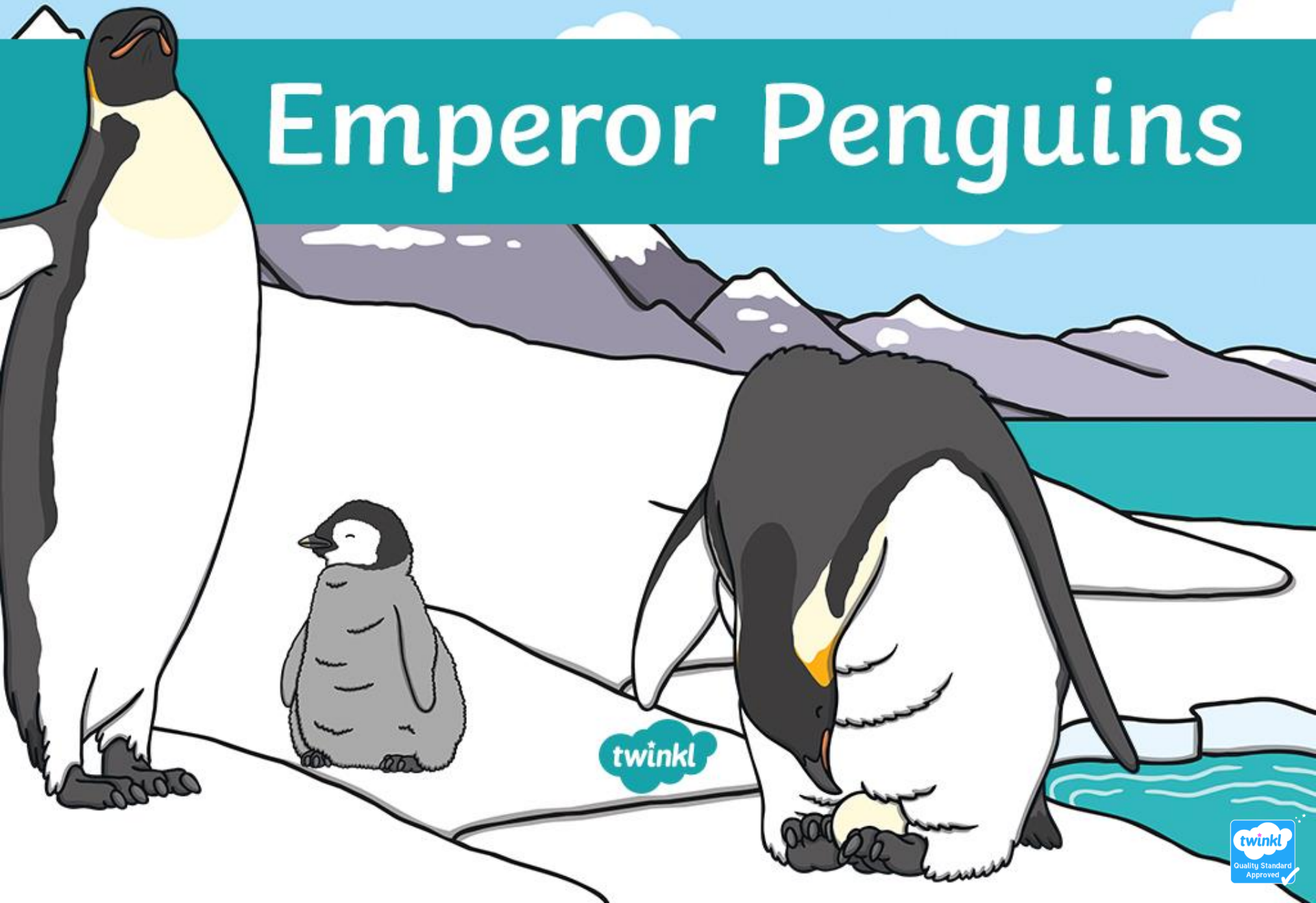


Emperor Penguins



Emperor Penguins

- Penguins are birds but they cannot fly.
- Emperor penguins are the largest species of penguin.
- Although they waddle slowly on land, they are super swimmers and brilliant divers.
- They have strong flipper-like wings and webbed feet to help them swim quickly.
- Emperor penguins live together in a colony.
- They can live about 20 years in the wild or up to 50 years in captivity.

