

NATURE

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MAD MATCH NATURE'S STRANGEST RELATIONSHIPS

1 x 50 min.

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HD, 5.1 and Stereo

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'A friend in need is a friend indeed', said the Water thick-knee to its unlikely friend the crocodile.

And the sentiment was returned. The bird and the reptile lay their eggs in close proximity to one another for maximum protection. While the crocodile cools down in the refreshing water, the thick-knee stands guard to spot intruders, such as the Nile Monitor. Following the bird's warning call, the crocodile immediately returns to their common nesting place and saves all the eggs—whichever species they belong to!

It's the type of 'odd couple' relationship that has evolved all around the world—and it works. Underwater, clown fish and sea anemones profit from each other's company; just like snapping shrimps and gobies, as well as rays and the hosts of the underwater cleaning station. It's tit for tat in the animal kingdom! Or ... is it?

Because there's the parasites! Flies cling to giraffes like glue. The hotter and drier it gets, the more intense their presence becomes. Oxpeckers to the rescue! But are these little birds really the perfect rescue team, or are they doing more harm than good?

Fire is another established solution to drive away flies and other pesky insects. Carefully supervised by a group of Dinka

in South Sudan, they engulf themselves and their cattle in smoke. But fire, gotten out of hand elsewhere, can be a real danger to slower ground dwellers. When a forest's ground dwellers are in flight mode, they may even form some unlikely underground temporary living communities. For the sake of safety—they risk dangerous company!

Banded mongooses that pick warthogs clean; ants that lovingly care for caterpillars; oxpeckers that attach themselves to giraffes and zebras; Aztec ants that defend their host plant against intrusive monkeys; and rodents that crack nuts so heavy and robust they could kill you if they hit you crashing down—wild relationships can be found everywhere, from the driest deserts to the deepest, darkest jungles.

What's a little frog doing in a tarantula's burrow? Why is there a little pink caterpillar in the middle of an ants' nest? What are the troop of colobus monkeys and this one red-tailed monkey up to? And why does the sword-billed hummingbird have such a long beak—and what mad match is it part of?

Be it taking advantage of others, a case of give and take or living in symbiotic harmony with others, our planet is filled with every possible type of strange, wild relationship!

