

16 September 2015

THE HUFFINGTON POST

H

LIVE NOW

HUFF
POST
AUSTRALIA**Julia Naughton**[Become a fan](#)julia.naughton@huffingtonpost.com.au

Rockhopper Penguins Mate For Life, But Spend Months Apart

Posted: 09/09/2015 16:24 AEST | Updated: 09/09/2015 16:24 AEST



If the [Ashley Madison scandal](#) has had you down and out about fidelity this past month -- look no further than the lovable penguin. A new study has found that these precious creatures mate for life but spend cold, harsh winters apart at-sea for up to six months (!).

The findings from the National Institute of Polar Research looked specifically at the rockhopper penguin and found through biochemical tracking techniques such as data-loggers (attached to the leg of the penguin, only weighing a few grams) that penguin partners migrate independently and can be located on average between 600 and 2500 kilometers apart during winter -- but reunite every breeding season -- better known as spring.

“At this time the male rockhopper penguin arrives first to the nest, followed by the female, about a week later,” Dr Jean-Baptiste Thiebot, the author of the study told The Huffington Post Australia.

It gets better. Once the couple arrive at their meeting spot they perform elaborate, prolonged courtship displays -- visual head and flipper movements and postures -- and vocal communication like calls and mutual trumpeting to find and recognise each other -- before collapsing in a complete bundle of mushy love.



Daisy Gilardini via Getty Images

“Long-term field surveys have shown that the same penguins may use the same nest site or nesting area to breed every year, over and over again.”

“This probably helps the two partners to meet up ashore at a known place,” she said.

Finally, the study authors conclude that for the rockhopper penguin at least -- the rate of fidelity is very high and is expected to last a lifetime.

Bless these darling little love birds.

MORE: [Life Love Penguins](#) [Rockhopper Penguins](#) [Fidelity](#)

[Log In](#) | [Make HuffPost Your Home Page](#) | [RSS](#) | [FAQ](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

[About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Archive](#)

Copyright ©2015 The Huffington Post Australia Pty Ltd. | All rights reserved.

Part of **HPMG News**