

My trip to the Antarctic

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About Antarctic Field Guides

About the project

The Antarctic Field Guides is a collaborative tool offering free access to information that can help you identify Antarctic organisms. Thanks to the initial efforts from Prof. Andrew Clarke (British Antarctic Survey) and Dr Stefano Schiaparelli (University of Genoa and Italian National Antarctic Museum), it allows users to build a tailor-made, customized guide, to be taken in the field or simply browsed. The pages are generated on-the-fly from the contents of authoritative, quality controlled data resources ([SCAR-MarBIN](#) and [ANTABIF](#)), and ensures the user to access up-to-date information about the group of organisms he/she is particularly interested in. Even if the primary focus is for scientists, the AFGs are open and free for all to enjoy.

About the data and its usage

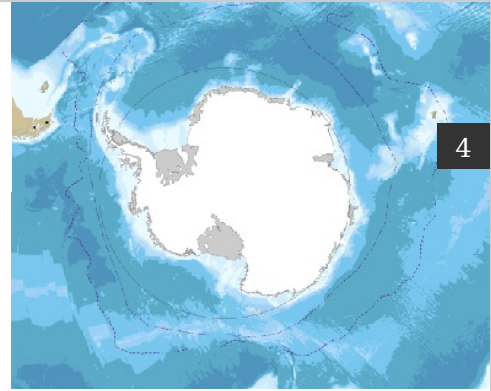
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Scientific name

Pygoscelis antarctica

Animalia Chordata Aves Ciconiiformes Spheniscidae Pygoscelis



Description

The Chinstrap penguin is the second most abundant Antarctic/subantarctic penguin, after the Macaroni. They are mainly concentrated in vast colonies along the coast of South Orkneys, South Shetlands and South Sandwich Islands. There are also small breeding colonies on the Balleny Islands, south of New Zealand. Although population changes have been detected among colonies on the Antarctic Peninsula, the overall Chinstraps population seems stable.

Individuals of this species are recognized by the narrow band of black feathers which extends from ear to ear, just below the chin and the cheeks, hence the name. This distinctive, thin black line distinguishes Chinstraps from Adelies and Gentoos, the other two members of its genus. Chinstraps are also smaller than Gentoos

The diet of the Chinstrap consists of: small shoaling animals, krill, small fish and other roaming marine crustaceans. They are considered near-shore feeders foraging among the pack ice, although vagrants may occasionally be seen in the open sea. They feed by pursuit-diving for prey close to their breeding colonies. Diving effort is usually concentrated near midnight and noon and dives typically last less than a minute and are seldom more than 200 feet deep. Like most penguins, Chinstraps using their flippers to 'fly' at speeds of up to 20 miles per hour. On land, Chinstraps often 'toboggan' on their stomachs, propelling themselves by their feet and flippers. They climb out of the water and up steep slopes using all four limbs and they are able to jump large distances to reach footholds.

Chinstrap penguins lay two eggs in November or December and the chicks fledge at about seven to eight weeks in late February and early March. Unlike other penguins species where the stronger chick is fed preferentially, Chinstrap parents treat both chicks equally. Scientists believe that extensive sea-ice persisting close to shore can restrict access to the sea for foraging adults and therefore impact chick survival.

Although Chinstrap penguins are not considered to be migratory, they do leave their colonies and move north of the pack ice in March through to early May for the winter.

The principal predator of adult Chinstraps is the Leopard seal, while the main predators of eggs and chicks are sheathbills and the Brown skua.

Distribution info

Antarctic peninsula and southern islands

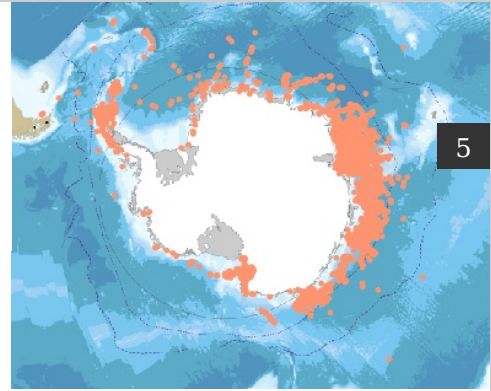
Size

27 inches tall

Scientific name

Pygoscelis adeliae (Hombron & Jacquinot, 1841)

