

Opinion

Docu-series shows us how we're killing our planet

A new series on Netflix serves a stern and shocking warning: we need to do more to save our planet and the inhabitants on it.

The series is narrated by the velvet voice naturalist, Sir David Attenborough, the most famous nature storyteller on television. The 92-year-old producer, narrator, and documentarian essentially invented the genre of television nature documentaries in his decades-long career at the BBC with programs like "Life on Earth", "Blue Planet", and "Planet Earth."

Previous documentaries have focused on the beautiful diversity of earth's life with closeup images of nature. With this series, however, Attenborough becomes an advocate for our crumbling and disappearing biodiversity and ecosystems.

The eight-part Netflix docu-series is called "Our Planet." We still see beautiful images of penguins, whales, leopards, and tigers in pristine oceans and lush safaris. However, we also see how climate change is having a detrimental impact on the natural habitats across our planet.

It's not hard to form a close personal connection with what you see on the screen. In the first episode, we see the colonies of baby flamingos "flaminglets" who have hatched in nests on muddy salt flats in Africa where adults have fed on the once dormant algae. Despite the rain that led the flamingos to the salt bed, the water doesn't last. After soaring temperatures dry it up, the colony has to travel more than 30 miles to find a new source of nourishment for the flaminglets.

Because the chicks can't fly, they have to follow the adults on the ground. Some find it hard to keep up. This was the case for one little guy who ended up having salt deposits solidify around its feet and legs, making it even harder for it to keep up with the rest of the birds.

As the thousands of birds advanced, this little one struggled with the weight of its salt boots. Attenborough said the majority of the birds eventually make it to the fresh water.

The "majority."

That doesn't mean all, including the baby bird.

The scene touched a lot of viewers, myself included. On Twitter, Kate @kathleen2690 stated, "I've started watching #ourplanet about 15 minutes ago and I'm already having an emotional breakdown over a baby flamingo. God dammit..."

In the second episode of the



This baby flamingo, weighed down from built up salt deposits on its legs, struggles to keep up to the flock in an episode of the Netflix series "Our Planet."

A young perspective

Wade Young
Editor



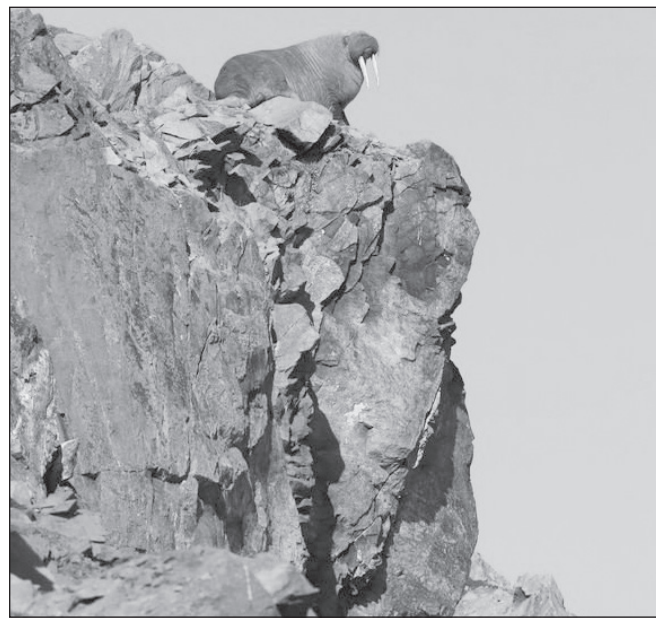
series, "Frozen Worlds." Our Planet explores the effects of climate change, specifically how the melting sea ice affects the arctic's wildlife, specifically the Russian walrus.

Attenborough narrates that after they have eaten clams surfaced by the summer thaw, the social walrus usually rest on sea ice. Since the ice is gone, they must "haul out" instead to beaches. The scene showed a small beach crowded with more than 100,000 walrus.

