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SAN DIEGO AMERICA'S WILDEST CITY

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1x 50 min., 4K, 5.1



Welcome to San Diego, the birthplace of California, where 70 miles of beaches, countless attractions, and idyllic year-round weather attract more than 30 million annual visitors to join its more than three million permanent residents.

But San Diego isn't just "America's Finest City" – it's also America's wildest ...! Nowhere in the USA has more species than this oasis at the cross-roads of hostile worlds.

For millennia, the cold Pacific Ocean has collided with San Diego's rugged coast, scorching desert, and snow-capped mountains, creating a tapestry of habitats bursting with life. The result? A kaleidoscope of wildlife adapted to a landscape with seasonal resources and little fresh water. Humans have been a part of this diversity for millennia, but just in the last two hundred years our numbers have exploded. And the ability of modern humans to reshape the landscape to meet our needs has become virtually limitless.

Today, almost all of San Diego looks man-made. Even its lakes and bays are artificial, created by damming box canyons and dredging tidal marshes. No part of the ecosystem was left unscathed.

With its dense coastal population, massive military bases, and more farms than any county in the United States, San Diego barely resembles its former, more natural self. But first impressions can be deceptive. Look closely and you'll discover a landscape vibrating with wildlife!

With more ecosystems than any other city in the world – from deserts, forests, and chaparral to rivers, estuaries, intertidal zones, and the Pacific Ocean, San Diego is the most biodiverse city in America.

However, the geographic isolation that created so much of San Diego's diversity is now one of its

greatest threats. In the face of the massive anthropogenic transformation, the plants and animals here are now trapped by deserts to the east, ocean to the west, a border to the south, and urbanization to the north. To survive here, they must learn to live alongside people, or they won't live at all.

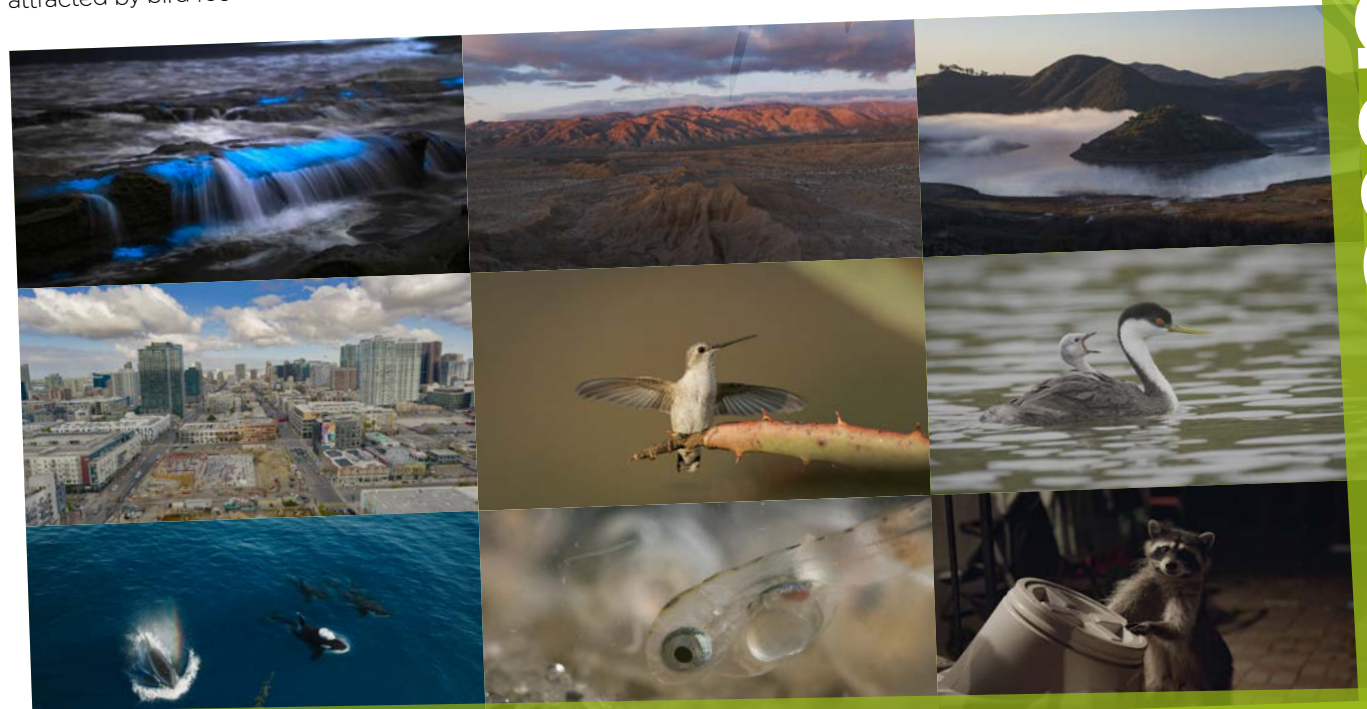
Californian squirrels inhabit many of San Diego's parks. Harbour seals meet and give birth to their young at a beach that was once especially created for humans. Grebes have made their home at the reservoirs and artificial lakes in the backcountry. Hummingbirds are buzzing around in the gardens, attracted by bird feeders that homeowners have set

up for them, while a roadrunner, attracted by all the buzz, has learned there's an easy meal for him, too – by jumping and picking young and unexperienced hummingbirds out of the air.

"Nature" in San Diego isn't just the remnants of an ecosystem that once was ... It's an entirely new, human-constructed ecosystem that poses unique challenges and opportunities for the wild animals that share space with us.

San Diego: America's Wildest City tells the remarkable story of wildlife in America's most biodiverse region making a living in a landscape utterly transformed by humans. It is an epic window into the secret lives of wildlife adapting to a new world where people decide what nature looks like.

A Day's Edge and Terra Mater Studios production
in co-production with The WNET Group
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