

Snake Month slivers onto National Geographic Wild this March

Issued by [The Walt Disney Company Africa](#)

20 Feb 2023

There are more than 3,000 species of snakes on the planet and they're found everywhere except in Antarctica, Iceland, Ireland, Greenland, and New Zealand. Of those, an estimated 500 species call Africa home. This March on National Geographic Wild (DStv 182, Starsat 221), Sundays are dedicated to showcasing these elusive creatures from 11:45 right through to 20:30 (CAT) every week, featuring intriguing and sometimes exhilarating snakey stories from across the world.



While snakes are feared in many societies, they help maintain a healthy ecosystem and are both predator and prey. Approximately 600 snake species are venomous, and only about 200 - 7% - are able to kill or significantly wound a human. A new three-part series, titled ***Legends of Venom*** that will premiere as part of **Snake Month**, on Sunday 5, 12 and 19 March at 18:00, sheds light on various snakes: how they live, why we can't see them, what they do to feed and breed, and how they deal with living near humans.

The first episode will showcase enigmatic cobras, known for their threatening hoods and intimidating upright postures. Charmed by some, feared by most – the cobra family is powerful and iconic. From giant cannibalistic king cobras in India, to desert specialists that hunt birds in the Kalahari and semi aquatic Forest cobras stalking toads in African swamps, each one has a unique story and set of challenges to overcome.



Vipers are one of the most feared snake families in the world. Now, their stories reveal just how troubled life can be for hated snakes. Rattlesnakes in the desert cheat death by predators and people. Puffadders clean up vermin yet face persecution. Gaboon vipers on the forest floor dare not move. The second episode of this series presents an intimate look at their challenges and how they overcome each with unique superpowers.

Legends of Venom's third episode features Black Mambas – known as one of the most feared snakes on the planet. But, behind the twitchy demeanour and lightning-fast strike is a shy and highly intelligent creature, just trying to get through the hot summer alive. This legendary serpent has a plethora of assets - venom, agility, speed and sensory superpowers - that make it a master of its habitat, despite being the most disliked serpent in Africa.



Intriguing programming such as ***Ten Deadliest Snakes***, ***Snake Attacktics***, ***Monster Snakes***, ***Serpents Surprise***, ***Viper Queens***, ***When Predators Attack***, ***Pythanathon*** and more will explore various facets of snakes and their remarkable lives. Additionally, viewers can enjoy various episodes from the previous seasons of the thrilling South African documentary series, ***Snakes in the City*** featuring snake-handling experts and conservationists Simon Keyes, Siouxsie Gillett and Mbali Mtshali, throughout the month.



National Geographic explorer Maurice Oniang'o studies snakes facing extinction in Kenya.

"Snakes are fascinating animals that are mostly misunderstood because of our fears, beliefs, myths or superstitions. Unfortunately, these not only endanger people's lives but also affect conservation of these middle order predators that play a very critical role in the environment," says Oniang'o. "The great gift we can give snakes is to learn and understand them better," he added.

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