



# NATURE



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## **THIRTEEN's *Nature* journeys to a magical realm of ancient forests and rare, elusive animals in *Wild Balkans*, January 31, 2010 on PBS**

Discover other natural wonders of the world and watch full episodes at ***Nature Online*** ([pbs.org/nature](http://pbs.org/nature))

Thick forests, vast wetlands, deep chasms – the Balkan peninsula is wild and pristine, a landscape that looks as if it was taken straight from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. But here, instead of orcs and elves, there are lynx and minks, bears and birds that have all but vanished from the rest of Europe. ***Nature*** takes viewers on a journey of discovery into the heart of the Balkans in ***Wild Balkans***, premiering Sunday, January 31, 2010 at 8 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings). The film features a wide variety of spectacular views and fascinating inhabitants to be found in the area, including the magnificent gorges and rich woodlands of the Durmitor Mountains in Montenegro, and the awe-inspiring flocks of birds that travel each year to nest in the Danube Delta that stretches between Romania and Ukraine.

***Wild Balkans*** will be available for streaming on ***Nature Online*** ([pbs.org/nature](http://pbs.org/nature)), along with more than 30 other full-length programs.

***Nature*** is a production of THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG – one of America's most prolific and respected public media providers.

"Take a walk on the wild side and be intoxicated by the Balkans' bewitching ecosystems," said Fred Kaufman, Series Executive Producer. "Even the best Hollywood CGI can't replicate the stunning natural beauty of the Balkans captured in this ***Nature*** episode."

For centuries, this region of the world, always in the middle between East and West, has endured countless wars, which ironically served to protect and conceal its natural wonders.

Among the many natural splendors of the Balkans are Tara Canyon, the deepest and longest in all of Europe; the vast wetlands and river forests of Kopacki Rit in Eastern Croatia; and the remarkable peaks and channels of Skadar Lake, the largest lake in the Balkans, which shelters thousands of migratory birds.

Though much of the Balkans remains almost inaccessible and unpopulated, there are those who still live even in its most desolate places, seemingly forgotten by time and isolated by their environment. High above Tara Canyon, an improbable community of women tends to farms and animals in the highlands, all alone with their traditions and their memories.

In Bulgaria's Dobrudza lie vast grasslands, called steppes. Only a few subsistence farmers and shepherds live here, but they represent a wide range of ethnic groups – Bulgarians, Romanians, Russians, Tatars and Armenians. Humans are rarer still in the Danube Delta, which is the least densely populated region in Europe. One of those rare humans is a biologist who spends his time gathering important data about an animal considered to be the most endangered carnivore in Europe – the European mink.

In ***Wild Balkans***, viewers are treated to enchanting glimpses of lynx, silently moving through the old growth forests, wild boar feasting on carp, and griffon vultures rising from sheer cliff walls in the rocky mountains of Tikves, near the border between Macedonia and Greece.

The Balkans may still be coming to terms with its violent history, but it remains a magical place, truly worthy of comparison with Tolkien's Middle Earth. Despite its reputation as one of the great battlegrounds of history, it continues to be wild, unspoiled, a wilderness preserved in the heart of a changing world.

Visit ***Nature Online*** ([pbs.org/nature](http://pbs.org/nature)) to watch previous programs and get updates about the series. Viewers can sound off about issues explored on ***Nature***, take polls, and share animal photos with the ***Nature*** community.

***Nature*** has won nearly 600 honors from the television industry, the international wildlife film communities, and environmental organizations – including 10 Emmys, three Peabodys and the first award given to a television program by the Sierra Club. Most recently, the series won a Peabody Award for *Silence of the Bees* and received two Emmy nominations for *Crash: A Tale of Two Species* and *White Falcon, White Wolf*.

***Nature's Wild Balkans*** is a ScienceVision Production for ORF Universum in association with ARTE and BR. ***Nature*** is a production of THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG for PBS. Fred Kaufman is Executive Producer. William Grant is Executive-in-Charge. Major corporate support for ***Nature*** is provided by Canon U.S.A., Inc. Additional support is provided by the Lillian Goldman Charitable Trust and by the nation's public television stations.

***Nature Online*** ([pbs.org/nature](http://pbs.org/nature)) is the award-winning web companion to the broadcast series and is spearheading ***Nature***'s distribution to new media platforms. At ***Nature Online***, visitors can stream full episodes of ***Nature*** programs, watch behind-the-scenes video exclusives with filmmakers and producers (also available at iTunes), view program excerpts (also available on YouTube), and find fun interactive content, teacher lesson plans, and more. Join ***Nature*** on Facebook ([Facebook.com/PBSNature](https://Facebook.com/PBSNature)) and follow the series on Twitter ([Twitter.com/PBSNature](https://Twitter.com/PBSNature)) to keep up with the latest videos, photos, program alerts and more.

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