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A STUNNING DANCE OF LIFE AND SURVIVAL



find out more

WILD INDIA

Written and directed by **Matt Hamilton**
Executive producers: **Sabine Holzer, Martin Mészáros**
2 x 50 min., 4K, 5.1



Spectacular scenery. Breath-taking diversity. Dramatic change. India is one of the most biodiverse nations on our planet.

Guarded by an impenetrable mountain range, the elements combine to create an awe-inspiring realm of intense beauty and mystery, filled with charismatic animals. Towering mountains, bone dry deserts, lush plains and tangled jungles may seem worlds apart but, as our stunning two-part series reveals, India's unique geography means all life here is deeply connected.

We combine jaw-dropping cinematography and animal behaviour with a powerful narrative to deliver a compelling, immersive mini-series. At the heart of our story lies India's most defining feature, the mighty Himalayas. These mountains, home to snow leopards, brown bears and Tibetan foxes, both isolate the country and control its weather. Pushed up millions of years ago, their extraordinary influence connects all life here.

Episode 1: FIRE

follows a diverse cast of animals as they battle to survive one day during India's baking hot and bone-dry winter. From rare lions to walking fish, sloth bears, gibbons, desert wolves and jungle cats, all must find a way to beat the heat. India's uniquely hot winter happens because the Himalayas stand in the way of cold winds from further north.

Dawn. The haunting call of a hoolock gibbon hangs in the mist. As the sun rises, it's first rays glisten on the dazzling tail feathers of a male peacock in full display. In a nearby clearing, a rare Asiatic lion cub explores her surroundings. The land is parched and barren, but the heat is only just starting to build. Our first episode follows one intense day during India's uniquely hot, dry winter.

The story of India's winter, however, begins in a very different setting. Heavy snow blankets the Himalayas, where the morning light reveals a successful snow leopard kill. Her prey weakened and forced down to the lower valleys, it is far simpler to catch. Up here certainly looks like the winter most of us recognise. But because the Himalayas block cold winds from further north, India in winter is bone dry and baking hot.

The Himalayas, the tallest mountains on Earth, were forced up millions of years ago when India slammed into the Asian continent. And while this extraordinary nation stretches for thousands of kilometres from tropical rainforest to barren desert, these mighty mountains unite all life here, isolating the country and controlling its weather.

As the morning begins to heat up, ten thousand demoiselle cranes touch down in India's desert. Each winter they arrive, soaring over the Himalayan peaks. Around them, fan-tailed lizards bask in the morning sun. Once warmed up, they flash bright colours to attract mates. With many males competing, comical fights soon follow.

Blackbucks now begin their own mating duels, so any young are born in easier, wetter times. Lions, however, have good reason to raise their young during the dry season. Shrinking water holes concentrate prey, so the young cub has plenty to eat.

As the day wears on, the heat continues to build. In the dry forest, a sloth bear, carrying a youngster on her back, scrapes the scorched earth for ants. Chital deer wait out the hottest part of the day in the shade. But as afternoon arrives, they emerge to feed and rut.

With the deer distracted, it is a good time for young tigers to practice their stalking skills.

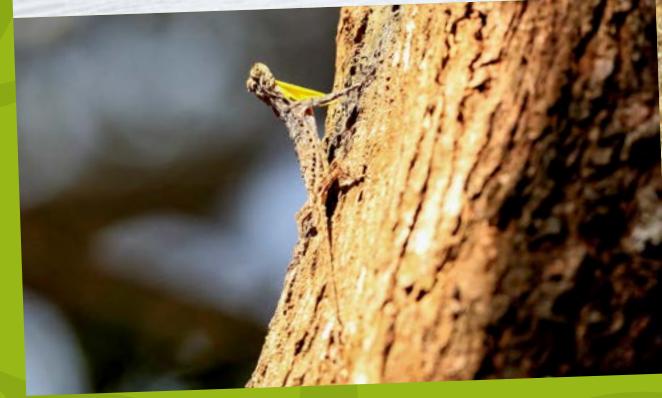
Some afternoons it gets so hot that the forest bursts into flames. The thick bark of teak trees is built to withstand this, but most animals must flee the fire, forcing some, like sloth bears uncomfortably close together. Fire is one of the greatest threats to the young lion cub and its family. With little more than 600 Asiatic lions remaining, they can't afford to lose their best hunting grounds.

Many species avoid the daytime heat, coming out only at night. Wolves stalk the desert in the fading light, competing with striped hyena for prey. As the sun sets, hundreds of bats pour out from a small cave, attracting the attention of a jungle cat. With water holes almost drying out completely, fish move overground to reach new ones, a challenge they must complete before the sun rises once again.

Episode 2: WATER

follows the dramatic change brought by India's summer monsoon rains. From majestic tigers to waving frogs, lion-tailed macaques to one-horned rhinos, and fishing cats to elephant herds, the rising waters bring both fortune and devastation. As summer monsoon winds blow in off the Indian Ocean, the Himalayas trap clouds. They build to sixteen kilometres high, forcing eleven metres of rainfall each year.

A majestic Bengal tiger comes to rest in the shade of a large boulder. Three tiny faces slowly appear. Her cubs. Despite the heat of the day, they play with boundless energy. For many weeks, this sheltered spot has been the only world they've known. But dramatic change is coming. India is set to transform. Our second episode follows the story of the rain-soaked summer monsoon.



NATURE

Environment matters

India's monsoon winds are changing direction. As the summer sun heats the land, hot air rises, drawing powerful winds off the ocean. Rains arrive and drench the tropical south, forcing frogs to wave to attract a mate above all the noise. Strange fish climb up rocks to spawn and rare lion-tailed macaques compete with giant squirrels to feast on giant ripening jackfruit.

The monsoon winds drive moisture north across India's great forests and grasslands, washing them with lush greenery. Langur monkeys take advantage of all the fruit, as chital deer pick up the pieces below. With so many eyes, it's a tougher time for the tiger to hunt. At least the many pools of water keep her cubs busy playing. In the desert, lions struggle as their prey disperses, while the rains trigger the start of the wild ass mating season.

The summer monsoon rain soaks most of India, though parts of the Himalaya in the north remain completely dry. Here, snow leopards now follow argali sheep to the highest peaks, while Himalayan brown bears and Tibetan foxes, pika hunting specialists, patrol the lower valleys.

The rains don't reach here because the mighty Himalayas block clouds from passing. Instead, the clouds reach the foothills and build to sixteen kilometres high. With no further to go, they release a deluge, with as much as eleven metres of rain falling each year. The Himalayas, which isolate India, make the monsoon rains more intense than anywhere else.

In the foothills, valleys burst into flower as red pandas seek out mates. Immense rivers flow to the most fertile plains on Earth, home to herds of Asian

elephants and enigmatic one-horned rhinos. These rivers flow on towards vast mangroves, home to fishing cats, who drop from the banks onto unsuspecting fish.

India's summer monsoon transforms the country completely. But soon the winds will turn once again. Cut off and ruled by the mighty Himalayas, India has become one of the most biodiverse nations on the planet. As our spectacular series reveals, it is full of surprising stories, epic landscapes and charismatic wild animals.

A Terra Mater Studios / Dandy Lion Films production

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