

## National Geographic Documentary Films Announces New Doc Short From Three-Time Academy Award Winner and National Geographic Explorer James Cameron

Ahead of Earth Day, National Geographic Documentary Films announced a new documentary short, **AKASHINGA: THE BRAVE ONES**. Executive produced by three-time Academy Award winner James Cameron and directed by Maria Wilhelm, executive director of the Avatar Alliance Foundation, the film tells the story of Akashinga, the all-female anti-poaching unit in Zimbabwe that is facing down poachers and saving wildlife. **AKASHINGA: THE BRAVE ONES** will have its world premiere at the EarthxFilm Festival, which will be held virtually April 22 to 27 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. The documentary short is also an official selection of the Tribeca Film Festival and will broadcast on National Geographic later this year in 171 countries and 43 languages. With many of Africa's key species, including elephants, reaching levels near extinction, Akashinga is a radical, new and highly effective weapon against poaching. Founded by former Australian special forces soldier and anti-poaching leader Damien Mander, the women-only team of rangers, drawn from the abused and marginalized, is revolutionizing the way animals are protected and communities are empowered — and its members' own lives are being transformed. Mander's innovative approach to conservation calls for community buy-in rather than full-on armed assault against poachers: If a community understands the economic benefits of preserving animals, then it will eliminate poaching without an armed struggle. This short film is a celebration of the courage, conservation and unorthodox thinking that's leading to massive positive change. Akashinga is more crucial now than ever: As the global pandemic crisis COVID-19 wages on and resources become increasingly scarce, wildlife will be especially vulnerable to poachers. The doc short is produced by Kim Butts, Drew Pulley and Maria Wilhelm; it is executive produced by James Cameron. Last November, National Geographic Documentary Films released its first-ever documentary shorts, which included **LOST AND FOUND**, directed by Orlando von Einsiedel, and **THE NIGHTCRAWLERS**, from first-time director Alexander A. Mora and producer Joanna Natasegara. Both short films played in numerous prestigious festivals around the United States prior to their digital launch, which exponentially expanded their consumer availability. **ABOUT NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARY FILMS** National Geographic Documentary Films is committed to bringing the world premium, feature documentaries that cover timely, provocative and globally relevant stories from the very best documentary filmmakers in the world. National Geographic Documentary Films is a division of National Geographic Partners, a joint venture between Disney and the National Geographic Society. Furthering knowledge and understanding of our world has been the core purpose of National Geographic for 132 years, and now we are committed to going deeper, pushing boundaries, going further for our consumers ... and reaching millions of people around the world in 172 countries and 43 languages every month as we do it. NGP returns 27% of our proceeds to the nonprofit National Geographic Society to fund work in the areas of science, exploration, conservation and education. For more information visit [natgeotv.com](http://natgeotv.com) or [nationalgeographic.com](http://nationalgeographic.com), or find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Pinterest](#). **ABOUT THE AVATAR ALLIANCE FOUNDATION** The Avatar Alliance Foundation (AAF) promotes science-based solutions that advance the availability of clean energy, ensure healthy oceans, protect biodiversity and create sustainable food systems. It recognizes and respects the intelligent guardianship of natural resources by indigenous peoples and supports indigenous rights. The AAF enables advocacy media projects

that address climate change and champion nature. **ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ANTI-POACHING FOUNDATION** The IAPF was founded in 2009 and operates in southern and East Africa. The focus of the organization is ecosystem preservation, achieved through the two key functions of training and operations. The operational model is Akashinga, a community-driven conservation program, empowering disadvantaged women to restore and manage networks of wilderness areas. Training is conducted under the LEAD Ranger initiative, a program of excellence, building field based indigenous leadership and instructional capacity across Africa's conservation industry. Registered in four countries, Dr Jane Goodall is our Patron and we have supported or trained rangers that help protect over 20 million acres of wilderness across the continent. For more information, visit [iapf.org](http://iapf.org) or find us on Instagram ([@int.anti.poaching.foundation](https://www.instagram.com/int.anti.poaching.foundation); [@damien\\_mander](https://www.instagram.com/damien_mander)) and on Facebook ([@iapf.org](https://www.facebook.com/iapf.org); [@damien\\_mander](https://www.facebook.com/damien_mander)). **MEDIA CONTACTS** Kristin Montalbano, [kristin.montalbano@natgeo.com](mailto:kristin.montalbano@natgeo.com) Tiffany Malloy, [tiffany.malloy@natgeo.com](mailto:tiffany.malloy@natgeo.com) Jennifer Bond, [jennifer.bond@natgeo.com](mailto:jennifer.bond@natgeo.com)