



NATURE'S NETWORKS

1 x 50 min.

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HD, 5.1 and Stereo

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Nature's Networks' presents compelling, unusual insights into the natural world, from Borneo to Brazil and from Tasmania and Kenya to the fjords of Norway. The various inhabitants of these varied habitats may appear significantly different, but they all have something in common: every species has a clearly defined role in nature's complex network, a network built on a foundation of variety—or, more accurately, biodiversity.

The jungles of Borneo are dark, shady places. A wealth of leaves and vegetation catches the sunlight, preventing much of it from reaching the undergrowth. This can be advantageous for both hunters and prey. However, those who require light to survive have to ensure they secure a place higher up in the trees. A rustling in the treetops announces the presence of an orangutan mother with her offspring. The young male will spend several years in its mother's company, learning how to navigate far above solid ground. And yet: this is no longer the jungle of the past. In recent decades these forests, among the most diverse in the world, have been subjected to such rapid, destructive change that their inhabitants have been unable to adapt.

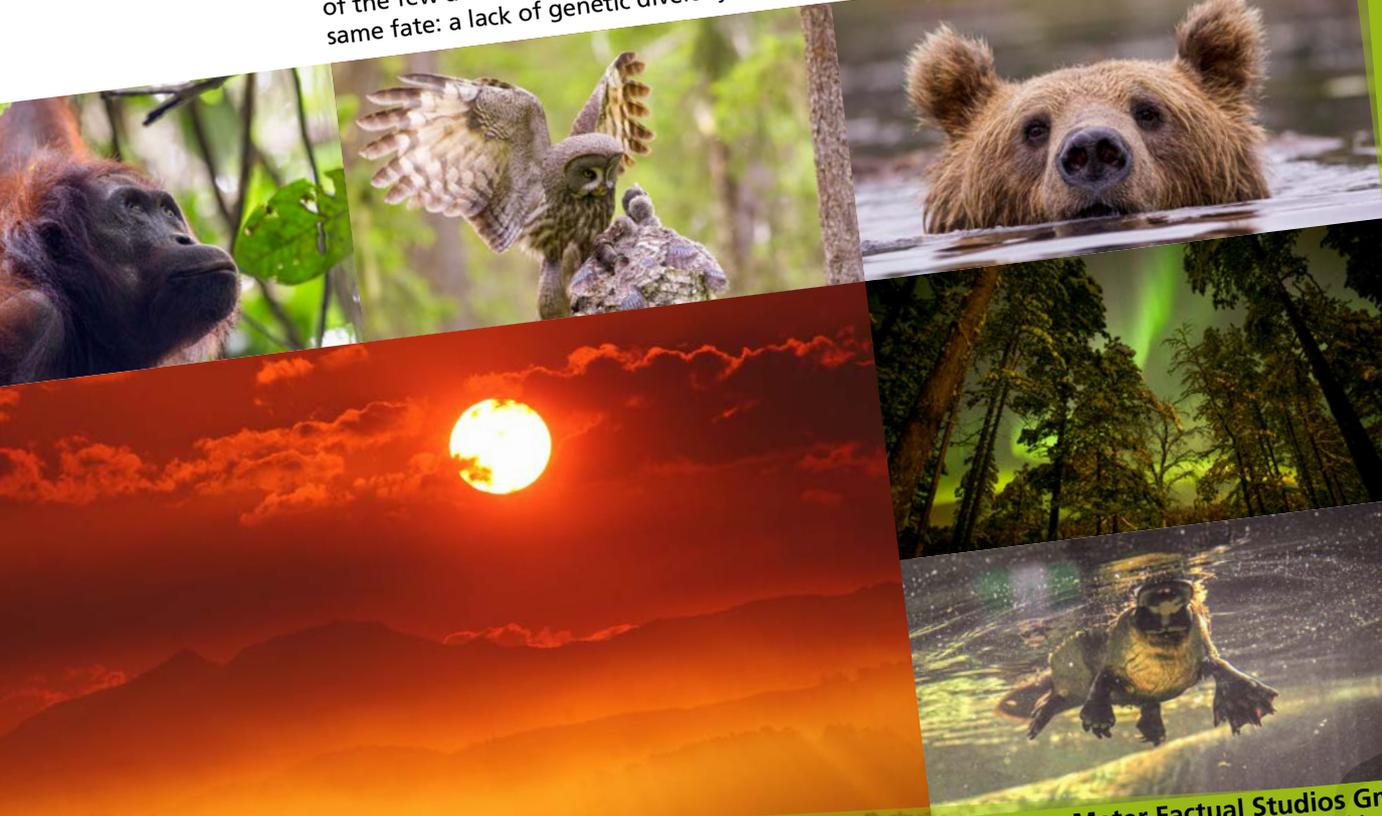
In Kenya's Maasai Mara National Reserve, another mother is attempting to ensure her offspring's survival. Cheetahs very nearly became extinct between 10,000 and 12,000 years ago. Since then, all the descendants of the few animals that survived share the same fate: a lack of genetic diversity.

This makes these apparently strong, powerful creatures particularly susceptible to diseases. The difficulties the cheetahs face are compounded by human encroachment on their habitats.

No species in the rainforest stands alone. Each lifeform is part of a complex network. The large amounts of rain make it difficult for flying insects like butterflies to spread sufficient pollen throughout the forest. Nature has provided necessary support in the form of hummingbirds. The ancient network appears both remarkably dense and incredibly resilient, consisting as it does of millions of species. Sadly, the destruction of the Brazilian rainforests is moving so fast that nature is unable to recover or adapt.

The destruction now seems unstoppable—despite the fact that we are dependent on the air produced by the world's forests. The vast forests of Borneo, Brazil and other regions help to stabilise the planet's climate. They also contain a range of natural ingredients that can help to prevent a number of diseases.

For a long time, scientists considered each species as a separate entity, ignoring the complex networks the species was an integral part of. The importance of the relationships between the different plants and animals in maintaining life on Earth is only now becoming clear—as we learn more and more about the fragile, endangered and wide-ranging ties that bind all lifeforms together to create 'Nature's Networks'.



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