Myths
THE GREATEST MYSTERIES OF HUMANITY

10 x 50'
Myths —
The Greatest Mysteries of Humanity, Season 1 + 2

They run across all periods of history: myths. But how much truth is there in them? And what is fact and what is fiction?

Each episode of the fascinating series The Greatest Mysteries of Humanity examines precisely this question. The series follows scientists and hobby researchers alike. Archaeologists uncover ancient graves and go on underwater expeditions. The traces lead to ancient Egypt, to Attila, the barbaric king of the Huns or straight in the middle of the infamous Bermuda Triangle. From biblical stories to historical figures and modern urban legends.

Where is the legendary Holy Grail located? Did the fabled Atlantis really exist? And are werewolves only pure fantasy creatures?

Produced by: Story House Productions for ZDF.info and ZDF Enterprises

Planet of Treasures

There were seven wonders of the world in antiquity, and UNESCO counts 1,121 treasures today. A good half of them are threatened by natural disasters, war, urbanization or decay.

In Planet of Treasures, historian Sir Christopher Clark presents these most fascinating places around the globe: his path leads from the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt to the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, from the “Palace of the Winds” in Jaipur, India, to the Jordanian desert, from the lagoon city of Venice to the Mexican city of Teotihuacan and the city of Hue in Vietnam along with many other impressive cultural and natural monuments.

This six-part series was created to familiarize a broad international audience with this world cultural heritage and takes the viewers to the most exciting places in the world.

Produced by: interscience film for ZDF in association with ZDF Enterprises
Crime Scene: Antiquity

Crime has been around since the beginning of mankind. Human history tells stories of rage and hate, of greed and suffering, of death and destruction. Nothing lets us look deeper into the dark abysses of a past epoch than the murders and misdeeds committed in it. But many crimes of the past are still unsolved today. Neither the perpetrators have been caught, nor has evidence been presented against them.

What was impossible then is now possible: Scientific methods can be used to solve crimes committed thousands of years ago. In the five-part documentary series *Crime Scene: Antiquity*, profilers, weapons experts, geneticists and historians use modern forensics and experimental archaeology to identify the criminals. In the process, they succeed again and again in shedding light on the darkness of historical criminal cases.

Produced by: taglicht media Film- und Fernsehproduktion for ZDF.info in association with ZDF Enterprises

Cold Case

This new historical crime mystery series combines the delicious twist-and-turn of a murder mystery with a close-up view of history’s most fascinating epochs. It reinvestigates high-profile murder cases using state-of-the-art forensics and archaeological methods. In the process, the series challenges our views on the life and times of these prominent victims.

*Cold Case* takes its audience from the ancient Egypt of Ramesses III, through Medici’s Renaissance Italy to Marilyn Monroe’s golden age of Hollywood.

The series’ host, internationally acclaimed actress Florence Kasumba, looks at all the suspects and theories around a case. She explores virtual crime scene recreations, analyzes forensic evidence and assembles a team of real-life criminal experts to separate valid evidence from popular myth in her crime lab.

Produced by: Story House Productions in association with ZDF, Arte and ZDF Enterprises
Selection Spring/Summer 2021

Highlight — New

Ancient Apocalypse

| History + Biographies | 6 x 50’ |

Ancient Apocalypse investigates six catastrophic stories of how the world’s greatest civilisations collapsed.

Every continent has its ruins — places where only stones tell the tale of a fallen people. They might lay buried under the Earth, in the shade of jungle canopy or amidst the teeming industry of a modern city. However, they all raise the same questions: How could something so great all but vanish? Why do civilisations collapse?

In this 6-part series, we uncover the scientific reasons why some of history’s most fascinating peoples have disappeared in the face of the natural world’s might. We investigate the end of the Akkadian Empire, the Lost City of Helike, Sodom, the mystery of the Sea Peoples, the Maya Civilisation and Doggerland.

Some of the world’s greatest natural disasters reduced these societies to nothing.

Produced by: World Media Rights for ZDF Enterprises and ZDF.info

New

Children of the Sun

| History + Biographies | 3 x 50’ |

With the demise of the Aztecs, Incas and Mayas, many relics documenting the history of these ancient American empires were lost to time.

Their traces are now buried in the remains of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan in today’s Mexico City, the temple buildings of the Maya or the Inca fortress Machu Picchu. This has led to many myths about their impressive rise and tragic fall.

In three episodes — each dedicated to one of these great civilisations — Children of the Sun shines a light on these influential peoples with the help of state-of-the-art technology. The picture that is revealed is both shocking and fascinating: While their gruesome practices — including human sacrifices — are far from being mere fiction, their advancements in the fields of mathematics, astronomy or craftsmanship still astonish experts today.

Produced by: Doc.station and Storyhouse Productions for ZDF in association with Arte and ZDF Enterprises
The Mystery of the Trojan Horse — On the Trail of a Myth

The history of the Trojan horse is probably one of the most famous stories ever told.

