



NATURE



Press Contact: Johanna Baker, WNET

212.560.3134, BakerJ@wnet.org

Press Materials: <http://pbs.org/pressroom> or <http://thirteen.org/pressroom>

Websites: <http://pbs.org/nature>, <http://facebook/PBSNature>, [@PBSNature](https://twitter.com/PBSNature),
<http://pbsnature.tumblr.com>, <http://youtube.com/NaturePBS>, [#NaturePBS](https://www.instagram.com/NaturePBS)

**THIRTEEN's Season Premiere of *Nature*
Celebrates the Quirky and Offbeat in
Animal Misfits
Wednesday, October 15, 2014 on PBS**

Focuses on creatures who march to a different drummer and thrive

There is great diversity in the animal world, but it seems those species known for their speed, intelligence and strength are often singled out and celebrated, while creatures who may look or act differently are overlooked. ***Animal Misfits*** seeks to correct this situation by focusing on these nonconformists that are not accidents of nature, but unconventional solutions to the challenges of survival on earth.

Meet a collection of these oddball creatures when ***Animal Misfits*, *Nature's* 33rd Season Premiere**, airs **Wednesday, October 15, 2014 at 8 p.m. (ET) on PBS** (check local listings). After broadcast, the episode will be available for online streaming at pbs.org/nature.

The giant panda is certainly a misfit. It may be part of the bear family but unlike the rest of its kind, the panda is a non-meat-eating carnivore. Ninety-nine percent of its diet comes from bamboo, which contains so little energy that it cannot build up enough fat to hibernate like other bears, even eating continuously for 16 hours a day. It's a full-time job. And reproduction is a very

slow process, since female pandas are fertile only once a year for a few days. But that's actually an advantage for an animal so reliant on just one food source. If the panda population ever increased dramatically, there might not be enough bamboo to go around.

Then there's the big-headed mole rat which only exists in Ethiopia's Bale Mountains. Of the 37 different species of mole rats in the world, most of which live and feed entirely underground, only the big-headed mole rat breaks with tradition and heads above ground to feed on fresh grass. This dietary preference, coupled with feeble eyesight and poor hearing makes it vulnerable to attacks by wolves. But the big-headed mole rat has a secret weapon, a sentry in the form of a bird called a moorland chat. This expert forager feeds on bugs and worms the mole rat digs up and, in turn, sings out an alarm to announce any approaching wolves.

Animal Misfits also includes creatures that may seem distinctly ill-suited to their environment, but thrive nonetheless: a tiny chameleon the size of an ant; the mudskipper, a fish that can live out of water; the ancient deep sea nautilus, whose propulsion thrusts it backwards so it can't see what's ahead; and New Zealand's kakapo, a pudgy flightless parrot whose food source is up in the trees. Possibly most remarkable is the Arctic woolly bear caterpillar that lives for 7 years or more but spends most of its life frozen stiff. The list goes on. Yet these unlikely creatures are not evolutionary dead ends. They're highly specialized success stories, animals that prove being different can also give you an edge.

Nature is a production of THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET. For ***Nature***, Fred Kaufman is executive producer. ***Animal Misfits*** is a co-production of THIRTEEN Productions LLC and BBC for WNET.

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 over 700 honors from the television industry, the international wildlife film communities and environmental organizations, including 12 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 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, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, the Estate of Elizabeth A. Vernon, the Lillian Goldman Charitable Trust, the Kate W. Cassidy Foundation, the Filomen M. D'Agostino Foundation, by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and by the nation's public television stations.

###

About WNET

As New York's flagship public media provider and 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](#), [PBS NewsHour Weekend](#), [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](#), [NJTV News with Mary Alice Williams](#) 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.