

RIVER IN THE SKY

1 x 50 min.

Written by **Paul Reddish**

HD, 5.1 + Stereo

Produced by **Andrea Gastgeb and Paul Reddish**

Executive producer: **Sabine Holzer**



TERRA MATER
Factual Studios

Brazil has a river that is bigger than the Amazon. Yet until recently it was unknown, and even now it remains invisible. Where is this remarkable river?

It is a River-in-the-Sky! And it is essential for all life in Brazil for it provides water to the grasslands and the farmers' fields, and fills the reservoirs that provide water for more than half the inhabitants of this vibrant country. The River-in-the-Sky is critical for giant anteaters on the plains of the Cerrado, for jaguars in swamps of the Pantanal and for monkeys and macaws in the tropical rainforests. The Amazon rainforest is the central character in this story.

That tale starts in the warm tropical Atlantic Ocean. Each day the tropical sun evaporates unimaginable amounts of water from the sea. Elsewhere in the tropics, this water would just fall back as rain; but not here. For the Amazon forest, the largest rain forest on Earth, acts like a living breathing organism.

Monkeys enjoying the morning sunshine must take care: the world's largest eagle, the Harpy is on the hunt. Soon, the warm, moist air returns as rain; all the creatures

of the Amazon rainforest must try to live with the frequent deluges. The rains continue for weeks, and as they do the rivers fill and then flood. Now the sloth must swim from tree to tree. Dolphins play amongst the tree trunks. Fish eat the fruit that falls into the swollen waters. For half the year they replace the birds and so become important agents in spreading seeds and regenerating the forest.

Then a key event takes place above this sodden world. The wind changes direction. The River-in-the-Sky is born. Each day it conveys more water than the Amazon, and takes it to the grasslands. Termites release their winged queens and kings as the rains fall. Strange glow worms feast on them as they exit the tall termite mounds, which the Giant Anteaters try to conquer. The River-in-the-Sky transforms the dry grasslands into a sea of green.

The River-in-the-Sky keeps flowing south. Here it fills the greatest freshwater swamp on Earth, the Pantanal. Jaguars, otters and caimans celebrate its arrival, as do millions of fish. Finally the River-in-the-Sky, 20 billion tonnes of water per day, arrives at the coastal forests, and creates one of the world's greatest spectacles, the Iguazu Falls. The River-in-the-Sky brings life to the great natural landscapes of Brazil. And all of this depends on the breath of the living Amazon rainforest!