There was no room for anything. It was body to body, so some discovered a flat space on nearby cliffs that were roughly 250 feet high. After resting for days, the group was ready to return to the water.

The walrus have poor eyesight out of the water, and those on the cliff sensed when the herd started back to sea.

That's when the horrific scene unfolded when the abnormal cliff-dwellers waddled toward the ocean, and plunged to their deaths.



Images: Netflix

In the absence of sea ice on which to rest, some Russian walrus instead rest precariously on a cliff. The image is from an episode of the Netflix series "Our Planet" that shows the effects of man's influence on the environment.

What can you do?

The World Wide Fund for Nature website, www.wwf.org.uk/wildlife, has a pledge with ideas people can take to make our planet a better place. I've copied the suggestions below:

- Take the Pledge for Our Planet I commit to:
 - B' Reducing my carbon footprint by monitoring the electricity I use and switching to clean energy options where available.
 - Improving my daily commute to work or school by walking, riding my bike, carpooling, or using public transportation. This reduces our fossil fuel use per person and helps us all become more energy efficient.
 - Reducing the food waste in my home from its current levels and only purchasing what I need knowing that I'll also save money.
 - Buying products that help protect forests like those with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) label, or seafood that comes from sustainable fishing practices like that with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) label. And, when possible, looking for products that use sustainable palm oil and have the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSP) label.
 - Signing petitions, sending messages to my elected officials, calling my representatives, and being a voice for the planet to help create and support policies that recognize and respect the importance of nature.

To say it was disturbing is an understatement. Seeing something so unnatural was sickening. There were no polar bears chasing them. They sought refuge in an unnatural place and died because of it.

I guess the producers and Netflix want people to be shocked so we start living a life that cares for our planet.

Other scenes also showed powerful glaciers breaking away from the ice fields of Greenland. Attenborough notes that this is happening twice as fast as it did 10 years ago. It is impacting sea levels and the food chain.

In past docu-series, we usually see the predator - the lion chasing a wildebeest or a leopard seal chasing a penguin. In this series, the predator hides in the shadows.

It is us. We need to do more.

The series was created in partnership with the world's leading conservation organization, The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the one with the cute panda logo. Footage for the series has been collected over four years, with more than 600 crew members filming in 50 countries across all the continents of the world.

There is a lesson for us all in the series. I encourage you to watch it.



Ask a Trooper

Question: I see vehicles with straight pipes, motorcycles with straight pipes and hear many others that sound as if they have no muffler. If the law is there why is it not enforced?

Answer: Minnesota State Statute 169.69 states: "Every motor vehicle shall at all times be equipped with a muffler in good working order which blends the exhaust noise into the overall vehicle noise and is in constant operation to prevent excessive or unusual noise, and no person shall use a muffler cutout, bypass, or similar device upon a motor vehicle on a street or highway. The exhaust system shall not emit or produce a sharp popping or crackling sound. Every motor vehicle shall at all times be equipped with such parts and equipment so arranged and kept in such state of repair as to prevent carbon monoxide gas from entering the interior of the vehicle. No person shall have for sale, sell or offer

Sgt. Troy Christianson
Minnesota State Patrol



for sale or use on any motor vehicle any muffler that fails to comply with the specifications as required by the commissioner of public safety."

The law does not specifically answer how loud a motorized vehicle can be, but it does say that a vehicle must have a good working muffler that prevents "excessive or unusual noise." So any cutouts or bypasses, straight pipes or rusted out mufflers and exhaust with holes are illegal. After market mufflers, sometimes called "glass packs" or "cherry bombs," can be an issue as they may produce "a sharp popping or crackling sound."

Many counties and cities

have local noise ordinances. A noise ordinance defines which sounds are and are not acceptable at any given time. So depending on where you live, I would check with the local authorities on their ordinances.

This law is frequently enforced and we do our best to educate the public on traffic safety and equipment violations through education and enforcement.

