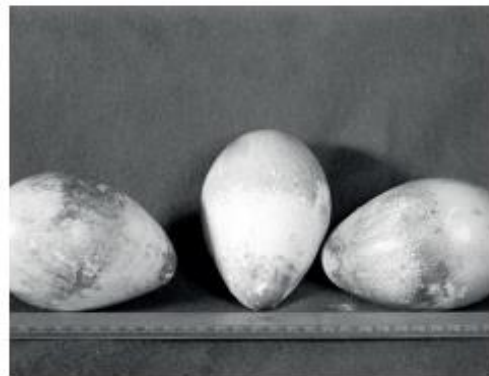


# Emperor Penguin Life Cycle

Penguins are birds that can't fly and they spend most of their life at sea. There are 17 subspecies of penguin. Emperor penguins are the biggest type of penguin. Instead of normal wings, they have flippers that help them to swim through the water. They catch fish, squid and krill to eat. Emperor penguins are found in the Antarctic. Groups of penguins on land are called a colony, rookery, huddle or waddle. A group of penguins floating in the ocean is called a raft.

## Egg

The mother penguin lays one or two eggs in a nest a few weeks after mating. The burrow can be a circle made of grass or stones, or can be under the ground. The mother carefully transfers the egg to the father, but some eggs get broken.



The male incubates the egg in June and July by keeping it on his feet, under a flap of his belly. The mother goes off to the sea to feed at this time.

1

## Chick

The chick hatches from the egg in August and starts calling so that the parents know its voice. Chicks have soft, fluffy, grey feathers. The mothers return and both parents take turns to look after their chick during September and October. The parent not looking after the chick goes off to sea to feed and returns to feed the chick. During October and November, the chicks huddle together to keep safe and warm.



2

## Adult

It can take up to thirteen months for penguins to form waterproof, black and white feathers. The families leave in December, when the ice breaks up at the start of the Antarctic summer. Chicks then hunt on their own and they all do lots of feeding in January, February and March. In April, the adult penguins march between 90 – 160km inland. They find a mate by singing to each other, usually in April or May. They keep the same mate for the whole of their life. Adult penguins can only reproduce when they are 3 to 8 years old.



# Emperor Penguin Life Cycle Questions

Answer the questions below in full sentences.

1. Where do emperor penguins live?

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2. What can't penguins do?

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3. How many subspecies of penguins are there?

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4. What do penguins eat?

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5. What are groups of penguins called?

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6. What are burrows made of?

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7. How do the males keep the eggs warm?

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8. What do the parents take turns with?

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9. How far do penguins have to march and when?

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10. How do penguins find each other and their chicks?

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