

Edinburgh Zoo inspired Christmas ad campaign



You may have seen the cute penguin based Christmas ad which is designed to promote [John Lewis](#) this gift-buying time, but now we know where they got their inspiration: right here in the capital at Penguins Rock along Corstorphine Road.

The ad agency Adam & Eve/DDB who are behind the video came to Edinburgh Zoo full of Christmas cheer in May, when we were all dreaming of long summer days ahead, to study the penguins and record the way they walked. This was then filmed and used to create the realistic on-screen penguins, Monty and Mabel. We can all watch the 100-strong penguin colony at Edinburgh Zoo [anytime on the penguincam.](#)

Dawn Nicoll, Senior Keeper of Penguins at Edinburgh Zoo, said:

“We were so excited when we found out our penguins helped to inspire the much anticipated John Lewis Christmas advert and would help bring the story to life. Although Monty and Mabel are Adélie penguins, they have the same behaviours and mannerisms as the Gentoo penguins we have here at the Zoo.

“When the production crew came to study our penguins for a day, the birds definitely put on a great show! We have a large colony here at Edinburgh Zoo with a few big personalities and famous residents who create a dynamic group. Some of Monty’s behaviours in the advert mirror the behaviours which can be seen in our colony at Penguins Rock. For example, the movements as penguins, porpoise, jump out of water, waddle, make a trumpeting call when throwing back their heads, sleep and lie on their belly, flap their wings and how they eat fish from our hands. The crew were particularly interested in capturing the exact head movements of the penguins which they

did a great job in recreating in the advert.

“Nesting season was in full swing at the time and it is possible that the affectionate behaviours displayed by our penguins inspired some of the more emotive interactions in the advert. Penguins could be seen courting similar to the loving behaviour displayed at the end of the advert when Monty and Mable meet. Male penguins were borrowing pebbles from each other to impress their other half and build their own perfect nests – an interesting and fun movement to watch which was reflected in the advert when Monty helps Sam build a toy brick house.”

Photo courtesy of Edinburgh Zoo/Ivon Bartholomew