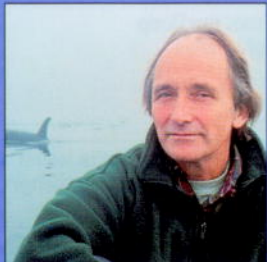




Part 8

ORCAS



The endlessly fascinating orca is the most powerful predator of the sea. Called a killer, it is also remarkably graceful and highly intelligent.

A radical researcher, activist and visionary, Dr. Paul Spong believes orcas can be understood only in the wild. He and his crew of volunteers from around the world follow whales with cameras and a network of underwater microphones, monitoring their amazing behaviour.

Orcas, the most closely bonded animals on earth, stay with their families for life. For over 25 years, Dr Spong has fought to release Corky, a performing orca held captive in California, to return her to her family in the waters of the Pacific.

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

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ORCAS

Part 8



VHS

C9197 100



Part 8

ORCAS



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ORCAS

Part 8

Orcas have roamed the seas for 40 million years, and had developed complex brains and highly organized societies long before our earliest ancestors started walking on land. They're the most closely bonded animals on earth and the only mammal that always stays with its family group throughout its life. Killer whales have learned to balance their populations and live in harmonious communities, without aggression or want.

One of the first scientists to shed light on the wonders of orca intelligence and social dynamics was Dr. Paul Spong. After earning a doctorate in behavioural psychology, he studied newly-captured killer whales at the Vancouver Aquarium. Dr. Spong discovered that they were sensitive, intelligent and very social creatures who were chronically bored in their tiny tank. His experiences with the whales transformed his life and he abandoned his lab coat for a radically new approach to orca research.

Paul Spong is convinced that killer whales can only be understood in the wild. From his eccentric research station on Hanson Island, he has pioneered an innovative approach to exploring the orca's world. With a crew of volunteers from around the world, Dr. Spong monitors the movement of killer whales in Johnstone Strait with spotting scopes, cameras and a network of underwater microphones. Thousand of recordings provide a unique record of orca activities, helping us understand how humans are affecting their habitat and behaviour.

Dr. Spong's dedication to the orca finds dramatic expression in his 25-year campaign to free Corky, the star attraction at San Diego's Sea World. Determined to unite Corky with her family in Johnstone Strait, Dr. Spong continues to generate international pressure for her release. A unique combination of scientist, activist and visionary, Paul Spong has broken the boundaries between man and whale.

PRE-VIEWING QUESTIONS

Locate British Columbia, Vancouver Island and Johnstone Strait on a map. Why do you think whales return here every year?

Whales have been featured in English literature, such as the novel *Moby Dick*, and in popular movies such as *Free Willy*. What public image of the whale has been created by the media?

POST-VIEWING QUESTIONS

Whales live in a co-operative rather than a competitive society. How is this reflected in their life cycle and lifestyle?

When and how did orcas develop the reputation and name killer whales?

Greenpeace, with its coordinated social activism, has been credited with saving the whales by focusing the world's attention on their near extinction. Greenpeace exposed the brutal hunting practices of the whalers and the effects on ocean ecology. How did Greenpeace begin and how did it accomplish its goals?

From the 1960s through to the 1990s, orcas were featured in many aquariums and theme park shows. Why were orcas so prized for these entertainment venues?

CHAMPIONS OF THE WILD



Champion:
Dr. Paul Spong

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



WORLD WIDE WEB SITES:

Orca information and pictures
http://www.seaworld.org/killer_whale/killerwhales.html

Orcas of the Salish Sea
<http://www.premier1.net/~iamdavid/garrett.html>

Lots of whale links
<http://www.webdirectory.com/wildlife/whales>

OTHER NATIONAL FILM BOARD PRODUCTIONS:

In Search of the Bowhead Whale	Cries From the Deep
The Whales Are Waiting	Island of Whales
We Call Them Killers	

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.