s Reef Film Festival’s 14-year history, the festival is adding a Tybee Island venue, the Tybee Post Theater. Movies on tap for February 5 include a delightful sampling of films from the San Francisco International Ocean Film Festival, one of the premier festivals in North America for ocean-related movies. “Our partnership with the Tybee Post Theater this summer exceeded our expectations, with more than 1,000 attendees expressing their interest in ocean-themed movies,” said Hines. “We are excited to expand the film festival and deepen our engagement with our beach communities.”

Two Miles Deep is the headliner at the Tybee Post Theater. Featuring cartoonist Jim Toomey, the part-cartoon, part-documentary film takes the viewer on his real-life adventure to the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico. The afternoon also includes several super-short films with some fun titles, such as *You're Not Hallucinating*, *That's Just Squid Skin*.

The Gray's Reef Film Festival is co-hosted by the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, a registered 501 (c) (3) charity that supports the work of sanctuary staff. After Saturday's movies, the foundation is hosting an after-party at 45 Bistro in the Marshall House on Broughton Street in Savannah. Partygoers will enjoy delectable light bites and sweet treats and can purchase adult beverages at the cash bar. Tickets to the after-party are \$25. Following Sunday's screenings, the foundation is throwing a wrap party at North Beach Bar and Grill on Tybee Island. Tickets are \$25 and include a delicious sandwich wrap, and a cash bar will be available.

Like last year, the foundation will be accepting donations from interested festival attendees. Suggested donations are \$10/day for adults and \$5/day for kids, students and members of the military. Click [here](#) to reserve festival seats and Wrap Party tickets. The foundation is also hosting the Founders' party at 24e on Broughton Street in Savannah on Thursday, February 2, 6 p.m. Tickets to the party are \$60.

For more information on Film Festival events, please view the [Gray's Reef website](#).

Gray's Reef Film Festival 2017

SCHEDULE

Suggested donation to benefit Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is \$10/day adults and \$5/day for children, students and members of the military.

To reserve seats, visit the Gray's Reef [foundation website page](#).

Thursday Night, February 2

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Founder's Party at 24e on Broughton Street in Historic Downtown Savannah. Tickets \$60.

Friday Night, February 3

7:00 PM – 3D Night #1 at the Trustees Theater

The Last Reef: Cities Beneath the Sea 3D

Galapagos 3D: Nature's Wonderland

Saturday, February 4

Multiple Venues

3:00 PM – Emerging Filmmakers Competition at the SCAD Museum of Art, 601 Turner Blvd. in Historic Downtown Savannah

7:00 PM -- 3D Night #2 at the Trustees Theater

Wonders of the Arctic 3D

Jean-Michel Cousteau's Secret Ocean 3D

Winner of Emerging Filmmakers Competition Announced

9:00 PM – Presentation of the Gray's Reef Film Festival Lifetime Achievement Award to Underwater Filmmaker and SCAD Professor Kevin McCarey

9:30 PM – Foundation after-party at 45 Bistro in the Marshall House on Broughton Street in Historic Downtown Savannah. Tickets \$25; features lite bites and sweet treats! Cash bar.

Sunday, February 5

Tybee Island Day!

3:00 PM – Fun short films at the Tybee Post Theater

A Love Affair

How do Sharks and Rays Use Electricity to Find Hidden Prey?

Whale Aware

A Plastic Sea

Connections

You're Not Hallucinating, That's Just Squid Skin

Two Miles Deep

4:30 PM – Foundation wrap party at North Beach Bar and Grill! Tickets \$25, featuring delicious wraps! Cash bar.