You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and always drive sober. Help us drive Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths.

If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson — Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901-5848. (Or reach him at Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us) Twitter: MSPPIO_SOUTH

Messenger Memories

100 years ago
April 18, 1919

Frank Busta, the barber, moved into his new shop on Main Street the first of the week.

The Misses Lena Lehman, Elizabeth Snorek and Albina Blaha visited New Prague last Wednesday evening between trains.

A regular blizzard visited this section last Monday and Tuesday, with about a foot of snow falling. The snow is fast disappearing, but it will delay seeding considerably now, even with the best of the weather.

80 years ago
April 21, 1939

Following the season's first rainfall, a snow storm swept out of the north early last Monday morning and continued unabated through the night, blocking traffic on most of the highways and bringing all farm work to a standstill.

Dr. R.A. Maves arrived here last week from St. Peter to assist in the offices of Drs. Westerman & Westerman.

60 years ago
April 16, 1959

The Montgomery F.F.A. Crops Judging Team went to Waseca for the District 13 crops judging contest on Monday. The team placed second out of 12 chapters.

Local firefighters were kept busy during the week being called out three times, reports Fire Chief Gilhausen. A grass fire at the Golden Pheasant threatened to get out of control and endangered the mink belonging to Elmer Novak. The Robert Hartwig farm, three miles west of Montgomery experienced an \$800 loss from the burning of a straw stack. The third fire of the week was a grass fire near the Superior Oil Station.

Louie's Drive Inn will open Saturday. A Dairy Whip has been installed. Food in cars and take out orders are

available.

40 years ago
April 19, 1979

John G. Keohen, 18, of Montgomery, will receive Minnesota's top high school athletic award Thursday evening in Minneapolis. The 1979 award winner is a two-time state champion in distance running.

Mary Ann Loftus, of Montgomery, was one of 24 high school juniors and seniors from around the State who participated in Project 120, a week long seminar on Minnesota government and politics at the State Capitol.

20 years ago
April 22, 1999

A representative from Reliant Energy Minnegasco

reassured members of the Montgomery City Council at the April 19 meeting that they are prepared for the year 2000 (Y2K) and natural gas service should remain the same.

After three months of serving as branch president at Rural American Bank in Montgomery, Rick Odenthal has resigned. He is now vice president at the Prairie National Bank in Belle Plaine.

Woodcarvers, miniature railroads, quilts and even a yodeler were exhibitors at the Folk Fair on April 14. The Fair took place of the Art Attack this year.

Big Stone Cellular opened its doors at 212 First Street. The store sells cell phones and satellite dishes. The manager is Steve "Howie" Hauer.

Honor thy secretary with flowers

It's National Secretaries Week. Time to thank your secretary.

Why not say thanks with an appreciation bouquet or a flowering plant?

National Secretaries Week, April 22-28
Flowers and Plants Are For Secretaries, Naturally!
Make an arrangement with:

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This ad from 40 years ago invites business owners and managers to recognize the support they receive in the office. Now called "Administrative Professionals Day", it falls on April 24, 2019. Why not stop in the local florist to honor your administrative professional?

Montgomery Messenger

Established in 1888

Published every Thursday by Suel Printing Co., Inc.

Subscription Rates:
\$43 per year in Le Sueur & Rice Counties & Zip Code 56071
\$50 per year in Minnesota & Snowbirds
\$58 per year elsewhere in U.S.A.
Single copy - \$1.25
Subscriptions are not refundable.

Deadline:
Monday 3 p.m.

Advertising Rates
Display - \$9.00 per column inch
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Office Hours
Monday through Thursday,
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 12 Noon

Postal Information:
Periodicals Postage Paid at
Montgomery, MN 56069
USPS 361-200
POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to
Montgomery Messenger,
Montgomery, MN 56069

Member of the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the Le Sueur County Editorial Association



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