



THIS JULY, VENTURE INSIDE THE LIFE OF ONE INCREDIBLE FELINE FAMILY WITH NAT GEO WILD'S *THE UNLIKELY LEOPARD*

Award-Winning Filmmakers Dereck and Beverly Joubert Produce a Heartwarming Tale About a Mother and Her Big-Eyed Cub Dikeledi, Clawing His Way Toward Independence

***The Unlikely Leopard*, Narrated by Jeremy Irons, Premieres Sunday, July 15, at 9 PM ET/PT on Nat Geo WILD**

(Washington, D.C. – June 26, 2012) – The mother-son relationship is one that stands the test of time across all species. Now, Nat Geo WILD gives you an inside look at the maternal characteristics of a leopard mother. Her bond with her son is strikingly similar to that of humans: This mother is patient, her leopard child self-seeking; this mother takes care of her family, this child only knows how to take care of itself; this mother catches dinner, this child eats that dinner. But unlike a human, this mother has fully retractable claws, fangs to kill a zebra and three million years of killer instinct. Soon her son will have these things too ... or at least she hopes so!

The world premiere film **The Unlikely Leopard** — narrated by Jeremy Irons and premiering Sunday, July 15, at 9 PM ET/PT on Nat Geo WILD — explores the intimate, sometimes comic relationship between Dikeledi, a leopard cub, and his mother, who is a seasoned hunter in Botswana's Okavango Delta. The leopard is known for its strength, agility and cunning, but those skills don't come without practice, and for a newborn cub, they definitely don't come without a mother's help. From baby whiskers to teenage growls, **The Unlikely Leopard**, produced by the critically acclaimed and award-winning Dereck and Beverly Joubert, is a story about coming of age in the African wild.

Dikeledi and his mom are a peculiar team in an unforgiving world. Whether it's hopping from tree to tree, warding off nosy jackals and baboons, or stalking dinner on the savannah, Mom can do it all. Dikeledi, on the other hand, has big eyes, an even bigger heart and a toddler's clumsiness. Where Mom excels, he stumbles. He can climb a tree, but he can't get down. He has fat claws but no delicacy; his heavy footsteps scatter prey before he can even prepare his attack. And when he's finally caught a snack, he just can't seem to hold onto it long enough to actually eat it. Dikeledi's clumsiness is fun for a while, but Mom knows she must train it out of him by using tough love and a soft heart. If she doesn't, he will surely die when it's time for him to set out on his own.

There is heartwarming humanity in these cats' love for each other. It's a mother's infatuation with her son when he's just a baby with big eyes and insatiable curiosity; but it's also the challenges of love, as Dikeledi grows into a teenager's body and only reluctantly accepts that he too must contribute to the hunt. **The Unlikely Leopard's** story is the story of all life on earth, seen through the love between a mother and her only cub, played out across the trials of youth in Botswana's wild. Mom's love, like all mothers' love, culminates with Dikeledi's eventual acceptance of independence, adulthood and personal responsibility in an unforgiving world.

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Creators Dereck and Beverly Joubert are award-winning filmmakers from Botswana and National Geographic Explorers-in-Residence. They've been filming, researching and exploring in Africa for more than 25 years. Their coverage of unique predator behavior has resulted in 22 films, 10 books, six scientific papers and many articles for National Geographic magazine. This body of work has earned five Emmys, a Peabody, the World Ecology Award and their recent induction into the American Academy of Achievement. **The Unlikely Leopard** is the newest installment in their celebrated body of work.

The Unlikely Leopard is a part of Nat Geo WILD's Big Cats Initiative to "Cause an Uproar" to save big cats, which are in greater danger now than ever before. Fifty years ago leopards numbered 700,000. Today there may be as few as 50,000. There are now more tigers living in captivity than in the wild. Cheetahs have disappeared from more than 75 percent of their range in Africa. These top predators are quickly disappearing — victims of conflict with humans and habitat loss or degradation. Because big cats are keystone species in their ecosystems, the loss of these majestic animals also means that the natural balance of entire environments is destroyed. **The Unlikely Leopard** is part of Nat Geo WILD's effort to raise awareness about these cats' plight . . . so we don't talk of them the way we speak of dinosaurs. For more information about the Big Cats Initiative, go to www.causeanuproar.org.

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NAT GEO WILD

For more than 30 years, National Geographic has been the leader in wildlife programming. The networks **Nat Geo WILD** and **Nat Geo WILD HD**, launched in 2010, offer intimate encounters with nature's ferocious fighters and gentle creatures of land, sea and air that draw upon the cutting-edge work of the many explorers, filmmakers and scientists of the National Geographic Society. Part of the National Geographic Channels US, based in Washington, D.C., the networks are a joint venture between National Geographic and Fox Cable Networks. In 2001, National Geographic Channel (NGC) debuted, and 10 years later, Spanish-language network Nat Geo Mundo was unveiled. The Channels have carriage with all of the nation's major cable, telco and satellite television providers, with Nat Geo WILD currently available in 54 million U.S. homes. Globally, Nat Geo WILD is available in more than 96 million homes in 90 countries and 28 languages. For more information, visit www.natgeowild.com.

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