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THIRTEEN’s Nature Offers a Departure From the Typical Gallic Tour in Wild France  
Wednesday, January 7, 2015 on PBS

Actress Laila Robins narrates a wildlife guide from Paris to the Pyrenees

When organizing a classic trip to France, most itineraries highlight the nation’s renowned food and wines, great art and architecture and celebrated culture of all kinds. But there’s another side to this popular destination that is not as visible, its wild side. Deep in the French countryside, it is possible for the adventurous to spot brown bears, wild boar, griffon vultures or wolves. These are among the creatures getting the chance and space to regain their old hunting grounds in France’s many mountains, valleys and forests.

Wild France features striking photography and locations all across France, from Alsace and the Alps to the Pyrenees and the island of Corsica, to document the diversity and behavior of the nation’s wildlife. The program airs Wednesday, January 7, 2015 at 8 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings). After broadcast, the episodes will be available for online streaming at pbs.org/nature.

The program begins its journey in the forest of Fontainebleau just outside Paris where kings of France enjoyed hunting and other pastimes for centuries. Among the ancient oak, pine and
beech trees, their hounds would seek out red deer, which still reside there today. *Wild France* follows two ten-point stags who have been life-long companions as they feast on ivy and willow leaves, alert each other to danger, and elude hunting dogs by escaping into the river where the water helps dilute their scent. The only time the pair parts ways is in the Autumn, when males compete for exclusive mating rights with a harem of females. When the mating season is over, the battles are forgotten and the pair reunites.

The film also travels to the Cévennes, a maze of granite mountains, deep valleys and winding rivers in the south of France. Here, successful re-introduction programs have increased the number of griffon vultures that live in colonies along the cliffs. Once the sun has warmed the air in the canyons, creating currents, the vultures take flight in search of a meal. As soon as one spots something and dives down, the others follow. It means there is something to eat, and the entire colony gathers to partake of the feast. Vultures eat rotting carcasses, which helps prevent the spread of disease and contamination of the water table.

Other regions highlighted in the program include: the Alps, where two wolf pups take their first steps and golden eagles hunt ever-vigilant marmots; the Pyrenees, home to a small number of brown bears re-introduced to the area; and the island of Corsica, which is one of many areas in France maintaining a healthy population of wild boar. Near the Atlantic Ocean is a region that is home to one of the largest wetlands in France, known as the Poitevin Marsh. Here, where sea water meets fresh water, wildlife flourishes. In addition to visiting its heron and greater horseshoe bat populations, *Wild France* follows the seemingly magical transformation of a dragonfly from a small larva emerging from the water into one of the most sophisticated flying creatures in the world.

*Nature* is a production of THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET. For *Nature*, Fred Kaufman is executive producer. *Wild France* is a Boréales-Terra Mater Factual Studios co-production in association with BMedia Development.

*Nature* pioneered a television genre that is now widely emulated in the broadcast industry. Throughout its history, *Nature* has brought the natural world to millions of viewers. The series has been consistently among the most-watched primetime series on public television.

*Nature* has won over 700 honors from the television industry, the international wildlife film communities and environmental organizations, including 12 Emmys and three Peabodys. The series received two of wildlife film industry’s highest honors: the Christopher Parsons Outstanding Achievement Award given by the Wildscreen Festival and the Grand Teton Award given by the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. Recently, the International Wildlife Film Festival honored *Nature* executive producer Fred Kaufman with its Lifetime Achievement Award for Media.

[PBS.org/nature](http://PBS.org/nature) is the award-winning web companion to *Nature*, featuring streaming episodes, filmmaker interviews, teacher’s guides and more.
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**About WNET**

As New York's flagship public media provider and the parent company of THIRTEEN and WLIW21 and operator of NJTV, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than 5 million viewers each week. WNET produces and presents such acclaimed PBS series as *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, *PBS NewsHour Weekend*, *Charlie Rose* and a range of documentaries, children’s programs, and local news and cultural offerings available on air and online. Pioneers in educational programming, WNET has created such groundbreaking series as *Get the Math*, *Oh Noah!* and *Cyberchase* and provides tools for educators that bring compelling content to life in the classroom and at home. WNET highlights the tri-state's unique culture and diverse communities through *NYC-ARTS*, *Reel 13*, *NJTV News with Mary Alice Williams* and *MetroFocus*, the multi-platform news magazine focusing on the New York region. WNET is also a leader in connecting with viewers on emerging platforms, including the [THIRTEEN Explore App](https://www13.wnet.org/explore/) where users can stream PBS content for free.

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