



4K **SCOTLAND**
THE NEW WILD

3 x 50 min. Written and directed by Nigel Pope and Jackie Savery

4K, 5.1 and Stereo Executive producers: Roman Landauer, Sabine Holzer, Walter Köhler



Scotland is moving into a new age of the Wild. Driven by the passion of youth and a spirit of innovation, re-wilding has become a flagship issue for the 21st century. With a new appreciation of the wild and its wildlife, the future of Scotland's most iconic habitats may be wilder than we could ever imagine ...

In this dramatically realised three-part series, we present the definitive 4K portrait of the natural world in Scotland. Using the most sophisticated time-lapse, slow motion, aerial and underwater camera systems known, this is the wildlife of Scotland as it marches into the future. From city to coast to island to mountain to the bottom of the ocean, we present a portrait that is both iconic and surprising.

Although Scotland may have the oldest landscapes in Europe, it's not a static place—the natural world is as dynamic as the people that reside here. Ever-changing, it is now poised to enter a new phase as we and our natural heritage adjust to the new wild.

As climate change, shrinking habitats and an ever-increasing human population make their indelible mark, the natural world here must make a heroic stand if it's to even remain a shadow of what it was. Yet, despite this pressure, many wild animals and plants here are increasing, thriving and even returning from extinction. As the world moves out of the darkness of the pandemic, we need a strong diverse wild Scotland more than ever—for our mental health, for our legacy, for the health of the planet itself.

EPISODE 1: ISLANDS

The camera moves gracefully beneath the waves through waving seagrass and kelp. Shafts of light bring out the turquoise, ochre and gold tones of the reef. Soft corals and jewel anemones line the rocks as shoals of silver fish twist through the blue. We're not in the Caribbean, this is the Firth of Lorne marine protected area on Argyll's West Coast. Carefully protected and now expanding, this world is home to porpoises, dolphins and minke whales.

The islands are lifeboats for rare and special species which are scarce on the mainland—rasping corncrakes on the Uists, gentle coughts onIslay and Colonsay, and now on almost every island, the ultimate pin-up of the re-wilding movement: iolar suil na greine—the eagle with the sun in its eye.

For the first time, we film White-tailed eagles on their newly colonised territory near the Old man of Hoy in Orkney. At the extreme North in Shetland, our star performer is the tiny but feisty merlin—one of the world's smallest falcons. Here, our slow-motion cameras capture them chasing down pipits and skylarks on the hills above the voes of Unst and Fetlar.

In high summer, in the dead of night, on the peaks of the Rum mountains, we experience the eery cackling of a huge colony of manx shearwaters—it's the largest colony of these seabirds in the entire world and we film it properly for the very first time with special low-light cameras. The warming seas have strikingly changed the ecosystems here and almost anything can turn up from humpback whale to sunfish, from orca to blue shark. Of all Scotland's new wilds, this is one of the most striking.

EPISODE 2: HIGHLANDS

We're in a rainforest. The canopy is closed above our head and the spring air is alive with birdsong. Soaring above the green roof of the forest we can see that the trees go on as far as the eye can see—from the ocean to the distant mountains. On the edges of the forest, the meandering river has been engineered into lagoons, channels and tree-studded pools. This is the land of the beaver—but we're not in Canada, but in Tayside in Highland Perthshire. We follow a family of beavers during breeding season, seeing their tiny kits emerge from the lodge and watching them fell aspen and birch to maintain this special habitat.

Further North is one of Scotland's resurgent glories—the Caledonian pine forest. For the first time, we film one of the most iconic animals to be re-introduced here—the European Lynx. Early trials reintroducing this sleek predator here are moving ahead soon and our cameras will be in place to record the cat's first steps. But it's not the only little big cat here: the original tiger of the Highlands is the Scottish wildcat, still not properly filmed in the wild. But this is about to change, thanks to our superb local relationships and command of remote camera technology.

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There are species in the Highlands that don't exist anywhere else in the world. For the first time we see the tree-top life of the nation's only endemic species—the Scottish crossbill. More parrot than finch, it lives out a secret special life cracking seeds from cones in the very summits of the pines.

Red squirrels, ospreys and golden eagles will also take the spotlight. We'll be spying on a mountain-top eagle eyrie and filming ospreys under the water from a trout's eye view.

