

Abalobi documentary wins International Ocean Film Festival Innovation Award

Abalobi's Coding for Crayfish documentary has received the Innovation Award at the 19th annual International Ocean Film Festival (IOFF) in San Francisco. The festival accepts films of all genres that focus on any of the varied aspects of the ocean, from around the world - with Coding for Crayfish one of just 11 films awarded this year and the only winner from the African continent.



Source: Supplied

Produced by the Abalobi team and Amehlo Productions' Karen Logan, Coding for Crayfish tells the story of traditional West Coast fisherman, David Shoshola, whose family has lived in Lambert's Bay for generations, fishing primarily for the once abundant crayfish, or rock lobster.

In spite of legal limits, unchecked industrial fishing in the 1970s, followed by poaching by gangs from the 2000s, has significantly affected both lobster populations and fisher livelihoods, leaving the fishery on the brink of disaster today. David talks of Abalobi's disruptive entrance into the industry and how the traceability technology, co-developed with the fishers, has started to transform his career and ultimately, the entire community's livelihoods.

"The award is amazing recognition for us as an organisation, but even more so for the small-scale fisherwomen and men with whom we work," says Serge Raemaekers, MD of Abalobi. "They are grateful that their story is being heard and being recognised. There is a desperate need for effective, alternative interventions contrary to disengaging from the rock lobster fishery, and the communities that depend on it. To achieve any form of sustainability, we need to rethink how we get there and have a greater focus on the fishers who rely on marine resources. We have to engage, and reimagine fair, transparent market opportunities."

Executive director for the festival, Ana Blanco, says that the 11 films awarded prizes this year are deserving of recognition because of the way they stand out in a field of exceptional quality and diversity. "All of our films and filmmakers are standouts and advance our mission of saving our oceans through the beauty and education of the visual medium," she says.

Coding for Crayfish is available to watch online at codingforcrayfish.com.

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