

# Mutual of Omaha's WILD KINGDOM®

## PROTECTING THE WILD

From the nature program that started it all ... Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom is producing a new series to showcase conservation success stories and to inspire the next generation of conservationists. We'll be traveling the United States and partnering with some fantastic conservation organizations to examine real-world animal and habitat issues.

Premiering in early 2023 on RFD-TV and digital channels, Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom Protecting the Wild includes 10 episodes about conservation field work that is making a positive impact on the Wild Kingdom. The episodes will feature an array of animals. Here's a preliminary list of our stories.



**Black Bear Cubs** — A wildfire in Washington state drove animals across the region out of their habitat. Among them were two black bear cubs. The cubs, which were barely able to walk and suffered second-degree burns and respiratory issues, were rehabilitated and were released back into the wild.



**Sea Turtles and Manatees** — Human behavior can positively and negatively impact animals in the wild. Citizen patrols of sea turtle nesting areas in Florida and community education has positively impacted turtle populations in southwest Florida. Yet boat strikes, red tide and agriculture runoff all negatively impact food sources and pose threats to both manatee and sea turtle populations. See what local research organizations are doing to help.



**Sea Otters** — Climate change has had a devastating impact on the kelp forests off the coast of California. The forests are critical in their ability to sequester carbon and as food and habitat for a myriad of marine life. Enter our hero — the sea otter. With their steady diet of sea urchins, sea otters build climate resilience for this threatened ocean ecosystem as their numbers continue to be threatened primarily by sharks.



**Beavers** — Fire, drought and humans combine to negatively impact streams and rivers in the United States, destroying habitat and negatively impacting groundwater. How do you build back hundreds of years of damage in just a few decades? Beavers (ecosystem engineers) can fix it one stick at a time, leading to habitat success for a wide variety of species. The work to re-establish beaver habitat and coexist with beavers is bringing nature's balance back to ranches and streams throughout the Northwest.



**Coral** — Coral: It's an animal! Coral reefs cover less than 1% of the ocean floor but support about 25% of marine life. However, they're declining around the world due to climate change, which has increased ocean temperatures and acidification. Coral disease, pollution, overfishing and other stressors are also threatening this vital species. Local organizations work to fight reef loss along the Florida coast. Zoos and aquariums across the country — including in Nebraska and Iowa — are helping conservation efforts by becoming repositories for coral.

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**Big Cats** — Like many places across the country, residents of Collier County, Florida, and Los Angeles, have built homes, businesses and infrastructure near beautiful wilderness that is home to many species of animals. We'll follow the stories of panthers (once nearly thought extinct) in Florida and cougars (including celebrity cougar P-22) in Los Angeles and what's being done to help big cats and humans live in harmony.



**Black-footed Ferrets** — Thought to be extinct, the black-footed ferret was rediscovered on a family ranch in Wyoming in the 1980s. Through conservation efforts from many state and federal agencies, zoos, Native American tribes, private landowners and conservation organizations, black-footed ferrets have been given a second chance for survival.



**Wolves** — Nature depends on apex predators and keystone species to survive and thrive. Wolves are both, which is why the wild needs them. This episode will dispel the myth of the "big, bad wolf" and educate the public about their plight so they can continue to thrive in their native habitats and be recognized for the vital role they play in maintaining healthy ecosystems.



**California Condors/Birds of Prey** — In the 1980s, the California condor population was in crisis and extinction seemed imminent. The dramatic decline was attributed to shooting, poisoning and habitat loss. The California condor is making a comeback thanks to the intervention of wildlife organizations that have implemented partnerships with ranchers and hunters to offer free, non-lead ammunition to reduce the chances of lead poisoning of condors so they can make a full recovery in the wild.



**American Crocodiles** — The once-endangered American crocodile is making a comeback, thanks in large part to the successful crocodile management program at a clean energy center in South Florida. The 11,000 acres of protected land provides ideal habitat for the crocodiles to thrive. The berms throughout the canal system contain elevated areas where the crocodiles can nest without the risk of flooding. Last year, the most hatchlings were produced in the 40-year history of the program.

*You won't want to miss these wild adventures!*

# About Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom

Since its network television premiere in 1963, Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom has been one of the most loved and respected wildlife programs in television history. It took viewers to the far corners of the world and studied wild animals in their natural habitats.

The show was the first reality TV show — you never knew what was going to happen next!

Hosts Marlin Perkins, Jim Fowler and Peter Gros wrestled anacondas, swam with sharks and were chased by a herd of elephants. They provided a look at an often unseen animal world and emphasized the importance of conservation while creating family-friendly entertainment.

