



• NATURAL HISTORY UNIT •

A F R I C A

SALES CATALOGUE 2008 - 2009



A Kalahari Tail

Format: HD
Location: Kalahari Desert (RSA)
Running Time: 1 x 52 mins

Small, cheeky, endearing, low down on the food-chain, and incredibly tough, the Ground Squirrels have had to adapt more than most in order to survive in the Kalahari. In this documentary we follow the fortunes of a small sisterhood of Squirrels, led by Scarlet, a shrewd, tough little creature who is very adept at surviving in the harsh Kalahari conditions.

The other characters include Lucinda, a feisty, determined little creature; Rosy, always first in line for a feed and Molly, one of Scarlet's daughters who has an insatiable curiosity that often lands her in trouble. They live in a network of burrows deep in the heart of the Kalahari and every day is a fight for survival. The constant threat from snakes, birds of prey, not to mention larger predators, means that ground Squirrels need to be constantly alert. Letting their guard down for a moment could have deadly consequences. Then there is the heat and the drought. Survival is all about adaptability and we see the almost miraculous ways in which these tiny creatures have figured out how to live in this remote part of the world.

Antarctica - Journey into the White Desert

Format: HD
Location: Antarctica
Running Time: 1 x 52

A vast white wilderness that stretches across the south of our planet; a giant natural laboratory that has long occupied the human psyche. Antarctica is a continent of remote natural wonder.

For brief moments each year this hauntingly beautiful landscape opens up, beckoning scientists and explorers from around the world to investigate its frozen secrets. 'Journey into the White Desert' takes us on a mesmerizing visual adventure into this mysterious continent, introducing us to a team of South African scientists, researchers and explorers who have braved the inhospitable continent in the quest to learn its secrets.

The film explores South Africa's role in the greatest wilderness on earth and showcases some of the groundbreaking research that could make the difference to our survival on this planet.

Millions of years ago Africa was connected to the Antarctica in a land mass known as Gondwanaland. Once again, through the power of film, the vast freezing land of Antarctica will be connected to the mother continent.

Desert Wanderers

Location: Namibia
Running Time: 1 x 48 mins

About 80 million years old, almost completely barren with less than 10mm of rainfall annually, measuring about 50 000 sq km; this is the Namib desert, an arid and hostile land - yet it is home to many unique creatures and those who inhabit her must adapt to her rules.

Located in the Kaokoland region of the Namib Desert, the elephant has become a master of desert survival, adapting its behaviours, feeding patterns and employing basic survival strategies in order to preserve both, energy and resources thus ensuring the animal's longevity.

The film showcases the environment in which these elephants live and how they have learnt to settle into the constantly changing environment they live in. A life that they have had to become accustomed to, to ensure their survival and to preserve their home.

Dragon Mountains

Format: HD
Location: Drakensberg (RSA)
Running Time: 1 x 52 mins

In the south east of the African continent south of Kilimanjaro lies the highest mountain range, the Maloti-Drakensberg or Dragon Mountains! Like the giant beast

after which it is named, this impressive wall of basalt stretches its scaly spine out over 300kms, soaring at times to heights of 3 000 metres and levelling off into the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho. As formidable as these mountains may seem, they have become a living landscape with the energy of people from the past and present interacting with mythical creatures, supernatural beings and nature. This is a haunted landscape in which the secular and sacred meet and meld; one in which every waterfall, pool and rock is imbued with value and intent. As a result, those who walk on these mountains are reminded of a primordial world; when continents were molded from a huge land mass with Africa at its core.

This film explores a whole new dimension of geological and paleontological wonders; the viewer is taken into the mists of time to a period of marshy swamplands. A period followed by a long stretch of drought culminating into volcanic activity.

An entrancing documentary of emotive viewing which transports viewers to fossilized remnants of "Massypondyris" and its unhatched eggs that contain the oldest dinosaur embryos in the world; a tangible testimony to a tragedy that happened to dinosaur species whose life on earth still raises scepticism.



The search for the Knysna Elephants

Format: HD
Location: Knysna Forest (RSA)
Running Time: 1 x 52 mins

Very little is known about the elephants of the Knysna Forest. It is difficult to study an animal that you cannot find; some even doubt their existence.

Hunted almost to extinction by the early 20th century, the last remaining members of the massive herds that roamed the southernmost areas of Africa instinctively knew that they had to adapt in order to survive.

Within a generation or two, they had developed specialised skills to enable them to live in the kind of vegetation where they could avoid the hunter's gun. They learnt to survive on a different diet, most significantly of all though, they became masters in the art of silence and stillness, becoming almost ghost-like, avoiding any contact with man. Gareth Patterson started research on these elephants seven years ago, with the aim to discover how many actually still remain. In this documentary, we follow the search for the proof of these elephants' existence in the Knysna Forest.

We trail the Forestry Guards as they gather the evidence needed to unravel the mystery of these highly evolved creatures.

