

Penguins' slick new look: **Woolly jumpers** help save hundreds of birds caught in **oil spills**

- **Knitted jumpers** help **penguins recover** from effects of oil spills
- **Garments** stop the birds **ingesting toxins** stuck to their feathers
- **Volunteers'** designs have saved hundreds of little penguins
- Football strips and **swimwear** among the designs

By [KATE LYONS](#) Daily Mail.co.uk 6 March 2014

1. They survive in some of the coldest environments in the world - but even penguins appreciate a warm woolly jumper once in a while. The mini knitted garments have helped save hundreds of flightless birds caught in oil spills, providing protection from the elements and stopping them from ingesting **poisonous pollution**. Knits for Nature, a program **run by The Penguin Foundation**, which **conserves** the little penguin population of Phillip Island, 140km south-east of **Melbourne**, has created up to 300 different designs over the years - and it's all **thanks to** talented volunteers.
2. 'There's a lot of hidden creativity out there,' said Lyn Blom, of the Phillip Island Nature Park.



A little penguin affected by an oil spill is dressed in a red woolly jumper to keep it warm and stop it preening and swallowing the oil, which could lead to its death

3. 'People love to know that they're helping the penguins because they're so cute and small and they **waddle** up the beach and they're so **feisty**. But

they need to be, they live in a pretty tough sort of environment,' A thumbnail-sized patch of oil can kill little penguins, the smallest of the **species**, measuring just 13 inches (33cm) and weighing 2.2lbs (1kg). The oil separates and mats their feathers, breaking natural **waterproofing** and heating functions.

4. Little penguins, also known as fairy penguins, little blue penguins or korora, are only found in Australia and New Zealand. Ms Blom estimates she has knitted between 200 and 300 penguin jumpers over the years, including ones in the colours of every Australian Rules football team in the country.



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Healthy penguins: The little penguin is the smallest species of penguin in the world and lives in Australia and New Zealand. The penguins pictured here are from the colony on Phillip Island, Victoria



© Phillip Island Nature Parks

Oil spills breach the natural waterproof covering of a penguin's feathers and mean they get very cold and heavy. They are also at risk of ingesting the oil when they try to clean it off their feathers

5. 'We used to use these cloth **ponchos** on the penguins, but we found the penguins could just get their **beaks** underneath,' she said.
6. A staff member read an article in an English women's magazine about knitting for guillemot birds and decided to adapt the designs.

7. 'There's **an awful lot of** ladies out there who used to knit for their children and grandchildren. These ladies have spare **wool** and idle hands, and they love to feel loved and needed and we love and need them,' said Ms Blom.
8. The Penguin Foundation recently **staged a competition** for the most creative jumper, which received an enthusiastic response. 'Some fabulous ones came in,' said Ms Blom. 'The winning one was the most beautifully-crafted jumper and it had an octopus and seaweed **crocheted** on to it. 'There was another one that was pretty funny, it had little red **budgie-smugglers** and a **six-pack**,' a **nod to** Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott.
9. The Penguin Foundation rescues approximately 20 birds a year. They even have a **stockpile** of jumpers in case of emergency - such as the large oil spill near Phillip Island in 2001. In that instance, 453 Little Penguins were affected, 96 percent of which were saved - most thanks to the jumpers.
10. The knitted items are also used to teach visiting children about the dangers of **marine pollution**.

Take a tour of the Phillip Island Nature Park in Australia





After they have been washed and rehabilitated the penguins are released back into the wild. It can take several days for the penguins to produce the natural oils that keep their coats waterproof



The little penguins are a key tourist attraction at Phillip Island, which is home to 32,000 little penguins
Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2574475/Penguins-slick-new-look-Woolly-jumpers-help-save-hundreds-birds-caught-oil-spills.html#ixzz35xLbpZ7U>

Have fun learning the key words in this article using digital flashcards. Go to Quizlet.com & search for the 'Peacemakerfoundation.com' class.

1. What do you think about [the Penguin Foundation](http://Peacemakerfoundation.com)? Is it worthwhile?
2. Is there a better way of saving penguins?
3. If you were good at knitting and you were in Australia would you help out and knit jumpers for penguins?
4. What animals do we need to help the most right now?
5. Many say that to achieve true happiness we must try to help others. Is this true? Can we also achieve happiness by helping penguins?

Article taken from Daily Mail.co.uk & amended for English class. Amended article is stored online at Peacemakerfoundation.com

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