



# NATURE



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***EARTHFLIGHT, A Nature Special Presentation* Takes to the  
Skies in a New Six-Part Mini-Series Debuting  
Wednesday, September 4, 2013 on PBS**

*Experience an awe-inspiring journey of earth's natural wonders, as never seen  
before, through the eyes of birds*

What would it be like to see the world from a bird's perspective? To experience riding on the backs of bald eagles and snow geese or flying alongside a flock of brown pelicans as they scan and dive for fish in the ocean below. State-of-the-art technology and sophisticated camera techniques have now made it possible to do just that and more as ***EARTHFLIGHT, A Nature Special Presentation*** takes viewers on a breathtaking aerial adventure over six continents.

Witness some of the world's greatest wildlife spectacles, struggles, migrations, and stunning landscapes from a bird's-eye view when ***EARTHFLIGHT, A Nature Special Presentation*** airs on six consecutive Wednesdays, September 4, 11, 18, 25, October 2 and 9, 2013 at 8 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings). After the broadcast, each episode will be available for online streaming at [pbs.org/nature](http://pbs.org/nature).

It took **EARTHFLIGHT** series producer John Downer and his team four years to film more than 100 bird species in 40 different countries. Whether retracing the North American flight paths taken by thousands of migrating wild snow geese traveling to their Arctic breeding grounds or witnessing, for the first time, the aerobatics of devil rays as they somersault and splash back into the sea, the goal was to show the world on the wings of birds.

To capture a view of the greatest gathering of wild flamingos seen in 20 years, the team employed a variety of spycams. Remote cameras were buried at a favorite drinking spot by Kenya's Lake Bogoria, while another camera was disguised as a mini-flock of floating flamingos. To film scenes from above, a radio-controlled drone was used with great success to silently infiltrate masses of the skittish pink flamingos.

To get remarkably close flying shots of wild vultures in South Africa, cameramen on paragliders piloted by biologists utilized the same updrafts and thermals as the birds they were there to film. To get even closer to the vultures, a full-scale replica of the bird was launched with a radio-controlled pan and tilt camera on board which was able to transmit pictures as it flew among the real birds.

Tiny HD cameras on the backs of trained birds captured amazing viewpoints that have never been seen before, such as that of a snow goose flying over New York Harbor toward the Statue of Liberty or a bald eagle soaring through the Grand Canyon in search of food.

The work involved in producing some images involved what is known as "imprinting," which involves raising a flock of birds from birth. The process causes the birds to form a strong familial bond with the individual they regard as their mother. Avid French bird-enthusiast Christian Moullec raised a flock of geese, caring for them every day and training them to accept his piloted microlight as part of the family, so that when they all took to the skies, he was able to film close-up shots of the imprinted flock flying in tight formation as the geese retraced the great journeys of wild birds over Edinburgh and London for **EARTHFLIGHT**.

Episode one: **North America** (airs Wednesday, September 4 at 8 p.m.)

Snow geese, pelicans, and bald eagles fly over the Great Plains, the Grand Canyon, Alaska, New York City and the Golden Gate Bridge as they encounter and engage with bears, dolphins, bison, and spawning fish.

Episode two: **Africa** (airs Wednesday, September 11 at 8 p.m.)

Fly and arrow-dive with cape gannets among sharks, dolphins, whales and the great sardine run. Soar with fish eagles, flamingos, kelp gulls and vultures to see the most animal-packed continent with fresh eyes.

Episode three: **Europe** (airs Wednesday, September 18 at 8 p.m.)

Cranes and geese rise over Venice, Dover, Edinburgh and the monkey-guarded Rock of Gibraltar. In Rome, the Loire Valley, Holland and Hungary, birds gather by the millions to breed and two by two to raise their families.

Episode four: **South America** (airs Wednesday, September 25 at 8 p.m.)

Condors and scarlet macaws take us to the Andes and the Amazon. Giant petrels in Patagonia shadow killer whales. Hummingbirds feed at Iguazu Falls, vultures ride the thermals over Rio de Janeiro, and black vultures target turtle eggs in Costa Rica.

Episode five: **Asia and Australia** (airs Wednesday, October 2 at 8 p.m.)

Japanese cranes dance in the snow, swallows and swifts visit the Great Wall and the Forbidden City, lorikeets, cockatoos and budgies form giant flocks in Australia, pigeons guide us through India, and geese fly miles above the Himalayas.

Episode six: **Flying High** (airs Wednesday, October 9 at 8 p.m.)

A behind-the-scenes look at how **EARTHFLIGHT** was made, including the extraordinary relationships between people and birds. Microlights, paragliders, drones, and camera-carrying birds and much more helped along the way.

A two-hour compilation of this six-hour series, titled “Winged Planet,” aired on the Discovery Channel last October.

**Nature** is a production of THIRTEEN in association with WNET for PBS. For **Nature**, Fred Kaufman is executive producer. **EARTHFLIGHT, A Nature Special Presentation** is a John Downer Production for BBC.

**Nature** pioneered a television genre that is now widely emulated in the broadcast industry. Throughout its history, **Nature** has brought the natural world to millions of viewers. The series has been consistently among the most-watched primetime series on public television.

**Nature** has won almost 700 honors from the television industry, the international wildlife film communities, and environmental organizations including 11 Emmys, and three Peabodys. The series received two of wildlife film industry’s highest honors: the Christopher Parsons Outstanding Achievement Award given by the Wildscreen Festival and the Grand Teton Award given by the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. Recently, the International Wildlife Film Festival honored **Nature** Executive Producer Fred Kaufman with its Lifetime Achievement Award for Media.

[PBS.org/nature](http://PBS.org/nature) is the award-winning web companion to **Nature** featuring streaming episodes, filmmaker interviews, teacher's guides, and more.

Support for this **Nature** program was made possible in part by the Arnhold Family in memory of Clarisse Arnhold, the Lillian Goldman Charitable Trust, the Filomen M. D'Agostino Foundation, the Sun Hill Foundation, by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and by the nation's public television stations.

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#### **About WNET**

In 2013, WNET is celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of THIRTEEN, New York's flagship public media provider. As the parent company of [THIRTEEN](#) and [WLIW21](#) and operator of [NJTV](#), WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to over 5 million viewers each week. WNET produces and presents such acclaimed PBS series as [Nature](#), [Great Performances](#), [American Masters](#), [Need to Know](#), [Charlie Rose](#) and a range of documentaries, children's programs, and local news and cultural offerings available on air and online. Pioneers in educational programming, WNET has created such groundbreaking series as [Get the Math](#), [Oh Noah!](#) and [Cyberchase](#) and provides tools for educators that bring compelling content to life in the classroom and at home. WNET highlights the tri-state's unique culture and diverse communities through [NYC-ARTS](#), [Reel 13](#), [NJ Today](#) and [MetroFocus](#), the multi-platform news magazine focusing on the New York region. WNET is also a leader in connecting with viewers on emerging platforms, including the [THIRTEEN Explore iPad App](#) where users can stream PBS content for free.