

The Derwent Little Penguins

Did you know that in Hobart we are lucky enough to have Little Penguins living in our backyard?

Derwent Penguins are Special

- The Derwent Estuary is one of the few places in the world where Little Penguins live in a city.
- These beautiful seabirds live in small colonies along the shore.
- The Penguins survive because they have learned to be very secretive. Many people don't even know they are there.
- Little Penguins are often seen swimming in the River Derwent. They also spend weeks fishing at sea — often in really rough weather.
- Little Penguins nest in burrows or among rocks. Sometimes they hide in backyards or under sheds.



Why do the Derwent Penguins need New Homes?

It is getting harder for the Penguins to find a place to build their first home. Young Penguins turn up regularly but many of them can't raise a family because there is nowhere safe to stay.

Just like many humans, Little Penguins like to live in quiet, secluded spots near the sea.

Threats to the Derwent Penguins

Only a small number of Little Penguins survive in the Derwent Estuary. Life in the city is very difficult for these wild creatures.

With the spread of Hobart's suburbs, Little Penguin colonies are in danger from:

- dogs and cats
- removal of vegetation
- humans coming too close
- gill net fishing
- plastic rubbish in the sea
- noise and lights at night.

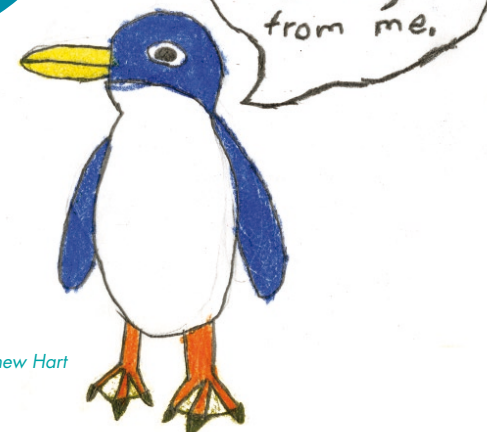
On land, dogs & cats are the biggest danger as they kill Penguins and Penguin chicks.



James Newton

The sniff of a dog can snuff out a family!

Did you know that taking your dog near a colony endangers Little Penguins? Even a well-behaved dog will leave a scent that attracts other dogs.



Matthew Hart

Saving what's left

The Derwent Estuary Penguin Project is helping Little Penguins survive by:

- building new burrows to provide safe homes
- using native plants to provide cover for nesting and moulting
- putting up fences to keep dogs away from Penguin colonies.

Scientists from the Department of Primary Industries and Water are keeping an eye on the Penguins. This summer they found about 120 pairs of Penguins nesting along the Derwent.



Zoe Rice

If you are in a boat, little penguins can be seen in our local waters during the day, especially around Bruny Island.



Liam O'Donovan

Their survival Depends on Us!

If you are near Little Penguins, you can help protect them:

- Keep your dog away.
- Don't take your dog to places with 'No Dogs' signs. Penguins might live there.
- Keep your cat inside at night and if possible during the day.
- Keep away from Penguin homes, especially at night.
- Don't fish with nets or throw away fishing lines or tackle.
- Put litter in rubbish bins. Don't use plastic bags!
- Look out for Penguin nests before you 'tidy up' your backyard. Sometimes weeds protect nests from dogs and cats.
- Plant prickly native plants to keep dogs and cats away from nests.
- **Do not go near a Penguin!** Penguins are easily frightened, and they may bite if they get really scared.

Did you know that if dogs or people are on the beach at night Penguins won't go home to feed their chicks?



Mara Davison

Be Penguin Aware!

You can save Little Penguins by reporting any danger to these native seabirds.

To report an uncontrolled dog or cat

Phone the local council:

Hobart City Council 6238 2711
Kingborough Council 6211 8200
Clarence City Council 6245 8603

To report an injured, sick or dead Penguin

Phone the Department of Primary Industries and Water on 6233 6556 or 0427 942 537 (all hours).



I'm a bird you know quite well.
All dressed in blue and white.
And even though I do have wings,
They're not designed for flight.
I waddle, waddle, waddle
On my funny little feet.
Across the sandy beach I go
To find a fishy treat.

Kristy Wylie

Flying through the water as quick as the wind

Running up and down well worn run ways

To get from their burrows to the sea.

Jarrah Day

Remember that a moulting Penguin may look sick but just wants to be left alone until it gets its new feathers.

To Find out more about Little Penguins

www.derwentestuary.org.au
www.Penguins.org.au
www.Penguins.net.nz/faq/faq.html

Phone the Derwent Estuary Program on 6233 3742.

Phone a Penguin biologist in the Department of Primary Industries and Water on 1300 135 5613.

The Derwent Estuary Penguin Project is an initiative of the Derwent Estuary Program, and is funded by the Australian Government Envirofund. Additional funding and support has been provided by Wrest Point, Hobart City Council, Kingborough Council, Tasmanian Conservation Trust, Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife, Tarooma Environment Network, Tarooma Primary School, Tarooma High School, Birds Australia, the Understorey Network, TAFE Tasmania and Wrest Point.



The Derwent Little Penguins

Family Life

- Little Penguins live about 7 years. They breed when they are 2–3 years old.
- Breeding is usually in spring but depends when food is plentiful.
- Male Penguins return to their colonies during winter. They repair burrows or dig new ones and call to attract mates.
- Most Little Penguins keep the same mate and use the same burrow for life.
- Penguins have 2 chicks. The parents take it in turns to stay with the chicks until they are 2 weeks old. They are then left alone during the day while both parents go fishing.
- Chicks go to sea when they are 8–10 weeks old. They stay at sea for a whole year before returning home.
- A Little Penguin has 10 000 feathers, which need replacing each year. The birds stay ashore for about 17 days while they moult and grow a new feather coat. They can't swim during this time and don't eat.

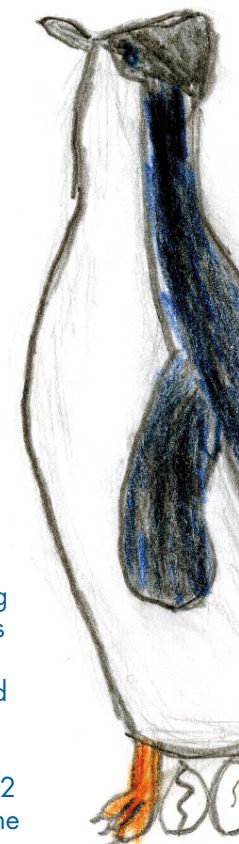
About Little Penguins

- Little Penguins are the smallest Penguin in the world. They are only 30 cm tall and weigh just 1 kg. They are also called Fairy Penguins.
- The Little Penguin is a seabird. Its flippers are wings shaped for swimming.
- Little Penguins cannot fly but they are swimming superstars.
- Penguins usually swim 10–15 km per day and may travel hundreds of kilometers to fatten up before they breed or moult. The record is 2000 km from home.
- Little Penguins can swim up to 6 km/hour, about the same speed when we walk quickly.
- Their scientific name, *Eudyptula minor*, means 'good little diver'. Little Penguins can dive 70 m deep. They can hold their breath for over a minute.
- Little Penguins eat mainly small fish such as pilchards. They also eat squid and krill (shrimp-like creatures).
- Most of their life is spent in the sea. They even sleep at sea. Penguins come ashore to raise their chicks.
- The Little Penguin is the only Penguin that breeds in Australia. They nest along the southern coast, from Perth to Coffs Harbour.

Thanks to the Grade 2/3 and 5/6 classes at Tarooma Primary School for their art and poetry.



Matthew Cherry



Josh