



NEWS

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Tai chimpanzees featured in Hollywood movie

Oscar, Freddy and Isha star in DisneyNature's **CHIMPANZEE**, which opened in theaters through North America on Friday, April 20th!

This marks the first time ever that a feature film was shot entirely in the wild. **CHIMPANZEE** includes spectacular footage of the chimpanzees living in Tai National Park, Côte d'Ivoire, and in the Ngogo area of Kibale National Park, Uganda. The three main stars, Oscar, Freddy, and Isha, belong to the chimpanzee groups that Max Planck Director Christophe Boesch and his team have been studying for the last 33 years in Côte d'Ivoire.

The movie is based on one of the remarkable cases of adoption that has been observed in the Tai chimpanzees. After the tragic loss of his mother, a chimpanzee infant was serendipitously adopted by Freddy, one of the most experienced adult males in his group. The story follows the powerful relationship between the two as Freddy cares for the little orphan as if he was his own offspring.



Image: Chimpanzee Freddy with his adoptive son.
Copyright: Tobias Deschner, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology.

"The first time I saw Freddy sharing food with the orphaned chimpanzee infant and helping him climb on his back, it was difficult not to think that he felt the need to help that little infant, and that sense of empathy is something we can all relate to," said Tobias Deschner a member of the research team at the MPI-EVA.

We have documented 18 cases of adoption at Tai thus far (<http://bit.ly/IOaqZi>), but for the first time ever, this remarkable type of relationship was caught on film for the entire world to see. **CHIMPANZEE** is an amazing and unique opportunity for people to learn

about the behavior of our closest living animal relatives and will allow them to understand why research in evolutionary anthropology is so fascinating and important.

The faculty, students, and field assistants of the Department of Primatology at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig were involved in the day-to-day filming of the movie and helped make the movie possible. Christophe Boesch served as the principal scientific advisor for the film and was directly involved in developing the script to make sure it reflected the many facets of chimpanzee life and behavior.

Wild chimpanzees are threatened across their natural range in Africa due to illegal hunting, deforestation, and habitat destruction and this is also true for the chimpanzees of the Tai forest.

“This film will allow the public to see into the lives of wild chimpanzees and learn about the personalities of individual animals. I really hope people will feel connected to the animals they see on screen and will feel moved to support conservation initiatives for the survival of this endangered species,” said Christophe Boesch.

Everyone interested in learning more about the wild chimpanzees featured in the movie and supporting chimpanzee conservation is encouraged to get involved and visit the following webpages:

Conservation:

Wild Chimpanzee Foundation: www.wildchimps.org

Research:

MPI-EVA, Department of Primatology: www.eva.mpg.de/primat

Christophe Boesch: www.eva.mpg.de/primat/staff/boesch/

The Ngogo Chimpanzee Project: www.ngogochimpanzeeproject.org

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