

The Emperor Penguin

The emperor penguin is the largest of the 17 species of penguin. Although penguins are birds, they cannot fly. Instead, their flipper-like wings and webbed feet make them superb swimmers, outstanding divers and skilled at catching fish.

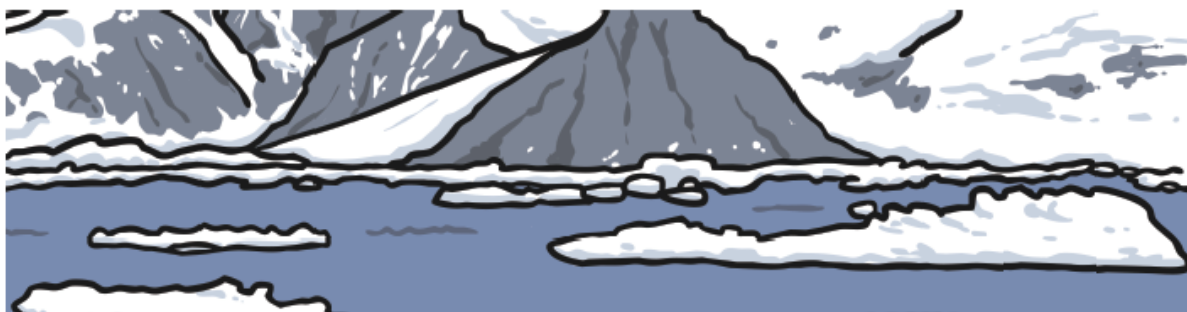
Habitat

Emperor penguins have adapted well to their extreme habitat. They are only found in Antarctica, the coldest place on Earth. They live in a huge group called a colony. To keep them warm in cold weather, they have a thick layer of insulation, made up of feathers (plumage) and fat. However, this makes it hard for them to move quickly on land. If the weather is bitterly cold, emperor penguins group together in a huddle.



Did You Know...?

- It is a long, slow walk inland across the ice to the colony. Emperor penguins can waddle up to 120km (75 miles).
- The male penguin protects his egg from gale-force winds and extremely cold temperatures. In all this time, he eats nothing.
- Climate change is sadly a big threat to colonies of emperor penguins.



Life Cycle

Egg Laying

1

The female lays one egg in May. It uses up a lot of her energy. She carefully passes it to the male and returns to the ocean.



Incubation and Hatching

2

The male keeps the egg warm through the winter in his brood pouch on top of his feet. In July, the female returns from hunting to feed the chick food from her tummy.



Moulting

3

The chicks lose their soft, fluffy, down feathers and grow sleek, waterproof ones. This is called moulting.



Fledging

4

By December, the sea ice has melted and the chicks leave the colony (fledge) and waddle along the ice to the sea.



Breeding

5

The young penguins return when they are about five years old. In April, the penguins find a mate.



Questions

1. The emperor penguin is... Tick **one**.

- not a large penguin
- the biggest of all the penguins
- the smallest species of penguin

2. Look at the **Habitat** section. Put ticks in the table to show which sentences are true and which ones are false.

Sentence	True	False
Emperor penguins live all over the earth.		
They live alone.		
They live in a colony.		
Their insulation keeps them warm.		

3. Fill in the missing word.

The male penguin protects his egg from gale-force winds and extremely cold temperatures. In all this time, he eats _____.

4. Look at the **Life Cycle** section. What happens during moulting?

5. **The female lays one egg in May... and returns to the ocean.**

Why does she return to the ocean? Give two reasons.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

6. How do penguins move differently on ice compared to the sea?

Use examples from the text.

Answers

1. The emperor penguin is... Tick **one**.

- not a large penguin
- the biggest of all the penguins**
- the smallest species of penguin

2. Look at the **Habitat** section. Put ticks in the table to show which sentences are true and which ones are false.

Sentence	True	False
Emperor penguins live all over the earth.		✓
They live alone.		✓
They live in a colony.	✓	
Their insulation keeps them warm.	✓	

3. Fill in the missing word.

The male penguin protects his egg from gale-force winds and extremely cold temperatures. In all this time, he eats **nothing**.

4. Look at the **Life Cycle** section. What happens during moulting?

The chicks lose their soft, fluffy, down feathers and grow sleek, waterproof ones.

5. **The female lays one egg in May... and returns to the ocean.**

Why does she return to the ocean? Give two reasons.

- 1. **She needs to eat to get more energy.**
- 2. **She needs to find food for her chick.**

6. How do penguins move differently on ice compared to the sea? Use examples from the text.

Pupils' own responses, showing understanding of the penguins' body parts being adapted to different environments. For example: Penguins are better at moving in the sea. Penguins move slowly and waddle on ice but have flipper-like wings and webbed feet so they are superb swimmers and outstanding divers.