



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

**THIRTEEN's *A Sloth Named Velcro* Overturns Old Myths and
Offers New Insights About These Fascinating Animals
Wednesday, November 5, 2014 on PBS**

*A journalist's life-changing experience as an adoptive mother to a baby sloth leads
to a new understanding of these enigmatic creatures*

In 2000, Ana Salceda, a young Spanish print and television journalist, moved from her native Spain to explore the wilds of Panama, but couldn't have predicted the turn her life would take when she became the caregiver for a tiny orphaned baby sloth, which she named Velcro. For nearly two years, the pair was inseparable, until the day came for Velcro to be reintroduced back to the wild. But their time together jumpstarted Ana's introduction into and involvement with the larger conservation story of sloths, as well as with their caretakers and supporters.

A Sloth Named Velcro tells the story of Salceda's return to Central and South America to see how much has changed since Velcro came into her life and to document current sloth conservation efforts when the program airs Wednesday, November 5, 2014 at 8 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings). After broadcast, the episodes will be available for online streaming at pbs.org/nature.

Sloths, once largely ignored, have become a hot topic of scientific researchers. New studies show that they're not so sloth-like after all. Ana teams up with Bryson Voirin and his colleagues from the Max Planck Institute as they carry out a landmark study into the sleep habits of sloths. Voirin has discovered that despite their reputation, sloths in fact sleep only about as much as humans do and are much more active in the wild than they are in captivity. Other studies have shown sloths are not as solitary as we thought, that they have social structures, and that males even keep small harems of females. New research into the gait of sloths has revealed another surprise. X-ray images and photographic analysis show that sloths actually move just like primates, only upside-down.

Sloth sanctuaries and rehabilitation centers are springing up throughout Central and South America as development displaces these gentle creatures. Ana spends time with founder Encar Garcia at the Jaguar Rescue Center in Costa Rica where orphaned and injured animals – including sloths – are cared for and returned to the wild. In Colombia, Ana meets Tinka Plese, whose approach to rehabilitation includes aromatherapy and massage as part of a program designed to instill a feeling of independence to animals before their reintroduction. Here, Ana also discovers a black market where baby sloths are sold to unsuspecting tourists. And in Panama we meet a loosely organized group of concerned citizens who make up a “sloth patrol” of individuals who rescue sloths crossing dangerous roads in search of a new home.

On the island of Escudo de Veraguas off the coast of Panama, Ana and sloth researcher Bryson Voirin slog through mangrove swamps to come face-to-face with a newly-identified sloth species, dubbed pygmy sloths, that has evolved in isolation for almost 9,000 years.

Shot on location and featuring a unique mix of home movies, natural history and new science, the journey that Ana began with Velcro becomes the story of a growing network of dedicated individuals working hard to learn more about these charming creatures in order to protect them.

Nature is a production of THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET. For **Nature**, Fred Kaufman is executive producer. **A Sloth Named Velcro** is a production of BelugaSmile Productions and THIRTEEN Productions LLC 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, Susan Malloy and the Sun Hill 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.

###