

PENGUINS ARE BIRDS

Penguins are an interesting type of bird. There are many facts about penguins that make them unique. Unlike most birds, penguins don't fly. The only time they become airborne is when they leap into or out of the water. In the water, they dive, glide, and flap their wings. In the water they look like they are flying.

Penguins swim like fish and walk like a toddler. They have fat cigar-shaped bodies perfect for swimming. Their webbed feet are designed for paddling through water. Their wings work like flippers. Penguins have short, strong legs set far back on their bodies. Their legs enable them to stand and walk upright. Their streamlined bodies make them swift and efficient swimmers. A penguin's average speed in the water is about 15 miles per hour. Yet penguins are slow moving on land. They waddle at a mere 2-3 miles per hour on land.

Although penguins spend most of the day in water, they cannot breathe under water. They can, however, hold their breath for a long time. When penguins need a breath of air they leap out of the water. They quickly take a gulp of air and dive under water again.

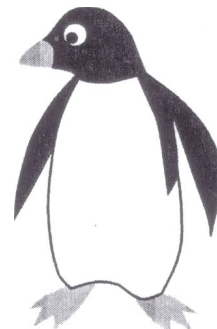
Penguins eat seafood. Their main diet is fish, though they also eat squid, and small shrimp-like animals called "krill." Penguins have a small hook at the end of their bills. This hook is perfect for grabbing their prey.

At mating time, pairs gather at a nesting area on shore called a rookery. Penguins hatch and raise their chicks at the rookery. A penguin pair usually stays together through their chick-bearing years.

Raising a penguin chick is a shared responsibility. As soon as the egg is laid, the female dashes to the ocean to fish. The male stays behind and sits on the egg. When the female returns, it is the male's turn to hunt for food. Once the chick hatches, the parents and chick learn to recognize each other's voices. When the chick is strong enough, both parents head for the ocean to forage. The chick stays behind at the rookery. When the couple returns to feed the chick, they call out for their hatchling. Even with all the squawking, parents and chicks know each other.

Penguins are playful birds. Some activities are similar to those enjoyed by humans. They can be seen wave surfing. They enjoy diving off cliffs and icebergs into the water. Once in the water, they hop back onto land and dive in again and again. Lines at good diving spots can get very long. With all the ice and snow around, penguins also enjoy lying on their bellies and sliding over the ice and snow.

There are 17 different species of penguin. All have black and white feathers. All penguins live in the Southern Hemisphere near icy-cold ocean waters. Species vary in height, weight, and color markings on their face. The smallest is the Adelle penguin. It stands about 2 feet tall and weighs 8 or 9 pounds. The largest species is the Emperor penguin. It is nearly 4 feet tall and can weigh 90 pounds. There are no penguins living in the wild in the Arctic regions of the North Pole. The only penguins living in the Northern Hemisphere are found in zoos, aquariums, or in wildlife displays.



1. Which member of the penguin pair is responsible for raising the chick?

- A. The female penguin
- B. The male penguin
- C. Both A and B
- D. The nanny penguin at the rookery

2. Which is the best location to see a penguin in the wild?

- A. The wildlife display at your city zoo
- B. The icy waters of the North Pole
- C. The arctic region of the Northern Hemisphere
- D. In the frigid waters of the Southern Hemisphere

3. What does the female do in the ocean as soon as the egg is laid?

- A. The female penguin needs to refresh immediately after laying an egg.
- B. The female penguin requires cold water immediately
- C. The female penguin knows that the male will need food, so she rushes to bring some.
- D. The female penguin needs to stay in shape during chick-bearing time.

4. Why do baby penguins and their parents need to recognize each others voices right away?

- A. To go swimming together
- B. To see if the baby penguin can talk
- C. To avoid too much noise
- D. Not to get lost and separated

5. What type of pastime do penguins enjoy?

- A. surfing, diving, and sliding over ice and snow
- B. watching movies and playing human games
- C. flying around the island is fun for them
- D. raising chicks and fetching food all day