A gigantic wooden horse is loaded with Greek soldiers and presented to the Trojans as a gift. Unsuspecting, they swallow the bait and pull the horse into the city. Under the cover of darkness, the Greeks slip out of the horse and open the gates to their comrades. Only hours later, the mighty Troy goes up in flames.

But what if the myth of the horse is not true at all? New, groundbreaking findings show that one of the most famous stories of all time will probably have to be rewritten. The Trojan horse was probably not a horse at all. But then how did the Greeks outwit their enemies? And what history will we find in the history books in the future?

Produced by: Gruppe 5 for ZDF in association with Arte and ZDF Enterprises

The Secret Story of the Knights Templar

Discover the secrets of the most mysterious and powerful knightly order of the Middle Ages: The Knights Templar.

From the rise of their heavenly power through to their fall within the flames of diabolism. From the rituals and traditions within the medieval knighthood, through the exterminatory campaign against them, to their supposed secret survival and their official legacies bridging the Holy Land and the European continent.

In our series, the mysterious story of the Knights Templar will be unveiled for the first time. We will distinguish between the abundant mythology that has been created about them and the newly acquired historical facts.

Produced by: KM PLUS MEDIA and RMC Production for RMC Découverte with the participation of Histoire in association with ZDF Enterprises and CNC
The Abyss — Rise and Fall of the Nazis

Europe in the 1920s and 1930s — a continent licks its wounds after the devastation of World War I. In this fertile breeding ground for dissent, authoritarian regimes are on the rise.

The Abyss takes a fresh look at the Third Reich from a global and current perspective. It tells us how the Nazis managed to conquer Germany and then half of Europe within a few years. How could that be, with the horrors of World War I still so fresh? Why did it take so long before they were stopped? A combination of previously unpublished archive material, historic sources and an international team of experts paint a new picture of Hitler’s regime.

The series unpicks the complex sequence of events that boosted a new regime, allowing violence and brutality to unfold on an unbelievable scale. A look at history with direct relevance to the world today.

Produced by: ECO Media TV-Produktion in association with ZDF Enterprises for ZDF.info

What if Hitler had won the War?

The documentary addresses a “classic” in counterfactual history-writing: a Nazi victory in the Second World War. In addition, the program pursues the question how history would have evolved if Hitler had died early.

The main findings are: A German victory in the Second World War was as unlikely as a long-term Nazi regime in Europe or the whole world. Vice versa, Hitler’s earlier death would probably not have turned all of history upside down.

But the documentary demonstrates impressively that history is not predetermined, but that it is rather an always open process. The question of a Nazi victory can be considered a historical warning. And it serves as a remedy against disenchantment with democracy.

Produced by: Gruppe 5 Filmproduktion in collaboration with PHOENIX
### Secret Bunkers

Bunkers are still omnipresent in Europe’s landscapes today. There are hundreds of thousands of them across Europe, most of them made of steel concrete. For tiny Albania alone, estimates run up to 200,000 standardized midget bunkers, apart from an enormous government bunker for the former potentates.

The oldest of these concrete fortifications hail from the time before World War I, when the brick-walled fortresses of the 19th century needed massive strengthening due to new armor-piercing ammunition. After the experiences of trench warfare in World War I, several European post-war governments opted for elaborate bunker systems along their borders as a supposedly impregnable line of defense. Once restricted areas, they are now either ruins or mementoes of, both, the hot and the Cold War.

In two episodes, we trace the story and the architectural highlights of eight of these secret bunkers.

**Produced by:** Doclights for ZDF.info in association with ZDF Enterprises

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### Auschwitz — One Day

The concentration camp of Auschwitz was liberated by the Red Army on January 27, 1945. Until today, Auschwitz is considered synonymous with the Holocaust. This documentary tells the story of a typical day in 1944 from the viewpoint of victims and perpetrators.

It is based on a unique document which is kept in the Israeli memorial site of Yad Vashem. The Auschwitz Album is a collection of photographs intended to chronicle the “work” of the SS. Nearly all photos were taken in just a few days during the final week of May 1944.

They capture the harrowing routine of mass murder in the so-called extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau – the arrival of the Jewish victims in overcrowded cattle cars, their “selection,” i.e. separating those considered fit to work from those destined for the gas chambers.

They show how they were robbed of their possessions, and how those who were not killed right away were turned into shaven, uniformed slave laborers.

**Produced by:** ZDF and ZDF Enterprises

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Hitler’s Circle of Evil

This is the inside story of the rise and fall of the Third Reich told like the drama it really was: from the perspective of those who made it happen — the movers and shakers of the most evil regime in history. They were Hitler’s henchmen — the small galle of war heroes, misfits, careerists and fanatical Nazis who had the ear of the Führer.

Men like ex-chicken farmer and leader of the SS — Heinrich Himmler, Hitler’s adoring but mentally unhinged deputy — Rudolf Hess, fighter ace turned morphine addict — Hermann Göring and sex-crazed propaganda chief — Joseph Goebbels. As they scrabble for power, they will turn on each other in a murky atmosphere of intrigue, betrayal and murder. In a regime where all power derives from one man, they strive to out-do each other in brutality and an unequivocal commitment to the Nazi cause.

