



**ADÉLIE PENGUIN**  
*Pygoscelis adeliae*





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Order : *Sphenisciformes* — Family : *Spheniscidae*

## GEOGRAPHIC RANGE :

The species has a circumpolar range. It is commonly found along the entire Antarctic coast.

## HABITAT :

Adélie penguins breed on ice-free rocky coasts, usually on higher ground than gentoo penguins. They often breed in extensive open areas to accommodate typically large colonies, which may be far from the open sea at the time of arrival.

## DIET :

Adélie penguins feed primarily on krill. They also eat small quantities of fish, amphipods and cephalopods.

## BEHAVIOR :

They capture their prey by pursuit-diving in groups, generally less than 20 meters deep and often at night. Social behavior such as territorial and courting behavior is highly developed within colonies. Males attract females with "displays": they stand a few meters away from the female and put on a display of beak thrusting, neck arching, and reaching their full height. They flap their flippers and vocalize. Each pair recognizes each other's mating call and returns to its usual nesting site. They need to walk quite long distances to feed in coastal waters. On snowy ground, they slide on their belly while their flippers and feet propel them forward. Like other penguins, they swim using an "underwater flight" and regularly enter and leave the water. They are preyed upon by Leopard Seals, Orcas and South Polar Skuas.

## REPRODUCTION :

Oviposition generally takes place in November. Adélie penguins breed in very dense rookeries, which are established in remote areas. Nests, which are depressions in the ground lined with small stones, are closely grouped. Partners finish building their nest after courtship displays. They are known to steal stones from their neighbors' nests! Females lay two eggs, which are incubated by both sexes in alternating shifts for 30 to 43 days. If the clutch is lost, females may lay another single egg. Chicks enter a crèche at 16 to 19 days of age, and fledge about 50 to 56 days after hatching. They become independent at the age of two months.

- Size : 69-71 cm
- Weight : 3.6-4.5 kg



## THREATS :

The species is categorized as "Least concern" (IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, September 2020). It is vulnerable to climate change, in particular to the decrease of sea ice extent. Colony disturbance by human activities may lead to a reductions in suitable ground for breeding.