

NATURE

media information



PBS

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***CAN RARE CREATURES MAKE A COMEBACK IN THE WILD?
NATURE EXPLORES THE ANSWER IN
THE LONELIEST ANIMALS***

In the Galapagos Islands, one giant tortoise lives the most extreme kind of solitary existence. He is the last of his kind on the planet. For centuries, sailors and pirates plundered his island for tortoise meat until they thought there were no more. The only one to escape the slaughter was Lonesome George. Yet George is far from alone. At 90 years of age he is a poster child for a growing group of species with dwindling numbers. Scientists warn that up to 100 species a day are being pushed into extinction. *Nature: The Loneliest Animals* premieres nationally Sunday, April 19 at 8 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings).

One of China's rarest treasures resides in a zoo in the southern city of Changsha. She is an 80-year-old Yangtze giant soft-shelled turtle, the last known female *rafetus* turtle in the world. At one time these turtles flourished throughout the Yangtze River valley, until modernization and overhunting all but destroyed them. Still, there is hope. When researchers discovered the last known male *rafetus*, 600 miles away in Suzhou, an historic blind date was arranged, and if all goes smoothly, this ancient Adam and Eve may live to see their species reborn.

In Indonesia, the Sumatran rhinoceros population has been decimated by poachers who kill the animals for their horns, which can be worth up to \$15,000 a pound. Deforestation threatens

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the few that are left. When the captive breeding program at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary failed to produce any offspring, the Sanctuary turned for help to the Cincinnati Zoo, home of Andalus, the first captive-born Sumatran rhino in more than one hundred years. Andalus was recruited as a potential mate for a young female rhino back in Sumatra. If they do produce a baby, it will be an important first step toward protecting and preserving these rare animals.

Wildlife sanctuaries around the world make every effort to reverse the fate of the dwindling few who make up the last of their kind. Lemurs born at Duke University wait to go home to Madagascar, where humans have cleared the island of 80% of its forest. The black-footed ferret of North America, once considered extinct, is now being successfully returned to the wild in northern Colorado. The world's most endangered cat, Spain's Iberian lynx, is being bred and kept in strict biosecurity until offspring can be returned to an equally endangered wild scrubland. A wildlife preservation center in the heart of the Persian Gulf nation of Qatar shelters over 2000 rare and critically endangered animals. They are all survivors on the edge, now relying on us to save them from an uncertain future.

Nature has won more than 450 honors from the television industry, the international wildlife film communities, 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*.

Nature: The Loneliest Animals is a production of Partisan Pictures and THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG and National Geographic Channel for PBS. Written and produced by Doug Shultz. Available in HD. 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.

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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