

NATURE . WILDLIFE

FABULOUS INSECTS

2 × 52' (ENG), 2 × 45' (GER)

Unveiling the secrets behind the remarkable success of two of the world's most resilient creatures: ants and beetles.

This two-part documentary explores the fascinating traits that have made ants and beetles evolutionary triumphs. The first part investigates how ants, with a biomass rivaling that of humans, have dominated the planet for over 100 million years. Their highly social lifestyle, adaptability to diverse habitats, and potential swarm intelligence are key to their success. The second part shifts focus to beetles, the most diverse animal group on Earth. From tiny species to large giants, beetles thrive in nearly every environment, displaying incredible strength and versatility. By examining their diets, habitats, and unique abilities, the documentary uncovers the secrets behind the widespread success of these extraordinary creatures.

Original Title:	Fabelhafte Insekten – Ameisen und Käfer
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Produced by:	Nautilusfilm
Partners:	arte



1. Ants

The biomass of ants and humans in the world is about the same. Next to mankind, ants are probably the most adaptable creatures on the planet. Why are ants so numerous in the world and therefore so successful; and have been so successful for 100 million years, long before the T-Rex appeared on Earth? What is it that makes them the most common animals in the world? Is it their highly social way of life or is it their enormous adaptability to a wide variety of habitats? Do they owe their success to a kind of swarm intelligence? Can we learn anything from ants?

2. Beetles

No other group of animals on earth is so diverse: beetles come in a wide variety of "models", from miniature versions a quarter of a millimetre in size to large versions seventeen centimetres long. Beetles are extremely successful: they live on land and in water. In winter and summer. From the high mountains to the seashores. Beetles eat plants, fungi, dead wood, carrion, dung and even other beetles. Many of them are predatory and prey on anything they can overpower. Beetles have superpowers. The strongest insect in the world is the bull beetle. It can lift more than a thousand times its own body weight. Step by step, the film answers the question of what makes beetles so successful.