

“RADIOACTIVE WOLVES” TO BE RENEWED IN 2026

ORF Universum Nature announces an updated and expanded version of the internationally acclaimed documentary “Radioactive Wolves”.

VIENNA – ORF Universum Nature is set to release “**Radioactive Wolves – Chernobyl’s Forbidden Wilderness**”, a new and updated edition of the internationally acclaimed documentary “**Radioactive Wolves**”. The production marks a return to one of the most significant ecological regions in Europe, four decades after the 1986 nuclear disaster.

The original “**Radioactive Wolves**”, directed by Klaus Feichtenberger and produced as an international co-production by ORF, epo film, WNET and NDR, was the first documentary to thoroughly explore the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. It showed how wolves and other species reclaimed the abandoned landscape, turning it into a thriving wildlife refuge. The film received major international recognition, including the *Best Wildlife Habitat Program* at the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival in 2011, *First Prize* at the Festival in Xanty-Mansiysk in 2012 and the *Environment Conservation Encouragement Award* at the Japan Wildlife Festival in 2013.

The updated version revisits the Exclusion Zone 40 years after the nuclear disaster and focuses on how the Russian invasion of Ukraine has affected both the ecosystem and decades of scientific research. What had become a unique open-air laboratory for international biologists, turned into a militarized zone in 2022. The film combines newly gathered scientific information, current expert interviews and fresh footage from the region to show how military activity has reshaped the landscape and disrupted long-term scientific work.

THE LARGEST OPEN-AIR LABORATORY

The original “**Radioactive Wolves**” followed the work of wolf experts Christoph and Barbara Promberger as they investigated how wolves survived in a radioactive landscape. By capturing and radio collaring animals, they studied population size, behavior, migration and health, while the film also documented the surprising return of species such as wild horses, bison and eagles. With rare access to restricted areas and the first aerial footage in two decades, the documentary revealed how a thriving ecosystem had emerged in the complete absence of humans.

The updated edition, “**Radioactive Wolves – Chernobyl’s Forbidden Wilderness**”, builds on these foundations and documents the profound changes the region has undergone since 2022. A film team travelled to Ukraine in winter 2026 under challenging conditions

to capture the damage to research sites, the interruption of ecological studies and the impact on scientists such as Maryna Shkwyrja, who was forced to abandon over a decade of wolf research. The documentary also references ongoing international studies, including promising but currently halted US-based research into possible radiation-related cancer resistance in wolves.

“Radioactive Wolves – Chernobyl’s Forbidden Wilderness” is scheduled for release at the beginning of April 2026. The documentary is distributed worldwide by ORF-Enterprise.

ABOUT ORF-ENTERPRISE

Content Sales International (CSI) is the international content sales unit of ORF-Enterprise, the marketing subsidiary of the Austrian public service broadcasting corporation ORF. The team markets both ORF productions and works produced by independent production companies. The portfolio spans from documentaries, movies, series to kids programming and music.

The award-winning ORF Universum documentaries and various popular original ORF Original drama series form the foundation of the colorful content catalog.

Content Sales International also acts as facilitator between the Austrian creative industry and international coproduction partners, hosts a Semi-Final round of Judging for the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (iEmmys®) and participates in a wide range of content markets including MIPCOM, Avant Première, Sunny Side of the Doc and Jackson Wild Summit. A music publishing service with its own label, along with the ORF-Musiclibrary, complement ORF-Enterprise’s activities in this segment.

SUMMARY:

- **“Radioactive Wolves – Chernobyl’s Forbidden Wilderness”** is the updated edition of the internationally acclaimed documentary **“Radioactive Wolves”**, released on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster.
- The new version revisits the Exclusion Zone with current scientific insights, expert interviews and newly filmed material.
- The original documentary received multiple international awards, including Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival (2011), Xanty Mansijsk Festival (2012) and Japan Wildlife Festival (2013).
- The documentary is distributed worldwide by ORF-Enterprise (contentsales.ORF.at).