

NATURE

media information



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NATURE* VENTURES THROUGH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE TO FIND MODERN-DAY MONSTERS IN *THE DRAGON CHRONICLES

THIRTEEN's *Nature* Premieres New Episode January 11, 2009 on PBS

Once upon a time, a small child dreamed of finding dragons. As the story goes, Romulus (“Rom”) Whitaker would grow up to become a renowned reptile expert and conservationist who sets out to discover the origins of these mythical monsters. In *The Dragon Chronicles*, he travels the world, reimagining lines between fact and fantasy, in search of counterparts of the fabled beasts in the modern world.

THIRTEEN's *Nature: The Dragon Chronicles* premieres Sunday, January 11 at 8 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings.)

Fred Kaufman, executive producer of THIRTEEN's *Nature* series says, “Dragons would be a tough and wildly expensive film to do, so we went with their modern-day cousins, the reptiles that inspired the great fantasy stories of yore.”

Whitaker's passion for reptiles has led to a life's work studying, conserving and breeding them in the wild and at his snake park and crocodile bank in India. Some of the exotic locations he explores in this film include:

- more -

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- The caves of Slovenia where he discovers the peculiar creature known as the olm, a cave-dwelling blind salamander once believed to be a baby dragon.
- The rainforests of India's Western Ghats, where Whitaker tracks his quarry down in the high canopy. These are flying lizards, belonging to the species called Draco. When threatened or courting, the males extend the bright yellow flaps on their necks. Whitaker captures one and gently stretches out its amazing wings.
- Indonesia's Komodo Island, where he sees a wild Komodo dragon for the first time. Remarkably, Komodo females can lay fertile eggs without a male's assistance. This is unique among other virgin births in nature because the Komodo can give birth to her own future mates.

Proving that fables and myths of the dragon are alive and all around us in the real world, Whitaker says, "Dragons are complex beasts – part myth, part science, part dinosaur fantasy."

NATURE has won more than 450 honors from the television industry, the international wildlife film community, and environmental organizations – including 10 Emmys, three Peabodys and the first award given to a television program by the Sierra Club. Most recently, the series won a Peabody Award for *Silence of the Bees*.

The Dragon Chronicles is a production of Icon Films Ltd and Thirteen in association with Granada International, National Geographic Channels International and WNET.ORG for PBS. Fred Kaufman is Executive Producer; William Grant is Executive-in-Charge. Major corporate support for *NATURE* is provided by Canon U.S.A., Inc. and SC Johnson. Additional support is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the nation's public television stations. Academy Award-winning actor F. Murray Abraham narrates. Available in HD.

Nature video podcasts, available on iTunes and at *Nature Online* (www.pbs.org/nature), range from two to 10 minutes in length and feature behind-the-scenes interviews with filmmakers and producers, program excerpts, and outtakes.

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