



International Environmental Communication Association

**ONE-PLANET TALKING**

Call for Submissions

# Re-MEDIating the Wild

The 16th Conference on Communication and Environment (COCE)  
June 21-24, 2021, online everywhere

## Conference Theme

The International Environmental Communication Association (IECA) will hold the 16th Conference on Communication and Environment (COCE) online everywhere in June 2021. This conference will mark IECA's 10th anniversary. As always, we will bring together artists, practitioners, scholars, students and engaged citizens from around the world to discuss the state of communication related to environmental affairs. We consider Indigenous perspectives to be central to this topic and therefore especially encourage the participation of Indigenous People.

We welcome submissions to the conference on any aspect of environmental communication and specifically call for work that addresses the conference theme, Re-MEDIating the Wild.

We are at the end of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, and the news is grim. The intent of this theme is to bring attention to research and practical experience on how best to communicate for the sake of Wildlife and Wild places. At the same time, we expect the conference to address the ways in which communication and culture influence how humans value the Wild and perceive their relationships with the rest of Nature.

This is an overdue theme for consideration by the environmental communication community. The United Nations Secretariat of the



Convention on Biological Diversity's recently published *Global Biodiversity Outlook 5* is the latest in a series of reports on the dire situation humans have created for the Earth's wild species. The report begins with the unambiguous statement, "Biodiversity is declining at an unprecedented rate, and the pressures driving this decline are intensifying." It goes on to explain that not one of the twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets for 2020 has been achieved.

A recently released high profile BBC program about the crisis facing the planet's Wildlife, *Extinction: The Facts*, takes a hard departure from host David Attenborough's typically celebratory and spectacular Wildlife films. Viewers are given a peek into the dismal circumstances under which many of the Earth's species exist and the implications of that for humanity. In particular, the program uses the COVID-19 pandemic as a frame to connect our own health with that of Wildlife.

Compounding the crisis on the ground and the existing communication challenges, advocates for biodiversity now face an all-too-familiar tactic of rhetorical opposition, denial and the trope of uncertainty. In this case, "extinction denial" and questioning of the science of conservation biology and ecology.

What, then, do we mean by Re-MEDIAting the Wild? In a literal sense it suggests healing Wild places, the species that live there, and humanity's relationship to the rest of Nature. In other words, rewilding and restoring resilience and integrity to the living Earth.

As this is a communication conference, we wonder what can the lens of communication bring to this challenge? What does Re-MEDIAting the Wild mean from that perspective?

For starters, and most importantly, it refers to how communication using technology—everything from handwriting to television to social media—affects people's understanding of Wild Nature and our relationships with it. It also refers to ways of reconciling conflicts related to Wildlife and Wild places. And it means connecting or linking ourselves to the Wild in a variety of ways, including as advocates for species and places that are unable to speak directly to our institutions and decision-makers. In all cases, the Re- is important; we must communicate better than we have.

Some questions asked by the conference organizers may serve as prompts for the discussions we hope will ensue.

- How have advocacy campaigns portrayed the Wildlife and Wild places they have sought to protect, and how has that affected the campaign outcomes?
- Are there common characteristics of successful campaigns for Wildlife?
- How have Wild species and places been portrayed through television, Wildlife films, advertising, popular culture, and other media, and what have been the consequences of those representations?
- How should we re-MEDIAte (communicate in new ways) about and for our fellow residents of Earth in order to heal Nature?
- What can Indigenous languages and perspectives teach us about how to communicate better for the Wild?
- What would it mean to re-Wild our language in the service of Nature?
- Is it even appropriate to be using the word "Wild" given how it has been used in the past in discriminatory ways?
- How can communication help us celebrate the Wild and build hope for the future while staying focussed on the present crisis?

Finally, we need to acknowledge the irony of holding an online conference on communication for and about Wildlife and Wild places. However, the online-only format of this meeting is a social symptom of COVID-19, so we can use that fact to help us further reflect on our conventional ways of doing things, and of communicating, not to mention our connections to the natural world. We hope you will join us for this adventure and experience COCE “as you’ve never seen it before.”

