

Penguins Exhibit Search

The Maritime Aquarium's special "African Penguins" exhibit features birds that are native to the coasts of South Africa and Namibia. Bring this Exhibit Search along on your next visit and use it to enhance your penguin encounter.

There are two mating pairs at the Aquarium. Couples often rest together and groom each other. When you visit, find Dobie (orange & green tag, right wing) and Dixie (no tag). Are they together? What about Astro (blue tag, right wing) and Jo (red & black tag, left wing)?



In the pink

Look for the pink featherless patches near the penguins' eyes. When an African penguin gets hot, body heat dissipates out of these patches, which are free of feathery insulation. It's a way to keep cool!

Are penguins camouflaged?

Yes! When a penguin is swimming and a predator is below, the penguin's white belly blends into the bright water surface. If the predator is above, the penguin's black back mixes with the dark depths. Viewed from the side, the penguin's belly in shadow – and its back reflecting the surface light – also helps it to "disappear." This adaptation, called countershading, is common in many aquatic and land animals.

Astro-logy

The Aquarium uses two main ways to identify each penguin: their color-coded wing tags and the pattern of spots & marks on each bird's chest.

Astro the penguin has a blue wing tag but also very unique chest markings. When you visit, try to find Astro by his blue wing tag and then draw in his chest markings on the altered picture at right.



Getting Around Swimmingly

Obviously, penguin wings aren't built for flight. They do, however, help the birds to "fly" through the water when they swim.

But what about their feet?

When you visit the exhibit, watch the penguins when they swim. Do they paddle their feet under water, like a duck? Or are their feet used mainly as rudders, for steering?