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Green Scene hosts "Last of the Right Whales" at Ritz

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The Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Georgia serves as the majestic right whales' calving grounds — for now.

Marine biologists have done the math. It is estimated that only 350 of these prodigious mammals remain. Right whales are dying faster than they can reproduce.

Due to climate change, fatal encounters with commercial fishing entities and other human-induced factors, many experts fear the right whale is not long for this earth.



Combining awe-inspiring footage of these majestic creatures with stark images of their struggles to survive, "Last of the Right Whales" offers viewers a better understanding of what is at stake for this endangered species. The award-winning documentary will be

presented Oct. 16 at historic Ritz Theatre, 1530 Newcastle St. in downtown Brunswick. Presented by Green Scene of Coastal Georgia, the movie begins at 2 p.m.

After the movie, light refreshments will be served during a question-and-answer session with right whale experts. The Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve is co-sponsoring the movie's viewing, and the event's organizers include Keep Golden Isles Beautiful, One Hundred Miles, the Altamaha Riverkeeper, the Glynn Environmental Coalition and the state department of natural resources' coastal resource division.

Produced in 2021, Last of the Right Whales earned Best Canadian Feature at last year's Planet in Focus International Film Festival.

"We are excited to bring this film to the Golden Isles," said Green Scene president Katy Smith in a statement. "With our close proximity to the North Atlantic right whale calving grounds, we have a vested interest in the well-being of the species. This is a great opportunity for folks to learn more about the plight of these beautiful creatures."

Filmmaker Nadine Pequenezza and her crew received "unprecedented access to film the whale migration from the only known calving grounds to the shifting feeding grounds," according to the release. It features appearances from marine biologists, whale activities, crabbers and a host of noted wildlife photographers, including Charles "Stormy" Mayo and Moira Brown.

A touching scene of a mother interacting with its calf is contrasted with the giant carcass of a right whale entangled in commercial fishing nets and ropes.

"They're so rare we don't understand them, and their decline tells us what is happening to the oceans," a narrator tells viewers.

The film informs viewers that adult right whales are more likely to die from collisions with ships and entanglement in fishing nets than of old age.

Right whale mothers give birth to a single calf following a one-year pregnancy. Typically, mother whales give birth every three years, but that average has extended to once every six to 10 years, according to NOAA Fisheries experts.

If changes are not made, some expect the right whale could be extinct within 20 years.

As one expert in the film stated, "it is one of the greatest animal ethical issues of our time."