



CELEBRATE THE UGLY DUCKLINGS

WEIRD BUT WONDERFUL

Executive producers: **Sabine Holzer, Walter Köhler**
1 x 50 min., 4K, 5.1 + Stereo



Why does it always have to be about the handsome, the beautiful or the indescribably cute? Fluffy kittens, clumsy bear cubs and dainty foals on shaky legs may all be wonderful to watch, but isn't our world significantly more colourful, diverse and ... unusual? Isn't there more to life than big, beautiful eyes and soft, silky fur?

It is time to celebrate the less attractive members of the animal kingdom! After all, they often have the more interesting life stories, from tousled owl chicks and slimy beetle larvae to hairless wombat babies. At first glance, they may look like only a mother could love them – but they are fascinating creatures in their own right!

Young wombats spend the first few months in their mother's pouch. Their field of view is limited to what a wombat would see if it had eyes on its backside, as the pouch opens towards the bottom rather than the chest. This protects the new-born wombat from sand and dirt when the mother burrows. Several months go by before mother and joey are able to see eye to eye ...

Young aye-ayes are also not much to look at. These long-fingered lemurs are the world's largest nocturnal primates and live solitary existences in the last remaining forests of Madagascar. Female aye-ayes only give birth to a single infant every two or three years, and the young aye-ayes are born with thin, shaggy fur, green eyes and oversized, droopy ears. Despite their unprepossessing appearance, young aye-ayes display some remarkable physical characteristics: each hand has five long, distinctive hairy fingers tipped with claws. The middle finger is particularly prominent. As they grow, the aye-ayes use this finger to dig fat, juicy grubs out of trees.

Closer to home, the dusty attics of old farm buildings in central Europe are often home to equally strange-looking young animals. The barn owlets squeal loudly to let their parents know they are hungry. The older barn owls are elegant, silent nocturnal predators. Like white ghosts, they hunt rats and mice mercilessly but gracefully. The same cannot be said of their scraggy, squawking, semi-naked offspring. The owlets are born with old-looking faces obscured by a hooked beak. Before long, they begin to explore the nest on long, spindly legs. It is hard to believe they will eventually become elegant airborne hunters like their parents.

Nature is full of baby animals that would never feature on posters or calendars, but which are none-the-less fascinating. This film celebrates these weird, wonderful creatures and the amazing animals they eventually become.

A production of Terra Mater Studios

