Watch Blue Planet II this weekend along with scientists on Twitter

If you're looking for a nature documentary to watch this weekend, and you'd like some expert company, you're in luck. The first season of the BBC Natural History Unit's stunning documentary *Blue Planet II* is now streaming on Netflix. And, starting this weekend, fans have the chance to sync up their favorite episodes with a live Twitter commentary from ocean experts.

The documentary explores the oceans from the coasts to kelp to the creatures that live in the sea. The first season premiered in the US on BBC America earlier this year, and it's now available to cord-cutting Netflix subscribers in the US and Canada. "It's supposed to be one of the most amazing wildlife documentary series ever filmed," says David Shiffman, a postdoctoral scientist who is studying shark fisheries and conservation at Simon Fraser University.

> *Hey everybody! Blue Planet 2 is now on Netflix in the US and Canada!*
>
> *Join me and a team of ocean science and conservation experts for a synchronized viewing and twitter chat! #BluePlanetChat*
>
> *Please help spread the word by RT-ing and tagging interested folks!*
>
> *Schedule below! pic.twitter.com/XZIJiBfKoI*
>
> *— Dr. David Shiffman (@WhySharksMatter) December 12, 2018*

Shiffman, who goes by @WhySharksMatter on Twitter, didn't want to watch it by himself. So he's organizing a synchronized viewing of the first three episodes of *Blue Planet II* on Sunday. The rest are on Monday and Tuesday evenings. To join in, just follow @WhySharksMatter or #BluePlanetChat on Twitter, and press play at the designated times. That means starting Episode 1 at 6PM ET on Sunday, December 16th.

Scientists on Twitter have organized similar science-themed virtual viewing parties before, including for the classic contagion thriller *Outbreak*. You just need Netflix, Twitter, and functioning Wi-Fi. "It's a pretty foolproof process," Shiffman said, before reconsidering: "Potentially famous last words."

Shiffman will be monitoring tweets to the #blueplanetchat hashtag, and he will be tagging in experts on Twitter to answer questions that viewers might have as they screen the show. "Like, 'Hey, what kind of fish was that? Hey, is that behavior normal?'" he says. "You will get a live running commentary."

[embedded content]

The idea is to bring back some of the camaraderie and the shared experience of regularly scheduled television, he says. With streaming, you have the convenience of starting any time you want, but you can lose out on the social aspects of watching TV along with your friends, family, or your friendly neighborhood ocean scientist. "It's a fun model of how you can use free tools like Twitter for interaction with experts, and asking questions, as well as just a fun shared experience."

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