



Richard Goss - Meerkats United, 1987



© Armand Denis and Maureen Walker



© John Sparks / naturepl.com

WILDFILM HISTORY

100 YEARS OF WILDLIFE FILMMAKING

ABOUT

WildFilmHistory is the world's centralised collection of films, photographs and information documenting the history and heritage of wildlife filmmaking. This unique interactive multi-media resource is freely available at www.wildfilmhistory.org.



© Angela Scott / naturepl.com

One of the most popular TV genres, wildlife films have brought the wonders of the natural world to cinema screens and into our living rooms for over 100 years.

WildFilmHistory's aim is to make this historically important material available again, to as wide an audience as possible. Material is donated by the most famous names in natural history broadcasting, as well as a whole host of specialist and individual private collections.

As well as bringing together the most important wildlife films, the project is collecting 'behind the scenes' photographs, and recording oral histories with industry pioneers. This information is being made available online and is stored at high resolution in the WildFilmHistory media vault for the benefit of future generations.

With over twenty five years' experience working directly with the wildlife filmmaking industry through its flagship film festival, Wildscreen is the logical home for such a collection.

In addition, the organisation's founding fathers, Sir Peter Scott and Christopher Parsons were instrumental in developing many of the early ground breaking wildlife TV programmes.

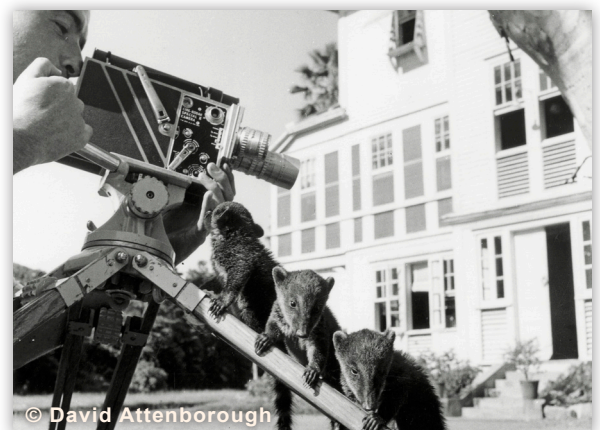
CONTENT

Over the past 100 years there have been many pioneering developments in wildlife filmmaking – the result of great determination and ingenuity by a number of remarkable individuals with a real passion for the natural world.

Whether developing new technology to film the world's plants and animals, or finding new and engaging ways to tell their stories, these people have been instrumental in shaping the entire industry.

WildFilmHistory captures their achievements through:

- **Oral histories**
Filmed interviews with wildlife filmmaking pioneers, telling their own personal stories.
- **Films**
Video clips from classic wildlife films and television programmes – dating from 1896 to the present day.
- **Images**
Hundreds of images, including 'on location' shots of our favourite wildlife TV productions and stars.



© David Attenborough

Oral histories

Each of the oral histories is a unique record created especially for WildFilmHistory. With over 100 hours of interviews, the oral histories are essential viewing for any natural history enthusiast:

“Looking back on my career, I reckon that I’m very fortunate in that I can say: ‘Yes, it was worthwhile’. It did something; it contributed something to the consciousness of people...all kinds of people, who say that they were moved and saw the value of natural history because of television. Happily, the way we enjoyed ourselves proved to be not without merit as far as the rest of the world is concerned.”

Sir David Attenborough, Wildscreen Patron

Film database

The priority for WildFilmHistory is the landmark films and those at most risk of loss or deterioration. Such films include: *Rough Sea at Dover* by Birt Acres, believed by many to be the very first natural history film; and *Dassan: An Adventure in Search of Laughter Featuring Nature’s Greatest Little Comedians* by Cherry Kearton. This entertaining travelogue is one of the earliest presenter-led natural history films. Recorded in 1930, it brings to life the early 20th century take on penguins.

Image database

The WildFilmHistory database contains many unique and rare images, such as the example below from the collection of husband and wife filmmaking team, Martin and Osa Johnson. The picture was taken on location in 1923 while filming scenes for their movie *Simba*.

For more information please visit
www.wildfilmhistory.org



DECADES OF SUCCESS

1895 - *Das Boxende Känguruh* premieres in Germany and is one of the earliest examples of animal behaviour on screen.

1900 - British filmmaker, William K Dickson, screens the first wildlife ‘battle’ – a staged confrontation between a scorpion and a tarantula.

1911 - Percy Smith’s *The Strength and Agility of Insects* premieres showing insects lifting objects many times their size and weight.

1928 - Martin and Osa Johnson’s film *Simba* is released in American cinemas. The film follows the couple armed with both rifle and camera exploring Africa and its wildlife.

1937 - British film, *The Private Life of the Gannets*, is the first wildlife film to receive an Academy Award.

1942 - Hans Hass pioneers the use of self-contained diving equipment and flippers in his film *Men Among Sharks*.

1953 - The first outside broadcast, *Severn Wildfowl*, is filmed at Slimbridge, UK, with Peter Scott. Also David Attenborough’s first wildlife television series, *The Pattern of Animals*, airs on BBC.

1957 - BBC Natural History Unit (NHU) established.

1963 - *The Major* is the first BBC NHU production filmed in colour.

1965 - *Miss Goodhall and the Wild Chimpanzees*, filmed by Hugo Van Lawick is the first National Geographic Television programme shown on CBS.

1974 - Alan and Joan Root record the wildebeest migration using cameras housed in tortoise shells at ground level in *The Year of the Wildebeest*.

1984 - *The Natural World* premieres, BBC2’s longest running strand.

1997 - *Big Cat Diary* inaugurates the ‘diary’ model for wildlife.

2006 - *Planet Earth*, the BBC’s most ambitious mega-series, filmed in HD, premieres.

2010 - Sky produces 3D prehistoric epic with David Attenborough.

Wildscreen is extremely grateful for all donations of images and film, which have made this project possible. WildFilmHistory is an ongoing project and if you know of any material that might be relevant, please do contact us.