## Submission Guidelines

Submissions will be made using online forms available through the conference website (<https://theieca.org/coce2021>) starting December 1, 2020. Submitters will be asked to indicate if their submission is related to the theme. The submission deadline is **February 1, 2021**.

All submissions must:

- Be written in English.
- Be single-spaced.
- Include a summary of up to 250 words for the programme.
- Include up to five keywords.
- Be formatted according to APA guidelines when including citations and a references list.
- Contain no information identifying the author(s) in the main content.

Please, no more than three submissions associated with any one person. That means as an author, co-author, panelist, etc.

## Scholarly Papers

Scholars, including students, are invited to share your original research. Scholarly paper submissions should be original works that emphasize contributions to knowledge.

- Submit an extended abstract of 500-750 words that clearly explains context, research questions, methods, results, conclusions and contributions to knowledge. Scholars who write from other than the social scientific approach should use a standard format appropriate for their discipline.
- If you have citations, include a reference list, not footnotes (word count not included in the word limit).
- Authors will have the choice of delivering their work in either poster or presentation format.
- Authors of accepted submissions will be invited to submit a full paper by May 24, 2021. Full papers will be eligible to participate in the Top Paper Awards competition.

## Practice Reflections

Practitioners of environmental communication are invited to share and reflect on your on-the-ground experiences. Practice reflections should be critical considerations by practitioners of their own projects and campaigns, and should emphasize effectiveness and applicability in other contexts.

- Submit a self-reflective summary of 500-750 words on your project or campaign. The reflection should critically examine the goals, strategy, tactics, messages and results.
- If you have citations, include a reference list, not footnotes (word count not included in the word limit).

- Submissions should highlight effective advances in areas such as public engagement, social marketing, advocacy campaigns, engagement with the scientific community, etc. in environmental communication.
- Authors will have the choice of delivering their work in either poster or presentation format.
- Authors of accepted submissions will be invited to submit a full paper or campaign documentation or evaluation by May 24, 2021. These will be eligible to participate in the Top Paper Awards competition.

## Artworks

Artists, including (but not limited to) Indigenous artists, filmmakers, literary writers, theatre and performance-makers, designers, musicians, street artists, socially-engaged practitioners, curators, etc. are invited to share and reflect on your work.

Submissions of original artworks that critically respond to the conference theme are encouraged. Artworks will be considered for online exhibition and/or performance during the conference and should be adaptable to the online situation. Accepted artworks will be considered for the Outstanding Environmental Art Award.

Submissions should include:

- An artist statement (max. 500 words) including how the artwork proposed responds to the theme of the conference. If you have citations, include a reference list.
- Artist biography (max. 200 words) or CV (max. 2 pages)
- Supporting material including up to 10 images, 10 pages of written material (literary writing), or 10 minutes of video and/or audio recording.
- Our preferred method of receiving supporting material is via URLs (web links).
- You may submit up to three URLs, which can include video, audio, images, and written material. You can link to a specific page on your artist or organisation website displaying examples of your work. If you don't have a website you can use Dropbox, Google Drive, Soundcloud (audio), Vimeo or YouTube (video).
- An itemised and detailed description of audiovisual support material submitted (max. 1 page) including title, date, medium, dimensions, running time and/or format; and, if relevant, provide any special instructions for viewing or playing the material for the assessment.
- Please provide any special considerations and/or preferences for the conference presentation if relevant.
- Artists selected for the online exhibition and/or performance will be required to submit their final artwork material by May 15, 2021.

## Panels

Scholars, practitioners and artists are all invited to submit panel proposals. Panel submissions should focus on a unified topic. They can either be panels of scholarly papers, panels of practice reflections, panels of artists, a combination of those, or roundtable discussions. Keep in mind that panels must fit into 90-minute sessions.

