



Penguin - Why don't penguins fly?

Fact

- A penguin does fly but under water not in the air :o)
- Penguin's bodies aren't built for flying. Their bones are solid and heavy and a flying bird's bones are light and hollow. The solid bones help them to sink lower in the water.
- Penguin's wings are paddle-like flippers. Their flippers aren't big enough to lift them into the air like a flying bird's wings but they are very good for pushing a penguin through water.
- Penguins get their food from the sea not on land but they come onto land to lay their eggs.

Do you know

- Scientists believed penguins evolved over 60 million years ago from the ancestors of albatrosses and petrels.
- The biggest penguin that ever lived was 1.5 meters tall and it lived in New Zealand thousands of years ago.
- The biggest penguins around these days are Emperor penguins. They live in Antarctica and they're 1.3 meters tall.
- The smallest penguins are little Blue Penguins
- Penguins eat small fish, squid and sea creatures called krill.
- They can hold their breath underwater for about 18 minutes.

Experiments you can do

Have a close look at your own tongue in a mirror. Is your tongue rough or smooth? A penguin has a tongue that is covered with spines that point backwards into its mouth and down its throat to help it swallow wiggly live fish.

Other Investigations

Penguins can swim up to 10 kilometres an hour. They use their feet and tail as a rudder and will sometimes leap right out of the water when they're swimming. They use their paddle-like flippers to push them through the water. Use a pair of flippers to see how fast you can push yourself through the water.

Jokes

Person 1: What do penguins eat for dinner?

Person 2: I don't know, what do penguins eat for dinner?

Person 1: Fish fingers

Person 2: Really, I didn't know fish had fingers!