WHAT HAS WINGS BUT CAN'T FLY?

The Elegant Emperor Penguin!





Not only will you not find these birds in the sky, but they may be the only bird to not set foot on land either!

Their large colonies are on the sea ice and they even breed on frozen sea. You may recognise these penguins from movies such as 'Happy Feet'! They are the largest living penguin species, standing around 115cm tall.

On land, penguins aren't the most graceful, waddling around and huddling together to keep warm in the freezing temperatures. They are adapted to life under water where they are incredible swimmers, hunting for fish and often reaching depths of between 200 and 500 metres! They can also hold their breath, staying underwater for up to 22 minutes!



If you could imagine one of the coldest places on earth, where would you think of?

If you thought Antarctica, you'd be correct! Antarctica is the Earth's southernmost continent, where temperatures have been recorded as cold as -60°C. So that the penguins are able to live in such chilly conditions, they have a number of 'adaptations'...

1 **Plenty of body fat to keep them warm**

2 **Several layers of feathers which are 'scale-like' to protect them from the icy winds.**

3 **They huddle close together in their colonies to share heat and keep one another warm. How's that for team work?**

4 **They also, in comparison to other penguins, have smaller flippers and beaks which helps prevent them losing more heat.**





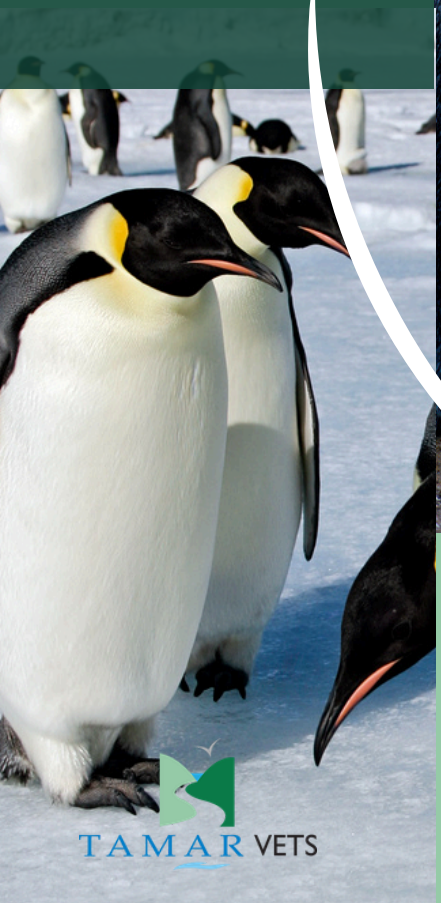
Emperor penguins are very important to our world! They form a really important part of the food chain in the Antarctic.

They eat creatures like squid and small fish, but they themselves are also a food source to other animals (or predators) such as some seals and sharks. By looking after the penguin, in turn we are also looking after the ocean environment which helps all the wildlife that lives within it.

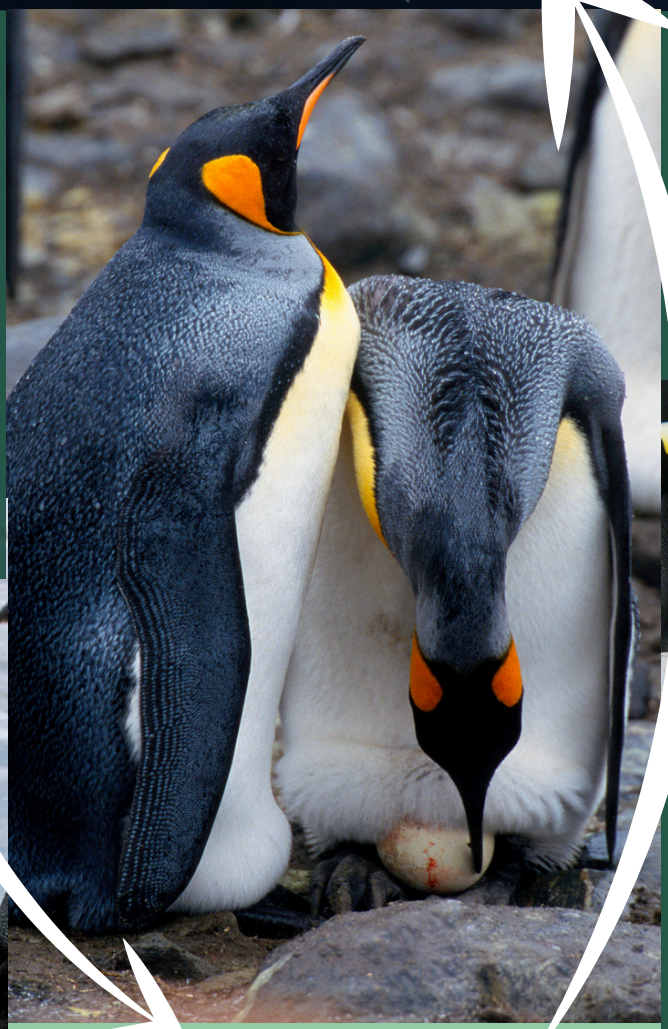
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APRIL

Around April each year, which is our springtime but the start of the Antarctic winter, penguins meet to breed with one another on the thick ice.



TAMAR VETS



JUNE

The females usually lay their eggs in June time, where the males then take over looking after the egg, keeping it warm by balancing it on their feet and draping their feathered skin over it. This is called a brood pouch!

AUGUST

The females get straight back to work hunting for food to fill their hungry tummies, often traveling up to 80 km in the ocean looking for fish and squid.



Once their eggs hatch, the mother regurgitates (another word for throw up, yuck!) their food to feed their chicks. Then it's time for the males to take over hunting. As the chicks grow, like many humans, penguins form something called a 'creche', which is where the chicks group together whilst the parents go off to fish for dinner. It's not long before the chicks are old enough to join their parents and learn to fish themselves.