

# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Sphenisciformes  
**Scientific Name:** *Pygoscelis adeliae*

**Family:** Spheniscidae  
**Common Name:** Adelie Penguin

**AZA Management:**  Green  Yellow  Red  None



**NATURAL HISTORY:**

**Geographic Range:** Europe  Asia  North America  Neotropical   
 Africa  Australia  Other  Antarctica: Circumpolar range.

**Habitat:** Forest  Desert  Grassland  Coastal   
 Riverine  Montane  Other  Breeding on ice free land areas; are marine/pelagic Endemic to Antarctica

**Circadian Cycle:** Diurnal  Crepuscular  Nocturnal  Other  [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Cold Tolerance:** To 70° F  To 60° F  To 50° F  To 40° F   
 To 30° F  To 20° F  Other  Possible to 0 or lower

**Heat Tolerance:** To 30° F  To 50° F  To 70° F  To 90° F   
 To 110° F  Other  Ideal temperatures to 34

**Diet:** Frugivore  Carnivore  Piscivore  Insectivore   
 Nectivore  Omnivore  Folivore  Other (Add Below)

**Captive Dietary Needs:**  
 Adelie penguins eat a variety of fish: capelin, herring, sardines, krill, silver sides, night smelt. See the Penguin Care Manual for detailed nutritional information.

**Life Expectancy in the Wild:** Males: 15-20 Females: 15-20

**Life Expectancy in Captivity:** Males: 15-35 Females: 15-35

# Species Fact Sheets

## BREEDING INFORMATION:

**Age at Sexual Maturity:** Males: 5-7 Females: 5-7

**Courtship Displays:** Adelie penguins exhibit an ecstatic display while at the nest; pairs often “bow” while at the nest-at nest exchanges. Prior to copulation they may head bow;

**Nest Site Description:** Nests consist of shallow well/scrape lined with small rocks

**Clutch Size, Egg Description:** Two eggs, white, round

**Incubation Period:** 35-37 days

**Fledgling Period:** 50-60 days

**Parental Care:** Both parents will care for and feed the chick

**Chick Development:** Chicks hatch covered in down that can be light to dark grey.

## CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

**Social Structure in the Wild:** Colonial

**Social Structure in Captivity:** Colonial

**Minimum Group Size:** 10

**Maximum Group Size:** May be limited to space available but exhibits have displayed as many as 75 individuals

**Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:** Yes **Comments:** Can be housed with other Antarctic (emperor) and some sub Antarctic penguins (gentoo, chinstrap, macaroni) as well as Antarctic seabirds (gulls, shags, petrels)

**Optimal Habitat Size:** Enough space should be provided so they can walk, swim, and perch. Dedicated breeding areas, back of house support are needed. Birds need to be able to avoid or escape any territorial disputes especially during breeding season. Adequate pool space is also important. See Penguin Care Manual minimum standards for water and land size.

**Management Challenges:** Adelies are very social and active penguins. They require colder temperatures and this may be a challenge when designing an exhibit. As with all penguins substrate should be a consideration as Adelies do prefer snow/ice when they are not breeding. They are very active swimmers and spend a considerable amount of time swimming. Adequate pool space is needed. Properly lighting should be considered to ensure successful breeding and molting.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

## Species Fact Sheets

---

Adele penguins are very energetic and social birds. They are excellent exhibit birds and would be a great penguin species for any exhibit that maintains the proper environmental conditions.

### REFERENCES:

<http://seaworld.org/animal-info/animal-bytes/birds/emperor-penguin/>

Williams, Tony. (1995) Oxford University Press Walton Street Oxford

Garcia Borboroglu, P. and Boersma P.D. (Eds.). (2013). Penguins: Natural History and Conservation. Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press.

Click here to enter text.

Click here to enter text.

Click here to enter text.

Click here to enter text.

Click here to enter text.

Click here to enter text.

### COMPLETED BY:

Name: Lauren DuBois

Date: 7/11/2014