Produced by: World Media Rights in association with ZDF Enterprises, Netflix and ZDF.info

Project Nazi

On 30 January 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of the German Reich, and sets out to build a new nation. But how do the Nazis convince ordinary Germans to support Hitler’s vision?

The series explores how Germans were seduced into supporting Nazism through the persuasive power of outstanding design, brilliant engineering, and insidious propaganda. How incredible that a small and extremist political party under the leadership of a failed artist was able to convince an entire nation to give it total power. What was the stupendous sham behind the original Volkswagen (the ‘people’s car’)? Not to forget Germany, the never-to-be World Capital, with its assembly hall for 150,000 people, as well as the 1936 Berlin Olympics filmed by Leni Riefenstahl with a new type of camera capable of recording the events in 3D...

Produced by: Midnight Oil Pictures in association with AHC and ZDF Enterprises
Since the very beginning of human existence, weapons have been produced and used to kill. Bloody conquests and dreadful crimes are committed by using weapons. But freedom fighters, anti-terror units, liberators all depend on weapons. The ‘History of Weapons’ is much more than a technical investigation. It uncovers the connection between the development of a new military device and the aftermath of its usage — dynamics that shaped several millennia of human fate.

The 10-episode documentary series *History of Weapons* tells the story of weaponry that took leading roles in the major battles of history. It reveals the development of arms that often improved the technical progression of its times. It also investigates men’s desperate attempts to tame the destructive power of ever new instruments of war.

*Produced by:* Story House Productions for ZDF and ZDF Enterprises

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This illuminating ten-part series tells the story of World War II through the ten most pivotal turning points in the conflict. Gripping story-telling illustrated with exquisitely restored and colourised archived films and supported by a global cast of stellar historians bring this crucially important era in history to life.

From Germany’s “Lightning War” on France; the RAF’s heroic defence of Britain; the bloody turning point at Stalingrad; the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor; the American fight-back at Midway; the Allied landing on Normandy and the doomed German counter offensive; the liberation of the death camps and the dropping of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this is World War II as you’ve never seen it before.

*Produced by:* World Media Rights in association with ZDF Enterprises, Discovery UK, NETFLIX, N-TV Germany with the participation of PLANÉTE+
New

Forsaken Places

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Historic places, forgotten, threatened and threatening at the same time. Made of steel, poured in concrete or blasted out of a mountain: Yesterday’s monuments from the great eras of history come alive again. These places are also full of personal stories told to us by contemporary witnesses. Up close and personal accounts of natural disasters, wars or global mega accidents that took a toll on those monuments and places – and the people around them as well.

In four episodes, we visit twelve such “Lost Places” – military bases, prestigious buildings, tourist paradises and hospitals. And the people who used to live and work there help us discover these mysterious places. They guide us through an emotional and educational journey into their personal stories, which are always part of history as well.

Produced by: Cinecentrum for ZDF.info in association with ZDF Enterprises

New

Orient Express — A Train Writes History

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Putting the Orient Express — also called “the train of trains” — on its tracks called for considerable stamina.

Several times, the ambitious project of Georges Nagelmackers was on the brink of failure as the Belgian entrepreneur was facing the bankruptcy of his sleeping car company, the Compagnie International des Wagons-Lits (CIWL). Yet, he kept on striving for his goal — to link Europe’s capitals by a network of night trains.

Produced by: Gruppe 5 Filmproduktion for ZDF in co-production with ORF
Mysterious Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is mostly characterized by volcanoes and deserts. Many parts are rugged and unwelcoming. In former times, the inhospitable territory was ruled by clans who often fought against each other. For fertile land was and still is scarce.

Ancient petroglyphs tell stories from a time when the Arabian Peninsula still was a fertile Savannah, but that time is long gone now. Caravan routes cross through the desert. Merchants like the legendary Nabataeans were transporting goods along these routes across the peninsula on their camels. In the Saudi town of Mada'in Saleh, they left their marks by building massive grave monuments. The city of Mecca was just another caravan post on the legendary Incense Route until the seventh century CE.

Produced by: SPIEGEL TV for ZDF in collaboration with Arte and ZDF Enterprises

The Story of Europe

This ground-breaking series tells the story of Europe in six glossy episodes exploring different chapters of its eventful history. It’s a journey through time and across space, from physical beginnings to the first human settlers, the evolution of European culture and religion, historical achievements in exploration, technology and politics, and a daring look at the continent’s present and future. Europe has been at the heart of world events for thousands of years and laid the foundations for much of modern society worldwide, while its perpetually fluctuating landscapes, climate, fauna and flora have shaped its own story.

This series explores different aspects of the continent’s incredible history, always set against the bigger picture. Stunning photography, pertinent questions and surprising insights paint a mesmerising portrait of Europe.

Produced by: Gruppe 5 Filmproduktion and interscience film for ZDF in co-operation with Arte and ZDF Enterprises
In Touch with a Giant Pacific Octopus

Wildlife + Nature 1 x 50'
4K/UHD

With eight arms, nine brains and arms that can stretch to ten meters, giant pacific octopuses are strange creatures.

