

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:03,000

Holy, this is crazy.

2

00:00:03,000 --> 00:00:06,000

That looks like a Tasmanian tiger.

3

00:00:07,000 --> 00:00:09,000

You've seen it.

4

00:00:09,000 --> 00:00:11,000

I ever dozed in the Donaof.

5

00:00:15,000 --> 00:00:18,000

This place feels like another planet.

6

00:00:22,000 --> 00:00:24,000

I hear something rustling.

7

00:00:24,000 --> 00:00:26,000

Wait, I just saw an eye up there.

8

00:00:26,000 --> 00:00:28,000

There's definitely something living in there.

9

00:00:28,000 --> 00:00:31,000

Oh, look at that. We got a cave down here.

10

00:00:33,000 --> 00:00:36,000

Look at this. Holy, that is a print.

11

00:00:45,000 --> 00:00:54,000

Bigfoot, the Loch Ness monster, Shupacabra, all cryptids, animals frequently seen but not yet proven to exist.

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00:00:55,000 --> 00:00:57,000

Sightings are often the same.

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00:00:57,000 --> 00:01:00,000

Someone catches a fleeting glimpse or snaps a blurry photo.

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00:01:00,000 --> 00:01:05,000

But what if we knew the creature in question actually existed?

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00:01:05,000 --> 00:01:08,000

Or at least did exist?

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00:01:08,000 --> 00:01:12,000

Meet the Phylusine, or Tasmanian tiger.

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00:01:12,000 --> 00:01:20,000

Once the apex predator of all of Australia, this carnivore was feared for its sharp fangs and terrifyingly wide jaws.

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00:01:20,000 --> 00:01:25,000

It was brutally hunted to the brink of oblivion by European colonists.

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00:01:25,000 --> 00:01:30,000

The last of its kind died on the island of Tasmania in 1936,

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00:01:30,000 --> 00:01:35,000

snuffing out a species that had survived for 26 million years.

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00:01:35,000 --> 00:01:38,000

But something strange is happening in Tasmania.

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00:01:38,000 --> 00:01:45,000

Eyewitnesses are coming forward, adamant that the Tasmanian tiger continues to live on in the wild.

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00:01:46,000 --> 00:01:50,000

A team of scientists are now chasing the latest in a string of sightings.

24

00:01:50,000 --> 00:01:57,000

And recently, shocking video has emerged from the Australian mainland that may drastically alter the search area for the creature.

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00:01:59,000 --> 00:02:03,000

Is the Tasmanian tiger still out there? I intend to find out.

26

00:02:03,000 --> 00:02:10,000

So get ready for a hunting expedition to the land down under in search of what just might be a living legend.

27

00:02:16,000 --> 00:02:18,000

My name is Josh Gates.

28

00:02:18,000 --> 00:02:19,000

Look at that!

29

00:02:19,000 --> 00:02:23,000

With a degree in archaeology and a passion for exploration.

30

00:02:24,000 --> 00:02:28,000

I have a tendency to end up in some very strange situations.

31

00:02:28,000 --> 00:02:31,000

This is horrible. This is officially horrible.

32

00:02:31,000 --> 00:02:37,000

My travels have taken me to the ends of the earth as I investigate the greatest legends in history.

33

00:02:37,000 --> 00:02:39,000

We're good to try. Let's go.

34

00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:41,000

This is Expedition Unknown.

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00:02:45,000 --> 00:02:53,000

The sixth largest country in the world, Australia is known for its beer, its beaches, and its bizarre menagerie of marsupials.

36

00:02:56,000 --> 00:03:02,000

And the allegedly extinct thylacine, aka the Tasmanian tiger, was one of the most unique.

37

00:03:02,000 --> 00:03:09,000

I begin my expedition 150 miles down under of Down Under in Australia's island state of Tasmania.

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00:03:10,000 --> 00:03:19,000

It's not only the namesake of our subject, but its capital city of Hobart was also home to the very last confirmed living Tasmanian tiger.

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00:03:19,000 --> 00:03:23,000

Hobart's one of those great cities that's really managed to reinvent itself.

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00:03:23,000 --> 00:03:26,000

At the turn of the 19th century, this place started as a prison colony.

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00:03:26,000 --> 00:03:33,000

And for much of its history, it's been an industrial port filled with wailing vessels and ships moving produce and wool back to the mainland.

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00:03:33,000 --> 00:03:40,000

Today, the harbor is still active, but most of the colonial era warehouses have been converted over into pubs and galleries and funky stores,

43

00:03:40,000 --> 00:03:45,000

turning a town built by convicts into a chic little city at the bottom of the world.

44

00:03:45,000 --> 00:03:53,000

Throughout Hobart, there are endless reminders of the hometown hero, the Tasmanian tiger, as well as other local wildlife.

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00:03:53,000 --> 00:04:05,000

The Tasmanian tiger, the koala, the wombat, obviously, the Tasmanian devil, all the classics here.

46

00:04:05,000 --> 00:04:06,000

That's a platypus though, right?

47

00:04:06,000 --> 00:04:07,000

Yep.

48

00:04:07,000 --> 00:04:09,000

Nailed it.

49

00:04:09,000 --> 00:04:18,000

I take a stroll over to the nearby Tasmanian museum and art gallery, where you can get up close and personal with a much more life-like stuffed phylocine.

50

00:04:19,000 --> 00:04:27,000

With a head like a wolf, stripes like a tiger, and an inverted pouch like a wombat, the phylocine looks like nothing else.

51

00:04:27,000 --> 00:04:34,000

It thrives in Australia for millions of years, until Asian seafarers introduced dingos to the continent 4,000 years ago.

52

00:04:34,000 --> 00:04:40,000

With competition for food and habitat, the phylocine dies out on the mainland 2,000 years later.

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00:04:40,000 --> 00:04:43,000

But it endures on the island of Tasmania.

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00:04:43,000 --> 00:04:52,000

That is, until the arrival of European settlers in the early 19th century, who valued their sheep over a predatory native species.

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00:04:52,000 --> 00:05:03,000

You know, seeing a display like this is a kind of amazing reality check, because there's so much rumor and legend surrounding the story of the phylocine that it's easy to forget that it's a real animal.

56

00:05:03,000 --> 00:05:11,000

We tend to think of species extinction as something that happened in the distant past, but here it is, in the flesh, from less than 100 years ago.

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00:05:14,000 --> 00:05:24,000

To eradicate the phylocine population, the Tasmanian government offers a bounty for each head, and even rebrands the reclusive animal to sound more deadly.

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00:05:24,000 --> 00:05:34,000

The new name, Tasmanian Tiger, conjures up fear, making people feel comfortable with exterminating thousands of phylocines to the brink of extinction.

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00:05:34,000 --> 00:05:42,000

And not far from the museum, I explore the ruins of one of the most important locations in the history of the Tasmanian Tiger.

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00:05:42,000 --> 00:05:50,000

Now, little more than an abandoned and overgrown field, this spot on the edge of town was home to the most famous phylocine of all time.

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00:05:50,000 --> 00:05:54,000

This is the Bomari Zoo, or what little is left of it.

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00:05:54,000 --> 00:05:59,000

Walking around here today, it's hard to believe that this place was once home to polar bears and

lions.

63

00:05:59,000 --> 00:06:09,000

And in just about this very spot, 80 years ago this week, in September of 1936, the very last known Tasmanian Tiger died in captivity.

64

00:06:10,000 --> 00:06:18,000

His name was Benjamin. He was accidentally locked into the outer part of his enclosure on a very cold night, and he succumbed to the elements.

65

00:06:18,000 --> 00:06:26,000

All that's left of him today is a very ghostly piece of film footage, what may be the very last images of an entire species.

66

00:06:26,000 --> 00:06:29,000

Unless, of course, there's more of them out there.

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00:06:31,000 --> 00:06:35,000

While the phylocine status as an extinct species is hotly debated,

68

00:06:36,000 --> 00:06:41,000

what's not up for debate is that it still has several living relatives here in Australia.

69

00:06:41,000 --> 00:06:46,000

I'm hoping that observing their habits might help me hunt for the Tasmanian Tiger.

70

00:06:47,000 --> 00:06:48,000

Greg.

71

00:06:48,000 --> 00:06:49,000

Josh, how are you, mate?

72

00:06:49,000 --> 00:06:50,000

I'm good, how you doing?

