



CRITICAL KINGDOMS

STORIES OF HOPE

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In this series, we travel far and wide to some of the world's most exotic and diverse corners to discover unrivaled wildlife and natural environments: we will visit the critical kingdoms of Australia, Africa and Indonesia.

While these lands look beautiful and serene on the surface, they are actually in grave danger. Manmade threats such as pollution, global warming, and more are quickly destroying these environments and will continue to do so unless we band together to take a stand. However, there are many stories of hope.

EP01: AUSTRALIA

Our journey begins in the land down under. An isolated island continent consisting of ancient rainforests, great grasslands, and vast deserts, Australia is home to many species of plants and animals that you won't find anywhere else. However, this is also the country with the highest mammal disappearance rate in the world and global markets are exploiting its natural resources. We examine the threats posed to the legendary Great Barrier Reef, how Lady Elliot Island needs restoration to reach its former lush beauty, and how bush fires are destroying land left and right. Where there is a problem, though, there are always people working for a solution. We discover the stories of hope in what scientists, NGOs, and volunteers are doing to combat these issues to revitalise the critical kingdom of Australia.

Our journey begins on the northeastern coast at the world-famous Great Barrier Reef. The largest living organism in the world, this coral reef covers an area larger than Germany and is home to thousands of marine species. Recently though, the reef has been suffering from coral bleaching, an effect of rising water temperatures and acidity. Scientists are now looking for solutions to preserve and repopulate coral reefs.

Preserved and repopulated: for centuries, Lady Elliot Island was a pristine paradise, where thousands of birds would nest during the year and contribute to the balance of the ecosystem. European settlers destroyed this harmony; but now, attempts are being made to restore the island to its former beauty.

Finally, we explore the water supply shortage, how it affects farming, and how it has contributed to the massively destructive bush fires in recent years. We speak to experts to learn about rescuing wildlife from these environmental threats, how scientists are learning to use fire to rejuvenate the landscape instead of destroying it, and how Australians are trying to protect their trees.

Australians are banding together to fight the effects of climate change and other threats to the landscape, marine life, and wildlife.

EP02: INDONESIA

Next, we travel to the unique country of Indonesia, which is composed of 18,307 islands. Part of the Ring of Fire as well as the Coral Triangle, this country is rich in biodiversity and untapped natural resources—a blessing and a curse. Perhaps the most critical kingdom of them all, we explore the threats posed by global warming, palm oil farming, the illegal wildlife trade, and more. There is hope here as well—endangered species are being tracked and protected, seaweed is being harvested as an alternative food and fuel source, and hazardous waste is being sent back to its countries of origin.

First, we head into the jungle to meet the primates. Jungles are being destroyed for palm oil farming and timber at an alarming rate—the island of Borneo alone has lost 40% of its jungles. This destruction of the natural jungle habitat has had a negative impact on many of the nation's native primates, namely the gibbon, the crested black macaque, orangutans and gibbons. We speak to experts to learn the stories of hope, including what is being done to rescue and rehabilitate the populations of these animals, as well as what we all can do to send a message about the negative impacts of palm oil farming. And we get to know a very special radio station—Radio Kalaweit, broadcasting not only pop songs, but also news from the local gibbon rescue centre. Stay tuned!

Indonesia is sadly also home to wild animal markets, where native species are sold as pets or as fresh meat. These animals are kept in awful conditions—unsanitary and unhygienic, these conditions are breeding grounds for the transmission of diseases. In this episode, we reveal how local officials are making an effort to break up the illegal wildlife trade and rescue these animals from these horrendous living conditions—whether it's the slow loris, native bird species, or marine life.

Finally, we explore the seas of Indonesia. The marine life is under massive threat from global warming, pollution, and extensive fishing. Shark and ray numbers have been reduced drastically; but now scientists are stepping up to educate



local fishers not only about the importance of a balanced ecosystem, but also about alternative ways to fish and earn their livelihoods. Anti-poaching measures, targeting travelling circuses that showcase Bottlenose dolphins around the islands instead of letting them swim the oceans peacefully, are also in place.

EP03: AFRICA

Finally, we travel to the cradle of mankind: Africa. Rich in resources, Africa has long been exploited by global market demand. In this episode, we reveal the stories of hope of what is being done to combat poaching, how we can work to save our closest cousins, the apes, and whether the fastest lang animal on our planet can race extinction. Environmentalists, locals, and scientists have come together to give us stories of hope.

The black market for Africa's unique and endangered species has grown in recent years, especially with the onset of the coronavirus as people struggle to make a living. The pangolin, the black rhino, and the African lion are among the species most in danger of poaching. We learn from experts how these animals are being protected and cared for by volunteers and African tribes, when modern technology is paired with ancient wisdom.

Humans share well over 95% of our DNA with three great apes: the bonobo, the chimpanzee, and the gorilla. All are in grave danger; be it poaching or bush meat trade. We will meet scientists continuing the legacy of Dian Fossey, who are fighting for the Mountain Gorillas' survival in Virunga National Park.

And we'll be encountering the Cheetah Conservation Fund that has been set up in 1990 by cheetah-enthusiast Dr Laurie Marker. Witnessing the species' rapid decline, Marker set up the fund to find ways for locals to live with the cheetahs—instead of fighting them.

In this series, we speak to scientists, environmentalists, and other experts to learn about these threats and discover stories of hope of how we can help. We try to understand what we can do to reverse the damage we've done in order to revitalise and breathe life back into these critical kingdoms. In this series, we witness stories of hope for the future of our planet and the beautiful species that live on it.



NATURE