Marine biologist and Wildlife filmmaker Florian Graner exposes the private lives of these relatives of snails and mussels.

He succeeds in filming impressive scenes of a Giant Octopus rendezvous and the unselfish care of a female: for months, the mother-to-be protects and fans her clutch, before she dies, totally exhausted. At the same time, Florian Graner follows the development of the young giant octopus Eleonora in the Marine Science Centre at Port Townsend. After a year, Florian – full of respect for a different kind of intelligence, brings the now much larger octopus back to the habitat where it came from.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Docolights for NDR in association with Arte and ORF, distributed by ZDF Enterprises

Just Animals, Season 2

Wildlife + Nature 10 x 50'

Be intrigued, surprised and enthralled by Just Animals, Season 2, an engaging series of documentaries showcasing some of the most amazing animals on the planet and revealing everything you could want to know about their life and behaviour.

This second series features monkeys, penguins, sharks, marsupials, wild cats, reptiles, wild dogs, insects, hooved mammals and octopuses ... each group having an episode dedicated entirely to them, providing an in-depth exploration of their world.

Just Animals, Season 2 is a visual feast presenting stunning high-quality archive footage that includes rare behaviour, intimate close-ups and fast-paced action sequences.

Discover impressive physical attributes, sensory perceptions, communication skills, plus extraordinary abilities and ingenious adaptations from a remarkable array of creatures great and small.

Produced by: WILDBEAR ENTERTAINMENT in association with ZDF Enterprises with investment from Screen Queensland, Queensland Government
The hunters of Africa come out of their hiding places at night. They slept most of the time during the day to avoid the heat. But now their time has come. They are equipped with “super senses” that enable them to find their prey in complete darkness while staying invisible themselves.

Lions, leopards and hyenas are the ultimate rulers of the night, but they all have different hunting strategies. Leopards sneak up to their prey like phantoms and attack in the last moment, while lions try to ambush their next meal and take it down as a team. Hyenas are long distance athletes and hunt their victims to exhaustion.

All of this would be left in the dark, if not for extremely light sensitive lenses and thermal cameras. Thanks to this modern technique, we are able to get a unique view into the secret world of Africa’s hunters of the night.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm/Doclights for NDR in association with ZDF Enterprises

Africa’s Hunters of the Night

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Produced by: NDR Naturfilm/Doclights for NDR in association with ZDF Enterprises

Elephants Up Close

Africa’s elephants are giants and the largest land mammals to grace our Earth. The majority of the world’s elephants live in Botswana – more than 130,000 animals. They are sensitive, helpful and gentle. How do they communicate with each other? And why do hundreds of them appear at a specific location simultaneously? Where their paths cross with those of humans, worlds collide and conflicts happen. Can there be a future together with elephants and humans?

For more than two years, award-winning filmmakers Thoralf Grospitz and Jens Westphalen travelled through Africa’s south, always close on the trail of the gentle giants. With their two-part series Elephants Up Close, they paint a complex picture of “Africa’s icon” and reveal intimate insights into the lives of the world’s largest land mammals, rarely seen before.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm/Doclights in association with NDR, Arte, ORF, distributed by ZDF Enterprises
Selection Spring/Summer 2021

New

Forces of Nature

3 x 50'

Times of turbulent weather are making us all too aware of the powers of nature. Sometimes we feel its force through natural disasters — but everyday the world is tested by nature’s might. The Earth is always changing. Sometimes the process is impossible to miss; when a volcano spews lava in an immense eruption, for instance.

But cold also tests life, and nowhere more so than the poles, where only the most polar-adapted creatures can make a living. Every year, the Earth receives enough rain-water to fill the Empire State Building half a million times! 90% of natural disasters involve flooding. And then there’s heat; deserts cover a fifth of the Earth’s surface and temperatures can reach over 50 degrees C.

Natural forces have always shaped the planet, causing incredible devastation with their power, and yet creating new opportunities for life.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Docklights in association with ZDF Enterprises

New

Life and Death in Paradise

2 x 50'

The Caribbean islands — home to an exceptionally diverse array of landscapes, animals and plants, including countless endemic, threatened and truly bizarre species like the solenodon, the hutia, and the Cuban crocodile. Isolation and limited space have forged a unique collection of life on each of the islands.

These stunning films feature Cuba and neighbouring Hispaniola with their rich endemic biodiversity as the biggest islands. And at the southern end of the island arch lie perhaps the youngest Caribbean islands — Trinidad and Tobago — with their rich South American heritage still struggling to adjust to island life.

The Caribbean may seem like paradise, but beneath the surface, the eternal fight for survival is a harsh fact of life. This is a gripping insight into the challenges of life beyond white beaches and nodding palm trees.

Produced by: Blue Paw Artists for Bayerischer Rundfunk in association with Arte, ORF-Universum, NDR and WDR
From the ashes of Australia’s devastating bushfires, wildlife survivors begin their long journeys to recovery. Australia’s fauna have evolved to coexist with bushfire, but these Black Summer fires are unprecedented in their scale, speed and intensity. Many native animals are unable to escape or survive without human help.

