

Irreplaceable: Wildlife in a Warming World exhibit

Irreplaceable: Wildlife in a Warming World, a national traveling photo exhibit raising awareness about plants and animals threatened by climate change, will open Oct. 25 at the Water and Oil art gallery in St. Paul as part of its nationwide tour to raise awareness about the threat to wildlife from climate change and global warming. The exhibit comes to Minnesota as part of a one-year tour with stops already completed in Providence, Missoula, Seattle, San Diego and San Francisco. The exhibit will be on display through Nov. 30.

Irreplaceable: Wildlife in a Warming World is a collaboration of art, justice, science and faith groups that aims to inspire hope, wonder and action through the beauty and power of images. Featuring work by award-winning wildlife conservation photographers, the 40-print exhibit brings the public face-to-face with the wildlife most threatened by climate change. The Irreplaceable exhibit is co-sponsored by Earthjustice, Noah Alliance, Restoring Eden, International League of Conservation Photographers (ILCP) and Conservation International's Center for Applied Biodiversity Science (CABS).

The Irreplaceable exhibit will be hosted at Water and Oil, a locally owned art gallery in St. Paul, located across from Payne Ave. and Swede Hollow Park. Water and Oil specializes in original and affordable Northern European and Scandinavian art and boasts the largest collection of works from Greenland. In accordance with the aims and efforts of the Irreplaceable campaign, Water and Oil invests 5 percent of every sale to environmentally conscious activities, such as planting trees in Central America and supporting environmental activism and education here in the United States.

"We are very pleased to be part of this creative effort to raise awareness of the plight of imperiled species," said Jim Davidson, Water and Oil Gallery owner. "This is an exciting opportunity, as this photo exhibit nicely complements our gallery's collection of vintage paintings which portray wild places as they existed a century ago—wild animals and birds, snow covered mountains and villages, bucolic farm vignettes, all reflecting our forefather's more intimate and more sustainable relationship with creation. Irreplaceable Wild photographs are fantastic, beautiful and inspiring, and highlight global environmental changes not through an artist's brush, but through the undeniable lens of photography."

Minnesota and the Midwest is home to a wide variety of animals that are either threatened or endangered such as the eastern spotted skunk, Baird's sparrow and green-northern cricket frog. The exhibit features several species from this region including the monarch butterfly, whooping crane, northern pintail duck and moose.

"Global warming has emerged as the most pressing challenge facing the world today. Our nation's wildlife—from the Arctic's polar bears to species home to Minnesota—are being affected and we will be judged by future generations on how we respond," said Trip Van Noppen, president of Earthjustice. "Our coalition of faith, science, art and justice partners has united for this exact purpose: to protect imperiled wildlife from the threats of a warming world."

"All faith traditions teach that we are called to care for the vulnerable. And in today's world, this includes species suffering because of climate change," said Suellen Lowry, Noah Alliance program director.

Scientists have predicted that global warming will become a leading cause of species extinction in the coming decades: The latest United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report found that 20–30 percent of animal and plant species could be at an increased risk of extinction, with up to 60 percent species loss in some areas if global warming continues as predicted.

The Irreplaceable Campaign educates the public and policy-makers on global warming's impact on wildlife. A collaboration of art, justice, science and faith groups, the campaign aims to inspire hope, wonder and action through the beauty and power of images. The exhibit has been on tour since April of 2008 and has been displayed in Providence, RI; Missoula, Mont.; Seattle; Aspen, Colo.; San Francisco; San Diego and now St. Paul, Minn. Other scheduled cities include Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.