

# off the fence.

## Hotspots: The Last Hope

5 x 60'

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

### 1. Australia

This subtropical and temperate HOTSPOT is in one of Australia's most diverse areas, and it is the most biologically diverse area in New South Wales and southern Queensland. It has a variety of significant habitats: sub-tropical rainforests, humid sclerophyllous woodlands, mountainous headlands, rocky outcrops, and transitional areas between forests.

These habitats support a wide variety of birds species as exciting as parrots and cockatoos, the black stork, the paradise riflebird or the golden bowerbird, in addition to a great diversity of kangaroo species, the most surprising of which are the tree-kangaroo and the kangaroo rat.

Other indigenous species under threat are koalas, which endure through the intense deforestation of Australia, the agile wallaby, a kangaroo that takes advantage of deforestation, the pretty-faced wallaby that hides in forests and on mountain slopes, and the highly adaptable eastern grey kangaroo which uses the shelter of trees to provide the comfort to their young.

### 2. Costa Rica

Costa Rica is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots that contains unique species of animals and plants in an environment that is highly threatened, so its conservation is a priority.

Costa Rica's biodiversity HOTSPOT is home to the highest mountainous forests in Central America and the most extensive, protected cloud forests in the region.

In this region, there are species such as the jaguar, the spider monkey, the howler monkey or the tapir. The region is a stopover for at least 225 species of migratory birds

### **3. Borneo**

Borneo is the third-largest island in the world, inhabited by almost 18 million people who, are, more and more, greedily exploiting their environment, making Borneo one of the most important HOTSPOTS on the planet.

The numbers that define Borneo's biodiversity are dizzying: it is estimated that it is home to about 222 species of mammals, more than 100 species of amphibians and 400 species of fish and every year even more species are discovered in its remote forests.

Nevertheless, more than 15,000 species of higher plants grow here, of which 6,000 are not found anywhere else in the world. The same applies to its fauna, mostly endemic species such as the orangutan, the binturong (aka the bearcat), the proboscis monkey, different varieties of macaques, the silvery lutung, the sun bear or the Borneo elephant are some of the most representative native species.

### **4. Madagascar**

It's the fourth-largest island in the world. Because Madagascar broke away from the supercontinent more than 160 million years ago, this hot spot is a living example of how an exquisitely unique set of species have evolved through millions of years of isolation from the main continent.

In Madagascar, very diverse natural vegetation and fauna are found from tropical rainforests along the eastern slopes to the dry deciduous forests of the eastern lowlands, until you reach the southern end of a thorny desert.

Madagascar is the homeland of the lemur. It is possible that a few primitive lemurs arrived in Madagascar sixty million years ago on vegetation carried by marine currents. Nowadays more than one hundred species of lemurs have been documented and many of them are in critical danger of extinction. Among the castaways who landed in Madagascar are frogs, who were the only amphibians capable of colonising the great island. Today it is estimated that there are some 400 species of frogs, many of them still unknown. Reptiles like snakes, lizards, chameleons or turtles were more successful in adapting and so Madagascar became their promise land, their earthly paradise, where they diversified and conquered all corners of the island.

### **5. Mediterranean**

The Mediterranean biodiversity HOTSPOT is the second largest hot spot in the world, precisely with Spain located at this point.

Many ecosystems have long ago reached a balance with the human activity that dominates the landscape. However, this delicate balance is a precarious one. The main threats to the conservation of regional biodiversity are the loss, fragmentation, and degradation of habitat, as well as pollution, the over-exploitation of resources, and the introduction of invasive species, among other things.

Olive trees, holm oaks, and Spanish firs are an important part of the Mediterranean HOTSPOT hosting a great biodiversity, as well as a wide variety of insects such as ladybugs, grasshoppers, crickets, and scorpions. A multitude of birds like hoopoes, doves, kestrels or small hawks nest in these spaces. Among the mammals, one finds rabbits, hares, wild boars, lynx...