

Penguin Life

Penguins may look like they are dressed for a formal dinner, but their lives are anything but polite and peaceful. These remarkable birds survive in some of the toughest environments on Earth, using clever adaptations, teamwork, and a surprising amount of determination.

There are around eighteen different species of penguin, and not all of them live in freezing conditions. While emperor penguins are famous for enduring the icy winds of Antarctica, other species live much closer to the equator. Galápagos penguins, for example, live in warm climates where they must cool down rather than keep warm. This often surprises people who assume penguins only exist in snow and ice.

Penguins cannot fly, but they are exceptional swimmers. Their wings have evolved into powerful flippers, allowing them to glide through water with speed and accuracy. Some penguins can dive hundreds of metres below the surface and hold their breath for over twenty minutes. Underwater, they move so smoothly that they appear to fly — just not in the way birds usually do.

Life on land, however, is far more challenging. Penguins waddle awkwardly, slipping and sliding over ice and rocks. Although this may look amusing, it uses less energy than walking upright and helps them conserve strength in harsh conditions. In the wild, saving energy can mean the difference between survival and starvation.

Penguins are highly social animals. They live in large groups called colonies, which can contain thousands of birds. Living together provides protection from predators and warmth during freezing temperatures. Emperor penguins huddle so closely together that they take turns standing on the outside, ensuring no individual penguin freezes.

Raising chicks is one of the most impressive parts of penguin life. Emperor penguin fathers balance eggs carefully on their feet for weeks, protecting them from the ice below while the mothers travel long distances to find food. If an egg touches the ground, it can freeze within minutes — a mistake no penguin parent can afford to make.

Despite their comical appearance, penguins face serious threats. Climate change, melting ice, and pollution are making survival more difficult each year. As their habitats change, penguins must adapt once again — just as they have done for millions of years.

So while penguins may make us smile, their lives are filled with danger, endurance, and cooperation. Beneath the feathers and flippers lies a story of survival that is far more impressive than it first appears.

Comprehension Questions

1. What is the main purpose of the opening paragraph?
 - A) To explain where penguins live
 - B) To describe penguins' appearance
 - C) To introduce penguins in an engaging way
 - D) To warn about climate change
2. Why are Galápagos penguins surprising to many people?
 - A) They are the smallest penguin species
 - B) They live in warm climates
 - C) They cannot swim well
 - D) They live alone
3. How have penguins adapted their wings?
 - A) They use them to glide on ice
 - B) They have lost them completely
 - C) They use them for balance
 - D) They have become flippers for swimming
4. Why do penguins waddle instead of walking normally?
 - A) They are injured
 - B) It helps them avoid predators
 - C) It uses less energy
 - D) They cannot walk upright
5. What is the benefit of penguins living in colonies?
 - A) It helps them find food more easily
 - B) It allows them to fly together
 - C) It keeps predators away through noise
 - D) It provides warmth and protection
6. What makes emperor penguin parenting especially difficult?
 - A) Eggs must be carried long distances
 - B) Eggs can freeze very quickly
 - C) Chicks hatch underground
 - D) Food is always nearby
7. Which word best describes penguins' behaviour as parents?
 - A) Careless
 - B) Competitive
 - C) Dedicated
 - D) Playful
8. What threat to penguins is mentioned near the end of the text?
 - A) Hunting
 - B) Pollution and climate change

- C) New predators
- D) Loss of food sources only

9. Why does the author include humour in the text?

- A) To make penguins seem silly
- B) To distract from serious issues
- C) To criticise penguin behaviour
- D) To keep the reader interested

10. What is the overall message of the text?

- A) Penguins are funny animals
- B) Penguins live simple lives
- C) Penguins survive through intelligence and cooperation
- D) Penguins will soon disappear

Answers

1. **C**
2. **B**
3. **D**
4. **C**
5. **D**
6. **B**
7. **C**
8. **B**
9. **D**
10. **C**