



We know pandas almost entirely from zoos, and little about their behaviour in the wild.

Their mountainous home in China covers a huge area of dense bamboo forest, and discovering how wild pandas live has proved almost impossible. Yet if they are to survive, it is important.

The rumour is that pandas are very different in the wild. It provides clues as to why they can't breed in captivity. Strange cries, fights between males, blood-stained trails, individuals moving huge distances and females held captive; all this adds to the mystery.

Yet, from what we know of pandas, they must have tender relationships, be good mothers, and be at home in their freezing mountain environment. This film documents wild pandas for the very first time.

For three years, award-winning cameraman Jacky Poon and his team of scientists and rangers have had unprecedented access to the Qin Mountains. Only 250 pandas live in over 350,000 square kilometres of mountainous terrain, so finding and filming wild pandas is almost impossible. There are clouded leopards, strange Takin, dancing pheasants, and mountain-top

monkeys. Yet not only have they found wild pandas, they have filmed amazing new behaviour: males confronting each other, females held hostage, and mating. It is a breakthrough in panda filming, and a landmark in our understanding of wild pandas.

The team has also had unprecedented access to Woolong Panda breeding centre. They have followed the head keeper, Wudaifu, for several years, from a panda birth to the release back to the wild. The footage of the birth and growing up over the months, tenderly cared for, is heart-warming. A year on, and the youngster is selected to return to the wild. The keepers have to teach him how to cope: dressing up as pandas and training him to fear leopards, bears and people.

The extraordinary story of how a panda born in captivity returns to face his natural wilderness is unique. In a final climax, six months after the release, Wudaifu journeys deep into the snowy forest for a month to find his panda.

He is accompanied by our dedicated filming team. It's not going to be easy ...



NATURE

4K
PANDA GOES WILD

1 x 50 min. Produced by Jacky Poon and Mark Fletcher
4K, 5.1 and Stereo Executive producers: Sabine Holzer, Walter Köhler



TERRA MATER
Factual Studios