

## OTEC launches virtual influencers on YT as ‘spokesanimals’ for endangered species – using new motion capture techniques to humanise its characters



On the EDGE Conservation (OTEC) – a charitable foundation dedicated to the promotion of biodiversity and conservation – is building on its recent debuts in mobile gaming and educational publishing with a series of anthropomorphic virtual influencers set to entertain and engage young YouTube audiences, whilst also highlighting their predicament as an overlooked endangered species.

Launching today, OTEC’s new [Youtube channel](#) will host weekly, short-form video diaries posted by the first characters in the series: Lexi the Aye Aye and Eric the Pangolin. Tegan the Kakapo will join the group in the coming weeks. Each has its own Instagram profile, and Tik Tok channels will launch in February.

To allow the characters to behave with the timeliness of influencers popular with kids aged 9-12 years old, OTEC has humanised them using a new form of motion capture, where the face, hands and body movements are rendered simultaneously (instead of afterwards). This process enables animation in real time, delivering the pace and feel of a classic vlogger.

These virtual influencers are the brainchild of experienced content-maker Bruna Capozzoli. She has invented modern-day lifestyles for the characters and commissioned Emmy award-winning screenwriting partnership, Mark Huckerby and Nick Ostler to create culturally relevant storylines that will resonate with kids. For example, Lexi the Aye Aye is a wannabe superstar DJ living in London, whilst Eric the Pangolin is studying environmental science at Uni.

**Commenting about today's launch, Bruna Capozzoli, who is Head of Creative Content at OTEC said:**

*"In this project we have really evolved our storytelling. Through the beauty of virtual influencers, we have surpassed relaying retrospective news and moved towards cultural commentary. The key to ensuring our characters could evolve and gain lives of their own was mastering the technology that sits behind motion capture."*

As an extension of the foundation's disruptive approach to the traditional model of conservation work, OTEC has ambitious plans to leverage its IP in future across different channels including licensing, third-party brand collaborations and co-produced content.



The adopted motion capture pipeline was designed by Doppelganger, a collaborative of technical specialists who came together to deliver OTEC's brief for this project. In addition to using motion capture data to control the character 3D model live, Doppelganger used cutting-edge technology to capture data from face, hands and body movement together at the same time, which is usually combined afterwards.

The On the EDGE YouTube channel follows the launch of mobile game, Kakapo Run, and underpins OTEC's ambition to promote biodiversity differently. By using popular digital platforms, OTEC hopes to inspire and engage a growing number of young activists to champion all of the diversity of life in our natural world.

**Beth Blood, Founder & CEO of OTEC said:**

*"By giving a voice to unfamiliar but endangered animals through modern storytelling techniques, we will promote biodiversity as something to be celebrated in pop culture. The characters in our animation are delightful and surprising, making refreshing new spokes-animals for the wonders of the natural world and the challenges it faces."*

**ENDS**

To view teasers of the series please follow the links below:

- [Lexi the Aye Aye teaser](#)
- [Eric the Pangolin teaser](#)
- [Behind the scenes](#)

For more information please contact Kara Buffrey at Highlight PR:



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**Notes to Editors:**

**About OTEC:**

On the EDGE Conservation acts to change the outlook for often-overlooked Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) species. Through long-term partnerships, providing support for innovative conservation action, science, and storytelling, we strive for game-changing impact around the world. Our approach is designed to inspire positive engagement in both adults and the next generation.

Twitter: @OTECconservation

**About Bruna Capozzoli:**

Bruna Capozzoli is a digital specialist with over 15 years' experience in content creation, specifically helping IP owners produce original YouTube content outside of the traditional broadcast model.

Bruna was Creative Director of Popcorn Digital for the company's first three years, during which she creating content and advised for brands like Angry Birds, Playmobil, Dr. Seuss, Pablo, Total Drama and The Last Kids on Earth.

Before that she was Senior Producer at Diagonal View and Content Manager at the global phenomenon Talking Tom and Friends.

### **About EDGE Species**

EDGE species are identified based on the amount of threatened unique evolutionary history they represent and are named on lists that identify priority EDGE species for conservation. These lists are updated and held by the EDGE of Existence programme at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL). To date, the following groups have been assessed and EDGE species lists produced: mammals, amphibians, birds, reptiles, corals, gymnosperms, sharks and rays, listing a total of 3,147 priority EDGE species across these groups.

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#### ABOUT HIGHLIGHT PR

Highlight PR is a results-focused PR and content marketing agency, based in Bath. The agency specialises in consumer PR for baby, kids and family brands and licensed characters and B2B PR for architects, designers, events, leisure and creative companies.

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