We follow iconic species like koalas, kangaroos, wombats, and an endangered parrot through their rescue, rehabilitation and eventual release. Remarkable tales of compassion and dedication are revealed along the way — from an orphan wombat growing too attached to her taker, to audacious helicopter airdrops to feed remote rock wallabies.

When the fires finally burn out, Australia looks to the science, innovation and indigenous knowledge that will be needed to safeguard fragile wildlife in an even hotter future.

Produced by: WILDBEAR ENTERTAINMENT in association with THIRTEEN PRODUCTIONS for WNET and PBS, ZDF / Arte and ZDF Enterprises

The Americans were the first to bring the idea of a national park to the world: Back in 1872, the area of Yellowstone National Park was designated a national park by the US Congress – the first national park ever to exist in the world.

Among the most famous national parks worldwide are, besides, Yellowstone National Park, Denali National Park in Alaska, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park and two parks in Canada: Kluane National Park and Reserve and Banff National Park.

Each episode of this series is dedicated to one jewel of these natural wonders. For one year each, the filmmakers accompany the rangers and scientists who have dedicated themselves to the preservation and exploration of this unique and beautiful nature that is threatened, especially by climate change.

Produced by: SPIEGEL TV with M. S. Worldwide Documentation & Art Film for ZDF in co-operation with Arte
Unknown Madagascar

Madagascar is an ultimate island: Nowhere else on Earth exist so many weird animals in one place. For millions of years, this island lay isolated in the Indian Ocean. Far from the main continents a unique flora and fauna could evolve here.

Like the lemurs, a group of prosimians that only live on Madagascar. There are about 100 known species of them — the largest is the indri. Its home is the rainforest on Madagascar’s eastern side. The most adaptable is the ring-tailed lemur, who even can survive in the driest places.

But the human population in Madagascar is rising rapidly. To produce charcoal, great parts of the rainforest are being chopped down. Only 10% of the natural rainforest still exists.

In his two-part series, wildlife filmmaker Thomas Behrend presents a still — in some areas — mythical world, that is on the brink of extinction.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Dolights in association with NDR, Arte, ORF and ZDF Enterprises

New Zealand — Wild at Heart

Far away in the Pacific Ocean lies New Zealand’s South Island. From mighty mountains with dramatic glacial valleys, to fjordland’s untouched nature, to the tropical shores.

Over millennia, a unique flora and fauna has developed on the South Island. A fascinating mix of landscapes, animal species and people. For those who live here, it is the most beautiful place in the world that is worth fighting for.

The film by Robert Morgenstern explores the harsh South Island of New Zealand in a very personal way. We accompany five extraordinary protagonists in their daily passionate commitment to the preservation of their living environment. With breathtaking landscapes, you can feel the forces of nature of the South Island and experience the daily adventures of the protagonists.

Produced by: ATARA FILM for NDR Naturfilm / Dolights, in association with ZDF Enterprises
Selection  Spring/Summer 2021

**New**

### Load of Bull

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Ever wondered what puts the beef in a burger? The world has 1.4 billion cows, and this is their story; from powerful, cunning and social wild beasts, humans harnessed the best, building the ultimate cow. They’re the result of a 10,500 year human / animal partnership that has made the cow one of the most influential and widespread creatures on Earth. But the secret of their success lies in their wild cousins, from bison to buffalo – wild cattle are prime beef.

Wild cattle have been heavily hunted, the aurochs, the great granddaddy of all cows was wiped out. But while its ancestors were being hunted, cows were being mass-produced and shipped around the world. Today around three and a half million tons of beef is produced every year. Without these glorious creatures, we wouldn’t have milk, cheese, yoghurt, beef burgers, shoes...

**Produced by:** NDR Naturfilm / Doclights in association with ZDF Enterprises

### Rescued Chimpanzees of the Congo with Jane Goodall

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This extraordinary series looks behind the scenes at the Jane Goodall Institute’s Tchimpounga Chimpanzee Rehabilitation Centre in the Republic of the Congo, one of the largest great ape sanctuaries in Africa.

Showing never before seen footage from over more than 20 years, it tells heartwarming stories of rescued chimpanzees who have lived through the tragedy of the illegal pet and bushmeat trade. It follows harrowing efforts to rescue and rehabilitate our closest living relatives, with expert primatologists, including the sanctuary’s head Dr Rebeca Atencia, who’s dedicated her life to protecting these incredible beings.

With unprecedented access into the daily life of the chimpanzees, the series also showcases intimate stories from Dr Jane Goodall, DBE, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute & UN Messenger of Peace.

**Produced by:** Off The Fence Productions for Curiosity Stream in association with ZDF Enterprises
There are lots of fears and phobias about snakes, but most are based on fiction not fact.

Snakes are phenomenally successful, with more than 3,000 species living across the planet. Whether it’s a little woma python sniffing out a rodent prey in the dark, a cobra trying to envenomate a toad, a mole snake fighting off a hunting serval or a huge python making moves on an alligator nursery, there is drama at every turn.

