

EMPEROR PENGUINS

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Table of contents

Introduction	pages 4–5
Chapter 1: Surviving in Antarctica	pages 6–9
Chapter 2: Finding food	pages 10–11
Chapter 3: Having young	pages 12–15
Conclusion	pages 16–17

An adult emperor penguin on an ice sheet.

Introduction

Can a bird live in Antarctica?

How would it find food in this icy land?

And how could a bird possibly protect its young in such a cold climate?



One bird that lives in Antarctica is the emperor penguin.



Emperor penguin walking.

It has amazing ways of staying safe, finding food and protecting its young in the coldest, windiest place on Earth.

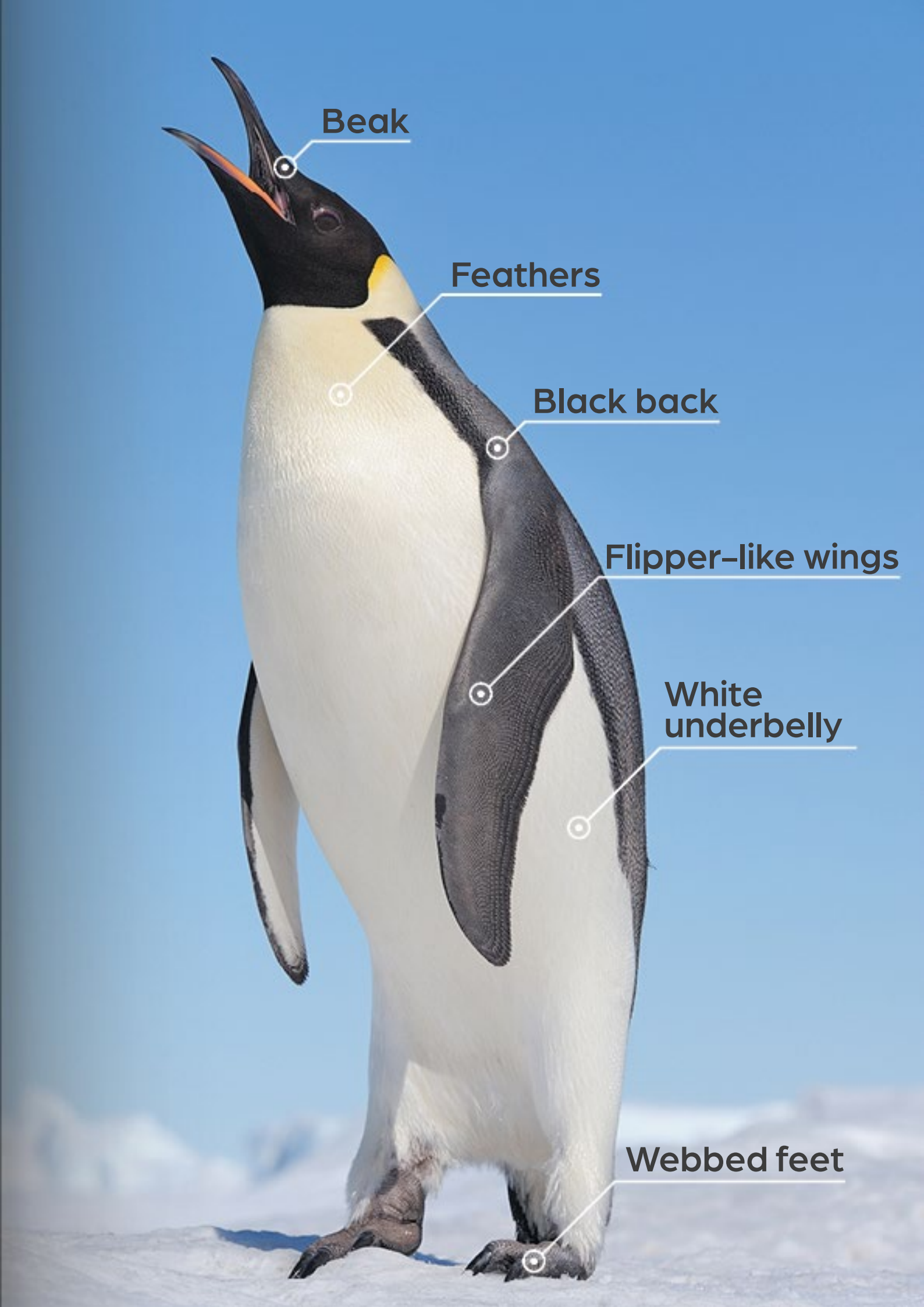
Chapter 1:

Surviving in Antarctica

Emperor penguins have the right body parts to keep warm in the cold weather, and to stay safe from predators that want to eat them.

Keeping warm

The emperor penguin can survive freezing cold temperatures. It has a thick layer of fat to keep its body heat in and the cold air out. It also has layers of waterproof feathers that help to keep the bitter wind and icy cold water out.



Staying safe

Animals such as orcas and leopard seals eat emperor penguins. The colour of the emperor penguin's feathers helps to keep it safe from these predators. When a penguin is swimming, its white underbelly is difficult for predators to see from underneath, and its black back is difficult to see from above.



Fun fact

The emperor penguin is the largest of all 18 types of penguin.

Chapter 2: Finding food

The emperor penguin is an excellent swimmer. It cannot fly but it uses its wings like flippers to swim in the water, where it finds food.

The emperor penguin eats fish, shellfish, squid and other small sea animals.

It speeds through the water as it hunts its prey. When the penguin gets close enough, it catches the prey in its strong beak.

A group of emperor penguins hunting their prey.



An emperor penguin diving.



Fun facts

The emperor penguin is the deepest diving bird on Earth. It can dive about 500 metres – that's half a kilometre! It can stay under water for about 20 minutes!

