Press Contact: Johanna Baker, WNET

212.560.3134, [BakerJ@wnet.org](mailto:BakerJ@wnet.org)

Press Materials: http://[pbs.org/pressroom](http://pressroom.pbs.org/) or http://[thirteen.org/pressroom](http://www.thirteen.org/pressroom)

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**THIRTEEN’s *Nature***

**Spends a Year with a Mother Moose and Her Newborn Calf in**

***Moose: Life of a Twig Eater***

**Wednesday, February 10, 2016 on PBS**

*Scientists investigate why the number of moose are decreasing*

There is a growing problem in North America affecting moose, the largest species of the deer family. Whether they make their home in the Canadian Rockies or in Minnesota, moose populations are declining at a rapid rate. One reason is that many of the newborn calves are not surviving their first year. In order to find out why, one intrepid cameraman spends a year documenting the life of a moose calf and its mother to understand what it takes to survive.

***Moose: Life of a Twig Eater*** airs Wednesday, February 10, 2016 at 8 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings). After the broadcast, the episode will be available for online streaming at [pbs.org/nature](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/).

The program is a first-person account by cameraman and naturalist Hugo Kitching of his year spent in Jasper National Park in the Canadian province of Alberta, a wilderness area that covers over 4,000 square miles. Arriving in late spring, he sets out to find a mother moose with a newborn calf, a challenging task as expectant mothers head to remote areas of the rugged terrain to give birth. Success comes three weeks later when Kitching spots a female calf only a few days old with her mother. His immediate goal is for the calf and cow to accept his presence so he can chronicle their life for the next 12 months. He does so by initially keeping his distance as the pair get used to him and his camera.

Kitching is able to capture intimate scenes of the mother teaching her young calf the crucial lessons of which plants to eat; how to swim and dive to reach mineral rich plants found on the bottom of mountain lakes; and the dangers of wolves and bears. The latter, in fact, kill more moose calves than any other predator. In a dramatic sequence, the film shows Kitching trying to determine the fate of a second calf being pursued by wolves as he follows their tracks in the snow. It’s estimated that only about 30% of calves survive their first year.

In addition to the Canadian Rockies, the program also covers work being conducted in Grand Portage, Minnesota where the moose population has declined by 64% since 1990. Biologists are seen capturing calves just long enough to weigh them and collect samples of their blood and hair, and to place collars on them in order to track and study their movements. So far, their research points to health-related issues, such as brainworm and winter ticks, as additional causes for the decreasing moose population, not only in Minnesota, but across the entire North American continent.

At year’s end, after spending hundreds of hours with them, Kitching finds he has become very attached to these animals, filled with great admiration for the endurance and persistence of the calf and the protection and guidance of its mother. But with the new spring, the mother will become pregnant again, and to ensure the best possible chance for her next newborn, she will turn on her yearling and drive her out. Time for the yearling to make it on her own. It’s tough love, in a tough environment. And it’s all that stands between the success and failure of a species.

***Nature*** is a production of THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET. For ***Nature***, Fred Kaufman is executive producer. ***Moose: Life of a Twig Eater*** is a production of Twig Eaters Inc. in association with THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET. Susan Fleming is the film’s producer/director.

***Nature*** pioneered a television genre that is now widely emulated in the broadcast industry. Throughout its history, ***Nature*** has brought the natural world to millions of viewers. The series has been consistently among the most-watched primetime series on public television.

***Nature*** has won more than 700 honors from the television industry, the international wildlife film communities and environmental organizations, including 16 Emmys and three Peabodys. The series received two of wildlife film industry’s highest honors: the Christopher Parsons Outstanding Achievement Award given by the Wildscreen Festival and the Grand Teton Award given by the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. The International Wildlife Film Festival honored ***Nature*** executive producer Fred Kaufman with its Lifetime Achievement Award for Media.

[PBS.org/nature](http://www.pbs.org/nature) is the award-winning web companion to ***Nature****,* featuring streaming episodes, filmmaker interviews, teacher’s guides and more.

Support for this ***Nature*** program was made possible in part by the Arnhold Family in memory of Clarisse Arnhold, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, the Kate W. Cassidy Foundation, the Lillian Goldman Charitable Trust, the Filomen M. D’Agostino Foundation, the Arlene and Milton D. Berkman Philanthropic Fund, Sandra Atlas Bass, Rosalind P. Walter, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and public television viewers.

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**About WNET**  
As New York’s flagship public media provider and the parent company of [THIRTEEN](http://thirteen.org/) and [WLIW21](http://wliw.org/) and operator of [NJTV](http://www.njtvonline.org/), WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than 5 million viewers each week. WNET produces and presents such acclaimed PBS series as [Nature](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature), [Great Performances](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf), [American Masters](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters), [PBS NewsHour Weekend](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/), [Charlie Rose](http://www.charlierose.com) and a range of documentaries, children’s programs, and local news and cultural offerings available on air and online. Pioneers in educational programming, WNET has created such groundbreaking series as [Get the Math](http://www.thirteen.org/get-the-math), [Oh Noah!](http://www.pbskids.org/noah) and [Cyberchase](http://www.pbskids.org/cyberchase) and provides tools for educators that bring compelling content to life in the classroom and at home. WNET highlights the tri-state’s unique culture and diverse communities through [NYC-ARTS](http://www.nyc-arts.org/), [Reel 13](http://www.thirteen.org/sites/reel13), [NJTV News with](http://www.njtvonline.org/njtoday/) Mary Alice Williams and [MetroFocus](http://www.thirteen.org/metrofocus), the multi-platform news magazine focusing on the New York region. WNET is also a leader in connecting with viewers on emerging platforms, including the [THIRTEEN Explore App](http://www.thirteen.org/explore/) where users can stream PBS content for free.

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