Animalia Chordata Aves Ciconiiformes Spheniscidae Pygoscelis



Description

One of the most common and well-known of all Antarctic penguin species, Adelie penguins can be found forming colonies on islands, beaches and headlands all around the Antarctic coast. The sight of thousands of them waddling and sliding to the water's edge and then, at the appropriate moment, diving headlong into the frigid Antarctic waters, has thrilled Antarctic visitors for generations. Early explorers made use of the ubiquitous Adelie not only for endless entertainment but also as a source of eggs and tough, but tasty meat. Scientists today use the Adelie as an indicator species to monitor the abundance of krill, so important to the web of Antarctic life.

The Adelie penguin is the stereotypical penguin. With its white 'tuxedo shirt' front, and the white ring around its eyes, the bird has a handsome, yet comical appearance. Its beak is reddish with a black tip.

Adelies vacate their winter quarters on the comparative warm Antarctic ice pack and arrive at the rookeries during September and October, often scampering several miles over the sea ice to reach their ancestral coastal homes. They typically establish dense colonies on the ice-free slopes of rocky coasts, headlands and islands. Competition for nesting sites can be fierce and the older more dominant birds tend to stake nests in the middle of the colony where they are better protected from marauding skuas.

A mating pair of Adelies will build a rocky nest of small stones carried in the birds' beaks and dropped into place. Two greenish-white eggs are usually laid in early November. Males and females take turns incubating the eggs, however, the female returns to the sea first, often leaving the male to stand alone for up to ten days while she feeds.

Hatching occurs after about 35 days. The chicks are brooded closely by their parents for the first two to three weeks. While the two chicks hatch almost simultaneously, inevitably one chick is stronger and is better able to win food, which is regurgitated from the crop of whichever parent is present at the time. Growing rapidly, the chicks soon develop a thick woolly gray down and quickly become almost as large as their parents. During the third or fourth week they huddle with other chicks in nursery groups called 'crÃches' for both protection and warmth. This leaves the parents free to go to sea on feeding forays in order to satisfy their chicks' increasing appetites. Often, a parade of adults can regularly be seen moving between the colony and the sea on such feeding trips. By late March most of the chicks can swim and the Adelies then depart for the pack ice and the sea.

The Adelie's main oceanic predators are leopard seals which often lie in wait beneath the ledges to snare the first penguin into the water.

Distribution info

Antarctic continent peninsula, and islands.

Size

About 30 inches tall

Habitat

In winter, Adelies stay at sea, resting on pack ice and icebergs in groups.

Depth of the distribution

Adelie penguins can dive up to 500 feet for prey

Ecology

There is fierce competition among penguins for nesting sites, especially on the higher well-drained ground -- stealing pebbles from neighboring birds' nests is a favorite pastime.

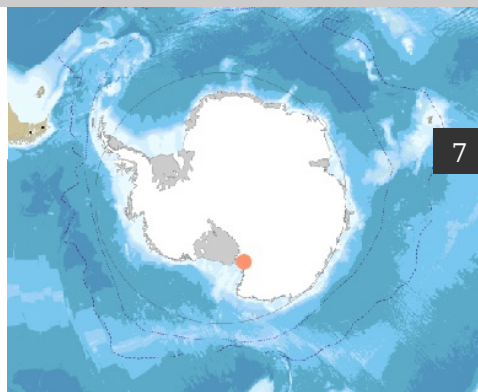
Lake Fryxell



Description

Lake Fryxell is a lake 4.5 km (3 mi) long, between Canada Glacier and Commonwealth Glaciers at the lower end of Taylor Valley in Victoria Land, Antarctica. Mapped by the British Antarctic Expedition under Robert Falcon Scott, 1910-13, the lake was visited by Professor T.L. Pá©wÁ© during USN Operation Deep Freeze, 1957-58, who named it for Dr. Fritiof M. Fryxell, glacial geologist of Augustana College, Illinois.

Notes



Species near this place
Suberites caminatus
Stylocordyla borealis
Sphaerotylus antarcticus