The show also was known for its infamous segues from the hosts' adventures to commercials for its sponsor — “just as the mother lion protects her cubs, Mutual of Omaha can protect your family.”

Wild Kingdom, which received 41 major awards including four Emmys, remained in production through 1985 and in syndication through the mid-1990s. The show returned to television in 2002 on Animal Planet and remained a mainstay for Sunday night programming on that network through 2011.

In 2021, Wild Kingdom returned to television in its original Sunday night timeslot on RFD-TV and is available to stream on the RFD app. Viewers can relive favorite memories of the original episodes with updated content. Fans also can engage with the programming on the **Wild Kingdom TV YouTube Channel** and by liking the **Wild Kingdom TV Facebook page**.

Coming in 2023 ... A new series called, Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom Protecting the Wild will showcase conservation success stories that are making a positive impact on the Wild Kingdom. The 10-episode series will premiere on RFD-TV and digital channels.

To learn more about Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom, go to [www.wildkingdom.com](http://www.wildkingdom.com).





# Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom Timeline



1963

Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom debuts on NBC



1971

Wild Kingdom enters syndication and wins 41 major achievements, including 4 Emmys

1987

"Mutual of Omaha's Spirit of Adventure" featuring Jim Fowler and Peter Gros begins a two-year run on ABC

1991

"Concerts of Yellowstone" series, featuring Chip Davis and Mannheim Steamroller

1992

Mutual of Omaha's Wildlife Heritage Center launches, awarding cash grants, scholarships and special citations to individuals and organizations involved in wildlife conservation



1993

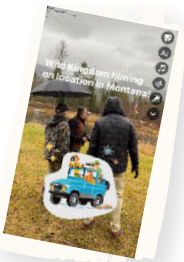
Jim Fowler's "Wildest Places on Earth" book tour in conjunction with Time Life Books

1995

Wild Kingdom airs on PBS with updated introductions and recaps by Jim Fowler and Peter Gros

2001

Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom Kids' Summit launches to challenge kids to think creatively about the natural world



2002

Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom returns to television on Animal Planet

2005

Wild Kingdom Adventure Tour brings a unique, interactive, mobile experience to fairs and festivals throughout the country

2009

Mutual of Omaha creates the Wild Kingdom TV Channel on YouTube and Facebook

2013

Mutual of Omaha launches nationwide Wild Guide Contest as part of Wild Kingdom's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary



2014

Mutual of Omaha launches Web series

2019

Wild Kingdom Co-host Peter Gros continues public appearances in support of conservation education

2021

Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom is back on Sunday night television and launches on RFD-TV streaming services



Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom sponsors a new digital series on The Dodo. With Peter Gros as host, the series, "Saving the Wild," features five animals and inspires viewers to reduce their own carbon footprint.

2022

Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom makes its debut in the Tournament of Roses parade. The conservation-themed float is made of completely organic material. It earns the parade's Director Award for the most outstanding artistic design and use of floral and non-floral materials.



2023

Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom Protecting the Wild premieres on RFD-TV and digital channels. The 10-episode series showcases conservation success stories that are making a positive impact in the Wild Kingdom.

# About Our Host, Peter Gros



## Television and Digital Content Host

As host of Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom Protecting the Wild and co-host of the original "Wild Kingdom" series, Peter Gros shares his love for wildlife and wilderness with families and children throughout the country.

The original Wild Kingdom series — a program honored with 41 major awards, including four Emmy Awards and an endorsement by the National PTA for television programming recommended for family viewing — was one of the best known and longest-running series on nature and the animal world. The series currently airs on Sunday nights on RFD-TV with updated introductions from Gros and is available to stream on the RFD app.

Gros hosts the Saving the Wild series on The Dodo, an animal-centric, family-focused media brand that serves up compelling animal-related stories and videos to help make caring about animals a viral cause. The series tells the stories of five endangered animals who each represent an entry point into tough issues facing animals on the brink of extinction and inspires viewers to take action around reducing their own carbon footprint.

Gros also is a frequent guest on *LIVE! with Kelly and Ryan* and the *CBS Early Show*. In addition, he appears on numerous national and local talk shows.

## Active Conservationist

On behalf of Mutual of Omaha, Gros is intimately involved in conservation education programs with local zoos, nature centers and wildlife refuges to create new content on social media and digital channels.

