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Presents

WILD PYRENEES

A 3x52' and 3x43' mini-series in 4K

Directed by Alwa DELUZE

Produced by Bellota Films





PITCH

A collection which immerses the viewer in the heart of the Pyrenean wild fauna, one of the most preserved in France.

Bears, golden eagles, peregrine falcons, bearded vultures, lizards, owls, marmots, cervidae, wolves, frogs, slugs, ants and dragonflies: from the most majestic species, to the most common animals, these living beings form at the same time mysterious and poetic ecosystems with their environment.

The animals are so frightened by man's presence that this luxuriant world is little accessible. To discover them, it is necessary to investigate, detect clues, follow tracks and be patient before you finally have a chance to see them. The road turns out to be just as exciting as the objective because it is like a game of hide and seek where man must understand nature, tame it, to pierce its secrets.

INTRODUCTION

This series of films offers a fresh look to revamp the wildlife documentary.

We will share nature film behind the scenes to realize that, very often, animals are more cunning than men. Wild species will be immortalized in their natural habitat.

If this naturalistic investigation is filmed, it is not embodied by a specific character: it stages the presence of man who is passionate and «tracks» wild animals for the pleasure of observing them. This benevolent presence shares with the viewer intense emotions, knowledge and a desire to humbly attend the inspiring site of wild world site.

The secret Pyrenees is above all an invitation to travel, to discover the wildest valleys of the Pyrenean massif. It is composed of sumptuous images, usually reserved for experienced mountaineers or the most pugnacious naturalists.





DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The aim is to shoot as new as exceptional visual sequences of these majestic Pyrenean landscapes, in all seasons, with breathtaking lights and rare naturalistic scenes: the broom of ants, the diversity of mosses and ferns in the depths of woods, traces of a fox just coming from gorging on cherries...

We were able to contemplate the conception of such an ambitious series because the film crew will live for two years at the rhythm of wild fauna. This daily quest will support certain ethical rules that are particularly important to us: few birds in the nest - this can disturb the breeding of young - minimum distance not to disturb protected species, etc. Finally, the teams in the field will be reduced as to be as discreet as possible.

The two videographers will be equipped with digital cameras making it possible to film in 4K full format (Alpha FS5) and a large number of cinema-quality telephoto lenses that will be chosen according to situations. The shooting will be supervised by Samuel Lahu, Chief Operating Officer graduated from Fémis, who will come as backup during targeted periods to shoot certain scenes with three cameras. During editing, slow motion can be used to enhance the power or the poetry of certain scenes.

Some aerial shots will allow the viewer to see the full extent and diversity of the territory along with its most welcoming and hostile valleys. The man - and the viewer - will feel very small in such a vast space. Panoramic shots from the highest peaks (Cagire, Pic du midi, Canigou, Carlit, etc.) will also reinforce this feeling.



Beautiful images, animal shooting and landscape plans constitute the essential material of this series. Depending on the narration, the sound will be very refined so that the viewer feels embarked on the adventure, behind a bush or observing a cliff. The sounds of nature will then be delivered raw, sometimes slightly amplified to bring more intensity to the scene and reinforce the feeling of immersion.

The shots will sometimes be accompanied by a voice-over, embodied by an imaginary character, a naturalist in pursuit of animals in the Pyrenean fauna.

The adventures of our guide will be punctuated by adventures during which, very often, the power of the elements sends him back very humbly to his simple human status. The sound of the wind, the darkening of the light, the turmoil of leaves or the trees bending, will

be filmed in a sufficiently explicit way.

The narrator will also question his place in nature. The common thread of each episode will be the journey of this naturalist, in search of an animal of his dreams, which he considers as a symbol, a myth. Each animal - the bear for the forest - the wild cat in the Piedmont or the golden eagle at high altitude - is difficult to approach and emblematic of the ecosystem in which it is found.

Each episode will thus take the form of an initiation journey in which our character is immersed. The narrative will be fueled by big and small stories, legends, naturalistic anecdotes and scientific reflections. Little by little, his relationship with nature becomes rougher, more instinctive, in one word: wilder. In 3 films, the mini-series will present 3 Pyrenean environments: Piedmont and Foothills, Upland Forest and Alpine Zone.

