



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 108/2018

Date: 27th February 2018

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### **Gibraltar Celebrates World Wildlife Day**

Saturday 3rd March is designated by the United Nations as World Wildlife Day. Gibraltar will commemorate the day on Friday the 2nd of March at the Gustavo Bacarisas Galleries in Casemates when the Minister for the Environment, Professor John Cortes, will inaugurate an exhibition entitled 'The Magic of Birds' at 1830 hours. The exhibition will show a series of over 100 stunning images taken by wildlife photography team composed of Stewart, Geraldine and Clive Finlayson. The team, also known by the name Finlayson Nature Photography, have put together an exhibition based on photographs taken in different parts of the northern hemisphere, including Gibraltar itself. Some of these were used in their recent book "Lost World" which describes the Nature and Heritage of the Gorham's Cave Complex World Heritage Site but there will be many others that have not been seen until now. The exhibition will be open from the 3rd to the 28th of March daily between 10:00am and 1:00pm & 3:00pm and 7:00pm and will be the centre piece for the 2018 event.

On 20 December 2013, at its 68th session, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 3rd March, the day of signature of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), as UN World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild animals and plants. The UNGA resolution also designated the CITES Secretariat as the facilitator for the global observance of this special day for wildlife on the UN calendar. World Wildlife Day has now become the most important global annual event dedicated to wildlife.

World Wildlife Day will be celebrated in 2018 under the theme "Big cats: predators under threat". Big cats are among the most widely recognized and admired animals across the globe. However, today these charismatic predators are facing many and varied threats, which are mostly caused by human activities. Overall, their populations are declining at a disturbing rate due to loss of habitat and prey, conflicts with people, poaching and illegal trade. For example, tiger populations plummeted by 95% over the past 100 years and African lion populations dropped by 40% in just 20 years. But a range of measures are underway to arrest this decline.



World Wildlife Day will also be celebrated at the Gustavo Bacarisas Galleries in Casemates, on Saturday the 3rd of March from 10:00am till 2:00pm when Gibraltar's wildlife agencies and NGOs will come together for the event. The theme of the day will be highlighted but a wider perspective on wildlife will be adopted.

Apart from the exhibition there will be on show a one hour video on the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon as well as other informative clips on wildlife facing extinction. There will be the opportunity of talking with some of Gibraltar's leading scientists and naturalists who will be raising awareness and explaining a little about the work they carry out locally including representatives from The Gibraltar Museum's Natural History Department, The Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society (GONHS), The Department for the Environment, The Alameda Wildlife Conservation Park, The Nautilus project, Monkey Talk and The Gibraltar Bats Project (Gib-Bats). There will also be a face painting stand- with a wildlife theme - and Arts and Crafts displays.

On the day the Gorham's Cave Complex, UNESCO World Heritage Site will be opening its viewing platform at Europa Advance Road additional hours between 10am and 2pm, and the site's Director - Professor Clive Finlayson - will be at hand to discuss all aspects of the site including its special wildlife. If weather conditions are good, there will be an opportunity of observing the migration of birds of prey from here.

Events will continue during the month with weekly lectures at the Gustavo Bacarisas Galleries: 6th March - Professor Clive Finlayson (Gibraltar Museum); 13th March - Dr Keith Bensusan (Botanic Gardens); 20th March - Dr Juan Jose Negro (Former Director of the Doñana Biological Station); and 27th March - Professor John Cortes (Minister for the Environment). The lectures will be at 1830 hours. All events are free.

These events will also form part of the Youth Arts Jamboree, organised by Gibraltar Cultural Services.