

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Sphenisciformes
Scientific Name: *Spheniscus humboldti*

Family: Spheniscidae
Common Name: Humboldt Penguin

AZA Management: Green Yellow Red None

Photo (Male):



Photo (Female and Juvenile):



NATURAL HISTORY:

Geographic Range: Europe Asia North America Neotropical
 Africa Australia Other Coasts of Chile and Peru

Habitat: Forest Desert Grassland Coastal
 Riverine Montane Other Marine Habitat

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

Birds can tolerate cold temperatures as low as 40° F on land; however they should be protected from low temperature extremes. Water temperatures should not be below 40° F.

Heat Tolerance: To 30° F To 50° F To 70° F To 80° F

To 110° F Other

On land, birds can tolerate temperatures to 80° F. Higher temperature extremes should be avoided, and birds should be given shade, misted, or other means for cooling when the temperatures rise above 80° F. Water temperature should not be in excess of 65° F. High humidity environments should be avoided.

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

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Captive Dietary Needs:

Great attention should be given to fish quality and handling. Quantities consumed by the birds vary greatly throughout the year depending on the energy demands of nesting, chick rearing or other activities. Specific supplementation requirements are available in the ACM.

Life Expectancy in the Wild: Males: Approximately 20 years Females: Approximately 20 years

Life Expectancy in Captivity: Males: Approximately 30 years Females: Approximately 30 years

BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity: Males: 3-4 years Females: 3-4 years

Courtship Displays: Collection of nesting material and nest building starts 3-4 weeks prior to egg lay. Increased aggression at the nest site occurs during mating season and throughout chick rearing. Frequency of copulations increases during the season prior to egg lay.

Nest Site Description: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Clutch Size, Egg Description: Clutch size is two eggs. Birds will re-clutch if the eggs fail or are destroyed.

Incubation Period: 40-46 days, mean = 42 days

Fledgling Period: 70-90 days

Parental Care: Both parents share incubation and chick rearing duties. Chicks are fed regurgitated fish by the parents.

Chick Development: Pip to hatch interval is 12-48 hours. Chicks gain weight rapidly. Fledge occurs at about 10-12 weeks of age. Parents start to leave the chick unattended for longer periods of time near fledge. Swimming may start while chicks still have down feathers. Chicks may need to be separated to learn to swim safely, without harassment from other birds, depending on exhibit design. Introduction to the colony should be slow, and closely monitored.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Colonial. Extremely social and often occur in large flocks when on land.

Social Structure in Captivity: Colonial. Minimum group size suggested is ten birds to allow for appropriate social interactions. Generally, pairs have strong bonds, though extra-pair copulations are common.

Minimum Group Size: 10 birds

Maximum Group Size: Dependent on exhibit size. See Optimal Habitat Size.

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Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:

Yes

Comments:

Depending on exhibit parameters, penguins can be housed with other birds that would be present in their natural range (terns, waterfowl). Care should be taken to prevent hybridizing between Spheniscus species.

Optimal Habitat Size:

See Penguin Care Manual for details. Land space should be 8 sq. ft. for the first six birds with an additional 4 sq. ft. per bird per bird after six. A minimum of 540 gallons of water with 2 ft. in depth is needed for the first six birds, with an additional 45 gallons added per bird after six. There should be a holding or isolation area available with access to water for management of the birds as needed for medical treatments, forced pairing or chick rearing.

Management Challenges:

Aspergillus, a fungal infection, is common in penguins, especially in times of stress. Malaria and West Nile Virus are transmitted by mosquitoes, and have been common in outdoor exhibits. Ingestion of small rocks, coins or other small objects can also be problematic.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

IUCN – Vulnerable

REFERENCES:

AZA Penguin Taxon Advisory Group. (2014). Penguin (Spheniscidae) Care Manual. Silver Spring, MD: Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

del Hoyo, J., Elliot, A., Sargatal, J., (Eds.) (1992) Handbook of the Birds of the World, Volume 1: Ostrich to Ducks. Barcelona: Lynx Ediciones

Garcia-Borboroglu, P. G., & Boersma, P. D. (2012). Humboldt Penguin *Spheniscus humboldti* in Species Fact Sheets. GlobalPenguinSociety.org. November 5, 2012.

Holland, Glen. (2007) Encyclopedia of Aviculture. Canada: Hancock House Publishers

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/>

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