

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
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

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

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

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

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%

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
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