73

00:06:50,000 --> 00:06:51,000

Welcome to our little sanctuary.

74

00:06:51,000 --> 00:06:52,000

Thanks for having me.

75

00:06:52,000 --> 00:06:57,000

Greg Irons is the owner of the Bonnarong Wildlife Sanctuary located just outside of Hobart.

76

00:06:58,000 --> 00:07:05,000

He's a leading marsupial expert that is working tirelessly to keep other endangered animals from meeting the same fate as the phylocine.

77

00:07:07,000 --> 00:07:08,000

Straight into some wombats?

78

00:07:08,000 --> 00:07:10,000

Oh my God, look at this thing.

79

00:07:10,000 --> 00:07:13,000

It is the most adorable animal I've ever seen.

80

00:07:13,000 --> 00:07:15,000

Not as adorable as when you jump and you don't have a plier, you king?

81

00:07:15,000 --> 00:07:16,000

Are we allowed to go over?

82

00:07:16,000 --> 00:07:17,000

Absolutely.

83

00:07:18,000 --> 00:07:24,000

I climb into the habitat, make myself comfortable, and meet a furry diva named Mariah.

84

00:07:24,000 --> 00:07:25,000

Hello.

85

00:07:27,000 --> 00:07:29,000

Boy, you got some claws on it too.

86

00:07:29,000 --> 00:07:30,000

Yeah, they're excellent burrows.

87

00:07:30,000 --> 00:07:33,000

They'll dig out burrows that are about 20 metres long and 2 metres deep.

88

00:07:33,000 --> 00:07:35,000

Right in the business.

89

00:07:35,000 --> 00:07:36,000

Okay.

90

00:07:36,000 --> 00:07:37,000

We charge extra for that.

91

00:07:37,000 --> 00:07:38,000

Yeah.

92

00:07:38,000 --> 00:07:41,000

Let's all just cool out down there.

93

00:07:41,000 --> 00:07:45,000

Let's get this wombat out from under my junk.

94

00:07:46,000 --> 00:07:51,000

Australia's geographic isolation means it's home to all sorts of bizarre and unique species.

95

00:07:51,000 --> 00:07:56,000

We all know the kangaroo and the koala, but Greg wants me to meet Tasmanias and Looney Tunes,

96

00:07:56,000 --> 00:08:00,000

most infamous marsupial, the Tasmanian devil.

97

00:08:00,000 --> 00:08:02,000

You're going to hand fade one?

98

00:08:04,000 --> 00:08:05,000

Uh, sure.

99

00:08:07,000 --> 00:08:08,000

Oh.

100

00:08:08,000 --> 00:08:10,000

Okay, so we've got some wallaby there.

101

00:08:10,000 --> 00:08:11,000

You're vegetarian?

102

00:08:11,000 --> 00:08:12,000

I am now.

103

00:08:12,000 --> 00:08:13,000

Okay, so I'm...

104

00:08:13,000 --> 00:08:14,000

Okay, what's the move here?

105

00:08:14,000 --> 00:08:17,000

To all control your arm, you just make sure you give me some flicks.

106

00:08:17,000 --> 00:08:19,000

What's about to happen here, Greg?

107

00:08:22,000 --> 00:08:24,000

Oh, they're strong.

108

00:08:24,000 --> 00:08:27,000

I, uh, don't want them coming, so I just lift a little.

109

00:08:28,000 --> 00:08:31,000

I quickly realise why Greg is guiding my hand.

110

00:08:31,000 --> 00:08:34,000

One slip and it could be chewed off.

111

00:08:36,000 --> 00:08:41,000

Nearby, I get a peek at the Eastern Quall, the closest living relative to the Phylocene,

112

00:08:41,000 --> 00:08:44,000

though decidedly more adorable.

113

00:08:44,000 --> 00:08:48,000

The Eastern Quall has just been listed as endangered in Tasmania,

114

00:08:48,000 --> 00:08:52,000

so if we're not careful, it could go the way of its cousin, the Phylocene.

115

00:08:52,000 --> 00:08:54,000

The takeaway here is simple.

116

00:08:54,000 --> 00:08:57,000

The Phylocene's relatives are wild and highly reclusive,

117

00:08:57,000 --> 00:09:03,000

which means finding a living Tassie tiger is going to be difficult and potentially dangerous.

118

00:09:03,000 --> 00:09:07,000

And what do you make of all the accounts that somebody's seen, uh, Tasmanian tigers?

119

00:09:07,000 --> 00:09:08,000

You think it's possible?

120

00:09:08,000 --> 00:09:10,000

I hope so. I desperately hope so.

121

00:09:10,000 --> 00:09:11,000

Yeah.

122

00:09:11,000 --> 00:09:13,000

You know, you never say never.

123

00:09:14,000 --> 00:09:20,000

By the light of a new day, I drive three hours northeast to the outskirts of the city of Launceston.

124

00:09:20,000 --> 00:09:24,000

It's not only where European settlers spotted their first Phylocene,

125

00:09:24,000 --> 00:09:27,000

it's a hotbed of much more recent sightings.

126

00:09:27,000 --> 00:09:33,000

So the search for the truth about the Tasmanian tiger has everything to do with eyewitness encounters.

127

00:09:33,000 --> 00:09:37,000

And one of the stories comes from a guy named Andrew Orchard.

128

00:09:37,000 --> 00:09:40,000

He's a dairy farmer in the northeast part of the island.

129

00:09:40,000 --> 00:09:44,000

He's got about 500 acres of pristine wilderness that backs up against his farm.

130

00:09:44,000 --> 00:09:49,000

And if his stories are to be believed, that wilderness may be home to a Tasmanian tiger.

131

00:09:52,000 --> 00:09:53,000

How you doing?

132

00:09:53,000 --> 00:09:54,000

How you going, Josh?

133

00:09:54,000 --> 00:09:55,000

I'm good, mate.

134

00:09:55,000 --> 00:09:56,000

Nice to meet you.

135

00:09:56,000 --> 00:09:57,000

Same to you.

136

00:09:57,000 --> 00:09:59,000

You want to know a bit about tigers, they tell me.

137

00:09:59,000 --> 00:10:01,000

That's why I'm here. I hear you're the guy in the know.

138

00:10:01,000 --> 00:10:02,000

I'm the man.

139

00:10:02,000 --> 00:10:03,000

You've seen one.

140

00:10:03,000 --> 00:10:06,000

I think I'm the only person in the world that has found a family group

141

00:10:06,000 --> 00:10:09,000

and been able to study it for 30 or more years.

142

00:10:09,000 --> 00:10:10,000

You've seen one?

143

00:10:10,000 --> 00:10:13,000

Seen plenty. I've seen over a dozen that I don't know of.

144

00:10:13,000 --> 00:10:14,000

When was your most recent sighting?

145

00:10:14,000 --> 00:10:15,000

March. This year?

146

00:10:15,000 --> 00:10:16,000

March.

147

00:10:16,000 --> 00:10:17,000

Walked on one?

148

00:10:17,000 --> 00:10:19,000

Oh, we could hear him yapping in the bush.

149

00:10:19,000 --> 00:10:21,000

And do you have any physical evidence?

150

00:10:21,000 --> 00:10:24,000

Have you been able to collect any specimens, any photos, anything?

151

00:10:24,000 --> 00:10:26,000

I have. Actually, I'll show you a couple of things.

152

00:10:26,000 --> 00:10:27,000

Yeah?

153

00:10:30,000 --> 00:10:31,000

That's a little female.

154

00:10:31,000 --> 00:10:32,000

Hold on.

155

00:10:32,000 --> 00:10:34,000

She's built like a little pig.

156

00:10:34,000 --> 00:10:36,000

Holy, look at that.

157

00:10:44,000 --> 00:10:49,000

I'm in northeast Tasmania, where there have been numerous recent sightings of the Tasmanian tiger,

158

00:10:49,000 --> 00:10:53,000

an animal that supposedly went extinct 80 years ago.

159

00:10:53,000 --> 00:10:58,000

Locals like Andrew Orchard claim to have spotted the creature right here in the remote back country.

160

00:10:58,000 --> 00:11:00,000

Holy, look at that.

161

00:11:00,000 --> 00:11:03,000

That looks like a Tasmanian tiger.

162

00:11:03,000 --> 00:11:05,000

I mean, look at the stripes on it.

163

00:11:05,000 --> 00:11:07,000

Yeah. The big solid tail on it.