Gorillas: A Journey For Survival

Format: HD
Location: South Africa and Cameroon
Running Time: 1 x 52 mins

In late 2001, from the rain forests of Cameroon, four helpless baby western lowlands gorillas were taken away after their mothers had been killed by poachers. The infant gorillas were later taken to Nigeria and kept in the Ibadan zoo. Documents were forged certifying that the four gorillas were born in the Ibadan zoo, thus making it possible for the four gorillas to be smuggled through South Africa to Malaysia. After several years they mysteriously ended up in South Africa at the National Zoological Gardens. However this was not meant to be their final destination.

This film chronicles the excitement of returning the Taiping Four home. It features the Gorillas' emotional and intensive journey from South Africa into the Limbe Wildlife Centre in Cameroon. Footage of hunters and ex-hunters reveal the truths and myths about the bush meat trade and explain the world of poachers and gorilla hunters in the Cameroon.

This world class story governed by emotive footage relates a memorable anecdote; and celebrates the role played by the Gorillas as they became true

ambassadors, having travelled through more countries than an average human being.

How to Catch a Crocodile

Location: Okavango Delta (Botswana)
Running Time: 1 x 26 mins

Think you've got what it takes to catch a crocodile!?

This unbelievable look at how a brave team of crocodile researchers trap and sample these enormous reptiles will convince you otherwise. Alikei Strydom and her research team are studying the crocodiles' role as a keystone species in the local eco-system. They desperately need to gather more information on the crocodiles to be used in a management strategy to help the locals see this vital species as an asset rather than a threat. Wrangling huge crocodiles on a daily basis, they work from a rustic bush camp in the heart of the Okavango Delta.

This mind-blowing documentary reveals the lengths that Alikei will go to collect the samples she needs. Watching her wrestling a 4 metre long crocodile into submission with a noose is an impressive sight, but you only truly realize the measure of Alikei as she inserts her whole hand into a crocodile's cloacae in search of the all important urine sample!

Brought to life by Michaela

Strachan's compelling narration, This fast paced film is compulsive viewing .

Ice Man - Journey of the Human Polar Bear

Format: HD
Location: Arctic Ocean
Running Time: 1 x 52 mins

Lewis Pugh has 10 seconds before he plunges into the freezing Arctic Ocean, where he swims a kilometre across Antarctica, wearing nothing but a Speedo and a swim cap, a feat never thought possible. 'Ordinary' humans would probably die within minutes in this icy water! How can his naked body cope with these conditions for so long? And why on earth would anyone want to do such a crazy thing?

This documentary provides a visual experience of Lewis as he swims to draw attention to the oceans and raise awareness about climate change. Ice Man documents the extraordinary physiological and psychological journey of Lewis's long distance swims in the freezing waters of both the south and the North Pole. With the support of cutting edge science and an incredible ability to believe in himself he hopes to unify the potential of mind and body.

He has gone where no one has gone before and achieved a new understanding of the human body.



Legends of the Lake

Location: Lake Fundudzi (Limpopo)
Running Time: 1 x 48 mins

"Everyone has beliefs... we know that our being is in the lake" (Chief Ntsundeni Netshivha)

For over a hundred years, the Vhatavhatsindi known as the "People of the Pool", have safe guarded, protected and conserved Lake Fundudzi; South Africa's only inland lake, by performing rituals for their ancestors and observing traditional laws. Yet with modernization and development, such traditional laws are no longer being observed. In this film we see why Lake Fundudzi is in a state of demise and how this state marks the beginning of a bitter struggle as potential investors are earmarking Lake Fundudzi for eco-tourism business development, much to the protest and disapproval of Vhatavhatsindi. The Vhatavhatsindi maintain that any development around the lake would anger their Ancestors as Lake Fundudzi is a sacred place where the souls of the Ancestors rest.

This film juxtaposes the ancient wisdom to the contemporary scientific knowledge, therefore exposes the impact of both schools of thought in encouraging communal solutions towards the future.

Nature of Life

Format: HD
Location: Worldwide
Running time: 1 x 52 min

The Nature of Life is an epic documentary feature film that will provide solutions to humanity's greatest challenge yet - Global Climate Change. So far all we have heard is that climate change is the biggest ever environmental crisis and that it has been caused by our unsustainable approach to living. The Nature of Life, however, sets out as a great inspired clarion call to humanity, telling us that there is hope and that there are ways to adapt to and overcome this crisis.

This documentary encapsulates a vision of hope that stems from the heart of Africa and expands globally, highlighting groundbreaking examples of sustainable development all over the world, inspired by the examples of Africa and the natural world. The microcosm of the "cradle of civilization", Africa, will spill into the entire world, introducing the audience to a group of extraordinary humans and companies who are challenging past models of sustainability and creating a new legacy of elegant design, technology, and rediscovered indigenous wisdom.

Out of Africa - Frogs in Demand

Format: HD
Location: South Africa & Madagascar
Running Time: 1 x 58 mins

The joy of knowing that you are pregnant and that your genetic material will live on in your newborn baby is an emotion to be shared and celebrated.

In the late 1920's it was discovered that if urine from a pregnant woman was injected subcutaneously into a female clawed frog, the frog will spawn. This developed into the first commercial pregnancy test and from the early 1930's until the early 1960's, large numbers of clawed frogs were exported from South Africa to various destinations worldwide for this purpose. In recent times frogs from every continent around the world have suffered from unexplained high death rates, resulting in various species undergoing severe population reductions and pushing others to the brink of extinction. Could it be that this pregnancy test was also responsible for the global decline of amphibians?