EPISODE 1 - IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE FOREST CAT, THE PIEDMONT CAT

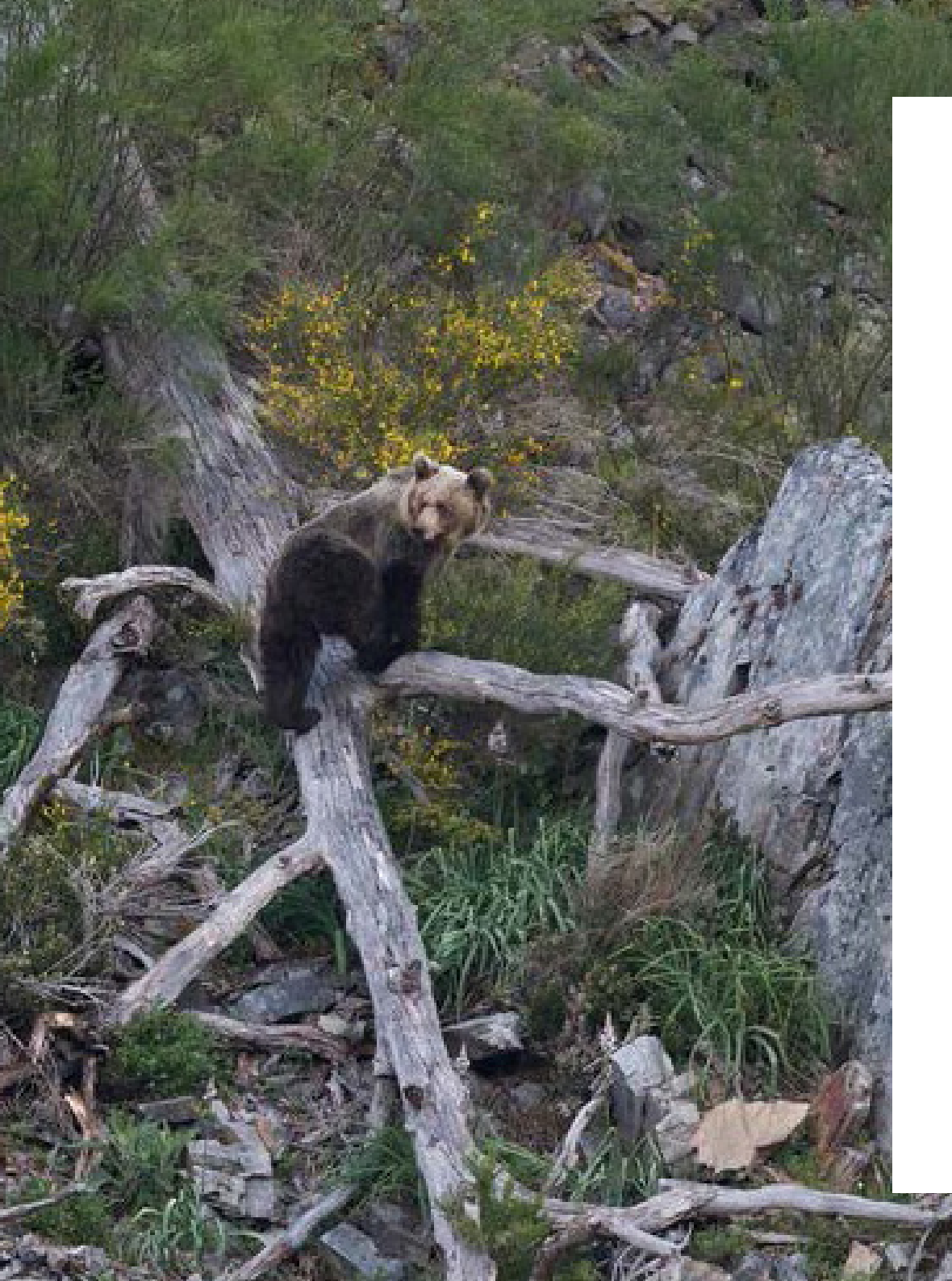
Piedmont and the Pyrenees' foothills form a land of abundance where biodiversity remains abundant. The environments are varied and the climate less harsh than at altitude where many species spend the winter without much difficulty. Thus, the old abandoned orchard treats thrushes, blackbirds, woodpeckers (epeiche, green, epeichette) and other passerines, from the first frost of autumn. The tawny owl and its little cousin the little owl compete for old fruit trees cavities. They enliven the mild winter nights with their bewitching love song, while the beautiful white lady - the barn owl - prefers the ruins of a half-collapsed barn or old steeples.

