

The ostrich is the largest of all birds but it can't fly. But it can run. At full speed, this giant can reach 70 kilometres per hour—that's almost double as fast as Usain Bolt in a 100 meters race.

On the other end of the size scale is the hummingbird. The smallest of these tiny birds is the Bee hummingbird. It's only about 5 centimetres long and weighs just 2 grams. Hummingbirds are well known for their extraordinary flying skills but they are also extremely adaptable. In the mountain forests of the South American Andes the beaks of one hummingbird species have grown to mirror the shape of a particular rainforest flower. Only this bird can pollinate the flower and sip its nectar.

From Eider ducks in the Arctic that "fly" underwater, to Hawaiian 'same sex' Albatross couples; from the ultra-social Sri Lankan Blue magpie, to the Patagonian Burrowing Parrot; this film presents the amazing world of 'Freaky Feathers'.

EP03: PLANET OF THE PRIMATES

This animal family has conquered almost all of planet Earth even if we don't count the most prominent members of its family, humans.

Snub-nosed monkeys manage to survive at an altitude of 4,000 metres or more in the Himalayas, while Japanese macaques

have learned to endure the unforgiving winters of the Japanese alps by harnessing geothermal powers.

Wherever they live, primates have something in common; they show an amazing level of intelligence, fine-tuned forms of communication and sophisticated skills for solving social conflicts. These capabilities enable some primates like Hamadryas baboons to form huge groups of up to 400 individuals.

Tool use is not just a human primate thing. Other primates also use a wide array of tools. Woolly spider monkeys repurpose leaves as sponges to reach hidden water sources. Chimpanzees have a whole box of striking, stabbing and crunching tools to master every mechanical challenge.

The similarities to humans don't end there. Some primates seem to enjoy our company. Thousands of long-tailed macaques roam the streets of the town of Lopburi in Thailand. They steal from passers-by, cause traffic jams and fool around, sometimes climbing the venerable Khmer temples. But the human inhabitants of Lopburi are fond of their macaque relatives. Once a year they prepare a huge all-you-can-eat-buffet for them!

'Planet of the Primates' takes a closer look at some of our closest relatives.



WILD WINNERS

3 x 50 min.

Produced by Ivo Filatsch, Andrea Gastgeb, Martin Mészáros

HD, 5.1 and Stereo

Executive producer: Sabine Holzer



TERRA MATER
Factual Studios

Big cats, birds, and monkeys; for many people these three groups of animals have a very special appeal. Perhaps because they (the wildlife, not the people) show unique behaviour and skills. 'Wild Winners' reveals the features and characteristics of these animals in a new light, by comparing and contrasting their unique skill set and focussing on what makes them special.

EP01: THE POWER OF THE VELVET PAW

Imposing, powerful, elegant, beautiful, swift; each of these attributes stands for one of the big cats. Appearance, geographical range, behaviour, hunting skills, and even raising young is different for each species. Every big cat has a special characteristic that makes it a superstar in the competition with other members of the cat family. Let the big cats of the world surprise you with their amazing versatility and strength, from the iconic tiger to the shy and rarely seen snow leopard.

At the head of the parade is the tiger. With its impressive size this majestic beast towers over its rivals. No other cat is as imposing and no other cat inspires as much respect. Regarded as one of the most efficient and dangerous predators, the tiger is feared as a man-eater and celebrated as a symbol of majesty in equal measure.

The lion is the ultimate social big cat. Without the protection, shelter and teamwork of the pride it would be difficult for lions to feed and raise their young, or to bring down large mammals. As a team they have the best chance to survive in open grassland and dense scrubland. A highly developed sense of family combined with social behaviour guarantees the lion a top ranking among the big cats.

The jaguar's bite force makes up for the advantages the tiger and lion enjoy because of size. The jaguar has the strongest teeth of all cats and a bite twice as strong as a lion's. Once a jaguar has sunk its teeth into a caiman, the fight between the two predators has already been decided.

The leopard is a solitary creature. But in his haunt he has to deal with extreme competition in terms of territory and prey. But the jaguar's strength lies in its climbing and carrying ability. With grace and ease this big cat can ascend a tree with a heavy carcass in its mouth and climb high enough to eat its meal in peace.

While the leopard relies on its adaptability, the cheetah stands out by virtue of its physical performance. When sprinting it can accelerate from 0-100 kilometres per hour in just four seconds. The slender cheetah's speed and manoeuvrability more than make up for what it lacks in strength when in the act of chasing prey.

The snow leopard is the rarest of the big cats. It lives in the high mountains of central Asia. Powerful legs and the ability to jump as far as 15 metres make this leopard a skilful hunter in rough terrain.

'The Power of the Velvet Paw' offers a comparison of various big cats from a unique perspective, opening the viewer's eyes to a most exciting and dangerous world.

EP02: FREAKY FEATHERS

Prominent calls and sounds, iridescent colours and acrobatic flying skills; these classic features make up our view of birds. But there's a lot more to these remarkable creatures. This program presents a flamboyant portrait of the bird world; from its tiniest representative, the hummingbird, to the giant ostrich, the largest bird on Earth.

We embark on a journey around the world, just as birds have spread across every continent landscape, habitat and climate zones. From Arctic to the desert, from massive mountain ranges to steamy tropical jungles; birds display an amazing adaptability and diversity. Yet there are only a few things that all birds have in common like feathers, wings, a beak and their Jurassic origins!

As bizarre as it may seem, when you watch a bird you are watching the descendant of a dinosaur. The ancestors of all birds we see today were a group of dinosaurs called Theropods. Look at the ostrich with its small head, beady eyes, long neck and those strong legs that end with a huge, sharp claw!