Snakes are amazing animals. They have endured for eons even though hundreds of thousands of snakes are killed by people every year. But it’s likely that snakes are far more beneficial to humans alive than dead. There’s no doubt some snakes can be dangerous and they deserve our respect. But they’re not out to get us. All snakes play an important role in maintaining the balance of nature, benefitting everything, including us.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Docklights, distributed by ZDF Enterprises

Most people see fish like they do vegetables, a rich, tasty, healthy and readily available food source. But fish are so much more.

They are builders, athletes, tricksters, mountaineers, long-distance travellers, even role-model fathers. They have endless energy to fight for life and race for future generations. From lumpfish fathers protecting their eggs, to bitterling hiding their offspring inside mussel shells. Young sharks stalk mangroves and pike fight their way through streams. The most epic struggle belongs to the salmon that travel thousands of kilometres inland, facing an endless barrage of predators.

Throughout their epic struggles, they feed the planet. Not just the human population, but entire ecosystems. Our world relies on the slippery and superb family of fish.

Following their scaly trail for a year, this is their story...

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Docklights in association with ZDF Enterprises
Russia’s Hidden Paradises

Russia’s vast nature has always fascinated people.

Four spectacular regions are representative of “Russia’s hidden paradises”: The exclave of the Curonian Spit forms the westernmost tip of Russia with the oldest ornithological research station in the world. In the far east on Kamchatka, Lake Kuril offers a paradise for the world’s largest brown bears. High in the north on Yamal live the reindeer herds of the Nenets. Climate change and gas production are rapidly changing their icy world. In the south, the mighty Caucasus borders the country. The ancient mountain forests of North Ossetia are ideal habitats for Europe’s largest primeval cattle.

Produced by: SPIEGEL TV for ZDF in co-operation with Arte

Scandinavia’s Hidden Paradises

Scandinavia’s vast nature has always fascinated people.

Four spectacular regions are representative of “Scandinavia’s hidden paradises”: High in the north, in Swedish Lapland, mighty moose feel at home. In the east, near the Russian border, Lake Saimaa in Finland is home to one of the rarest seal species in the world. Gotska Sandön is the most remote place in the southern island paradise of the Baltic Sea. In the west, mountains and fjords dominate the landscape. Today, arctic foxes live on the Hallingskarvet plateau once again.

In all these places, nature conservationists are working with great enthusiasm for Scandinavia’s hidden paradises.

Produced by: SPIEGEL TV for ZDF in co-operation with Arte
The Oder-Delta — A Wilderness without Borders

A boundless wilderness, a mere flapping of wings away from the white sandy beaches of the famous Baltic bathing resorts on Usedom and Wollin.

In this dream-like aquatic world between Germany and Poland, sea eagles breed so close to one another that one could be excused for considering it a colony. The first wolf pack in Mecklenburg Western Pomerania settled here years ago in the Oder Delta. Huge herds of wild horses cross the vast plains, while bison roam the forests of the Polish side.

This film tells the dramatic story of a lonely bison bull that found its way across the border into Germany and reveals intimate insights into the domestic life of the beaver. The absolute highlight has to be the 200 sea eagles that came to the Anklamer Stadtbruch during the summer. A natural spectacle that one can only experience in the Oder-Delta.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Doclights for NDR in association with rbb / Arte, MDR, ORF, distributed by ZDF Enterprises

Eagle Lakes

The Lauenburg Lake District is located between Lübeck and Lauenburg. Thanks to its being a biotope and its biodiversity, it is one of Germany’s most important nature landscapes.

25 years after reunification, nature has healed the wounds caused by the Wall and now, even the scars are beginning to slowly disappear. The Lauenburg Lake District has become a centre for threatened species.

Animal film makers Christoph and Almut Hauschild present the natural wealth of Lauenburg’s lakes. After spending more than a year of shooting footage, they can now present exciting stories of hunting sea eagles, huge herds of deer and unusual cross-border “commuters.”

One example of just how sensitive this refuge has become is the sea eagle. After an absence of more than 13 years, the first osprey have returned to Schleswig-Holstein.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Doclights for NDR in association with ZDF Enterprises
Forest of Heroes

One of Germany’s most beautiful forests extends from Lower Saxony to North Rhine Westphalia. Its claim to fame stems from the Varus battle, which took place in the year 9 A.D. The Cherusci Prince Armenius vanquished the Roman legions here.

Today, the dense groves are home to boars and reindeer, dormice and common toads. During the damp and windless winter nights, one can experience a rare phenomenon at the Extern Stones: threads of ice seemingly grow out of the dead branches. In the Wistinghaus Senne, there are even animal forest managers: Exmoor ponies and Scottish Highland cattle were settled in order to keep the forest in check.

During the two years spent filming, the nature film makers were able to document the Teutoburg Forest intensively.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Doclights for NDR, funded by nordmedia, in association with ZDF Enterprises

Romantic River – The Beautiful Leine Valley

South of Hannover, along the river Leine and below a true fairy-tale castle, the Marienburg, stretches a mosaic of fields, meadows, ponds and forests. A place for animal and plant species that are becoming increasingly rare in northern Germany.

