

The emperor penguin is the largest of 17 species of penguin at 1.15 m (45 in.) tall.

Four layers of scale-like feathers protect them from icy winds and provide a waterproof coat.

The penguins can store large amounts of fat which insulates their bodies while also serving as a long-lasting energy source.

They have small bills and flippers, which helps to conserve heat.

Emperor penguins are also specially adapted to traveling in this extreme habitat. On the ice masses, they use strong claws on their feet to help grip the surface as they shuffle along.

These birds are super swimmers and impressive divers; they can dive deeper than any other bird. They can reach depths of over 500m and stay underwater for up to 22 minutes!

The male emperor penguins must cope with the worst weather conditions on earth, all the while eating nothing.

They take turns moving towards the inside of the pack, where it is warmer, thereby sustaining the entire group.

Although emperor penguins are effective hunters, they are also prey to a few Antarctic animals as well.

In the water, both juveniles and adults are eaten by leopard seals and killer whales.

However, emperor penguins face several threats due to human activity.

Sadly, today emperor penguins are considered near threatened and their populations are expected to decline rapidly in years to come.

It's feared that rising temperatures due to global warming will reduce their breeding ground, Overfishing will mean less food for them to eat.

Adults have a white stomach and a black head, back, tail and wings. They also have yellowy-gold markings on the side of their head and neck.

Emperor penguins spend their entire lives in Antarctica - the Earth's southernmost continent - where temperatures can drop to as low as -60°C.

Around April every year (the start of the Antarctic winter) emperor penguins meet to breed on the thick Antarctic ice.

Emperors also have feathers on their legs so their ankles don't get too chilly.

Emperor penguins are similar to king penguins but the emperors have yellow patches around their ears whereas the king penguins have orange patches.

Emperors are perhaps the only species of bird that never sets foot on land.