

SYNOPSIS



Drava - River of Peace, River of War

Drau - Ein Fluss zwischen Krieg und Frieden

The Drava is one of the last big, partially untamed lowland rivers of central Europe. Whereas in Austria the river is forced into a narrow concrete corset after a few kilometers in Austria, the lower reaches of the Drava at the border between Hungary and Croatia are practically untouched. For years it was cut off from the outside world by the Iron Curtain. At that time only soldiers were permitted to enter the border area. This allowed the areas along the Drava to keep its incredible variety of plant and animal life. Here black storks breed in the solitude of the forest, kingfishers and sea eagles fish in the branches of the Drava and innumerable bank swallows make their nests in the steep slopes rising from the river.

Further downstream, the idyll found an abrupt end during the war at the beginning of the 1990s between the Serbs and Croats. The Kopacki Rit, the flood plains where the Drava flows into the Danube, was right at the fighting front. During those years the Kopacki Rit Natural Park lost a great deal of its original natural wealth.

Nature's process of regeneration, however, will take place during the coming decades without human intervention.



Awards: Missoula International Wildlife Film Festival 2001: Missoula International Wildlife Film Festival Award

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Written by Karl Königsberger

GOESS Film and Media for ORF

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