

Fun facts about penguins

Who doesn't love penguins?! We love them for their funny walks, cute fluffy chicks, their stomach slides and their amazing swimming ability.

Living in some of the coldest places on Earth, penguins have adapted to their cold environment in ways that make them pretty special.



Here are some fun facts:

- Penguins are flightless birds. While other birds have wings for flying, the wings of penguins are adapted into flippers to help them swim in the water.
- Penguins have a fusiform body shape (tapered at both ends). Their bodies are streamlined, which allows them to be expert swimmers.
- When penguins are on land, they have a very upright posture in when they walk. This is because their legs and webbed feet are set far back on the body. With the right snow conditions, penguins will slide on their bellies through the snow rather than walk.
- A penguin's black and white plumage serves as camouflage while swimming. The black plumage on their back is hard to see from above, while the white plumage on their front looks like the sun reflecting off the surface of the water when seen from below. However, the details of this colouring may differ between species.
- Penguins eat krill, squids, and fishes that they catch underwater; however, the exact diet will differ between species. This helps to reduce competition between species.
- Penguins can drink seawater.
- Penguins spend around half their time in water and the other half on land. Because they are adapted to living in the sea, some species will spend months at a time living in the water.
- Penguins in Antarctica have no land-based predators. Most penguin predators live in the sea, such as seals and killer whales.
- There are 18 penguin species, most of which live in the Southern Hemisphere. The Galapagos penguin is the only penguin species that ventures north of the equator in the wild.

- Large penguin populations can be found in countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Argentina and South Africa.
- No penguins live at the North Pole.
- The Emperor penguin is the tallest of all penguin species, reaching as tall as 120 cm (47 in) in height - this is about the height of a 6-year-old child!
- Emperor penguins can stay underwater for around 20 minutes at a time.
- Emperor penguins often huddle together to keep warm in the cold temperatures of Antarctica.
- After she has laid her egg, the female Emperor penguin passes it to the male, who incubates it by resting it on its feet for 65-75 days to keep it warm! Then, out of the shell pops a fluffy chick.
- King penguins are the second largest penguin species. These penguins form large breeding colonies: one colony on South Georgia Island holds up to 100,000 breeding pairs.
- Chinstrap penguins get their name from the thin black band that lines their 'chin'. It can look like they're wearing a black helmet.
- Crested penguins have yellow crests, as well as red bills and eyes.
- Yellow-eyed penguins (or Hoiho) are native to New Zealand. These penguins are endangered; however, actions are being taken to protect these animals.
- Little blue penguins are the smallest type of penguin, averaging around 33 cm (13 in) in height.
- Even if we live far from the sea and far from penguin habitats, we can all do something to help look after penguins. By making sure our waste stays in the bin and out of the ocean, we are helping to protect the homes and food sources of penguins.

To find out more about penguins, click the links below:

- <https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/penguin>
- <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/blog/penguin-fact-sheet/>
- <https://www.natgeokids.com/au/discover/animals/birds/emperor-penguins/>
- https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/91391/Little-Penguin.pdf
- <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/penguin-facts/>
- <https://www.discoverwildlife.com/animal-facts/birds/facts-about-king-penguins/>
- <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/birds/birds-a-z/penguins/yellow-eyed-penguin-hoiho/>