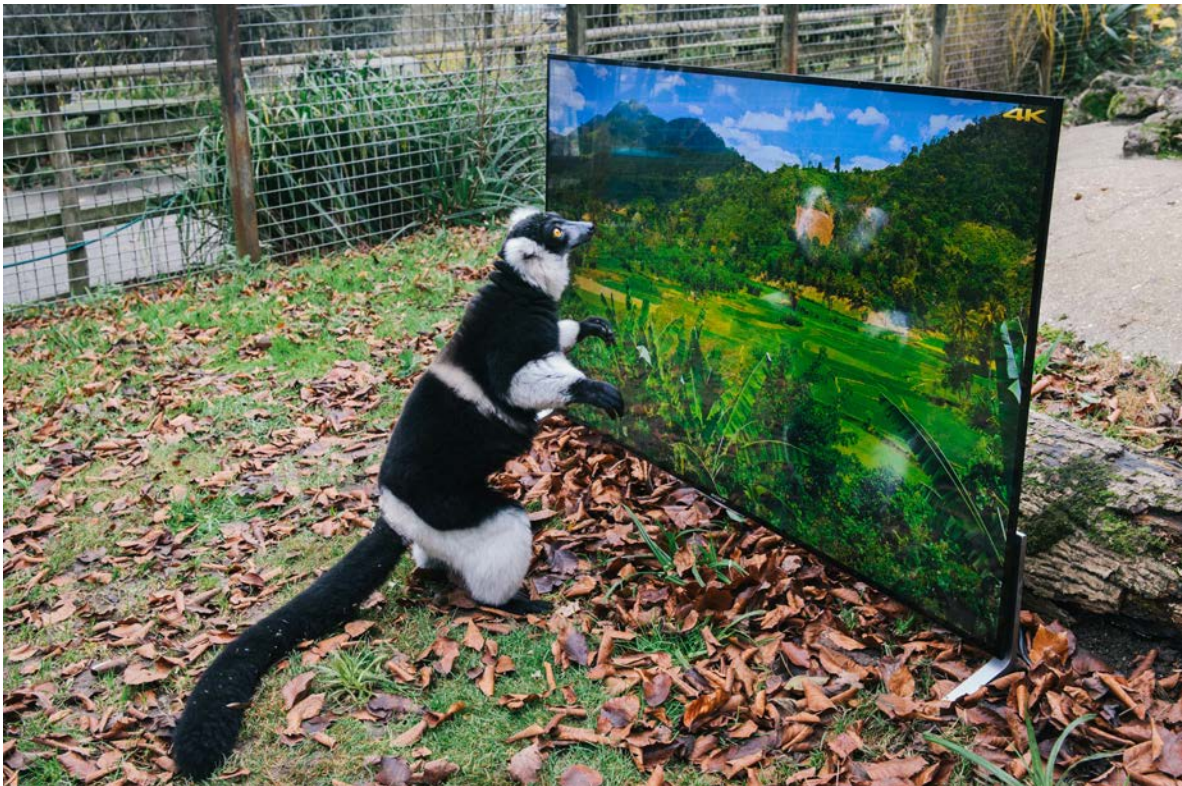
- Submit a descriptive panel proposal of up to 750 words, including a rationale for the panel.

- If the panel includes distinct individual presentations (as opposed to more informal roundtable discussion panels), then each presentation must also be submitted separately by its main author, just like other stand-alone submissions. There will be a space in the submission form to indicate that the submission is part of a panel proposal and which panel the submission is attached to. These individual submissions are necessary for peer review and production of the programme.
- For roundtable discussion panels, separate submissions are not necessary, but the panel submission should include the names and brief bios of the panelists as part of the descriptive proposal and all panelists should be included as authors of the panel.
- If you have citations, include a reference list, not footnotes (word count not included in the word limit).