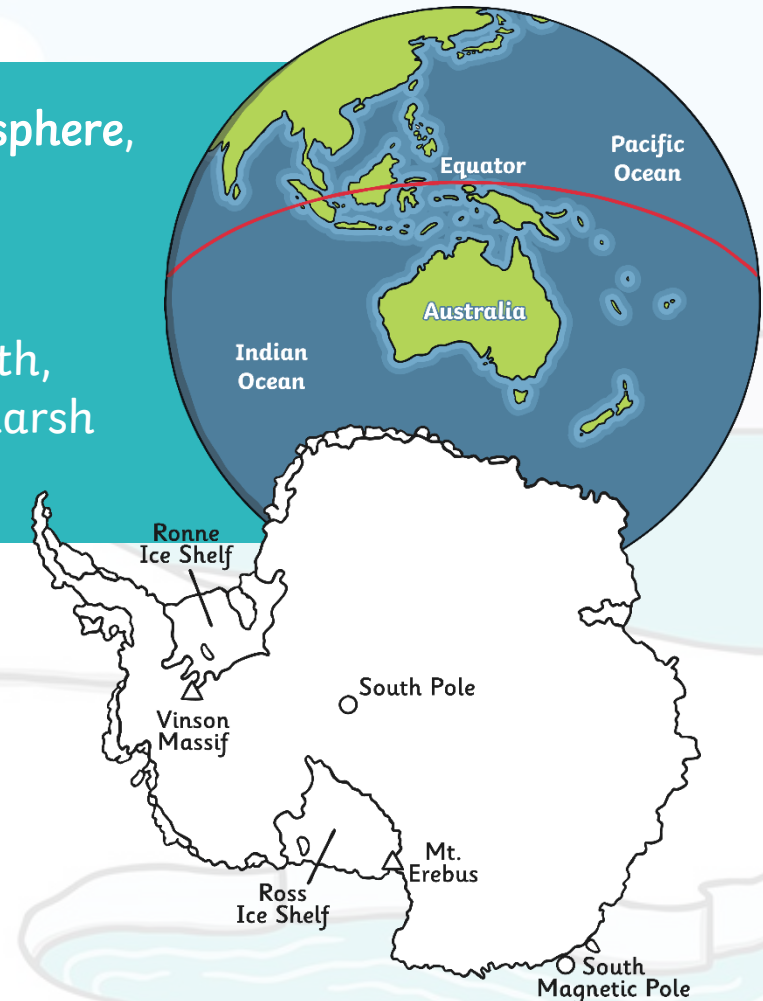
An adult emperor penguin can grow to 115cm tall – about the same as a six-year-old boy or girl!



Habitat

All penguins live in the southern hemisphere, which is the bottom half of the world.

The emperor penguin is found in the Antarctic, the coldest continent on Earth, but they are perfectly adapted to the harsh temperatures.



Special Adaptations

Emperor penguins' bodies and behaviour help them to survive. In extreme cold, the **colony** of penguins work together as a team, sharing their body heat.



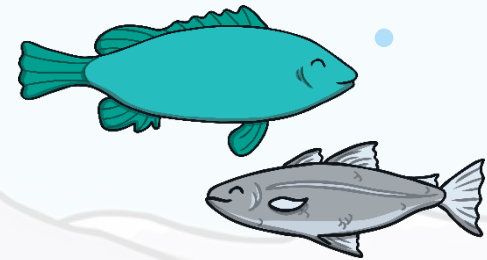
The penguins constantly shuffle, from the freezing cold outside of the **huddle** to the insulated inside, and then back again.

Their bodies have a thick layer of feathers and fat. They even have special fat in their feet to prevent them freezing on the ice!

Diet

Emperor penguins swim and dive like experts!

They hunt their **prey** (krill, fish and squid) from the sea around the **ice pack**.



Did You Know...



Emperor penguins are the world's deepest diving birds. One was recorded diving 565m – that's over half a kilometre down into the sea! Furthermore, they can hold their breath for up to 22 minutes!



Egg Laying

The female lays one egg in May. It uses up a lot of her energy. She carefully passes it to the male and returns to the ocean.

Breeding

The young return when they are about five years old. In April, the penguins find a mate.



Incubation and Hatching

The male keeps the egg warm through the winter in his large pouch on top of his feet. In July, the female returns from hunting to feed the chick food from her tummy.



Fledging

By December, the sea ice has melted and the chicks leave the colony (fledge) and waddle along the ice to the sea.



Moulting

The chick lose their soft, fluffy, down feathers and grow sleek, waterproof ones. This is called moulting.

Teamwork

Emperor penguins are the only animal that **breeds** during the Antarctic winter. The male and female work together to make sure their chick survives.

After the female penguin lays a single egg, the male looks after it. He keeps it safe and warm for about 65 days in a place between his tummy and feet called a **brood pouch**. All the males **huddle** tightly together with their eggs, eating nothing in all this time.

Exhausted, the female travels to the sea to feed. When she returns to the **colony**, the hungry male takes his turn to feed.

A Long Way Back!

The colony can sometimes be up to 100km inland from the sea! What a tiring walk!

Chicks

Both parents take it in turns to feed and protect their young chick. The chick eats **regurgitated** food – from its parents' tummies! When their warm, down feathers have grown, the chicks all stay together in a group called a crèche while their parents take shifts to find food.

Did You Know...

Sometimes the chick hatches while its mother is still away at sea. Incredibly, the male can feed it a kind of milk from its neck! There are only three types of birds in the world which can do this:

- Flamingos
- Pigeons
- Emperor penguins

Population and Climate Change

It is estimated that there are around 60 000 emperor penguins living in about 40 colonies.

Emperor penguins rely on the permanent ice pack in order to breed. As sea temperatures rise with climate change, large areas of ice break up and melt. This reduces the size of their habitat, affects their **prey** and threatens their population.

