Name _____ Date: _____

Emperor Penguin

The emperor penguin is the tallest and heaviest of all living penguin species.

Emperor penguins appearance can vary based on their age or the time of year. Generally, adult penguins can stand up to 110-130cm tall and weigh between 22.7 and 45.4kg, with males weighing more than females. Like all penguin species, emperor penguins have streamlined bodies and wings that are more like stiff, flat flippers. Males and females are similar in size and color. The adult has black dorsal feathers that cover their head and back area. The underparts of the wings and belly are white. In juveniles, the chin and throat are white while their bills are black. Emperor penguin chicks are typically covered with silver-grey down and have black heads and white masks.

Emperor penguins are generally consistent in what they eat. Their diet consists mainly of fish. Fish are usually the most important food source with the Antarctic silverfish making up the bulk of their diet. Other prey include squid. The emperor penguin searches for food in the open water of the Southern Ocean in either ice free areas of open water or tidal cracks in pack ice. They can dive around 50m to catch fish, repeating this sequence about six times before surfacing to breathe.

The emperor penguin can generally be found in a very specific location. They are found almost exclusively in the Antarctic circle and almost always breed on stable pack ice near the coast. Breeding colonies are usually located in areas where ice cliffs and icebergs shelter them from the wind. Since 2009, a number of colonies have been reported on shelf ice rather than sea ice. In some cases, they have moved to shelf ice when sea ice forms later.

In 2012, the emperor penguin was uplifted from a species of least concern to nearly threatened. The primary reason for this is due to declining food availability as a result of climate change and industrial fishing.

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