

| QUESTIONS | ANSWERS |
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| what is the scientific name of the penguin family | <i>Spheniscidae</i> |
| what is the scientific name of the little penguin | <i>Eudyptula minor</i> |
| how many species of penguin are there world wide | 17 |
| how many penguin species are known to have visited Australia | 7 |
| how many penguin species breed in Tasmania and mainland Australia | 1 |
| are little penguins the smallest in the penguin family | yes |
| how many penguins are there in the St Kilda colony | about 1000 and still predicted to grow (year 2006) |
| what is the average weight of a female little penguin | 1050grams |
| what is the average weight of a male little penguin | 1170grams |
| do penguins weights vary seasonally | yes |
| is the female plumage different from males | no |
| how can you tell females apart | females are generally smaller and |

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| from males | males have a deeper (top to bottom) beak with a more prominent hook. |
| are little penguins only found in the southern hemisphere | yes |
| are little penguins only found in Australia | no, they are also found in New Zealand |
| is Port Phillip Bay visited by Phillip Island penguins | yes, many feed in the bay in winter |
| have any Phillip Island penguins been found in St Kilda | yes, several birds |
| have any St Kilda penguins visited Phillip Island | yes |
| do they mate for life | sometimes but not usually |
| do little penguins nest on beaches in Port Phillip Bay | no, they normally prefer to nest on islands where they are safe from land based predators. St Kilda breakwater is similar to an island |
| when did little penguins start breeding on St Kilda breakwater | the first record was in 1974 |
| how does St Kilda breeding success compare to Phillip Island | a higher proportion of St Kilda fledgelings return to breed |
| can little penguins fly | no, but they effectively 'fly' through the water |
| do little penguins have wings like flying birds | no, their wings are known as flippers, they are short and covered in tiny scale like feathers |

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| do they have feathers | yes |
| how many feathers do they have | about 10,000 |
| why are their feathers different from most flying birds | to provide insulation and to stop water from seeping into their skin |
| do little penguins preen their feathers like other birds | yes, they have an oil producing preen gland at the base of the back |
| do they have more feathers than most flying birds | yes, 3 to 4 times more than most birds capable of flight |
| do they have webbed feet | yes |
| can little penguins swim underwater | yes |
| how do they propel themselves underwater | with their flippers |
| what are the feet used for when swimming underwater | as rudders |
| how long can they stay underwater | dives of up to 45 seconds in duration have been recorded |
| how deep can they dive | up to 60 metres |
| what do they eat | fish, squid and krill |
| what colour are little penguins | blue/grey on the head back and top of flippers and all white on the front |
| what advantage is the white front | they are less likely to be seen from below by their predators |

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| what water based predators do they have | sharks and seals |
| what natural land based predators do they have | sea eagle, and silver gulls and ravens have been known to take chicks if in the open during the day. Water rats occasionally take eggs and very young chicks |
| what introduced land based predators do they have | foxes and dogs |
| at what time of day do little penguins come ashore | after sundown |
| at what time of day do they go to sea | before sunrise |
| do they have to return to land each night | no, little penguins are so buoyant that they can sleep at sea |
| how much does a little penguin egg weigh at laying | about 55grams |
| how many do they lay per clutch | sometimes one but more often two |
| where are eggs laid | generally in underground burrows or under rocks but sometimes under a bush |
| can little penguins lay several clutches in the same season | yes if sufficient food is available |
| what colour are the eggs | white |
| are both eggs the same size | no, the second egg is generally the same width but shorter |
| how many days does it take till | 33-37 days |

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| the eggs hatch | |
| are both parents involved in incubating the eggs | yes |
| do both parents feed the chicks | yes |
| when do chicks reach adult weight | chicks can be as heavy as their parents at 4-5 weeks old |
| how heavy are newly hatched chicks | about 40grams (4% of average adult weight) |
| are the chicks guarded by one of the parents | one or other parent stays with the chicks till they are 2-3 weeks old |
| how old are the chicks when they first go to sea | 8-10 weeks old |
| do parents feed them once they have fledged | no |
| when do the fledged chicks return to the colony | when they are of breeding age 1-3 years |
| where do fledged chicks go | little is known about this but Phillip Island chicks tend to travel west along the Victorian coast |
| when do little penguins moult | after breeding |
| how many times a year do they moult | once |
| how often do most birds moult | twice a year |
| what preparations do little penguins make for moulting | increase their body weight by around 50% |

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| how long does a penguin take to moult | 2-3 weeks |
| can little penguins go to sea during moult | no |
| what is the main effect of having to remain on land | weight loss at a rate of 50 grams a day(they may eventually lose half their body weight) |
| does moult weaken the little penguins | possibly, due to the enforced fasting and physiological demand of producing new feathers, the period immediately after moult, (April-May) mortality is slightly higher than at any other time of the year.. |
| what unnatural threats do the St Kilda penguins face at sea | possible oil spills and entanglement with fishing line, plastic and other litter |
| do humans compete for food with little penguins | yes, some of the favourite penguin foods are harvested for pet food and bait |
| are little penguins protected by law | yes, the wildlife act prohibits handling or harassment of Little Penguins and other native species |
| compiled by Prof. Mike Cullen updated by Earthcare St Kilda Inc. | copyright Earthcare St Kilda Inc. |