164

00:11:07,000 --> 00:11:08,000

And the ear.

165

00:11:08,000 --> 00:11:09,000

Yeah.

166

00:11:10,000 --> 00:11:12,000

Then you've got one, he's running away from you.

167

00:11:12,000 --> 00:11:13,000

See the big fat feet on it?

168

00:11:13,000 --> 00:11:14,000

Yeah.

169

00:11:14,000 --> 00:11:16,000

I measure that sag, that's knee high.

170

00:11:17,000 --> 00:11:20,000

All right, I'm getting intrigued here now.

171

00:11:20,000 --> 00:11:25,000

This one here, the stripes and the facial marks just blend into all the canopy around it.

172

00:11:25,000 --> 00:11:26,000

This is crazy.

173

00:11:26,000 --> 00:11:27,000

These are so big.

174

00:11:27,000 --> 00:11:32,000

I've seen a lot of evidence, more than most people, but they're still not definitive.

175

00:11:32,000 --> 00:11:34,000

So what would you say to a skeptic?

176

00:11:34,000 --> 00:11:38,000

What would you say to a hardened skeptic who says there's no way that this thing is actually out here?

177

00:11:38,000 --> 00:11:41,000

I say spend a day with me and I'll prove you wrong.

178

00:11:41,000 --> 00:11:43,000

Can you prove it to me?

179

00:11:43,000 --> 00:11:44,000

I can take you out there.

180

00:11:44,000 --> 00:11:46,000

I'll show you where I found a layer with some cubs in it.

181

00:11:46,000 --> 00:11:47,000

Really?

182

00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:48,000

Yeah.

183

00:11:48,000 --> 00:11:50,000

All right, I'm all yours. Let's go.

184

00:11:50,000 --> 00:11:52,000

Andrew's confidence means one of two things.

185

00:11:52,000 --> 00:11:54,000

He's a very good man.

186

00:11:54,000 --> 00:11:56,000

Andrew's confidence means one of two things.

187

00:11:56,000 --> 00:12:02,000

He's either completely nuts or he actually has a phyllocline family living on his property.

188

00:12:02,000 --> 00:12:06,000

And since I'm following him deep into the Tasmanian bush,

189

00:12:06,000 --> 00:12:08,000

I'm really hoping for the latter.

190

00:12:08,000 --> 00:12:13,000

One of the photographs I showed you, he was on the track there, I had a camera on a tree.

191

00:12:13,000 --> 00:12:14,000

So we're in the zone?

192

00:12:14,000 --> 00:12:15,000

We're in the zone.

193

00:12:15,000 --> 00:12:17,000

So I'm going to have to make you smell like the bush.

194

00:12:17,000 --> 00:12:18,000

Oh boy.

195

00:12:18,000 --> 00:12:20,000

Otherwise he will smell us long before we get there.

196

00:12:20,000 --> 00:12:21,000

What does that involve?

197

00:12:21,000 --> 00:12:23,000

Eucalyptus oil.

198

00:12:25,000 --> 00:12:26,000

We use eucalyptus oil.

199

00:12:26,000 --> 00:12:27,000

Uh-huh.

200

00:12:27,000 --> 00:12:29,000

And we cover our bodies with it.

201

00:12:30,000 --> 00:12:31,000

Just throw this on?

202

00:12:31,000 --> 00:12:32,000

Throw that on.

203

00:12:32,000 --> 00:12:33,000

Right on.

204

00:12:33,000 --> 00:12:35,000

Cover all your deodorants, soaps, shampoos.

205

00:12:35,000 --> 00:12:37,000

Lucky for you, Andrew, I don't bathe that much.

206

00:12:37,000 --> 00:12:39,000

I'll let you in on a little secret.

207

00:12:39,000 --> 00:12:43,000

Here on Expedition Unknown, showers are few and far between.

208

00:12:44,000 --> 00:12:45,000

It's strong.

209

00:12:45,000 --> 00:12:47,000

A little honey ears.

210

00:12:47,000 --> 00:12:48,000

Huh?

211

00:12:48,000 --> 00:12:49,000

Look at the ladies.

212

00:12:49,000 --> 00:12:51,000

Okay, I smell like a Turkish bath. Let's go.

213

00:12:51,000 --> 00:12:53,000

Eucalyptus tree now. Let's go.

214

00:12:53,000 --> 00:12:54,000

Let's do it.

215

00:12:57,000 --> 00:12:59,000

Smelling like koala food, we forge ahead.

216

00:12:59,000 --> 00:13:03,000

Looking for a den or a cave, or a thylacine would make its home.

217

00:13:03,000 --> 00:13:05,000

How much are trailing here?

218

00:13:11,000 --> 00:13:14,000

Suddenly, Andrew signals that we're in the right area,

219

00:13:14,000 --> 00:13:17,000

and he silently closes in on a particular spot.

220

00:13:24,000 --> 00:13:26,000

It's a real big hole.

221

00:13:26,000 --> 00:13:28,000

Looks like she's been living in here again.

222

00:13:28,000 --> 00:13:29,000

It's freshly used.

223

00:13:29,000 --> 00:13:30,000

Freshly used.

224

00:13:31,000 --> 00:13:33,000

You can see under the bottom there, there's a hole dug underneath.

225

00:13:33,000 --> 00:13:35,000

You can see where she lays in here.

226

00:13:36,000 --> 00:13:37,000

That's amazing.

227

00:13:37,000 --> 00:13:40,000

If we go over the other side of the log, there's a bigger hole.

228

00:13:40,000 --> 00:13:42,000

This den goes through, you think?

229

00:13:42,000 --> 00:13:43,000

It goes through to the other side.

230

00:13:43,000 --> 00:13:45,000

The cubs were actually on the other side when I found them.

231

00:13:45,000 --> 00:13:46,000

Let's take a look.

232

00:13:47,000 --> 00:13:48,000

Wow.

233

00:13:49,000 --> 00:13:51,000

The hole goes straight under the log.

234

00:13:51,000 --> 00:13:53,000

This is where the cubs were down in there.

235

00:13:53,000 --> 00:13:54,000

Incredible.

236

00:13:54,000 --> 00:13:55,000

And you can see we've been freshly used.

237

00:13:55,000 --> 00:13:57,000

There's definitely something we've been living in there.

238

00:13:57,000 --> 00:13:58,000

Wow.

239

00:13:58,000 --> 00:14:02,000

Andrew and I examine the den for any signs of droppings or hair fibers,

240

00:14:02,000 --> 00:14:04,000

but it's completely clean.

241

00:14:04,000 --> 00:14:06,000

Do you think that she's going to come back and use this again?

242

00:14:06,000 --> 00:14:07,000

I hope she will, yes.

243

00:14:07,000 --> 00:14:10,000

If not, she'll have only moved somewhere up in the scrub, not far away.

244

00:14:10,000 --> 00:14:11,000

Right.

245

00:14:11,000 --> 00:14:13,000

I was going to ask Andrew to come back and use this again.

246

00:14:13,000 --> 00:14:15,000

Somewhere up in the scrub, not far away.

247

00:14:15,000 --> 00:14:16,000

Right.

248

00:14:16,000 --> 00:14:18,000

I was going to ask you before we came out here why you think it's been so hard

249

00:14:18,000 --> 00:14:22,000

for people to find these, but I think I got all my answers on the walk up here.

250

00:14:22,000 --> 00:14:24,000

I mean, it's just like walking through just dense brush.

251

00:14:24,000 --> 00:14:25,000

It is.

252

00:14:25,000 --> 00:14:29,000

How do you see an animal that's only knee high in ferns that are this high?

253

00:14:29,000 --> 00:14:30,000

Exactly.

254

00:14:30,000 --> 00:14:33,000

It's easy to see how something like that could stay off the radar here.

255

00:14:33,000 --> 00:14:35,000

Oh, I'd have to hear you coming long before you get to it.

256

00:14:35,000 --> 00:14:36,000

Right.

257

00:14:36,000 --> 00:14:37,000

I'd be gone.

258

00:14:37,000 --> 00:14:42,000

But we should have a look around the den and see if we can find any physical evidence of one being about.

259

00:14:42,000 --> 00:14:44,000

Let's look around.

260

00:14:44,000 --> 00:14:49,000

Phylacenes are crepuscular, which is a fancy word meaning they come out around twilight.

261

00:14:49,000 --> 00:14:54,000

So if there are any of them out here, this is the perfect time to spot one.

