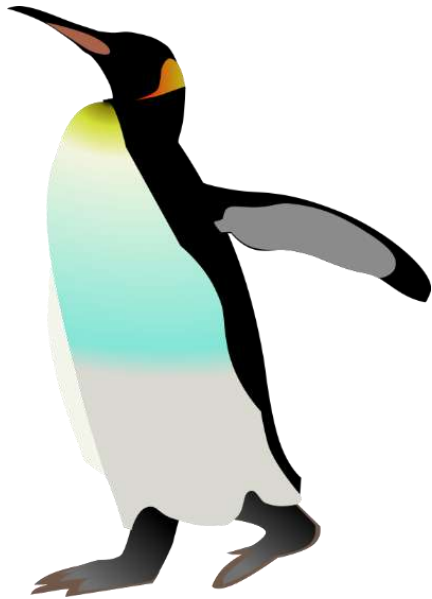


Penguin Facts!

When you think of animals that live in the snow and ice, you automatically think of penguins. You may even think they live exclusively in the North Pole. But actually, not a single penguin lives in the North Pole! Most of them live in the Southern Hemisphere, like in Antarctica. In Antarctica, temperatures can dip down to a freezing -90 degrees Celcius! Brr...But the truth is, many penguins can be found in countries that are not so cold like New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Argentina and South Africa. And don't forget about the cute penguins that live in the famous Galapagos Islands. They are the only penguins that live north of the equator.



One of the funny things about penguins is that although they're birds with feathers, they can't fly. Instead of wings, penguins have flippers that help them swim in the water. The closest they come to flying is when they jump out of water for a brief moment. They like to do that to get a gulp of air before diving back into the water.

By the way, did you know that penguins can't breathe underwater like fish? They can hold their breath for a long time, but eventually they need to get out of the water. They spend about half their time in the water and the other half on land.

Another penguin fact is that they're carnivores. That means they eat meat. They like to eat different kinds of fish, squid and "krill." Krill is a fancy word for tiny animals that are like shrimp. Penguins are pretty good at catching their prey underwater.

Speaking of water, penguins only swim in salt water. Actually, they're even able to drink the sea water. They have a special gland in their bodies that takes the salt out of the water they drink. The salt then gets pushed out of grooves in the penguin's bill. That's pretty neat!

For the penguins that live in very cold places, do you know how they stay warm? Well, penguins are sort of like whales in a way. They have a layer of fat under their skin called “blubber.” On top of that, they have several layers of warm, fluffy feathers. These feathers also help keep them warm. Also, penguins have another trick they use to keep warm. They rub oil from a gland into their feathers to help make them waterproof and windproof.

But even with all that, it still gets pretty cold for some penguins in the Antarctic. That is why they like to stand near each other and huddle. This creates body heat. Sometimes you’ll see up to 5,000 penguins bunched together to keep warm!

You may have always thought that penguins look funny. Or you may have thought that the way they waddle around is cute. But there’s a reason they’re shaped the way they are. If you look closely, you’ll see that a penguin is shaped like a torpedo! Their body is built like that for speed and efficiency. They can swim very fast, with an average speed of about 15 miles per hour.

So although penguins are cute, they’re also skilled predators and expert survivalists. They’re able to endure the toughest conditions!



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