



4K

CENOTE LIFE

1 x 50 min.

Written and directed by **Bianca Keeley**

4K, 5.1 and Stereo

Executive producers: **Sabine Holzer, Walter Köhler**



TERRA MATER
Factual Studios

In the steamy jungles of Mexico, CENOTES mean LIFE.

For the first time, we reveal how all animals—from the King of the Jungle jaguar, to the charismatic tayra, to the regal White-tailed deer to the spectacular margay, rely on the cenotes; not just for water ... but for their daily lives.

From the beginning of time, caves have held a special place in the hearts of humans; they provided shelter, warmth, food and protection. They were both revered and feared. Today, they still elicit a primeval feeling; a dread of the deep dark unknown... of what lurks inside.

But truly amazing sights lurk inside these networks of caves, sinkholes and underground rivers! Pumas stalking their way through giant stalagmites, tayras climbing cave walls, crocodiles hunting and jaguars finding a quiet nook to mate.

The Yucatan is devoid of surface rivers and animals must frequent cenotes to drink. But the animals are also using them for shelter, to nest, to mate, for food. Expanding human populations and exploding tourism on the Yucatan coast are putting grave pressure on the cenotes. Just how much do the animals and the humans rely on them?

We follow Australian biologist Dr Karl Vernes and his team of cave divers on an

adventure mission to find out. Over the course of a year, camera-traps, underwater and remote-controlled 4K colour cameras will reveal intimate images uncovering the secrets of 'Cenote Life'.

The forests encircling the cenotes grow on limestone so robust pacas have no place to build burrows. They must tirelessly bring in leaves from the forest to nest in the cenotes. Amazing swimmers they build their nests on the far side of the water, trying to outwit their many predators; jaguars, pumas and ocelots.

The striking motmot bird makes its nests high in the hollows of cave walls. But even here they are not safe. Tayras, tenacious members of the weasel family, are expert rock-climbers, scaling vertical walls searching for delicious eggs.

Peccaries—a favorite food of jaguars—and white-tailed deer—a favorite food of pumas—must come to quench their thirst at the cenote entrances. They're extremely nervous with their backs exposed to the forest. Even the powerful pumas seem wary ... they too want to avoid a confrontation with the King of the Jungle.

Many animal remains have been found inside the cenotes. The big question is: who has a seat at the table and who is coming for dinner? We find out in 'Cenote Life'.



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