



THE SECRETS OF THE KIMBERLEY

Making the invisible
Visible

Synopsis 1

Scientists and artists attempt to explore the isolated Kimberley marine region through some innovative photographic techniques and randomly discover a new natural world.

The Kimberley is one of the most ecologically diverse areas of the world. Its marine ecosystems are amongst the world's most pristine. At 424500 square kilometres the Kimberley is bigger than Italy or Germany and it has over 3000 uninhabited islands.

This documentary takes you on an expedition into this remote region with a team made up of an artist and scientists. What they find redefines their values and how they view the natural world. It showcases one of the last great wilderness areas through incredible wildlife-great and small.



Synopsis 2

On board the “Olivia J” under the command of a veteran fisherman a group of scientists and a photographer embark on a journey into one of Australia's least explored marine frontiers-The Kimberley. What they find redefines their values and how they view the natural world. It showcases one of the last great wilderness areas through incredible wildlife-great and small.

This is a look at a wild space from an angle rarely seen. The Kimberley is a place lost in time. No towns, no roads, no people. At times it has a chilling sense of loneliness and silence. A world without humans. In a strange paradox, if you look, it is teeming with life. All you need to do is get there and wait. From the mighty blow of a giant humpback whale to the crackles of armies of micro crabs feeding, this is a showcase of life great and small. This film highlights the rare species in this region through some amazing photography and describes the marine science being undertaken to improve our understanding of this incredible part of Western Australia.

Tags

Kimberley, Western Australia, Wildlife, Marine Science, Photography, Anthropomorphic, expeditions adventure, corals discovery channel, NGC, National Geographic, Geo, Nature, Wildlife photography, Humpback Whales, Whales calf, whale birthing waters, coral reefs, discovery, hyperspectral surveys, geonewmedia. Palace, Environmental Film Festival Melbourne, EFFM, Trevor Almeida.

Biography

Trevor Almeida-Producer

Trevor has been producing films, video and interactive media for over 18 years. His past documentary commissions include Western Australia's Marine Environment, Carbon Dioxide and Our Coral Reefs. In 2010 his independent film My Home the Block was selected for the F4 program at the AIDC and has screened on the cable network through NITV. He worked as an editor for 100meter films in Japan on their award winning feature film Firefly Dreams. He currently runs Geonewmedia, a production company focusing on science, innovation and technology digital media.

FAQ of Trevor Almeida during the making of Secrets Of The Kimberley.

How did the Secrets of the Kimberley come about and how was it financed?

This is not the kind of film we at Geonewmedia usually make.

We usually make environmental films, training films, business profiles promoting science, environment and innovation. We usually work with scientists, Indigenous communities and sustainability industries to promote their vision or products.

The Secrets of The Kimberley however was basically an independent production unsupported by any government funds or industry yet we realise it is a privilege to visit this country and make this film. The expedition and film was funded by research, a private investor and Geonewmedia. Our challenge was to reveal the values of The Kimberley Marine Region - in Art , Science and Indigenous Knowledge.

What motivated you to make this film.

I was born in Kenya and as a child loved watching wild animals in their natural environment. But when I got to the Kimberley I was totally moved with how remote and vast this region is. As we flew over we literally saw the road end.

Scientists believe the Kimberley is one of the most ecologically diverse areas of the world and its marine ecosystems are amongst the world's most pristine. Surveys of a mere 3 islands have recorded 280 species of coral.

We have only just begun to understand its true value. I just wanted to bring this amazing region to people who cannot afford to reach it .

What did you discover from the experience of shooting the film

It still gives me shivers!

Shooting this film in the Kimberley made me realise that a lot of Australians will never experience the unique and outstanding wildlife they have in their own back yard.

Unfortunately the Kimberley is " out of reach " for most of us. This means out of sight, out of mind and that it a real shame. Getting to the Kimberley is only available to a privileged few. It can cost us \$10000 just to get on a special vessel to take you there. There are no roads, the nearest air strip is on a private mine site. You need a special vessel and an experienced captain to navigate there through the unsurveyed waters and giant tides. This is indigenous country and remains one of the planets most uninhabited regions.

I was lucky to spend some time there while on the Olivia J. What we found was a unique wild world of creatures great and small.

What were the challenges in making such a film

Actually you need to be always ready when making an expedition documentary.

