



4K THE ALPS

2 x 50 min. + 1 x 90 min

4K, 5.1 and Stereo

Directed by **Otmar Penker**

Series producer: **Andrea Gastgeb**

Executive producer: **Sabine Holzer**



TERRA MATER
Factual Studios

The Alps—wild mountains, extreme lives, but also a magical world.

This majestic mountain range connects eight countries and reaches heights of up to 4,000 metres above sea level. At a length of 1,200 kilometres, the Alps form both a connecting bridge between western and eastern Europe and a high barrier between southern and central Europe. The mountains act as a mighty water reservoir and continental watershed, feeding innumerable rivers that flow into three different oceans.

Their highest peak, Mont Blanc, is surrounded by long, soaring mountains with ice-covered slopes. These great summits are just one reason the so-called "Roof of Europe" continues to fascinate—across the continent and around the world. The incredible diversity of landscapes, flora and fauna makes the Alps a unique natural treasure at the heart of Europe.

Vast river valleys and huge forests cover giant areas, and craggy peaks and rugged canyons dot the landscape. Millions of years of tectonic activity, glacier formation, erosion and weather have shaped today's Alps. The vast, exposed mountains are even subject to their own climate. In a matter of mere seconds, pleasant, sunny weather can change into raging storms. In general, the summers are short and hot, while winters are long and harsh. These extremes are challenging for local life, and plants and animals both needed to develop complex survival strategies.

From the spring thaw to the depths of the freezing winter, this two-part documentary presents fascinating insights into the compelling alpine wilderness and its many secrets, great and small.

The first episode of the two-part series, 'The High Life', focuses on the warm months of the year and opens near the sun-soaked Mediterranean coast. Here, in the western foothills of the Alps in Italy and France, the Mediterranean flora and fauna meets the animals and plants of the alpine environment. When lizards in the low-lying olive groves begin seeking out mates in spring, the marmots are still hibernating in their burrows in the snow-covered higher elevations.

In one of the deepest Alpine river canyons, Verdon Gorge, the griffon vultures have already begun to reproduce and rear their young. Meanwhile, higher up, a golden eagle continues to circle above its still-frozen realm. Eventually, the snow gives in to the ever-warming temperatures and begins to melt; the perfect moment for marmots to emerge. After eight long months of hibernation, it's a blast to stretch some legs and stock up on nutritious food, but the marmots must be careful: the golden eagles are equally hungry and never far away, circling the skies.



A Terra Mater Factual Studios production in co-production with THIRTEEN Productions LLC, Doclights/NDR Naturfilm, France Télévisions in association with PBS, CPB und WNET supported by RTF and Carinthia Film Commission

Innumerable common frogs that have spent the cold season underground now re-appear and begin their courtship in the Alpine ponds and lakes. Warm spring winds drive away the final patches of snow from the mountain pastures. Millions of crocuses and other harbingers of spring that were biding their time now cover the slopes in a sea of colour. Meanwhile, the forests resound with the distinctive mating calls of the western capercaillies.

Spring and summer are a time for courtship, mating, feasting, giving birth and rearing offspring—for everyone who lives and thrives in this extraordinary environment.

In the Alps, summer lasts just four months and is therefore extremely demanding for most wild animal species: ibex, red deer, chamois, marmots, golden eagles, ptarmigans, mountain hares, lynxes, wolves and bears have all found ways of taking full advantage of this brief time of plenty.

The second episode, 'Winter's Fortress', examines the cold, icy seasons and the many hardships and dangers that accompany life during an Alpine winter. Rocks and ice, freezing cold, winter storms, deep snow, deadly avalanches and scarcity—there's no end to difficulties for the locals. And yet, every year, the survival strategies that have developed throughout the ages are successful, and life continues to endure in the inhospitable world of the Alps in winter.



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