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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dolphins, drones, and giant clams rise to the top of the 2015 Ocean 180 Video Challenge

Over 37,000 middle school students across 21 countries selected winning ocean science research videos.

MELBOURNE, FL- Middle school students in over 1,600 classrooms around the world spent the past two months carefully evaluating and judging the 10 video finalists submitted to the 2015 Ocean 180 Video Challenge. Student judges thoughtfully critiqued each entry and ultimately determined which 3 minute video abstracts best explained the results and significance of the scientists' research. Ballots cast from 336 schools revealed the top 4 entries, each of which will be awarded a portion of a \$9,000 prize package to honor their work in communicating science to the public.

This year's two first place films, *Dolphin Research Center Blindfold Imitation Study* led by Dr. Kelly Jaakkola at the Dolphin Research Center and *Drones at the Beach* led by Patrick Rynne at the University of Miami, were singled out by students for being innovative, creative, and thought provoking. Rounding out the winning submissions was second place entry *How to Treat a Bruised Flipper: Developing Pain Medications for Dolphins* from Dr. Claire Simeone at The Marine Mammal Center and third place entry *Rescuing the Gentle Giants* led by Charles Waters at the University of Auckland, Institute of Marine Science.

Participating scientists were motivated by more than just the prize money. First place winner Dr. Jaakkola saw Ocean 180 as a chance to make her mark on the next generation of ocean scientists. "For a lot of students, science can have a negative, scary image. They picture people in white lab coats talking about topics that nobody understands in the most boring, unimaginative way possible," explained Dr. Jaakkola. "If we want to get kids excited about science, we need to change that image."

Thanks to the videos created by this year's finalists, the 37,795 student judges were exposed to a range of ocean science topics, from submarine volcanoes along the Oregon coast to fish migration in the Atlantic Ocean. In addition to sharing the results of recent research, the videos also described the importance and relevance of the research to society. Teachers around the world applauded the effort of the finalists to make connections between classroom lessons and the impact of scientific discoveries.

“Too often, students only see science in isolation with the benchmarks assigned to them, rather than the real-world application of that learning,” said Kathryn Blysmá, whose students at Dr. John Long Middle School in Wesley Chapel, FL participated as judges. “Although our state benchmarks are thorough in supporting key learning for our students, making connections between classroom learning and the real-world is critical to being good stewards of our planet.”

Short films, like those submitted to Ocean 180, have become an increasingly popular tool for presenting research to non-scientists in an engaging way. “For me, some of the most inspiring science writing uses analogies, metaphors, and similes to communicate aspects of the scientific process, particularly the relevance of results,” said third place winner Charles Waters. “Video helps lift images from print and the message comes closer to being an experience for the audience in contrast to a mere information stream.”

Using their video abstracts, the Ocean 180 Video Challenge provides scientists with a platform to connect with a broad audience and offers an opportunity to practice translating the importance and outcomes of their research to non-experts. As first place winner Patrick Rynne explained, the ability to communicate scientific findings is an essential skill to develop. “At the end of the day, most research is funded by the taxpayer,” said Mr. Rynne. “Although it is critical that work go through the peer-review process such as technical journals and conference proceedings, we also have a responsibility to deliver our findings in a digestible way to the general public.”

On March 26th from noon-1:00pm (EST), the annual Student-Scientist Summit will be held. During the virtual assembly, scientists from the top video abstracts will be on hand to respond to questions from student judges. Attendance is free and all are welcome to join. Registration for the Summit is available at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7363249416277305345>

Visit <http://ocean180.org> to learn more and to see a full list of finalists and participating classrooms.

2015 Ocean 180 Video Challenge Winners

1st Place (Amateur Category)

Drones at the Beach

Patrick Rynne, *University of Miami*

Fiona Graham, *University of Miami/ Waterlust*

Ronald Brouwer, Ad Reniers, and Matthieu de Schipper, *Delft University*

Jamie MacMahan, *Naval Postgraduate School*

Laura Bracken, *University of Miami/ CARTHE*

1st Place (Professional Category)

Dolphin Research Center Blindfold Imitation Study

Kelly Jaakkola, Emily Guarino, Mandy Rodriguez, and the Visual Communication Staff, *Dolphin Research Center*

2nd Place

How to Treat a Bruised Flipper: Developing Pain Medications for Dolphins

Claire Simeone, *The Marine Mammal Center*

3rd Place

Rescuing the Gentle Giants

Charles Waters, *University of Auckland, Institute of Marine Science*

Scott Ewing

Richard Story, *Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources*

Mark J. Costello, *University of Auckland*

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About COSEE Florida

COSEE Florida's mission is to spark and nurture collaborations among scientists and educators to promote ocean discovery and literacy, and to enhance the public's understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the ocean. COSEE Florida is funded through a National Science Foundation Grant through the Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence (COSEE) Program, COSEE Florida's partners include Indian River State College, Florida Institute of Technology, the Smithsonian Marine Station at Fort Pierce, and Ocean Research and Conservation Association (ORCA). <http://www.coseeflorida.org>

About Ocean 180

The Ocean 180 Video Challenge, Sponsored by the Florida Center for Ocean Science Education Excellence (COSEE Florida) and funded through a grant from the National Science Foundation, was designed to inspire scientists to communicate the meaning and significance of scientific research with a broader audience. <http://ocean180.org>