

**CHAMPIONS
OF THE
WILD**

Part 12

RIGHT WHALES



The planet's rarest marine mammal, the North Atlantic right whale was once thought extinct.

For 700 years, humans slaughtered countless right whales. Today, only 60 breeding females remain. And we continue to harm these incredible animals; most members of the species bear scars from collisions with ships.

Dr. Moira Brown and Deborah Tobin are combining research, public education and lobbying to make the North Atlantic safer for right whales. And their efforts may be paying off.

Humans were once the right whale's worst enemy. Now we can become its closest ally in the fight for survival.

Endangered animals — and the champions who have dedicated their lives to saving them — feature in this spectacular series of 13 half-hour videos! Stunningly shot around the world, from the frozen ice fields of Canada's North to the jungles of Borneo, **Champions of the Wild** combines fascinating natural history with the intrigue of personal drama.

Director: **Chris Aikenhead**

Producers: **Christian Bruyère and Ian Herring** (Omni Film),
George Johnson (NFB)

Executive Producer: **Michael Chechik** (Omni Film)

25 minutes

Order number: **C9197 101**

Series order number: **193C 9197 106**

TO ORDER NFB VIDEOS, CALL TODAY!

1-800-267-7710 (Canada)

1-800-542-2164 (USA)

www.nfb.ca



Closed captioned.
A decoder is required.

Video jacket ©1998 National Film Board of Canada. All rights reserved. A license is required for any reproduction, broadcast, sale, rental or public screening. Only educational institutions or non-profit organizations that have obtained this video from the NFB or an authorized distributor have the right to show this material free of charge to the public.

National Film Board of Canada P.O. Box 6100, Station Centre-Ville, Montreal, Quebec H3C 3H5
Printed in Canada



**CHAMPIONS
OF THE
WILD**

RIGHT WHALES

Part 12



VHS

C9197 101

**CHAMPIONS
OF THE
WILD**

Part 12

RIGHT WHALES



AS SEEN ON
DISCOVERY
AND
ANIMAL
PLANET

A NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA RELEASE

RIGHT WHALES

Part 12

"What right whales really need is an advocate, someone to speak out on their behalf. Because they are so threatened, you have to watch out for any possible danger to them and try to intervene."

Grazing on a feast of plankton and krill in the North Atlantic, right whales are like enormous sieves skimming tiny crustaceans from the sea. Their courtship groups are one of nature's wonders, as writhing clusters of enormous beasts churn up the ocean in an aquatic orgy. Every spring, nursing mothers migrate with their calves up the coast from Georgia to Nova Scotia, where they use the Bay of Fundy as a kindergarten for teaching their young how to hold their breath and dive for food.

Over seven centuries, whalers slashed their population from 50,000 to just a few dozen. Despite international protection, humans are still taking their toll: 40% of right whale mortalities are from collisions with ships, and two-thirds of the fragile population bear scars from propellers.

Dr. Moira Brown and Deborah Tobin run East Coast Ecosystems, a tiny but influential organization dedicated to right whale conservation. Their efforts combine scientific research, public education and political lobbying to make the North Atlantic safer for right whales. Moira Brown works with colleagues from the New England Aquarium to study the behaviour and reproductive biology of the whales. Collecting DNA samples with a cross-bow and biopsy darts, she has discovered that all remaining right whales are descended from just three families. With less than 60 breeding females left, and rising mortality rates, the species' survival is in jeopardy. Deborah Tobin specializes in communicating the animals' plight to government, the media and students. Together, the two women take direct action to protect the whales: their radio hotline to the Coast Guard alerts captains to the presence of whales in the shipping lanes. And by pulling political strings they managed to have NATO naval training exercises moved from the Bay of Fundy. Although the right whale's future is still in doubt, Deborah Tobin and Moira Brown are going a long way towards improving the odds.

PRE-VIEWING QUESTIONS

Locate the following migratory route on a map: Georgia, Brown's Band, Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia, the North Atlantic Ocean.