Common kestrels breed under the rooves of farmhouses. Here, they raise their chicks and hunt over meadows on the lookout for voles. Mute swans perform their graceful courtship displays and where the riverbed meanders through the landscape as a tributary, brilliant kingfishers hunt for little fish. At night, fire salamanders wander to their spawning grounds to give birth — scenes that have hardly ever been filmed before.

Even in the middle of the region’s capital, Hannover, the Leine is surprisingly wild. In the city alone, six beaver families have settled in.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Doclights in association with NDR and ZDF Enterprises
Deer are instantly recognisable and much-loved symbols of the wild, but how well do we really know them? Over the course of a year, they undergo huge changes, from losing their spotted baby-coats, to growing giant antlers and adapting their diet to the changing seasons.

Following the herds through a calendar year, we can share their first baby steps, watch them dodging predators, migrating to new feeding grounds, undertaking deadly river crossings and having to go head to head in fierce battles over mating rights. Even the reindeer, a symbol of winter and 'Santa’s little helper,' leads a tough and challenging life, just as remarkable as if delivering gifts at Christmas.

There is so much of deer life that we rarely get to see. Perhaps the best way to really get to know them is to follow them for a year and watch them grow!

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Doclights in association with ZDF Enterprises

The Secret Lives of Red Deer

Often seen as the ‘King of Europe’s forests,’ the legendary Red Deer has been portrayed as a hormone-crazed, roaring stag, fighting for females in the autumn. What it does for the rest of the year is mostly overlooked.

At the end of the mating season, the stags are literally worn out and need the rest of the year to gradually rebuild their physical reserves. In the following months, they roam in bachelor herds, completely focused on nothing but food. Their mates and offspring are of no interest. The ewes also start out in herds. At the end of May, new calves are born in secret. Then the females lead them to hidden playgrounds and protect them from dangers. It takes at least five years before a young stag gets the chance to become a top dog – a time filled with exciting encounters and relaxed moments.

Hidden cameras show rare pictures of their births, film them dancing and prove that, even in death, the so called ‘King of the forest’ can hardly be defeated.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Doclights in association with NDR, Arte, MDR, Terra Mater and ZDF Enterprises
Foxes are true survivors, at home in all regions of the Earth and able to adapt to many man-made changes. Nowadays, the smart animals also feel at home in our cities. As an example, a close-knit clan made up of several generations of foxes has been living in Berlin’s government district for many years. A few kilometres further, at the Innsbruck Square traffic hub, a male fox enjoys his role as a faithful family man to the fullest. A completely different wind blows for the foxes in many parts of the countryside. High up in the North on the German coast, a vixen raises her litter alone. Rarely is there enough to feed everyone. Like after a storm, for example, when the vixen finds a lot to eat in the drift line on the beach. The little ones have to grow up fast, as once the autumn arrives, their single parent mother’s reserves are exhausted and she drives them out of her territory.

For more than two years, filmmakers Roland Gockel and Rosie Koch kept track of the foxes in Berlin, Hamburg and on the North German coast. With the help of several hidden, buried and camouflaged cameras, they were able to unearth many secrets of the clever, yet camera-shy animals.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Doclights for NDR, in association with Arte, rbb, SVT and ZDF Enterprises

Masters of the Wild

From the highest mountains to the thickest jungle, coldest ice floes, or hottest desert – the world is full of hostile landscapes, but animals seem determined to make a go of it. With specialised bodies, unusual diets and unique behaviours, they have conquered every corner of the globe.

The desert is perhaps the toughest environment where animals must find ways to beat the heat. Creepy crawlies like scorpions have waxy exoskeletons to prevent water loss. For mammals, it can be very difficult to find water, but some take advantage of the bug’s strategies; meerkats, for example, enjoy nothing more than chowing down on a scorpion, enjoying its juicy body to get most of the water they need.

Few animals face greater challenges than the muskox on their frozen wasteland. With the hottest fur and ability to graze on the smallest of food plants, they are true survivors. But wherever they live, animals have adapted to make the most of the surroundings. The truth is they are all masters of the wild.

Produced by: NDR Naturfilm / Doclights in association with ZDF Enterprises
Construction Fails

Construction Fails exhibits catastrophic failures from building sites around the world and shows the danger of ever-growing modern construction. Cranes topple, structures crumble, huge machines go hay-wire — even professionals make mistakes, and sometimes disaster is unavoidable. Gathering from building sites all over the globe to show failures of all shapes and sizes, we dive into the mechanics and causes for unmitigated calamity.

Construction Fails explores just how and why these accidents occur and explores the extent of the damage. Skipping safety inspections, ignoring building codes, and poor planning are just some of the causes for these disasters, but all disasters have a major cost. From small propane tank explosions — to runaway bulldozers — to entire projects crumbling to dust, we show what happens when construction fails!

Produced by: yap films in association with Bell Media, ZDF Enterprises and Newsflare with the assistance of The Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit Rogers Cable Network Fund

Human Animal

From our big brains to our hands, leading academics have long pondered the attributes that make us uniquely human. When compared to other animals, a fascinating story of human evolution emerges. Sometimes it’s the features we least think about that set us apart, like our special way of sweating. Other traits which we consider uniquely human, like our ability to use tools, are surprisingly widespread among other species.

