

# PENGUIN, ROCKHOPPER

## RANGE:

Peri Antarctic, cold and warm sub-Antarctic locations, including islands close to Tierra del Fuego, the Tristan da Cunha group, the Falkland Islands, Marion Islands, and Iles Crozet, St. Paul and New Amsterdam, South Africa, and most of the cold, temperate islands (including Macquarie Island) south of New Zealand.

## HABITAT:

Habitat is mainly rocky coastal areas. They are also found less frequently in vegetated areas of forests and grasses.

## SIZE:

Sexes are alike in appearance. Males are usually slightly larger in size and weight. Body length is about 22 inches. Body weight is about 6 lbs.

## LIFE EXPECTANCY:

15-20 years in captivity.

## DIET:

Crustaceans, fish, cephalopods (such as squid) in the wild. In Zoos they eat capelin and other fish, plus a vitamin and mineral supplement.

## REPRODUCTION:

Their breeding colonies are often very large, and inhabit New Zealand, Heard Island, McDonald Island, Tristan da Cunha, Iles Crozet, Antipodes, Campbell and Maquarie, Gough Island, the Falklands, and Kergulen Islands.

The rockhoppers use their yellow plumed crests during courtship. The birds face each other and shake their heads in order to flutter the tufts of their crests in a most graceful display.

Rockhoppers make nests on ledges, scree slopes, or in crevices high above the sea. On islands that are vegetated they nest in the forests of fjord lands, under tussock canopies of temperate islands, or in scrub forest of various islands. The female lays two eggs, 3-8 days apart. The parents will not begin to incubate the eggs until both eggs are laid. Even if both eggs hatch, the parents rarely, if ever will raise both chicks. They will concentrate on one.

Penguin chicks are covered with a downy coat when they hatch, and they are brooded for 6-10 days. At this point they begin to regulate their own body temperatures. Parents feed the penguin chicks by regurgitating food for them. Eventually, the young will venture into the water on their own, without the assistance of the parents. At about the end of their first year, after their first molt, their adult plumage comes in. It may then be several years before they breed for the first time.

# theZOO

LOUISVILLE



JILL KATKA, PHOTOGRAPHER

Order:	<b>Sphenisciformes</b>
Family:	<b>Spheniscidae</b>
Genus:	<b>Eudyptes</b>
Species:	<b>chrysome</b>

## **PENGUIN, ROCKHOPPER**



### **BEHAVIOR:**

Rockhopper penguins move about on land by actually hopping, as their name implies. Instead of waddling like other penguins, rockhoppers jump from one place to another with their feet together. They balance themselves by poking their heads forward while pointing their flippers backward.

They are very skillful at climbing up and down rocky slopes, aided by their thick, downward curved claws.

Rockhoppers spend from three to five months of the year continuously at sea way from their breeding grounds. Because penguins cannot escape from the sea by flying away, they are particularly vulnerable at this time to their predators, which include giant petrels, brown skuas, Dominican gulls, blue sharks, fur/leopard seals, and killer whales.

### **POINTS OF INTEREST:**

Rockhoppers have black backs with white fronts, and yellow crests that look rather like long, bushy eyebrows that sweep upward. They have red eyes, reddish-brown beaks and pink legs and feet.

Penguins are specially adapted for prolonged swimming and for diving, so their bodies take on a peculiar appearance, and they walk in a peculiar manner. Their hind legs are attached far back along their bodies, and their hips can't rotate on the backbone, so penguins walk upright, and (in general) with a waddling gait. Their back feet and tails serve as rudders. In snow, penguins often move by sliding forward on their bellies.

Most penguins are sociable birds. They live in colonies, and breed, swim and search for food in flocks as well. Penguins call to one another by making a loud noise that sounds like "krohk". This noise can be heard for great distances across land and water. By calling out in this fashion and by observing distinguishing marks on one another, penguins can stay in contact with others of their species. This is helpful in many ways. The parents can keep track of their own young, the birds are protected against getting lost at sea, and it helps them to assist each other in location of food and in warning others of predators.

### **STATUS:**

Rockhoppers are the most common of all the penguins.

### **REFERENCES:**

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