



RARE SURVIVORS CHINA'S ICONIC WILDLIFE

4K

1 x 50 min.

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

4K, 5.1 and Stereo



TERRA MATER
Factual Studios

Mist swirls around the base of Shanghai's skyline. From the city, tigers and monkeys seem as unreal and distant as dragons and mermaids emerging through the mist. Yet they do exist, as rare survivors in an extraordinary and diverse landscape. From snow leopards to wild horses, and from alligators to elephants, China's iconic wildlife is a lot more than just pandas.

The Yangtze River is an unlikely place for a mermaid, but perhaps the truth seems even more unlikely than the legend. Hundreds of miles inland lives a fresh water whale called a Yangtze river porpoise with some extraordinary behaviour. It spits water a metre or two in front of itself, and sends fish fleeing back, into the porpoise's mouth. A mother teaches her youngster the trick.

To the northern border with Russia Manchurian tigers hunt in the snow. They, like so much of the surviving wildlife here, live on the margins, hidden refuges and rare survivors. To the south the Qinling Mountain range is the home of wild giant pandas. A male sits up like an old man chewing bamboo, while a mother in her den nurses her nine-month-old cub. In the mountains above them are forest elves: a family of snub-nosed monkeys. They have new-borns, too.

The Himalayas stretch majestically through Asia. Bar-headed geese cross the mountains from India to breed in Tibet on high cliffs. Their chicks, once they hatch, throw

themselves off the cliff, bouncing against rocks and tumbling to the base of the cliff. It's hard to believe that they could survive.

Red-crowned cranes dance their song of reunion in the marshlands around Beijing. A herd of Tibetan gazelles braves a dust storm at the Gobi desert's margins, while the only truly wild stallions, the rare Przewalski's horse, wait for the rain. After dark, new characters emerge: charming long-eared hedgehog and long eared Jerboa leave their burrows.

Following rivers south, we head into a new landscape, the huge towers of limestone and China's most iconic landscape. The Cao Vit gibbon was thought extinct for 50 years, but one family was found in 2002. Since then, a few more have been discovered, but the total population remains at about 100. Even further downstream, forest elephants come down to bathe, while peacocks strut on the bank. Chiru spar and dance as they will do into winter.

This is a film about are survivors, some well know and much loved, and others important and iconic animals filmed for the first time. They are all charming, fascinating, and fragile.