In the breeding meadows, the marauding fox is looking for voles. The roe deer, always graceful, is extra careful when it ventures out into the open to graze. Birds of prey - the buzzard, the red kite and the common kestrel - patrol the sky as the hawk weaves in and out over the hedges to surprise the chickadee round looking for food.

The other day, I was told about a feline, a little tiger that roams and hunts on the edge. Those who saw it say that it has a broken mouth caused by fight. An emerald green look, a white medallion on the throat, it would be high on legs. To recognize it, we must observe its tail: dark rings and a club-shaped ending in a black pompom.

I decide to go in search of the forest cat, commonly called wild cat, the only feline that remains at the feet of these peaks.





EPISODE 2 - WHERE IS THE BEAR, THIS FOREST GHOST HIDING ?

The forest is dense, the trees seem hundred years old, and the ground is covered with moss. The lichen clings to the bark. Depending on the light, the vegetation offers tranquility and it forms a backdrop to a wonderful world or, on the contrary, it seems threatening to foreigners who dare to venture there.

I turn my head, a deer runs away. The animal seems so fearful. It's probably due to hunters, the roe deer having no other predators in the Pyrenees.

I like to dream while observing these beech trees over forty meters tall. The more I walk the forest, the more I understand why the bear has chosen it as a refuge. What density, fauna and flora. The ecosystem is there, before my eyes, so fascinating to observe. Tengmalm's owl is hiding, nestled in the trunk of an old fir tree. At the foot of the leafy tree, ants and slugs seem to be cleaning up. It's spring time and the ground is soaked with water. Humus and moss swell like sponges. And suddenly I see it. Five fingers, one palm, the trace is twice as big as my hand. The bear passed by here, probably a few hours ago.

The bear's footsteps will guide us. It had disappeared, hunted by humans, from most of the valleys before being reintroduced into the central Pyrenees twenty years ago.

The forest awakens in early spring when the snow softens and the plantigrade comes out of its den. At the turn of spring, the bears begin the rut. Females and males seek, miss and find each other to love each other for a few days while enjoying the delights of the forest. We find almost everywhere the stigmata of these intoxicated feasts here, the giant decapitated anthill there, the fir tree windthrow being disemboweled and emptied from fat larvae which decomposed it...



