**The Penguin Crisis**

The first draft

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**Outline**

**Introduction**

1. 11 out of 18 known species of penguins are marked vulnerable or endangered on the IUCN Red List
2. 3 crises of penguins: pollution, overfishing, and climate change

**Body paragraph 1-pollution**

1. Oil pollution
2. Plastic pollution

**Body paragraph 2-overfishing**

1. Overfishing of krill, sardines and the impacts on penguins

**Body paragraph 3- climate change**

1. Breeding failures and the little chance of survival of the chicks
2. Bird flu

**Conclusion**

Penguins are in extremely dangerous situation now due to the 3 main crises, and we should not ignore it.

**(Main text: 500–650 words)**

Penguins, the flightless birds mostly taking up residence around Antarctica, are remarkable for their ease of staying in that harsh freezing environment. However, shadows have approached this penguin’s territory in recent years, gradually leading these sensitive and fragile creatures to extinction. Among the 18 known living species of penguins, 11 of them are marked as “near threatened, vulnerable or endangered” on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List. In this essay, we will discuss three crucial hidden crises behind this unbelievably horrible fact: pollution, overfishing, and climate change.

One of the threats to penguins is the various pollution from human activities. According to a an article published on the website*The Conversation*, the number of African penguins is shrinking at a distressing rate, hugely owing to oil pollution. It reports the two oil spill events in 2016 and 2019 have contaminated more than 14% of African penguins near the area. Consequently, the toxic oil spillage resulted in the abandonment of the oiled eggs and chicks and a higher chance of breeding failure, exacerbating the decline in the population of African penguins. Another notorious pollution affecting penguins is plastic. A documentary film “*The Plastic and the Penguins*” made by Henry West reveals how penguins would choke on plastic waste to death. It points out that 90% of seabirds including penguins have mistaken plastic products as food and accumulate microplastics in their bodies, thus threatening their life. Therefore, it is obvious that pollution has been such a nightmare for penguins that we should not ignore it.

Aside from pollution, the lack of food supply caused by human overfishing is another hardship penguins are experiencing. In the relatively vulnerable food chain of Antarctica, the crucial food supply of penguins, krill and sardines, is now decreasing because of the thriving Antarctica fishery supporting the nutritional supplement industry. A 2020 study conducted by George M. Watters et al. indicates that the current regulations for commercial fishery are not sustaining the number of krill for penguins and other predators— the penguins are still struggling with the dwindling food resources in this unfair competition with the whole fishing industry. Also, the World Sustainability Organization, a non-governmental environmental organization, points out that the overfishing of krill, sardines and anchovies has pushed the endangered African penguins and Humboldt penguins even closer to extinction because of the need for penguins’ longer forage trips and the rising possibilities of starvation of their chicks.

Lastly, it should be taken seriously that penguins are at the top of the victim list of climate change. Wildlife Conservation Network (WSN), a non-profit wildlife protecting organization, is calling people’s attention to the fact that the climbing temperature has put Emperor penguins at risk and could leave only 10% of the population by 2100. Also Warned by WSN, parent penguins are now finding nowhere to build the nest for eggs, and numerous chicks are frozen to death because the sea ice has disappeared before their waterproof feathers well-developed. Besides, bird flu could also be a potential danger brought by climate change. Earlier this year, the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) found more than 200 baby penguins died of the avian flu, H5N1, which started the spreading on this pristine continent this year. Another non-governmental environmental organization, Greenpeace, explains that the pandemic of H5N1 likely resulted from the warming events allowing foreign creatures to enter Antarctica. From those crises, we can tell that global warming has devastating impacts on penguins.

In conclusion, penguins are in a dire situation now. They are overwhelmed with different kinds of pollution left by human activities and starved by declining prey due to human overfishing. Besides, the penguins are forced to witness the sea ice—their home—disappearing and suffering from the emerging avian flu. These frustrating truths are what these innocent waddling birds are living with, and also what we should take immediate action to change.