Why is a survey a good research technique?

POST-VIEWING QUESTIONS

Why is whale-watching such a popular tourist activity?

What are the long-term effects of a reduction in the number of calves born to a single mother?

How do we identify individual whales in a pod? Why is this type of identification an important part of whale research?

Why was the whale hunted almost to extinction? What made this type of hunting so profitable?



Champion:
Deborah Tobin &
Moira Brown

Champions of the Wild is a spectacular 13-part series featuring endangered animals and the champions who have dedicated their lives to saving them.

Produced by
Omni Film Productions Ltd

with the participation of
Telefilm Canada,

in association with
British Columbia Film,
Amaya Distribution,
Discovery Channel and
The National Film Board
of Canada, and
with the participation of
the Cable Production Fund
and Rogers Telefund.



WORLD WIDE WEB SITES:

Whale conservation institute

<http://www.whale.org/>

Information on the right whale from the National Marine Fisheries Service

<http://www.nmfs.gov/tmcintyr/cetacean/right.html>

Lots of whale links

<http://www.webdirectory.com/wildlife/whales>

OTHER NATIONAL FILM BOARD PRODUCTIONS:

In Search of the Bowhead Whale

The Whales Are Waiting

We Call Them Killers

Cries From the Deep

Island of Whales

CHAMPIONS OF THE WILD SERIES:

Part 1: SHARKS (C9197 096): From their research station on Bimini Island in the Bahamas, Tim Calver and his mentor, Dr. Sam Gruber, are committed to changing the world's negative perception of sharks.

Part 2: GORILLAS (C9197 104): In the dangerous surroundings of Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park, Dr. Pascale Sicotte risks her life to protect one of the world's last remaining populations of mountain gorillas.

Part 3: GRIZZLIES (C9197 093): Wayne McCrory has spent the last 25 years passionately campaigning to protect the grizzly and rare white spirit bears of the British Columbia rain forest.

Part 4: WOLVES (C9197 103): Dr. Paul Paquet studies the harmful effects of wolves coming into contact with civilization and has succeeded in reintroducing wolf packs into the southern Alberta Rockies.

Part 5: HUMPBACKS (C9197 099): Dr. Jim Darling, a leading authority on humpback whales, follows the migration of these magnificent creatures in order to protect them in their Pacific environment.

Part 6: PANDAS (C9197 102): A self-proclaimed "pandaholic," Dr. Sue Mainka helps the Chinese make critical breakthroughs in raising captive pandas.

Part 7: LEMURS (C9197 105): Dr. Lisa Gould's mission is to protect the ring-tailed lemurs of Madagascar and to make the world aware of these obscure primates.

Part 8: ORCAS (C9197 100): Radical researcher and visionary Dr. Paul Spong, having researched killer whales for over three decades, helps us understand how humans affect orca habitat and behaviour.

Part 9: POLAR BEARS (C9197 095): Biologist and photographer Dr. Dan Guravich has a love affair with the polar bear. His thousands of photographs have profoundly influenced our understanding of the world's largest land-based carnivore.

Part 10: DOLPHINS (C9197 097): Diane Claridge and Ken Balcomb are leaders in the fight to free the planet's imprisoned dolphins and whales and return them to the wild.

Part 11: SWIFT FOXES (C9197 094): Clio Smeeton has dedicated her life to completing her parents' dream of reintroducing the once-extinct swift fox to its Canadian Prairie home.

Part 12: RIGHT WHALES (C9197 101): By policing the Bay of Fundy and educating those who use the world's waterways, Deborah Tobin and Dr. Moira Brown are dedicated to saving the northern right whales, the planet's rarest marine mammal.

Part 13: ORANGUTANS (C9197 098): Activist researcher Dr. Biruté Galdikas lives in the gruelling jungles of Borneo and Sumatra, fighting to save the increasingly threatened orangutan.