

NATURE



WILD MIAMI



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Executive producers: **Ivo Filatsch, Sabine Holzer**

1x50 min.
4K, 5.1 and Stereo



#terramatters

The stories of American cities are inextricably linked with the tales of immigrants, making their lives there. And Miami is no exception – in the last century, it has become a melting pot of wildlife from around the globe.

South Florida's buzzing metropolis has become a new home for Indian peafowls. We follow some chicks that just hatched into an urban world. They immediately run across some of Miami's other animal immigrants.

The most obvious are the anoles: small lizards with flashy colors on their throats, which they use to challenge rivals and attract mates. The green anole was Florida's only tree-dwelling lizard for thousands of years. But today, the suburbs swarm with nine other anole species from across the Caribbean. They arrived here as unwanted pets, or as stowaways on cargo ships.

Yet, Miami harbours a lot of other native species, like the ever-present racoons. A female is looking for a place to stay with her young. She finds a park full of fellow species, and full of opportunities. When humans visit the park, they often leave remains of their fast-food meals behind. It's an all-you-can-eat buffet for mom and her kits, who are diving into the trash cans. There's a reason people call them trash pandas ...

The first full moons after the summer storms trigger the mass migration of giant blue land crabs from their terrestrial burrows to the sea. Thousands of these crabs, whose claws can reach 30 centimeters

across, march across busy roads, through manicured backyards, and into dense mangroves to reach the warm, shallow waters of Biscayne Bay, where males and females meet to spawn in the high tide.

Miami also has an intricate network of canals that cut through the city. These canals are full of animal immigrants, too: tropical aquarium fish, released into the city's waterways by owners weary of caring for them, thrive here. Colorful cichlids establish breeding territories in the shallows, with the parents fearlessly defending their offspring.

In many ways, parrots are the peafowl's polar opposite – where peafowl live hard and die young, parrots can live for many decades; and where peacocks compete to mate with as many peahens as they can, some parrots pair with the same mate for life. But both groups of birds have found a home in Miami, thanks to humans' unquenchable desire to surround themselves with beautiful things.

However their fortunes change, the animal immigrants of Miami have beaten the odds to gain a foothold on a new continent. But in a city that's so intimately linked with the rest of the world, it won't be long before a new generation of animal immigrants arrives, to create a new life for themselves – in Wild Miami ...

A co-production of Terra Mater Factual Studios / Day's Edge Productions / Smithsonian Channel

