

## Nature's Greatest Moments - Fantastic Creatures (Series 1)

11 x 5 MINUTES

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

### 1. The Polar Bear

Polar bears are generally considered carnivores, but like all bears like feeding on fruit and vegetation. That's why their favourite haunts are water holes with algae and seaweed. The trouble starts when another polar bear is attracted to the same water hole. When two dangerous loners meet, a fierce fight can erupt- especially when one of the Polar bears is a female who wants to protect her cubs from a hungry male.

### 2. Indian Elephants

Working elephants spend their lives felling and carrying trees. They are used in places that trucks and tractors can't reach—in the wilderness, and in marshes. A grown elephant can lift up to 400 kg, and pull more than a ton. But harnessing the extraordinary strength of these large animals is an art in itself, passed from one generation of elephant wranglers to the next.

It takes endless patience and skill to turn a young Indian elephant into a proper lumberjack.

### 3. Urang-Utans

The most sombre and remote rainforests of Indonesia are home to one of the rarest species on earth: the Orang-utan. They are the hermits of the canopy. Only once every four years does a female give birth to a single child. The little one spends its first months clinging to its mother's fur. Regardless if its parent swings from tree to tree or hangs on to a branch, it must hold on for its dear life. Another four years will pass before it roams alone, swinging through the gardens of the jungle canopy.

### 4. Snails

When the first rays of sunlight warm the forest, a very special animal awakes. It has been hibernating for the past months, dug into the ground. Now the snail senses that spring has come. It's the mating season. So the little creatures crawl through the forest in search for a partner. Most European snails are hermaphrodites, they are both male and female. This is incredibly convenient, since a snail can literally mate with any other individual it encounters. Their mating ritual is strange and brutal. The snails shoot love arrows into each others bodies. After they have coupled, both partners are able to lay eggs and produce baby snails.

## 5. Meerkats

Being a meerkat sentinel in the Kalahari desert is a pretty important job. While the other meerkats clean their fur or hunt for locusts in the bushes, the guard must keep watch at all times. There's danger everywhere. A wild cat just loves the taste of a juicy meerkat. But as soon as the predator appears, the lone sentinel sounds the alarm and the meerkats quickly retreat into their underground hideouts.

## 6. Hornets

The hornet is a much feared creature, but its sting is no worse than a bee's. They are docile and industrious creatures who build their nests out of a self-made papier-maché. The hornet queen lays up to 40 eggs a day. The larvae are reared by loving nannies, who feed them a special mush made of wasp meat. Soon the little ones hatch, crawling out of their cocoons as grown hornets. This magical process is known as „metamorphosis“. The transformed larvae cut their way through the side of their silk cocoon and, for the first time, enter the wide, open world.

## 7. The Seahorse

The Sea Horse is a strange fish that doesn't look like a fish at all. The sea horse, a tiny, delicate animal, protects itself with a bizarre armour. It feeds on shrimp and courts its lovers by performing a most elegant mating dance. But the most amazing aspect of its behaviour is that the male carries out the young. This film sheds light on the sea horse's mysterious life in the deep.

## 8. The Starfish

A small mollusc that lives off the coast of Australia has been hitting headlines around the world. It appears in huge masses and devastates whole reefs. The Crown of Thorns starfish feeds off corals-- and at lightning speed! It's a strange-looking creature, this predator of the reefs. And it has almost no natural enemies at all—except the Triton's trumpet, an animal which is just as bizarre as the Crown of Thorns. This film is about nature's caprice, and a battle for life and death just a few feet under the surface of the oceans.

## 9. The Elephant Seal

These strange creatures may resemble elephants with their big trunks, but in fact they're not related to the big land mammals at all. This film explores life in the seal colonies, documenting the mating rituals and the weaning of the youngsters. It shows how adolescent. Elephant seals form "kindergartens" and roam the sea, practicing how to dive and swim. The trunks of these young males aren't fully developed yet, and much time must elapse before they become rivals to the alpha male, the king of the beach.

## 10. The Hyena

One of the most lethal predators in the Ngorongoro crater, Tanzania, is the spotted hyaena. It is frequently mistaken for a scavenger, but carcasses only comprise a small part of its diet. In fact, the hyaena is a ruthless killer, hunting down its victims in packs. First, the predators choose a suitable victim, mostly an old, weak, or very young animal—like an inexperienced Wildebeest. They then tag their victims mercilessly, until the final showdown arrives.

## 11. Squids

Squids rank among the strangest animals populating this planet. They are cephalopods which means that they have tentacles growing out of their heads. They've also got a secret weapon: extra long tentacles that shoot out when an unsuspecting victim swims by. Fierce hunters, squids grab their prey with lightning speed. But squids are multi-talented- they are also masters of camouflage. They can change colour to blend in with their surroundings. They can also express emotions by switching from one hue to another. In this film, the mating of the squids is seen, one of the most colourful and eerie rituals in the entire animal kingdom.