With stunning footage and high-end graphics, this insightful series reveals what singles us out from the pack across two episodes.

Episode one, Birth, Brains and Brawn looks at body shape, development and movement, revealing the physical adaptations that gave us our edge in the animal kingdom. Episode two, Loving, Living and Dying, compares human and animal behaviour to find out what makes us truly unique.

Produced by: WILDBEAR ENTERTAINMENT with ZDF / Arte and ZDF Enterprises
For the second time, the TGV, France’s high-speed train, is the fastest train of the world. Yet, its engineers are continuously pushing for even higher speeds, having launched the new TGV Ocean and the AGV, the TGV of the future.

It all began back in the 1950s with the CC 7100 series and its electric locomotive, which was considerably lighter than any of its predecessors. This technological gem made history by breaking the world’s speed record for trains. As the electrification of rail traffic proved to be a success, more and more of the less powered steam locomotives were phased out.

Since then, the successors of the original TGV have smashed all records for rail-bound traffic, culminating in 2007 with an incredible performance of 574 kilometres per hour.

Produced by: PERNEL MEDIA in association with RMC Découverte

Bridges are counted among the most spectacular works of art and hold a special place in the history of engineering. They are the answer to a central challenge in the history of mankind – mastering the land with a view to connecting people. Over vertiginous cliffs, steep gorges, rivers with devastating torrents.

Bridges continue to fascinate because they symbolize the human genius in overcoming the obstacles of nature. Throughout the centuries, the necessity of developing means of transport coupled with the ambition of establishing new world records has been a driving force of progress, forcing the pioneers to break new ground.

Three bridges, three eras, three records of civil engineering, The Pont du Gard, the viaduct of Garabit and the viaduct of Millau.

Produced by: PERNEL MEDIA in association with RMC Découverte
Ancient Engineering

Discover how history’s greatest engineering marvels have changed the world! Built by ancient civilisations using techniques that continue to be used to this day, we reveal how the planet’s most jaw-dropping structures broke new ground, often defying the known laws of physics. Ancient engineers created immense structures and pioneering inventions that have baffled science for thousands of years, and many of these “wonders of the world” are still standing.

From technological breakthroughs like The Wheel or The Wall to huge structures like The Pyramid and The Taj Mahal, Ancient Engineering is a 10-episode documentary series bursting with the most exciting and intriguing feats of engineering from the ancient world, which have inspired and influenced modern-day engineering.

Produced by: Off The Fence for CuriosityStream in association with PLANETE+ and ZDF.info

Underworld

Only 5% of the world’s caves have ever been explored; no one really knows what lives in this impenetrable “world within a world.”

Now, for the first time, science has the technology to reveal this darkest of domains. Our expedition team will use a revolutionary laser scanning technique inside the caves to reconstruct breathtaking new worlds and produce never-seen-before stunning fly-thru animations.

In each episode, they enter uncharted territory: caverns so vast they could house the great pyramids of Giza, caves with lush forests and their own weather systems, hidden chambers concealing ancient human remains, and mysterious new subterranean creatures.

These visually spectacular habitats will transform our understanding of climate change, world history and conservation and strengthen the human connection to this secret underground world.

Produced by: Off The Fence for CuriosityStream in association with ZDF Enterprises and Youku association with ZDF Enterprises, ZDF / Arte and CCTV.
From the moment we are born until we draw our very last breath, gender determines much of our lives.

*Naked* raises big questions of how our biological sexes and assigned genders affect us and seeks answers in lived realities and current research from around the world. What does it mean to be cis, trans, gender non-binary or intersex? What does it mean to be a “woman” or a “man?” What role do biological sex and assigned gender play in childhood? What does puberty do to us? What are the challenges today in finding a partner and starting a family? What role do sex and gender play in old age? And what opportunities and difficulties exist for the next generation?

*Naked* explores our fascinating relationships with gender and the way they permeate every aspect of our lives: Naked truths, naked facts, naked questions, truthful answers.

**Produced by:** Spiegel TV and Primitive Entertainment in association with Crave / Bell Media, ZDF, Arte and ZDF Enterprises

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Some years stand out above all others; years that are loaded with shocking events, incredible human achievements and life-changing moments in history.

*The Year that Rocked the World* celebrates iconic and extraordinary global moments from politics, cinema, crime, celebrity, sport, disasters, science, inventions, music and arts — landmark events and breakthroughs in the course of one year that profoundly shaped the world today.

This captivating new series draws on a wealth of fascinating film archive from the world’s leading collections. Engaging interviews from a regular cast of well known faces provide lively social commentary and relevance to the stories, while legendary pop tunes capture the mood and energy of that year.

**Produced by:** Off The Fence for CuriosityStream in association with ZDF Enterprises
GOING CIRCULAR

From the producer of *My Octopus Teacher* 1x90'

Environmentalist James Lovelock's greatest discovery could hold the solution to save our world