262

00:14:54,000 --> 00:14:56,000

These are really good sized scat.

263

00:14:56,000 --> 00:14:58,000

Oh, look at that.

264

00:14:58,000 --> 00:14:59,000

Got no bones in it.

265

00:14:59,000 --> 00:15:00,000

It's definitely not a devil.

266

00:15:00,000 --> 00:15:01,000

Right.

267

00:15:01,000 --> 00:15:03,000

It's too big for a quail.

268

00:15:03,000 --> 00:15:06,000

Only these one thing that could be, a tiger.

269

00:15:06,000 --> 00:15:07,000

You think it's tiger?

270

00:15:07,000 --> 00:15:08,000

I do.

271

00:15:08,000 --> 00:15:09,000

Let's get a sample.

272

00:15:09,000 --> 00:15:12,000

We can take it back for analysis.

273

00:15:12,000 --> 00:15:15,000

Rather than pick it up, would you like to use my knife?

274

00:15:15,000 --> 00:15:17,000

That's not a knife.

275

00:15:17,000 --> 00:15:18,000

That's a knife.

276

00:15:18,000 --> 00:15:20,000

I've been waiting days to say that.

277

00:15:20,000 --> 00:15:21,000

I'm sorry.

278

00:15:21,000 --> 00:15:22,000

Take note, kids.

279

00:15:22,000 --> 00:15:25,000

You think you want to be a travel channel host.

280

00:15:25,000 --> 00:15:29,000

And then you find yourself playing with poop.

281

00:15:29,000 --> 00:15:37,000

With a promising sample bagged and tagged, we'll be sending this to a lab to determine if this is the calling card of a tiger roaming Andrew's property.

282

00:15:39,000 --> 00:15:45,000

The next day, I'm back on the road and back on the hunt.

283

00:15:45,000 --> 00:15:53,000

Pushing west, I enter what's known as Tasmanian Tiger Country, the region of the island home to the most modern sightings of the creature.

284

00:15:53,000 --> 00:16:01,000

There's even a Tassie Tiger Bar filled with news articles of sightings and colorful representations of the legendary beast.

285

00:16:01,000 --> 00:16:02,000

Have you seen it?

286

00:16:02,000 --> 00:16:03,000

The Wifas.

287

00:16:03,000 --> 00:16:04,000

The Wifas?

288

00:16:04,000 --> 00:16:07,000

The look on the face when she came home, she looked like she'd seen a ghost.

289

00:16:07,000 --> 00:16:08,000

And you think it's still out there?

290

00:16:08,000 --> 00:16:09,000

Yeah, it's still out there.

291

00:16:09,000 --> 00:16:10,000

Cheers.

292

00:16:10,000 --> 00:16:11,000

Cheers to the tiger.

293

00:16:17,000 --> 00:16:22,000

So my next stop is to meet with a group called the Phylocene Research Unit.

294

00:16:22,000 --> 00:16:32,000

This is a trio of researchers who are combining old school tracking skills, a knowledge of biology, and some really high tech equipment to try to solve the Phylocene mystery.

295

00:16:32,000 --> 00:16:35,000

And I'm meeting them at the site of some of the most recent eyewitness accounts.

296

00:16:38,000 --> 00:16:39,000

Chris.

297

00:16:39,000 --> 00:16:40,000

Hey man, how are you going?

298

00:16:40,000 --> 00:16:41,000

Good, how are you doing?

299

00:16:41,000 --> 00:16:42,000

You must be Josh.

300

00:16:42,000 --> 00:16:43,000

Yeah, nice to meet you man.

301

00:16:43,000 --> 00:16:44,000

The tune's up here in this clearing.

302

00:16:44,000 --> 00:16:45,000

Okay.

303

00:16:45,000 --> 00:16:46,000

So I'll jump in and I can probably lead you in.

304

00:16:46,000 --> 00:16:47,000

Awesome, let's do it.

305

00:16:47,000 --> 00:16:48,000

Cool.

306

00:16:51,000 --> 00:16:52,000

Straight on?

307

00:16:52,000 --> 00:16:53,000

Straight on man.

308

00:16:53,000 --> 00:16:55,000

The muddy is all get out of here.

309

00:16:55,000 --> 00:16:57,000

We have to get a lot money man.

310

00:16:57,000 --> 00:16:59,000

It's a lot deeper through here.

311

00:16:59,000 --> 00:17:01,000

You're not kidding.

312

00:17:01,000 --> 00:17:03,000

This looks like Tasmanian Tiger Country now.

313

00:17:03,000 --> 00:17:05,000

It's a perfect tap-a-tat.

314

00:17:05,000 --> 00:17:06,000

It wouldn't be better.

315

00:17:06,000 --> 00:17:08,000

Man, there have been real sightings here recently.

316

00:17:08,000 --> 00:17:11,000

Yeah, some historic ones and then right up to this year.

317

00:17:11,000 --> 00:17:12,000

Great, awesome.

318

00:17:12,000 --> 00:17:14,000

So this is the spot.

319

00:17:17,000 --> 00:17:19,000

Oh yeah, oh yeah.

320

00:17:31,000 --> 00:17:35,880

Our muddy drive leads us to the TRU Base Camp where the rest of the team is waiting, looking

321

00:17:35,880 --> 00:17:37,880

like the Tasmanian ZZ Top.

322

00:17:37,880 --> 00:17:38,880

How's it going?

323

00:17:38,880 --> 00:17:39,880

Good.

324

00:17:39,880 --> 00:17:40,880

Josh, this is Bill.

325

00:17:40,880 --> 00:17:41,880

Hey Bill, nice to meet you.

326

00:17:41,880 --> 00:17:42,880

And this is Warren.

327

00:17:42,880 --> 00:17:44,880

Hey Warren, nice to meet you as well.

328

00:17:44,880 --> 00:17:50,880

A wildlife biologist, a tech expert and an experienced bushman, the TRU team brings a skeptical

329

00:17:50,880 --> 00:17:54,880

and conservation-minded approach to their phylicine research.

330

00:17:54,880 --> 00:17:56,880

Why band together and undertake the search?

331

00:17:56,880 --> 00:17:57,880

Why do you think it's important?

332

00:17:57,880 --> 00:18:00,880

We are directly responsible for the extinction of this animal.

333

00:18:00,880 --> 00:18:07,880

And so if there is a remnant population, we need to find it to allow effective conservation

334

00:18:07,880 --> 00:18:08,880

of the species.

335

00:18:08,880 --> 00:18:10,880

Okay, well, let's get into it.

336

00:18:12,880 --> 00:18:15,880

The team has devised a two-pronged plan of attack.

337

00:18:15,880 --> 00:18:20,880

We'll search for any physical signs of phyllicine activity while also attempting to actually

338

00:18:20,880 --> 00:18:24,880

draw one out at dusk when it's believed to hunt.

339

00:18:24,880 --> 00:18:29,880

We hike through the dense forest and as we enter a clearing, I spot a fresh kill.

340

00:18:29,880 --> 00:18:32,880

Proof that we're trailing a predator.

341

00:18:32,880 --> 00:18:33,880

What is this?

342

00:18:33,880 --> 00:18:35,880

It looks like sheep to me.

343

00:18:44,880 --> 00:18:49,880

I'm on the island of Tasmania, tracking down evidence that the Tasmanian tiger still exists

344

00:18:49,880 --> 00:18:52,880

and we may just have found a major lead.

345

00:18:53,880 --> 00:18:55,880

It looks like sheep to me.

346

00:18:55,880 --> 00:18:57,880

This is bone here.

347

00:19:00,880 --> 00:19:02,880

What's big enough to take down a sheep out here?

348

00:19:02,880 --> 00:19:06,880

In the past, the phylicine, hence why they put the bounty on it.

349

00:19:06,880 --> 00:19:07,880

Right.

350

00:19:07,880 --> 00:19:08,880

What do you think did this one end?

351

00:19:08,880 --> 00:19:13,880

If it was on its absolute last legs, a Tasmanian devil, but I can't tell what it is.

352

00:19:13,880 --> 00:19:15,880

Bill can't tell what it is.

353

00:19:15,880 --> 00:19:18,880

Alright, well, keep our eyes open for a sheep killer.

354

00:19:18,880 --> 00:19:32,880

I really can't overstate how absolutely rugged it is in here.

355

00:19:32,880 --> 00:19:35,880

This is no ordinary walk in the woods.

