

MEDIA CONTACT:

Shedd Aquarium Public Relations

(312) 692-3330

media@sheddaquarium.org

PENGUINS

Guests visiting the Shedd Aquarium have the opportunity to learn about two species of penguins: *Rockhopper* and *Magellanic*. For years, Shedd has been a part of a very successful penguin breeding program.

Rockhopper Penguins:

- Rockhopper penguins (*Endiptes chrysocome chrysocome*) are among the smallest of penguins, measuring in at 12 to 15 inches high and four to six pounds.
- Found across several islands between the tip of South America and Antarctica, rockhoppers are named for the way in which they move from place to place. They breed on steep, rocky terrain, which makes it necessary to hop from one point to the next. Breeding sites of rockhopper penguins are often close to sources of fresh water that is used for bathing and drinking.
- There are three distinct species of Rockhopper penguins: the Southern, *E. chrysocome chrysocome*, Eastern, *E. chrysocome filholi*, and Northern, *E. chrysocome moseleyi*.
- Because of disease and the rise in sea temperatures (which affects the availability of prey), the rockhopper population has seen a rapid decline in size. This decline has led to the species being added to the 'vulnerable' list by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.
- Rockhoppers are easy to identify by the distinctive crest feathers on their heads, bright orange-red bills and tiny blood-red eyes. Males and females are very similar in appearance, though males are larger.
- Despite the small size of their colonies compared to other penguin species, rockhopper colonies are often noisier than any other type of species. Fierce competition for nesting materials, mating partners, and territory all contribute to the commotion that takes place at these sites. As well as vocalizing, these birds communicate by head shaking, head and flipper waving, bowing, gesturing and preening.
- It is not all fun and games for these penguins. At sea, rockhoppers are eaten by blue sharks, leopard seals and fur seals. On land, eggs and chicks are eaten by many birds, including skuas, petrels, and Kelp gulls.

Magellanic Penguins:

- Magellanic penguins (*Spheniscus magellanicus*) are quite larger than their Rockhopper counterparts and can grow to be around 27 inches high and weigh seven to nine pounds.
- They inhabit the cold temperate waters and sub Antarctic regions of coastal Chile and Argentina and burrow under rocks or bushes for nesting.
- Magellanic penguins are named after Ferdinand Magellan who first witnessed them in 1519 on his initial voyage around the tip of South America.
- The Magellanic penguin is the largest of the temperate climate penguins (*genus Spheniscus*), which include: the [Humboldt](#), the [Galapagos](#), and the [African](#) penguins.
- During the warmer weather of the breeding season Magellanics lose the feathers around their eyes. When it starts to get cold again the feathers grow back.
- Magellanic penguins lay two eggs each breeding season.
- In contrast to many penguin species that feed chicks preferentially, both Magellanic chicks are given equal care and often both survive.
- Magellanic penguin populations are considered to be stable, however, they do face threats from oil spills, overfishing of their food supply, and fishing net entanglement.
- Magellanic penguins have very dense feathers: more than 70 per square inch. The feathers have natural oil on them, for waterproofing.

#

*Shedd Aquarium is supported by the people of Chicago and the State of Illinois.
Shedd Aquarium is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and
the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums.*