

PENGUINS *Spheniscidae*

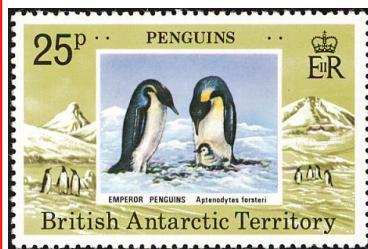
Chris Marsh (member 472)

There are 17 species of Penguins recognised and are divided into six genera.

Penguins only occur in the Southern Hemisphere, in the Antarctic and the Southern Oceans up to the coastlines of the southern states of Australia and all of New Zealand, up to and around South America from southern Brazil in the east round to Ecuador and the Galapagos in the west, and finally the southern tip of South Africa and up along the coast of Namibia.

Up until the 1990's examples only appeared on stamps of countries where Penguins were found.

In recent years they can be found on stamps from countries across the world, which from an ornithological view is somewhat bizarre. Obviously some of the species are found in zoos and successfully bred in captivity like the Humboldt and Jackass.



larger and more heavily built and grows up to 120cm tall (right, BAT S.G. 293), whilst its close relative the

King penguin
Aptenodytes patagonicus



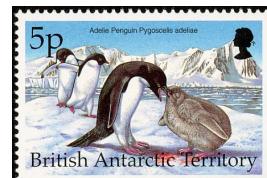
(below left, Falkland Islands S.G. 638) is up to 105cm in length (right, South Georgia S.G. 322). They live and breed in colonies on the Antarctic ice and the surrounding waters.

The male is left to incubate the single egg standing upright with the egg held on top of its feet. The male birds are left to huddle together in huge colonies for warmth during the blizzards and severe cold of the polar winter, while the females return to the open seas to feed before returning just before the chicks hatch to feed them on regurgitated food. Then the males go off to feed before returning to help raise the single chick.

During incubation period of about 60 days the males can lose between a third and half their body weight.

The next genus in size, although much smaller and approximately 65cm in length are the *Pygoscelis* penguins.

These include the **Adelie** *pygoscelis adeliae*, **Gento** *Pygoscelis papua* and the **Chinstrap or Bearded** *Pygoscelis antarcticus* penguins.



Adelie (BAT S.G. 292, and Peru, right S.G. 1758).



Gento
(Falkland Islands S.G. 60 and BAT S.G. 90).



Chinstrap (New Zealand S.G. 1577 and South Georgia S.G. 170).



They are found on and around the South Atlantic Islands and circumpolar regions.

They nest in the summer in crowded colonies generally returning to the same nest site year and the same mate. The nest consists of a low heap of pebbles and they normally raise two young each year. The females begin laying eggs in November with incubation of some 35 days so that the chicks hatch at the start of the Antarctic summer. They feed mostly on krill and small fish.



Slightly smaller in size are the short tailed penguins genus *Spheniscus*. They are the northernmost penguins by habitat. Breeding success is linked to the available supply of food. They feed on anchovies, pilchards and other surface shoaling fish. They hunt in small groups or flocks and herd up the fish. Nesting sites are generally in burrows with two chicks.



The Jackass penguin (South Africa S.G. 816) is found in South African waters, and is named after its donkey like braying call.



The Humboldt penguin (Peru S.G. 1622) is found along the west coast of Chile and Peru, and feeds in the cold but fish rich Humboldt current.

Commercial quarrying has destroyed many colonies' nesting sites. Also in this group is the **Magellan** penguin, *Spheniscus magellanicus*, found in the waters around Cape Horn, and the **Galapagos** penguin, *Spheniscus mendiculus*, which is smaller and is found up the west coast further north and around the Galapagos Islands.

PENGUINS *Spheniscidae* (2)

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Magellan (left, Portugal 2004, S.G. 3078).

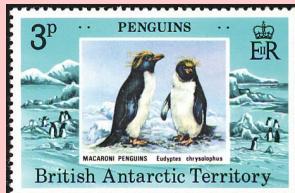
Galapagos (right, Tanzania, 1999)

The fourth genus is the Eudyptes,

the crested penguins.

There are six penguins in this group and all are about 60cm long and have a distinctive plume of yellow feathers on either side of their head.

They are found in the cold waters around Antarctica and the Islands of the southern oceans. The **Rockhopper** Eudyptes Chrysocome (Tristan da Cunha S.G. 431) and **Macaroni**



Eudyptes chrysolophus (BAT 1979, S.G. 89) are found all-round the Antarctic, and they form a nest in a depression in the ground and lay 1-2 eggs.

The **Royal Penguin** Eudyptes schlegeli (Australian Antarctic Territory 1992 S.G. 94) which is the only true crested penguin is found in the waters around New Zealand as well as the waters of the Antarctic.



Fiordland crested penguins Eudyptes pachyrhynchus (New Zealand 1988 S.G. 1467) nest under bushes between tree roots or holes in the ground using very little nesting material. They feed on fish, krill and squid and spend over 75% of their time in ocean waters.



Snares penguins Eudyptes robustus are named after the Snares Islands, a small group of islands off the south of New Zealand, where they breed. It is a marine sanctuary with no human habitation. They can be distinguished from the Fiordland penguins by the small patch of skin at the base of their beaks.

Erect Crested penguins Eudyptes sclateri (Dominica 1998 S.G. 2471) have a long slender orange/brown beak, a graceful and elegant body and a short tail. They are found along the southern coasts of Australia and New Zealand and the Antipodes.



They spend about half of their time on land living in colonies near to the sea. Like most other penguins they live on a diet of fish and krill.

Next come the Yellow Eyed penguin megadyptes antipodes (New Zealand 2001, S.G. 2457) which is larger than the Crested penguins. It is restricted to the waters around New Zealand and nests in burrows or rock crevices.



Lastly is the Little penguin endyptula minor (below, New Zealand 1964 S.G. 832) and is the smallest. This tiny penguin is only 40cm in length. It avoids its predators by being mainly nocturnal and also has a very plain nondescript plumage.



They feed at sea swimming underwater to catch fish and nest in a burrow on a sandy shore or under dense vegetation close by the sea. The parents take turns to incubate the eggs.

They are found along the coasts and islands of south and south east Australia and New Zealand.



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