Chapter 3:

Having young

Emperor penguins come to the icy land to lay their eggs and raise their young. They all gather in one spot to do this. This large group of penguins is called a colony.

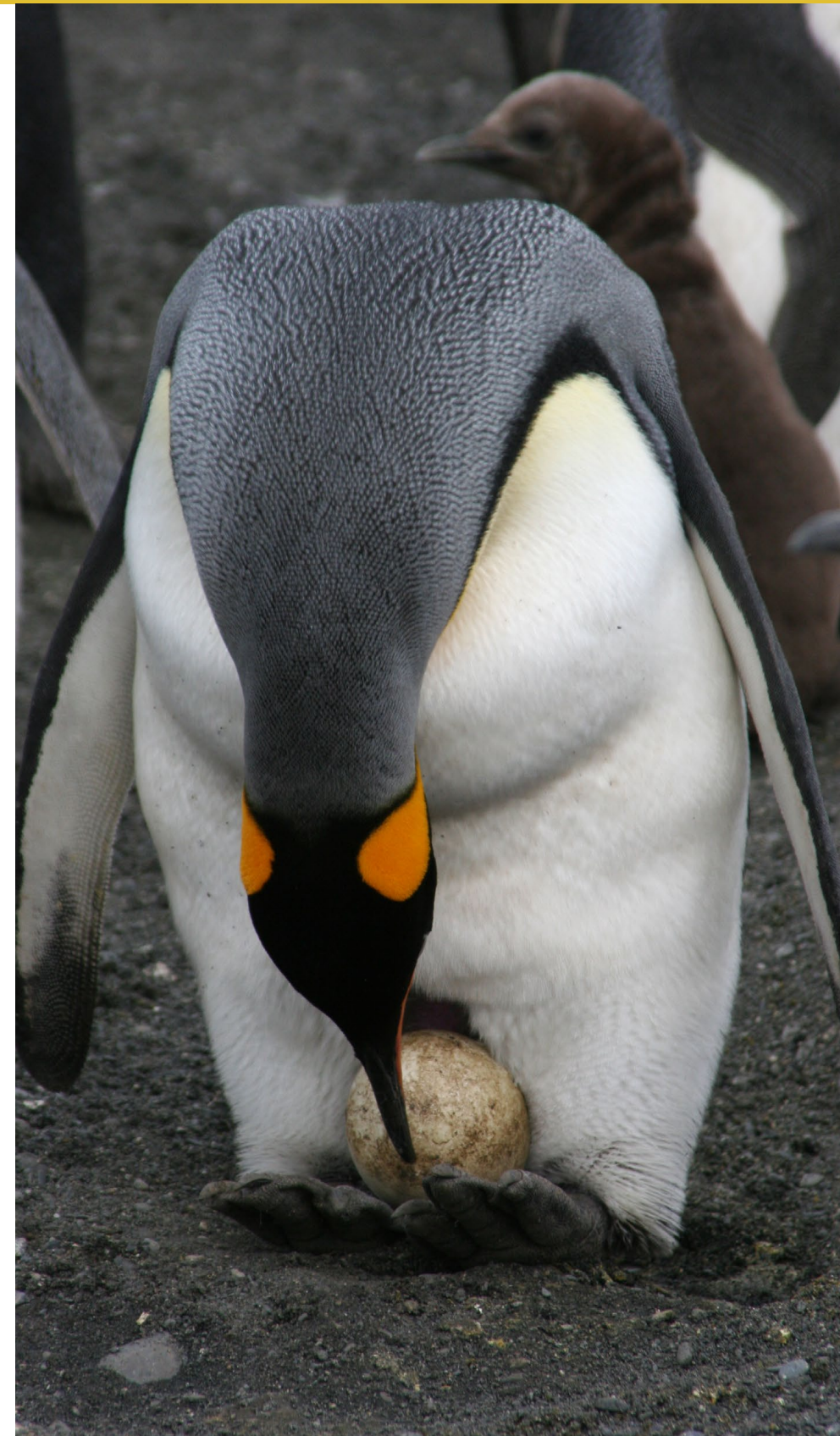


An emperor penguin colony in Antarctica.

Laying eggs

The female lays one egg, and then returns to the ocean to find food.

The male penguin looks after the egg. He holds the egg on his feet away from the ice, and he covers it with a layer of his fat, called a brood pouch, to keep it warm. The male stays like this for two months, without eating, until the egg hatches.



A male emperor penguin holding an egg on its feet.

Parents and chicks

The female returns to the ice when it is time for her egg to hatch. The male can then go back to the ocean to find food.

When the chick hatches, the mother penguin feeds it and protects it from the cold.



A mother penguin protecting her little chick.

After about a month and a half, the chick is big enough to leave its mother. Now both parents go to the ocean to get food for their chick. The chick huddles with other chicks to keep warm while the parents are finding food.

The parents continue feeding their chick until it is ready to go to the ocean and catch its own food.



A group of chicks keeping warm together.

January to March

Adults feed at sea.



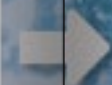
April

Adults come to land to breed.



May/June

Females lay one egg. Male looks after the egg.



July/August

Female returns from the sea. Egg hatches.



September to November

Chicks huddle together. Parents find food for chicks.



December/January

Chicks leave land to feed in the sea.

Conclusion

The emperor penguin can survive in a freezing cold, icy world.

The emperor penguin is an incredible swimmer and hunter, and it takes great care to look after its young. It is truly a remarkable bird!



Emperor Penguins

Antarctica is covered in ice, the wind is bitterly cold and the surrounding sea is freezing. One animal that can survive in this harsh environment is the incredible emperor penguin. Find out how this amazing bird stays safe, finds its food and looks after its young in this icy land.



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