

Amazing Creatures Beyond our Beaches - Diary of an Adelie Penguin

Once there was an Adelie penguin egg in Antarctica. The mother penguin had gone out to start to collect food. That left the dad to incubate the egg. Just then the egg started to crack. At that moment, the mum started to come out of the water. "Look the egg is starting to hatch," the father yelled. Then, out popped a male chick. "His name is going to be Percy," exclaimed his parents. Percy hatched out of the eggshell and cried for food, so his mother started running. Percy chased her, and then she vomited krill up for him. Percy grew and grew until he had his watertight feathers after eight long weeks.

He then left his parents and stayed away for four years until he could find a mate. While he was away, he made a friend by the name of Preston. They both were born in the same year, and they returned to find a mate. When October came around, their mates laid two eggs. Percy and Preston had to incubate their eggs because their mates were away. Preston's mate had to swim for miles out into the sea because of overfishing and climate change, so she could get food. Sadly, when one of Preston's eggs hatched, his mate had not returned, and the chick died from starvation. Preston and Percy continued incubating the eggs until the remaining eggs had hatched.

Percy and Preston waddled away from their chicks when they heard a weird sound. They saw a boat and knew it was an oil tanker. Just then, the tanker struck the iceberg that Percy and Preston were standing on. Down and down they fell until they hit the oil which had spilt from the ship. They struggled to swim back to the iceberg from the oil that was slicked all over them, and they had to evade their predators, leopard seals and sea lions. They got back onto the ice, covered with oil from the spill. Percy and Preston tried to preen themselves, but felt sick.

The people who were onboard the tanker boarded their lifeboats and started sailing back to Tasmania. When they got there, they told biologists that they had caused an oil spill and penguins were covered in oil. When Preston and Percy looked around, they saw humans coming towards them with cages. They then put Percy and Preston into the cage, and then loaded them into the boat. The boat then sailed away with the penguins onboard, and the next thing Percy and Preston knew they were getting scrubbed and scrubbed. They then had to stay in an enclosure with other penguins. After three weeks, Percy and Preston were released back to their families. They talked to their families about their scary experience. Percy lived a long life and died in his sleep at twenty years of age.

Word count: 486

Bibliography

<https://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/5-major-threats-to-penguins-and-what-you-can-do-to-help/>

<http://www.antarctica.gov.au/about-antarctica/wildlife/animals/penguins>

Appendix: Key Science Ideas

1. Adelie penguins travel 92.5 miles one way to get food (squid, krill, and Antarctica silverfish) for their chicks, and the chicks then chase the adults before they vomit it up.
2. Adult Adelie penguins' predators are orcas, sea lions and leopard seals.
3. Adelie penguins dive 575 feet to evade predators and to get fish.
4. Effects of climate change - ice melting, sea warming and sea levels rising.
5. Effects of oil spills - toxic oil gets in when the penguins try and clean themselves and the oil ruins their floatation, so they do not go out swimming for food.
6. Overfishing - penguins food supply is dwindling because of overfishing and climate change, so then chicks are starving in the October breeding season.