



# THE ALPS WILD MOUNTAINS — EXTREME LIVES

**4K**

2 × 53 min.

Executive producers: **Andrea Gastgeb, Sabine Holzer**

4K, 5.1 and Stereo



**TERRA MATER**  
Factual Studios

**The Alps are a world apart—a romantic world where time stands still. They are also one of the last strongholds of rare and majestic nature. But behind the magical façade there's a constant fight for survival. Those who call the Alps home are true survivalists. This two-part documentary depicts their dramatic struggle.**

**T**he Alps connect eight countries starting from sea level to peaks rising over 4,000 metres. Most of the world's environments are here. They create a land of sharp contrasts—from picturesque alpine pastures to steep cliffs, from rolling hills to rugged peaks, from trickling forest springs to massive mountain torrents.

Alpine moods are extreme. The Alps have a climate of their own where the weather can change in a matter of seconds from idyllic to life threatening. Europe's four seasons are all too often reduced to long, harsh winters and short, hot summers. They are times of punishing extremes where all life challenges death on a daily basis.

This series reveals nature's secrets. How Alpine plants and animals, both the extraordinary and the rare, face the extreme seasonal fluctuations. From the volatile thunderstorms and landslides of summer to the avalanches and frozen meadows of winter when food and water are scarce.

Each dramatic episode reveals the unique adaptations that enable plants and animals to endure the cycling seasons in the ever-changing environments of the Alps.

#### **THE SERIES**

**The first episode** explores the most inhospitable upper regions of the Alps. They are the water towers of Europe shaped by frost and ice. How were these mountains created? We explore their unique geology and topography—as we fly above the highest mountains and dive into green valleys where giant rivers flow.

Living in these habitats are some of the world's most amazing creatures like the ibex, the lynx and the wolf. We discover how these warm-blooded creatures persist in the long white, frozen winters.

Through snow blizzards, frost and thrashing rain we witness what special strategies animals and plants use to survive. Some have fine-tuned their physiology, reproductive rates and behaviour.

The ibex' ability to climb vertical cliff walls is unparalleled. The snow hare and ptarmigan change their colour like chameleons. They turn white—a perfect camouflage in the snow.

We see the complex social structure of the charismatic marmot. They build beds in their burrows for a comfortable hibernation during the icy months!

An elusive wallcreeper flashes its red wings. Some spend all winter on steep cliff walls where they make their nest in crevices. Even more elusive is the snow vole, the highest altitude dwelling mammal. But to catch a glimpse of it we must peek beneath winter's snow blanket.

Chamois are daredevil mountaineers, leaping down near vertical cliffs over 3,000 metres high. There is food and safety in the high terrain. But in the deep snows of winter the cliffs are difficult to navigate and food is scarce. When winter comes they move to lower altitudes to eat conifer sprouts.

Populations of deer also migrate in the depths of winter to lower ranges, for food and for the



forest cover. Predators like wolf and lynx are on the hunt. Fine-tuned physical forces and camouflage help them avoid attacks. But danger lurks when an avalanche from the mountain slopes comes crashing into the world below.

**The second episode** of the series will explore how conditions in the Alps change when the spring crocuses push through the melting snows. Spring, summer and autumn will follow. And with the new seasons come delights and dangers.

During the warm season all species in the Alps are busy raising their offspring. Many of them were born in the safety of a deep, warm den. As temperatures rise the youngsters start to explore their new world. But they only have a few weeks to learn from their parents how to adapt and thrive in the challenging alpine habitat. The cycle of the seasons speeds along. And even as the heat of summer beats down on exposed slopes, winter waits in the wings, ready to bring the first snowfalls.

Many extinct animals have successfully been brought back to the Alps by establishing National Parks and animal reintroduction programs. Populations of ibex, deer, chamois and raptors are

steadily increasing, as are those of wolves, bear, lynx and otters. As we follow the tracks of wolf, lynx and bear their migration routes, territorial disputes, and mating behaviour will be revealed.

Even the most successful Alpine predators have an enemy—the human. Despite playing critical roles in the fragile Alpine ecosystem they are perceived as a threat to the livelihood of many Alpine people.

#### **THE LOOK**

Geology, biology and wildlife stories will be seamlessly interwoven throughout the series. State-of-the-art 4K camera technology, including the most recent advances in stabilized aerial photography, will take us to great heights where we witness the breath-taking majesty of the Alps. Macro photography and hidden nest cameras will give intimate glimpses into the secret lives of rare, elusive Alpine creatures.

With inspirational landscapes and astonishing nature and wildlife, the two-part series 'The Alps: Wild Mountains—Extreme Lives' will not merely be another beautifully filmed natural history documentary about the Alps but a dramatic story of survival in a fast changing world.



**NATURE**