



Gentooos construct their nests with small pebbles<sup>1</sup> and often will steal them from neighboring nests.<sup>2</sup>

## Conserving Gentoo Penguins

Gentoo penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*) can be found swimming, breeding, and foraging in the waters off the Antarctic Peninsula, which juts northward toward South America, and around several sub-Antarctic islands. Although their numbers are stable, human activity could have a major impact on their population health.

### About gentoo penguins

About 387,000 breeding pairs of gentoo penguins inhabit the Antarctic Peninsula, the Falkland/Malvinas Islands, and South Georgia Island.<sup>3</sup> They can be as tall as 76 centimeters (about 2.5 feet) and weigh 4.5 to 8.5 kilograms (about 10 to 18 pounds). They are recognizable by their red-orange bills and their feet, which range in color from pink to orange to red.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists gentoo penguins as Near Threatened with extinction. Although some colonies appear to be growing, others are declining quickly, and the impact of human activity may be to blame.<sup>4</sup>

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## Did You Know?

- Gentoo penguins are mostly monogamous during their breeding season.<sup>5</sup>
  - The gentoo diet includes a mix of crustaceans and fish. Females eat more Antarctic krill than males do.<sup>6</sup>
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## Habitat and threats

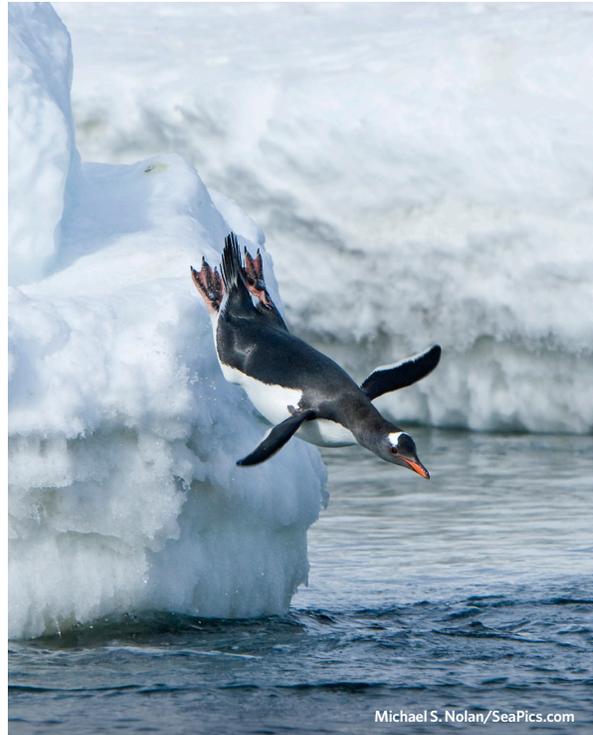
Human interference and habitat degradation are the main threats to the health of gentoo penguin populations. As tourism and other commercial activities—such as oil exploration, fishing, and egg collection—increase near the islands and waters where they live, their breeding and foraging ability is affected.<sup>7</sup>

## What we can do

Protecting gentoo breeding colonies is critical for the birds' survival. Visitors, whether recreational, scientific, or commercial, increase pollution and marine traffic, which can hurt gentoos' foraging ability. The Pew Charitable Trusts recommends:

- Creation of marine reserves to protect gentoo penguin food sources and foraging grounds.
- Precautionary management of the Antarctic krill fishery.
- Appropriate management of tourism activities to prevent damage to penguin foraging and nesting areas.

The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) is an international body of 24 countries and the European Union with the authority to create large-scale, fully protected marine reserves in the waters surrounding Antarctica. Action by CCAMLR is needed to help alleviate threats to these penguins and to protect them for the future.



# Where Gentoo Penguins Live



**Threats:**

Fisheries pressure and overfishing

**Population:**

387,000 breeding pairs

**IUCN status:**

Near Threatened

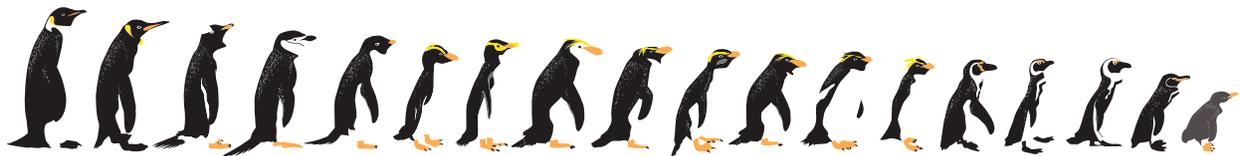
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The Antarctic Peninsula, Falkland/ Malvinas Islands, and South Georgia Island are the primary habitat for gentoo penguins.

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## Endnotes

- 1 Animal Diversity Web, "*Pygoscelis Papua* (Gentoo Penguin)," accessed July 24, 2014, [http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Pygoscelis\\_papua](http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Pygoscelis_papua).
- 2 Oiseaux-Birds.com, "Gentoo Penguin," accessed July 24, 2014, <http://www.oiseaux-birds.com/card-gentoo-penguin.html>.
- 3 Heather J. Lynch, "Gentoo Penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*)," in *Penguins: Natural History and Conservation*, ed. Pablo Garcia Borboroglu and P. Dee Boersma (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), 75.
- 4 International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Species, "*Pygoscelis papua*," accessed March 7, 2014, <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22697755/0>.
- 5 J.P. Croxall and L.S. Davis, "Penguins: Paradoxes and Patterns," *Marine Ornithology* 27 (1999): 2, [http://www.marineornithology.org/PDF/27/27\\_1.pdf](http://www.marineornithology.org/PDF/27/27_1.pdf).
- 6 Australian Antarctic Data Centre, "Taxon Profile: *Pygoscelis papua papua papua*," accessed March 7, 2014, [https://data.aad.gov.au/aadc/biodiversity/taxon\\_profile.cfm?taxon\\_id=66969](https://data.aad.gov.au/aadc/biodiversity/taxon_profile.cfm?taxon_id=66969).
- 7 BirdLife International, "Gentoo Penguin *Pygoscelis papua*," accessed March 7, 2014, <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/speciesfactsheet.php?id=3850>.



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## Find out how you can help gentoo penguins:

[pewtrusts.org/penguins](http://pewtrusts.org/penguins)

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