356

00:19:35,880 --> 00:19:41,880

Everywhere you look, really strange plants and you just don't even feel like you're on

357

00:19:41,880 --> 00:19:43,880

planet Earth anymore.

358

00:19:44,880 --> 00:19:49,880

Dusk is upon us and we're in the area of recent sightings.

359

00:19:49,880 --> 00:19:54,880

If the phyllicine really is out here, now it should be waking up to hunt.

360

00:19:56,880 --> 00:20:01,880

Guys, this looks like a great area to break out some of the gizmos that we've got in our bags here.

361

00:20:01,880 --> 00:20:06,880

We've got these sound blasters that basically projects the sound.

362

00:20:06,880 --> 00:20:11,880

We've got a sound that's engineered to sound like a phyllicine bark.

363

00:20:11,880 --> 00:20:14,880

So the idea is we send this out and we hope something answers.

364

00:20:14,880 --> 00:20:16,880

Yeah, absolutely.

365

00:20:16,880 --> 00:20:22,880

The team breaks out a massive parabolic dish that can pinpoint sounds more than a half a mile into the jungle.

366

00:20:22,880 --> 00:20:26,880

Once it's rigged up, Bill activates the artificial phylicine call.

367

00:20:26,880 --> 00:20:37,880

It's amazing how much you can hear on these things.

368

00:20:37,880 --> 00:20:41,880

I can hear mosquitoes buzzing birds across the way.

369

00:20:41,880 --> 00:20:44,880

I left the TV on in my hotel room.

370

00:20:57,880 --> 00:21:00,880

Wrestling. I hear something rustling.

371

00:21:00,880 --> 00:21:05,880

I heard a bunch of birds reacting and then something rustling.

372

00:21:05,880 --> 00:21:09,880

Whatever we heard is somewhere in here. We're losing light pretty fast.

373

00:21:09,880 --> 00:21:13,880

Why don't we switch to infrared? Maybe we go out there, check it out, see if we can find any sign of it.

374

00:21:13,880 --> 00:21:15,880

Yeah, absolutely.

375

00:21:16,880 --> 00:21:22,880

Night has officially fallen, so we swap over to infrared cameras for the remainder of our search.

376

00:21:22,880 --> 00:21:24,880

Okay, so what's our plan?

377

00:21:24,880 --> 00:21:28,880

We're going to use the FLIR infrared to try and get a heat signature.

378

00:21:29,880 --> 00:21:37,880

The FLIR is a thermal imaging camera that will reveal any wildlife hiding in the dark by illuminating the ambient heat it gives off.

379

00:21:37,880 --> 00:21:39,880

Alright, let's do it guys.

380

00:21:45,880 --> 00:21:52,880

Exploring this area at night is actually really stressful because whether there's a Tasmanian tiger here or not,

381

00:21:52,880 --> 00:21:55,880

it is home to some extremely dangerous animals.

382

00:21:55,880 --> 00:22:01,880

Some of the most venomous snakes in the world live here, so you have to be cautious with every single footstep.

383

00:22:02,880 --> 00:22:10,880

But as we look downward to avoid deadly snakes, we might do well to also watch for other dangers at eye level.

384

00:22:16,880 --> 00:22:18,880

Got some bones here, guys.

385

00:22:18,880 --> 00:22:20,880

Oh, look at that.

386

00:22:21,880 --> 00:22:23,880

Alright, alright.

387

00:22:23,880 --> 00:22:25,880

Bit of skull, I'll just left it.

388

00:22:29,880 --> 00:22:35,880

This here is pretty telling. It looks like something's going to smash through there,

389

00:22:35,880 --> 00:22:39,880

and that's the remnant of the upper canine tooth of the predator.

390

00:22:39,880 --> 00:22:40,880

Right.

391

00:22:40,880 --> 00:22:47,880

I reckon it's being killed by a marsupial, so either devil, quoll, or something else.

392

00:22:47,880 --> 00:22:51,880

Yeah, whatever did this in was certainly intent.

393

00:22:52,880 --> 00:22:56,880

Absolutely. So, uh, pry. Just go find the predator.

394

00:22:56,880 --> 00:23:00,880

That's right. That's the fall of bones, I guess. They head off this way.

395

00:23:08,880 --> 00:23:10,880

Oh, wait, wait, wait, guys, come here.

396

00:23:11,880 --> 00:23:13,880

I just saw an eye up there.

397

00:23:13,880 --> 00:23:15,880

Yeah, I could have found one.

398

00:23:15,880 --> 00:23:17,880

Oh, there it is, yeah.

399

00:23:24,880 --> 00:23:28,880

We're deep in the Tasmanian bush, tracking a marsupial predator in the dark.

400

00:23:28,880 --> 00:23:30,880

Oh, wait, wait, wait, guys, come here. Come here.

401

00:23:30,880 --> 00:23:33,880

And I've just spotted something that might be tracking us.

402

00:23:33,880 --> 00:23:34,880

You see it?

403

00:23:34,880 --> 00:23:36,880

Yeah. Yeah, I could have found one.

404

00:23:36,880 --> 00:23:37,880

Oh, there it is, yeah.

405

00:23:37,880 --> 00:23:38,880

Signature for a bone.

406

00:23:38,880 --> 00:23:40,880

For sure. It's just sitting up in the tree.

407

00:23:40,880 --> 00:23:44,880

Yeah, it looks like it's got a white stomach and maybe a white tiptile,

408

00:23:44,880 --> 00:23:48,880

so it's got to be a culling ringtile possum.

409

00:23:48,880 --> 00:23:50,880

We got a marsupial, at least.

410

00:23:50,880 --> 00:23:52,880

Absolutely. That was a good spot.

411

00:23:52,880 --> 00:23:53,880

Hey.

412

00:23:53,880 --> 00:23:56,880

Keep your eyes open, guys. Come on. Get in the game.

413

00:23:57,880 --> 00:24:01,880

We continue to push our way deeper into the back country.

414

00:24:01,880 --> 00:24:03,880

Definitely got moving water right there.

415

00:24:03,880 --> 00:24:07,880

Eventually hitting a river, which is a promising sign.

416

00:24:08,880 --> 00:24:11,880

Animals have come down here to drink for sure.

417

00:24:11,880 --> 00:24:14,880

Can't really get much further down here.

418

00:24:14,880 --> 00:24:16,880

No, it looks like it might continue down that way.

419

00:24:16,880 --> 00:24:17,880

Yeah, yep.

420

00:24:17,880 --> 00:24:19,880

It looks like a bit of a game trail going up here.

421

00:24:19,880 --> 00:24:20,880

Yeah, absolutely.

422

00:24:20,880 --> 00:24:23,880

Why don't we split up? Chris, you and I can go check out along the water.

423

00:24:23,880 --> 00:24:25,880

You guys want to follow that game trail up? See where it goes?

424

00:24:25,880 --> 00:24:26,880

Absolutely.

425

00:24:30,880 --> 00:24:35,880

The soil near the river is muddy, making this an ideal area to scan for animal tracks.

426

00:24:35,880 --> 00:24:37,880

Let's see any tracks in here.

427

00:24:37,880 --> 00:24:42,880

But before we spot anything, there's word from Warren that they've made a potentially incredible find.

428

00:24:42,880 --> 00:24:43,880

Yo, Josh.

429

00:24:43,880 --> 00:24:44,880

Yeah, go for Josh.

430

00:24:44,880 --> 00:24:47,880

Look, we found a den side up here.

431

00:24:48,880 --> 00:24:50,880

Sorry, go again. You see, you guys think you found a den?

432

00:24:50,880 --> 00:24:52,880

Guys, get up here and check this thing out.

433

00:24:52,880 --> 00:24:54,880

Stand by, right away.

434

00:25:02,880 --> 00:25:04,880

What do you got, guys?

435

00:25:04,880 --> 00:25:06,880

It's a great den song.

436

00:25:06,880 --> 00:25:07,880

Look at that!

437

00:25:07,880 --> 00:25:09,880

You could get access.

438

00:25:09,880 --> 00:25:11,880

We're an animal down through there.

439

00:25:11,880 --> 00:25:13,880

You want to check it out, see if there's anything down there?

440

00:25:13,880 --> 00:25:14,880

Yeah.

441

00:25:17,880 --> 00:25:18,880

Oh, whoa.