## Workshops

Workshop submissions should focus on practical training in some area of environmental communication practice, scholarship, teaching, design, or artistic production. Workshops should normally fit into 90-minute sessions, but exceptions are possible. Generally speaking, workshops will be scheduled as pre-conference events.

- Submit a description of the workshop of up to 1000 words, including time required, a rationale, and learning outcomes.
- Submissions should explain clearly how attendees will participate virtually, and must include a summary of activities, as well as the names and affiliations of all trainers.
- If you have citations, include a reference list, not footnotes (word count not included in the word limit).



## Submission and Review Process

All submissions, except workshops, will be reviewed anonymously and rated individually for their potential value to conference participants. Reviews will be based on overall quality, as well as the following criteria when appropriate: importance and relevance of topic; potential contribution to knowledge; useful synthesis of current knowledge; potential contribution to practice; creative innovation; clarity of presentation; and relevance to the conference theme.

- Submissions are due by 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on **February 1, 2021**.
- Submissions will be made using online forms, so have your submission ready to cut and paste into the various fields. Keep formatting to a minimum.
- For artists uploading images, please ensure that any photos are optimized before creating the PDF to keep file sizes reasonable.
- Instructions for making submissions will be provided on the COCE 2021 website: <https://theieca.org/coce2021>.
- A maximum of three submissions can be associated with any one person, including as a co-author or panelist.
- Submitters will be notified no later than **April 12, 2021** if their submission has been accepted.
- Full papers of scholarly paper submissions and full papers or other forms of campaign documentation or evaluation for practice reflections must be uploaded by **May 24, 2021** in order to be considered for the Top Paper Awards.
- Faculty members and practitioners are invited to volunteer to review submissions. Please contact Mark Meisner, IECA Executive Director: mark at theieca dot org.

## Important Dates

Dates are subject to change.

- 10 October 2020 - Theme announced and call for submissions distributed
- 1 December 2020 - Online conference submission system opens
- 1 February 2021 - Deadline for all submissions
- 8 February 2021 - Registration opens
- 12 April 2021 - Acceptance notifications
- 12 April 2021 - Draft programme available
- 12 April to 17 May 2021 - Programme revisions and corrections
- 26 April 2021 - Presenters must be members of IECA
- 17 May 2021 - Programme mostly finalized
- 17 May 2021 - Presenters must be registered
- 24 May 2021 - Early-bird registration closes
- 24 May 2021 - Presentations, papers, posters and artwork must be uploaded to the conference platform
- 24 May to 21 June - Delegates can view pre-recorded presentations and other material
- 21 June 2021 - Pre-conference events (optional)
- 21 June 2021 - Conference begins online everywhere
- 24 June 2021 - Conference ends

## Important Things to Know

You don't need to be an IECA member to submit, but all conference presenters must be members of the IECA in 2021. So, you'll need to join by April 30, 2021 if your proposal is accepted. All members receive discounts on conference registration. Membership information can be found here: <https://theieca.org/membership>. We recommend joining in November 2020 to get the most from your membership benefits.

As this is the first time the IECA has organized an online conference, we do not yet know what formats we will use for the presentations and how we will work around the time zone challenges of a conference with participants from around the world. It is quite likely that we will have most presenters pre-record their presentations. We will keep everyone informed as we develop our plans.

To facilitate participation from around the world, the conference organizers will take the time zones of the speakers into account when scheduling sessions. However, we can't guarantee a convenient time for everyone.

## About the IECA

Founded in 2011, but with roots going back to 1991, the International Environmental Communication Association (IECA) is a professional nexus of practitioners, artists, teachers, scholars, students, and organizations engaged in research and action to find more ethical and effective ways to communicate about environmental concerns to move society towards sustainability. Our mission is to foster effective and inspiring communication that alleviates environmental issues and conflicts, and solves the problems that cause them. More at <https://theieca.org>.

**Web:** <http://theieca.org/coce2021> • **Twitter:** @TheIECA #coce2021 • **Email:** [coce2021@theieca.org](mailto:coce2021@theieca.org)

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