

off the fence.

Butterflies: Superheroes Of Nature

3x60' + 1x60'

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. The Super-Voyagers

To most people, butterflies seem to lead a dull existence, going from flower to flower, in a bucolic, insignificant manner. And yet, these winged insects can cover thousands of kilometers in the fulfilment of their mission to ensure the survival of their species. How do they accomplish such a feat when they only live for a few weeks?

French researcher Marianne Elias set out to solve the secret of the red admiral, a species she suspected had unrivaled capacity for traveling. Combining speed, endurance, agility, and a sense of direction, the red admiral shows impressive powers on its travels. Accompanied by a team of passionate scientists, Marianne Elias, just like Lois Lane, will discover the super-power of these “Clark Kents” of nature: Super-voyager.

2. The Super-Transformers

For most people, the butterfly exhibits its natural beauty quite innocently. For thousands of years, these creatures have both hypnotized and fooled us. Because this beauty can be fatal. Behind its sublime appearance, the butterfly hides a formidable super-power: That of being a super-shapeshifter, able to transform itself. By changing from a caterpillar into a butterfly to take on the challenges of nature, or by camouflaging itself to evade predators, how do butterflies manage to modify their physical appearance, and to what end?

This episode explores the techniques butterflies use to confront their many predators: Dissuasion, camouflage, even invisibility. Among the butterflies that best master the art of transformation is the genus heliconius, tropical butterflies that thrive in the forests of Panama. Rémi Mauxion, a young field entomologist, set out to understand how these super-shapeshifters operate.

3. The Super-Resilient

To most people, butterflies are fragile insects, none of which could survive extremes of temperature. And yet, over the course of evolution, butterflies have colonized almost all continents, even the most northerly zones, where one might think the cold would prove fatal for them.

Scandinavian scientists Carl Gotthard from the University of Stockholm and Pasi Sihvonen from the University of Helsinki are trying to understand how two key species in northern Europe, the speckled wood and the geometer moth, manage to survive in harsh climates. The extremes of cold and heat, the water, the ice – they seem able to take all these challenges in a wingbeat. It must be said, the butterfly is an unrivaled strategist, capable of incredible sacrifices to be super-resilient.

1. Episode 001

With names like blue morpho, red admiral, death's head hawkmoth, small emperor moth, and comma, butterflies make up nature's own team of superheroes. Some can beat their wings over distances of more than 10 000 kilometers. Others can take on the appearance of an owl to scare off enemies. These cunning, shape shifting avengers of nature are also blessed with incredible beauty. This series, filmed using techniques specially adapted to this fleeting and elusive species, takes us on a stunning journey of discovery to explore their unknown super powers. You will never look at butterflies the same way again!