

NATURE ENVIRONMENT

DOCUMENTARY
30 MIN.

VERSIONS

Arabic, English, Spanish
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26 4702 | 01-19



Struggle for Survival

One in every four species of mammal, one in every eight species of bird and a third of all amphibian species are threatened with extinction. The diversity of life on our planet is declining at an alarming rate. The International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species shows that not enough is being done to save them. At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, governments promised to reverse the trend and to cut significantly by 2010 the rate at which plants and animals are dying out. That target has not been met. On the contrary, the number of species on the Red List has increased dramatically. Immediate, drastic action is required to preserve valuable habitats and halt the extinction of species.

01 Grzimek's Legacy in Africa

The Swiss biologist Dr. Markus Borner is one of the conservationists who worked personally alongside Prof. Dr. Bernhard Grzimek. Together with his son Michael, Grzimek produced the movie "The Serengeti Shall Not Die", the first German documentary film to be awarded an Oscar. The Serengeti is Dr. Borner's place of work. The TV crew joined him on an excursion to see just what has become of Grzimek's legacy.

02 Hama – A Rhinoceros, a Stranger in Africa

A young black hook-lipped rhinoceros comes from Frankfurt Zoo to Africa, to boost dwindling numbers of the endangered species as quickly as possible. A zoo animal released into the wild has much to learn: it must cope with a new environment, learn to locate food independently, and find its place among the wild animals whose territory it must now share. Will Hama overcome the challenges?

03 Grzimek's Legacy in South America

Prof. Dr. Bernhard Grzimek was the man who brought the animals of this world into German living rooms, with his television series "Ein Platz für Tiere" (A Place for Animals). When he let a fully-grown South American marine iguana run over his desk, a creature he knew Germans had never seen before, he not only fascinated people, he also mobilised them to support the preservation of the world's last paradises. The camera crew follows in the footsteps of those who have taken up Grzimek's cause, and who fight for the protection of threatened habitats and species in South America.

04 Bears in the Andes

Few South Americans are aware that they share their homeland with a large species of bear: the Spectacled, or Andean Bear. The animals are descended from the largest primeval beasts of prey bears since the demise of the dinosaurs. They are still threatened with extinction to this day. Their natural habitat, the cloud forests of the Andes, is continually in decline, and they are also at the mercy of hunters.

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05 Grzimek's Legacy in Asia

Grzimek's successors are also active in Asia, for example in The Philippines and Indonesia. They are the resolute guardians of such magnificent wild animals as the langurs of Vietnam, the writhed-billed hornbills on the Philippine island of Panay, or the Sumatran orang-utans.

06 In the Forest of the Hornbills

For the dulungan, as the locals call the hornbill, survival has become a difficult challenge. Its habitat consists of just a few meagre remnants of the rainforest on the Philippine island of Panay. In addition, the flesh of the bird fetches a high price as a luxury snack. Thus the number of dulungans is decimated by around 50 percent every year. Fortunately, conservationists from Germany have developed a plan to turn former poachers into the birds' protectors.

07 Save the Blue Parrot!

There are only a few Spix's Macaws still alive and all of them live in captivity. Experts from around the world are making a concerted effort to help these rare birds breed. They hope to increase the population once found in the wild in the Brazilian state of Bahia and one day return the Spix's Macaw to its natural habitat.

08 Gardens of the Oceans – Seagrass Fields in Mozambique

Seagrass fields are some of the most productive ecosystems in the world, but they are under threat because of natural and human factors. One rare and extremely shy species that feeds exclusively on seagrass is the dugong or sea cow. The loss of seagrass fields means the dugong's fate is very uncertain.

09 The Tasmanian Devil Under Threat

For the past decade, a strange facial cancer has been spreading among the Tasmanian Devils on the island which gave them their name off the coast of Australia. In some areas, 80 percent of the population have died. Is it too late to save the world's largest carnivorous marsupial from extinction? Will it end up sharing the fate of the now extinct Tasmanian Tiger?

10 On the Tuna Fish Trail

Tuna has featured on Mediterranean menus for more than 4,000 years. But man is not the only predator to lie in wait as tuna come from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean to spawn. This documentary looks at the dramatic decline in tuna stocks, but also explores the beauty and diversity of species of fish still to be found in the Mediterranean.

11 Arctic Fox in the Ark

Nordens Ark in western Sweden is a beautiful and special zoo located in a wonderful landscape beside a fjord. Its main task is to breed rare species such as the arctic fox, snow leopard, wolverines and European wildcats.

12 Dhole – The Disappearing Dog

Once widespread in Asia, today the Asiatic wild dog – the dhole – is practically only found in India. But even there, its survival is under threat. Until recently, the dogs were hunted or poisoned mercilessly. The film observes these timid creatures in their natural habitat, the jungle of Periyar.