442

00:25:18,880 --> 00:25:20,880

Chris, does it dead end or does it keep going?

443

00:25:20,880 --> 00:25:23,880

No, it's deeper in, but it's two an hour.

444

00:25:23,880 --> 00:25:26,880

Okay, I'm going to go around the edge of this, see if I can see another opening.

445

00:25:26,880 --> 00:25:27,880

Okay?

446

00:25:27,880 --> 00:25:29,880

Alright, stand by, guys.

447

00:25:30,880 --> 00:25:33,880

Looks like there might actually be another way through here.

448

00:25:37,880 --> 00:25:38,880

Oh!

449

00:25:40,880 --> 00:25:42,880

We got a cave down here!

450

00:25:43,880 --> 00:25:44,880

Chris!

451

00:25:44,880 --> 00:25:45,880

Coming!

452

00:25:46,880 --> 00:25:47,880

Look at that.

453

00:25:47,880 --> 00:25:48,880

Awesome.

454

00:25:50,880 --> 00:25:52,880

I think that must connect up to the den you saw.

455

00:25:52,880 --> 00:25:54,880

Oh, yeah, absolutely.

456

00:25:54,880 --> 00:25:56,880

It's probably chimed everywhere.

457

00:25:56,880 --> 00:25:57,880

Okay.

458

00:25:57,880 --> 00:25:59,880

It's super slippery in here.

459

00:25:59,880 --> 00:26:01,880

This whole thing just slumps off to nothing.

460

00:26:01,880 --> 00:26:02,880

I'll go check it out.

461

00:26:02,880 --> 00:26:03,880

You want to hang here?

462

00:26:03,880 --> 00:26:04,880

Yeah, for sure.

463

00:26:10,880 --> 00:26:11,880

Drops way down.

464

00:26:13,880 --> 00:26:15,880

Looks like an access point down here.

465

00:26:27,880 --> 00:26:29,880

Okay, I'm in!

466

00:26:40,880 --> 00:26:41,880

Josh, for Chris, come in.

467

00:26:41,880 --> 00:26:43,880

Dive for Chris.

468

00:26:43,880 --> 00:26:45,880

I'm inside the cave.

469

00:26:45,880 --> 00:26:48,880

I can see where that den connected.

470

00:26:48,880 --> 00:26:50,880

Man, it's flooded as hell in here.

471

00:26:50,880 --> 00:26:52,880

I don't think it's much of a habitat out here,

472

00:26:52,880 --> 00:26:54,880

but I can see a dryer section further back.

473

00:26:54,880 --> 00:26:56,880

I'm going to go investigate it.

474

00:26:56,880 --> 00:26:57,880

That's cool, Josh.

475

00:26:57,880 --> 00:26:58,880

Stay safe.

476

00:26:58,880 --> 00:26:59,880

It looks sketchy.

477

00:26:59,880 --> 00:27:01,880

Yeah, it is.

478

00:27:01,880 --> 00:27:02,880

And cold.

479

00:27:02,880 --> 00:27:04,880

I'm going to keep my eyes open for any prints, though.

480

00:27:04,880 --> 00:27:05,880

Lots of mud and sand down here.

481

00:27:05,880 --> 00:27:07,880

I'll let you know if I find anything.

482

00:27:15,880 --> 00:27:18,880

The cave is like a limestone obstacle course,

483

00:27:18,880 --> 00:27:21,880

and it's hard to see more than just a few feet in front of me.

484

00:27:27,880 --> 00:27:30,880

That wasn't my most graceful landing.

485

00:27:36,880 --> 00:27:41,880

Got all this soft sand here off to the edges of the stream flow.

486

00:27:41,880 --> 00:27:45,880

If anything came through here or has been living down here,

487

00:27:45,880 --> 00:27:47,880

you'll definitely leave a track.

488

00:27:50,880 --> 00:27:53,880

This could be a track, but it's really hard to tell.

489

00:27:53,880 --> 00:27:56,880

You can see some impressions here, but man, it's really,

490

00:27:56,880 --> 00:27:58,880

that's a little too close to call for me.

491

00:27:59,880 --> 00:28:00,880

Nothing.

492

00:28:01,880 --> 00:28:05,880

I don't see any other markings of anything that's been in here at all.

493

00:28:06,880 --> 00:28:07,880

Oh, look at this!

494

00:28:07,880 --> 00:28:10,880

Holy, that is a print!

495

00:28:16,880 --> 00:28:18,880

It's the middle of the night in Tasmania,

496

00:28:18,880 --> 00:28:21,880

and I've just found a clear sign of an animal presence

497

00:28:21,880 --> 00:28:23,880

deep inside this cave.

498

00:28:23,880 --> 00:28:24,880

Look at this!

499

00:28:24,880 --> 00:28:25,880

Look at this!

500

00:28:25,880 --> 00:28:26,880

That is a print!

501

00:28:26,880 --> 00:28:27,880

That is a print for sure.

502

00:28:27,880 --> 00:28:28,880

Look at that!

503

00:28:28,880 --> 00:28:30,880

You can see the actual towpads,

504

00:28:30,880 --> 00:28:32,880

and then the main part of the paw right there.

505

00:28:32,880 --> 00:28:33,880

Look at that!

506

00:28:33,880 --> 00:28:36,880

100% that's a print from something sizable.

507

00:28:36,880 --> 00:28:38,880

Let's see if there's anything else.

508

00:28:39,880 --> 00:28:40,880

Oh, here, here, back here.

509

00:28:40,880 --> 00:28:41,880

Another one.

510

00:28:41,880 --> 00:28:43,880

Same exact thing right there.

511

00:28:43,880 --> 00:28:44,880

Looks like the other paw.

512

00:28:46,880 --> 00:28:47,880

Josh, for Chris, come in.

513

00:28:48,880 --> 00:28:49,880

Dive for Chris, Josh.

514

00:28:49,880 --> 00:28:51,880

Listen, man, I got what it looked like.

515

00:28:51,880 --> 00:28:53,880

A couple of prints down here.

516

00:28:53,880 --> 00:28:54,880

Awesome.

517

00:28:54,880 --> 00:28:56,880

Okay, I'm gonna snap some photos,

518

00:28:56,880 --> 00:28:57,880

see if there's anything else down here,

519

00:28:57,880 --> 00:28:58,880

and then head back up.

520

00:28:58,880 --> 00:28:59,880

Cool, cool.

521

00:28:59,880 --> 00:29:00,880

That's crazy.

522

00:29:08,880 --> 00:29:09,880

Okay, we got photos.

523

00:29:10,880 --> 00:29:13,880

I check out, make sure there's nothing else down here,

524

00:29:13,880 --> 00:29:14,880

hiding in the dark.

525

00:29:14,880 --> 00:29:15,880

Into the line.

526

00:29:16,880 --> 00:29:17,880

It's a dead end.

527

00:29:17,880 --> 00:29:19,880

So whatever was down here that left those prints,

528

00:29:19,880 --> 00:29:20,880

is not here now.

529

00:29:20,880 --> 00:29:21,880

I'll tell you what, though,

530

00:29:21,880 --> 00:29:23,880

it's absolutely awesome down here.

531

00:29:23,880 --> 00:29:24,880

Just stunning.

532

00:29:24,880 --> 00:29:25,880

But, no file is seen here.

533

00:29:26,880 --> 00:29:27,880

Away we go.

534

00:29:29,880 --> 00:29:31,880

The cave prints are an encouraging sign.

535

00:29:34,880 --> 00:29:35,880

So we stay on the hunt through the night,

536

00:29:35,880 --> 00:29:36,880

scouring out the area.

537

00:29:36,880 --> 00:29:37,880

We're gonna go get some photos.

538

00:29:37,880 --> 00:29:38,880

We're gonna get some photos.

539

00:29:38,880 --> 00:29:39,880

We're gonna get some photos.

540

00:29:39,880 --> 00:29:40,880

We're gonna get some photos.

541

00:29:40,880 --> 00:29:41,880

We're gonna get some photos.

542

00:29:41,880 --> 00:29:42,880

We're gonna get some photos.

543

00:29:42,880 --> 00:29:43,880

We're gonna get some photos.

544

00:29:43,880 --> 00:29:44,880

We'll be here in the night,

545

00:29:44,880 --> 00:29:45,880

scouring every inch of this valley.

546

00:29:47,880 --> 00:29:48,880

By the light of a new day,

547

00:29:48,880 --> 00:29:49,880

we reconvene at camp.