Gros' research expeditions have taken him to Lake Baikal in Siberia to explore the wonders of the world's largest, oldest and deepest lake, and to the Amazon Basin where he led an expedition of 39 six-graders from Zeeland, Michigan, to study the Peruvian rain forest. He has also studied the effects of ecotourism on wildlife in Venezuela, Costa Rica, Belize, Mexico and the Galapagos Islands.

In addition, Gros has served as the U.S. representative on the Citizen Ambassador Program's research study of tigers and rhinos in the Chitwan National Forest in Nepal. In his travels throughout the world, Gros and his animal friends help teach about the importance of caring for the world around us.

## Nationally Recognized Authority

Gros has nearly 30 years of field experience with captive wildlife. In his former position as director of Land Animals and vice president at Marine World/Africa USA, he established breeding programs for hundreds of endangered animals. He also developed a rehabilitation program for birds of prey, as well as the largest captive breeding colony of ostriches in the United States.

He is a licensed Exhibition & Animal Educator for the U.S.D.A. and an active member of the American Zoo and Aquariums Association, Association of Wildlife Educators and Zoological Association of America. Gros is also on the Board of Directors of the Suisun Marsh Natural History Association and a trustee for the Cheetah Conservation Fund.

He is a frequent lecturer on conservation and preservation at universities, zoos, nature and science centers and theaters around the United States and Canada. His mission is to excite people about wildlife and teach them to understand and care about the natural world. "My goal is to advance the understanding of our planet and its inhabitants while inspiring stewardship for our natural world," Gros said. "It is possible to use our natural resources in a sustainable manner. We simply need to educate our nation's youth about the importance of wildlife conservation."

# Inspired by Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom

Since first airing in 1963, Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom has captivated audiences of all ages. The beloved television show took us across deserts, down to the depths of the ocean and up the highest mountains. It introduced us to new animal species and exotic places around the globe and called on us to join in conservation efforts.

And for many viewers, Wild Kingdom was more than a Sunday night ritual. It ignited a passion for wildlife conservation and propelled them into lifelong careers.

“Watching Marlin, Jim and the other associates work with real wildlife biologists as they captured animals and collected vital data showed me that field work to understand and help wildlife was something, I, too, could do for a living. That seed, planted by Wild Kingdom, grew into a life-long dedication to preserving our wild heritage, culminating in my efforts to confront the consummate conservation challenge polar bears face in a warming world.”

– Steven Amstrup, Chief Scientist for Polar Bears International

“We loved Wild Kingdom in my family ... That was probably one of the early introductions to learning about animals. I think seeing those early natural history documentaries completely turned me on to going into a field that involves natural history, which is a big part of what I do. Wild Kingdom was part of the package that sent me on my path.”

– Dr. Jenn Caselle, Research Biologist, University of California Santa Barbara Marine Science Institute

“Now I'm making wildlife films, so I'm very much an example of sort of a living legacy of a show like Wild Kingdom. It was such a beautiful show and it took me to places I would have never thought about. And, it inspired me to try to do something similar, to convey a passion for wildlife and the beauty of it, and why the world's better for having wild animals in it.”

–Jennifer Hile, Head of Production, OceanX

“Growing up watching the Wild Kingdom, I had no idea I would be following in the footsteps of Marlin Perkins, Jim Fowler and Peter Gros, the latter two whom I had the opportunity of working closely with over my career from the early 1970s. My research on cheetahs has taught me how cheetahs rely on sustainable systems integrating the needs of people, livestock and wildlife for their survival. In turn, cheetahs help conserve biodiversity, which makes ecosystems healthier. Save the cheetah, save the world.”

– Dr. Laurie Marker, Founder and Executive Director, Cheetah Conservation Fund

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## Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom Fast Facts

- Premiered on network television in 1963
- Entered syndication in 1971 on the Mutual of Omaha National Syndication Network; more than 200 local television stations joined the network
- Covered six of the seven continents in environments ranging from deserts below sea level in Africa to subfreezing inclines 16,000 feet high in the Himalayas
- Averaged 34 million television viewers in the United States and kept most of that audience for 25 years
- Received 41 major awards including four Emmys, an endorsement from the National PTA and the First Annual Communications Award from the National Wildlife Association
- Showcased the travels of original hosts Marlin Perkins, Jim Fowler and Peter Gros and wild guide Stephanie Arne
- Produced 330 classic episodes, 62 Fast Facts, 50 webisodes, 28 Field Notes and four "5 Facts" that focused on the timeless value of wildlife conservation
- Achieved nearly 200,000 followers on social media

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go to [www.wildkingdom.com](http://www.wildkingdom.com).