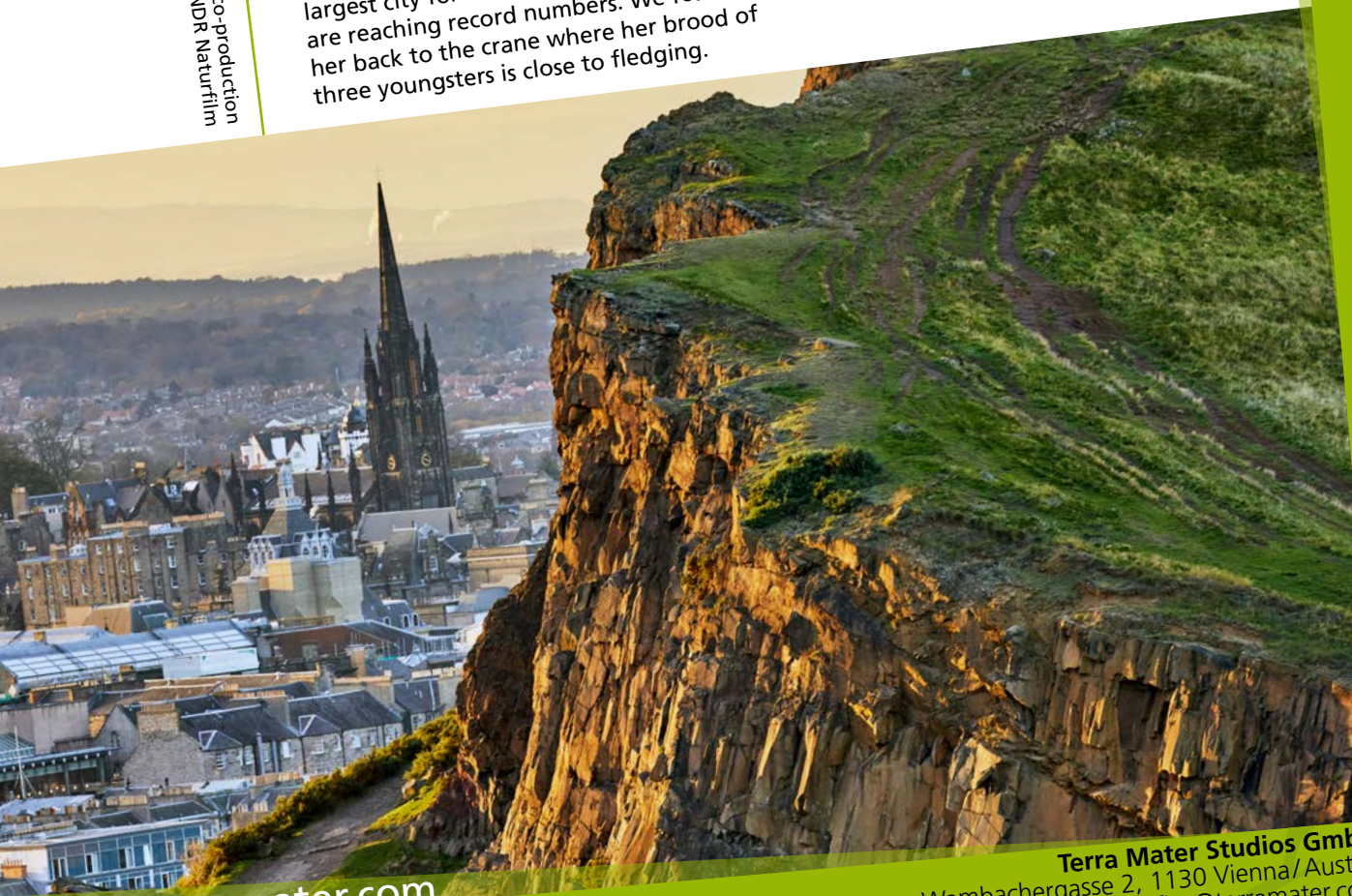
EPISODE 3: BORDERLANDS

Something is stirring at the apex of the Clydeport crane close to the Clyde in the heart of urban Glasgow. A female peregrine falcon! She takes wing and soon we're flying high above Scotland's urban heartlands. This is the newest and most vibrant wildlife habitat in Scotland. Peregrines have been nesting in Scotland's largest city for several years, but now they are reaching record numbers. We follow her back to the crane where her brood of three youngsters is close to fledging.

This episode takes us from the sprawl of the central belt where roe deer, water voles, kingfishers are increasingly at home alongside housing estates, shopping malls and motorways, to the plantations and saltmarshes of Dumfries and Galloway—a hotspot for new colonists including red kites and pine martens.

In Edinburgh, we meet a surprisingly bold otter family making a home on the Water of Leith, pipistrelle bats that flit beneath the castle ramparts and Scotland's largest colony of common terns who have pride of place on the quay near the moored Royal Yacht Britannia.

In Ayrshire, the land of Burns, we see how new hedgerows and gentler farming are supporting badgers, voles and barn owls—an inspiration for a new generation.



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