Herpetologists from South Africa believe they might have found the answer. Join Professor Louis du Preez and Marius Burger as they investigate what they believe is the reason for the decline of amphibians, and

whether the use of the clawed frog in pregnancy tests may have contributed to the spread of the Chytridiomycosis disease; a disease that has been identified as the most likely cause of massive frog population decline around the world.

Planet Africa

Location: Southern Africa
Running time: 13 x 26mins

Planet Africa gives a fresh approach to documentary television. Using an exciting and upbeat style, the focus is on bringing awareness of positive environmental and community-driven stories by taking the audience on a journey through Africa to experience first-hand environmental and community issues. This documentary brings together stories that tell of projects that people are involved in, whether small or large, which have a positive effect on the environment and community. These stories educate, inspire, create awareness and encourage involvement.

Examples of the Planet Africa stories include: Shark Spotter Programme along the Cape coast; Cheetah Outreach; Darling Wind Farm generating green electricity and Mobile Vets.

The computer graphics expertise and upbeat music used in the production qualify it as a dynamic product for edutainment.



The Cheetah Diaries

Format: HD
Location: Cape Town (RSA)
Running Time: 13 x 24 mins

The Cheetah Diaries is an incredible profile of the work done by an extra-ordinary team of women, cheetahs and dogs! Their methods are modern, controversial and are constantly coming under fire from detractors. This documentary chronicles the lives of the cheetah cubs at the centre located amongst the vineyards outside Stellenbosch to their placement on the farms.

This series spent a year with this unique conservation team; following the highs and lows, and the daily battles. From the emotive eye operation performed on one of the cheetah cubs to Shadow's charismatic guest appearance as a male cheetah ambassador. The viewers will be amazed by the astonishing footage that demonstrates the communal work done by humans and the wild creatures.

Viewers will be gripped by the challenges that the Cheetah Outreach team face and hooked on the gorgeous cubs and puppies as the series traces their progress from tiny balls of fluff to working conservationists.

The Zoo that Saved the World

Format: HD
Location: Pretoria (RSA)
Running time: 13 x 24 mins

From one of the top 10 Zoo's in the world, this is a zoo story with a difference. It is a series that shows viewers a unique action-orientated footage of how the Zoo plays a crucial and dynamic role in the field in Africa.

This is a behind the scenes look at what happens in the National Zoo where the Zoo is literally helping to save the world. Viewers are taken on a conservation journey showing the vital role which the Zoo and Zoo partners around the world play in conserving endangered and threatened species.

We see how the Zoo works to maintain populations that are extinct in the wild, as well as, provide sanctuary for animals captured in illegal trade. It also creates a base of genetic diversity for the future and is a hub for advancing knowledge throughout Africa, and globally.

From rainforest to savannah, laboratory to coral reef, through research and good science, this documentary shows the hard work, and the passion that the people of the Zoo have.

Wandering Wild

Format: HD
Location: Kruger National Park (RSA)
Running Time: 1 x 26min

"I saw wildlife, I explored the unknown, but it was never real; I only dreamed of Africa".

Wandering Wild is a presenter-driven documentary that explores the greater Kruger National Park through the eyes of a wildlife filmmaker. Lianne Sleggh grew up in the Netherlands, and her endeavours to become a wildlife filmmaker brought her into Africa. In the company of Walter Jubber a head ranger, Lianne explores the Pafuri Triangle; an intersection of two great rivers, the Limpopo and Livuvu and a meeting point of three countries; Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique, and she joins in the tracking of a Lion where signs of a thrilling hunt are discovered.

Lianne's journey also brings her to the experience of the daring work by the anti-poaching unit; a team dedicated to be guardians to the animals, transcending the dangers of keeping vigil through days and nights to retrieve the poachers when they come in sight.



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SOPHIE VARTAN
Head of Production and
Commissioning Editor,
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Sophie Vartan oversees the production and commissioning department for NHU AFRICA, based in Cape Town, South Africa. The Unit is producing approximately 80 hours of HD wildlife and natural history programming for international distribution per year. Sophie works closely with international and local co-production partners and independent producers as well as with in-house production teams. She also raises finance and acts as Executive Producer on a number of productions.



ZANELE GUQAZA
Head of Sales and Distribution,
NHU AFRICA

Zanele Guqaza manages the sales and distribution for NHU AFRICA's extensive wildlife, natural history and factual programming portfolio. Working with local and international acquisition executives, she negotiates pre-sales, license acquisitions and multi-media distribution deals. Working with an extensive number of buyers from all over the world, Zanele liaises with over 40 countries and attends the annual and bi-annual Film Festivals where she markets the NHU AFRICA productions.

The production portfolio for NHU AFRICA includes a number of popular observational documentary series following the busy work of conservationists, environmentalists and animal handlers. One-hour specials focus on a wide variety of topics including strong, character driven human-animal relationship stories, ranging from the heat of the Kalahari Desert to the cold of the Antarctic ice!