The biggest challenge was the giant tides. Because they vary so dramatically twice a day up to 12 meters it made getting in and out of reefs precarious and dangerous. As a result the schedule of the scientists would change all the time and we would need to re-plan our sequences on the fly. Several times we would set up our time lapse cameras or shots and we would need to escape on short notice because of rough weather or the tide was approaching too fast. A lot of the areas are unsurveyed so we had no maps to help us. Generally the camera crew had to be up before light and end after dusk so there was no time for sleep. We did most of our preparation in the afternoon when the sun was too hot for photography.

How did you manage safety

Thank goodness we had no heroes. Safety came first because if you had an accident it would be a nightmare. Helicopter would be the only viable rescue and that would take time. The rock faces are jagged and sharp, so it would be easy to slip and slice your self. That said we did have some injuries. The second camera twisted his leg but thankfully nothing serious.

Reviews-The Secrets of the Kimberley

“ Amazing extremely well done.. very emotive” S Jackson- Innate Ecology.

“Really powerful. I was moved by it!” S Young.

“The confluence of art and science looking at an issue as important as the Kimberley....a brilliant piece of work” - R Wyatt-Think Impact.

“I loved the photography. The interplay of science and photography...Skillfully told story.” C Tafford -Alpha Green.

“People have to see it . The Kimberley is awesome!” A Foran -Hagar Australia.



Production stills.















Production Notes

This film came about because of Dr. Steve Blake's interest in the Kimberley region and the desire to study the geomorphology of the area. A local photographer, Peter Strain had been active in photographing the marine life there on a macro level and they got to talking about their different approaches to their subjects. Steve recognized an opportunity to return to the Kimberley to do more study and agreed to come up with a modest budget to make a film comparing how scientists and artists view nature. Geonewmedia was brought in to make the film because of the previous work they had done with Steve and WAMSI (Western Australian Marine Science Institution). Peter already had a close relationship with Captain John Maher and his 22.5 meter steel hulled trimaran, Olivia J MV, so this was chosen as the research vessel and home for a number of weeks for the scientists, photographer, boat and film crew.

The scientists and film crew would meet up with the Olivia J on Kulan Island and from there would spend the next several weeks exploring the Kimberley coast, Turtle Reef, Montgomery Reef and Camden Sound. Being interested in small organisms, Peter work was mainly focused on the reefs and mangroves. The film crew had to drag their equipment through knee-deep mud while keeping a watchful eye out for crocodiles. The reefs were a little bit easier since the outgoing tide would expose the reef but you would have to be aware of the time and when the tide would come rushing back in. Peter was also very cooperative and very agreeable to setting up shots for the film and would explain his process of shooting the small marine creatures. With the scientist it was another story, since they preferred to be left alone to collect their data. During this time, filming had to be much more observational, leaving little time to set up shots and rushing to catch what work was being done. It wasn't until later on back on the Olivia J, that they consented to be interviewed and explain for the camera their methodology. On occasion the film crew was able to capture a spirited discussion between Peter and the scientists that lent itself to the subject of the film where they would discover that they shared many mutual interests.

There were several interviews with Captain John of the Olivia J, who would regale them with stories of his years spent on the Kimberley coast in the tourist industry. His wealth of knowledge of the region proved to be invaluable to both the scientist and Peter and he was able to introduce them to a world that few have ventured into.

Participants

Peter Strain, Dr Steve Blake, Captain John Maher, Uunguu Rangers, Chris Powick, Dr Barry Wilson

Graham Thompson, David Ryan and Dr Jorg M Hacker

Videography

Trevor Almeida and Clifford Terry

Photography

Peter Strain

Additional Photography

Dr Steve Blake, Dr Jorg Hacker

National Library of Australia

Expedition to north-west Australia 1926/D.S Wylie

Sully. Walters

Writers

Trevor Almeida, Clifford Terry and Clive Willman

Original Script by

Dan Lee, and Peter Strain

Music

Marcus Shinsui Grandon and Henry Bahrou

Editor

Trevor Almeida

Additional Music

Enrico Liverani

Sound Edit and Mix

John Koh

Narration

Bob Knowles

Expedition Logistic

Steve Blake, Peter Strain and John Maher

Contributors

Bill Read- Linneys, Western Australian Marine Science Institution, Airborne Research Australia, Flinders University, Tropical Marine Service, Murex Consultants, Broome Pictures, Underwater Observations Pty Ltd and Geonewmedia

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