

PEOPLE PLACES

DOCUMENTARY
30 MIN.

VERSIONS

Arabic, English, Spanish:
19 x 30 min.

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Animal Encounters

Can there be such a thing as a spiritual affinity between animals and humans? The men and women in our **Animal Encounters** would probably say yes. They have all felt a profound connection with certain animals, a relationship that has stayed with them ever since their first meeting. The devotion with which they commit to the welfare of their protégés, the trust that these animals demonstrate and the wordless form of understanding between them are often an enigma to outsiders.

01 My Friend, the Wolf VoD HD

Few people have such an intense relationship with wolves as the Norwegian Frank André Soma. This is evident to anyone watching him playfighting with “his” wolves. Frank André Soma campaigns for wolves to be able return to their old habitats in Europe.

02 Masters of the Eagle VoD SD

Among the nomadic Kazakhs of Mongolia, the berkutchi are a respected group of men who hunt with golden eagles. The skills needed to train the birds are passed down from one generation to the next. Aralbay and his female eagle have been hunting together for many years. He removed it as a chick from its nest and tamed it.

03 At the Elephant Orphanage HD

In Kenya, keepers at the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust lovingly raise baby elephants, most of whom were orphaned when poachers killed their mothers. For all of those concerned, this is more than just a job. The men bottle feed the babies every three hours and are there when traumatised calves are plagued by nightmares.

04 Film Stars in Fur and Feathers SD

Animal trainer Christoph Kappel has an eye for a movie star, and instantly knows whether an animal will make the grade. He employs gentle methods to groom and coach his furry and feathered protégés for the big screen. Once on the set, Christoph Kappel shields his animal stars from stress with calmness and serenity.

05 The Cobra Pact VoD SD

Pakistan is home to fakirs, who catch poisonous snakes, including cobras, and make their living by performing with them at markets. It is a dangerous profession. When a fakir captures a snake, he promises to look after it well and at some point give it back its freedom.

06 Searching for Sky the Bear SD

The Swiss-Canadian bear researcher Reno Sommerhalder released five young grizzlies into the wild in Kamchatka, Russia. Years later, he returns to find out what has become of his favorite female, Sky. Has she survived in the wilderness?

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07 A School for Monkeys HD

In Thailand, the coconut harvest is monkey business. Usually, wild monkeys are captured and beaten until they have learned how to do their job. But at Somjai Saekhow's school for monkeys, it's quite a different story. With plenty of love and endless patience, her staff teach them how to recognise a ripe fruit and pluck it.

08 Among Dolphins VoD HD

The Swiss biologist Angela Ziltener resigned her job, left family and friends, and moved to Egypt's Red Sea coast, all to be close to "her" dolphins. While diving with these animals, she gains the most extraordinary insights. This is because she manages to integrate herself within the pod, as though she were a dolphin herself.

09 The Tree-Kangaroo Mother HD

There is a species of kangaroo in Australia that lives in trees. Tree-kangaroos are nimble climbers, but occasionally one may fall or lose its young as it jumps from branch to branch. Jeffrey and Dorothy are tree-kangaroos who were found abandoned as babies. Their prospects for survival were dim, until they found a human foster mother in Margit Cianelli.

10 Berta's Little Alpaca HD

Eight-year-old Berta from Peru is a member of the Q'ero ethnic group. It is traditional within this community for children to adopt a newborn alpaca, as a way of teaching them early about the meaning of responsibility. The first few weeks of their partnership present Berta and her little alpaca with huge challenges, which lay the foundations for a life-long bond.

11 The Story of the Spirit Bear HD

Kermode bears, also known as spirit bears, are extremely rare. Related to the more common black bear but with a striking white coat, the spirit bear is revered for its special powers by indigenous people in western Canada. Clover is an orphaned spirit bear who was raised by zookeeper Angelika Langen with lots of tender loving care. Once he was grown, she released him, to try to ensure the survival of the species in the wild.

12 My Animal Protégé VoD HD

At Schönbrunn Zoo in Austria – the oldest zoo in the world – 70 keepers tend to the needs of around 8,000 animals. Many dedicate their entire lives to the care of their protégés. They watch as their animals are born and grow up, grow old and die. Sometimes they are even witness to the extinction of a species.

13 The Girl and the Elephants VoD HD

Sixteen-year-old Chandani has an ardent wish: She wants to follow in her father's footsteps and become a mahout, or elephant rider. But in her homeland Sri Lanka, this is a job exclusively for men. Nonetheless, Chandani's father decides to give her a chance, and puts her in charge of the elephant calf Kandula.

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14 Conserving India's Wildlife VoD HD

In India's Kaziranga National Park, wildlife populations are under threat from poaching and disease. Efforts to protect them need the backing of the local population, but elephants and rhinos cause damage to farmland, and people are afraid of tigers and leopards. Phulmoni Gogoi and her husband Prasanta Boro run an animal clinic where they fight for the lives of every single patient, as well as educate people about the creatures themselves.

15 A Love for the Leopard-Spotted Horse VoD HD

The Knabstrupper is a Danish breed of horse with an unusual leopard-spotted coat. 350 years ago, the stallions were considered as precious as gold and favored by royalty. Today, the breed is threatened with extinction. Heinz Hackmann is devoted to their conservation.

16 Too Slow for This World – Sloths in Costa Rica VoD HD

Sloths are just that - slothful in everything they do. They are becoming misfits in their own world in Costa Rica as forests are razed, construction encroaches, and cars speed by along broad highways. Encar Garcia and Sandro Alviani have created a little refuge for these languorous animals.

17 Immo the Hunter and Harry the Stag VoD HD

Harry is a red stag and a foundling. The professional hunter and forest educator Immo Ortlepp is raising him. Immo wants to train Harry to be a tracking stag. A tracking animal leaves traces in the forest that are used to train hunting dogs. But first, Immo has to win the wild creature's trust.

18 Jenny and her Flying Foxes VoD HD

The fruit bats of northeastern Australia are dropping like flies. Fruit farmers used to cull the voracious creatures, but nowadays a mysterious illness causes them to fall out of the trees in large numbers and die a painful death. Jenny Maclean has turned her home into a fruit bat clinic.

19 Lotta Learns to Swim VoD HD

Dirk and Rosi Fussbahn are rearing Lotta by hand. Their children, and even their dogs, love the orphaned baby otter and do their bit to help. But young otters are afraid of water and need to be coaxed into swimming. That is now Dirk's job.