



# species factsheet

## | species introduction |

**Common name: Chinstrap penguin**

Scientific name: *Pygoscelis antarctica*

Description: 68 to 77cm high; black back, upper head and tail; white breast and abdomen. Flippers are black with a white inner side and edge. The face is white extending behind the eyes, which are reddish-brown; the chin and throat are white as well, while the short bill is black. The strong legs and the webbed feet are pink. The tail is fairly long.

Geographical distribution: Circumpolar, with the bulk of the population in the South Atlantic.

Interesting facts: The chinstrap penguin is known by different names. These include the stone cracker penguin, ringed penguin and also bearded penguin. Of all the penguins, it is one of the boldest. Although small in size, they have the courage to fight off larger penguin species.



## | status in the wild |

The species has not been assessed yet for the IUCN Red-list status. The species is not globally threatened.

## | species reproduction |

The birds arrive at the colony in October and November. The nests can be found on irregular rocky coasts, in ice-free areas. The earliest egg-laying occurs in November / December. It is

a colonial breeder, typically occurring in huge colonies of hundreds of thousands of birds. The birds often nest beside conspecifics. The nest is a very simple round platform of stones. They lay two eggs, rarely one or three. Incubation is carried out by both sexes for 34 to 40 days, with stints of one to eighteen days. The chick's first down is pale grey, the second pale grey as well, but darker above and on the chin. They crèche at 23 to 29 days and fledge at 52 to 60 days. The species reaches sexual maturity at the age of three years.

### **| species habitat |**

The Chinstrap penguin is a marine species, living mostly in zones with light pack ice (10-30% ice cover).

### **| species food |**

The Chinstrap penguin is an inshore feeder. They forage almost exclusively on Antarctic krill (*Euphausia superba*), normally in the 4.0 to 6.5cm size range; they will also take a few fish and other species of crustaceans. Apparently they capture prey by means of pursuit-diving, mostly at a depth of less than 45 meters and 40% of the time at less than 10 meters.

### **| threats |**

This species has an extremely large range, and hence does not approach the IUCN thresholds for Vulnerable under the range size criterion (Extent of Occurrence <20,000 km<sup>2</sup> combined with a declining or fluctuating range size, habitat extent/quality, or population size and a small number of locations or severe fragmentation). The population trend appears to be increasing, and hence the species does not approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the population trend criterion (>30% decline over ten years or three generations). The population size is extremely large, and hence does not approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the population size criterion (<10,000 mature individuals with a continuing decline estimated to be >10% in ten years or three generations, or with a specified population structure). For these reasons the species is evaluated as Least Concern. The current population is estimated to number at least 8 million individuals.

### **| find out more |**

#### **Websites**

- <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/sowbsearchresults.php?a=st&SearchTerms=sphenisci>
- <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/family/penguins-spheniscidae>

**| this factsheet has been prepared by: Pierre de Wit, Chair EAZA Penguin TAG, Zoo Emmen, The Netherlands |**

For more information go to [www.poletopolecampaign.org](http://www.poletopolecampaign.org) or email [info@poletopolecampaign.org](mailto:info@poletopolecampaign.org)