548

00:29:50,880 --> 00:29:52,880

Between the remains of the prey we found,

549

00:29:52,880 --> 00:29:53,880

the rustling noises,

550

00:29:53,880 --> 00:29:54,880

the den,

551

00:29:54,880 --> 00:29:56,880

and the mysterious print,

552

00:29:56,880 --> 00:29:57,880

there's certainly evidence

553

00:29:57,880 --> 00:29:59,880

of a serious predator on the prowl here.

554

00:30:00,880 --> 00:30:02,880

Chris and his team will need to analyze our finds,

555

00:30:02,880 --> 00:30:03,880

and while they do,

556

00:30:03,880 --> 00:30:06,880

I'm pressing on to follow another hot lead.

557

00:30:07,880 --> 00:30:08,880

My search is being thrust

558

00:30:08,880 --> 00:30:10,880

in a different and surprising direction.

559

00:30:11,880 --> 00:30:12,880

Thanks to a breaking new video,

560

00:30:12,880 --> 00:30:18,340

a breaking new video. This footage, released during my visit, was captured in the southern

561

00:30:18,340 --> 00:30:23,260

part of the Australian mainland, where the Phylusene has reportedly been extinct for

562

00:30:23,260 --> 00:30:33,260

2,000 years. I hop a short flight up to Melbourne to get to the bottom of recent Phylusene sightings

563

00:30:33,260 --> 00:30:40,260

in the region. This funky town is the birthplace of the Hemsworth brothers, Vegard, and the

564

00:30:42,880 --> 00:30:48,480

Jemite and Flea. It's also home to the Queen Victorian Market, the largest open-air market

565

00:30:48,480 --> 00:30:52,880

in the southern hemisphere, where one can sample a staple of the Phylusene's diet.

566

00:30:52,880 --> 00:31:00,480

Can I try the kangaroo salami? That's pure kangaroo. Pure kangaroo. Here we go. 100%

567

00:31:00,480 --> 00:31:08,800

kangaroo salami. Well, that's fantastic. There's bad news for kangaroos everywhere.

568

00:31:08,960 --> 00:31:14,960

Very good salad. Man, I need a really good kangaroo salami joke right about here. It's

569

00:31:15,680 --> 00:31:22,000

pouch hop, sprinkle a bit of rillton soup. I really enjoyed this.

570

00:31:25,600 --> 00:31:30,240

No, I got nothing. Now that we've determined who the real apex predator is around here,

571

00:31:31,680 --> 00:31:37,280

I head south of the city to meet a local Phylusene hunter named Michael Moss. He doesn't just

believe

572

00:31:37,280 --> 00:31:42,880

mainland sightings are the real deal. He's got the historical research and personal experience to

573

00:31:42,880 --> 00:31:47,040

back it up. How you doing? Pretty good. Thanks, Josh. How are you? Good. Nice to meet you.

574

00:31:47,040 --> 00:31:51,360

You too, mate. Pleasure. Look at this place. Sensational, isn't it? It's stunning. I can

575

00:31:51,360 --> 00:31:55,760

hardly believe that I'm an hour and a half from downtown Melbourne. It feels like another world.

576

00:31:55,760 --> 00:32:03,360

It is. Yeah. So Phylusene, Tasmanian tiger, obviously associated with Tasmania. So, you know,

577

00:32:03,360 --> 00:32:06,480

how do we get to be looking for this creature here on the Australian mainland?

578

00:32:06,480 --> 00:32:12,400

Yeah, in between 1908 and 1940, Josh, in this part of mainland Australia, they introduced

579

00:32:12,400 --> 00:32:17,360

22 native species for free range introduction. Okay. And that was to preserve them?

580

00:32:17,360 --> 00:32:21,120

Yeah, to preserve native species under the threat of extinction in their native habitat.

581

00:32:22,400 --> 00:32:28,000

In the early 1900s, a wildlife preservation program aimed to reintroduce nearly extinct

582

00:32:28,000 --> 00:32:34,080

species to mainland Australia. Michael believes that the Phylusene was among the animals released,

583

00:32:34,080 --> 00:32:39,200

but due to its bad reputation, the information was kept secret. Michael's research further

584

00:32:39,200 --> 00:32:44,720

shows that there were no recorded sightings on the mainland until shortly after the reintroduction

585

00:32:44,720 --> 00:32:52,160

program began. Coincidence? He thinks not. And the new video shot not far from here further backs

586

00:32:52,160 --> 00:32:57,680

up his claim, not to mention Michael's own encounter. I did 998. I had my own experience.

587

00:32:57,680 --> 00:33:01,680

You did? Yeah. Yeah. I was sitting on the hillside. I had a video camera.

588

00:33:01,680 --> 00:33:04,880

And you had the footage? I had the footage. Can I see it? Yes, you certainly can.

589

00:33:05,440 --> 00:33:11,120

This is awesome. Yes. Yep. Here's the footage, Josh. There it is on the hillside there.

590

00:33:11,920 --> 00:33:18,000

Oh my God. Look at that. It has a really strange tail. It has the characteristics

591

00:33:18,000 --> 00:33:22,960

that you'd expect from a Tasmanian tiger. It has this really kind of elongated tail,

592

00:33:22,960 --> 00:33:28,080

but also it's kind of stiff. Yes. And that's the giveaway of it. Obviously, I was too far away

593

00:33:28,080 --> 00:33:31,920

to see the stripes. I was too busy filming it. I saw it for a couple of seconds before it went

594

00:33:31,920 --> 00:33:36,720

into the bush. What was going through your mind when you filmed this? I didn't think I just acted.

595

00:33:36,720 --> 00:33:40,480

Right. And then afterwards, you must have been ecstatic. Oh, I was punching the air. It stays

596

00:33:40,480 --> 00:33:46,800

with me till this day. This is really extraordinary because the tail does not look like a dog at all,

597

00:33:46,800 --> 00:33:51,680

and it's hard to account for what that really is. Exactly. Okay. So video like this, eyewitness

598

00:33:51,680 --> 00:33:56,080

sightings like this do make a really interesting case for this being on the Australian mainland.

599

00:33:56,080 --> 00:34:00,640

So why here? Why are we here today? There's been some recent alleged sightings of Tasmania

600

00:34:00,640 --> 00:34:05,280

Tigers just in this catchment here. So what's the plan for today then? Well, we're going to visit

601

00:34:05,280 --> 00:34:10,480

the cameras. I've got trail cameras strategically located on game trails. So we'll check the cameras,

602

00:34:10,480 --> 00:34:14,720

the SD card, see what we get, the 10 second video clips. Hopefully we've got our striped friend there.

603

00:34:14,720 --> 00:34:18,160

You hopefully there's a Tasmanian tiger on there. Exactly. And how far out of the cameras?

604

00:34:18,160 --> 00:34:22,480

There's a little way in, but don't worry. Just have a speedy way of getting you out there.

605

00:34:22,480 --> 00:34:26,160

All right. All right, like that. Michael leads me to the edge of a clearing

606

00:34:26,160 --> 00:34:32,240

where I come face to face with this little beauty. This is a Tom Carr, Josh. Militia

607

00:34:32,240 --> 00:34:36,160

grade off-road vehicles. And it's good for phthalosine hunting. It's a great phthalosine

608

00:34:36,160 --> 00:34:38,960

hunting material. Let's put her through the paces. Come on. Let's see what she can do.

609

00:34:41,600 --> 00:34:44,800

I strap in. Michael turns the key and we're off.

610

00:34:52,960 --> 00:34:56,800

Oh, it's just my kind of driving. It's going to be a real shame if we see one of these

611

00:34:56,800 --> 00:35:02,800

stylusines and then run it over. How far out of these cameras?

612

00:35:03,840 --> 00:35:04,960

Here on the right. Great.

613

00:35:07,840 --> 00:35:12,880

Michael leads us to a spot deep in the woods where he's deployed multiple trap cameras.

614

00:35:12,880 --> 00:35:18,800

The plan is to remove and replace the memory cards and see if they've captured any promising footage.

615

00:35:19,280 --> 00:35:22,960

Well placed. It was camouflage. Exactly, man. Okay. So what's the move here?

616

00:35:22,960 --> 00:35:27,280

It's pretty simple. Josh, we just open the bottom up here, just press out the SD card.

617

00:35:27,280 --> 00:35:32,400

We just substitute another one in there. Put in a fresh one. Yep. Got it. And you're back next.

