



KIDS

MENU



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Humboldt penguins have pink patches around their eyes and at the base of their bills.  
PHOTOGRAPH BY CYRIL RUOSO, GETTY IMAGES

# Humboldt Penguin

Crossing a beach to get to the sea, a two-foot-tall Humboldt penguin waddles over what appears to be a cluster of large boulders. Suddenly one of the rock-like objects rises up and barks! The penguin is stepping on sea lions lounging on the shore. Sea lions prey on Humboldt penguins in water but are too slow to catch them on land. The bird continues to ruffle feathers as it climbs over more annoyed sea lions. But it finally makes it to the ocean and dives in for a swim.

BY ANDREA SILEN

**COMMON NAME:** Humboldt Penguin

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Spheniscus humboldti*

**TYPE:** Birds

**DIET:** Carnivore

**AVERAGE LIFE SPAN:** 15-20 years (in captivity)

**SIZE:** 22-28 inches long

**WEIGHT:** 8-13 pounds



## A GOOD SPORT

Humboldt penguins live along the shores of Peru and Chile, two countries in South America. Named for a chilly water current that flows through their coastal range, these birds are excellent swimmers. Their torpedo-shaped bodies can shoot through the water at speeds of 30 miles an hour. And they can dive up to 500 feet underwater in search of snacks such as fish, shrimp, and squid.

When the birds need a break from swimming, they come ashore. Getting around on land isn't always easy. Parts of their habitat feature rocky seaside cliffs. Luckily the animals have some built-in climbing gear: They use sharp claws on their webbed feet to grip onto rocks as they move across the rugged landscape. The animals also put their climbing skills to use when they have to scramble over sunbathing sea lions blocking their path to the ocean.



Check out where Humboldt penguins live.  
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAPS

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## THINK PINK

During the hottest months of the year, temperatures in the Humboldt penguin's home can reach triple digits. The animal has ways to beat the heat though. It sports patches of bare, pink skin around its eyes and at the base of its bill. The bird expels body heat through these featherless spots. This little guy's athletic abilities and its pink patches make it one colorful penguin!

Check out the book [Penguins vs. Puffins](#) for more about these amazing birds!





## PENGUINS STEP ON SEA LIONS

Humboldt penguins tumble down a cliff and hop over sea lions to get their lunch. Find out what else makes the Humboldt penguin so freaky in this episode of Freaky Creatures!

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