

EP03: The Art of Seduction

Life is filled with magical moments. Some are extra-special. A seducing look, an irresistible move, a sexy signal; in the animal world every species has their own flirtacious code to find the right mate. Success is only guaranteed if the seducer has done his homework and knows how to apply 'The Art of Seduction.'

Performers like to be the centre of attention. However when the torrent frog's intense croaking is drowned out by the sounds of the rapids, he needs to get physical. To avoid the dilemma of being left unheard he waves his hind legs in the air, a sure way to get the attention of the lady frogs.

Male fiddler crabs have taken things one step further. They move their one enlarged claw, either alone or in sync with other males to impress the opposite sex.

Some dances and performances are a visual feast but they can only be appreciated to their fullest when everything is slowed down. Slow motion is the only way to see the Wire-crested Thorn-tail's steady eye contact, elegant hip movements and unique flight technique used to seduce his chosen female hummingbird.

Males work hard to attract mates. And some females can be extremely demanding. The blue manakin won't even consider choosing a partner who does not take part in a group performance of males to impress the feathers off her!

Male fireflies have no trouble working together to attract a mate. They can light up the dark with elaborate lightshows and synchronised flashing to impress.

Then there are the silent lovers. The Jacarés seduce by using infrasound waves, and the orchard bee that douses itself with seductive perfumes that females find irresistible.

But seduction is not all about light, sound, perfume or dance. Some must fight for their right to mate, like the giraffe and the red deer. What may seem like a game at first can turn into serious business in the blink of an eye. Seducers are well-advised to double-check, as appearances can be deceitful. Recklessness can have fatal consequences when what was supposed to be a romantic date turns into murder and mayhem.

But what's life without a little sprinkle of danger?



NATURE



NATURE'S GREATEST TALENTS

3 x 50 min.

Written and produced by **Petra Lederhilger, Susanne Lummer, Martin Mészáros**

HD, 5.1 and Stereo

Executive producer: **Sabine Holzer**



TERRA MATER
Factual Studios

Clever, camouflaged or seductive—animals and plants are among nature's greatest talents. This three-part natural history series portrays behaviour, tricks and looks which have inspired some of our greatest inventions. Presenting wildlife from all over the world in a new perspective: 'Nature's Greatest Talents' combines 'The Art of Seduction', nature's 'Masters of Disguise' and tops it off with the ultimate question: Who is 'Smart & Smarter'?

EP01: Smart & Smarter

Navigation without a map? No problem. Building a fortress out of living bodies? Check. Living life as a super-organism without chaos or collisions? Nothing out of the ordinary for some.

The animal kingdom is filled with creative solutions for staying safe, building homes or catching prey. And it's not only the great big mammals that excel. Birds are also considered to be massively intelligent and insects can perform real miracles.

There are those that consider smart living the go-to option. Great Dusky Swifts take cover behind the water curtains of the Iguazu Falls. Safe from harm, they cling to the bare rocks and dwell in their nests with an incomparable view.

A smart security system is crucial to many animals. Army ants and their next of kin have taken self-security to the limit. They construct invincible walls using their own bodies as building materials.

Smart minds think alike, or at least they are taught to do so. From their elders, Capuchin monkeys learn how to crack rock-hard palm nuts to extract their nutrition-rich core. Tool use is a feature of the very smart ones. Some even have personal tools that they carry around for their whole lives! Elephants' trunks are of great use when the grey giants' inner navigational system has directed them towards hidden sources of water.

Some creatures have abilities that come in extra handy. There's a fish that shoots rays of water at his prey as if from a toy water gun! Spiders make their own silk. It's natural, biodegradable, flexible and it's been around for 350 million years. Meanwhile, some birds have the ability to hover in one spot so they can suck nectar from their favourite flowers.

Planet Earth is filled to bursting with animals capable of masterful deeds deserving of our awe and envy. Each and every one of them fits the title, 'Smart & Smarter'!

EP02: Masters of Disguise

In nature, appearances can be deceptive. In all corners of the world animals have evolved to avoid their predators or successfully catch their prey, by appearing to disappear! Whether hidden in the undergrowth or out in the open, thanks to the colour of their skin, fur or feathers, they can become invisible. These magicians come in all sizes and live in all environments ranging from tiny insects and underwater agents of deceit, to the mega-mammals of the African plains. They are true 'Masters of Disguise'.

Tiny mantis and tall giraffes are among the great masters of camouflage. But cats can disappear too, with plain or patterned fur that blends into their surroundings. Now you see them. Now you don't.

Sometimes, disappearing is not an option. Poison dart frogs and monarch butterflies show off their bright colours to actively discourage their predators from attacking them.

Others may even change their appearance according to the seasons, like alpine hares and snow grouse. They wear white for winter and brown for summer. There are those that change in the blink of an eye. Welcome to the underwater realm of octopuses and fire squids! Their stunning colour changes are unparalleled beneath the waves. Above water a cast of different chameleon species are capable of equally stunning displays.

Disguise and deception are perfect hunting techniques. Carnivorous plants, snakes and trapdoor spiders lure their prey with nectar, false promises or simple yet deadly traps. We can be forgiven for thinking that life in the animal kingdom is just one big deception full of ingenious plots to trick the enemy, or the prey.