618

00:35:34,240 --> 00:35:34,880

On to the next.

619

00:35:39,200 --> 00:35:44,720

We pull card after card, carefully collecting the media in the hopes that we've captured

620

00:35:44,720 --> 00:35:50,560

photographic proof of a living file. Josh, you want to drive to the next camera?

621

00:35:50,560 --> 00:35:53,440

Do I want to drive? Yeah. Oh, yes. Yes, I do.

622

00:35:55,120 --> 00:36:00,640

Okay. You've made a huge mistake. You realize that, right? Here we go.

623

00:36:14,960 --> 00:36:24,400

After putting the Tom car through its paces

624

00:36:26,160 --> 00:36:31,520

and scaring the scat out of Michael, we pull the last memory card and check the footage.

625

00:36:31,520 --> 00:36:36,240

Okay, Josh, we got all the cards. Let's see what we got. Yeah. There you go. Little mouse there.

626

00:36:37,520 --> 00:36:40,640

That doesn't look that little. What's about this big? Oh, no. That's the Australian version.

627

00:36:40,640 --> 00:36:44,240

I was going to say a little mouse in Australia is like the biggest rat I've ever seen.

628

00:36:45,040 --> 00:36:50,800

We look at each video clip after clip when something surprising suddenly jumps into frame.

629

00:36:52,240 --> 00:36:53,200

What the hell is that?

630

00:37:00,400 --> 00:37:03,920

I'm in southern mainland Australia where there have been a string of recent

631

00:37:03,920 --> 00:37:09,360

thylacine sightings and Michael Moss may have just captured a brand new one on camera.

632

00:37:09,360 --> 00:37:15,920

There it is. There it is. Yes. What the hell is that? Walking around behind the log. Very interesting.

633

00:37:15,920 --> 00:37:19,280

Here, see it up again. Long tail. Yes.

634

00:37:20,800 --> 00:37:24,800

See that? Extremely long tail finish as well. What is that? That's a good question.

635

00:37:26,240 --> 00:37:32,160

Wow. That's not a possum. No. That's not a mouse. No, it's not a dog or a cat either.

636

00:37:32,160 --> 00:37:36,080

What could have something serious here, Josh? Wait, is that it? Could be.

637

00:37:36,080 --> 00:37:39,600

If it turns out to be a thylacine, do I get partial credit for having been here?

638

00:37:39,600 --> 00:37:46,160

No, I think you might. Co-discover? Yeah, maybe. Maybe. He's already cutting me out of the deal.

639

00:37:46,160 --> 00:37:50,480

Yes, exactly. I'm really excited to hear what that is. Let me know what that is. Will you?

640

00:37:50,480 --> 00:37:55,520

Definitely. You'll be the first to know. Michael plans to enhance the footage and share it with

641

00:37:55,520 --> 00:38:04,320

fellow researchers to get a positive ID. In the meantime, I make one final stop at the

642

00:38:04,320 --> 00:38:09,600

Melbourne Museum to meet an evolutionary biologist who's made an incredible discovery

643

00:38:09,600 --> 00:38:13,760

that could rewrite the ending to the grim tale of the Tasmanian tiger.

644

00:38:15,920 --> 00:38:18,560

Let's talk about the work that you've been doing. How did this project start?

645

00:38:18,560 --> 00:38:23,280

So back in about 2002, we started looking at the thylacine in more detail.

646

00:38:23,280 --> 00:38:27,840

You were collecting genetic samples? Yeah, so there's a large collection of thylacine material

647

00:38:27,840 --> 00:38:32,640

in museum collections across the globe. So people have a lot of skin specimens because the pelts had

648

00:38:32,640 --> 00:38:37,600

the really charismatic stripes on it. There's also a lot of skeletons around and then also some

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00:38:37,600 --> 00:38:42,320

of the poucheon. So actually the baby's taken out of the mum's pouches and they've been preserved

650

00:38:42,320 --> 00:38:46,560

in alcohol in a few collections. Did you find that you were able to get good genetic material?

651

00:38:46,560 --> 00:38:50,320

We probably looked at about 100 samples. For some specimens, we were able to find they had

652

00:38:50,320 --> 00:38:54,400

quite intact fragments of DNA, whereas others were completely destroyed and it was almost

653

00:38:54,400 --> 00:38:58,720

impossible for us to get anything from them. What percentage of the genome do you think you had

654

00:38:58,720 --> 00:39:05,920

from them? Oh, it would be far less than 1%. I mean we're talking .0001% of the genome, if that.

655

00:39:05,920 --> 00:39:12,560

Okay. But then we were able to find one specimen in particular that had really intact chromosomal DNA.

656

00:39:12,560 --> 00:39:18,320

Wow. I can show you. You have it. Yeah, this is the actual specimen, this one here. So you can see

657

00:39:18,320 --> 00:39:23,680

in there, that's the whole poucheon. Look at that baby thylacine. And so from this sample,

658

00:39:23,680 --> 00:39:27,520

along with the other materials you collected, how much genetic information were you able to get?

659

00:39:27,520 --> 00:39:32,560

The big advance that we got once we found this specimen is we were able to the first time actually

660

00:39:32,560 --> 00:39:37,120

go in and then sequence the entire genome of this species. 100% of it. All of it. So we've

661

00:39:37,120 --> 00:39:40,960

sequenced the whole thing now. You went from 1% to 100% to the whole thing being done.

662

00:39:40,960 --> 00:39:45,600

And has that been published yet? No, so we're about to publish that. But it's a really huge

663

00:39:45,600 --> 00:39:50,160

advance, obviously. And our understanding of the biology of this species is now for the first

664

00:39:50,160 --> 00:39:54,000

time being able to look at the entire blueprint of this particular animal.

665

00:39:54,960 --> 00:40:00,000

So now the million dollar question. You have the blueprint. Can you rebuild it?

666

00:40:00,000 --> 00:40:03,120

As far as doing the cloning or bringing back a whole living species,

667

00:40:03,120 --> 00:40:07,280

certainly sequencing the genome is the first massive hurdle that you have to get through.

668

00:40:07,280 --> 00:40:11,680

And we've done that now. We still don't quite yet have the technology to go from

669

00:40:11,680 --> 00:40:17,760

knowing what the genome looked like to making whole viable chromosomes and cells and then a whole

670

00:40:17,760 --> 00:40:22,160

organism. Do you have an opinion on whether something like that should be done?

671

00:40:22,160 --> 00:40:27,280

We were responsible for wiping them out. So I think we owe it to this species to try and

672

00:40:27,280 --> 00:40:30,720

bring it back to do everything that we can. So watch this space. Watch this space.

673

00:40:30,720 --> 00:40:34,720

There may be a thylacine running around in it soon. You never know. That's right.

674

00:40:37,520 --> 00:40:42,320

On my trek through Tasmania in search of the thylacine, one thing stood out most.

675

00:40:42,320 --> 00:40:47,280

Everyone I met desperately hoped that their ancestors didn't completely kill off this

676

00:40:47,360 --> 00:40:53,040

unique native species. Of course, the hunt for an elusive and possibly extinct creature

677

00:40:53,040 --> 00:40:58,320

is bound to come with uncertainties, like the video that Michael Moss captured on the mainland.

678

00:40:58,320 --> 00:41:03,520

I was hopeful we were looking at a Tasmanian tiger, but it's too hard to make a positive ID

679

00:41:03,520 --> 00:41:08,720

and it could be nothing more than a local fox. The scat on Andrew Orchard's property

680

00:41:08,720 --> 00:41:14,720

failed to yield up testable DNA and so proved inconclusive. The prints from the cave?

681

00:41:14,720 --> 00:41:20,320

Compelling. But without a sighting of the creature that left them, it will also remain open-ended.

682

00:41:20,320 --> 00:41:26,480

But one thing is certain. If the Tasmanian tiger is still out there as so many people believe,

683

00:41:26,480 --> 00:41:32,320

it will take devotees like Andrew and Michael to keep the hope alive. And professionals like

684

00:41:32,320 --> 00:41:38,320

the Phylacine Research Unit to track down physical proof. And while we don't yet know for sure if

685

00:41:38,320 --> 00:41:44,080

remnants of the species continue to live in the wilds of Australia, we do know that science is

686

00:41:44,080 --> 00:41:52,080

closer than ever to reversing the sins of our past.

