

Penguin takes astounding selfie video of its diving and feeding activity

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Credit: Wildlife Conservation Society

Just in time for Penguin Awareness Day (Thursday, January 20th), the Wildlife Conservation Society's (WCS) Argentina Program has released amazing underwater selfie video recently taken by a male Gentoo penguin fitted with a special camera.

The footage shows the penguin repeatedly diving and twisting through schools of sardines with startling speed and agility. Several times it grabs individual sardines and gobbles them down. Other penguins can also be seen in the distance along with diving cormorants and albatross.

The footage was taken in the Beagle Channel off Isla Martillo, in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina where WCS has supported penguin conservation for more than 20 years.

The camera was donated by the Tawaki Project (pengu.cam) and was placed on the Gentoo penguin by a team of CADIC-CONICET, as part of a collaborative study on feeding ecology undertaken by WCS Argentina, together with Antarctic Research Trust, and Tawaki Project. The study is comparing the feeding ecology of Gentoo penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*) of Argentina and the yellow-eyed penguin (*Megadyptes antipodes*) of New Zealand.

Gentoo penguins usually search near the seabed for their food, but the footage revealed that if they come across a school of baitfish along the way, they won't miss the opportunity to feed on them.



Gentoo penguin with PenguinCam. Credit: Sabrina Harris

Said Andrea Raya Rey, WCS Argentina associate researcher and staff at CADIC—CONICET: "We were fascinated to see the Beagle Channel seabird community feeding on this amazing shoal of sardines. We wrote in many papers that the seabird community in the Beagle Channel rely on sardines but this is the actual proof, and now it is confirmed and with a star behind the camera: the penguin."

Added Raya Rey: "We attached the device just for one foraging trip, and upon the penguin's return we unattached the device and monitored the breeding success of the nest. The Gentoo continued with its parental duties and taking care of the offspring."

WCS works on penguin conservation throughout the Southern Cone region of South America. It promotes the creation and effective management of marine and coastal protected areas to conserve penguins. In addition, WCS works with integrated land management practices that enhance protection of breeding colonies on private lands. WCS has been collaborating in monitoring the population of Magellanic penguins in Argentina for over thirty years, and studying the food needs and spatial use of the marine environment of various species (rockhopper, gentoo, Magellanic) throughout Patagonia to promote marine spatial planning.

Along with its field conservation work, WCS has seven species of penguins at three of its five wildlife parks in New York City—Bronx Zoo, Central Park Zoo, and New York Aquarium. The Polar Circle exhibit at the Central Park Zoo features king, [gentoo](#), chinstrap, and macaroni penguins. The Bronx Zoo has Magellanic and little blue penguins in the Aquatic Bird House and Sea Bird Aviary, and African black-footed penguins can be seen at the New York Aquarium.

Provided by Wildlife Conservation Society

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