



Northern Territory Government

Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

Desert Park Reptiles Star in upcoming BBC Production

Legendary Naturalist and Documentary maker Sir David Attenborough filmed a world first at the Alice Springs Desert Park last week while producing the BBC's new documentary series 'Life in Cold Blood'.

Desert Park specialist reptile keeper, Jochem van der Reijden, said the Desert Park was asked to provide several very specialised and interesting species for involvement in the new documentary series on reptiles.

"It was an absolute thrill to meet Sir David and participate in the location filming, as Sir David is an inspiration to zookeepers around the world," he said.

"The BBC arrived at the Park last week and used the Desert Park facilities to film the fascinating behaviour of the Lake Eyre Dragon.

"The mating behaviour of these tiny arid survivors was only captured for the first time in a series of photos taken by myself at the Desert Park last year.

"Lake Eyre Dragon mating, or non-mating, can be a very fast affair and it was great to see the BBC crew were able to capture it for the first time on film for the world to see.

"The male Lake Eyre Dragon approaches the female by jumping toward her on all four legs, if she is amiable she will allow mating however if she is not she will flip onto her back so that he cannot mate with her."

Mr van der Reijden says the Desert Park also provided Burrowing Frogs (Desert Spadefoot frogs) for the BBC to film.

"Unfortunately our first filming was cut short due to Sunday nights' electrical storm so we went back on Monday to capture on film the frogs burrowing into the ground," he said.

"Many people do not realise that even in some of the driest regions of our desert burrowing frogs live under the ground waiting for rains to come so that they can emerge and mate, sometimes waiting for years on end for the right conditions."

The frogs from the Desert Park were transported to a location south of Alice Springs where they met the BBC crew and Sir David to film the burrowing.

Sir David has visited the Desert Park in the past and said "there is no zoo or wildlife park in the world that can match it".

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Media Note – For more information contact Jochem Van Der Reijden on 08 8951 8721.

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