

Penguins (order [Sphenisciformes](#) /sfiˈnɪsɪfɔːrmiːz/, family [Spheniscidae](#) /sfiˈnɪsɪdiː/) are a group of [aquatic flightless birds](#). They live almost exclusively in the [Southern Hemisphere](#): only one [species](#), the [Galápagos penguin](#), is found north of the [Equator](#). Highly adapted for life in the water, penguins have [countershaded](#) dark and white [plumage](#) and flippers for swimming. Most penguins feed on [krill](#), [fish](#), [squid](#) and other forms of [sea life](#) which they catch with their bills and swallow whole while swimming. A penguin has a spiny tongue and powerful jaws to grip slippery prey.[4]

They spend roughly half of their lives on land and the other half in the sea. The largest living species is the [emperor penguin](#) (*Aptenodytes forsteri*):[5] on average, adults are about 1.1 m (3 ft 7 in) tall and weigh 35 kg (77 lb). The smallest penguin species is the [little blue penguin](#) (*Eudyptula minor*), also known as the fairy penguin, which stands around 30–33 cm (12–13 in) tall and weighs 1.2–1.3 kg (2.6–2.9 lb).[6] Today, larger penguins generally inhabit colder regions, and smaller penguins inhabit regions with temperate or [tropical climates](#). Some [prehistoric](#) penguin species were enormous: as tall or heavy as an adult human. There was a great diversity of species in [subantarctic](#) regions, and [at least one giant species](#) in a region around 2,000 km south of the [equator](#) 35 [mya](#), during the Late [Eocene](#), a climate decidedly warmer than today.[7]