

Science on the Air

Check your local listings for exact times and dates. (R) indicates a repeat broadcast.

May 1 (PBS) Nature — “Tom’s River: Reflections of a River Keeper” Provides insight into the inhabitants and the ecology of the Hampshire Avon River in England.

May 2 (PBS) Discoveries Underwater — “City Under the Sea” Explores the underwater remains of Port Royal, Jamaica, a town destroyed by an earthquake in the 17th century.

May 4 (PBS) Conserving America — “The River” Reviews the efforts to preserve and restore the 3½ million miles of rivers that flow across the North American continent.

May 5 (PBS) Bodywatch — “Fighting Fat”(R) Discusses America’s preoccupation with thinness and dieting and examines the dangers of crash diets as well as the hazards of carrying too much body weight.

May 7 (PBS) Innovation — “Breaking Through” Looks at the latest research on autism, an enigmatic and destructive mental disorder.

May 7 (PBS) Wild America — “Animal Oddities”(R) Shows how some of nature’s strangest experiments serve as important survival strategies.

May 8 (PBS) Nature — “The Elephant Challenge”(R) Probes the relationship between humans and the African elephant as they fight to survive on Africa’s dwindling land.

May 9 (PBS) Discoveries Underwater — “Science, Salvage or Scrap?” Discusses whether artifacts discovered underwater should be discarded as scraps or salvaged as valuable relics.

May 10 (PBS) NOVA — “A Man, A Plan, A Canal, Panama”(R) Travels to the Panama Canal to recount the human drama behind one of the world’s greatest engineering achievements.

May 11 (PBS) The Addicted Brain Takes a tour of the most prolific manufacturer and user of drugs in existence — the human brain.

May 11 (PBS) Plagues Looks at the history of epidemic disease and puts the current AIDS tragedy into context.

May 14 (PBS) Bodywatch — “Breast Cancer” Looks at the latest medical techniques for diagnosing and treating breast cancer, and explores some of the more controversial strategies for preventing the disease.

May 14 (PBS) Innovation — “Our Bones: A Delicate Matter” Focuses on osteoporosis and whether calcium supplements have been given too much emphasis.

May 14 (PBS) Wild America — “Born to Run”(R) Visits the amazing pronghorn, one of the fastest animals in the world.

May 15 (PBS) Nature — “See No Evil”(R) Follows the fight to save the macaque, a monkey indigenous to Japan.

May 17 (PBS) NOVA — “The Plane That Changed the World”(R) Features the 50th anniversary of the DC-3, which many call the most important plane ever built.

May 18 (PBS) The Sexual Brain Investigates whether sexual behavior stereotypes are a result of social conditioning or evolutionary heritage.

May 21 (PBS) Bodywatch — “Well Conceived”(R) Scrutinizes the latest research on the importance of prenatal care.

May 21 (PBS) Innovation — “The Male Factor” Explores newly found causes of male infertility as well as modern corrective techniques.

May 21 (PBS) Wild America — “Owls — Lords of Darkness”(R) Shows how owls create a vital link in the chain of life.

May 24 (PBS) NOVA — “The Magic of Special Effects”(R) A behind-the-scenes look at the new art of illusion, Hollywood-style.

May 28 (PBS) Bodywatch — “The Ten Most-Asked Questions About Food” Responds to viewers’ most pressing questions about food, health and fitness.

May 28 (PBS) Innovation — “S Is for Science” Travels to Paris to see how a new generation of “hands-on” museums are inspiring children to become actively involved in the sciences.

May 28 (PBS) Wild America — “Hog Wild”(R) Looks at the funny, bizarre and sometimes violent lives of peccaries and wild hogs.

May 29 (PBS) Nature — “Long Live the Turtle”(R) Examines the life of the giant loggerhead turtle, whose existence is threatened by egg poachers and hunters.

May 31 (PBS) NOVA — “Riddle of the Joints”(R) A historical perspective sheds new light on rheumatoid arthritis.

May 31 (PBS) A Portrait of Manic Depression Shows the effect of manic depression on the lives of ordinary people, and discusses its treatment.

Books

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Challenger: The Final Voyage — Richard S. Lewis. The explosion of the space shuttle Challenger in January 1986 was the most traumatic event of the space age. This book provides an in-depth, well-illustrated account of the mission. Explores the tragic accident, telling of the preparation for the mission and the aftermath. Covers in detail the presidential commission’s investigation of the disaster and shows what the United States can learn from this tragedy. Columbia U Pr, 1988, 249 p., illus., \$29.95.

The Complete Birder: A Guide to Better Birding — Jack Connor, foreword by Roger Tory Peterson. Written for those already intrigued by birds to help upgrade their field skills. Covers optics and acoustics for the birdwatcher, describes available equipment and tells how to use it. Looks at the rhythm of the seasons from the birder’s point of view and examines the psychology of good birding. Discusses the five groups of birds that the author feels give the intermediate birder the most difficulty: warblers, hawks, shorebirds, terns and gulls. HM, 1988, 285 p., illus. by Margaret LaFarge, \$18.95, paper, \$8.95.

Infinite in all Directions — Freeman J. Dyson. Based on the Gifford Lectures this scientist gave at Aberdeen, Scotland, in April and November 1985. The lectures were given in two series and the book is divided into two parts. “Part one,” says Dyson, “is about life as a scientific phenomenon, about our efforts to understand the nature of life and its place in the universe. Part two is about ethics and politics, about the local problems introduced by our species into the existence of life on this planet.” Har-Row, 1988, 321 p., \$19.95.

The Invention of Memory: A New View of the Brain — Israel Rosenfield. This expert on the neurosciences challenges the popular notion that what we know is stored in our brains like data in a computer. He first reexamines the clinical discoveries of the 19th century that established the doctrine of localization of brain function. He goes on to develop arguments against localization and permanent memory traces on the basis of recent brain research. Discusses the theory of neural Darwinism, giving a biological basis for a new understanding of the brain. Basic, 1988, 229 p., illus., \$18.95.

The Statue Within: An Autobiography — François Jacob, translated by Franklin Philip. The fascinating life story of an outstanding French scientist who shared with colleagues in 1965 the Nobel Prize in Medicine for their work on gene regulation. Jacob’s path to a career in science took him from early years in medical school to fighting with the Free French forces in World War II. Returning wounded and unable to become a surgeon, Jacob completed his medical studies in haste after working as a filmmaker, journalist and civil servant. It was his thesis necessary for his degree in medicine that prompted his interest in becoming a biologist. By chance he obtained a position in Andre Lwoff’s laboratory, the most prestigious genetics institute in France. A volume in the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation series to promote the understanding of the scientific enterprise. Basic, 1988, 326 p., \$22.95.