

**T**here is one place that is dominated by crocodiles — 10 million of them! Welcome to South America's Pantanal, and meet the Yacaré caimans, taking a look at life from their perspective.

Crocodiles may look primitive, stupid even, but that is simply wrong. The Yacaré caiman is perfectly adapted to its surroundings. At the driest time of the year, at the lowest water level, males gather in shrunken pools and court females. They do it by blowing bubbles, head-butting the water and creating kinetic water sculptures by vibrating their bodies. The show is spectacular, and it attracts females to mate and who then wait ...

... for the coming of the rains. It's then our female builds her nest from damp vegetation and aggressively defends it from coatis and tegu lizards. She is a most attentive and caring mother, taking her new born babies to the river for their first swim.

With floods, the Pantanal is transformed and so are the lives of its inhabitants, including our Yacarés. The water rises over 3 metres and the whole Pantanal is awash. The babies are growing fast, feeding on the clouds of insects that are hatching off. Their mother though is starving, for she daren't leave her wards. Attacks by dourados and piranhas are not extraordinary. The males move into the streams that run off the many newly formed lakes.

Here, they capture the piranhas and other fish that breed in the flooded meadows. Life is easy, but not for long.

As the waters recede, the dry season imposes its hard regime. Our female is lucky, for she has found a pond where fish are trapped. The male though is trapped himself, along with thousands of other Yacarés in a shrinking pond. Food is long gone, and the water is heating up. Conditions are intolerable and the male must move. But only at night, when it is cooler, can the male set off to find a new, less crowded home. If he can't make it, he will die from heat exhaustion.

With only pockets of water left, our Yacarés often share a waterhole with unsavoury neighbours. The anaconda is both predator and prey for Yacarés.

At the peak of the dry season, our Yacarés face their greatest danger—the king of the Pantanal, the jaguar. These powerful cats can take on a croc even in its own realm; jumping into the water and wrestling a Yacaré to the shore, before killing it with a skull crushing bite. Will our Yacarés suffer such a fate or survive to face another season in the greatest crocodile location on earth?

This film will be an intimate portrayal of a remarkable, poorly understood animal; filmed both above and below water with close up, wide angle photography.



NATURE

# A CROCODILE'S TALE

1 x 53 min. Written and directed by Paul Reddish

HD, 5.1 and Stereo Executive producers: Sabine Holzer, Walter Köhler

