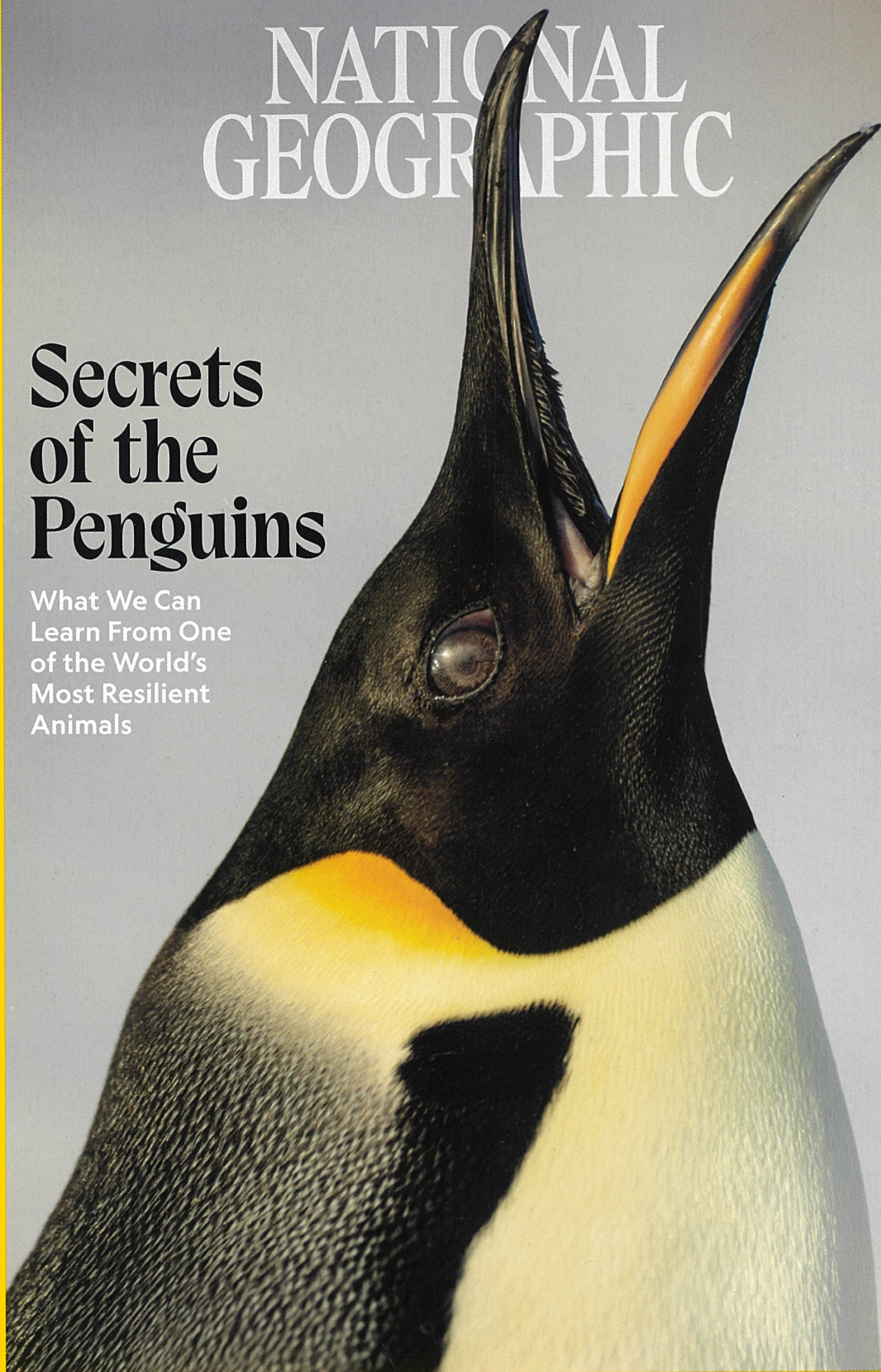


NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Secrets of the Penguins

What We Can
Learn From One
of the World's
Most Resilient
Animals



FROM *the* EDITOR

NATHAN LUMP

EVERY MAY in our annual *Secrets of* series, we take a closer look at one incredible animal to examine what makes it so special—and why it's worthy of our attention now. This year we have focused on a long-standing favorite here at National Geographic: penguins.

These aquatic birds are among the planet's most charismatic species, beloved by old and young the world over. Penguins are, of course, pretty adorable creatures, and their range of specialized behaviors has been both well documented and enshrined in popular culture.

What isn't always so frequently discussed is the difficulties they face: While they've evolved to thrive in some harsh environments, many of their habitats are under great pressure, and penguins must now navigate things like melting ice and rising sea levels, oil spills and plastic pollution, and shrinking food supplies. About half of all penguin species today are threatened with extinction.

Yet there are some positive developments. Alongside various human interventions to help them, like establishing new protected areas and creating new nesting sites, scientists are discovering that penguins are proving themselves to be quite adaptable in the face of change. They're making smart choices by adjusting where they live and hunt and nest.

If this month's feature sparks your interest in these birds, don't miss our new series, *Secrets of the Penguins*, on Disney+. You'll join filmmaker, photographer, and National Geographic Explorer Bertie Gregory—who took this issue's cover image—on an epic journey to learn more about them, and see some jaw-dropping, never before captured footage of surprising and novel behaviors.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

PHOTO: MARK THIESSEN, NGM STAFF

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ON THE COVER Opening its beak wide, an adult emperor penguin in Atka Bay, Antarctica, stretches, or "yawns."
Photograph by BERTIE GREGORY