

NATURE . WILDLIFE

OKAVANGO – RIVER OF DREAMS

4 x 52' (ENG, GER), 90' (ENG)



The Okavango in Southern Africa is one of the greatest rivers on Earth – lions, leopards, dogs, and elephants are living in paradise. But here, someone’s paradise is always someone else’s purgatory!

Drawing on Dante’s “Divine Comedy”, the story is told as a journey from Purgatory into Paradise, a quest for truth, for the soul of this river, the Okavango in Botswana, seeing those who use her, as well as those who are victim to the changes she brings, used by her. This four-part series follows the very different and distinct stages of the Okavango, as this river creates a unique ecosystem where the lives of all creatures that live in, along, and around it are amazingly connected and intertwined.



Original Title:	Okavango - Fluss der Träume
Year:	2019
Produced by:	Terra Mater Factual Studios, Wildlife Films, Thirteen Productions LLC, Doclights/NDR Naturfilm
Partners:	PBS, CPB, arte France/Unité Découverte et Connaissance, National Geographic Channels, SVT

1. Paradise

The deep water of the Upper Okavango presents elephants swimming and carving channels through the reeds and papyrus, setting small birds afloat to drift past hippos and crocodiles. This first episode features the amazing story of Fekeetsa, a lioness that was severely injured by a buffalo and therefore is badly handicapped now. After her pride has left her for dead, she has to survive in the swamp alone – and hunt, to feed her little cubs. The film ends with the spectacular wildfires that ignite the peat bog deep underground and burn for decades, making the landscape disappear under thick blankets of smoke.

2. Limbo

The second episode shows the panhandle called part of the Okavango - the Middle Earth, or Limbo. Here, the river is most dynamic and alive, feeding, and being fed on, where massive herds of elephants flood in with the water and Pied kingfishers dive from over 10 metres high to catch minnows underwater. Young nomadic lions try to challenge a hippo that came onto land. In an extraordinary sequence, a hyena and a warthog family share neighbouring dens, helping each other by keeping an eye on potentially threatening predators. The main character here is the King, a male lion who, with his brother, rules these floodplains and ultimately hunts huge buffalo through the waters.

3. Inferno

In the third episode, we experience the final chapter of the Okavango. The river waits and retracts and takes back everything it gave. It leaves precious salt and nutrients behind that thousands of animals, like zebra and wildebeest, migrate to find. But it is also a fragile world, where dancing mirages are either real or imaginary. It is the inferno, where the landscape is baked dry by the scorching sun. But here, nomadic lions take us on a journey, and a leopardess called Moporoto brings up her cubs and survives the constant changes - by moving constantly. Everything here is on the move because it is the end of the water – eventually, the Okavango, this River of Dreams, is ghosting away...

4. Divine Journey

The last episode takes an intimate look behind the scenes of this amazing production. It presents the remarkable journey the film crew has gone through, their efforts, and experiences around the shoots. More than 20 remote cameras were lost during the making of this series - hidden by crocodiles, destroyed by elephants, and stolen by some curious creatures. But this film shows even more personal stories, like the almost deadly incident Dereck and Beverly Joubert had with an injured buffalo. The episode reveals all the enthusiasm, passion, and love of the whole team for this unique and yet so vulnerable place - the great and mighty Okavango...