



MORAVA BETWEEN DELUGE AND DROUGHT

4K

1 x 50 min.

4K, 5.1 and Stereo

Written and directed by Manfred Christ and Tomáš Hulík

Executive producers: Sabine Holzer, Walter Köhler



TERRA MATER
Factual Studios

One of the last and most exceptional remaining riparian wildernesses: join us on an exploration of the Morava River in the heart of Europe.

Particularly in its last 60 kilometres, along the border between Austria and Slovakia, the river develops a distinctive personality and international significance, forming vast wetlands containing meadows, forests and a wild network of branches and streams.

Just a stone's throw from these wetlands, there are ancient sand dunes. The animals and plants here thrive in dry, hot and sandy surroundings in which the sky appears to meet the land and the sun and clouds create picturesque landscapes that are reminiscent of the American west.

Only a few species are able to navigate both of these vastly different worlds; birds of prey such as the eastern imperial eagle, but also ground dwellers like wild boars and deer move between the two different habitats. Regular flooding often drives the region's larger animals to higher, more arid elevations. Entire herds of red deer, fallow deer, wild boars and even mouflons can frequently be seen wading or swimming through the river and its many tributaries.

Between May and July, the air is filled with scarce swallowtails. These butterflies glide on thermal currents without beating their wings for several minutes. Close-by, some of Europe's most colourful birds, bee-eaters, have established a colony.

The annual flooding defines life along on the Morava. It is the life force of the wetlands. The floodwater penetrates far inland, creating ponds and puddles and contributes to the diversity of the local flora and fauna. As soon as the waters begin to recede, fish enthusiasts such as herons and storks settle on the damp ground, attracted by fish trapped in puddles. Foxes emerge to try a little fishing, and even white-tailed eagles occasionally partake of the generous fish buffet.

Konik ponies have grazed in the meadows that surround the stork colony for several years. Also known as Polish primitive horses, these animals are closely related to the extinct Eurasian wild horse or tarpan and are perfectly adapted to the coarse environment of the wetlands.

White storks close-by are busy at this time of year. Several decades ago, the birds established a colony in ancient oaks behind a local castle, just 400 metres from the river—the largest colony in central Europe. Depending on season and conditions, up to 30 or 40 breeding pairs inhabit the various levels of this WWF nature reserve at any one time.

Slow-moving rivers surrounded by both wetlands and an encroaching dry, hot steppe landscape have become scarce in central Europe. This film simultaneously explores and pays tribute to one of the last and most exceptional remaining riparian wildernesses in this part of the world.

A Terra Mater Factual Studios / Cosmos Factory co-production
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