EPISODE 3 - THE EAGLE REIGNS ON HIGH MOUNTAIN

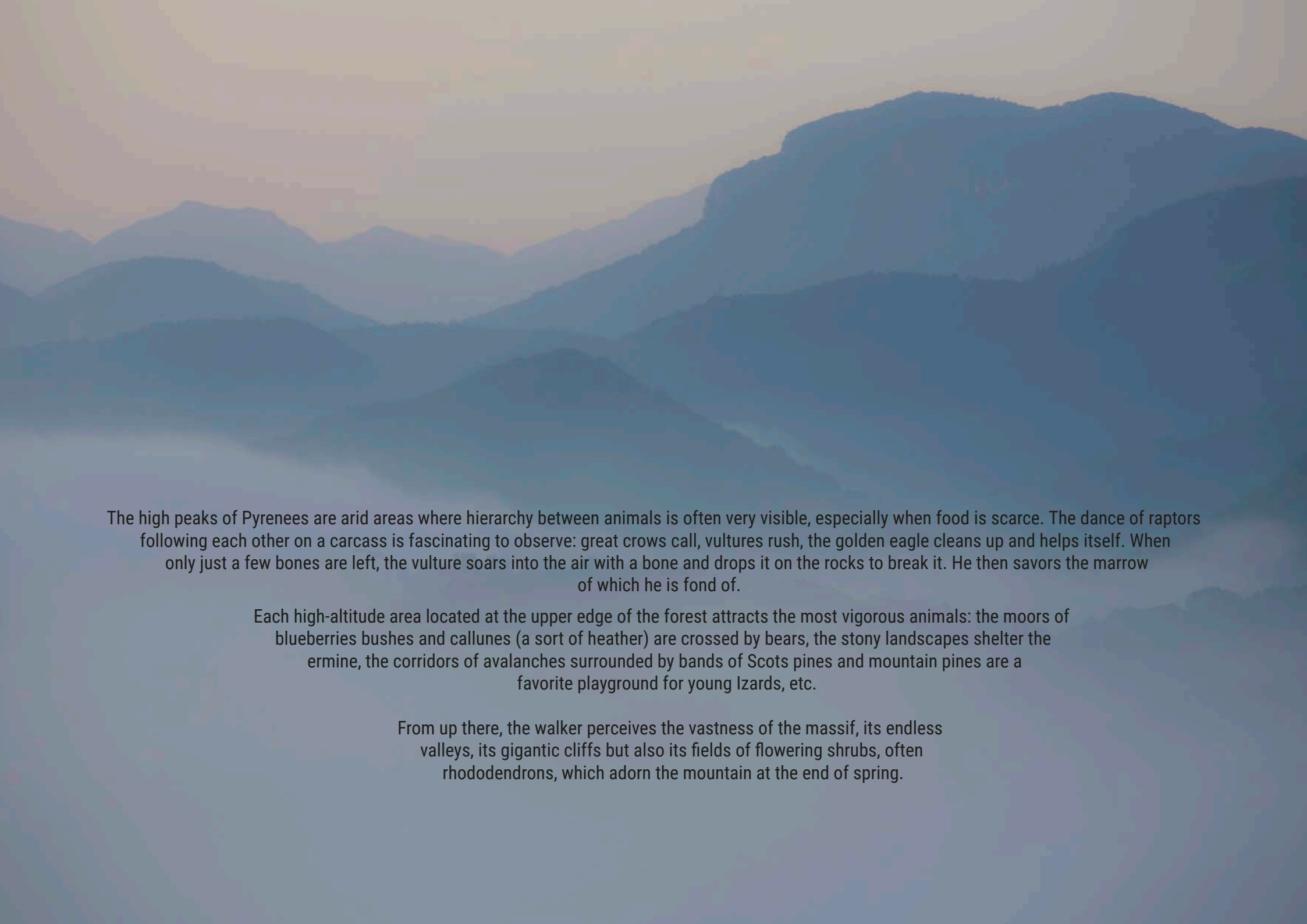
The wind sweeps over high peaks. Who are those brave, ready to face valiantly these snowstorms, this freezing humidity which never leaves you when it seizes you? The gusts are so violent that I waver.

However, they tirelessly rotate, choreographing an aerial dance full of grace. They are golden eagles. Their wingspan exceeds two meters. Even from this distance, you can feel the power of the animal. Behind this royal dance hides the hunting instinct of a super predator. However, on the ground, prey is scarce at the end of winter.

Now I'm trying to locate the bird with hare's footprints. It goes from one snowdrift to another to find food. This rare bird is the snow partridge, the ptarmigan. Like a mirage, its plumage changes color according to seasons. In the heart of winter, the bird is white and merges with the snow to hide from the royal couple with sharp claws that keep spinning.

Suddenly the big crows are calling. My eye is drawn to an aerial gathering. I can't count them all. They are vultures, the first raptors to be served on the remains. I don't know how they got there first, before being chased by the royal bird. The carcass must be that of an izard. The melting snow has probably freed the body from the ice. I have to get close to it if I want to get a chance to observe the eagle up close.





The high peaks of Pyrenees are arid areas where hierarchy between animals is often very visible, especially when food is scarce. The dance of raptors following each other on a carcass is fascinating to observe: great crows call, vultures rush, the golden eagle cleans up and helps itself. When only just a few bones are left, the vulture soars into the air with a bone and drops it on the rocks to break it. He then savors the marrow of which he is fond of.

Each high-altitude area located at the upper edge of the forest attracts the most vigorous animals: the moors of blueberries bushes and callunes (a sort of heather) are crossed by bears, the stony landscapes shelter the ermine, the corridors of avalanches surrounded by bands of Scots pines and mountain pines are a favorite playground for young lizards, etc.

From up there, the walker perceives the vastness of the massif, its endless valleys, its gigantic cliffs but also its fields of flowering shrubs, often rhododendrons, which adorn the mountain at the end of spring.

PORTFOLIO

Photos by Laurent Nédélec and Grégory Ortet



















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