



# NATURE



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**THIRTEEN's *Nature* Chronicles Life at Antarctica's  
*Penguin Post Office*  
Wednesday, January 28, 2015 on PBS**

*Postal workers and tourists witness the life cycle of gentoo penguins*

Antarctica's most popular tourist destination is a unique British post office located in the heart of the Antarctic Peninsula at Port Lockroy, about 700 miles south of Argentina and Chile. Enthusiastic cruise ship passengers from around the world come ashore throughout the Antarctic summer to see the colony of 3,000 gentoo penguins that takes up residence each year alongside Port Lockroy's other summer inhabitants – the post office staff.

***Penguin Post Office*** follows the daily lives of the gentoos as they find their mates, build their nests and raise their young. Also featured are interviews with members of the small group of volunteers from the United Kingdom Antarctic Heritage Trust who run the remote British outpost. Hearty enthusiasts themselves, they ready the post office, gift shop and on-site museum to welcome the thousands of visitors who will arrive over the course of the four-month-long tourist season. The program airs Wednesday, January 28, 2015 at 8 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings). After broadcast, the episode will be available for online streaming at [pbs.org/nature](http://pbs.org/nature).

Each November, the penguins return from an intensive spell of deep sea fishing to their breeding grounds at the post office, sometimes trekking nearly two miles across sea ice and snow to get there when the weather is especially bad. Their human neighbors must do the same. As the volunteers prepare for the tourists, the penguins are busy locating life-long partners and building nests made of small stones piled one on top of the other to create good drainage from snow and rain. Squabbles often break out in the colony as stones are pilfered from neighbors and unattended nests are appropriated. Meanwhile, mating begins and clutches of two eggs are laid, which usually hatch in two months. The parents share incubation duties, one always staying on the nest, keeping the eggs warm and protected from predators while the other is away fishing. Still, despite best efforts, some eggs are always lost to the repeated aerial assaults of skuas, foraging for food to support families of their own.

At the height of summer, Port Lockroy averages two ship visits a day. Tourists happily take shot after shot of the dramatic scenery and of the gentoo colony. The penguins always appear happy to pose for photographs, provided that tourists and their cameras get no closer than 15 feet, which seems to be their limit for paparazzi. Then it's on to the museum dedicated to Port Lockroy's unique history as a British research center, and to the gift shop for penguin-themed mementoes, gifts and postcards to send to friends and family, and sometimes to themselves.

At the end of December, the penguin chicks hatch and immediately call to be fed. They need to grow fast to survive the cold months ahead. As the chicks get older, instead of being fed on demand, they will be made to chase their parents for food, encouraging competition. The strongest and most determined is fed first and the chase builds their strength to prepare them for the time when they will need to fend for themselves. Some chicks succumb due to lack of food, predator attacks, and even attacks by other penguins for straying into their territory. But the majority will learn how to swim and feed on their own as winter arrives. Then, after the Penguin Post Office has closed for the season and the tourists and volunteers have left for home, the fully grown chicks will join their parents on regular long distance fishing trips, where finally they'll become masters of their Antarctic home.

**Nature** is a production of THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET. For **Nature**, Fred Kaufman is executive producer. **Penguin Post Office** is a production of AGB Films for THIRTEEN Productions LLC and BBC for WNET.

**Nature** pioneered a television genre that is now widely emulated in the broadcast industry. Throughout its history, **Nature** has brought the natural world to millions of viewers. The series has been consistently among the most-watched primetime series on public television.

**Nature** has won over 700 honors from the television industry, the international wildlife film communities and environmental organizations, including 12 Emmys and three Peabodys. The series received two of wildlife film industry's highest honors: the Christopher Parsons Outstanding Achievement Award given by the Wildscreen Festival and the Grand Teton Award given by the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. Recently, the International Wildlife Film

Festival honored **Nature** executive producer Fred Kaufman with its Lifetime Achievement Award for Media.

[PBS.org/nature](https://www.pbs.org/nature) is the award-winning web companion to **Nature**, featuring streaming episodes, filmmaker interviews, teacher's guides and more.

Support for this **Nature** program was made possible in part by the Arnhold Family in memory of Clarisse Arnhold, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, the Estate of Elizabeth A. Vernon, the Lillian Goldman Charitable Trust, the Kate W. Cassidy Foundation, the Filomen M. D'Agostino Foundation, Susan Malloy and the Sun Hill Foundation, by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and by the nation's public television stations.

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### **About WNET**

As New York's flagship public media provider and the parent company of [THIRTEEN](#) and [WLIW21](#) and operator of [NJTV](#), WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than 5 million viewers each week. WNET produces and presents such acclaimed PBS series as [Nature](#), [Great Performances](#), [American Masters](#), [PBS NewsHour Weekend](#), [Charlie Rose](#) and a range of documentaries, children's programs, and local news and cultural offerings available on air and online. Pioneers in educational programming, WNET has created such groundbreaking series as [Get the Math](#), [Oh Noah!](#) and [Cyberchase](#) and provides tools for educators that bring compelling content to life in the classroom and at home. WNET highlights the tri-state's unique culture and diverse communities through [NYC-ARTS](#), [Reel 13](#), [NJTV News with Mary Alice Williams](#) and [MetroFocus](#), the multi-platform news magazine focusing on the New York region. WNET is also a leader in connecting with viewers on emerging platforms, including the [THIRTEEN Explore App](#) where users can stream PBS content for free.

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