



**Video (englisch):**

# **The Golden Gate Leech Summer of Love 50th**

**This video is the first contribution to our new 2017-series  
“Public Understanding of Biology”.**

It consists of a mixture of art, piano-music and solid science, produced by the evolutionary biologist **Prof. Ulrich Kutschera** (Universität Kassel, Germany/Stanford CA) in collaboration with Dr. Elizabeth Watts (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany), plus the support team Petra Bock & Lars Börje Vormstein (Universität Kassel, Germany).

First, we present a brief summary of the “**Summer of Love 50th Anniversary**”, celebrated in San Francisco CA (USA) in 2017. Then, we describe the discovery, description and unique reproductive behavior of a tiny, little hermaphroditic worm that was found in 1987 in the very place where the Hippie Movement began five decades ago. In 1967, thousands of young people converged on Haight-Ashbury, turning San Francisco into the epicenter of a cultural phenomenon known as the “Summer of Love”. During this exciting time, art, music and fashion flourished and, according to a 1987 article published by the San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle, there was a “feeling that everything was possible”... and here our story begins ...Yes, indeed, everything was possible ... even the discovery of a new aquatic animal species in Golden



Gate Park, San Francisco, where, on the 14th of January 1967, “The Summer of Love” began.

In 1987, Dr. Ulrich Kutschera, who was at that time a Postdoc in Stanford, California, discovered a new leech species in the Golden Gate Park. This “loving San Francisco worm” is a good mother - it protects and feeds its young!

We recollect this unique story - the search for the leeches and their prey organisms in the ponds of Golden Gate Park, the identification/description of the animal - official name “**Golden Gate Leech, Helobdella californica Kutschera 1988**”, and the brooding behavior of the hermaphroditic “parent”. In addition, we discuss macro-evolutionary transitions in leeches. After this excursion into the world of evolutionary biology we come back to the “Summer of Love 1967”, with reference to the Monterey Pop Festival etc.

The video was created with the support of Jason Herrington (California Historical Society, San Francisco CA), Glenn Branch (National Center for Science Education, NCSE, Oakland CA), and Dr. Steve Farmer (The Systems Biology Group, Inc., Palo Alto CA). Music produced by [UVASONAR Media Pool](#).