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13 Cloning Creatures – Conservation of Species

In spite of the numerous animal conservation programmes underway today, more and more species are dying out. A global genetic databank has been established to pool knowledge about the origins of species and how they've evolved and changed through history. Some scientists even hope that frozen DNA might one day help bring extinct creatures back to life in the form of clones.

14 Elephant Villages

The locals call them the "elephant villages". They are located in the Dzanga-Ndoki National Park in the Central African Republic. They are clearings in the swamp forests where groups of rare forest elephants gather. Little is known about the African elephant's smaller relative. It is thought that about 200,000 still live in the tropical rainforests of Central and West Africa. But their habitat is under serious threat.

15 Douc Monkeys and Their Coats of Many Colors

Douc monkeys have very distinctive, vividly colored fur. Three species of Doucs live in the rainforests of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and they are all threatened with extinction. The primary dangers are posed by the destruction of their habitats as well as the illegal hunting and keeping of the animals. The Endangered Primate Rescue Center in Cuc Phuong National Park in northern Vietnam is working to ensure the survival of the Doucs and other species of primate.

16 The Atlantic Salmon Returns to the Rhine

In the mid-1980s, all the nations along the Rhine agreed on a unique, joint nature conservation program to re-introduce the salmon, a fish that had been eradicated in the contaminated waters of the western European river. The program has succeeded in re-establishing the pollution-sensitive fish – in one of the world's busiest waterways with its attendant throng of people and industry.

17 Bringing Back the Bush Dog

Many packs of bush dogs used to roam Brazil's Atlantic rainforest, the Mata Atlântica. It originally covered an area of about two million square kilometers, but large-scale clearing has reduced the forest to just seven percent of its original size. Bush dogs are so shy and have become so rare that few Brazilians have ever seen one. Biologists are doing their utmost to try to preserve the species.

18 Wolves in Gran Paradiso **HD**

While wolves, along with bears and lynxes, were wiped out in Central Europe, a small population of wolves survived further south in the Apennine Mountains of Italy. Thanks to a variety of protective measures, their numbers are again rising. Scientists have been surprised to establish that some have moved north and now live in the Alps. But this could lead to a conflict of interests between wolf and man, for which new solutions must be sought.

19 The Peaceful Monkeys of Brazil

Brazil's Atlantic rainforest is home to the largest and most threatened monkey species in the Americas: the miqui. US biologist Karen Strier has been observing this monkey's extraordinary behavior for 20 years: In comparison to other primates, relations between male miquis within a troop are extremely harmonious. But this unusual animal's survival is threatened by the deforestation of their habitat.

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Struggle for Survival

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20 Saving the Sabah Rhinoceros **HD**

There are thought to be only 50 Sabah rhinos on the island of Borneo. The Malaysian government plans to protect the species – the world's smallest rhinos – from extinction. This is only possible through reforestation, stringent protective measures, public information campaigns and medically supervised assisted reproduction.

21 The Return of the Wildcat

Wildcats used to be a common sight in German forests. But they need space, which has been drastically reduced due to the fragmentation of woodland areas. Scientists and conservationists now plan to create green corridors between conservation areas to enable the wildcats to roam more freely.

22 Hunting Down Peru's Butterflies

Peru's rainforests are home to an array of magnificent butterflies. Collectors are ready to pay huge sums of money for fine specimens. This has given rise to a roaring trade in butterflies that have been hunted almost to extinction in the forests. As so often the collector's demand for rare species becomes a threat to their very existence.

23 Surrogate Moms for Wombats

Wombats used to be regarded as vermin in Australia and were hunted mercilessly. Of the three surviving species, one is in acute danger of dying out: the northern hairy-nosed wombat. Scientists and former hunters are looking at ways to save the dwindling population. One approach is to use southern hairy-nosed wombats as surrogate mothers.

24 Beavers: Overprotected or Over Hunted?

In Germany, the beaver was almost extinct. The rivers dammed up by its constructions put precious arable land underwater. Today, public perception of the animal has been turned on its head. The population has grown again, and the marshlands created by beavers are viewed as valuable biospheres. It's a different story however in Tierra del Fuego, at the southern tip of South America, where authorities have launched a massive program to eradicate the animals.

25 The Vulnerable Nile Crocodile

The Nile Crocodile was under threat from intensive hunting until the mid-1990s. Since then, a number of protective measures have led to a recovery in numbers. But the sudden death of masses of the animals in Olifants River in the South African Kruger National Park shows that even species with healthy populations can be vulnerable.

26 The Forgotten Livestock

Almost a third of the world's 6,500 species of livestock are threatened with extinction. By relying on more productive animals, industrial agriculture is reducing genetic diversity on a massive scale. Often this livestock is introduced from elsewhere and is more susceptible to stress and disease. Farmers are looking at ways to preserve indigenous species and cross-breed them to make the high-performing breeds more resilient.

For further information
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