



TV choice

by Sanjida O'Connell

Sanjida O'Connell is a zoologist who also produces and presents science and natural history programmes.

WILDLIFE HIGHLIGHTS: 7 MAY TO 8 JUNE

GAME RANGER DIARIES

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC WILD,
WEEKDAYS, 7-18 MAY, 9PM

A fly-on-the-wall documentary following big game rangers at the Lewa African Conservancy as they pacify warring rhinos and attempt to protect the animals from poachers.

KILLER JELLYFISH

ANIMAL PLANET,
SUNDAY 20 MAY, 8PM

The world's deadliest marine killer is only the size of a fingernail. This film follows Dr Jamie Seymour as he studies Irukandji jellyfish in the hope of developing an antidote to their venom.

NATURAL WORLD: DESERT LIONS

BBC2, WEDNESDAY 23 MAY, 9PM

The remarkable story of lions eking out a living in the deserts of Namibia. Dr Flip Stander, who studies them, says: "My first sighting of the desert lions was on the beach, feeding on a seal – an impression that's stayed with me for 25 years."

BUG BROTHER

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC WILD,
SUNDAY 27 MAY, 9PM

A microscopic analysis of the bugs fighting, reproducing, excreting and dying in our houses. Not for the house-proud or the squeamish.

Don't let the house-proud or bed bugs bite... the squeamish.

INVASION

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC WILD,
TUE 29-THURS 31 MAY, 9PM

A three-part series following animals that end up in places they don't belong, such as toxic toads in Australia and killer bees capable of stinging a horse to death.

NATURAL WORLD: SAVING OUR SEABIRDS

BBC2, WEDNESDAY 30 MAY, 9PM

Britain's seabirds have suffered catastrophic breeding failures over the past few years. Expert Roy Dennis, former warden of Fair Isle, goes back to try and discover why and what can be done to save them.

» Read more about Roy's investigation in News, p28.



Gabon is truly a land of surprises. Nowhere else on Earth will you find hippos swimming in the sea.

Michael Nichols/BBC

PICK OF THE MONTH

A vision of Gabon's wildlife

NATURAL WORLD: GABON – FORESTS OF THE FUTURE

BBC2, WEDNESDAY 6 JUNE, 9PM

On 18 December 2000, J Michael Fay, a biologist from the Wildlife Conservation Society, New York, completed a 2,000-mile walk across Africa. After he got back, he explained to me how he kept going: "It's like studying maths every day for two years and then suddenly you realise the power of calculus. It's a thing of extreme beauty. Every day you become more and more intimate with it; every day is more of an adventure."

Michael's 'megatranssect' was an attempt to chronicle the last undeveloped region in Africa. It was a snapshot for the Millennium of a land on death

row, awaiting execution at the hands of logging companies.

This *Natural World* film is an exploration of the national nature reserves that were set up in Gabon as a direct result of Michael's campaigning after completing his megatranssect. It's

It's a vision of elephants greeting each other in forest clearings like mates at the local pub.

a vision of pristine rainforest, swollen waterfalls and strips of sunlight on tea-coloured rivers; of elephants greeting each other in forest clearings like mates at the local pub, and gorillas wading through swamps, trying not to get their hands wet.

One of Gabon's most stunning parks is Loango, which lies along the coast. This reserve, where hippos surf and elephants beachcomb, marked the end of Michael's trek: "It was like landing in paradise," he said. "It's literally the only place left on the entire planet where elephants and buffalos spill out from the forest and onto the beach."

Despite presidential support for Gabon's national parks, they're still threatened by logging and Chinese oil exploration. This is an old-school-type film that has the power to inspire another generation of conservationists, and make those of us already interested desperate to visit Gabon's fabulous forests.

» Find out more about Gabon's wildlife in our travel feature overleaf.