



MAGELLANIC PENGUIN

SPHENISCIFORMES
Family: Spheniscidae
Genus: *Spheniscus*
Species: *magellanicus*



K Chadbourne Collection

Range: Coast of S Chile to Cape Horn and Patagonian coast of Argentina & Falkland islands

Habitat: bare to forested terrain, including relatively level scrub-covered coastal terraces and even cliff faces

Niche: Aquatic & terrestrial, carnivorous, diurnal

Wild diet: Squid, cuttlefish and sardines

Zoo diet: herring and smelt

Life Span: (Wild) 25 years
 (Captivity) 30 years

Sexual dimorphism: Males are slightly larger and heavier than females.

Location in SF Zoo: Penguin Island

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

The penguin is a highly specialized flightless sea bird. It has paddle-like wings, which do not fold. The short legs have heavily webbed feet that are set far back on a stout body. The plumage of the penguin is thick waterproof narrow feathers. The tail is short and stiff. The Magellanic's color pattern is quite distinctive, black back and head top are set off from white front by an encircling strip of black and white. This extends to the head as well. The eyes are underlined with pink. The feet are grey black. The quality of the coat is maintained by preening and the application of oil from glands at the base of the tail.

Weight: M 7 - 8 lbs

Length: 30 inches

Penguins feed in the water; they fast and use up stores of fat when nesting. Small stones have been found in the stomachs of immature birds but no explanation is known for this occurrence. They have backward facing spines on their tongue to help keep the prey in its mouth and guide it down the their throat. Penguins drink seawater and have a salt excreting gland. Penguins are in great danger of overheating than freezing because of their excellent insulation. When penguins are to warm on land they may hold their wings out. The bare areas around the eyes and at the base of the tail facilitate thermal regulation.

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Oil drilling operations, pollution of air and water, fishing industry complaints are chief threats to penguin life. Sea lions and Giant petrels prey on adults and young alike. While Kelp Gulls and Great skuas take the chicks before they are old enough to defend themselves. The Magellanic penguin is the most common of the penguins, the world population probably numbers in the millions.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

The Magellanic penguin is capable of a whole range of sounds from moos, bleats, cackles, and brays. Each penguin's **voice** is as distinct, which is important in a colonial species for locating mates and chicks.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

These birds gather in huge nesting colonies, 20 nests per 20 square yards during breeding. Then these areas are nearly abandoned from April through mid-September (winter in the Southern Hemisphere) when most but not all birds move as far north as northern Chile in the Pacific and southern Brazil in the Atlantic. During the breeding season these penguins dig 20" deep burrows underground or make shallow nests under bushes. Penguins pair for life and reuse the same burrow for up to 20 breeding seasons. Young birds are fed by regurgitation of adults until they go to the water, about 75 to 85 days after hatching. The first true molt of feathers occurs in the second year of life and then takes place annually thereafter. Fledging takes 11 weeks, with two stages of down to feather development.

Incubation: 40 - 42 days	Sexual Maturity:
# of eggs: 1 - 2 chalky white	Fledge:

MISCELLANEOUS

The San Francisco Zoo maintains the largest and most successful breeding colony of Magellanic penguins in captivity, having fledged approximately 205 chicks since 1985, and participating in a nationally-coordinated Population Management Plan (sponsored by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums). SF Zoo born chicks go to "fish school" where keepers teach them to take fish by hand thus assuring adequate nutrition and allowing for monitoring their health.

Magellanic penguins are named after Portuguese explorer, Ferdinand Magellan who circumnavigated the globe in 1520.

Sources:

<http://www.penguins.cl/magellanic-penguins.htm>

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