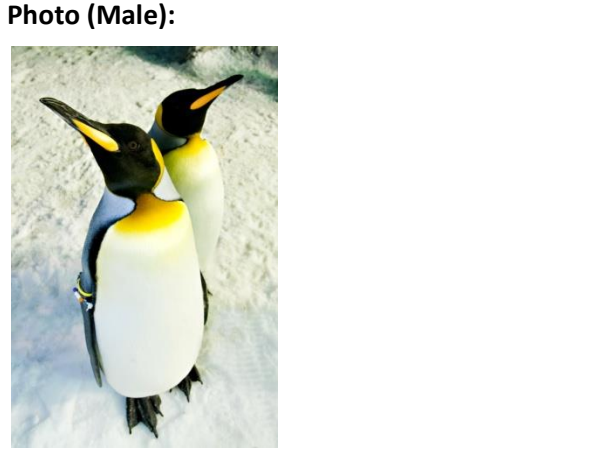


Species Fact Sheets

Order: Sphenisciformes
Scientific Name: *Aptenodytes patagonicus*

Family: Spheniscidae
Common Name: King penguin

AZA Management: Green Yellow Red None



NATURAL HISTORY:

Geographic Range: Europe Asia North America Neotropical
 Africa Australia Other Sub-Antarctic and temperate islands between 45oS and 55oS; most notably South Georgia but also including the Falklands and Malvinas Islands; Prince Edward, Crozet, Kerguelen and Heard Islands; and Macquarie Island. Migratory.

Habitat: Forest Desert Grassland Coastal
 Riverine Montane Other Dense colonies on beaches, among tussocks and sometimes well inland.

Circadian Cycle: Diurnal Crepuscular Nocturnal Other Known to make night foraging trips.

Cold Tolerance: To 70° F To 60° F To 50° F To 40° F
 To 30° F To 20° F Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Heat Tolerance: To 30° F To 50° F To 70° F To 90° F
 To 110° F Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

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

Species Fact Sheets

Captive Dietary Needs:

Variety of fishes including herring, capelin, hake, and sardines.

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

Life Expectancy in Captivity: Males: 15-30 years Females: 15-30 years

BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity: Males: 3-6 years Females: 3-6 years

Courtship Displays: King penguins use visual and vocal courtship displays. They lift their head and point their bill straight up as they trumpet their ecstatic display. This is followed by arching the neck forward with the bill pointing down. Receptive birds will respond with a similar vocalization and posturing (this is similar to the “face to face” in emperor penguins). King penguins also engage in a “waddling gait”. Their displays also include bill shaking, mutual preening and bill clapping. The breeding cycle in wild king penguins lasts about 14-15 months.

Nest Site Description: King penguins do not build a nest. The single egg is incubated on top of the feet within the brood patch.

Clutch Size, Egg Description: Single egg clutch; large, white, thick-shelled egg.

Incubation Period: 52-54 days

Fledgling Period: 14 months in the wild; much less for king chicks in human care due to the absence of the long winter chick fasting period.

Parental Care: Males and females share incubation and chick rearing. Chicks will form crèches when both parents must leave for the sea in order to provide sufficient food for the growing chick. Chicks are fed infrequently in the autumn through winter to spring period when food is scarce. Chicks, which are nearly full grown by this time with body fat reserves, will lose weight during this time, until the parents return to feed the chicks again until fledging.

Chick Development: Chicks hatch nearly naked with a thin covering of down from neck to tail and only slightly thicker down on the head. Subsequent down series occur ending with the development of the iconic, long, brown down.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Colonial.

Social Structure in Captivity: Colonial.

Species Fact Sheets

Minimum Group Size: The Penguin Animal Care Manual (submitted for publication, AZA, 2014) has set a minimum group size of 10 birds.

Maximum Group Size: Limited by space not behavior. Normally found in large colonies of up to thousands of birds.

Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:

Yes

Comments:

Has been housed successfully with other penguin species including Gentoo, rockhopper, chinstrap, macaroni, emperor and Adelie.

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:

Despite this North American population having a high gene diversity and low inbreeding potential, according to the recent PVA (Johnson, et al, 2014) only three of the 16 AZA holding institutions have maintained a high breeding rate. Breeding potential for all institutions should be analyzed and promoted to maintain the viability of this population well into the future.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Click here to enter text.

REFERENCES:

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Jouventin, P. (1982). Visual and Vocal Signals in Penguins, their Evolution and Adaptive Characters. *Advances in Ethology* No. 24, 1-148.

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