

AFRICAN BLACK-FOOTED PENGUIN

Spheniscus demersus

CONSERVATION STATUS: IUCN 2010 Endangered

FAST FACTS:

WEIGHT: Up to 8 pounds

LENGTH: Up to 27 inches tall

LIFESPAN: 15-20 years

INCUBATION: 38 days

NUMBER OF YOUNG: 2

RANGE: South Africa coastlines and islands around S. Africa

HABITAT: Rocky shores and offshore waters

DIET: Fish, squid, crustaceans



DID YOU KNOW?

- Are a warmer weather penguin
- Have one black horseshoe shaped band across their chest and black spots on their white chest; each penguin has a unique spot pattern (similar to human fingerprints); have a white band that looks like the letter C and a backwards C over the eyes; have black feet
- Don't have feathers on their legs and have a featherless patch on their face (this helps to dissipate heat)
- Have 70 feathers per square inch
- Have a catastrophic molt (loses all of their feathers at the same time) once a year; penguins are not waterproof, don't go into the water during molt, and don't eat until molt is complete and new feathers are in place
- Rub their beaks and necks on one another as a greeting
- Make nests out of hardened guano (bird excrement); no vegetation near nesting sites; humans harvest guano for fertilizer ruining breeding sites
- Live in large colonies; are monogamous; breed twice a year in February and September; lay 2 eggs; both parents incubate and care for young; feed young regurgitated food
- Can swim up to 15 mph
- Make a braying sound like a donkey
- Predators include seals, sharks, shorebirds (eggs and young)
- Are fed capelin (small fish) at OHDZ

ECOLOGY & CONSERVATION:

- Threats include oil spills, pollution, overfishing leading to food shortage
- All 17 species of penguin are legally protected
- Was uplisted to endangered by IUCN 2010 due to rapid population decline

<http://www.animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu>

<http://www.denverzoo.org>

<http://www.iucnredlist.org>

<http://www.seaworld.org>