

EMBARGO 00:01 BST Weds 19 April 2017

Walk amongst penguins in groundbreaking virtual reality film

For the first time, digital audiences can be transported to a sub-Antarctic penguin colony to immerse themselves in the lives of penguin species, thanks to a new 3D 360-degree film launched today, produced with Visualise for BirdLife International's "Protect a Penguin" global campaign.

The world's largest nature conservation partnership, BirdLife International, has worked with London-based virtual reality producer, Visualise, to create Walk with Penguins, an engaging 3D 360 short nature film used to connect audiences with penguin protection—the first of its kind.

Despite being loved the world over, penguins are the world's second most threatened group of marine birds, with 10 of the 18 species threatened with extinction due to competition with fisheries, bycatch, marine pollution, disease, habitat disturbance and climate change. Urgent action is needed to better protect them, but public awareness of their situation is low.

BirdLife International wanted to bring the daily challenges and threats to penguins closer to its audiences, and created a high-quality 3D 360 film as part of its digital campaign "[Protect a Penguin](#)".

Richard Grimmett, Director of Conservation, BirdLife International, said: *"BirdLife Partners across the globe are already working to tackle some of the threats to penguins, but the size of the challenge demands that efforts are redoubled. Using 3D 360 film, we can get people closer to penguins and give people that magical feeling of being with them – and ultimately that can lead to a greater support for their conservation."*

During the five-month project to capture penguins in their native habitat, the Visualise production team travelled to the remote Falkland Islands in November 2016 (during the breeding season) and filmed incredible scenes using the Google Jump stereoscopic camera system in 3D 360, which provides unfettered, intimate action with penguins and their offspring.

"A fluffy King Penguin chick walks up to you and stares you in the eye; you duck your head as an albatross soars overhead; you are almost splashed with water as penguins squabble for a shower; and you share intimate moments with Southern Rockhopper Penguins, threatened with extinction. As the sun sets on the penguin colony within which you stand, you can't help but feel an emotional connection to the penguins there, especially as you learn of their plight through the voice over", continues Dr Grimmett.

Filming proved a major challenge, using untested camera rigs on precipitous cliff faces and in remote environments with no infrastructure. With experience in this arena, Visualise team had to balance the necessity of getting near to the penguins, to ensure great 360 shots, without upsetting the birds in their natural habitat. The net result is one of the world's first nature films shot using 3D 360 technologies—never before has the action of penguins been captured in such immersive detail.

Will McMaster, Head of VR at Visualise said, *“We have loved working with BirdLife and the penguins they are supporting on this project. This film is one of the first nature documentaries created in stereo 360. While most 360 film is shot monoscopic, and therefore has no depth, stereo 360 means that the viewer can see the physical depth of the scene. This means that audiences will be able to feel even more like they're there, like they could almost reach out and touch the penguins, rocks and the sea. We hope this unique level of immersion will provide an emotional connection with audiences and generate greater support and donations for the campaign. Let's save the penguins!”*

The film has been condensed into a five minutes, and will be live from Wednesday 19 April. For maximum audience reach, the film will be viewable on Facebook and YouTube 360 - as well as through Virtual Reality headsets at BirdLife fundraising events.

Go to: <http://penguin.birdlife.org>

Watch *Walk with Penguins*: <https://youtu.be/oM7Su9SmxBE>

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BirdLife International is the world's largest nature conservation partnership. With 120 BirdLife Partners across the globe, it is recognised as the world leader in bird conservation. It is a not-for-profit charity founded in 1922, and now has grown into a global partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources.

www.birdlife.org

<http://penguin.birdlife.org>

Visualise is the award-winning, international production studio that specialises in exceptional virtual reality filmmaking and immersive experiences. Since forming in 2012, the company has delivered ground-breaking virtual reality experiences for some of the world's most iconic brands.

Recent work includes developing a VR App and content for The Economist, shooting 3D 360 content for the FT & Google Hidden Cities series and working with MSF/Doctors without Borders to tell the stories of refugees from around the world.

Visualise has partnerships with major virtual reality manufacturers, including Oculus Rift, Google and Samsung, which enables them to produce VR content that connects new audiences to virtual reality across multiple platforms.

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