

NATURE



A STORY OF LIFE, OF BIRTH AND GROWTH

MARA: REBIRTH

A film by **Dereck and Beverly Joubert**
Executive producers: **Sabine Holzer, Ivo Filatsch**
1 x 52 min., 4K, 5.1 + Stereo



MARA: REBIRTH looks at one of the most covered and well-known ecosystems in natural history, but dives deeper into a side of it that is almost never seen. What happens when the wildebeest migration leaves?

Our film starts with the dust of the disappearing migration as it heads off across the river and turns its face back to what is left. And that is something quite incredible. The real value of wildebeest of what they leave behind is in millions of tons of fertilizer that turns the grass into one of the richest landscapes on the planet. And the best part is that for nine months, no wildebeest herds return.

Wet gazelle babies lie in the grass almost impossible to see, with a special adaptation; they are born with no scent. Predators walk by most of them, and their defense is to stay still. We will be talking about the science of the newborn. What they need to know, how long they are vulnerable, why they are born with large eyes ('cute' seems to be universal!) and the function of play, of bonding and of grooming virtually across the species range. All of this happens after the madding crowds have departed here.

One of our key characters fits the frame well as a youngster: a giraffe, taking its first wobbly steps into life. From this less than lofty position he looks around at his world, and we use him as our 'guide' to the other more mundane (in his opinion) creatures.

Zebra foals, those wild, striped rocking horses that no one can avoid loving, have parents with strong instincts; one is to rid the plains of other babies, like Thompson Gazelles that may attract hyenas and then threaten the striped foals.

One mother, an eland having just given birth to a calf, has her own issues with a clan of hyenas. It isn't their fault she gave birth near their own den of young, and they too need to feed their babies; nor that they are born fairly cute, but grow out of that quickly!

The eland has a tactic though. She is strong, fast and flings her curled horns around like sabers, too much for the clan.

Leopard cubs, jackal pups, elephant calves who spin and dance and nobly tilt at windmills – well, small trees – all give the story a latent sense of joy and fun, a celebration of nature that is not cliched or reliant here on a migration and the usual crocodilian frenzy.

Ours is a story of life, not death, of birth and growth, of the richness of a landscape that takes your breath away each dawn and gives it back again in meditation each evening.

Birth is one of the two things that is common to all of us around the planet. Our film is a lyrical but factual look into what happens most of the year in the Mara, and it is a journey. We hope you can join us.

A production of Terra Mater Studios and Wildlife Films in co-production with The WNET Group in association with PBS and CPB



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