

NATURE



DISCOVER THE UNTAMED BEAUTY OF AMERICA'S SOUTH



find out more

REALM OF THE WALKING FOREST

THE FLORIDA KEYS

Written and directed by **Zoltan Török**
Executive producers: **Sabine Holzer, Walter Köhler**
1x 50 min., 4K, 5.1



At the southern tip of Florida, where land, sea, and sky meet, lies the Florida Keys. This chain of tropical islands with its charming natural beauty and bordered by the warm, shallow waters of Florida Bay, is the ultimate tropical getaway for humans. But most visitors to this paradise have no idea they're sharing their vacation with some pretty wild neighbours.

Just beneath the surface of sleepy lagoons, American crocodiles patrol the mangrove roots. Ospreys soar above the water. While on land the tiny Key deer move gracefully through the dense bushes.

These animals are the stars of our story. Alongside them, many of America's most fascinating creatures – often living just a beach towels throw away from vacationing humans – also make an appearance.

Our Lone Wanderer – The American Crocodile

A solitary male crocodile leads us through his peaceful, secretive, underwater world where lemon sharks, bottlenose dolphins, the rare sawfish and gentle manatees, also live. Throughout his long life, this ancient reptile has witnessed a human invasion which forces him to enter our world – like clean, green meadows where humans hit little white balls with iron clubs!

An (almost) Perfect Winged Family – The Ospreys

Ospreys mate for life, the pair stay together only during the long nesting season. Both parents raise their chicks in impressive nests built in the trees above waters where the crocodile lives. Here, the red mangroves tangled, reddish roots appear to be standing or walking on the surface of the water earning them the title of “walking trees.” Roseate spoonbills, brown pelicans, black skimmers, flamingos and many other bird species also share the sky with the ospreys ... along with sneaky gulls that never miss a chance to raid an unattended nest.

A Single Mum – The Key Deer

Our deer heroine raises her offspring alone. The bucks are off doing, well, buck things. The mangroves are full of dangers for her fawn, especially when the pair must swim between islands.

But no natural predator compares to the threat of humans. Main roads lined with plants attract the deer, exposing them to fatal encounters with cars and trucks. When vultures gather to feed on the fallen deer an unexpected scene unfolds. Feral iguanas which are typically plant-eaters, switch their diet to

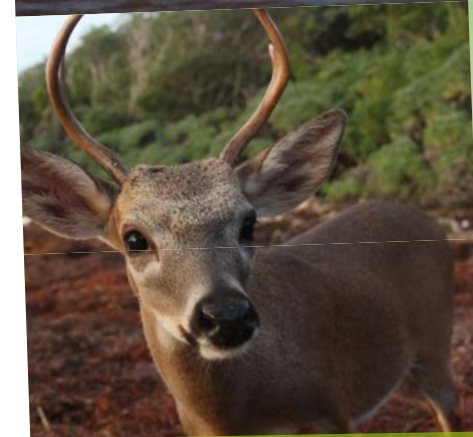
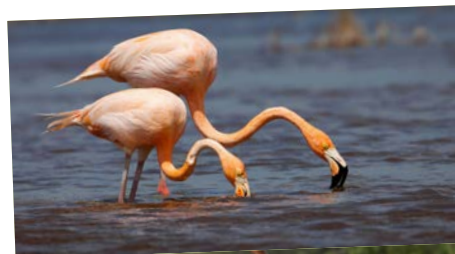
carion! They'll even fight the vultures for their share, so there's less food available for the scavenging birds.

Other species found only here, like the Lower Keys marsh rabbit and the Key Largo woodrat are also under threat from invasive species.

But perhaps the biggest threat of all to the nature of Florida Keys are the increasingly fierce and frequent hurricanes that ravage the islands. Despite this, there is hope for the natural inhabitants of the Keys, thanks to the world's largest habitat restoration project. It's been in action now for over 25 years.

5 million humans visit the Keys every year, yet they are never far away from the feathered, fierce, or furry inhabitants of this unique place.

**A production of Terra Mater Studios and Wild Tales Production
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