

NATURE

media information



PBS

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NATURE ASKS WHY WE LOVE CATS AND DOGS THIS FEBRUARY ON PBS

New Episode Uses Non-Traditional Style Of Nature Filmmaking

In the season of Valentines, THIRTEEN's *Nature* series explores our infatuation with our four-legged friends. Americans own 73 million dogs and 90 million cats, considering them best friends, soul mates, family members, and even surrogate children. Why are we so attached? To find out, *Nature* gets personal with pet owners and animal behavior experts. *Nature: Why We Love Cats and Dogs* premieres nationally Sunday, February 15, 2009 at 8 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings).

“This is a different kind of *Nature* film,” says Fred Kaufman, THIRTEEN's Executive Producer of *Nature*. “We combine a more verite style of filmmaking with in-studio pet owner interviews, and the result is a gamut of stories that are insightful, heartwarming and funny.”

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Featured experts share their research and perspective on why we love our cats and dogs:

- Sarah Wilson, dog behaviorist, psychologist and author, reveals primal reasons men and women are drawn to dogs and the nine major relationship styles people have with their pets, including soul mate, observer, buddy, angel, and master.
- Marc Bekoff, renowned evolutionary biologist and professor emeritus at the University of Colorado, explains our attraction to animals via the concept of “mirror neurons.” His theory suggests shared emotions and empathy biologically connect humans to their dogs and cats.

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- Dr. Nicholas Dodman of Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine reveals that cats, often reputed as independent animals, can be as responsive and trainable as dogs. He explains that owners who communicate with their cats through training and agility exercises can eventually erase the cats' behavior problems.
- Animal behaviorist Emily Weiss uses mutual personality traits to connect people with the "right" dogs and cats. She developed the "Meet Your Match" system for the ASPCA to assess dogs' and cats' personalities so that they can be matched to the right owners based upon their lifestyle and expectations.

Throughout the film, there are interviews with cat and dog owners discussing their bonds and adventures with their pets. Among the many personal stories shared is the remarkable journey of Jerry, a three-legged dog amputee with cancer whose owners sold their home and business to enjoy the dog's last months by traveling with him cross-country. This and other tales show how strong the human-animal bond can be.

Nature has won more than 450 honors from the television industry, the international wildlife film communities, and environmental organizations – including 10 Emmys, three Peabodys and the first award given to a television program by the Sierra Club. Most recently, the series won a Peabody Award for *Silence of the Bees*.

Nature: Why We Love Cats and Dogs is a production of THIRTEEN and Golden Egg Productions in association with WNET.ORG for PBS. Available in HD. Fred Kaufman is Executive Producer; William Grant is Executive-in-Charge. Major corporate support for *Nature* is provided by Canon U.S.A., Inc. and SC Johnson. Additional support is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the nation's public television stations.

Nature video podcasts, available on iTunes and at *Nature Online* (www.pbs.org/nature), range from two to 10 minutes in length and feature behind-the-scenes interviews with filmmakers and producers, program excerpts, and outtakes.

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